

OTTAWA COUNTY TREASURER'S

ANNUAL REPORT

Amanda Price, Treasurer | January 2022



Ottawa County
Where You Belong

FAST DUE!
PLEASE REMIT TODAY





JANUARY 2022

Ottawa County Board of Commission Members,

The mission of the Treasurer’s office is to administer all roles and duties in a professional, effective, and responsive manner, thereby assuring confidence that both sound management and the best interests of the public are of foremost importance in the Treasurer’s office. In the Treasurer’s office, we live this mission each day.

Overview

The majority of the work done by the Treasurer’s office is mandated by Michigan law. However, service levels are not mandated. Excellent customer service can only be provided by our office if supported by the County Board of Commissioners and the Administration.

This annual report presents data and information for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. It can be broadly broken into three categories: **"Dollars, Delinquencies, and Dogs"**

2020-2021 Accomplishments:

- For security reasons, created an exterior conference room ✓
- Implemented PA 255 and 256 of 2020, which is the Rafaeli lawsuit legislative solution ✓
- Implemented a Cashiering Software Upgrade ✓
- Installed 3 additional SafeCash Machines in certain county offices ✓
- Implemented an **Interest Only Lawyers Trust Account** process for Public Defenders Office ✓

Amanda Price

Ottawa County Treasurer

CUSTODIAN OF COUNTY FUNDS



In accordance with **Public Act 40 of 1932**, and by board resolution, the Office of the County Treasurer is the depository for all county funds.

Fund management activities include receipting for revenues; coordinating cash drawer and imprest cash for all departments; reconciling receivables; coordinating disbursement of funds held in trust; and coordinating signatures on and transfer of funds to cover county disbursements.

Striking

Each year the Treasurer - along with Corporate Counsel - assist the local units of government in “striking” Personal Property taxes that have been delinquent more than five years and are uncollectable. In 2021, the Treasurer's office helped 12 local units of government strike \$14,994 (all levies) in uncollectable personal property taxes from their rolls. For each unit that participates in this joint filing, there is a direct reduction in that municipality's legal expenses.

Escheats

Checks that remain un-cashed for over one year must be escheated to the State of Michigan. Under recent changes in state law, we now retain and must account for all unclaimed checks under \$25. In Fiscal Year 2020-2021, there were 130 checks escheated to the State of Michigan for a total of \$13,534.

County Funds at a glance

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020	2021
Depository Accounts				
Accounts	29	23	20	20
Bank Charges	\$7,670	\$12,373	\$9,488	\$49,928
Uncollected Delinquent Personal Property				
County Tax	\$26,502	\$29,496	\$33,511	\$42,137
Parks Tax	\$2,652	\$3,959	\$3,321	\$3,955
E 911 Tax	\$3,645	\$2,918	\$4,476	\$5,299
Roads	\$2,009	\$3,139	\$44,115	\$5,200
CMH	\$918	\$1,611	\$2,222	\$2,994
Taxes Stricken from Taxes Receivable				
# of Local GU	15	16	13	12
# of Parcels	100	129	72	63
Total \$	\$12,198	\$29,664	\$3,114	\$14,994
Unclaimed Checks – Escheated to State				
# of Checks	57*	-	50	130
Total \$	\$9,408*	-	\$4,445	\$13,534
Not Cashed under \$25	\$1,473*	-	\$511	\$1,773

* No checks were escheated. All state checks were re-issued.

GENERAL FUND INVESTMENT POOL



Cash and investment activities for the 12 months ending September 30, 2021, are discussed with this portion of the report and cover only the operations of the county that fall under the direct responsibility of the County Board of Commissioners.

The information on this page does not include the operations of the Ottawa County Insurance Authority, Ottawa County Building Authority, the Ottawa County Road Commission, the OPEB Trust, the Ottawa County Land Bank Authority, or certain activities of the Water Resources Commissioner, unless specifically identified.

The primary objectives of the County's investment activities (in priority order) are:

- 1) Protection of principal
- 2) Liquidity
- 3) Return on Investments

The investment activity throughout the year – and on September 30 – complies with the Ottawa County Investment Policy.

The total Year-To-Date return for 2021 was 0.0979% which compares with a 2021 Benchmark blended index earning of -0.22% (using 2/3 Barclay's 1-5 Government Index blended with 1/3 S&P 0-3-month T-Bill Index.)

On September 30, 2021, approximately \$37,735,000 million of the Portfolio was laddered over a five-year period with a weighted average maturity of 2.2466 years. We will continue to ladder while investing to take advantage of the yield curve whenever possible.

Invested Balanced September 30, 2021

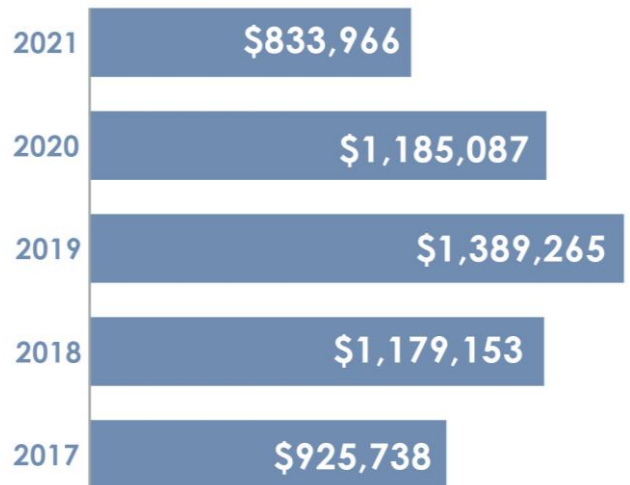
\$162,276,580	Par Value
\$163,040,311	Market Value

\$536,286	Accumulated change in fair market value
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Total Return Rate (net)

2021	0.0979%
2020	2.438%
2019	3.811%
2018	0.480%
2017	0.383%
5-year average	1.6182%

Annual Interest Earned





The collection of Summer and Winter Property Taxes is the responsibility of our local units of government.

Throughout the year, the Treasurer’s Office assists local government assessors and treasurers by verifying tax roll calculations prior to the bills being mailed to taxpayers. Local units electronically transfer their tax rolls to Ottawa County a minimum of three times during the tax year so that the tax roll totals can be verified making the March 1 settlement a much smoother process.

The State of Michigan relies on the Treasurer’s office to coordinate collection and provide accountability for the *State Education Tax*, which is billed and collected by the local units. The offset to this workload is that the investment interest earnings on the SET levy can be retained by the County.

The current year tax rolls are turned over to the County Treasurer’s office by the local units of government on March 1 of each year. A settlement process occurs during the month of March which consists of verifying the taxes billed and adjusted as well as delinquent tax rolls.



As a result of this process, the delinquent tax rolls are “purchased” using the county’s *Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund*, which makes all taxing authorities whole.

The Treasurer’s office has done an estimate of cash available each April 1 through 2027 to determine if there is a need to bond for these payments.

Electronic settlement with the local units saves hours of staff time for both the County Treasurer’s office and the local unit treasurers. The county website provides historical tax data online.

Tax rolls for 2004 through 2020 are saved electronically eliminating paper tax rolls and reducing physical vault storage capacity needs.

REAL TAXES RETURNED DELINQUENT



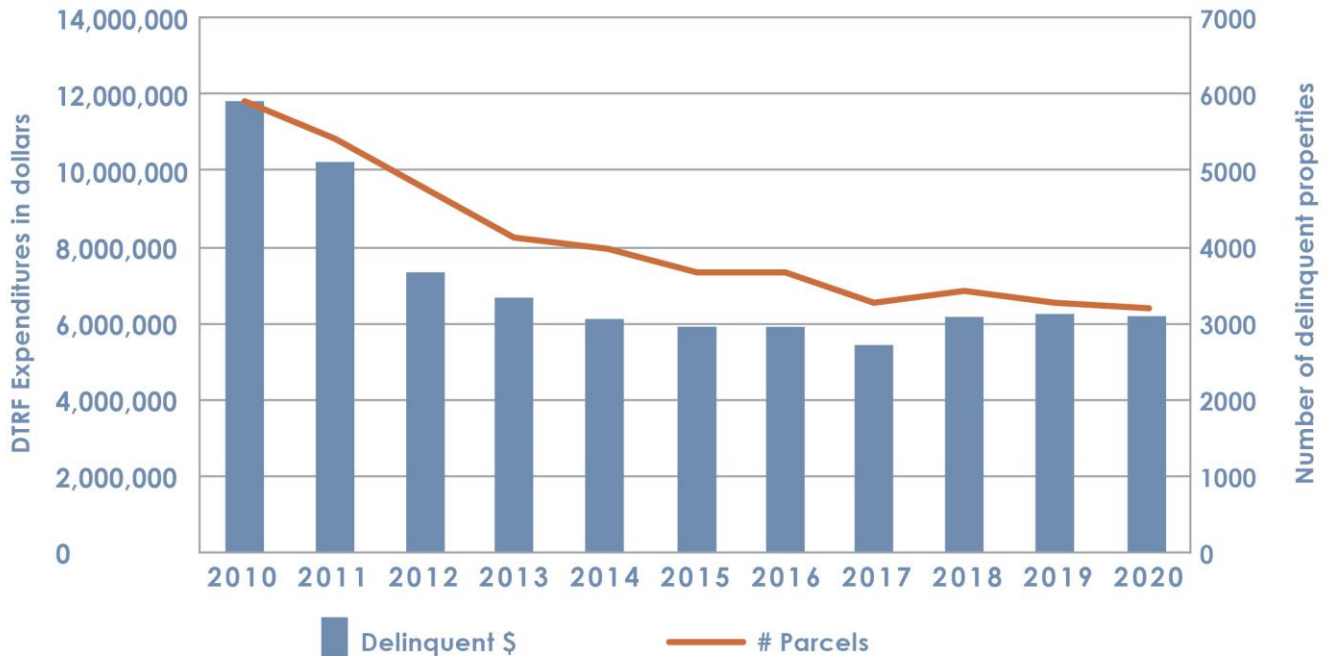
The County operates a *Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund (DTRF)* from which the County pays all other taxing authorities their portion of delinquent property taxes as settled on *March 1* of each year. The payments are distributed to the local units around *April 15*.

By maintaining the DTRF, Ottawa County is not forced to borrow to reimburse the local units. The DTRF has become one of the financing tools of the county.

The graph below shows the volume of delinquent parcels and the total dollars necessary in each year to “purchase” the delinquent taxes.



Historical Delinquent Dollars and Delinquent Parcels



DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES



It is the responsibility of the County Treasurer to collect the delinquent real property taxes.

Functions associated with delinquent taxes include:

- **Writing receipts**
- **Processing tax roll adjustments to prior year's tax rolls (for up to 20 years)**
- **Processing bankruptcy claims**
- **Managing the annual forfeiture and foreclosure process**
- **Acting as the Foreclosing Governmental Unit**

Although our office is charged with the collection of delinquent property taxes, we view our job as assisting taxpayers with the payment of their taxes.

Our goal is to reduce the number of foreclosures as much as possible. We assist taxpayers by:

- **Meeting to understand and discuss their financial situation**
- **Developing payment plans**
- **Referring a taxpayer to local and state resources that could assist with taxes**

Delinquent Property Taxes at a Glance

Fiscal Year	2019	2020	2021
Real Taxes Returned Delinquent			
No. of Properties	3,439	3,261	3,293
Dollars	\$6,191,820	\$6,229,976	\$6,233,664
Forfeited and Foreclosed			
Certified Mail County	2317	2232	1778
Property Forfeited	411	410	340
Property Foreclosed	13	7	6
Financial Hardship Given	24	20	9
Tax Collections			
Receipts Written	4703	4888	4721
Dollars in Millions	\$6.70	\$7.70	\$6.57
Interest & Fees	\$901,963	\$1,025,116	\$971,505
Tax Roll Adjustments			
Number Processed	446	605	488
Foreclosed Land Sales			
Proceeds from Sale	\$233,580	\$7,800	\$179,124
Total Tax, Fees & Interest Billed	\$37,536	\$5,370	\$55,351
Less charge Back to Tax Units	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Gain (Loss) on 2021 Land Sales	\$196,044	\$13,170	\$123,773

- **Instituting monthly ACH withdrawals from checking accounts**

- **Use of Hardship Deferral***

* In FY 2019-20, we used the deferral to protect 20 properties. In 2021, we used the deferral to protect 9 properties.

Six properties were foreclosed on April 1, 2021.

Of these six parcels, one was a vacant home and five were vacant parcels. The home and two of the vacant properties were sold at auction.



The Ottawa County Landbank Authority (LBA) was formed in 2010. The original steering committee determined it was important for the private sector to take the lead on the property development as much as possible, so the LBA seeks only to acquire tax foreclosed properties if they remain unsold after both property tax auctions.

The purchase and anticipated changes to these properties will reset the property values thereby bringing additional tax revenue to the community. These are the type of results that the LBA was established to produce.

All ongoing support to accomplish the work of the LBA is provided by the County Treasurer’s office, other than legal assistance being provided by the County’s Corporate Counsel.

The LBA does not have taxing authority and was established with its only funding stream coming from property sale transactions.

2021 data and financial information is below:

- One new property in Grand Haven City was transferred into the Land Bank for financing and subsequently transferred out.
- One property is held by the Land Bank. The property is in Holland Township and is 8.6 feet wide by 139 feet long

Ottawa County Land Bank Authority Finances

	2021 Actual
REVENUE	
Tax Capture	\$ 0
Sale of Property	\$ 0
Other Revenue	\$ 940
TOTAL REVENUE	
EXPENSES	
Legal Services	\$ 0
Administrative Expense	\$ 0
Dues & Memberships	\$ 0
Mileage	\$ 0
Conference	\$ 0
Project Cost Incentive Grant	\$ 0
TOTAL EXPENSES	
NET	
Prior Year End Fund Balance	\$49,181
YEAR-END FUND BALANCE	\$50,121

Ottawa County Land Bank Authority Board Members

Amanda Price
County Treasurer, (by statute), Chair

Rebecca Hopp
Ferrysburg Mayor, Vice-chair

Tom Oonk
Secretary, Zeeland Township Supervisor

Tim Maday
City of Zeeland, Treasurer

Vince Bush
Holland Township, Township Member

Randy Meppelink
County Commissioner, Appointed County Member

Amanda Murray
Ottawa County EDC Member

Glenn Nykamp
Zeeland Township Supervisor, Township Member

John Shay
Interim County Administrator, Appointed County Member

Dale Wyngarden
Citizen Member

DOG & KENNEL LICENSE PROGRAM

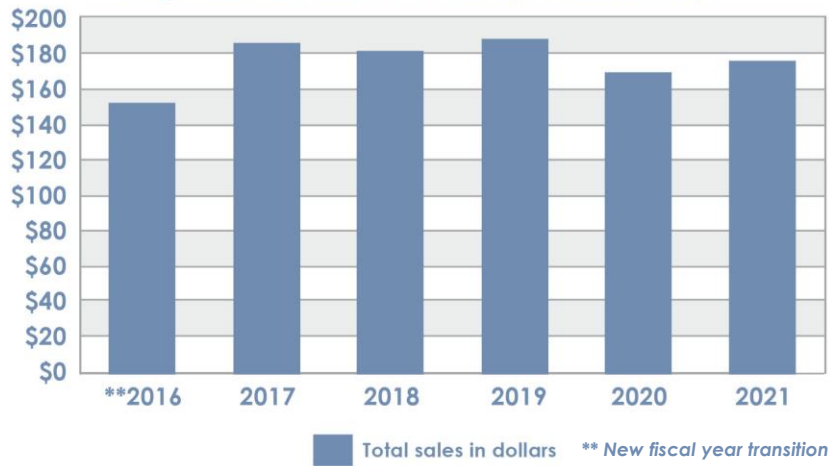


The County Treasurer's Office manages the dog and kennel license program for the County. Ottawa County sells both one year and three-year licenses on a year-round basis. Fees for yearly dog licenses are:

- **\$25 male or female**
- **\$10 for spayed or neutered dogs**
- **\$10 for puppies 7 months or younger**

In 2018, the Animal Ordinance was updated and now reports most violations as civil infractions (versus misdemeanors) which allow animal control officers to write tickets without concern of creating a criminal record for the owner.

Dog License Sale Revenues (in thousands)



Total Active Dog Licenses in Each Year (in thousands)





2021 DOG DATA

TOP BREEDS

- 1** Labrador Retriever
1,023
- 2** Golden Retriever
505
- 3** German Shepherd
364

TOP NAMES

- 1** Bella
118
- 2** Charlie
101
- 3** Lucy
86



Rocky (left) with pal Remi at Kirk Park.



PROPERTY TAX SEARCH

A tax search is a *documented, paid tax status verification* from the Ottawa County Treasurer’s Office. The verification may be of delinquent tax status, historical tax roll amounts (including if paid or not) and legal descriptions. Tax searches are also performed for warranty deed certification. A legislative change in 2016 increased the price for certifying deeds and revenue has seen a jump in fee income since that year. The new fee is set by state statute and is a minimum of \$5 for up to 25 parcels and 20 cents per parcel per deed thereafter.

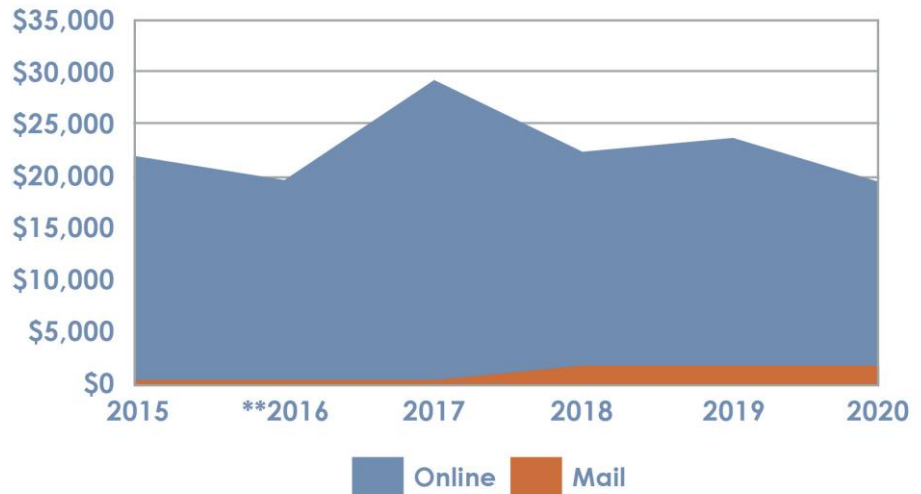
Tax search requests are received via U.S. Postal Service or the county’s website. The fee is set by State statute at a maximum of 50 cents per parcel/year. Through the online search service, customers can verify the property information and then obtain written documentation for delinquent and paid taxes 24 hours a day/365 days per year.

Public terminals are available at both the Fillmore and Grand Haven offices for individuals to do their own searches at no charge.

Fiscal Year	2019	2020	2021
Certification Revenue			
Deed Certification	\$36,056	\$31,271	\$37,182
Tax Search Revenue			
Mail Searches	\$1,787	\$2,002	\$3,132
Business On-line Search	\$17,192	\$13,903	\$9,310
Personal On-line Search	\$4,295	\$3,108	\$1,242
Total Search \$	\$23,274	\$19,013	\$13,684
Online Utilization	92%	*89%	*77%

*Convenience fees suspended during COVID

Annual revenue



MUNICIPAL CIVIL INFRACTIONS



The Municipal Civil Infraction Bureau was established by the Board of Commissioners in 1995.

The Treasurer’s Office is the designated collection office for the Bureau. The Bureau processes violation tickets issued by:

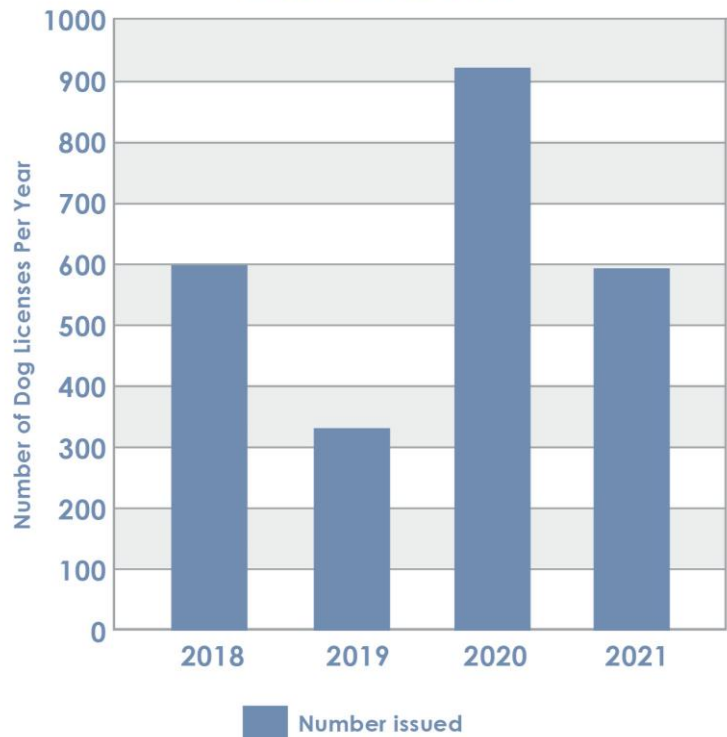
- **County Parks & Recreation Department**
- **County Water Resources Commission**
- **Environmental Health**
- **Sheriff’s Animal Control officers**

The fines are established by County Ordinance and any fines not paid are turned over to District Court to be processed as any other citation to the court.

Beginning in 2013, the Parks Department issued a notice that a citation could be voided if a county Parks Pass was purchased within two weeks of the citation.

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020	2021
Citations Disposition				
Issued	604	328	934	598
Paid In Person \$ Collected	170 \$9,237	183 \$10,734	117 \$7,228	81 \$4,719
Paid Online \$ Collected	247 \$10,138	112 \$5,521	395 \$17,611	290 \$13,062
Total Revenue	\$19,375	\$16,225	\$24,839	\$17,781
To District Court	142	9	132	104
Dismissed	-	1	61	123
Pending	5	-	-	-

Citations issued



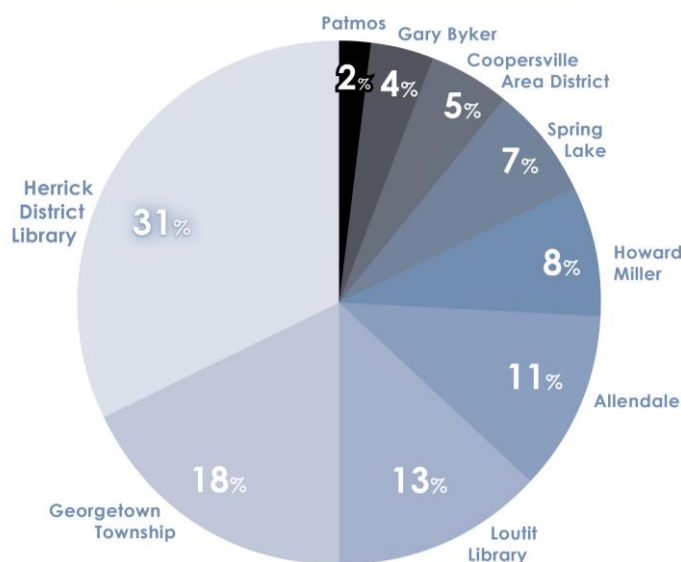
LIBRARY PENAL FINES



Public Act 59 of 1964 established the Penal Fine distribution system which supports public libraries. This law also established the collection and distribution of penal fines based on population of the jurisdiction the local library services.

Ottawa County has nine public libraries: Allendale, Coopersville, Georgetown Township, Patmos (Jamestown), Herrick District (Holland), Gary Byker Memorial (Hudsonville), Loutit District (Grand Haven), Spring Lake District, and Howard Miller (Zeeland).

Ottawa County 2020-2021 Penal Fine Distribution



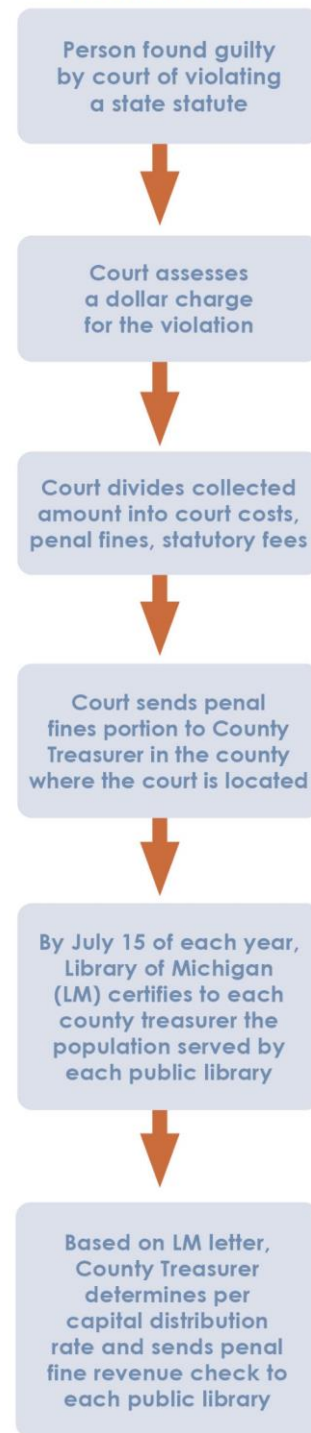
The County Treasurer’s office receives the penal fines throughout the year. In July, the Library of Michigan sends out a listing of the eligible libraries and associated populations, and the County Treasurer’s office disburses the collected penal fine funds to each library.

In recent years, the penal fines distribution total has ranged from **\$700,000 to over \$920,000**. In 2019, the total distributed was **\$849,763** and in 2020 the distribution amount totaled **\$755,171**, which is likely due to fewer penal fines being written during COVID shut-downs.

Fine Distribution by Library

Allendale Township	\$87,243
Coopersville Area District	\$36,590
Georgetown Township	\$144,931
Patmos (Jamestown)	\$21,697
Herrick District	\$255,219
Gary Byker Memorial	\$33,878
Loutit District	\$109,628
Spring Lake District	\$56,325
Howard Miller	\$68,217
TOTAL	\$813,728

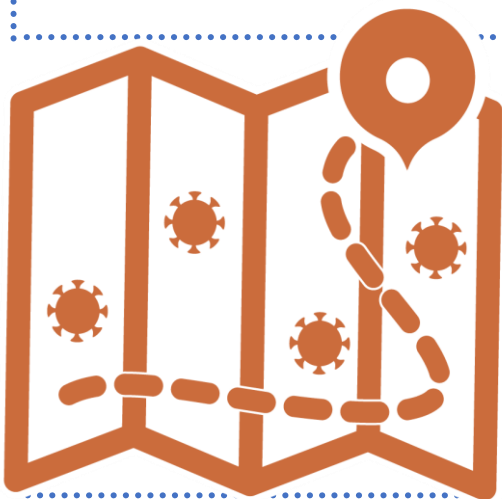
Life of a Penal Fine





Develop a Request for Proposal for a single, County-wide credit card processing vendor

Investigate having a uniform credit card fee assessment



Continue navigating COVID-19 pandemic



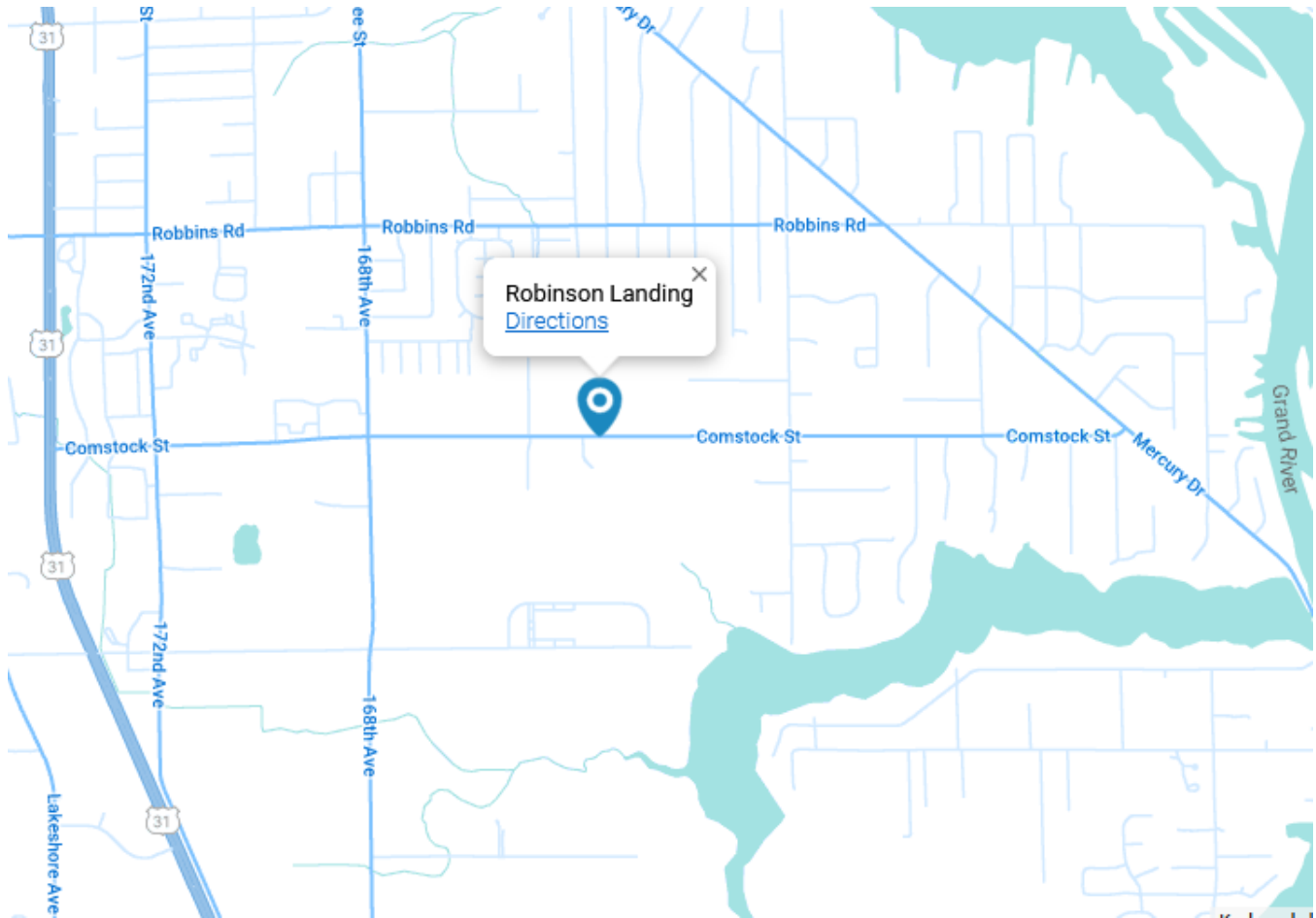
QUESTIONS?

Robinson Landing

- A 30-unit single family residential investment in the City of Grand Haven with 16 homes available to families in the 60-80% AMI income range



Robinson LANDING





2-Bedroom, 1-Bathroom

\$139,900

beds	bath	sqft	floors
2	1	904	1



3-Bedroom, 2-Bathroom

\$159,900 - \$239,900

beds	bath	sqft	floors
3	2	1148	1



3-Bedroom, 2.5-Bathroom

\$179,900 - \$279,900

beds	bath	sqft	floors
3	2.5	1485	2





Grand Haven
Memorial
Airpark

Comstock St

Comstock St

Shape Corp

E2 Technologies, Inc

Airpark Dr

Judith Dr

Carter Manufacturing

AFAB Warehouse

Robinson
LANDING

- Homes with market values of \$225,000+ will sell for as low as \$139,000 to qualified families
- Buyers enter into specific agreements with Grand Haven Community Land Trust to resell at predetermined price to maintain affordability for future working families
- Made possible by cooperation of the Ottawa County Land Bank, the County Board of Commissioners and County Administration







Cooperating agencies and entities:

- Michigan Community Capital
- Ottawa County Housing Next
- Grand Haven Neighborhood Housing Services
- Grand Haven Area Community Land Trust
- City of Grand Haven
- Grand Haven Charter Township
- Grand Haven Board of Light and Power
- Ottawa County Land Bank
- Ottawa County Road Commission
- Abonmarche Engineering
- BlueWest Properties
- DK Design
- Grand Haven Area Community Foundation
- Dart Bank