



# **OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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## *Strategic Plan and 2011 Business Plan*



## **OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

*Back Row (Left to Right):* Donald G. Disselkoen - District 8; Jane M. Ruiter - District 4;  
Joseph S. Baumann - District 7; Robert W. Karsten - District 9;  
Greg J. DeJong - District 5; Stu P. Visser - District 1; James H. Holtvluger - District 11

*Front Row (Left to Right):* Dennis W. Swartout - District 3;  
Chair Philip D. Kuyers - District 2; Vice-Chair James C. Holtrop - District 10;  
Roger G. Rycenga - District 6

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Ottawa County, the eighth-largest county in Michigan, is a beautiful community of 263,801 people located along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The government that serves the community is comprised of approximately 1,100 employees and elected officials with occupations as diverse as nursing, parks, corrections, administration, and law enforcement.

An 11-member Board of Commissioners, each elected to a two-year term, governs the County. The Board of Commissioners establishes the general direction of government and provides oversight of administrative functions of the County. The Board appoints a County Administrator who manages the budget, provides leadership and management of Board initiatives, and oversees general County operations. The remaining operations are managed by either elected officers (Clerk, Drain Commissioner, Prosecutor, Register of Deeds, Sheriff, and Treasurer), statutory boards (Community Mental Health), or the judiciary.

While the Board of Commissioners had conducted strategic planning activities in the past, the County had not had an active strategic plan, mission, or organizational values in place for several years, so in 2004 the Board began collecting information needed to develop a plan. This included the employee and resident surveys, a study of mandated services, employee input on the mission statement, evaluations of several departments, a wage and classification study, the United Way Community Needs Assessment, and definitions of the County's financing tools.

After collecting and considering this information, the Board met on March 23 and 24, 2006, to begin work on its strategic plan. That initial plan was adopted and implemented over the next two years. The Board now meets annually to review the strategic plan and develop an accompanying business plan comprised of objectives that serve as action steps toward achieving the strategic plan.

The Board of Commissioners met on February 25, 2011, to create the business plan for 2011. This involved an update of objectives for 2010 and a review of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing the County. After the Board established draft objectives, Administration assigned resources to each objective, and developed outcome measures which will indicate success in completing the plan's goals. The results of the process follow.

A **VISION** statement indicates how an organization views its ideal, or ultimate, goal. The Board of Commissioners has established the following vision statement:

**Ottawa County strives to be the location of choice for living, working, and recreation.**

A **MISSION** statement assists an organization in easily communicating to a variety of constituencies what it does, who it serves, and why it does so. The Board of Commissioners has established the following mission statement:

**Ottawa County is committed to excellence and the delivery of cost-effective public services.**

**GOALS** focus the direction of an organization's work, under the guidance from the vision and mission statement. Goals are relatively static in nature and will not often change. The four goals of the Board of Commissioners are:

- 1. To maintain and improve the strong financial position of the County.**
- 2. To maintain and enhance communication with citizens, employees and other stakeholders.**
- 3. To contribute to a healthy physical, economic and community environment.**
- 4. To continually improve the County's organization and services.**

*A formal statement of organizational values was developed to clearly identify not only the principles upon which the organization is based, but the way in which it treats its employees and residents.*

We recognize the importance of the **DEMOCRATIC PROCESS** in the accomplishment of our mission, and hold it as a basic value to respect the rule of the majority and the voted choices of the people; to support the decisions of duly elected officials; and to refrain from interference with the elective process.

We recognize the importance of the **LAW** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to work within, uphold, support, and impartially enforce the law.

We recognize the importance of **ETHICS** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to always act truthfully, honestly, honorably and without deception; to seek no favor; and to receive no extraordinary personal gain from the performance of our official duties.

We recognize the importance of **SERVICE** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to treat each resident as a customer; to do all we can, within the bounds of the County's laws, regulations, policies and budget, to meet requests for service.

We recognize the importance of **EMPLOYEES** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to treat each employee with professional respect, recognizing that each person using his or her trade or vocation makes a valuable contribution; to treat each employee impartially, fairly and consistently; and to listen to the recommendations and concerns of each.

We recognize the importance of **DIVERSITY** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to treat all people with respect and courtesy.

We recognize the importance of **PROFESSIONALISM** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value that each employee will perform to the highest professional standards and to his or her highest personal capabilities.

We recognize the importance of **STEWARDSHIP** of public money in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to discharge our stewardship in a responsible, cost-effective manner, always remembering and respecting the source of the County's funding.

# BUSINESS PLAN - 2011

## OBJECTIVES, DELIVERABLES AND OUTCOMES

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*While goals are relatively static in nature, the objectives that assist in accomplishing the goals are likely to change annually. Deliverables are items that give further meaning and substance to an objective. Outputs are specific items of action and outcome indicators are a measure of success, demonstrating the impact of actions conducted to achieve goals and objectives.*

Prior to setting goals, members of the Board of Commissioners examined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting the County as a whole. The items in each category are not ranked by importance, nor is this intended to be an all-inclusive list, however it forms a basis for the development of goals and objectives. In addition, the items identified provide a view of potential issues that may impact the environment in which the County provides services in the near- or long-term future.

# STRENGTHS

- Community image - good place to raise a family, quality of life
- Location - good place to live
- Natural Resources (lakes, rivers, trees)
- Financial health
- Quality management by County Board and staff
- Effective services provided by dedicated employees
- Public safety - low crime
- Parks system
- Agriculture
- Potential for future energy development
- Industry
- Educational systems; public and private, higher education
- Entrepreneurs
- Regional cooperation
- Training programs and communication with employee groups
- Area traits; conservative, work ethic and religion
- Close to cultural resources
- Transportation
- Health care, local hospitals and proximity to Kent County
- Culture of volunteering and philanthropy, community services provided by non-profit and religious groups
- Strong recreational opportunities
- Infrastructure
- Website
- Open Space
- Broadband → coverage as % of county

# OPPORTUNITIES

- Legislative activity - lobbyist to develop proactive strategies
- Local government communication, relations and assistance
- Economic development (Pfizer plant, energy, agriculture)
- Use of new communication tools, social networking
- Sustainable thinking - "going green", recycling, cost savings
- Growth in health care industry
- Economic climate allows for new thinking; regional focus, collaboration and consolidation
- Programs to meet new needs (emerging industries, substance abuse)
- Maintain open spaces
- Increase and recognize diversity
- Tourism (lakes, parks)
- Bring the road commission closer to the county, various strategies
- Bring balance to regulation in economic climate
- Provision of infrastructure
- Increase funding for mandated services
- Revenue sharing and finances
- Legislative plan to get state change(s)
- Improve transit, conduct corridor studies

# WEAKNESSES

- Effective communication with citizens and other stakeholders
- Lack of diversity, need to be a more welcoming place for diversity
- Declining transportation system with inadequate funding
- Redundancy, need for increased regional collaboration/consolidation
- Need to bring issues along slower to match a comfort-level with local units of government
- Runoff and water pollution
- Geographic division by Grand River
- Overall economic conditions
- State government
- Workforce unprepared, inadequate for future jobs
- Lack of countywide mass transit, especially to County facilities, rural areas
- Three Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- Accessibility and affordability for housing in disabled and elderly populations
- Over-reliance on manufacturing
- Managing growth to keep open spaces

# THREATS

- Financial state of the economy - unemployment, state budget
- Loss of revenue sharing, dropping property tax revenue
- Crisis in the housing industry; foreclosures, loss of value, etc
- Rising pension and health care costs
- Lack of a regional economic development entity
- Bigotry and challenges of diversity
- Decreasing water quality, beach closures
- Excessive State/Federal regulation and mandates
- Air pollution regulation changes
- Gang and drug activity, WEMET funding
- Conflicts between being environmental and promoting business
- Aging population
- Road conditions and funding
- Domestic violence and hunger
- Substance abuse
- Globalization
- Term limits and potential of a Constitutional Convention
- Green industry overkill, need to keep goal of a diverse economy
- Amount of non-taxable land
- Loss of personal property tax
- Right to work laws

**GOAL 1: TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNTY.**

Output

Outcome Indicator

**Objective 1:** Maintain and improve the financial position of the County through legislative advocacy.

- *Advocate to achieve full funding of mandates.*
- *Advocate to achieve the full reinstatement of revenue sharing.*
- *Identify other legislation that impacts our financial position and develop clear position statements on those issues.*
- *Work with our legislative delegation to make our positions clear.*
- *Develop improved communication methods regarding our position statements, including a Dashboard, Dollars and Sense Report and other items requested by the Governor.*
- *Evaluate the value of the lobbyist contract.*

Produce documentation clearly outlining our issues.  
 Conduct a survey of our legislative delegation on various issues.  
 Post on the website a Dashboard and Dollars and Sense Report.  
 Lobbyist provides quarterly legislative updates to the Board.

Legislation is adopted that more fully funds mandates.  
 Revenue sharing is not further cut and eventually fully restored.  
 Positive legislation adopted and negative legislation defeated.  
 The Board affirms the value of the lobbyist contract.

**Objective 2:** Implement processes and strategies to address operational budget deficits with pro-active, balanced approaches.

- *Adopt a budget calendar and provide information to the Board necessary to make key decisions.*
- *Identify financial threats and approve strategies to mitigate those threats.*
- *Maintain the health of the County financing tools.*
- *Eliminate operational budget deficits, adopting the budget by the end of October.*

Adopt a budget calendar and adhere to established timelines.  
 Provide information to the Board in a timely fashion.

The County financing tools are fully financed.  
 Budgets are adopted without deficits.

**Objective 3:** Approve strategies to reduce the negative impact of rising employee benefit costs on the budget.

- *Approve a strategy to move to a defined contribution (DC) plan for new hires.*
- *Report on the possibility to move out of the MERS retirement system.*
- *Approve strategies to contain health benefit costs.*
- *Implement a health management plan.*

Board considers a strategy to establish a DC plan for new hires.  
 Board considers a report on moving out of the MERS system.  
 Board considers strategies regarding health costs.  
 Implement a health management plan.

Employee benefit costs rise at a rate lower than established benchmarks.

**Objective 4:** Maintain or improve bond ratings.

- *Continue to address budget deficits with pro-active, balanced approaches.*
- *Present thorough, high-quality information to bond rating agencies.*

Board adopts a balanced budget.  
 Meet with bond rating agencies as scheduled.

Achieve and maintain the top ratings from all rating agencies.

WHAT WILL WE DO TO GET THERE?

## GOAL 2: TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION WITH CITIZENS, EMPLOYEES, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS.

Output  
Outcome Indicator

### Objective 1: Continue to improve the County website.

- Increase and improve the services that citizens can access and receive through the website.
- Continue to evaluate the expanded use of social networking options that are linked to the website.
- Evaluate the value of the website contract.

Regularly review the work of the website contractor, tracking metrics and revenue of the website.  
Board considers the website contract.

The 2012 citizen survey reflects a 5% increase in citizen use of website.

### Objective 2: Review and update a comprehensive communication plan to maximize communication with citizens.

- Increase focus on receiving coverage on local radio and community television stations.
- Develop a report on the benefit of County property tax dollars.
- Evaluate the use of citizen budget meetings.

Board considers an updated Communications Plan.  
Board considers a "Property Tax Dollar" report.  
Conduct citizen budget meetings.

The 2012 citizen survey reflects a 5% increase in citizen awareness of County activities.

### Objective 3: Continue to develop and implement methods of communicating with employee groups.

- Continue using the Front Page and all-staff e-mails to communicate important information to employees.
- Continue the Labor-Management Cooperation Committee.
- Continue and improve employee-edited newsletter.
- Continue brown-bag lunches and other information sessions.

Administration maintains consistency with brown bag luncheons, newsletters, Labor-Management meetings and other means to communicate with employees.

The 2011 employee satisfaction survey reflects an increase in overall employee satisfaction.

### Objective 4: Continue to improve communication with Commissioners.

- Continue departmental annual report process.
- Evaluate use of paperless packets and other communication tools with Commissioners.

Communication methods continue with the Board.  
Conduct a survey of the Board rating communication.

Commissioners report 100% satisfaction with communication from Administration.

### Objective 5: Evaluate communication with other key stakeholders.

- Develop and implement a legislative action plan.
- Continue to evaluate the role of Commissioners and staff in national, state and regional professional organizations and define the specific purpose of what we are to accomplish in those roles.
- Evaluate communications with local units of government, including the use of quadrant meetings.

The Board adopts and monitors a legislative action plan.  
Quadrant meetings are held on a regular basis.

Legislative delegation reports understanding of County legislative positions. Ottawa County is viewed as a leader for best management practices and collaborative efforts.

**GOAL 3: TO CONTRIBUTE TO A HEALTHY PHYSICAL, ECONOMIC, & COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT.**

Output

Outcome Indicator

**Objective 1:** Discuss and act upon road policy issues as appropriate.

- Regularly contact legislators and road officials on relevant road-related legislation and project status of the US-231 project.
- Communicate and coordinate with the road commission on relevant issues and to improve public understanding on roles.

Continue regular meetings with the Road Commission and MDOT.

The US-231 project is completed. The 2012 citizen survey demonstrates improved public understanding of roles.

**Objective 2:** Consider opportunities to improve economic development in the region.

- Work with existing partners on regional economic development efforts.
- Continue work on developing an agriculture incubator.
- Work to maintain MSU Extension services in the County.
- Look for ways to support agricultural tourism.

Economic development groups give report to the Board. Board considers a feasibility study of agriculture incubator. Board receives information on agricultural tourism.

Unemployment rates decrease in the County. The 2012 citizen survey reflects a lower concern regarding economic development.

**Objective 3:** Continue initiatives to preserve the physical environment.

- Continue efforts related to water quality.
- Complete a groundwater resources inventory.
- Develop a comprehensive sustainability plan.
- Continue to support completion of the Parks and Recreation Commission Parks and Recreation Plan.

Water Quality Forum held. Board considers groundwater resources inventory and sustainability plan.

A plan of action with measurable results is developed from water quality research.

**Objective 4:** Continue initiatives to positively impact the community.

- Continue work with the Agricultural Preservation Board.
- Complete Urban Smart Growth demonstration project.
- Conduct build-out analysis for local government units.
- The Board of Commissioners will review the strategic plans of County departments and agencies, as requested by those entities, that provide direct services to the residents of the County.

Complete Urban Smart Growth project and build-out analysis for two local government units. Department strategic plans are reviewed by Planning and Policy.

The 2012 citizen survey reflects a higher rating of County government.

**Objective 5:** Provide quality County facilities throughout the County.

- Analyze the potential use of County land for additional communication tower leasing.
- Effectively maintain the existing facilities in the County.
- Investigate providing power to County facilities with wind, solar and other alternative energy options.

Board approves the construction of an additional communication tower. Board considers alternative power options.

County facilities are maintained at a lower cost than an established benchmark.

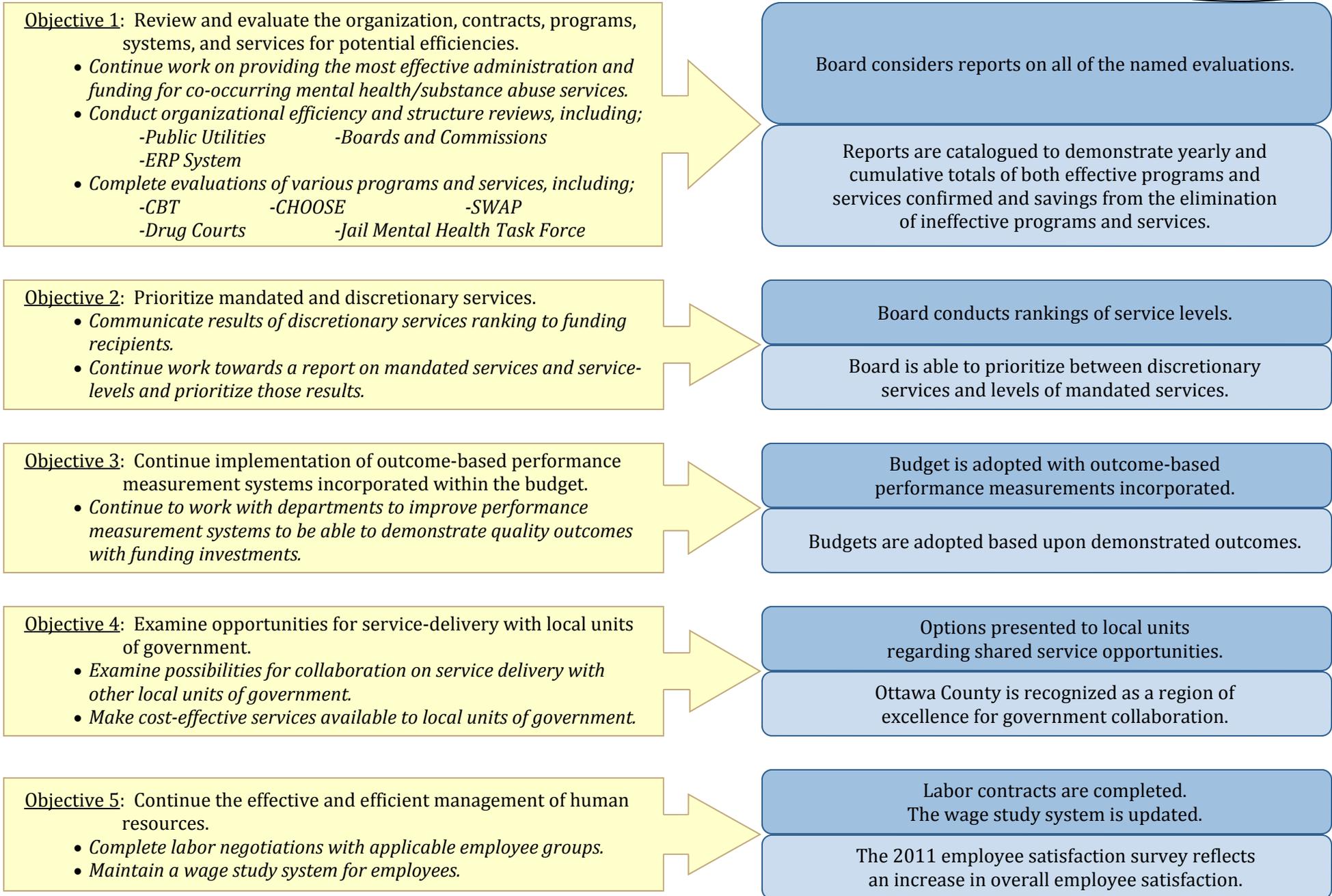
WHAT WILL WE DO TO GET THERE?

### GOAL 4: TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE THE COUNTY'S ORGANIZATION AND SERVICES.

Output

Outcome Indicator

WHAT WILL WE DO TO GET THERE?



# ASSIGNED RESOURCES AND DEADLINES

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*Once objectives, deliverables and outputs have been established, it is important to assign deadlines and resources to ensure that the plan activities are completed.*

**Ottawa County Board of Commissioners  
Business Plan: Deadlines and Resources**

	Projected Completion	Resources Assigned
<b>Goal 1: To maintain and improve the strong financial position of the County.</b>		
<i>Objective 1: Maintain and improve the financial position of the County through legislative advocacy.</i>		
Produce documentation clearly outlining our issues.	Ongoing	Administrator, Fiscal Services, Planning, Corporation Counsel
Conduct a survey of our legislative delegation on various issues.	12/31/11	Administrator, Planning
Post on the website a Dashboard and Dollars and Sense Report.	9/1/11	Administrator, Fiscal Services, Planning, IT
Lobbyist provides quarterly legislative updates to the Board.	Ongoing	Administrator, Planning
<i>Objective 2: Implement processes and strategies to deal with operational budget deficits with pro active, balanced approaches.</i>		
Adopt a budget calendar and adhere to established timelines.	10/31/11	Administrator, Fiscal Services
Provide information to the Board in a timely fashion.	10/31/11	Commissioners, Administrator, Fiscal Services
<i>Objective 3: Approve strategies to reduce the negative impact of rising employee benefit costs on the budget.</i>		
Board considers a strategy to establish a defined contribution (DC) plan for new hires.	12/31/11	Commissioners, Administrator, Human Resources, Fiscal Services
Board considers a report on moving out of the MERS retirement system.	8/1/11	Administrator, Human Resources, Fiscal Services
Board considers strategies regarding health costs.	Ongoing	Commissioners, Administrator, Human Resources, Fiscal Services
Implement a health management plan.	3/1/11	Administrator, Human Resources
<i>Objective 4: Maintain or improve bond ratings.</i>		
Board adopts a balanced budget.	Ongoing	Commissioners, Administrator, Fiscal Services
Meet with bond rating agencies as scheduled.	Ongoing	Administrator, Fiscal Services
<b>Goal 2: To maintain and enhance communication with citizens, employees, &amp; other stakeholders.</b>		
<i>Objective 1: Continue to improve the County website.</i>		
Regularly review the work of the website contractor, tracking metrics and revenue of the website.	Ongoing	Administrator, IT
Board considers the website contract.	10/31/11	Commissioners, Administrator, IT
<i>Objective 2: Review and update a comprehensive communication plan to maximize communication with citizens</i>		
Board considers an updated communications plan.	12/31/11	Commissioners, Administrator, Fiscal Services
Board considers a "Property Tax Dollar" report.	12/31/11	Commissioners, Administrator, Fiscal Services
Conduct citizen budget meetings.	7/1/11	Administrator, Fiscal Services
<i>Objective 3: Continue to develop and implement methods of communicating with employee groups.</i>		
Administration maintains consistency with brown bag luncheons, newsletters, Labor-Management meetings and other means to communicate with employees.	Ongoing	Administrator, Administration Departments
<i>Objective 4: Continue to improve communication with Commissioners.</i>		
Communication methods continue with the Board.	Ongoing	Administrator
Conduct a survey of the Board rating communication.	12/31/11	Administrator
<i>Objective 5: Evaluate communication with other key stakeholders.</i>		
The Board adopts and monitors a legislative action plan.	Ongoing	Commissioners, Administrator, Planning
Quadrant meetings are held on a regular basis.	Ongoing	Administrator

**Ottawa County Board of Commissioners  
Business Plan: Deadlines and Resources**

	Projected Completion	Resources Assigned
<b>Goal 3: To contribute to a healthy physical, economic, and community environment.</b>		
<i>Objective 1: Discuss and act upon road policy issues as appropriate.</i>		
Continue regular meetings with the Road Commission and MDOT.	Ongoing	Commissioners, Administrator
<i>Objective 2: Consider opportunities to improve economic development in the region.</i>		
Economic development groups give report to the Board.	10/1/11	Administrator, Planning
Board considers a feasibility study of agriculture incubator.	10/1/11	Administrator, Planning
Board receives information on agricultural tourism.	10/1/11	Administrator, MSU Extension, Planning
<i>Objective 3: Continue initiatives to preserve the physical environment.</i>		
Water Quality Forum held.	11/1/11	Administrator, Parks, MSU Extension, Health
Board considers groundwater resources inventory.	12/31/13	Administrator, Planning
Board considers sustainability plan.	12/31/11	Administrator
<i>Objective 4: Continue initiatives to positively impact the community.</i>		
Complete Urban Smart Growth project.	7/1/12	Planning
Complete build-out analysis for two local government units.	12/31/11	Planning
Department strategic plans are reviewed by the Planning and Policy Committee.	Ongoing	Administrator, All Departments
<i>Objective 5: Provide quality County facilities throughout the County.</i>		
Board approves the construction of an additional communication tower.	8/1/11	Administrator, Planning, IT, Fiscal Services
Board considers alternative power options.	12/31/11	Administrator, Fiscal Services, Facilities
<b>Goal 4: To continually improve the County's organization and services.</b>		
<i>Objective 1: Review and evaluate the organization, contracts, programs, and services for potential efficiencies.</i>		
Board considers report on the administration of co-occurring mental health/substance abuse services.	12/31/11	Administrator, CMH, Corporation Counsel
Board considers a report regarding the potential reorganization of Public Utilities.	6/1/12	Administrator, Planning, Corporation Counsel, Fiscal Services
Board considers a report regarding various boards and commissions.	12/31/11	Administrator
Board considers a report regarding the ERP system.	12/31/13	Administrator, Planning, Fiscal Services
Board considers a thorough evaluation of the Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Program.	12/31/11	Planning, Community Corrections
Board considers a thorough evaluation of the CHOOSE Program.	12/31/11	Planning, Health
Board considers a thorough evaluation of the SWAP Program.	12/31/11	Planning, Sherrif
Board considers a thorough evaluation of the Drug Court pilot projects.	9/30/10	Planning
Board considers a report from the Jail Mental Health Task Force.	12/31/10	Administrator, CMH, Planning, Sheriff
<i>Objective 2: Prioritize mandated and discretionary services.</i>		
Board conducts rankings of service levels.	6/1/11	Administrator, Fiscal Services
<i>Objective 3: Continue implementation of outcome based performance measurement systems incorporated within the budget.</i>		
Budget is adopted with outcome-based performance measurements incorporated.	internal 5/31/11	Planning
Budget is adopted with outcome-based performance measurements incorporated.	board 10/31/11	Administrator, Fiscal Services
<i>Objective 4: Examine opportunities for service delivery with local units of government.</i>		
Options presented to local units regarding shared service opportunities.	Ongoing	Administrator, All Departments
<i>Objective 5: Continue the effective and efficient management of human resources.</i>		
Labor contracts are completed.	12/31/11	Administrator, Human Resources
The wage study system is updated.	12/31/11	Administrator, Human Resources