



STATE OF ALLEGAN COUNTY 2013

PRESENTED BY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
ROBERT J. SARRO TO THE
COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JULY 11, 2013



Allegan County Strategy Map

To achieve our vision and ensure Allegan County continues to progress and prosper, we MUST...

Provide valuable and necessary quality services to our

CUSTOMERS

- Deliver affordable and accessible services
- Engage and educate our citizenry
- Collaborate locally and regionally

Vision:

Provide our citizens superior and innovative services, be judicious and efficient in the expenditure of resources and promote a safe, clean and healthy environment in which to live, work and play.

Maintain our FINANCIAL STABILITY

- Develop and maintain a balanced operational budget
- Maintain reserve funds
- Execute long-term financial planning



Support a united and ENGAGED WORKFORCE

- Foster a positive, team-based work environment
- Employ and retain high-performing, quality employees
- Promote safety and wellness

Continuously improve our

PROCESSES

- Be efficient and cost effective
- Measure and learn from outcomes
- Seek and implement innovative solutions

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Letter from the County Administrator

We are proud to present the 2013 State of Allegan County, in which we will reflect on accomplishments of the past year and discuss current and future initiatives aligned towards Allegan County's growth and prosperity. This address comes to you as a result of the County's strategy map that was constructed based on the organizational mission and vision.

At the center of our continuous improvement culture are R.I.C.H. values (Respect, Integrity, Commitment, and Honesty). We have four overarching strategic goals all of which were identified to guide the organization toward continuous improvement:

1. Support a united and engaged workforce
2. Continuously improve our processes
3. Maintain our financial stability
4. Provide valuable and necessary quality services to our customers

Prior to 2008 the County enjoyed consistent annual growth in market value. This provided fairly stable funds to maintain services. During 2008–2013 we experienced unprecedented decline in value and revenue. Throughout this period we established a strategy map as described above to help us more clearly navigate through the difficult period. We united closer than ever as an organization and through strong financial practices, policy, engagement and innovation we made significant expenditure reductions while continuing to provide quality services.

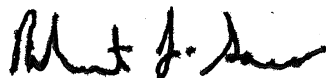
Currently, we are experiencing a plateau in revenue loss and are forecasting conservative and gradual gains in market value. We are hopeful this will represent a consistent upward trend to which we were historically accustomed to. Despite a potential recovery we are starting from an already reduced level. As an organization, we are still transitioning through many changes. Many service areas and teams have admirably “held the line” the past few years and are currently overwhelmed. With resilience and patience we will recover stronger than ever.

The experience over the past few years has reinforced the need to always seek maximum efficiency and identify ways in which we can improve governmental process and service delivery. It also demonstrates the importance of good planning and development of common goals. In the coming year, we are going to take our development to the next level by beginning a visioning and planning process to establish more specific goals and performance measurements. The process will include a high level of engagement and result in the development of multi-year budget, capital infrastructure plan, and shared goals with measurements. It is important that we can all see the future of Allegan County with 20/20 vision.

Our success must be measured through the level of satisfaction and value we deliver to our citizens and overall customers. This report is just one of many ways in which we will continue to keep you informed of our progress. We hope you enjoy reading the 2013 State of the County. If possible after reading this report, please provide us with your feedback via the survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/2013SOC.

We thank everyone for the unified efforts resulting in the many accomplishments summarized here.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Sarro

Strategic Goals

Support a United and Engaged Workforce

The first goal, to Support a United and Engaged Workforce, is a fundamental building block for Allegan County. How we interpret “United” is viewing the County holistically. Each service area does not stand alone; it is part of a bigger entity: the County. “Engaged Workforce” is defined, for example, based on the 2005 Towers Perrin Global Workforce as employees’ willingness and ability to help their organization succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustained basis. Understanding these two concepts tells us that without everyone seeing the vision; and supporting that vision with their collective passion Allegan County will not reach its potential.

To reach Allegan County’s potential three strategic priorities were developed in 2011 and are aimed at supporting a united and engaged workforce. Specific projects and/or initiatives have been developed to:

- Foster a positive, team-based work environment.
- Employ and retain high-performing, quality employees.
- Promote safety and wellness.

To successfully reach our strategic priorities we accomplished the following:

Employee Engagement Team (EET)

The EET exists to, listen to and learn from all employees so we can suggest ideas and changes to the workplace culture which will support leadership in its quest to nurture the total wellbeing and talent of employees. Through a series of strategic planning sessions in early 2012, the Employee Engagement Team evaluated the responses to the employee engagement survey done in 2011 and identified the following three organization-wide engagement areas to focus on—team building, employee recognition, and interpersonal skills development. Three separate workgroups were formed to develop plans proposing specific en-

agement objectives and tasks for each of the three areas. The proposed plans were developed in the last quarter of 2012:

TEAM BUILDING: Providing opportunities for employees to come together and share common non work-related interests is a powerful way to build relationships between employees across departments. This helps break down barriers and builds a sense of belonging within the broader organization, not just the department.

- Employee Luncheons are held to provide opportunities to build relationships throughout organization.

RECOGNITION: After pay and benefits, recognition is the greatest motivator keeping an employee on the job. Successful recognition is frequent, consistent, timely, specific and done in a way that is appropriate and meaningful to the employee. Recognition must have support and participation from leaders throughout the organization and span all levels.

- Retirement Ceremonies – three hosted to date
- Blog Recognition: “Hail & Farewell” & “Way to Go”

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: Interpersonal communication between managers and employees was identified as a major focus area in the survey.

- Leadership Conference held in October 2012 focused on engagement.
- Communication Training held in November 2012.

Leadership Conference

In October 2012 we held the first annual Leadership Conference with 96 in attendance, including County representation from in and outside the organization. The main purpose of the conference was to drive home the necessity of engagement through the organization and community. We

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face the challenge of meeting the needs and expectations of our citizens or customers while utilizing fewer resources. Through the engagement of others, we can ensure the decisions we make will move the organization, community, and the region in the right direction.

As shown on Allegan County's strategy map, engaging employees, citizens/customers, and local and regional agencies is an integral part of our overall organizational strategy and commitment to continuous improvement. More than ever we are looking to collaborate universally to share services, ideas, and resources in an attempt to remain sustainable. It takes fully engaged individuals to ensure collaboration will produce the results we all strive to achieve.

Facility Emergency Response Plans

This past year the organization launched an ongoing initiative to increase drills, provide education, and perform ongoing evaluations aimed at improving our emergency preparedness.

Allegan County through its Facilities Emergency Response Plan (FERP) conducted training followed by three drills at each facility last year. One drill was a severe weather drill, one a fire drill and the last one was a lockdown drill. Each drill was followed by debriefing with the participants involved and a report was issued with results of the drill as well as recommendations for both facility and procedural changes to make them more effective. These recommendations were given to the FERP committee to prioritize and recommend changes to Administration and the Board of Commissioners and provide a cost and timeline for these changes. These changes were approved to be implemented in 2013.

The safety of County facilities, the public and employees will continue to improve as we institutionalize emergency response through annual drills, evaluations and improvements to each FERP.

Wellness

In 2012, the County embarked on developing a Wellness Plan for the organization through the leadership of the Wellness Committee. The plan involves:

- Implementing a Comprehensive Worksite Wellness Program for employees.
- Establishing baseline data on employees' health behaviors and risks to measure outcomes and guide future wellness strategies.
- Pursuing wellness initiatives to help manage and control increasing health care costs to the County and its employees as well as reduce the overall need for health service utilization.
- Actively monitoring, analyzing and influencing the County's health care expenditures.
- Using wellness strategies to help employees minimize the financial impact of the health expenditure caps now required for governmental health insurance plans.
- Using wellness strategies to maintain a healthy and productive workforce with low levels of absenteeism and presenteeism (attending work while sick).

A request for proposals was released in March 2013 and a vendor will be selected to administer the plan late August 2013. The effectiveness of the wellness program will be monitored and reported on in future reports.

Continuously Improve our Processes

The second goal is to Continuously Improve our Processes. Through continuous evaluation and improvement of support processes and service delivery, we will increase efficiency and cost effectiveness maximizing value for our citizens.

Three strategic priorities have been developed and aimed at continuously improving our processes.

- Be efficient and cost effective.
- Measure and learn from outcomes.
- Seek and implement innovative solutions.

To meet these strategic priorities, we engaged in the following projects and initiatives:

Project Management

Over the past year, the County's Project Management Team (PMT) has identified and started tracking close to 100 projects that require coordination between multiple service areas, need support from central services, or involve executive level approval. The PMT is also helping decision-makers prioritize and maintain focus on critical projects.

The PMT continues to refine estimates for central service capacity and is applying this knowledge to set realistic expectations for project completion. In addition, the PMT has established a project management process, is in the process of deploying a Microsoft SharePoint solution to enable online collaboration between project teams and has begun training project managers within the organization to use this process and tools. Finally, the PMT is facilitating the scoping of ideas, helping develop project proposals, analyzing outcomes and debriefing projects to measure success and promote continuous improvement.

Continue Using LEAN Concepts

LEAN is a strategic goal of continuous improvement designed to dramatically improve operational efficiency by identifying and eliminating non-value added activity (waste) associated with systems and processes. LEAN actively engages all process participants, not just managers, in finding ways to minimize time spent on processes so they can devote more time to customer service.

This past year, we worked closely with the Courts to redesign processes for the new Legal Assistance Center and the submission of Family Court warrants. In both cases, we were able to infuse technology into the process to streamline the submission, transmission and reporting of data previously collected in paper form.

One of these technologies involved deploying tablets to enable key Family Court personnel to receive, digitally sign and return forms to the Department of Human Services (DHS) electronically. Allowing for more real time interaction between

State and County personnel should result in quicker response times and more efficient service delivery. As a new initiative, metrics are just now being collected related to this solution.

For the Legal Assistance Center, the Information Services Application Development team created a web-based encounter management and reporting application which allows the County to efficiently collect usage data for this new service. Traditionally, customers have filled out paper forms from which it has proved difficult, if not cost prohibitive, to generate the type of statistics critical for evaluating service usage and program success. The new web-based solution captures encounter information digitally in real time. From there stored data can be analyzed and reported in minutes instead of hours.

Performance Measurement Dashboard

In the fall of 2012, as part of the statewide County Incentive Program (CIP), a program similar to the Economic Vitality Incentive Program (EVIP) for local government, Allegan County compiled various statistics on the economy, education, health and public safety within the county. An online dashboard was created illustrating the current performance of each indicator as well as trends from the past three, six, and nine years. Such dashboards allow decision makers to monitor conditions important to them and easily identify areas of continuously poor performance or where an indicator is trending in an undesirable direction. Strategic initiatives can then be developed and undertaken to address unfavorable conditions.

The long-term goal is to develop performance measures relevant to and aligned with the County's strategy map. This enhanced dashboard will portray statistics showing our overall performance as an organization and should be useful to guide decision making, developing strategic goals and identifying future budgetary needs. The Resource Planning and Project Management Team within Information Services is beginning to work with individual service areas to refine and develop some of the performance metrics currently reported through quarterly and annual reports.

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Some of these will be included in the county dashboard.

Continue Development of Web-Based Services

Web-based technologies continue to be a key innovative solution for Allegan County. By continuing to develop the County's website, we keep the public informed and engaged in the day-to-day operations of the County. A strategic goal is to continue increasing the number of online applications that provide self-service portals for people to utilize from anywhere in the world.

This past year, joining our existing online property and tax lookup, park reservation, and traffic ticket payment system, a new self-reporting crime form, restaurant inspection search solution, smoking violation complaint form, and Medicaid for children portal were added. These self-service portals provide an efficient and cost effective way for information to be submitted by the public and processed by the County. Using Google Analytics software, our web team has begun tracking use statistics for specific areas of the County's website. Indications are that approximately 30% of the 400,000 visits to the County's website are to one of the above listed self-service portals.

Electronic Medical Record Software Solution

Migrating medical record information from paper filing systems to digital environments creates tremendous efficiencies for medical staff, external provider agencies and patients. By storing this information electronically, authorized health care providers are able to quickly and easily store and retrieve information to better serve their patients. It also reduces current and future space needs for storing paper records. This space can be repurposed now and eventually eliminated from future facility plans to reduce building construction, maintenance and utility costs. Finally, electronic information is much more secure due to strict federal rules on security access and data encryption.

This past year, both the Medical Care Community and Community Mental Health agencies began the process of researching, selecting and implementing electronic medical record (EMR) solutions. Both offices are deploying mobile solutions

on laptops and tablets to enable staff to provide services to patients wherever needed.

Electronic Health Records Software Solution

New federal rules and regulations required the County to begin using electronic health records to improve record keeping and patient tracking in addition to establishing uniform code standards for services provided. To meet these regulations, continue receiving reimbursements and incentives for providing health services, and improve the way the County utilizes health information, a new electronic health records (EHR) solution has been implemented in the Health Department. This solution greatly improves billing, patient charting and reporting. It also increases efficiency by reducing data entry time and provides charting tools that enable nursing staff to better evaluate program outcomes based on statistical analysis.

Client Management Solution for Senior Services

In 2011, it was determined that Senior Services was outgrowing the in-house application developed by Information Services to manage the services being provided through senior millage funds.

In 2012, a new client management solution was researched, selected and deployed. The completely web-hosted solution went live last October and allows external service providers to register seniors and submit assessment data through web forms. Senior services can then determine eligibility and match individual needs to the services and funds available through the millage. This new system also makes tracking, reporting and billing much easier, more reliable and accurate.

Electronic Document Management Solution

By 2012, the Friend of the Court (FOC) records storage vault housed about 1.5 million sheets of paper and full to 83% of its capacity. In addition, the file retrieval process was inefficient and there was no means for disaster recovery.

After a year of planning and process engineering, a document management solution was implemented for the FOC in October 2012. In six months, the FOC staff has been able to digitize about 27,000 incoming pieces of paper and stem

the flow of new paper records into the vault. Also during this time, the records management team was able to scan and purge about 300,000 pieces of paper from the vault. These efforts have opened up much needed vault space.

More importantly, the document management solution has given case workers the ability to quickly access case file information from anywhere and at any time. Instead of checking out paper case files from the vault to take with them to court they can easily access the digitized record. Furthermore, the digital file can still be viewed by staff if needed, thereby increasing efficiency and productivity office wide.

Comprehensive Technology Network Security Audit

In a continuing effort to evaluate performance, the Information Services team continues to routinely test network security. These include monthly internet security audits of our external facing servers to ensure any new solution deployed is as safe as possible. On an annual basis or more frequently if needed, a more detailed audit is done on the County's network infrastructure.

Earlier this year a grant-funded opportunity presented itself to partner with the regional emergency management committee to perform a highly comprehensive security audit of the County's workstations, servers and networking infrastructure. The audit came back very positive with only a few minor issues noted, many of which were corrected within 24 hours of receiving the report. This was the second fully comprehensive security audit we have undertaken over the past 10 years. Most security audits are conducted by independent technology security audit firms whose services are available through the State of Michigan.

Video Conferencing

As part of a State of Michigan initiative to decrease costs and increase efficiency of certain types of courtroom testimony, each court in Allegan County received a video conference solution. With this solution, witness testimony can be given from any participating agency across the State. In accordance with the State's multiphase deploy-

ment approach, virtually every county in Michigan and most courts within those counties can take advantage of this technology. This saves tremendous costs for example when out-of-county expert forensic witnesses are needed to provide testimony. It also allows for remote arraignment of individuals housed in jail facilities outside the county without having to send jail transport staff to pick them up and bring them to Allegan.

Automated Vehicle Locator Solution in the Transportation Office

In May of 2010, Allegan County Transportation requested and received funds from the Michigan Department of Transportation to deploy an automated vehicle locator (AVL) system that uses Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to provide real-time vehicle location data to Transportation drivers and dispatchers. The AVL solution is an integrated extension of the RouteMatch software solution the Transportation office currently uses to manage customers and schedule trips on its fleet of 28 vehicles.

For drivers, the AVL system provides accurate, real-time location and trip data on their Mobile Data Computers (MDCs) to help them navigate between their route stops according to schedule. For dispatchers, the AVL system enables them to easily and dynamically view and locate vehicles throughout the county in real-time.

Having real-time vehicle location information allows Transportation to better anticipate and manage scheduling issues. There is no longer a need to print out more than 100 sheets of daily paper manifests as schedules are now delivered directly to the driver's MDC and can be modified by dispatchers as the vehicle drives its route to accommodate trip additions and delays. Finally, drivers should have fewer issues in locating riders and can validate being on location at the right time for no-shows.

Service Area Collaboration

The County continues to explore and find ways to collaborate and share resources, office space, equipment and information. In a recent example, facilities staff has helped with buildings and grounds maintenance at various county parks due

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to staff turnover. In early spring, facilities staff was also able to repair the dock at Gun Lake Park and the entrance bridge to Dumont Lake County

Park. Both repairs were achieved with significant cost savings over contractor estimates used for the capital budget allocation.

Maintain our Financial Stability

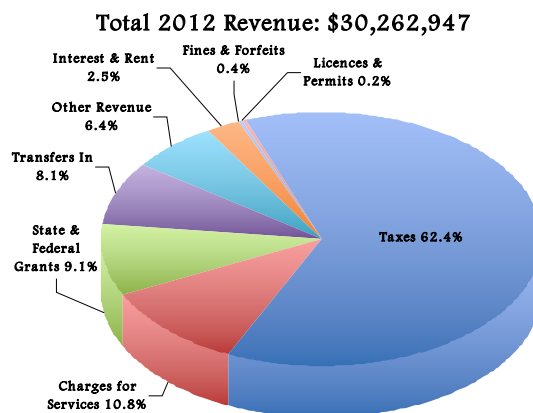
The third goal is to Maintain Our Financial Stability. Allegan County's market value has remained relatively strong at just over \$10 billion. We had previously experienced a reduction in market value from 2008 to 2012 of 15%. The County appears to have hit the floor of declining values as evidenced by the 2.71% increase it realized from 2012 to 2013, as seen in the 2013 Equalization Report.

The upward movement in values is estimated to continue and is supported by a decline of 17.81% in foreclosures (511 foreclosures in 2011 compared to 420 in 2012) as reported by the Allegan County Register of Deeds. There has also been an 18.75% increase (1,035 sales in 2011 compared to 1,216 in 2012) in arms-length residential property sales as reported by the County Equalization Director.

The County's overall finances continue to be strong and stable as a result of many difficult and responsible decisions. Allegan County maintains an unreserved General Fund fund-balance of 10% of General Fund budgeted expenditures. Additional liquidity is available in the budget stabilization fund which is funded at its statutory maximum of approximately \$4.5 million. The Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund (DTRF) is maintained at a minimum of the annual tax settlement (approximately \$7.5 million). Allegan County maintains a considerably low debt level.

Historically, the County has experienced an approximate average of 3-5% overall revenue growth with years as high as 7% prior to the latest economic downturn. The past few years have demonstrated unprecedented declines in tax revenues. Generally, even during a year of revenue growth, the need or expectation for services often exceed the available resources for any county. For 2010, 2011 and 2012 combined, we reduced expenditures by approximately \$5 million and utilized approximately \$2 million in

budget stabilization funds. Fortunately, due to efficient and judicious departmental expenditures, we continue to experience annual surpluses to maintain a healthy budget stabilization balance as a tool to navigate this economic downturn and other threats such as the elimination of state revenue sharing and the potential phase out of the tax on personal property.



The 2013 general operating budget was adopted at 30,362,947, representing a \$19,651 decrease from the 2012 budgeted expense total. The 2013 budget did include a transfer in of \$579,000 from the Budget Stabilization fund compared to \$750,000 for 2012. The budget, also, includes property tax revenue of \$18,410,183 which is reduction of \$242,500 from the budgeted amounts for 2012. We are projecting an increase of \$92,050 for 2013 in the Register of Deeds office due to an increase in real estate activity. This 14% increase is a positive sign for the long anticipated turn around in property values.

Overall general fund compensation was projected to decrease by \$305,888 for 2013. This decrease was due primarily to the state mandated cap on health insurance costs municipal employers can pay toward employee health insurance premiums.

Some financial challenges include:

- A stable source for funding capital needs continues to be a struggle. Prior to 2008 and the recession capital expenditures for Allegan County ranged between \$800,000 and \$1,200,000 per year. Since the recession General Fund capital has dipped below \$300,000 per year. We can not sustain our operational capital needs and take adequate care of our infrastructure without a stable source of funding to meet these needs.
- Since the late 1990s Allegan County has taken steps to reduce the growth in its long term pension liability. As of 2013, this unfunded liability is in excess of \$12 million. The county is currently in discussions with its pension provider to develop options for a long term strategy aimed at significantly reducing this liability.

State Revenue Sharing

Over the past ten years the instability of the State Revenue Sharing program to the counties has proven to be an unreliable revenue source that makes planning difficult. The County, prior to the State's hold on the Revenue Sharing allocation, received approximately \$2.2 million annually. Beginning in 2012 Allegan County was part of the State's new revenue sharing program titled "Economic Vitality Program" (EVIP). This program consisted of three components. Each component required that specific information be provided to the state and made available to the public in a consistent format. Allegan County successfully completed each component within the required timeframe and received EVIP funding in the amount of \$1.87 million. However, based on the recent instability of the State's revenue sharing program this significant revenue source continues to be a budgeting challenge.

Unfunded Mandates

- It is important to note the impact of State mandates on the County's budget and the funding ratio between the parties. For example, when one adds the General Fund portion of judicial expenditures to the Child Care Fund the total Judicial expenditures are just

over \$10 million. However, the County receives only approximately \$3 million from State/Federal sources.

- Health Services is another example. \$1.5 million out of the approximate \$2.4 million General Fund expenditure on Health and Human Services is transferred to the Health Department Fund to carry out State mandated services. All revenue sources considered, the Health Department Fund is approximately \$3.8 million. The County receives only approximately \$791,000 for these mandated services. This is nowhere near the 50% funding level supposedly in place for counties.
- Unfunded State mandates combined with population growth have continued to place a high and increasing demand on many County services.

Three strategic priorities have been developed and aimed at maintaining our financial stability.

- Develop and maintain a balanced operational budget.
- Maintain reserve funds.
- Execute long-term financial planning.

Maintain or increase current AA Bond Rating

Because of Allegan County's overall good financial standing, we have secured an excellent bond rating which saves the citizens significant dollars when borrowing is necessary. For example, within the past year we have saved money for both Fillmore Township and the Village of Martin by using our bond rating to refinance outstanding debt on public works projects.

Health Initiative

In 2011, the County opted out of Public Act 152 and chose the "hard cap" option, which regulated the amount premium government employers can pay. Understanding how critical Employee Wellness is to reducing our actual claims cost, Allegan County enabled and empowered staff throughout the organization this past year to modify health care plans. Every employee group participated, 16 plans were considered, and 3 were chosen. In the

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first year, nearly \$700,000 was reduced without burdening the employees with that cost.

“I worked with the County on the Health Insurance Project last year. It was a large group of people and never once did I leave the meetings without feeling all the questions had been answered or answers would be found. I don't have much contact with upper administration, but I walked away from that project knowing they have our best interest at heart. It was a very good experience for me.” – Terri Coffindaffer, Central Dispatch.

Negotiations

In 2012, collective bargaining groups came to the table to negotiate and the County was able to settle all labor contracts (with the exception of one long overdue contract, which was also settled out of arbitration through mutual agreement). We continue to strive to make the contracts materially equitable.

“I have had the opportunity to participate in many contract negotiations throughout my career with the County. Involving the employees proactively and making information freely available to everyone has made a huge difference. There is a greater understanding throughout the organization and this is leading to a more equitable environment.” David Vanderroovart, Executive Director of County Finance.

Voluntary Separation Plan (VSP)

The plan is most effective when layoffs are required to balance the budget. During these circumstances the focus is to minimize layoffs of individuals who wish to continue working while providing incentives to those contemplating separation from the County. Generally, the benefit to the organization is possible by not backfilling positions and minimizing unemployment costs. Based on the statistics below and input from service area leaders the County decided not to offer the VSP during 2013 for the 2014 budget strategy.

Year	Employees Taking VSP	Positions Backfilled
2010	13	2.75
2011	13	11.5
2012	13	10

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

The County's Project Management Team (PMT) has been active in facilitating the planning and execution of approved 2013 Capital Projects. In so doing, the PMT has developed a solid understanding of what items the County's Capital Improvement Plan needs to address. An outline has been drafted and work has begun on filling in the details necessary to enable reasonable cost projections, which are five years for operational needs and 15 years for infrastructure needs.

The PMT intends to have a working CIP ready for use as a reference to assist in setting dollar amounts for capital expenditures in the 2014 budget. The plan will also recommend specific projects to be undertaken in 2014 with a goal of having them approved before the end of the year.

Budget Policy

We continue to develop and annually review a comprehensive budget policy. The 2014 budget process is being designed to facilitate better long term financial planning and will result in our first three-year budget document. This three-year budget will help us more easily project and identify trends and enable better decision making about the types and levels of services we provide our citizens.

County Development

The work of the Allegan County Economic Development Commission (EDC) began in May of 2010. The purpose of the EDC is to take a higher-level view of the County's economic development program and offer guidance and leadership to County staff in addressing stakeholder needs.

Last year, a milestone for the EDC was the development of the County EDC website with assistance from the county's web development team. The website offers connections to economic development resources at the local, State and regional level.

Looking ahead the EDC is working to build relationships with other economic development forces in the region and seeking to actively participate in discussions and initiatives that go beyond the borders of Allegan County.

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA)

The BRA was established for the purpose of assisting development projects that face economic challenges due to environmental constraints. In 2010, it was awarded two \$200,000 EPA Envi-

ronmental Assessment grants, one for hazardous substances and one for petroleum. By May 2011, the BRA had carried out nine assessment projects, the two largest being the Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority in Saugatuck/Douglas and the Rock-Tenn Paper Mill in Otsego. Last year, four new projects were added to utilize the remaining grant funds. The BRA will be reviewing options for remediating the environmental conditions discovered through these assessments in an ongoing effort to return these properties to economic use.

Provide Valuable and Necessary Quality Services to our Customers

The final goal is to **Provide Valuable And Necessary Quality Services To Our Customers.**

The demand for human services continues to increase yet funding continues to become scarcer. With a focus on customer service and meeting the needs of our citizens we continue to find ways to make services more readily available. We have worked with various agencies to bring a variety of human services together under one roof with our Human Services Building including the Health Department, Senior and Veteran Services, State Department of Human Services, Michigan Works, County Development (Parks, Recreation, MSU Extension.) It has allowed an increased level of resource sharing, cost savings, and accessibility of services.

Three strategic priorities have been developed and aimed at providing valuable and necessary quality services to our customers.

- Deliver affordable and accessible services.
- Engage and educate our citizenry.
- Collaborate locally and regionally.

A few selected projects and initiatives centered on these priorities include:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

This program is designed to help eligible homeowners in non-entitlement areas of the County to carry out certain home repairs and improvement projects. Grants are awarded every two years with

\$300,000 awarded to the County in the current cycle. The Allegan County Resource Development Committee administers the grant and funded 3 home improvement projects in 2012.

Self Help Legal Assistance Center (LAC)

The primary goal of the LAC is to afford residents of Allegan County access to legal information on civil proceedings related to divorce cases, child custody and support, and many other non-criminal matters. The LAC does not provide legal advice, but helps individuals to locate relevant legal information using the michiganlegalthelp.org website, navigate the legal process, and fill out necessary forms. The LAC also provides referral to community agencies for non-legal assistance, and has a list of attorneys with fee schedules if legal representation is desired.

While providing these services to residents, the LAC is helping to streamline court proceedings by ensuring individuals are better prepared for their day in court. The LAC also diverts legal inquiries and procedural explanations from occurring within court reception areas. Services are offered on a walk-in basis on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. After opening its doors in August, the LAC had 296 visitors in the first two months for an average of 4.5 visitors per day.

Drug Treatment Court (DTC)

Allegan County is entering its third year of providing a DTC. This program is appropriate for

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cases where the judge has some discretion in sentencing based on the offense and the individual and can use the DTC as an alternative to sending someone to state prison. Based on the values of the community and the court, participants in the program receive a six-month jail sentence with a review and potential release from incarceration within 60 days before/after. Participants must “get clean” and actively engage and orient themselves to the program’s strict rules and guidelines. Currently, seven participants have continued diversion from prison. The Courts state the program has progressed to the point where there are definite successes and they are pursuing a grant opportunity through the state to continue the program with funding for 20 additional participants. The court continues to review applications to make sure that community the participant safety concerns are addressed.

One of the greatest challenges to participants is transportation during the recovery process. While some participants have been able to use an alcohol lock system to continue using their personal vehicles, Allegan County Transportation has been a great resource to assist those that do not have a means of transportation.

Health Assessment

Allegan County is designated a Health Professional Shortage Area. To help address this issue, the Health Department secured a planning grant from the Health Resources Services Administration to engage the community in a health needs assessment. This assessment, completed in August 2012, identified health priorities for the county and geographic locations where services are needed the most.

One identified priority is to better address the needs of the underserved, uninsured, and underinsured. Research was done to investigate models and options for establishing a Federally Qualified Health Center in the county to meet some of these needs. However, only Allegan General Hospital was identified as a potential host agency and they are currently unable to pursue this opportunity.

The County continues working with various free health service providers in an effort to expand medical services. Data collected through the

Community Needs Assessment will assist current planning efforts and support future grant applications to fund appropriate programs.

Seniors and Veteran Services

Senior and Veteran Services share many of the same clients and provide very similar services. In an effort to maximize the efficiencies and decrease customer wait times for appointments the once separate departments joined forces in 2011 and moved to the main floor of the Human Services Building. Although the new office space was physically adequate, it was not configured in a manner conducive to the business needs of the service area. Through discussions between Senior and Veteran Services, the Health Department and Facilities Management, a plan was developed to redesign the Health Department front office space and reception area to make it more welcoming and usable for Senior and Veteran Services.

In January 2013, the office renovations were completed by removing four empty cubicles to open up the interior office space and by removing a set of glass doors to open up the reception area. Signage was also added to help customers find the services they are looking for. Finally, dedicated space was established for a “Hero’s Closet” to store donated items issued to those in need. Additional storage for donated items has been established at the Allegan Community Center.

Human Services Expo

The 2013 Human Services Expo was held at the Human Services Building on March 28. The main focus of the Expo was to bring the County’s Human Services agencies together to share information on their services and to provide some training opportunities on topics relevant for human service providers. It also gave an opportunity for County Commissioners, County employees, and members of the public to learn about the various Human Services offered by County agencies.

Highlights of the event include: Exhibits by fifteen agencies representing most of the Human Services offered by the County, a morning training workshop on Person Centered Training, and an afternoon session on the Legal Assistance Center and Employee Safety in Homes.

Citizen Engagement

The County recognizes the value in collecting input from citizens with respect to the services provided by the County as outlined on the Strategy Map. This past year, as part of its Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) project, the Health Department developed a standardized survey applicable to all of its programs and service areas. Staff was trained to distribute the survey and explain to clients how results are being used to improve services. All program areas now distribute the survey to clients in paper or on-line form, giving them the opportunity to provide input on the service they received. Survey results are analyzed quarterly to recognize exemplary service, identify areas of concern, evaluate the usefulness of data being returned, implement changes and share results with other managers and county leaders. Having a customer survey also meets a state accreditation requirement for County Health Departments.

Animal Shelter

The County continues to collaborate locally through an agreement with Wishbone Pet Rescue for the management of the animal shelter and care of the animals brought there. As a private group Wishbone is well suited to this role, having more resources to recruit volunteers and generate donations. In 2012 the shelter temporarily housed 974 dogs and 1489 cats for a total of 2472 animals. To date for 2013 they have had 280 dogs and 254 cats for a total of 534 animals. Since taking over shelter management, Wishbone has been able to increase hours the shelter is open and has begun offering Micro Chip identification services for dogs and cats.

Narrowband Radio Compliance

In 2004, the FCC set a deadline of January 1, 2013 requiring all wideband radio frequency equipment to begin using narrowband technology. Realizing efficiencies to be gained through collaboration, Central Dispatch coordinated the inventory of existing radio equipment in use by local fire departments and used that information to issue a single request for proposals for narrowbanding conversion services. This included the replacement of 230 non-compliant radios and 125 pagers as well as the reprogramming of all radio towers, 90 existing radios and 400 existing pagers. Competitive bidding on this quantity of equipment saved on individual unit cost although exact cost savings are difficult to quantify. Centralized project management, coordination and troubleshooting also created efficiencies. Collaboration has also minimized the number of equipment types in the field and ensured a greater level of standardization across 20 fire departments. The narrowbanding project was successfully completed ahead of the 2013 deadline and Allegan County is now narrowband compliant.

Now that pagers and radios have been reconfigured to work in narrowband, and the effects of narrowbanding on radio coverage are known, a new project is underway to enhance radio coverage in Laketown and Leighton Townships where coverage was already a concern prior to narrowbanding. Several smaller initiatives are complete or underway to address a handful of localized coverage issues resulting from narrowbanding, mostly related to reception inside buildings.

Major Projects

County Law Enforcement

In 2008, discussion began regarding law enforcement service levels. Affected by the nationwide downturn in the economy, the County faced increasing budget constraints, preventing the backfilling of most road deputy positions that became vacant in order to maintain other core services provided by the Sheriff. Townships, also feeling the effects of the economic downturn, began contracting for fewer dedicated law enforcement officers in their jurisdictions and became increasingly reliant on road deputies patrolling county-wide.

During ongoing budget discussions in August 2008, the Allegan County Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution suspending the administrative fees townships were paying as part of their law enforcement contracts starting in 2009. The Board of Commissioners also adopted the County Provided Law Enforcement Project Plan. The Plan outlined how the County's Administrative and Sheriff's Offices would work together to evaluate current and future service levels to be supported by the Allegan County Criminal Justice System.

In September 2012, the Project Team presented a County Provided Law Enforcement Strategy to townships, cities and villages in attendance at the Allegan Township Hall. This strategy hinges on a

Community Coordinated Operational Precinct (CCOP or "Cops") Plan which establishes a precinct model for policing that divides the county into 5 precincts and deploys 24 road patrol deputies fairly and equitably across the county. Moving forward:

- The Sheriff Department will continuously review suggestions from the regular CCOP meetings and reevaluate the Cops Plan to verify and improve the plan's effectiveness.
- The Sheriff's office anticipates updating the Board of Commissioners on the progress of the CCOP meetings during their Annual informational session in 2013.
- The Sheriff's office and Information Services will continue to work on solutions for informative data collection and analysis, providing local units with monthly reports on crime and law enforcement activity within their townships using the best information available.
- The Sheriff's Office will seek input from precinct representatives to assist in developing law enforcement strategies and community policing initiatives to address specific issues related to each precinct.

Sheriff's Office and Corrections Center

In February 2012 construction began on the County's new Sheriff's Office and Correctional Center at 640 N. River Street in Allegan, site of the former Haworth Seating Plant shuttered in 2009. The site, purchased by the County for \$1,775,000, included 193,000 square feet of office and open manufacturing space sitting on 22 acres of land.

Completion of the new facility, designed to house 325 inmates, is expected by December 2013 at a projected cost of \$20,164,520. The proposed square footage for various functions is as follows:

Facility Space	Area
Corrections	90,043 sq. ft.
Sheriff Administration	4,217 sq. ft.
Law Enforcement	2,867 sq. ft.
Detective Bureau/Evidence	8,074 sq. ft.
Shared Staff	6,735 sq. ft.
Mechanical and Utilities	8,995 sq. ft.
Unoccupied	83,962 sq. ft.
Total floor	204,913 sq. ft.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the many accomplishments and current initiatives outlined in this report, it is important to recognize the connectivity of all elements to the County's strategy. Each strategy is an interrelated building block to the next enabling us to achieve results. These results are possible in all focus areas through the continuous improvement model obtainable through excellent communication, accountability, transparency, and feedback.

True to our spirit of continuous improvement, we have a lot to work on and change is difficult. County government with its separately elected offices and branches of government is particularly complex in its structure, which makes it difficult to get everyone moving in the same direction. However, it presents a world of opportunity for success. Often success comes from what can be learned when a goal is not met as planned; otherwise referred to as failure. In fact, legendary UCLA Coach Sue Enquist describes failure as "success recalibration." Continuous improvement enables us to measure results and learn from them while progressing with each success or failure. Most remember Babe Ruth for holding the record of 714 home runs in his career. Babe Ruth was quoted saying, "Never let the fear of striking out get in your way." Ironically, he is not as widely remembered for also having held the record of 1330 strikeouts. Yet, so often communities and organizations have the tendency to focus on what is going wrong. This can detract from the reality that progress is being made in strides and so much is going right.

Allegan County is transitioning to a world class government organization and is pioneering the way toward high performance local government committed to continuous improvement.

On behalf of the entire Allegan County Team we are proud to present this report based on a strategy and a culture we are building together.