

Strategic Plan 2014-2018

Approved March 24, 2014

DeWitt Charter Township Board

Rick Galardi, Supervisor
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Strategic Plan 2014-2019 Executive Summary



Introduction

To ensure that the Township is moving in the right direction, the Board began strategic planning in 2008. This effort was designed to provide a direction and focus for the local government. The 2008 to 2013 Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board April 13, 2009.

The Strategic Plan became the governing document by which the Township budgeted and determined what projects to work on. All Township board actions were tied directly back to the Strategic Plan to ensure that the Township actions were aligned with its desired future.

The 2014-2019 Strategic Plan is the second major update to the original plan.

This Strategic Plan creates a vision and helps chart a plan for the future. DeWitt Charter Township believes as the economy turns around, we will once again be the leaders of growth in the region. We must be prepared through a proactive management process.

A strategic plan will not only help us through the challenging times, but also put us in position to be, once

again, ready for the future fast-paced growth.

Overall, the Township is trying to achieve the highest quality of life within its borders at the most reasonable cost to residents and businesses.

What is a Strategic Plan?

Strategic plans have been defined in many ways. The concept has been around since the 1960's and over time the idea has evolved and changed. There is no one way you can define the value and purpose of a strategic plan, but here is one definition:

Strategic Plan: *A strategic plan is a disciplined, coordinated, systematic, and sustained effort that enables an organization to fulfill its mission and achieve its vision. A strategic plan covers a five-year rolling timeframe. It links the mission to the vision. Strategic plans are reviewed annually to monitor progress and ensure alignment with other planning cycles. It establishes imperatives, goals, strategies, and performance measures for the organization that can be used*

*as a management and communications tool.*¹

The important part to understand about a strategic plan is that it is simply a tool. A tool, like many others by itself, will not transform an organization; but if used correctly, it will certainly help the Township move toward its vision. Without a plan, an organization is more likely to change directions as pressures change. These can force the organization off track, or constantly change its goal. Additionally, the lack of a plan increases the likelihood that individual citizens, elected officials, department heads, and employees see a different vision and direction on how to get to that vision.

The Michigan Township Association talks about the value of a plan because it helps differentiate what is most important over the long term; it provides a framework for making decisions. They also say that a strategic plan can help by:

- focusing resources on key priorities
- proving a tangible way to evaluate how well the Township is meeting its goals
- empowering staff to carry out their jobs because they know the outcomes to achieve
- minimizing quarreling over which direction the Township should go
- becoming more needs-driven versus budget-driven

- improving the image of the Township
- being viewed as proactive rather than reactive
- linking the strategic plan to the annual planning and budget cycles²

In summary, a Strategic Plan is the formal consideration of an organization's future course. All strategic planning deals with at least one of three key questions:

1. "What do we do?"
2. "For whom do we do it?"
3. "How do we excel?"

Layout of Document

This document is broken down into three additional sections that follow:

- Mission and Vision
- Strategic Initiatives
- Summary of Initiatives

The Mission and Vision are short statements that help define an organization. The vision looks into the future and defines what the organization wants to become. The mission defines why the organization exists.

The Strategic Initiatives are five broad statements of priority for the Township. By implementing these priorities, the Township believes that it will be meeting its mission and setting

¹<http://www.tamus.edu/strategicplan/docs/GLOSSARY.doc>

² Michigan Township News, December 2003

the Township in the direction to meet its vision.

The final pages of the document are the summary of initiatives. This section breaks down each of the five strategic initiatives and provides more detail about the initiative.

The section starts by broadly defining what the initiative means. Because the Township is here to serve at the will of the people, the initiative is put into perspective of what it means to a citizen. If the Township was to fully achieve the initiative, this section would illustrate what the Township or community would look like.

The next two sections are challenges and opportunities. In creating any good plan, it is always good to know the environment you are facing. This creates a situational awareness. This information helps the organization be more aware of what is happening around it and how that may impact the organization from achieving its goals and objectives, both now and in the future.

The final section sets the strategies for accomplishing the strategic initiatives. A strategy is a long-term plan of action for achieving a goal. Each strategy then has one or more tactics or tasks. The tasks are more immediate action items. In some ways, this section is the most important of the document. It defines what areas the Township will be focusing on in the upcoming years.

This document is intended to be a living document. At a minimum, it will be reviewed and updated yearly. As new opportunities arrive, they should be compared with the Strategic Plan to ensure they are inline with the Township's overall vision. Additionally, during the yearly review, the past year should be evaluated to measure the Township's success in achieving its objectives.

DeWitt Charter Township Mission and Vision

Vision: Defines the desired or intended future state of a specific organization or enterprise in terms of its fundamental objective and/or strategic direction.³

Vision: DeWitt Charter Township's fiscally responsible, citizen focused Government promotes the high quality of life that makes our community the region's leading destination for families and businesses.

The Mission of DeWitt Charter Township is to ensure public safety and provide financially responsible, efficiently delivered services in a visionary, proactive and sustainable manner.

Mission: Defines the fundamental purpose of an organization or an enterprise, describing why it exists.³

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_planning

Strategic Initiatives

The Township has identified five strategic areas or themes. These can be considered long-term goals that help the Township meet its mission and to achieve its vision. These are not listed in any specific order of priority. More detailed information on each strategic initiative can be found on the pages that follow.

- Fiscal and Organizational Excellence- fiscally responsible with Township dollars and capable of funding the Township's resource demands for immediate and long-term sustainability while delivering efficient high quality customers service
- Economic Development - ensure that we have a vibrant and diversified economy.
- Public Safety - ensure that the residents and businesses of DeWitt Charter Township are safe and secure.
- Infrastructure - Develop and maintain infrastructure that is both sustainable for current needs and adequately prepared for realistic future development.
- Quality of Life - Ensure that the urban areas of the Township are walkable and that we have first class parks, recreation amenities, and programs/events. Additionally the Township will promote environmental awareness.

Fiscal and Organizational Excellence

The Township’s strategic goal is to be fiscally responsible with Township dollars and capable of funding the Township’s resource demands for immediate and long-term sustainability while delivering efficient high quality customers service.

What does this mean to Citizens (goal)?

- Regional cooperation
- Low tax rate
- Reasonable fees
- Proactive planning
- Well-organized government
- Preserving property values
- Expenses in line with current and future revenues
- Healthy fund balance
- Customer service

What are the challenges in achieving this goal?

- Protecting/maintaining borders
- Relations with other government units
- Maintaining adequate fund balances
- Slow growth
- Availability of grants and alternative funding sources
- Predominately residential class

What are the opportunities in achieving this goal?

- Enhance tax base through 425 agreements
- Relations with other government units
- Public Education
- Fiscally conservative Board
- Creative staff
- Growth potential
- Quality of life makes this community attractive
- Grants and alternative funding
- Township not at maximum millage rate
- No significant legacy costs
- Strong housing stock

Strategies & Objectives

- 1) Maintain sound fiscal policies and budgets that allow the Township to address service needs and maintain community quality.
 - o Evaluate individual Departments for options.

- Evaluate energy conservation options within Township facilities.
 - Explore funding sources and opportunities.
 - Maintain employee wages at a competitive rate to attract and retain high quality work force.
 - Work to control employee benefit costs.
 - Maintain high level of transparency with the budget and all Township operations.
 - Encourage education and training opportunities and professional development.
 - Renew Police and Fire millage
 - Provide funding for statutory required functions and maintaining investments that the Township has already invested
- 2) Continue discussion with regional jurisdictions to determine if new opportunities exist
- Regional fire service
 - Regional police service
 - Regional Building/Trade permit operations
- 3) Continue/expand long-term planning related to revenue and expense, and ensure that the Township continues to invest in and maintain its existing assets
- Fund reserves
 - Increase the proactive planning through a strong Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- 4) Enhance Township Services, giving consideration to the latest technology and best practices
- Monitor Township personnel/contractors to ensure we have the appropriate levels to meet the needs & demands for high quality service delivery.
 - Enhance cemetery records management system
 - Evaluate record automation for preparation and management of Township Minutes and Agendas.
 - Develop user friendly public reference tools for processes and ordinances.
 - Increase automation and eliminate unnecessary processes to reduce costs and increase customer service (building permits, burn permits, e-mail sewer bills, facility management, e-file assessment forms, GIS, mapping etc.)
 - Update the Townships web site.
- 5) Continue to utilize all media sources (newsletter, news articles, social media, listservs to strengthen media exposure, ensure transparency, and to strengthen Township Brand.
- Signs
 - Constant contact usages

Community & Economic Development

The Township's strategic goal is to ensure that we have a vibrant and diversified economy.

What does this mean to Citizens (goal)?

- Small town experience
- Strong business district
- Equal access to services
- Good economic planning
- Ensure balanced mix of small and large developments
- Encourage mixed use developments
- Preserve and promote agribusiness
- Well maintained businesses
- Stream lined processes

What are the challenges in achieving this goal?

- Regional economy
- Cost of expanding infrastructure
- Sustainability of agribusiness
- Need for certain regulations
- Available infrastructure

What are the opportunities in achieving this goal?

- Available space
- Transportation hub
- Airport expansion
- Welcoming diversity
- Natural surroundings close to urban amenities
- Diverse employment nearby
- 2107 acres of land in agricultural Preservation (P.A. 116 and PDR)
- One of the fastest growing areas in Greater Lansing and the State
- County has low unemployment rate
- Regional cooperation
- Largest State University 15 minutes away
- A government that works with Businesses

Strategies & Objectives

- 1) Stabilize and increase the South Central Tier
 - Support efforts of the CIA
 - Create overlay zoning
 - Work with Airport on joint planning efforts
 - Blight Elimination

- Work with Neighborhood groups to solve problems and increase a sense of community
- Work with CATA and Clinton Transit to enhance transportation options
- Create a unique sense of place
- 2) Enhance aesthetic quality of major gateways to the Township
 - Create signage for unique districts in the Township.
 - Add landscaping, lighting, street trees, art installation, etc.
- 3) Utilize strong planning principles and a policy of managed growth.
 - Review/update Comp Plan
 - Work with Community to create "Sense of Place"
 - Work the regional jurisdictions on joint planning and economic development opportunities (i.e. airport)
 - Identify and promote opportunities to ensure sustainability of agribusiness
 - Work with Tri-County Regional Planning on the evaluation and possible implementation of an Urban Service Boundary
 - Evaluate planning and zoning processes to ensure appropriateness and efficiency
 - Review old site plans and SUP's for compliance
 - Encourage mixed use and/or senior developments
 - Market study on multi-family housing
 - Work with Lansing Township and East Lansing to expand Coleman road and the opportunities around this area.
 - Review and update Ordinances to ensure they are meeting the long term goals of the Township
- 4) Encourage a variety of businesses and a diverse housing stock.
 - Increase Economic Development initiatives to promote commercial and industrial growth
 - Evaluate economic development opportunities in the Northern Tier with the creation of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
 - Develop a PR brochure that can be provided to developers about DeWitt Township and Clinton County.
 - Develop a plan for expansion of sewer north of Webb Road
- 5) Work with Lansing to assist the expansion and growth of the Capital City International Airport
 - Next Michigan
 - State Road zoning and road right-of-way
 - Work with Clinton County Economic Alliance, LEAP, and MEDC to attract new business opportunities and retain existing businesses.
- 6) Increase elements that help attract and retain seniors.
 - Encourage more senior housing

- Increase senior facilities, services, and other quality of life components
- Perform market study(s)
- Evaluate ordinance opportunities
- Develop a volunteer coordinator

Public Safety

The Township's strategic goal is to ensure that the residents and businesses of DeWitt Charter Township are safe and secure.

What does this mean to Citizens (goal)?

- Good police and fire services
- Safe access to destinations
- Well lighted outdoor areas
- Community safety and education programs
- Adequate snow removal
- Police presence at community events
- Good and safe response times
- Safe housing and commercial buildings
- Well maintained roads
- Regional services
- Affordable cost for public safety
- Access to public water for Fire
- Maintaining existing equipment
- Expected to be a top priority by citizens

What are the challenges in achieving this goal?

- Relationships within the community
- Economy/Revenues
- Lack of rental inspection program
- Maintaining existing capital/infrastructure
- Lack of public water in some areas
- Maintaining a suitable level of on-call staffing within the Fire Department
- Maintaining excellent response times
- Lack of local control of roads
- Growth of population

What are the opportunities in achieving this goal?

- Relations within the community
- Public education
- Excellent and well respected staff
- Good capital and infrastructure
- Good Neighborhood Watch and Neighborhood Association systems
- Automatic Aid
- Good 911 System
- Good relationship with Clinton County Road Commission

Strategies & Objectives

- 1) Evaluate ways to increase safety of housing and commercial buildings
 - Consider adoption of rental housing ordinance
 - Review ISO study and determine options for improving Fire Department Operations.
- 2) Planning/Development of safe community
 - Implement non-motorized plan
 - Develop a strategic plan for the Fire Department
 - Plan for replacement of Fire Station one.
 - Expand Township readiness for assistance to the Community during large scale emergencies.
- 3) Explore, develop, and implement options that improve safety and educate residents on the role they can play in making their community safer
 - Promote paid on-call opportunities in the Fire Department
 - Evaluate opportunities for Fire education programs
 - Expand the Police community safety and education programs
 - Utilize Retired Senior Volunteer Program to support the community
 - Implement a Citizen Police academy
 - Increase Police contact with public at events, neighborhood gatherings, via social media, etc.

Infrastructure

The Township's strategic goal is to ensure, develop, and maintain infrastructure that is both sustainable for current needs and adequately prepared for realistic future development, including utilities, roads and technology.

What does this mean to Citizens (goal)?

- Safe uncongested access to local and regional destinations
- Public water and sewer
- Non-motorized transportation
- Infrastructure is well maintained
- Regional approach

What are the challenges in achieving this goal?

- Ageing roads/infrastructure
- Water/sewer system limitations
- Revenues
- Rising costs
- Inadequate funding of roads
- Slowdown in economy
- Need of additional access management plans
- Cost of developing in areas without adequate infrastructure
- Limited right-of-way for roadway expansion

What are the opportunities in achieving this goal?

- Excellent regional access
- Good base to expand upon
- Roads have been rated
- Sewer Rehabilitation Plan
- Reserve established for transportation
- Adequate capacity for growth in sewer plant
- Current access management plan
- Manage storm water regionally (GLRC)
- Proactive maintenance on roads

Strategies & Objectives

- 1) Maintain high quality transportation network
 - Create Road Asset Management Plan
 - Implement non-motorized transportation plan, increase funding of transportation system via additional general fund dollars, grants, transportation millage, special assessments and/or additional State funding.

- 2) Work with Clinton Transit and CATA to expand public transportation opportunities and interconnections between systems
Maintain quality sewer system
 - Continue to fund and implement 10 Year Capital Improvement Plan for Sanitary Sewer System
 - Complete S2 Grant and fund identified critical repair projects.
 - Develop a plan for expansion of sewer north of Webb Road.

Quality of Life

The Township's strategic goal is to ensure that the urban areas of the Township are walkable and that we have first class parks, recreation amenities, and programs/events. Additionally the Township will promote environmental awareness.

What does this mean to Citizens (goal)?

- Non-Motorized transportation system
 - Connected/ expanded trail system
 - Sidewalks
 - Bike paths
 - Access to Looking Glass River for canoeing
- Portfolio of diverse community events
- Sense of community
- Water recreation opportunities
- Open space
- Cost effective/affordable
- Modern park amenities
 - Senior opportunities
 - Adequate sport facilities
 - Handicap access
- Spacious tree lined streets. This replaces park-like feel on main roads.
- Developments that embrace green building techniques
- Extensive use of trees and landscaping on new developments
- Protection of our water resources

What are the challenges in achieving this goal?

- Revenues and lack of funding
- Access to land for needs
- Consensus on priorities
- Regional Relationships
- Lack of grant opportunities

What are the opportunities in achieving this goal?

- Excellent existing resources
- Regional relationships
- Public/Private partnerships
- Marketing what we already have

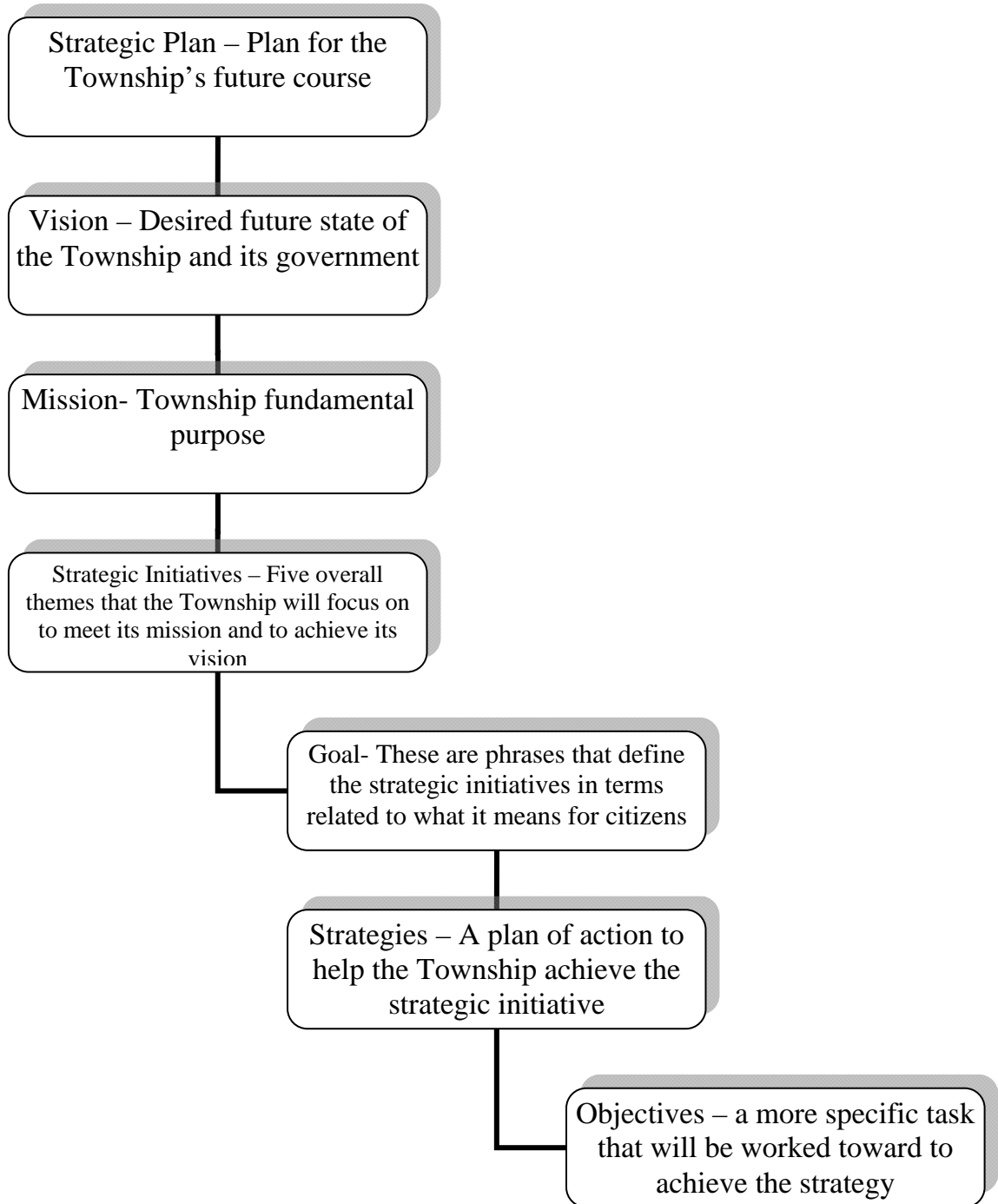
Strategies & Objectives

- 1) Enhance Township recreation amenities and opportunities
 - Work with other community entities such as DeWitt Area Chamber of Commerce, and DeWitt Area Recreation Authority (DARA) to offer new community events
 - Identify strategies to obtain additional funding
 - Work with community members to expand recreation opportunities such as a dog park.

- Expand services and opportunities for senior citizens.
- 2) Provide bike lanes, sidewalks pathways, and waterways that promote healthy lifestyles and provide adequate connection within the entire community for transportation, health, wellness, and safety.
- 3) Review and develop a long term plan for expansion and maintenance of cemeteries in the Township.
- 4) Promote environmental awareness
 - Work with regional partners to promote good management of our environment
 - Educate and foster a green community
 - Establish post construction standards and procedures for storm water run off
 - Explore options for development standards that promote conservation and environmental sustainability.

Appendix A

Below is a summary of how each of the components of the Strategic Plan fit together. Each bubble defines a piece of the Township Plan and illustrates how it fits together with the item above or below.



Appendix B

Below is a summary of some of the significant accomplishments from the 2008 to 2013 Strategic Plan.

- o Institute Peddler & Solicitors fee to improve public safety
- o Changed fire staffing from 1 full time to multiple part time to increase service hours
- o Delayed Gunnisonville Cemetery expansion \$117,419
- o Created rental property sewer deposit ordinance 259
- o Participated in MSU Benchmarking program to allow us to compare ourselves to other jurisdictions
- o Funded \$1000 to County aerial flight project - \$91,500
- o Eliminate Township cell phones and go to a phone allowance to save money and comply with new IRS rules
- o 2010 switch Dental Insurance to Guardian - saving \$9,500 or 20% over current carriers 2010 quote
- o 2010 switch Life and AD&D to Mutual of Omaha - saving \$2,580 or 40% savings
- o Reduced Township traditional contribution to the Meadows Celebration by increasing donations
- o Received grant for police vest covering 50% or \$4,223
- o Implemented Tax Admin Fee
- o Reviewed opportunities to reorganize building operation. Estimated savings \$38,800
- o Switched computer/network services to I.T Right saving approximately \$6,500 a year
- o Implemented ability to accept Credit Cards
- o Codified Township ordinances
- o Switched to Guardian for vision locking in rates for 2 years and eliminate in raise in dental for 2012
- o Add Sparrow CARES Employee Assistance program for employees
- o Upon retirement in police department reorganized full-time secretary position to a 30 hours per week position.
- o Switched to Guardian for Life, Short Term and Long Term Disability (2% decrease) locking in rates for 2 years and eliminate in increase in dental or vision for 2012
- o Refinancing of Township Hall bond saving about \$92,000
- o Contract with Volunteer Energy for Natural Gas estimated to save \$4,000 a year or about 14%.

- o Conversion of exterior lights at Community Center and Township Hall to LED's, utilizing Consumers Energy Business Energy Efficiency Program with payback of 2 to 3 years
- o Received \$261,250 Grant for purchase of fire pumper
- o Received \$12,754 grant for Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- o Leveraged Township funds by using the Water fund for a loan, instead of a commercial bank for the purchase of two Fire Apparatus saving the Township over \$30,000 in interest.
- o Worked with Cadgewith Farms and King Arthurs Court to pay for 50% of emergency siren (\$10,000 contribution)
- o Changed Local Dial Tone Service to WBI (savings about \$1,800 a year)
- o Board evaluated new fee billing residents for Fire Department response to structural fires.
- o Applied for and received RAP grant for panic button and door access cards for Township Hall (\$3,750 grant, Project est. \$8,000)
- o \$35,980 Federal Grant for use of County OSSI software
- o \$64,000 grant for purchase of OSSI crash reporting software to be shared with County
- o Joint Parks and Rec Master Plan with DARA and the City
- o Contract with Bath for replacement of sewer interceptor with no cost to the Township
- o Worked with Bath and Watertown Township's to apply for a MSU grant that focuses on "Creating Entrepreneurial Communities"
- o Township committed to funding and being part of Building Stronger Communities Council
- o Held joint meeting with City of DeWitt and DeWitt Schools
- o Amend 425 with Bath to add a parcel located at 16970 Chandler Road.
- o Applied for Economic Vitality Incentive Program Grant with City of DeWitt and Bath Township to provide Joint Building/Code Operations. (\$16,500)
- o Joint meeting with City of DeWitt, DeWitt Schools and the Library
- o Working with Road Commission to change Schavey Road from Primary to Local to allow for application of State Grants for upgrade of the motorized and non-motorized assets
- o Adopted Fund Balance Policy
- o Increased items on CIP from 24 in 2009 budget to 42 in the 2010 budget
- o Lift Station 501 & 504 Pump Station Report
- o Pump station report completed for 11 of the oldest pump stations
- o Created south BR127 technical design committee
- o Jointly working with Bath Township and the Road Commission to create a Road Asset Management Plan
- o Classification and Compensation Study
- o Creation of new Township web site
- o Fire Prevention Open House

- o Public input and education session to discuss current financial challenges/options
- o Established Township Facebook site
- o Established e-mail blast capabilities via Township web site
- o Developed Fiscal Challenges Survey and post results to Facebook
- o Adopted IPMC and Violations Bureau on second reading
- o Worked with City of Lansing and the Airport to create Next Michigan Development zone and do a 425 on airport property
- o Public meeting on water expansion
- o Expand Commercial Rehab District to include the Transition area of the South Central Area Plan
- o Commercial Rehab for Northcrest Plaza (Roger Dean)
- o Applied for a MNRTF grant - Miracle League & restroom/concession
- o On behalf of DeWitt Township and Bath Township applied for and received \$315,000 Building Better Buildings home energy grant
- o Worked with Rebuilding Together to rehab homes in the Township
- o Township received parcel on BR127 and Meadowlawn via State Tax foreclosure
- o Creation of Special Assessment District for the Installation of Street lights on Ralph Street
- o Created South BR127 technical design committee
- o Installed art piece on Sheridan Road and Old US-27 after receiving \$10,000 LEAP placemaking grant
- o Received title to home on Greenwood that was blighted to tear down
- o Purchased home on Sheridan Road next to Township vacant lot using the State tax foreclosure process
- o Applied for MEDC Blight Elimination Grant for purchase and demo of Chips.
- o Applied for a transportation alternative grant for pathways/sidewalks along the southern portion of the Old US27 corridor. Grant = \$400,000
- o Corridor Improvement Authority implemented along Old US-27
- o Planning Commission and Board approved 10 policy statements to the Comprehensive Development Plan
- o Approved R2012-12-67 (Access Management Plan) and the associated ordinance enacting Access Management for all of BR127
- o Ordinance for mixed used Regulations
- o Adopted Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
- o Zoning Ordinance Amendments- R6 District, Duration of Approval Site Plans & SUPs, Consideration by Board on SUPs, and Day Care Facilities
- o Established a joint session with Bath Township to provide joint training to Planning Commissioners
- o Letter sent out to Township farmers on potential agricultural grant opportunities
- o Ordinance 225.6 which allows some flexibility in the installation of sidewalks.

- o Ordinance 60.73 which allows commercial advertising at public parks, ball fields and ball diamonds.
- o Ordinance 91.7 which allows prepayment of sewer tapin fees
- o Ordinance 60.74 which allows the use of Medical Marihuana.
- o Ordinance 60.75 which allows Wind Energy Conversion Systems (wind turbines).
- o Ordinance 60.76 which allows Medical Clinics, Health Service Office and Professional Offices in the R5 zoning district.
- o Ordinance 60.77 allowing the adaptive reuse of functionally obsolescent public/religious buildings
- o Ordinance to allow for the payment of sewer tap-in fees over three years was passed
- o Purchase Pumper and Tank, partially paid for by a Grant
- o Adopted Ordinance 2013-06-02 on discharge and use of fireworks
- o With City of DeWitt applied for grant from State to do a Biking audit of our two communities
- o Received \$12,754 grant for Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- o Received MNRTF Grant (\$78,000) for Canoe\Kayak Launch and River Bank stabilization. Board set total budget \$115,700.
- o Worked with Bath to replace Pump Station 504 in 2011
- o Created a long term planning worksheet for SCCMUA that helps plan out future replacements, simplifies reserve funding and establish jurisdictional rates
- o Completed 10 year CIP for Sanitary Sewer that includes manholes, collection system and pump station repairs
- o Board approved submission of a S2 Grant that will pay 90% of \$564,387. The Grant will allow the Township to review the rest of the Sanitary Sewer system and start the creation of a Sewer Master Plan.
- o Purchase State Road property for expansion of parking at Community Center.
- o DARA exploratory committee established to evaluate expanding authority to Bath Township and Watertown
- o Work with Road Commission and neighbors in the area to provide small parking area at the Water's Edge Park for little cost to the Township