

# GRAND HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN

2015 – 2018



## GRAND HAVEN TOWNSHIP BOARD

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GRAND HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP

*Above all else, our purpose is to provide superior customer service to our community.*

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# STRATEGIC PLANNING



Simply put, strategic planning is an organization’s process for defining its direction and identifying objectives to guide decisions regarding the allocation of capital and people. The focus of a strategic plan is typically on the whole organization and they are established for a specific timeframe, typically three to five years. Since strategic planning cannot foretell exactly how the marketplace will evolve and what issues will surface over time, it is essential to re-visit them on an annual basis.

## Why is the Township doing a Strategic Plan?

Grand Haven Charter Township is a desirable place to live with its beautiful natural features, lakeshore location, and reasonable commute to regional employment centers. Over the last 60 years the Township’s population has grown from 1,997 to about 16,000+ and that rapid growth has led to an increased demand for public services.

The long lasting impacts of the so-called “Great Recession” have largely passed and the Township has entered a new period of growth. Although this growth is not as robust as the pre-2006 levels, the growth is expected to continue through 2017. Consequently, the Township is facing questions regarding the level of service and capital projects designed to improve quality of life as opposed to being mainly focused on cost control measures.

### **How will the Township use the Strategic Plan?**

The plan will be used as a tool to:

- Assist with communicating the Township’s goals
- Assure that elected officials are all “on the same page”
- Set priorities and make decisions
- Monitor and measure implementation progress
- Identify needed changes

# OUR PLANNING PROCESS



## “Resilient Grand Haven” Planning Process

A joint planning project with the City of Grand Haven directed by the Land Information Access Association (LIAA), a non-profit community planning firm based out of Traverse City.

This collaborative planning process included the following steps:



*“Resilience is the capacity to absorb severe shock and return to a desired state following a disaster.”*

—Godschalk, 2009

1. Monthly **Joint Planning Commission meetings** with the planning staff and commissioners from both jurisdictions.
2. The **Community Summit** invited residents, community leaders, and an array of presenters to learn about the project.
3. Three **Community Action Team (CAT)** meetings were held after the Summit. Each included six “break-out” sessions to focus on specific topics.
4. The **University of Michigan** presented their fiscal impact model based on a matrix of scenarios for various weather conditions.
5. Three **Special Joint Sessions** with the Township Board and Planning Commission were held to correlate the needs of an updated Strategic Plan with the “Resilient Grand Haven” Master Planning process.
6. Draft **Goals & Objectives** were submitted to the Township Board, Planning Commission, and Department Directors for review and comment.
7. At the **Joint Community Open House** each municipality presented their Resilient Grand Haven Master Plan drafts for public comment.
8. The updated **Master Plan (adoption pending)** and **Strategic Plan** include valuable information obtained during the community engagement sessions and the “Resilient Grand Haven” planning process.

# OUR MISSION



## The Mission of Grand Haven Charter Township is to:

- Provide and continually improve those essential services that can best be provided by the Township and are necessary for the health, safety and welfare of all who live, work or visit the community;
- Protect and invest the financial resources entrusted to us;
- Provide a superior customer experience; and,
- Protect, promote and invest in our abundant natural resources.



The 2015 Mission statement shows only a minor evolution from the 1997 Strategic Plan Mission statement:

*“The mission of the Grand Haven Charter Township Board is to provide those professional quality services that can best be furnished by the Township and are necessary for the health, safety and welfare of the residents.*

*The Township shall continually improve these services to accommodate the needs and expectations of the residents, who are the customers and stakeholders of the Township.”*

The 2015 Mission Statement recognize the fiscal constraints that exist even during periods of growth and places an emphasis on meeting the service needs of the citizens.

# OUR GOALS



**Maintain a Healthy Financial Balance that Reflects Current Revenues and Future Projections** (see page 7)

**Deliver Superior Essential Services that Can Best Be Provided by the Township** (see page 9)



**Maintain and Improve the Infrastructure that is Necessary to Enhance the Community's Health, Safety, and Quality of Life** (see page 10)

**Establish Strong Partnerships within Our Community, with Our Neighbors, and with Other Governmental Agencies to Promote Shared Essential Services and Resources** (see page 12)



**Support and Retain Economic Development that Enhances the Quality of Life in Balance with the Protection of Our Community Character** (see page 13)



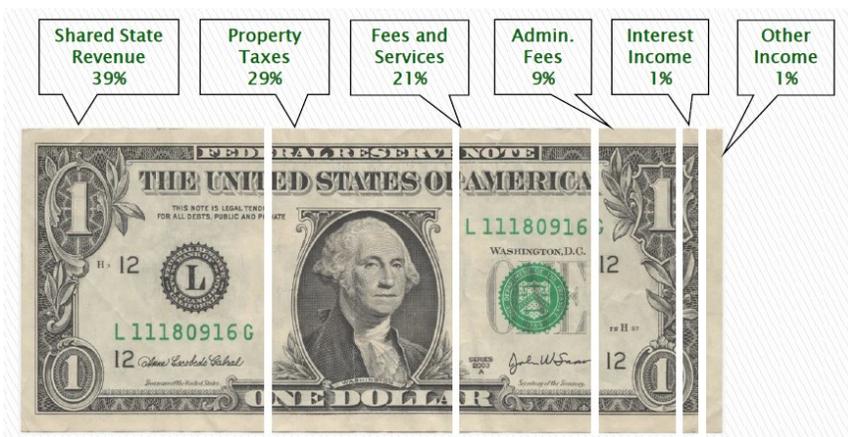
## GOAL: Maintain a Healthy Financial Balance that Reflects Current Revenues and Future Projections

Grand Haven Charter Township maintains eleven (11) funds with majority of operations found in eight (8), including the General Fund, Fire/Rescue Fund, Police Services Fund, DDA Fund, Municipal Street Fund, IT Fund, Water Fund and Sewer Fund. In general, monies from one fund cannot be transferred to the other funds.

The \$3.0± million annual expenditures from the General Fund are the source of most of the services associated with local government, such as assessing, building and zoning services, parks, elections, drain maintenance, pathways, etc. Grand Haven Charter Township relies on various sources of revenues to supply its General Fund, including property taxes, fees and state revenue sharing. Most of the revenue sources have stabilized since the so-called “Great Recession” with some revenue streams showing recent increases.

Although the Township collects over \$22 million in property taxes each year, the vast majority of these taxes are not kept by the Township. Rather, they are distributed to the State of Michigan, the local school districts, Ottawa County and other taxing jurisdictions. For every tax dollar that the Township collects, about 84.3 cents is distributed to others.

### General Fund Revenue Sources

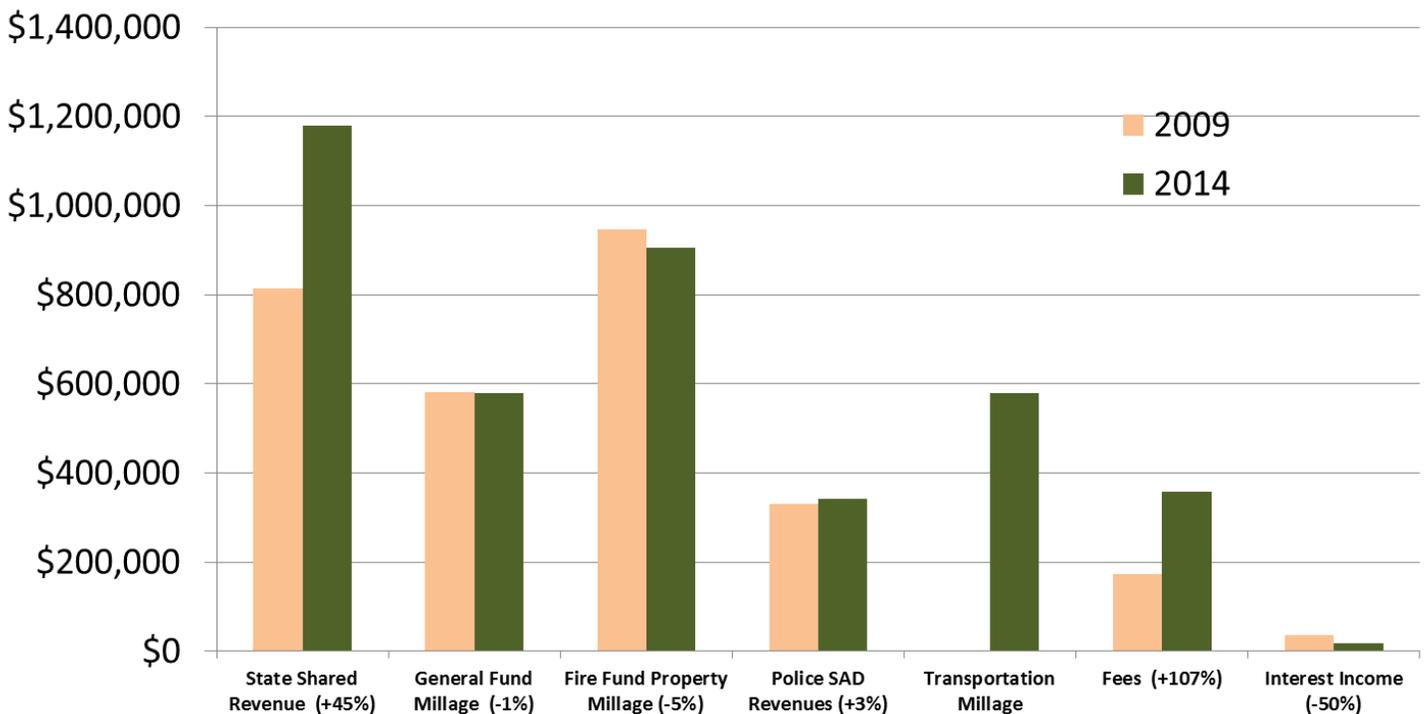


## Objectives:

- Adopt policies that support – “living within our means”.
- Have sufficient financial reserves to respond to emergencies and economic downturns.
- Prioritize taxing and spending to focus on “quality of life” issues.

## Low Millage Rate

Grand Haven Township’s millage rate is the 5th lowest of all 24 municipalities in Ottawa County and is about 4.12 mills below ↓ the average.



Selected Revenue Streams—change from 2009 (*not adjusted for inflation*)

# ESSENTIAL SERVICES

## Objectives:

- Define and prioritize those essential services that can be best furnished by the Township.
- Continually improve the services provided by the Township, especially those services that relate to public safety (*i.e., fire/rescue services and police protection*).
- During the annual budget approval process, review department organization, responsibilities, functions, and staffing (*including succession planning*).
- Develop a versatile professional workforce that is crossed trained to ensure superior customer service.
- Show appreciation for superior staff, committee and board service.
- Review and implement recommendations for sustainable and creative solutions.

## GOAL: Deliver Superior Essential Services that Can Best Be Provided by the Township

Grand Haven Charter Township provides a broad array of public services and amenities to its citizens. The Township recognizes that unlike the private sector, citizens cannot “choose” to do business or receive their services from another local government or agency. With this in mind, the Township staff adopted the creed that *“Above all else, our purpose is to provide superior customer service to our community.”*

As the Township’s population has increased, so has the demand for services and the need to both maintain and expand the existing infrastructure (*e.g., pathways, streets, drain districts, bus service, etc.*).

The Township’s goal is to carefully evaluate and prioritize the services and amenities it offers to ensure they can be provided at the highest possible level and in a fiscally responsible manner.

Under state law, the only services that the Township Board must provide are:

### Property assessments, tax collection, and elections.

However, the Board has chosen to provide or support a variety of services, many of which are considered foundational for local governments, including:

1. Fire/Rescue services
2. Contracted police services
3. Municipal water
4. Municipal sewer
5. Planning and Zoning
6. Building Code Enforcement
7. Parks
8. Pathways
9. Cemeteries
10. Economic development
11. Ambulance service
12. Road maintenance
13. Storm water maintenance
14. Property Code enforcement
15. Drain maintenance
16. Trash collection
17. Library services
18. Liquor control enforcement
19. Yard waste collection
20. Website and IT services
21. Recreational programs
22. Bus Service

# INFRASTRUCTURE

## **GOAL: Maintain and Improve the Infrastructure that is Necessary to Enhance the Community's Health, Safety, and Quality of Life**

Grand Haven Charter Township prides itself on the quality infrastructure it provides to its citizens. This is considered to be a basic and fundamental function for the Township.

Even during the so-called "Great Recession", the Township was able to sustain road maintenance in cooperation with the Ottawa County Road Commission (OCRC) at levels "fair" or higher. And, in cooperation with the Ottawa County Water Resources Commission (OCWRC), the Township was able to maintain the storm systems throughout the community.

### **Objectives:**

- Establish and implement asset management principles for roads in the Township to address issues of safety, mobility and community character.
- Maintain funding source for basic infrastructure maintenance (e.g. roads, pathways and storm drains).
- Provide high quality water and sewer services.
- Collaborate and partner with other communities and agencies to provide and maintain essential infrastructure and services.
- Use technology to enhance services and to increase efficiencies in every aspect of operations.
- Integrate other Township plans with the Strategic Plan and use these as key tools in making decisions regarding operations, capital investments, and natural resource protection.
- Maintain and refine planning and zoning requirements so they are responsive to community character and priorities.



# Infrastructure Facts Sheet

INFRASTRUCTURE	WHAT DO WE HAVE?	FUNDING SOURCE	FACTS
 <p><b>ROADS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 106.28 Miles of Public Roads                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23.25 Primary</li> <li>• 24.20 Local</li> <li>• 18.81 Gravel</li> <li>• 40.48 Subdivision</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax monies through the OCRC</li> <li>• Municipal Street Fund</li> <li>• General Fund</li> </ul> <p>Transportation Revenues are increasing.</p>	<p>At the end of 2014, all of the <b>paved roads</b> were rated “5” or better on the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating System (PASER) where “10” is excellent.</p>
 <p><b>DRAINS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 County Drainage Districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Assessments</li> <li>• General Fund</li> </ul>	<p>All costs are paid through assessments, except for minor maintenance.</p>
 <p><b>WATER SYSTEM</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 88.42 Miles of Main</li> <li>• (2) 500,000 Gallon Elevated Storage Tanks</li> <li>• 5 Meter Stations</li> <li>• 5,039 Taps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Use Fees</li> <li>• Connection Fees</li> </ul>	<p>A cost of service rate study will be completed in 2015.</p>
 <p><b>SEWER SYSTEM</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18.79 Miles of Main</li> <li>• 9 Pump Stations</li> <li>• 722 Connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sewer Use Fees</li> <li>• Connection Fees</li> </ul>	<p>A cost of service rate study will be completed in 2015.</p>
 <p><b>BIKE PATH</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26.7 Miles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funded with 2 debt mileages approved by voters</li> <li>• Maintenance funded by General Fund</li> </ul>	<p>The last debt millage expired in 2008; plans for a ten mile expansion will be presented to the voters in 2016.</p>
 <p><b>PARKS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 437 Acres of Public Land with 6 Parks</li> <li>• Ottawa County has 587 acres of additional Park land in the Township</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Fund</li> <li>• Grants</li> </ul>	<p>During 2015, the Township expects an additional 115 acres from the Witteveen Estate and to purchase 40 acres with a MNRTF grant.</p>
 <p><b>CEMETERIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lakeshore Cemetery</li> <li>• Historic Cemetery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Fund</li> <li>• User Fees</li> </ul>	<p>All tasks within a 2002 Cemetery Plan are complete. User Fees are insufficient to fund maintenance.</p>

# STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

## GOAL: Establish Strong Partnerships within Our Township, with Our Neighbors, and with Other Governmental Agencies to Promote Shared Essential Services and Resources

To further reduce costs and to provide benefits to the region as a whole, Grand Haven Charter Township is working cooperatively through partnerships with adjacent communities and organizations. In addition to the cost savings that result from improved efficiency, regional cooperation has also led to improved relations with adjacent municipalities and local agencies. The Township currently cooperates on a regional basis in the following ways:

- Grand Haven/Spring Lake Sewer Authority
- Harbor Dredging
- Harbor Transit
- Loutit District Library Authority
- Fire Department Mutual Defined Response Areas
- NOCH Ambulance Authority
- North Ottawa Community Hospital
- North Ottawa Recreation Authority
- North Ottawa Water System (NOWS)
- Regional Economic Development contract
- Resilient Grand Haven Plan
- Robbins Road Sub-area Plan
- July 4th Fireworks
- Emergency Management and Planning



North Ottawa Community Health System



**Loutit District Library**  
Expanding Horizons, Enriching Minds



### Objectives:

- Share progress on the Strategic Plan with the community through articles in the Township newsletter.
- Regularly communicate with the community about the issues facing the Township.
- Identify meaningful ways for citizens to engage in the process to govern.
- Collaborate with other governmental agencies to provide essential services and to enhance natural resources.



## GOAL: Support and Retain Economic Development that Enhances the Quality of Life in Balance with Protecting Our Community Character

- Ottawa County is ranked second in Michigan and 98 in the United States in the total value of agricultural production.
- Tourism attracts nearly \$50 million each year to the greater Grand Haven area.
- Manufacturing provides for about 29% of the jobs in this region. This is more than 30,000 jobs.
- In comparison, only 12% of jobs in Michigan and only 14% of the jobs in the nation are provided by manufacturing.
- Of the three types of wealth creating businesses in this region, manufacturing is the most important.

Community wealth is created by businesses that sell products or provide services to others that are outside of the region. These businesses attract dollars to this region. The Township is fortunate to benefit from three different types of wealth creating businesses – tourism, agriculture and manufacturing. Also, North Ottawa Community Hospital is important to the area's economy through the 1,000± jobs provided.

Grand Haven Charter Township is a unique community that benefits from its proximity to Lake Michigan, the Grand River, and bayous. The economic vitality of the region is sustained by the agricultural, manufacturing, and tourism industries and the community supports its existing businesses and employers. It also encourages economic growth and development. While the makeup of the Township is varied, its rural character is nonetheless a prime asset. This unique dimension adds importance to establishing and maintaining development standards that appropriately respond to community character, surrounding land uses, and environmental features.



# DEVELOPMENT

*“In order for the Township to be successful, the Township must support and partner with local businesses”*

## Objectives:

- Support business retention and expansion.
- Seek economic development opportunities that provide employment and sustain community character and quality of life.
- Work with businesses and economic development organizations to identify and support the assets necessary for economic growth in alignment with the Township’s Master Plan.
- Collaborate with local agencies and neighboring municipalities to attract and support:
  - Higher education
  - Healthcare services
  - Senior housing and services
- Protect the Township’s environmental features that help define its rural character, including water resources, wetlands, and woodlands.
- Continue a policy of balanced development that is based on community character, surrounding land uses, and environmental features; establish design standards.



