



MEMORANDUM

January 28, 2021

TO: Honorable Commissioners
FROM: Robert J. Sarro, County Administrator
RE: **Strategic Work Plan**

During the January 14, 2021, Board Meeting, the Board Planning Input Survey was reviewed. This survey does not in any way duplicate the Citizen Survey. In fact, our current process was designed to ensure that our citizen's input, as summarized by the National Citizen Survey consultants, was able to be considered for placement in actionable plans or next steps.

Upon review of the Board Planning Input Survey results, the direction of the Board was for the County Administrator to propose a general approach, work plan, for next steps.

The Board has been in possession of all survey responses. No additional responses or data were used in the development of the work plan. The work plan is not intended to dismiss or highlight any one particular comment but rather to form an approach to the overarching themes and outcomes by category.

Recommendations relative to the budget process include the formation of 2022 fiscal year changes, four additional years of planning, and up to 20 years of capital projects.

Quality of Life – In general, the responses appear to be reflective of, and covered by, other categories of the survey.

Public Safety (and Justice)

The judicial and law enforcement areas combined account for over 60% of the General Fund. As these areas represent a strong focus of the tax limitation discussions that have occurred with the Board, it continues to be recommended that the County, Courts, Prosecutor, Sheriff and Defender meet and review interrelated needs to identify any solutions available using existing resources, or potentially by requesting additional resources.

Subsequent to these discussions, it is recommended the previously submitted Sheriff's Department Plan and other related budgetary requests from the Justice system be re-evaluated by this interconnected group. Root issues to needs should be identified and solutions focused on those root issues. At a minimum, the Sheriff's previous plan would be revised as he has requested time to do such. It is recommended the plan (or any related plans) be converted to a 5 year budget plan submitted by May 31, 2021 for consideration of changes to be implemented for the State funding year 2022 (which begins in October 2021).

Through the survey there is mention of related technology considerations. Of course, these could be reviewed through this process.

Economy

Lakeshore Advantage is currently the County's connection into Economic Development. The contract with Lakeshore Advantage has been renewed for an additional three years with an increase representing an average 5% percent annual adjustment from the time of implementation to maintain existing service

levels. The investment to Lakeshore Advantage could be increased with specific results to be obtained if such expectations vary from Lakeshore Advantage's existing plans. It is recommended the Board consider the suggestions for increased economic activity (through scheduled planning session discussions in 2021) and provide direction to the Administrator to develop a plan in conjunction with Lakeshore Advantage to address the selected areas of focus:

Based on the survey, areas include:

Affordable Broadband Access

Accessibility to healthcare and fitness centers

Income levels, housing availability, inclusion and accessibility to and attainment of college education are economic factors and indicators currently part of Lakeshore Advantage's plans as these are heavily discussed in the Economic Development arena currently.

Infrastructure improvements (water, sewer, etc.)

Social distancing, remote work, and other methods to support employers and provide flexibility for employees in the new norm

Small business sustainability

Land Acquisition

Recreation and Wellness

Based on the percentages on the dashboard report for items below benchmark, the need for more access to fitness opportunities (affordable fitness centers) is the 1st lowest, access to Mental Health Service the 2nd lowest and access to preventative care is the 3rd lowest.

Many comments in this category or throughout the survey related to Parks and Recreation as well.

In addition, comments also focus on Public Health funding and resources.

Access to health care and fitness - For access to preventative health care and affordable fitness centers the Administrator has included the topics under Economy.

Mental Health - Accessibility to Mental Health Services it is recommended to be referred to the Community Mental Health Authority.

Parks and Recreation – The current Parks plan does not expire until the end of 2024. As such, it is recommended the Citizen Survey and all of the Parks related comments from the Board Input Survey be referred to the Parks Department and Advisory Board for evaluation of the current plan and determination as whether the plan addresses the feedback. If not, a recommendation should be formed for the Board's consideration in the form of changes to the Parks plan with the related funding proposal.

Public Health - If the Board desires to evaluate Public Health services levels and funding, it is recommended that Public Health work in conjunction with County Administration to conduct a gap analysis and identify the necessary funding to fill significant gaps (in a similar approach to how Environmental Services was reviewed). Outcomes, should be submitted through the budget process by May 31, 2022 (may need to be extended depending upon pandemic demands) for final Administrative recommendation and Board consideration in the documented budget process. At this time, the immediate demands of the pandemic do not allow a process to be completed this year. However, needs specific to the pandemic continue to be monitored and resources may still be requested relative to that response. Public Health can cover a broad spectrum of services, the Board's expectations should be clear as to the extent the County is willing to provide services. For example, is the focus on meeting mandate, being able to impact community needs beyond the planning, or somewhere in between? Areas could include homelessness, access to healthcare/dental/mental health services, nutrition, wellness, etc. We have

community needs assessments and reports from the Healthy Allegan County Coalition. Are these areas we are looking to directly impact or still maintain a planning role?

Transportation

The plan, as previously presented, to restore and enhance Transportation services remains accurate. With changes resulting from COVID-19, the plan may have options for a phased approach. It is recommended the plan be converted to a 5 year budget plan submitted by May 31, 2021 for consideration of changes to be implemented for the State funding year 2022 (which begins in October 2021).

Debt

Many of the plans relative to the input received will require funding. It is likely funding will require an increase in the operating millage. It is recommended that debt reduction not be a separate consideration but rather a means to accomplish the plans while limiting the amount of additional millage needed through elimination of interest and reallocation of existing payments.

Overall Citizen Survey (Beyond Summary Areas) - In general, the responses appear to be reflective of, and covered by, other categories of the survey.

Strategy Map – Please see individual comments.

Services to Expand - In general, the responses appear to be reflective of, and covered by, other categories of the survey. Technology and support is an area that has been woven throughout the survey responses.

Services to Reduce – In general, responses either indicated no reductions were necessary or that areas suggested are linked to mandates the County does not have discretion over.

State mandated function of the Board (P.A 156 of 1856) – The majority of responses in each area listed reflect overall satisfaction in these function areas. Areas that have the most opportunity for improvement based on the responses are:

Board meetings – More efficient/concise meetings, live remote access (which is currently live through Zoom) but two comments reflect desire to stream on YouTube or other media.

Facility planning – It is recommended facility planning efforts continue. Space is available and through innovation the Courthouse is still adequate to address Court needs if non-court functions are moved. With CMH plans proceeded it is recommended the County consider the County Services Building to occupy non-court functions. The Youth Home should be a focus. In general, we have been successful at incorporating general building maintenance and infrastructure upgrades in the Capital Plan; however, needs exceed available funding.

Compensation – Plans are already in place to review compensation over the next 18 months. The review should determine more objectively where the County stands in the comparable market. Recent input from employee groups is to focus on reducing the number of steps. The County has already been working towards this and some improvement is expected to be recommended.