

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR JACKSON COUNTY

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CONTENTS

Review of the Strategic Planning Process	3
Future Vision of Jackson County	4
Mission and Values	5
Key Challenges	6
Major Strategies	8
Appendix – Strategic Planning Task Force Members	10

REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In March 2007, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners initiated a strategic planning process. A task force of 37 County managers and elected officials was selected to complete the strategic plan with input from County residents, local units of government, Jackson County employees, and community leaders. The planning process was facilitated by the Fulcrum Group, an external consulting group based in Troy, Michigan. The following steps were completed as part of the strategic planning process.

Constituent Input

Focus groups were conducted with five Jackson County constituent groups:

- Jackson Community Members
- Jackson Community Leaders
- Township and City Officials
- County Employees
- County Managers and Supervisors

The purpose of the focus group sessions was to: 1) gather constituent perceptions regarding county strengths; 2) brainstorm ideas for a preferred future for the county, and; 3) identify potential obstacles to achieving the preferred future. The findings from the focus group sessions were used to guide the planning process.

Future Vision

A future vision of Jackson County was crafted based on input from the constituent focus groups. The vision identifies six areas of concentration or *vision directions*: cooperation between governments, economic development, education, community health, improved work environment, and quality of life.

Trend Analysis

Existing statistical information was reviewed and analyzed by the task force in the areas of population, housing, community health, economy, business growth, employment, education, and public safety. Implications and key challenges for Jackson County were identified.

Mission and Values Clarification

The County's mission and values were reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the future vision.

Major Strategies

Based on the future vision identified by the constituent focus groups, the task force members developed major strategies for each vision direction. Action plans for accomplishing each of the strategies will be refined by as the plan is implemented.

FUTURE VISION OF JACKSON COUNTY

The following six vision direction statements describe the preferred future state of Jackson County.

COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS

Jackson County provides effective and economical services for all citizens by working cooperatively and collaboratively with other units of government.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Jackson County's diverse economy and innovative economic development efforts ensure continued growth and vibrancy within the local, regional, state, and global marketplace.

EDUCATION

Jackson County recognizes education fuels a thriving community and provides a progressive environment that promotes education at all levels to give residents a competitive advantage.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Jackson County residents enjoy phenomenal health through affordable, accessible healthcare; a community commitment to wellness; and increased public recreation options.

IMPROVED WORK ENVIRONMENT

Jackson County employees are a cohesive and conscientious team of people empowered by committed, effective leadership to serve the public.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Jackson County's wealth of cultural opportunities, recreational activities, community amenities, and neighborly environment makes it one of Michigan's most desirable places to live, work, and play.

MISSION AND VALUES

The Jackson County mission and values were reviewed by the Strategic Planning Task Force to ensure that they align with the preferred future vision of the County. The County's existing mission statement was endorsed. The values were revised to better reflect those qualities that are inherent in the vision direction statements. These values will be reinforced among County employees and integrated into decision making at all levels of operation.

MISSION

Jackson County government, in cooperation with the community and local government units, strives through a planned process to deliver quality services that address public needs.

CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY

We will ensure public trust through honesty, fairness, consistency and follow-through.

LEADERSHIP

We are committed to actively guiding Jackson County toward a higher quality of life.

COLLABORATION

We are dedicated to building partnerships and sharing knowledge and resources.

RESPONSIVENESS

We will deliver customer-focused service that is accessible, user-friendly, respectful and efficient.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We will prudently manage County resources.

KEY CHALLENGES

For each of the vision directions, key challenges were identified to ensure that the strategic goals were focused on the critical aspects of each vision direction. A key challenge is an obstacle that meets the following criteria:

- If we don't solve it, we will not accomplish our vision
- If we don't solve it, it will have a significant negative impact on the County
- If we solve it, it will enable us to achieve our preferred vision

The obstacles listed below were identified initially by the constituent groups involved in the focus group sessions. More than 70 obstacles were identified. These were summarized into the following key challenges by the Strategic Planning Task Force, as follows:

COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS

- Key Challenges:
1. Local governments protect their "turf."
 2. Government entities are resistant to change.
 3. Finding a champion of inter-governmental cooperation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Key Challenges:
1. The many layers of government.
 2. Resistance to growth and change.
 3. Fragmented community vision.

EDUCATION

- Key Challenges:
1. Children lacking positive, constructive family support.
 2. Consolidation of services and cooperation between educational systems, while still maintaining individual identities.
 3. Educational environment that is easily adaptable to the ever changing needs of employers.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

- Key Challenges:
1. The public does not take ownership and responsibility for a healthy community.
 2. The public is resistant to changing lifestyle behaviors (e.g. diet, exercise, pregnancy, etc.). We are not willing to change the norm.
 3. The public does not have access to affordable healthcare.

KEY CHALLENGES, CONTINUED

IMPROVED WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Key Challenges:
1. Fear of change causes resistance to a “new vision” and ideas.
 2. Personal agendas and politics create lack of unity.
 3. Need to improve management by example and structures that ensure accountability.
 4. Lack of consistent quality expectations from different departments.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Key Challenges:
1. Various entities in the community do not work together to benefit citizens.
 2. The community’s self-image distorts our outlook and limits development of our potential.
 3. Jackson County takes its merits for granted and is complacent about promoting them.

MAJOR STRATEGIES

The Strategic Planning Task Force identified major strategies for overcoming the key challenges and achieving the County's preferred future vision in each of the six vision direction areas. The strategies will be further refined and detailed action plans will be developed as the strategic plan is implemented.

COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS

- Major Strategies:
1. Re-energize the Intergovernmental Committee to focus on cooperation.
 2. Conduct an inventory of existing intergovernmental cooperative arrangements.
 3. Get input from constituents (e.g. businesses, citizens, community leaders, etc.) to identify where and how government can cooperate.
 4. Develop communication tools to assist local units in the means necessary to collaborate and communicate.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Major Strategies:
1. Facilitate a community economic strategic planning process with all key government, economic development, and private stakeholders to create an economic development plan for Jackson County.
 2. Create a streamlined mechanism for permits, requirements and licenses to make it user-friendly to start and maintain businesses.

EDUCATION

- Major Strategies:
1. Encourage county employees and residents to participate in mentoring opportunities throughout the County.
 2. Participate in, and encourage, services and cooperation between educational systems.
 3. Bring together all stakeholders (i.e. South Central Works, JAMA, JCC and others) to create a better understanding of what is needed to match education with employers needs.

MAJOR STRATEGIES, CONTINUED

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

- Major Strategies:
1. Facilitate a countywide taskforce to develop a long-term, comprehensive plan for improving the overall health of Jackson County residents.

IMPROVED WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Major Strategies:
1. Create a user-friendly environment for the public.
 2. Develop and enhance department heads and elected official's management abilities so they are leading by example to ensure accountability to the taxpayers of Jackson County.
 3. Increase employee health by tying benefits to participation in a wellness program.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Major Strategies:
1. Measure the community's perception of Jackson County.
 2. Build on identified community strengths using a community coaching approach.
 3. Launch a "community relationship renewal" campaign that highlights existing community merits and the value of making a contribution to the community. (based on the measurement results from strategy #1 and the work accomplished by the coaching process in strategy #2).

APPENDIX

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Charles Adkins
Circuit/Family/Probate Court Administrator

Teresa Hawkins
Youth Center Director

Todd N. Brittain
Jackson County Commissioner

Clifford E. Herl
Jackson County Commissioner

Mike Brown
Jackson County Commissioner

Dan Heyns
Sheriff

Andy Crisenbery
Friend of the Court Director

Joni Johnson
Deputy Director Human Resources

Sandy Crowley
County Clerk

Juli Kolbe
Equalization Director

Gerald Cyrocki
Finance Officer

Kim Luce
Animal Control Manager

Mike Dillon
District Court Administrator

David F. Lutchka
Jackson County Commissioner

Phillip S. Duckham III
Jackson County Commissioner

Gail W. Mahoney
Jackson County Commissioner

David K. Elwell
Jackson County Commissioner

Kent Maurer
Airport Manager

Connie Frey
Information Technology Director

Daryl Mazur
Chief District Judge

Jill Glair
Administrative Assistant Medical Examiner

Earl J. Poleski
Jackson County Commissioner

Sally Griffis
Fair Manager

Brandon Ransom
Out County Parks Supervisor

James Guerriero
Parks Director

Diane Rappleye
Chief Probate Judge

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Mindy Reilly
Register of Deeds

Marcia Smith-Murphy
County Guardian

Charles C. Reisdorf
Region 2 Planning Commission

Geoff Snyder
Drain Commissioner

Janet Rochefort
County Treasurer

Kevin Stellingworth
Captain, Sheriff Department

Chad Schmucker
Chief Circuit Judge

Randy Treacher
Acting Administrator/ Controller

Jan Seitz
MSU Extension Director

James C. Videto
Jackson County Commissioner

H.F. (Ric) Scheele
Facilities/Fleet/Printing Supervisor

Michael J. Way
Jackson County Commissioner

James E. (Steve) Shotwell, Jr.
Jackson County Commissioner

David Welihan
Veterans Service Officer

Kristy Smith
Department on Aging Director

Ted Westmeier
Health Officer

Patricia A. Smith
Jackson County Commissioner

Hank Zavislak
Prosecutor

FACILITATOR

Jeanne De Liefde is a consultant and educator with expertise in strategic planning, organizational assessment, leadership development and organizational change. She is founder and president of the Fulcrum Group, a business consulting company based in Troy, Michigan. Prior to forming the Fulcrum Group, Jeanne worked in higher education and hospital administration as a strategic planning and business development officer. Today, Jeanne works with national and international corporations and non-profit organizations to help them develop more purposeful, productive, and innovative work environments.