



2021

HARRISON TOWNSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN

Harrison Township, Montgomery County, Ohio
Plan Framework

Adopted: May 20, 2021

Prepared by

McBrideDALE
CLARION



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Harrison Township Staff

Kristofer McClintick, AICP - Township Administrator

McBride Dale Clarion - Consultant

Greg Dale, FACIP - Project Manager

■ Introduction	1
■ Strategic Objectives	3
■ Implementation Tools	9

INTRODUCTION

About the strategic plan

The Harrison Township Strategic Plan is a guide to decision making and investment for the next 20 years. The strategic plan sets out objectives, actions, and a mechanism to prioritize annual actions and work tasks.

This plan builds on the analysis and assessment of Harrison Township conducted as part of the Planning Road Map prepared in 2020. The Road Map documented the many long-term economic and demographic challenges facing the Township. These include an aging population with not enough young families moving in, an aging housing stock showing signs of market instability, deteriorating conditions of both housing and businesses, aging infrastructure, struggling local retail, and related social and economic problems. The Road Map also identified reasons to be optimistic, including strong leadership and professional staff, dedicated regional partners, and a committed citizenry eager to help improve the Township.

The Road Map was a call to action for the Township to take control of its destiny and reverse the downward trends. It called for a strategic planning effort with a long-range aspirational vision and a course of action to achieve that vision. This strategic plan is in response to that call to action.

On February 18, 2021, the Harrison Township board of trustees adopted a vision in the form of strategic objectives in six initiative areas:

- **People:** Increased population with young families, mature families, and seniors aging in place.
- **Prosperity:** Increased resident prosperity and decreased poverty.
- **Neighborhoods:** Improved residential neighborhoods with increased home values, increased owner occupancy, and improved housing conditions.
- **Businesses:** Strengthened neighborhood business districts with viable local serving businesses.
- **Image:** Improved regional image of the Township.
- **Services:** Sustained high level of Township services with increased Township revenues.

This plan identifies actions needed to achieve these objectives, a framework of benchmarks for monitoring progress, and a process of annual work programs by the Township at the department level. It also calls for continued partnering with valuable regional partners and internal community-based organizations.

RESOLUTION NO. 16-2021**RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO PROCEED WITH THE
HARRISON TOWNSHIP STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

WHEREAS, Harrison Township is facing long-term economic and demographic challenges, including an aging population, an aging housing stock, deteriorating building conditions, aging infrastructure, struggling local retail, and related social and economic problems, and

WHEREAS, Harrison Township has faced a series of disruptive challenges that are testing the township's resiliency, including the housing crisis of 2008, the tornado of 2019, and the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, and

WHEREAS, The Harrison Township Trustees have committed to a focused, intentional, and sustained approach to meet these challenges in a fiscally responsible manner linked to the township budget, and

WHEREAS, Harrison Township has dedicated professional and volunteer leaders and staff within township government, and

WHEREAS, Harrison Township has a network of public and private partners at the local and regional level ready to assist in addressing these problems, and

WHEREAS, Harrison Township has a strong reserve of human capital at the neighborhood, business, faith based, and local school level, and

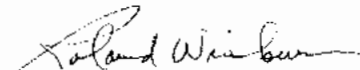
WHEREAS, The Harrison Township Trustees commissioned the Harrison Township Planning Roadmap dated August 30, 2020 to help chart a course to meet these challenges, and

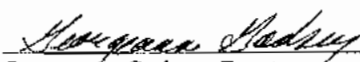
WHEREAS, The Harrison Township Trustees embrace redevelopment and revitalization as a core service of the Township, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Harrison Township is embarking on a purposeful strategic plan to achieve the following strategic objectives:

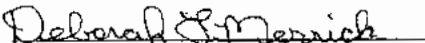
- **People.** Increased population with young families, mature families, and seniors aging in place.
- **Prosperity.** Increased resident prosperity and decreased poverty.
- **Neighborhoods.** Improved residential neighborhoods with increased home values, increased owner occupancy, and improved housing conditions.
- **Businesses.** Strengthened neighborhood business districts with viable local serving businesses.
- **Image.** Improved regional image of the township.
- **Services.** Sustained high level of townships services with increased township revenues.

**HARRISON TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**


Roland Winburn, President


Georgeann Godsey, Trustee

I hereby certify that **Resolution No. 16-2021** was adopted by the Harrison Township Board of Trustees at their meeting on **February 18, 2021**.


Deborah L. Merrick, Fiscal Officer

Strategic Objectives

Possible Benchmarks

- Population Change Over Time
- Growth Rates
- Age Cohorts

People

Increase population with young families, mature families, and seniors aging in place.

Actions

- Identify strategic locations for housing at various price points (affordable and market-rate) for workforce and seniors.
- Investigate amenities to attract each type of family.
- Work with current senior housing in township to grow residency and attract from outside the township.
- Identify public safety initiatives to attract all families.
 - Reduce crime
 - Promote a better image
- Increase/improve recreational opportunities through park programming and partnerships.
- Attract amenities for each target population.
 - Grocery store
 - Sidewalks
 - Recreational space like hiking to attract families
- Investigate how current property tax rates are affecting attraction and retention.



Prosperity

Increase resident prosperity and decrease poverty.

Actions

- Determine why our poverty rate has grown quickly over last 17 years.
- Identify pockets or concentration of poverty and develop plan to address it.
- Work with partners to identify programs to address and reduce poverty rates.
- Identify ways to attract residents not living in poverty.
- Attract and retain jobs that pay living wage.
- Coordinate attraction and retention with other jurisdictions.
- Partner with local schools to employ students in trades.



Strategic Objectives

Possible Benchmarks

- Poverty Rate
- Median Income
- Educational Attainment
- Job Growth

Strategic Objectives

Possible Benchmarks

- Home Values
- Owner Occupancy Rate
- New Construction
- Increased Permit Activity for Home Improvements

Neighborhoods

Improve residential neighborhoods with increased home values, increased owner occupancy, and improved housing conditions.

Actions

- Assist owners of deteriorated homes and properties by partnering with local businesses, tradesmen, and contractors to facilitate local based home improvements.
- Update Neighborhood plans from 2018 to better understand the dynamics of each neighborhood (look at Middletown information on housing).
- Develop action items to address blight based on information in the plans.
- Expand current demolition program.
- Continue Thriving Neighborhoods Initiative in Castlewood.
- Identify and rank neighborhoods based on needs, like the system used to rank street paving needs. Classify neighborhoods on a scale from stable to needing multiple initiatives.
- Develop Code Enforcement programs and review staffing.
- Launch Litter program in neighborhoods and thoroughfares
- Empower pride in each neighborhood, perhaps through a neighborhood competition.
- Find ways to engage neighbors and community members.



Businesses

Strengthen neighborhood business districts with viable local serving businesses.

Actions

- Perform conditions assessment of each business building on all our main corridors.
- Develop plan to address deteriorating buildings, including consideration of demolition and improvements.
- Evaluate infrastructure program.
- Redevelop relationships with all businesses (business retention).
- Partner with businesses on beautification projects. Identify locations for businesses to “adopt” a portion of the median and maintain and plant flowers.
- Identify redevelopment sites and greenfields.
- Assemble and acquire strategic commercial and industrial properties.
- Review tax abatement process and determine sensible timeline.
- Buy local campaign.



Strategic Objectives

Possible Benchmarks

- Commercial Property Values
- Building Permits
- Overall Building Investment
- Job Creation

Image

Improve the regional image of the township.

Actions

- Organize rebranding and determine what level of rebranding is required.
- Upgrade township website.
- Hire consultant or staff for social media, image improvement.
- Communicate the township's story and develop plan to control the narrative the best we can.
- Each department must begin to think of image and creating an image as part of their daily duties
- Implement placemaking efforts around the township
- Host recreational opportunities, river cleanup, forest park primer events.
- Brainstorm possible programing in parks or community center and ways to create positive stories about township.
- Organize a community parade or festival.
- Celebrate each neighborhood and township as a whole.
- Combat negative perception regarding general image, especially crime.

Possible Benchmarks

- Media Coverage of the Township
- Citizen Surveys



Services

Sustain a high level of townships services with increased township revenues.

Actions

- Consider process improvements that improve efficiency.
- Explore grant writing opportunities township-wide
- Services
 - Develop sidewalk and curb program.
 - Identify infrastructure issues that need to be addressed.
 - Maintain excellent service – leaf pickup, plowing, etc.
 - Better job of promoting successes.
 - Advertise parks and, develop plan for possible new parks.
- Fire
 - Develop marketing programs for community such as Firefighter Phil, station open houses, work with local school districts, etc.
 - Better job of promoting successes.
- Police
 - Develop programs for community modeled after Washington Township programs.
 - Disseminate public information to businesses to help deter crime, vandalism, etc.
 - Better job of promoting successes.
- Administration
 - Improve communication from township.
- Development
 - Increase level of code enforcement and number of inspectors.
 - Research programs to increase and maintain property values, pre-sale inspections, rental registration, etc.
- Waste
 - Determine ways to better address persistent contractor issues.
 - Implement process improvement exercises to determine efficiency.

Strategic Objectives

Possible Benchmarks

- Tax Revenues
- Community Survey

Implementation

Township Toolbox

- Vacant building maintenance licenses
- Mortgage foreclosure notice requirements
- Point of sale inspections
- Vacant building registration requirements
- Online property complaints
- Enterprise zones

Overall Actions

The primary mechanism to implement the plan will be an annual township work program aligned with department work plans. It will include the following steps:

Develop an information management system to track progress.

- GIS system that tracks property conditions and investment benefits
- Dashboard indicators that track progress on benchmarks

Improve code enforcement and mitigation of deteriorated properties.

- Township enforcement improvements
- Court adjudication improvements
- Demolition initiatives
- Property acquisition by township

Accelerate economic development.

- Infill and redevelopment strategies
- Business recruitment and retention
- Improve community and business involvement

Lead by example: Institute township improvements to address public “curb appeal.”

- Curb and sidewalk improvement program
- Township infrastructure

Target key zoning improvements.

- Used car lots (underway)
- Improve processing of development requests (underway)
- Signs
- Residential social service uses (i.e. substance abuse rehab, group homes)

Communications and branding strategy that projects an aspirational and inspirational vision of the township.

- Website update (underway)
- Township image branding
- Improved online interaction and communication with residents

How Will the Plan Work in Practice?

Overview

This plan is ambitious. It aspires to reverse decades of downward trends, and that will not happen overnight. We understand that the problems have been a generation in the making and will take a generation to reverse them. There are many actions identified in this plan, and it is not feasible to tackle them all at once. The key will be to identify priorities on an annual basis, without losing sight of the long-term picture. This plan will require consistent dedication over many years to restore the township to the prosperous, economically healthy, and vibrant community of neighborhoods and business districts that it once was.

This plan identifies actions needed to achieve these objectives, a framework of benchmarks for monitoring progress, and a process of annual work programs by the Township at the department level. It also calls for continued partnering with valuable regional partners and internal community-based organizations.

Annual Process

The following annual process is anticipated to integrate this plan into the township budget and department work process:

- A spreadsheet-based system will be developed to track annual progress in achieving the strategic objectives in this plan.
- The Township Trustees will work with the administration each year to identify action priorities to achieve the strategic objectives for the upcoming year, using this plan as a guide.
- The Township Administrator will work with each department to prepare work programs for their department, using a work program template to be developed. This will include assessing progress from the previous year.
- The annual work programs will utilize benchmarks as suggested in this plan using an improved data and GIS information system as called for in this plan.
- A master tracking spreadsheet will be prepared to track annual progress.
- The budget system will be modified to tie the strategic objectives directly to the budget.
- The budget will include both anticipated short term expenditures as well as longer range budgetary needs, i.e. 5 year, 10 year, 20 year time frames.

Implementation

Township Toolbox

- Revolving loan funds
- Community reinvestment areas
- Intergovernmental agreements with other jurisdictions
- TIF districts
- Community improvement corporations
- Township home rule designation
- State Treasurer Tools