

2011

Collaboration, Cooperation and Consolidation Plan



HOWELL
MICHIGAN

City of Howell

12/28/2011

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Executive Summary

As part of the new requirements from the State of Michigan to improve intergovernmental cooperation throughout State and local governments, the City of Howell has developed this report to our residents. The report includes two main components: The Current Cooperative Efforts chart, a quick and easy snapshot of the City's existing relationships with other local governments; and the City of Howell's Cooperation Plan, a more in-depth look at areas of the City of Howell's government that have the potential for successful intergovernmental cooperation.

We hope that you will find this document useful. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the City Manager's Office at (517) 546-3502 or via email at scharles@ci.howell.mi.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Charles II', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Reid S. Charles II
Howell City Manager

Current Cooperative Efforts

The City of Howell prides itself on our cooperative efforts with neighboring governments and agencies. Many of our collaborations have been going on for decades and have resulted in huge savings for us and our partners. Our goal in establishing any partnership is to increase our level of service to our residents while reducing taxpayer costs.

This section of the report outlines some of our major cooperative efforts that are currently underway.

City of Howell Fiber Optic Wide Area Network Project

In 2006, The City of Howell researched the possibility of linking together its seven facilities electronically for the use of centralizing and sharing data, and also improving communications with a centralized phone system. Upon retrieving proposals for Wireless communication, T-1 communications, and Fiber Optic communications, it was decided that a Fiber Optic wide area network was the optimum solution to suit our electronic communication needs. The original 2006 proposals came in at a total cost of \$167,000 to install a fiber based STAR network, centralized at Howell City Hall.

In 2007, there was word that Livingston County and Fowlerville Schools were planning to install a fiber based network. To reduce installation costs, the City joined with the County and Fowlerville schools to create a Cooperative Fiber Wide Area Network Project, sharing the labor and installation costs and also the DTE Pole Rental fees. The fiber was installed and labeled within a shared sheath between the DTE Poles. The project timeline was over two years. In the end, the City of Howell's total cost was \$98,600 with a cost savings of \$68,400 from the original proposed project.

Custodial/Maintenance Services Agreement with Livingston County

The City of Howell and Livingston County have met on a regular basis for quite some time, discussing various shared services opportunities between the two organizations. In 2011, one such opportunity was signed into an agreement: an agreement between the City of Howell and Livingston County for Facility Maintenance Services. The scope of services includes basic HVAC work, specialized maintenance and janitorial for City Hall and the DPW Complex.

During the 2010-2011 fiscal year the City spent \$61,150 for these combined services. Under the new agreement, the City will contract with Livingston County for these services, for a total annual savings of \$17,592

Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority

Four municipalities (the City of Howell, Oceola, Marion and Genoa Townships) joined forces back in 2005 creating the Howell Area Parks & Recreation Authority (HAPRA). The Authority, which replaced the Howell Area Parks and Recreation Department, took over the recreation programs formerly administered by the Parks Department. The Authority also manages operation and maintenance of the existing major parks in the City of Howell.

Unlike the City's Parks Department, HAPRA is governed by a Board of Trustees with members selected from each of the participating jurisdictions (City of Howell, and the Townships of Genoa, Marion and Oceola). Over 21,000 individuals are served each year through HAPRA's youth and adult sports leagues, enrichment classes, special events, teen center, senior center, preschool and summer day camp.

The HAPRA board continues to develop policies and procedures that keeps the organization operating with high professional standards including bylaws, revisions to personnel policies, employee discount policy, travel and vehicle policy, identity theft policy, and cell phone use policy.

HAPRA's operating budget of \$750,000 is supported not only by participation fees but by healthy contributions that are provided by the four participating municipalities. The City of Howell and Oceola Township each contribute \$100,000 to the overall operations, while Genoa and Marion Township each contribute \$62,790. When combined, these amounts equal approximately one half of HAPRA's operating budget. In recognition of these contributions, HAPRA has adopted a three tier participation fee structure that provides an equitable solution to the differences between contributing members and non-contributing government entities. Residents of the four municipalities that are members of the Authority are afforded a lower participation fee because approximately half of their program participation fee is already paid for through their local unit of government. Marion and Genoa Township resident fees are approximately 30% lower than non-resident rates, and the City of Howell and Oceola Township resident fees are 50% lower than non-resident rates.

Table 1: Current Cooperative Efforts

City Department	Cooperative Effort	Partner Agency	Positive Fiscal Impact	Year Implemented
Information Technology	Fiber Optic Wide Area Network Project	Livingston County, Fowlerville Schools	\$68,400	2007
Community Development	Building Services	City of Brighton, Livingston County	\$78,000 annually	2009
Public Works/Facilities	Custodial/Maintenance Services Agreement	Livingston County	\$17,592 annually	2011
Parks and Recreation	Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority	Genoa Township, Marion Township, Oceola Township	\$105,102 annually	2005
Fire	Howell Area Fire Authority	Oceola, Cohoctah, Marion and Howell Townships	103,767 annually	2003
Public Works	Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion	Marion Township	Shared costs of WWTP improvements; avoided separate facility constructed in the Township	1997

Building Services Agreement with City of Brighton/Livingston County

Since 2009, the City has contracted with either the City of Brighton (2009-2010) or Livingston County (2010-2011) for Building Official services. The arrangement began in 2009 with a Cooperative Agreement with the City of Brighton, in which the two cities shared the cost of the Building Official. In 2010, that shared Building Official moved to Livingston County, and so both municipalities began contracting with the County for the same services.

Beginning in 2008, the City's Community Development department evaluated several options for providing Building Official services to our residents. The full-time building official position was eliminated in July, 2009 due to declining building permit revenues. For a short time the City used a part-time contractor for plan review, issuing building permits, and conducting inspections. Community Development recommended a longer term solution that would accomplish the following goals:

- Operate cost effectively given the reduced level of permits and inspections
- Provide timely reviews and inspections to our applicants
- Have a building official available on a regular basis for inquiries and customer service
- Be scalable, so that if building activity increases or if a large project comes in the City can respond quickly

As a result of the shared services agreement, the Building Official of Livingston County also serves as the Building Official for the City of Howell. The building official is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Michigan Building Code and the Michigan Residential Codes, within the boundaries of Howell.

The City has realized significant savings under this arrangement. Compared to employing a full time Building Official, the City saves approximately \$78,000 annually.

Howell Fire Authority

Implemented in 2003, the Howell Area Fire Authority is a multi-jurisdictional entity that includes Oceola, Cohoctah, Marion and Howell Townships as well as the City of Howell. While not a City department, the Fire Authority provides fire protection for the city. The Authority is overseen by a Board of Directors representing all six areas. The Howell Fire Authority services approximately 170 square miles and about 43,000 residents.

The mission of the Howell Area Fire Department is to protect lives, health and property in the Howell Fire Department's response area from the outcomes of fire, medical, structural, and environmental emergencies through education, prevention, mitigation and control.

The department continues to stress training of staff, and education and prevention training for the community. All firefighters are trained and certified to Firefighter II standards and receive training in the areas of hazardous materials, medical first responder and rescue. In addition, there are several "special teams" trained for specialty responses: Technical Rescue, Hazardous Materials Response, Underwater Search and Recovery, and Fire Investigation.

Wastewater Treatment Plant – Collaboration with Marion Township

The City of Howell collaborated with Marion Township by executing an agreement for wastewater treatment services in 1988. In this agreement, the City agreed to expand its wastewater treatment plant to provide more capacity to serve both the City and the Township. The agreement specified a certain capacity increase with costs for the expansion shared by the Township. This resulted in cost savings to the City on the construction of the wastewater treatment plant improvements as well as savings to the Township from not having to construct their own separate facility.

Future Cooperative Efforts

City Department	Cooperative Effort	Partner Agency	Potential Positive Fiscal Impact
All	Energy Audit	Howell Area Parks & Recreation, Howell Area Fire Authority, Howell Carnegie District Library	Collaboration on hiring the energy audit firm, joint purchasing of equipment, energy savings at facilities

Energy Audits

The City is working on a partnership with the Howell Area Parks & Recreation Authority, the Howell Area Fire Authority, and the Howell Carnegie District Library to conduct energy audits and upgrades to public buildings within the City limits. Jointly, we have engaged a firm to perform a feasibility analysis for energy improvement and then more detailed audits of all facilities. The results of the audit will be used to prioritize building and infrastructure improvements.

By partnering in this way, each entity will benefit from:

- greatly reducing the cost of the energy audits themselves
- improving energy efficiencies at their facilities
- reducing the cost of equipment/infrastructure investments through joint purchases with the partners

Proposed Collaborations

Shared Information Technology Services

The City has begun discussions with the City of Brighton on sharing information technology services. We believe that there is potential for significant efficiency improvements and cost savings through the sharing of personnel and IT infrastructure. Meetings are continuing between the two cities; we hope to have an agreement in place within the first half of 2012.