

FULL REPORT



2025-
2028



Hanover Township

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

PREPARED
MAY 2025



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Center for
Governmental Studies

Outreach Engagement and Regional Development

Center for Governmental Studies
Northern Illinois University
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Alisa "Lee" Beattie, *Trustee*

Craig Essick, *Trustee*

Eugene "Gino" N. Martinez, *Trustee*

Denise Noyola, *Trustee*

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Hailey Matich, *Assistant to the Township Administrator*

HANOVER TOWNSHIP PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Township would also like to thank all the partner organizations and stakeholders who participated in the stakeholder feedback phase of the process. An effective strategic plan includes feedback from stakeholders to ensure that needs and expectations are shared and understood by leaders of the organization.



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Hanover Township Background

Hanover Township is a growing community in Illinois with a population of nearly 100,000 residents located approximately 30 miles northwest of Chicago's Loop. Hanover Township encompasses 36 square miles and houses portions of six communities within their jurisdiction: Streamwood, Bartlett, Hanover Park, Elgin, Schaumburg, and Hoffman Estates. The Township is primarily responsible for Human Services not regularly offered by incorporated municipalities.¹ These Human Services include:



- **An Office of Community Health which provides health-based services and programs that focus on preventative health screenings, improving overall health status, managing chronic diseases, navigating the health system and improving access to health services;**
- **A Youth and Family Services department with a staff of full-time family therapists;**
- **A Senior Center which assists the Township's older adult population in maintaining an active and independent lifestyle;**
- **A Mental Health Board that is responsible for allocating funding each year to support services and programming for residents of Hanover Township in the areas of mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse;**
- **A General Assistance office which administers local, state, and federal welfare programs;**
- **An Assessors and Clerk's Office, and various internal support departments.²**

Township offices include the Township Town Hall and Senior Center in Bartlett, the Astor Avenue Community Center in Hanover Park, and the Izaak Walton Youth Center in Elgin.

¹<https://www.hanover-township.org/about-us/faq>

²<https://www.hanover-township.org/government/message-from-the-supervisor>

Introduction

Strategic planning is an effective way to identify and confirm the Township's vision for the future and set organizational purpose and direction by incorporating clear priorities and measurable goals. To this end, Hanover Township (the "Township") engaged the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies ("NIU-CGS") in March 2024 to facilitate its strategic planning update process (Figure 1). The value of such processes continues to be recognized by policy-making boards, councils, and executive staffs in both private and public organizations.

From September through October 2024, the NIU-CGS team gathered internal and external stakeholder input that was shared at the strategic planning leadership workshop held in March 2025. The workshop offered elected officials and administrative leadership

an opportunity to reaffirm and refine the Township's future vision, explore the Township's mission, and establish short- and long-term goals. It also provided a positive atmosphere where workshop participants could discuss the best ways to serve the Township and the broader community in the coming years.

It is important to keep in mind that the judicious use of the Township's limited resources (including financial resources and professional staff time) is key to achieving good results. Only a limited number of goals and objectives can be managed and implemented effectively at any given time. In a very realistic sense, clear and stable priorities must be maintained if the Township desires to stretch its resources as far as they can go.

Figure 1. Strategic Planning Model



* Model generally represents the steps that are taken for this type of initiative.

Pre-Workshop

Environmental Scanning and Stakeholder Input

The Township's leadership recognizes the importance of gaining a comprehensive understanding of their organization and the broader community they serve by gathering input from various stakeholders. During the environmental scanning phase of the strategic planning process, NIU-CGS aimed to examine factors that shape the Township's future direction. To accomplish this, the NIU-CGS team conducted focus groups and interviews involving external and internal stakeholders. The results from the stakeholder input phase were shared in thematic form at the strategic planning leadership workshop, providing valuable insights to guide discussions.

EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

Incorporating external perspectives into the Township's strategic plan is important for capturing the diverse needs and aspirations of the community, ensuring the plan is responsive to the concerns of its residents, businesses, and partners. This approach fosters greater public trust and engagement, leading to more effective and sustainable outcomes. To that end, NIU-CGS conducted four in-person external stakeholder focus groups.

- **Focus groups** are designed to be a highly interactive approach, allowing for a robust and informative conversation with and between participants. In September 2024, four in-person focus groups were conducted with the Township's external stakeholders, as outlined below. The number of participants in each group ranged from 3-12. Detailed summaries are provided in [Appendix A](#).

- » **Human Service Organizations**
- » **Intergovernmental Partners and Civic Institutions**
- » **Volunteer Group**
- » **Invitation Residents, Clients, and Customers**

INTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

Gathering internal perspectives when developing the Township's strategic plan is also crucial, ensuring the plan is informed by the insights and experiences of those who understand the organization's unique operations, challenges, and opportunities. This comprehensive input fosters alignment with the community's needs and goals. To collect these internal perspectives, the NIU-CGS team conducted a mix of virtual and in-person interviews with the Township's leadership team and elected officials, facilitated an in-person focus group with front- and mid-line staff, and conducted a working session with department heads. Detailed summaries are provided in [Appendix A](#).

- **Interviews** result in highly personalized participation and the in-depth sharing of ideas. The focus of the interview sessions is to gain an initial perspective by building a balanced and informed view of the Township from each stakeholder's unique vantage point. In September, six virtual interviews were conducted with the Township Trustees, Assessor, and Clerk.
- **Focus group** with 14 members of the Township's front- and mid-line staff across the different departments was conducted in late October 2024.
- **A working session** was also conducted in October with the Township's department heads. This working session provided an opportunity for NIU-CGS to learn more about each department, their priorities, and what they hope to see come out of the strategic planning process.

Figure 2. 2024 Stakeholder Feedback Themes

Top Priorities for All Stakeholders

Alignment of all stakeholder feedback (focus groups and interviews)



**Organizational
Development**



**Facility and Resource
Enhancement**



**Community Engagement
and Outreach**



**Strategic Partnerships
and Advocacy**

Leadership Workshop

Outline of Exercises and Discussion Sessions

All discussion sessions at the strategic planning leadership workshop employed highly participative and interactive approaches. The workshop facilitators utilized a group discussion approach that assures each participant an equal opportunity to speak and share opinions with the larger group. Participants were also able to weigh alternatives and refine their thinking through dialogue in small-group activities at the workshop. As ideas were shared and debated, the group worked steadily toward a consensus regarding the Township's mission, future direction, goals, and priorities.

INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKER EXERCISE

Participants were asked to introduce themselves and share how long they have been involved with the Township in their current role. Next, they engaged in an icebreaker exercise titled, "Garage Sale." In this exercise, workshop participants selected an item from the "garage sale" table that represented to them an important issue, initiative, or big idea they felt should be a part of the Township's future and be discussed as part of the strategic planning process. This was a brainstorming exercise, and no evaluative or judgmental debate was permitted during this session. Next is a list of those answers (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Icebreaker: important issue, initiative, or big idea that should be part of the Township's future

Garage Sale Item	Responses
Fly Swatter	The Township continues to prove its worth and acquire additional responsibilities (e.g., Township takes over the Mosquito Abatement District).
Knot	The Township needs and values its volunteers, is tied to them and supports them.
Baseball	Cohesiveness within the community, staff, and team.
Socket	Unique. The Township is innovative, the "idea" people.
Steam Engine	The Township continues to do good work to work to abolish the threat of getting rid of township government. Increase or improve the branding of the Township.
Capitol Building	Dedicated staff and elected officials. Leadership is responsive, and the programming makes Hanover Township #1.
Measuring Tape	Need data and statistics to learn why Township programs are important, what is needed in the community, measure success.
Stuffed Elephant	There is a need for specific programs for early childhood.
Foam Finger	Staff contributes to the high standard – Hanover Township is #1 in the state.
Outlet Extender	The Township is plugging more into services programs – connector of the community.
Ballerina	The Township has addressed needs and created new programs over the years (e.g., offer caregiver services, create Latino groups)
Light Bulb 1	The Township is innovative, developing new programs, new ways to serve residents, finding creative solutions and ideas.
Clorox Wipes	"Clean up" the old ways of doing things - less paperwork - more streamlined processes and updated, integrated software (e.g., HR).
Light Bulb 2	Customer service is the primary focus – an opportunity exists to enhance customer service.
Kleenex	Township staff and Board are passionate, care about programs and residents.
Police Car	Emergency Services Department continues to improve outstanding services.
Rubber Duck	Land development and stewardship of green areas has increased, would like to develop educational programs to involve other departments in the Township in this initiative and work together (e.g., Facilities and Maintenance with Youth and Family Services, etc.)



VISIONING FOR THE FUTURE

The workshop participants next engaged in a visioning exercise to describe the desired future direction of the Township by answering the following question: **“If you left the community and didn’t return for 5 -10 years, what do you think you will see or what do you hope you will see when you return in terms of Township development, services, programs, improvements, or changes?”** Participants were asked to think about their ideas ahead of time and then be ready to share them with the group during the workshop. Responses are listed in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Visions for the Future—Hope or think you will see in 5 - 10 years

Visions for the Future—Responses

Township building has updated façade – modernized look.
More connected Township campus, enhanced beautification (OSLAD Grant).
More parking added at food pantry to improve accessibility.
Community or Youth Center, sports programs, etc. – potentially partner to provide these programs.
Expanded services for children with disabilities and their caregivers.
Add more inclusive, diverse services, programming.
Expansion of the Township’s physical space – facilities, consider conducting a space needs assessment.
More communication, engagement with the youth to amplify youth voices. • Student Government Day is hosted by the Township
Think there will be younger Board members, even more diversity on the Board.
Township offers more services than it does today • More youth and family services • Programming changes to match demographic changes • Services are more focused on emerging technology (telehealth, artificial intelligence, etc.)
Hope to see improved and updated technology at the Senior Center. • Move from paper to electronic record keeping, tablets, etc.
Township follows through on current projects and sees them to completion. • E.g., cemetery and walking paths
Hanover Township acquires additional responsibilities and continues to be a leader.

A FRESH LOOK AT THE TOWNSHIP'S MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES STATEMENTS

The next exercise at the workshop provided Township leadership with an opportunity to review and discuss the Township's mission, vision, and values statements. This exploration began with these formative questions: Who are we and why are we here? Why do we get up in the morning? Why do we expend time, money, and personnel resources?

Participants were organized into small groups and asked to compile a list of suggested edits or revisions to the mission, vision, and values statements for the Township. Groups then shared their adjustments with the larger group for discussion, suggestions, and modifications. There was a consensus among the group that no revisions were necessary for the Township's mission and vision statements. Below are proposed modifications to the values statements drafted at the workshop with suggested changes shown in **blue**. Township leadership plans to further review suggested changes after the workshop.

MISSION STATEMENT

To continuously improve the quality of life for Hanover Township residents.

No Changes Suggested

VISION STATEMENT

A better life through leadership, innovation, and diversity.

No Changes Suggested

VALUES STATEMENT

Above and Beyond – We go the extra mile.

Ownership – Our responsibility is great service.

Adaptability – We **listen and move to a solution.**

Ensure that equal value and weight is afforded to "Ownership" and "Adaptability" internally. Make sure Township values statement is made visible for all staff.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING PART I—SURRENDER OR LEAD

Next, participants were introduced to a leadership exercise titled, "Surrender or Lead." During this exercise, participants organized into small groups to respond to a series of structured questions. These questions aimed to reveal hopes, perspectives, challenges, opportunities, and possible barriers based on the collective view of each group. The responses were recorded and the combined themes from the three groups are reported next. For a full list of Surrender or Lead responses from each individual group, see [Appendix B](#).

Themes from Surrender or Lead:



Balancing growth and expansion of services with fiscal constraints.



Employee and volunteer support.



Improving stakeholder awareness and addressing Township government misconceptions.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING PART II—LARGE GROUP SWOC ANALYSIS

The next exercise at the strategic planning workshop allowed participants to further review and account for the internal and external factors present that could potentially influence the Township, both negatively and positively. Workshop participants were asked to identify the Township's **strengths** (S) and **weaknesses** (W). In what areas does the Township regularly excel, and in what areas are there difficulties or shortcomings in terms of expertise, resources, or training? What **opportunities** (O) are on the horizon that can be used to the Township's advantage? Conversely, what trends or **challenges** (C) lie ahead that would be obstacles or hindrances? These elements could include both internal and external factors, conditions, trends, regulations, agencies, and resources. The full list of responses to the exercise are provided in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Large Group Rapid Fire SWOC Analysis



STRENGTHS

- Breadth of services
- Leadership, operational capacity
 - » *Managing many projects and tasks*
- Passion
- Social media, "gets the word out"
- Really strong local partners
- Empathetic staff
- Diversity of staff, volunteers, Board members – working to better reflect the community
- Multi-lingual staff
- Planning and implementation
- Volunteers
- Financial stability and careful stewardship
- Open-door policy with other townships
- Physical space – ability to serve clients
- Ability to satellite services and partner



WEAKNESSES

- Enhanced engagement with new residents is needed
- Township Associations
 - » *Statewide and regional*
- Volunteer trends



OPPORTUNITIES

- Engage new residents
- Work more closely with Springfield
- Social media and search engine optimization (SEO)
- Create more outreach opportunities like Breakfast with the Board
- Strong local partnerships
- Offer more bilingual services
- Continued diversity amongst Board and staff
- AI technology – incorporate into all departments
- More digital programs and software
 - » *Registration, payroll, data management, fleet maintenance, senior services, etc.*
- Expand physical space to increase and enhance programming



CHALLENGES

- Landlocked
- Springfield
- Diverse community - meeting all needs, communication
- Statewide and regional Township Associations
- Fiscal constraints
- Physical space constraints



NOMINAL GROUP GOAL IDENTIFICATION

With the preceding discussion sessions and exercises acting as a sound foundation for goal setting, the next exercise provided time for a healthy group discussion including an update on the previous strategic plan's goals. Participants walked through each of the previous nine goals from the 2020 strategic planning process, and discussed if the goal was **completed**, **in progress**, or **no longer relevant**.

To develop new goals and objectives to achieve the future visions as expressed by leadership, workshop participants reconvened in the same small groups from the previous exercises. Each group was allotted time to develop and then report out at least **three to four** important policy and program goals they thought the Township should accomplish. Groups were asked to create goals using two-time frames: **short-term goals**, which could be started or accomplished in the next one to three years, as well as those that would be considered **long-term goals**, which could be accomplished in a four- to eight-year time frame.

Group goals could be extensions or refinements of prior goals or could be new goals. Each group then shared their short- and long-term goals with the larger group. Goals could be highly specific or general, but all goals pointed to important outcomes that leadership hopes to see in the years ahead.

Short-term goals are those goals or objectives that could or should be completed or substantially underway in the next one to three years.

Long-term goals are those goals or objectives that could or should be completed or substantially underway within a four- to eight-year time frame.

Open Group Discussion and Consolidation of Goals and Objectives

This final phase of the goals discussion served as a forum for workshop participants to refine and compare the ideas and goals offered by each participant. Participants gave their opinions and further explained the fit, ideas, and policy outcomes expressed in the goals and discussed if additional goals or details were needed.



Strategic Goal Areas

After the workshop, Township leadership reviewed the final list of goals created at the workshop. Five overarching goal areas were created based on the workshop participants' input. These goal areas represent important strategic priorities for the Board and staff to address in the months and years ahead (Figure 6).

- **Advance the Township's Town Hall Renovation and Improvements Project**
- **Enhance Community Health Services**
- **Strengthen Staff and Volunteer Development and Retention**
- **Promote Community Engagement and Communication**
- **Assess and Implement Technology Upgrades**

Figure 6. Hanover Township Strategic Goal Areas 2025-2028





Conclusion

The strategic planning process will only be effective if this report serves as a practical guide for Hanover Township leaders and community. It captures key discussions throughout the strategic planning process and supports the Township's leadership in creating action plans to achieve strategic goals and advance priority initiatives.

As the Township continues to evolve, it must adapt to changes in demographics, community trends, technology, and best practices. The strategic plan provides a flexible roadmap to navigate these shifts. To stay aligned with community needs, regular reviews of the strategic planning goals—monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually—are recommended, along with a full update of the plan every three to five years.

The discussions and idea-sharing during the strategic planning process highlighted Hanover Township's forward-thinking leadership, who are committed to embracing strategic thinking and ensuring thoughtful planning for the Township's future.

We wish you well with the ambitious years that lie ahead.

Melissa Henricksen A. Hoebing Jeanna Ballard

Mel Henriksen, Alli Hoebing, and Jeanna Ballard
NIU-CGS Project Coordinators and Facilitators.

Appendix A

Focus Group and Leadership Interview Feedback

SUMMARY

One of the key analytical techniques used for the focus groups and interview notes is an analyst's search for key phrases, words, or terms that emerged during the stakeholder input sessions, a process known as coding. Coding is an analyst's individual readings of the data, followed by key term searches. The words and phrases listed below are the results of the NIU-CGS team's analysis of the collected focus group and interview notes. At a glance, the analyst can discover which ideas were referred to most frequently in the feedback notes. Using individual analysts' coding, the researcher identifies themes that recur across participant groups and across questions. The results reveal key topics or issues that should be weighed and considered when proceeding with strategic planning discussions.

The information that follows is a summary of key themes and topics that emerged during the exploratory focus group sessions and leadership interviews. The stakeholder feedback collection served as a primer for the strategic planning process. The information that is presented in this summation was designed to add exploratory and thematic information for the Township's leadership team to consider during the strategic planning workshop.

The same exploratory discussion questions were asked to each focus group and interviewee and are listed below:

1

How would you describe the Township to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work in the area?

2

If you left and didn't return for 10-15 years, what services or programs do you think you would see the Township offering or what do you hope you would see when you return?

3

What do you like best about the Township? Related to that, what are the strengths or greatest assets of the Township?

4

Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses or greatest needs for the Township?

5

What are or should be the top priorities for the Township over the next three to five years?

6

If you could change or initiate one key item or one goal for the Township, what would it be?



Communication and Outreach



Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy



Organizational Advancement

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

- Elevate the “why” of what the Township does and how money is spent – value of Township
- Ensure outreach and education is offered via multiple avenues – social media, paper, in person
- Distribute a comprehensive brochure listing all the Township services in one place
 - » *Potentially distribute to local real estate agents, Welcome Packet for new residents*
- Engage with local realtors to be aware of township and services
- Promote communication between intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and human service organizations (HSOs) to provide support
 - » *Create scheduled monthly meetings, catch ups*
 - » *Connect local organizations to share some staff, e.g., regional HR Director*

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVOCACY

- Continue to support human service organizations by advocating to state or other fundraisers for funding
- Funding for workforce development within human service organizations
 - » *Need for bilingual staff, multicultural*
 - » *Professional development, quality staff, reduction of turnover*
 - » *Compensation, recruitment, and retention, training opportunities*
- Investigate alternate funding sources through strategic partnerships
 - » *Advocate for Township programs, services, partnership opportunities on the legislative level*
- Consider offering 708 Board and Township trainings at a higher level
 - » *Workforce, support groups, continuing education with more expansive fundraising*
- Addition of more social services staff such as counselors, health services staff, and nurses
- Work to increase access to affordable legal services
- Expand transportation services
 - » *More affordable transportation options*
 - » *Pace buses 24/7 access, increase accessibility*
 - » *Expanded transportation service hours*
- Strengthen partnerships (find efficiencies and intergovernmental agreement opportunities) to increase social services such as affordable housing, access to mental health services, emergency housing, etc.
 - » *Provide follow up services to the school district, police department, and fire department identified issues*



Communication and Outreach



Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy



Organizational Advancement

ORGANIZATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

- Volunteer coordination
 - » Consider hiring a central volunteer coordinator for all buildings and volunteers
 - » Create a volunteer onboarding or orientation and cross-training process
 - » Build some more flexibility into the volunteer structure (e.g., don't have to be "all or nothing", can have more specialized roles for volunteers that align with their talents or interests)
 - » Youth recruitment for volunteers – schools often require civic hours, other avenues
 - » Communicate volunteer needs (which staff needed in which department, etc.) and opportunities – internally and externally
- Additional storage space for the food pantry and other Township programs (e.g., Christmas program gifts, Thanksgiving meals, etc.)
 - » More parking for the food pantry volunteers
- Streamline the Township's hiring process to be more efficient and ensure staffing level remain adequate





Staff Support and Recognition



Facility and Equipment Upgrades

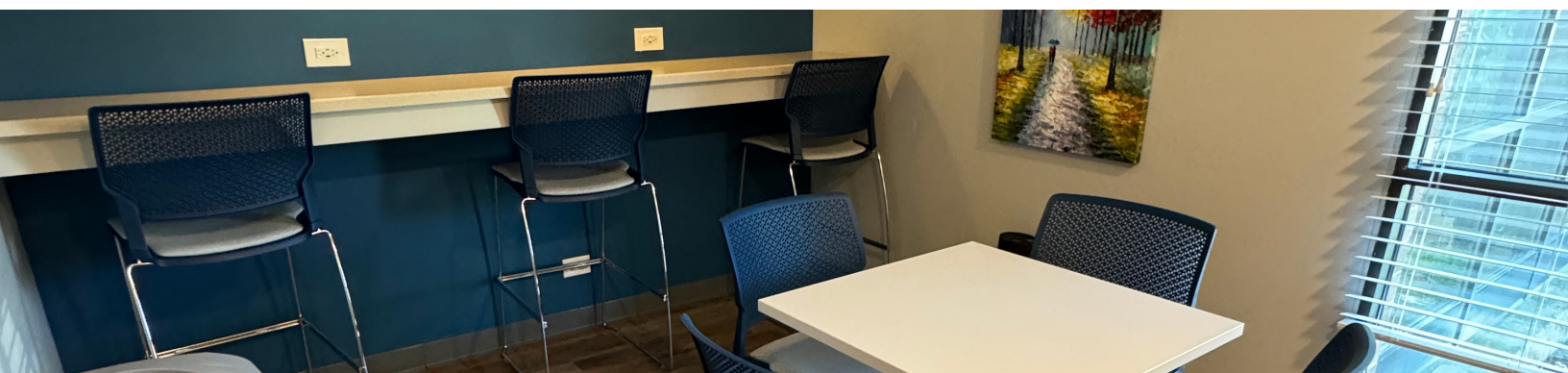


Enhanced Communication



STAFF SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

- Administration and leadership staff shadows or spends a day in each department to know the challenges of short staffing
- Every employee and department are held to the same standard, more even and fair management of paid time off (PTO) and vacation time and expectations
 - » *Accountability of leadership*
- Increased staffing across all departments
 - » *Reduce burnout, stress*
 - » *Consider a possible flexible administrative role to support all departments (e.g., scheduling, answering phones, etc.)*
- Competitive compensation and benefits for current staff and as a recruitment tool
 - » *Helps show commitment, trust, and respect to current employees*
 - » *Incentives, include merit raises to reward above and beyond employees not just inflation raises*
- Enhance employee appreciation and recognition program - give staff more time to connect with one another, catch up, communicate
 - » *Creation of a New Employee Spotlight*
 - » *Allow staff to nominate or praise another employee throughout the year. Receive a certain number of points from nominations and receive a gift card, etc. Communicate all who were nominated, not just the winner*
 - » *Offer different locations or dates for staff gatherings, some can make it, some can't due to staffing or obligations*
- Onboarding for new employees could be better
- Engage more volunteers, younger generation to replace aging volunteer population
 - » *Invested volunteers, long-lasting*
 - » *Figure out how to get volunteers to stay past mandatory hours*





Staff Support and Recognition



Facility and Equipment Upgrades



Enhanced Communication



FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT UPGRADES

- Updated equipment and technology resources and staff across departments
- Reconfiguration of Township's physical space
 - » *Expansion to include more gathering spaces, additional offices – increased privacy for health and therapy appointments, green space, more staff offices*
- Youth Services Center (Izaak Walton Center) has the ability to redecorate the Center – more funding and resources
 - » *Addition of technology, video games, other activities for youth*
 - » *Increase brightness*
- Continued updates of aging equipment
 - » *Including bus maintenance*
- Expand the office of Community Health to expand services, e.g., physicals



ENHANCED COMMUNICATION

- More focus on longer outcomes and improvements rather than just numbers
 - » *Quality over quantity*
- Leadership listens to suggestions of stakeholders – use ideas
- Having a concise, standard message that everyone uses when speaking about the Township
- Create a manual explaining all Township roles and responsibilities
- Extend hours for phone services – possibly a remote worker
- Campus signage is improved, directional, maybe list departments on signage
- Township remains practical with asks given resources and staff, e.g., outdoor landscaping, facilities, projects, workload
- Meeting patients and clients where they are – in their homes, satellite locations
 - » *Ability to do intakes at schools for therapy*



**Succession Planning,
Staff Retention, and
Recruitment**



**Community Engagement
and Outreach**



**Board and Leadership
Dynamics**



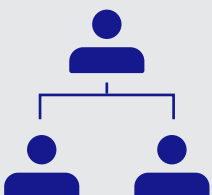
SUCCESSION PLANNING, STAFF RETENTION, AND RECRUITMENT

The Township is currently navigating challenges related to recruitment, retention, and succession planning, as employees approach retirement and transition to new opportunities. Ensuring the transfer of institutional knowledge has become a growing priority, with a recommendation for staff to begin actively training their successors and creating or updating policies and procedures. Despite offering competitive compensation and benefit packages, some positions have experienced prolonged vacancies and turnover. There is interest in gaining a deeper understanding of the underlying causes and exploring strategies to address these issues moving forward.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Efforts to engage the diverse residents of Hanover Township, including the Hispanic and South Asian populations, are seen as an area for improvement. While the Township has a strong connection with its senior population, there is an opportunity to expand outreach efforts to new and underrepresented groups. Enhancing these efforts will improve awareness of the Township's programs and services, help to better match patrons with the services and resources they need, and potentially recruit more volunteers. There is also an opportunity to improve collaboration with external entities, such as School District U-46, to better utilize existing resources such as the Izaak Walton Youth Center.



BOARD AND LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS

The interview participants noted their strong, diverse, and synergistic leadership as a strength. They also shared they try to remain actively engaged with the community and involved in decision-making processes that prioritize the Township's long-term success. A large part of that success is due to the staff's professionalism and dedication, along with effective communication between leadership, employees, and the community. The importance of maintaining a strong focus on improving the Township, adapting to emerging needs, and ensuring consistency and transparency in policymaking was also highlighted.

Appendix B

Surrender or Lead Exercise

The **bolded and underlined sections** are key phrases that each group provided in response to the Surrender or Lead exercise's open-ended questions and prompts during the leadership workshop.

Group 1:

1. We want to **increase programming and services**, but **we are limited by budget and resources**.
2. The two most important things to focus on are **employee retention** and **development** because **they are our front-line service to our residents**.
3. If it weren't for **lack of resident awareness, disinterest, or unknown value**, we would **serve more people**.
4. We need to finally **utilize the search engine optimization (SEO)** and **next-gen social media**.
5. **The Illinois General Assembly** will have the biggest impact on the Township in the coming 2-3 years.

Group 2:

1. We want to **grow**, but **there are financial constraints**.
2. The two most important things to focus on are **staff development** and **service delivery** because **supporting employees and volunteers drives growth, expansion, and excellence**.
3. If it weren't for **misconceptions about townships**, we would **focus on funding and expansion**.
4. We need to finally **address the lack of statewide leadership**.
5. **Springfield** will have the biggest impact on the Township in the coming 2-3 years.

Group 3:

1. We want to **expand**, but **there are fiscal constraints and limitations**.
2. The two most important things to focus on are **service** and **quality** because **it justifies our existence (keeps the Township relevant and fills a need)**.
3. If it weren't for **outdated state statutes about townships**, we would **have more staffing and fiscal opportunities**.
4. We need to finally **renovate Town Hall**.
5. **Employee turnover and volunteer retention** will have the biggest impact on the Township in the coming 2-3 years.

Appendix C

Strategic Goal Area and Stakeholder Feedback Alignment

ADVANCE THE TOWNSHIP'S TOWN HALL RENOVATION AND IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT-RELATED STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK:

- **Additional storage space for the food pantry and other Township programs (e.g., Christmas program gifts, Thanksgiving meals, etc.)**
 - » *More parking for the food pantry volunteers*
- **Reconfiguration of Township's physical space**
 - » *Expansion to include more gathering spaces, additional offices – increased privacy for health and therapy appointments, green space, more staff offices*
- **Youth Services Center (Izaak Walton Center) has the ability to redecorate the Center – more funding and resources**
 - » *Addition of technology, video games, other activities for youth*
 - » *Increase brightness*
- **Continued updates of aging equipment**
 - » *Including bus maintenance*
- **Campus signage is improved, directional, maybe list departments on signage**

ENHANCE COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES-RELATED STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK:

- **Expand the office of Community Health to expand services, e.g., physicals**
- **Meeting patients and clients where they are – in their homes, satellite locations**
 - » *Ability to do intakes at schools for therapy*
- **Addition of more social services staff such as counselors, health services staff, and nurses**
- **Consider offering 708 Board and Township trainings at a higher level**
 - » *Workforce, support groups, continuing education with more expansive fundraising*



STRENGTHEN STAFF AND VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION-RELATED STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK:

- **Volunteer coordination**

- » Consider hiring a central volunteer coordinator for all buildings and volunteers
- » Create a volunteer onboarding or orientation and cross-training process
- » Build some more flexibility into the volunteer structure (e.g., don't have to be "all or nothing", can have more specialized roles for volunteers that align with their talents or interests)
- » Youth recruitment for volunteers – schools often require civic hours, other avenues
- » Communicate volunteer needs (which staff needed in which department, etc.) and opportunities – internally and externally

- **Streamline the Township's hiring process to be more efficient and ensure staffing level remain adequate**

- **Administration and leadership staff shadows or spends a day in each department to know the challenges of short staffing**

- **Increased staffing across all departments**

- » Reduce burnout, stress
- » Consider a possible flexible administrative role to support all departments (e.g., scheduling, answering phones, etc.)

- **Competitive compensation and benefits for current staff and as a recruitment tool**

- » Helps show commitment, trust, and respect to current employees
- » Incentives, include merit raises to reward above and beyond employees not just inflation raises

- **Enhance employee appreciation and recognition program - give staff more time to connect with one another, catch up, communicate**

- » Creation of a New Employee Spotlight
- » Allow staff to nominate or praise another employee throughout the year. Receive a certain number of points from nominations and receive a gift card, etc. Communicate all who were nominated, not just the winner
- » Offer different locations or dates for staff gatherings, some can make it, some can't due to staffing or obligations

- **Onboarding for new employees could be better**



PROMOTE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION-RELATED STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK:

- **Engage more volunteers, younger generation to replace aging volunteer population**
 - » *Invested volunteers, long-lasting*
 - » *Figure out how to get volunteers to want to stay past mandatory hours*
- **Leadership listens to suggestions of stakeholders – use ideas**
- **Create a manual explaining all Township roles and responsibilities**
- **Extend hours for phone services – possibly a remote worker**
- **Strengthen partnerships (find efficiencies and intergovernmental agreement opportunities) to increase social services such as affordable housing, access to mental health services, emergency housing, etc.**
 - » *Provide follow up services to the school district, police department, and fire department identified issues*
- **Continue to support human service organizations by advocating to state or other fundraisers for funding**
- **Elevate the “why” of what the Township does and how money is spent – value of Township**
- **Ensure outreach and education is offered via multiple avenues – social media, paper, in person**
- **Distribute a comprehensive brochure listing all the Township services in one place**
 - » *Potentially distribute to local real estate agents, Welcome Packet for new residents*
 - » *Have a concise, standard message that everyone uses when speaking about the Township*
- **Engage with local realtors to be aware of township and services**
- **Promote communication between intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and human service organizations (HSOs) to provide support**
 - » *Create scheduled monthly meetings, catch ups*
 - » *Connect local organizations to share some staff, e.g., regional HR Director*

ASSESS AND IMPLEMENT TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES-RELATED STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK:

- Updated equipment and technology resources and staff across departments
- Take advantage of technology such as AI, being cautious to use discernment and ensure communications are coming from the correct source
- Communicate using multiple platforms, including social media, website, etc.
- Think that technology will be incorporated into more services in the future (e.g., robocalls, e-newsletters, etc.) and Township will evolve with the times