

Executive Summary: Yates Township 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Our Preferred Future

Yates Township is a welcoming and safe sanctuary. Here, people can enjoy peacefulness and recreation in a natural environment and maintain a vibrant social and cultural connection. It is an attractive *and* cultural destination. The citizenry respects the significance of Idlewild to African American culture and works to preserve and celebrate this historic American treasure in the Huron-Manistee National Forest.

Yates Township is a healthy community for year-round and seasonal residents, promoting well-being and thriving both socially and economically. While maintaining its unique and rural character, the township is open to new opportunities for arts, entertainment, sporting, dining, and shopping. It encourages the use of digital technologies for residents to access quality goods and services, and it paves the way for entrepreneurs to constructively contribute to cultural awareness and address community needs.

The people of Idlewild and the Acreage lift the whole township with pride and respect by:

- learning about and applying ecologically sustainable methods to preserve individual and collective property
- continuously working to enhance the quality of governance and the quality of life available in the township
- collaborating to build a community with vision and purpose.

Strategic Filters to Be Applied in All Decision-Making to Achieve This Preferred Future

Does this decision demonstrate Long Term Strategic Perspective? Illustrate Adaptation to Change?

Did our process to reach this decision: Align with Ethical and Legal Behavior? Apply the lessons learned from the past?

Did our process incorporate and rely on Teamwork/Collaboration? Did we seriously include consideration of Innovative and Creative solutions?

Prioritized Outcomes, Strategies and Goals for 2022-2025

<p>#1. Enabling Strategy – Effective Governance</p>	<p>Outcome: The township grows strategically with prosperity impacting the township’s year-round residents and tourism.</p>	<p>Outcome: The township celebrates and promotes Idlewild as a nationally historic African American cultural community.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local government components are functional, establishing trust, professionalism and consistency in public service work • Develop Master Plan to plan for growth of year-round residents, year-round tourism, and infrastructural services to support both • Update and enforce ordinances (planning, zoning and township) • Update zoning to give life to historical institutions to allow property updates so they can be adapted to current market place • Develop a plan to create a visitor-friendly community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure reliable internet services to support home-based or internet centric employment • Preserve natural environment: lakes and forest • Establish a watershed management authority with proper mechanisms to address environmental conditions • Increase and assure quality housing stock and convenient, viable, basic services for healthcare, food, and banking to support our year-round needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an Historic Commission to preserve our historical buildings and markers • Develop a plan for welcoming visitor and community spaces to feature historic elements and augment existing resources with public facilities, info about the community, and provide a relaxed social gathering place for residents.

Introduction: Yates Township 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Background

In early summer of 2022, the Yates Township Board approved the pursuit of development of a Strategic Plan for the Township. Funds for planning facilitation was allocated from a grant received by the Planning Commission.

Susan Radwan, SMP, was the chosen facilitator for the process. The process included three steps:

1. A pre-planning survey
2. An initial half-day session to explore the emerging trends that would impact the township in the future, plus consideration of a preferred future statement.
3. A full day session which fleshed out the preferred future and identified key strategies and goals to achieve that preferred future.

The planning team was created by invitation. Planning facilitator Radwan recommended that the ideal size for a planning team was 15-25. Planning Commissioner Blair Evans invited year-round AND seasonal residents from Idlewild and the Acreage. Additionally, each Township Board member invited key community members to participate.

Thirty individuals were invited.

Twenty-six individuals responded to the survey provided.

Seventeen individuals participated in the half-day session.

Sixteen individuals participated in the full day session.

In all, approximately 30 unique individuals from Idlewild and the Acreage were involved in the process.

Methodology

1. On July 14, 2022, the community group gathered in person and on line to discuss the critical elements that would assure a desired quality of life and well-being for township residents and visitors. The discussion focused beyond the statutory duties of the township and focused on what people value in their community of the future. Four Township Board members attended.
2. The second in-person session, held on August 26, 2022, included a focused group that included three Township Board members, and selected active members of the community. The group defined and prioritized critical strategic initiatives to achieve the preferred future developed during July session. Between the two sessions all five board members attended.
3. The final report is a synthesized product of the second session's discussion. It includes a slight revision of the initial preferred future, plus the initiatives prioritized by the planning group with recommended timelines, and possible actions to inform the final approach to achieve the chosen initiatives. This final report is presented for Township Board consideration and ultimately Township Board approval.

Once approved, the plan initiatives become a key focus of the township and must be appropriately funded and tracked for progress to realize the preferred future.

The Board should check on progress on a quarterly basis from the leaders of each initiative in play. Additionally, the plan should be reviewed on an annual basis to recalibrate the plan as circumstances and lessons learned present themselves.

Yates Township 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Overarching Outcomes

- The township grows strategically with prosperity impacting the township’s year-round residents and tourism.
- The township celebrates and promotes Idlewild as a nationally historic African American cultural community.

Effective Governance is the enabling strategy to open pathways for the Overarching Outcomes to be achieved

Strategies and Goals by General Timeline

Short Term Results <i>To be completed in the next 12 months (2023), with ongoing activity to continue the work.</i>	1. All local government components are functional, establishing trust, professionalism and consistency in public service work
	2. Address and assure reliable internet services to support home-based or internet centric employment (in place by 2024)
	3. Preserve natural environments: lakes and forest
	4. Update and enforce ordinances (planning, zoning and township)
	5. Develop Master Plan to plan for growth of year-round residents, year-round tourism, and infrastructural services to support both
	6. Establish an Historic Commission to preserve our historical buildings and markers
	7. Develop a plan for welcoming visitor and community spaces to feature historic elements and augment existing resources with public facilities, info about the community, and provide a relaxed social gathering place for residents (<i>prioritized as short term due to current momentum</i>)
Medium Term Results <i>To be completed in the next 24 months (2024)</i>	8. Establish a watershed management authority with proper mechanisms to address environmental conditions.
	9. Implement the plan for welcoming visitor and community spaces to feature historic elements and augment existing resources with public facilities, info about the community, and provide a relaxed social gathering place for residents.
Long Term Results <i>To be well in progress in the next 36 months (2025)</i>	10. Increase and assure quality housing stock and convenient, viable, basic services for healthcare, food and banking to support the year-round needs
	11. Develop a plan to create a visitor-friendly community.

Detailed Recommendations to Address Priorities

Because people support what they help to create, the recommendations for actions included here are presented for the consideration of the committee or working group assigned to the project. Each group assigned to work on a project should create a plan of work that defines the outcome(s) for the project, as well as the sequence of actions to be taken and who is responsible for each step. (See the Committee Plan of Work Form as an illustration of such a plan.)

Short Term Goal

1. All local government components are functional, establishing trust, professionalism and consistency in public service work

Key Success Measures:

- People serving in township government capacities participate in training to properly do the job.
- Trust is developed at the township governance level: achieve results, act with integrity, demonstrate concern for the other.
- Conversations change to *both/and* and *us*, not *either/or* or *we/they*.
- Governing bodies act with professionalism and consistency, using tact, diplomacy, logic and a structured process such as Robert's Rules.
- Township decisions are based in facts, not in politics or emotional pronouncements.

Possible Action Steps:

- Assure communications to shape a positive story, promoting the good things we are doing.
 - Use visual symbols of success.
 - Make the website and social media useful and frequently updated to encourage people to keep coming back
- Actively support modern tools to deliver services through the internet such as telemedicine.
- Engage with Lake County Tourism Council and other like kind of councils (7 councils of county commissions)
- Develop a clear parks and recreation plan
 - Featuring year-round sports: Hunting, fishing, snowmobiling
 - Offering activities for youth, (2) repair basketball courts etc., summer camp, rentable large event space & kitchen for affordable private or community events
 - Provide year-round activities for residents and visitors
 - Invite creatives
 - Create a "music/concert" scene bringing entertainment that causes Idlewild to once again becoming a destination.
- Interpersonal and professional practices training for boards and commissions.
- Training on culture of positive engagement with community.

Short Term Goal

2. Address and assure reliable internet services to support home-based or internet centric employment

Key Success Measures:

- Internet access is available and reliable across the township by October 2024

Possible Action Steps:

- Assure we have public access to the internet to do work remotely as well as private access
- Assure the internet access supports home-based businesses
- Increase healthcare through telemedicine. This will require building a relationship with healthcare providers to bridge our access gap.
- Train residents on how to use the internet as an economic tool.

Short Term Goal

3. Preserve natural resources (lakes and forests)

Key Success Measures:

- Public beach is upgraded
- Zebra mussels and other invasive species in the lakes are effectively managed
- Boat launch and boat washing station installed
- Protective native species planted in lake shore areas

Possible Action Steps:

- Conduct public education on how to manage the habitat
- Conduct boater education on environmental impact

Short Term Goal

4. Update and enforce ordinances (planning, zoning and township)

Key Success Measures:

- Policies/ordinances are updated/created with an equity lens.
- Ordinances are enforced.
- Blight is reduced responsibly (not demolishing historic buildings)

Possible Action Steps:

- Hire and train an ordinance enforcement officer(s), based on clear job descriptions
- Conduct public education on the ordinances
- Enforce ordinances on absentee owner property

Short Term Goal

5. Develop Master Plan to plan for growth of year-round residents, year-round tourism, and infrastructural services to support both.

Key Success Measures:

- Business conveniences are available within Yates Township
- Increased access to parks and green space for all age groups
- Safe, enjoyable and informative walking and biking for residents and visitors

Possible Action Steps:

- Serve community needs through convenient business establishments such as restaurants, retail stores, and gas stations.
- Have community workshop(s) exploring suggestions including
 - Neighborhood walking/biking trails with pocket parks
 - Host a community garden and food forest
 - Use a retirement-centered design
 - Use coop and greenhouses to create a food hub
 - Maintain a stable meeting place for everyone
 - Provide spaces for activities for youth, (2) repair basketball courts etc., summer camp, rentable large event space & kitchen for affordable private or community events
 - Fitness center with low fees in Township Hall

Short Term Goal

6. Establish an Historic Commission to preserve our historical buildings and markers.

Key Success Measures:

- Township government supports establishment of the commission.
- Be unapologetic about our African-American history.
- Zoning is updated to give life to historical institutions to allow property updates so they can be adapted to present day needs

Possible Action Steps:

- Evaluate street names to reflect history and culture of the communities within Yates Township

Short Term Goal

7. Develop a plan for historic visitor and community spaces to augment existing resources with public facilities, information about the community, and provide a relaxed social gathering place for residents. (Prioritized as short term due to current momentum.)

Key Success Measures:

- A clear design and plan for experience and display of history across the township.

Possible Action Steps:

- Engage community for ideas and needs
- Engage resources like Ferris State University, Michigan State University, and Lake County Economic Development Alliance

Medium Term Goal

8. Establish a watershed management authority with proper mechanisms to address environmental conditions and preserve the natural resources in the township.

Key Success Measures:

- A Watershed Management Authority is established.
- The authority makes a positive impact on the water resource management of the Township.

Possible Action Steps:

- Engage Lake Associations to plan the establishment of Lake Boards

Medium Term Goal

9. Implement the plan for visitor and community spaces to augment existing resources.

Key Success Measures:

- Available spaces include:
 - Public facilities
 - Accessible information about the community,
 - A relaxed, social gathering place for residents.
- Spaces are frequented by visitors interested in learning about the distinctive historic nature of the community

Possible Action Steps:

- Create a hub for community information to residents, businesses and visitors
- Create a visitor center
 - Create a guide for historic touring.
 - Support with signage, website and modernization of some buildings.
 - Promote sites as destinations: Pere Marquette and Forests
 - Our 1920-30's history needs to be lifted up.
- Install public art representing the culture
- Go beyond Idlewild and recognize that we have many cultures here.

- Install and communicate the existence of additional markers beyond the Historic District that are currently unheralded; *Beware that reducing blight might lead to demolishing important history.*
- Preserve the flamingo mural wall
- Install public art around the township
- Install pocket parks
- Update historic tour maps.

Long Term Goal

10. Increase and assure quality housing stock and convenient, viable, basic services for healthcare, food and banking to support our year-round needs

Key Success Measures:

- Future land-use developments follow the updated Master Plan.
- Developments support year-round residents' quality of life for healthcare, access to food, financial services and economic opportunity.
- Wellness center for resources from cradle to grave

Possible Action Steps:

- Master Planning
- Create relationships with healthcare institutions to attract telemedicine and healthcare providers to the area.
- Update ordinances to establish housing standards

Long Term Goal

11. Develop a plan to create a visitor-friendly community using a variety of way-finding tools.

Key Success Measures:

- GPS mapping provides accurate way-finding throughout the township.
- Signage provides easy way-finding for tourists and emergency services

Possible Action Steps:

- Create unambiguous street names and assure they are consistent in all relevant documentation and mapping.
- Street signs to imprint cultural identity
- Create a simple tourist map of the area

Steps for Getting Started with Recommended Timeline

Resources needed:

- Strategic budget, authorized by the Township Board.
 - Training may be needed to amend the budget with strategic investments.
- Master Plan completed by Planning Commission
 - This drives many of the other plans that involved land use.
- Project manager officer (could be a contracted resource or a resident with an informed project management skillset).
 - To assist working groups to develop realistic project plans and to assure follow through of those working group plans.

Sept 2022	Township Board approves the strategic plan
October 2022	The township board appoints a Change Leadership Team that will oversee the plan implementation, acting as a point of accountability for project groups, assuring that projects are progressing. The team might include one trustee, one staff member, one respected leader from Idlewild and from the Acreage.
	Development of working group charters with clear end results and operational parameters, such as authority delegated to the group, time frames to complete work. (See attached)
	Initial solicitation of citizen volunteers to engage with the defined work.
	Development of strategic budget amendment to fund initiatives that will begin before the next fiscal year.
November 2022	Approval of the strategic budget amendment
	Board appointment of working groups/committees
December 2022- January 2023	Working groups create and submit their plans of work to the Change Leadership Team.
January 2023	Township Board conducts its first quarterly review of plan progress as presented by the Change Leadership Team.
February 2023+	Working groups do the work as planned, sequenced and budgeted for
March 2023	Township budget is developed and includes investments to fund the 2023-24 elements of the plan
April 2023	Township Board quarterly review of plan progress. Reports may be given by the Change Leadership Team OR a working group leader.
July 2023	Township Board quarterly review of plan progress. Reports may be given by the Change Leadership Team OR a working group leader.
October 2023	Township Board quarterly review of plan progress. Reports may be given by the Change Leadership Team OR a working group leader.
January 2024	Township Board quarterly review of plan progress. Reports may be given by the Change Leadership Team OR a working group leader.

Proposed Working Group/Committee Charter

Working Group/Committee Name:

Ordinance Review Working Group

Descriptive Role of the Working Group in relation to Strategic Plan:

To contribute to effective governance, township ordinances need to be reviewed and updated to meet the needs of the current environment. All planning, zoning and township ordinances need to be reviewed. This working group needs to focus on proposing amendments to township ordinances, refer problematic ordinances to the planning and zoning commissions respectively so that they propose language for ordinances under their jurisdiction.

Expected Time Commitment: 8 meetings (weekly or bi-weekly) with some individual work between meetings. Work to be completed by December 31.

Long Term Goals (3-5 years):

Yates Township will have relevant and enforced ordinances.

Community members will be informed of ordinances that impact their choices related to property ownership and activities conducted inside the Township.

Critical Success Factors for Long Term Goals:

Assuring that all ordinances are reviewed with an equity lens.

All ordinances are enforceable.

The township hires and trains ordinance enforcement officer(s).

Short Term Measurable Goals:

Systematically review all current township ordinances.

Propose update ordinances as needed and appropriate, with rationale for the proposed change, to the Township Board for approval.

Committee Members Names:

Limits of Authority: (i.e. spending money, entering into contracts)

Authority is limited to making recommendations to the Township Board and making referrals to the Planning and Zoning Commissions to review ordinances under their jurisdiction.

The working group may not enter into any contracts. Only the Board of Trustees holds authority to do so.

Reviewed and Authorized by:

Proposed Working Group/Committee Charter

Working Group/Committee Name:

Governance Committee

Descriptive Role of the Working Group in relation to Strategic Plan:

This committee is responsible for assessing governance needs training needs of the board, commissions and working groups/committees.

The committee is accountable to assess training options and budget allocations to assure that volunteers in decision-making roles understand their jobs and develop skill sets to successfully deliver on a process that engenders trust and transparency among the group and with the community at large.

Long Term Goals (3-5 years):

- A professional, trustworthy governing body.
- A Township Board and Commissions that function in a consistent, transparent manner.
- A decision-making process that is fact-based and driven by shared values.
- High-functioning township components: Board, Planning and Zoning commissions, Parks and Recreation Commission.
- Realization of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan
- Township communication to the public shapes a positive story

Critical Success Factors for Long Term Goals:

Governance education
 Understanding the roles and responsibilities of the positions held
 How to work in a group process
 Dialogue skills
 Knowledge of Robert's Rules in Conduct of Meetings

Short Term Measurable Goals:

Elected and appointed officials receive training and use Robert's Rules and dialogue skills to conduct a professional and productive meeting.

Committee Members Names:

Limits of Authority: (i.e. spending money, entering into contracts)

Authority is limited to making recommendations to the Township Board.

The working group may not enter into any contracts. Only the Board of Trustees holds authority to do so.

Reviewed and Authorized by:

Proposed Working Group/Committee Charter

Working Group/Committee Name:

Internet Working Group

Descriptive Role of the Working Group in relation to Strategic Plan:

Seek and negotiate with internet providers willing to supply internet services that support home-based businesses, telemedicine, and public access in designated public spaces.

Long Term Goals (3-5 years):

Township wide access to reliable internet

Critical Success Factors for Long Term Goals:

Contractual agreements with internet providers

Short Term Measurable Goals:

Agreement with internet provider

Installation of appropriate signal equipment throughout the township

Committee Members Names:

Limits of Authority: (i.e. spending money, entering into contracts)

Authority is limited to making recommendations to the Township Board/

The working group may not enter into any contracts. Only the Board of Trustees holds authority to do so.

Reviewed and Authorized by:

Proposed Working Group/Committee Charter

Working Group/Committee Name:
Natural Resource Preservation Working Group
Descriptive Role of the Working Group in relation to Strategic Plan:
To assure that the lakes and forests are preserved with sound ecological methods. Create a strategy for the public beach upgrade. Seek solutions to address invasive species in the lakes and forest. Seek out bids to install a boat launch and boat washing station for future budgeting Create an approach to educate the citizenry on how to manage natural habitat.
Long Term Goals (3-5 years):
Lakes are healthier with less invasive species Forests are healthier using natural methods of preservation. The citizenry and visitors take informed action to preserve the natural resources while enjoying the environment.
Critical Success Factors for Long Term Goals:
Community-wide education of citizenry and visitors to respect and preserve the natural resources.
Short Term Measurable Goals:
Committee Members Names:
Limits of Authority: (i.e. spending money, entering into contracts)
Authority is limited to making recommendations to the Township Board/ The working group may not enter into any contracts. Only the Board of Trustees holds authority to do so.
Reviewed and Authorized by:

Proposed Working Group/Committee Charter

Working Group/Committee Name:

History and Hospitality Working Group

Descriptive Role of the Working Group in relation to Strategic Plan:

Inventory the existing resources that are part of the story.

To create a strategy for funding to augment the existing resources and display history in a way that will create a memorable experience for visitors to the region.

Design and plan for memorable experience built around the history of the community, as well as design and plan gathering and pocket spaces that lift historical markers and celebrate the history of the community.

Seek out funding for the development of these areas.

Long Term Goals (3-5 years):

Critical Success Factors for Long Term Goals:

Funding for this historic district and historical markers in the township.

Artistic and attractive ways of telling the story of Idlewild and surrounding areas.

Public art consultant.

Park design consultant.

Funding for maintenance of these structures and attractions.

Parks and Recreation Planning to create events to celebrate the stories being told through the historical markers.

Short Term Measurable Goals:

A plan for fundraising to create this community wide story-telling about the history of the area.

A design plan that can be installed over a period of time as funding and resources become available.

Committee Members Names:

Limits of Authority: (i.e. spending money, entering into contracts)

Authority is limited to making recommendations to the Township Board.

The working group may not enter into any contracts. Only the Board of Trustees holds authority to do so.

Reviewed and Authorized by:

Proposed Working Group/Committee Charter

Working Group/Committee Name:
Historic Commission Working Group
Descriptive Role of the Working Group in relation to Strategic Plan:
Study the elements of having an Historic Commission in the township. Assess what would need to be created in the process of becoming an Historic Commission. Develop a plan to assure that the Commission will be continuously supported and funded. Seek initial funding for the establishment of an Historic Commission and first steps to demonstrate progress in this effort.
Long Term Goals (3-5 years):
Historic structures in the township are preserved and contribute to the experience of understanding the historic significance of Idlewild.
Critical Success Factors for Long Term Goals:
Sustained support for the Commission.
Short Term Measurable Goals:
Township Board supports and funds the creation of an Historic Commission.
Committee Members Names:
Limits of Authority: (i.e. spending money, entering into contracts)
Authority is limited to making recommendations to the Township Board and making referrals to the Planning and Zoning Commissions to review ordinances under their jurisdiction. The working group may not enter into any contracts. Only the Board of Trustees holds authority to do so.
Reviewed and Authorized by:

Working Group/Committee Charter Template

Working Group/Committee Name:

Descriptive Role of the Working Group in relation to Strategic Plan:

Long Term Goals (3-5 years):

Critical Success Factors for Long Term Goals:

Short Term Measurable Goals:

Committee Members Names:

Limits of Authority: (i.e. spending money, entering into contracts)

Reviewed and Authorized by:

Template Working Group/Committee Project Plan of Work

Relevant Intended Outcome or Priority Task Assigned by Organizational Assessment

Vision for our work product and **how would we know we were successful?** (i.e. What outcome(s) do we want in relation to this topic? What good for which people at what cost?)

Our plan of work, action steps needed, who will be responsible?

Action Step	Date Due	Responsible Party?

Specific Assignments by
Committee Members Date Due Task

Committee Members	Date Due	Task

Resources Required from Staff	Staff/contractor Hrs?	Financial Resources Requested	\$\$\$
		To maintain current programming	
		To launch new initiatives	
		Total for this Fiscal Year	
		Anticipated for next fiscal year?	

Committee Meeting Schedule Anticipated: