



# Strategic Plan

## August 2022



**BURGES & BURGES**  
STRATEGISTS

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## MISSION

Perkins Township is committed to providing exceptional services that improve the quality of life and opportunities for those who live, work, or visit in our community.

## VISION

We will become the premier community by maximizing every resource available to us, from our highly qualified and committed staff to developing strong partnerships with organizations around us, while strategically and carefully utilizing every dollar entrusted in us by the public.

# Executive Summary

Towards the end of 2019, Perkins Township began a strategic planning process, that was put on pause with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In those years since, communities across the country have seen significant change. At the beginning of 2022, Perkins Township decided to revisit their strategic planning process and sought outside help. In May 2022, Perkins Township hired Burges & Burges Strategists to help develop a new strategic plan, rooted in community input and residents perspectives.

To gather community input, Burges & Burges Strategists conducted a three month research process including: facilitating community stakeholder input throughout two in person sessions, reviewing previous strategic plan goals, analyzing Perkins mission and vision statements, an online community survey, and guiding discussions for a Perkins leadership group. The following report communicates our findings and offers strategic recommendations to Perkins Township.

To begin the strategic planning process, Burges & Burges Strategists met with the Perkins Township leadership and administration to review past mission and vision statements, the 2019 strategic plan crafted by Perkins Township, and the overall timeline of creating a new strategic plan.

This group, consisting of 10 Perkins Township staff members and three Burges & Burges team members, met on three separate occasions.

Secondly, Perkins Township and Burges & Burges Strategists met with a group of 30 Perkins stakeholders on two separate occasions, once in June 2022 and once in July 2022, in order to get needed community input regarding a new strategic plan. The following pages represent the outcomes of those meetings and discussions.

# Goal #1

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Perkins Township will provide professional safety services to residents, visitors and employees, using all of the resources available to us.

## Initiatives

- **Continue** to analyze market conditions to assure we offer competitive benefits, salaries, and a conducive work environment
- **Provide opportunities for employee development** through training and duty assignments
- **Stay aware** of new technology; using industry best practices, when equipment needs replaced.
- **Create a formal structure** for safety officers to report hazards.
- **Utilize** the community relations police officer to do proactive outreach to seniors and neighborhoods.
- **Complete an analysis** of the service facility for staffing and storage needs
- **Explore** funding options for facility plans that emerge
- **Help the Fire Marshall** proactively reach out to the community.
  - Create an informational card regarding fire safety and home inspections
- **Complete** fire department facility study to determine a plan to upgrade and update Perkins fire facilities.

# Goal #2

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Perkins Township will become known as the place where people can find a variety of housing that best suits their needs, in settings that provide a great quality of life.

## Initiatives

- **Conduct research to gather data** on what types of housing people who are looking to move to this area are seeking - also national trends - and identify what gaps exist in Perkins.
- **Form partnerships** with builders, developers, and employers to fill the above gaps.
- **Help residents** maintain their property by **continuing and expanding our grant program**-- Market the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership, Habitat for Humanity, and CHIP grants to promote revitalization of properties.
- Continue to **identify distressed properties** and neighborhoods by performing a needs assessment and rating scale.

# Goal #3



Perkins Township will create a township center with viable housing, commercial services to residents and visitors, connectivity to neighborhoods, and various recreation opportunities.

## Initiatives

- **Ensure community input** and support for the concept of a town center.
- **Identify** a clear vision for the township center.
- **Hire a consultant** to study feasibility of town center and explore locations.
- **Strive to have a variety of housing options** and businesses surrounding the town center to ensure it is viable.
- **Explore locations** that could serve as the center.
- **Secure necessary funding** for the plan and the implementation.

# Goal #4



Perkins Township will increase awareness of community resources that impact quality of life to attract new residents while helping our residents at every stage of life.

## Initiatives

- **Develop connections** with mental health providers to see how we can help them raise awareness
- **Complete a needs assessment** to prioritize expansion of recreational opportunities, parks, trails and sidewalks throughout the township
- **Partner with other community entities** and organizations on use of their recreation facilities
- **Utilize survey tools** to quantify our current service to the community and identify gaps in other resources.
- **Work with partners** to amplify their services to the community, and add their contact information to as many places as possible.

# Goal #5



Perkins Township will work on a comprehensive Economic Development Plan that redevelops blighted areas, focuses on main corridors, boosts our tourism opportunities, and creates sustainable, high-paying jobs.

## Initiatives

- **Conduct a study** to determine redevelopment options, vacancies, and current market conditions for prospective properties.
- **Identify quantifiable attributes** for commercial, residential, industrial and recreational properties throughout the township, and create an inventory to assist developers with pertinent information
- **Create partnerships** to promote available land to developers
- **Engage regional stakeholders and partners** in a collaborative planning process
- **Work with federal, state, and local officials** on economic development opportunities (ODOT, TeamNEO and OTA)
- **Develop an infrastructure enhancement strategy** that provides a path for utility availability along major corridors, specifically Route 4.
- **Develop a marketing plan** to recruit new businesses and industries, like NASA.
- **Work with existing businesses** to ensure they are supported



# Stakeholder Committee Process

With the help of Perkins leadership and administration, Burges & Burges assembled a stakeholder group made up of 30 individuals, whose goal was to review data and outline a strategic plan.

The Perkins Township Stakeholder Committee consisted of 30 individuals from various segments of the community. The committee was comprised of residents, business owners, public safety officers, township trustees and administrators, county officers, and local school representatives. They met in person on two occasions, June 15th and July 27th 2022.

Across both meetings, the stakeholders completed four unique activities to identify needs, goals, and future initiatives. Both stakeholder sessions fostered meaningful discussion from a cross section of the community. The sessions allowed the strategic planning process to be external and grounded in the community's input.



# Activities 1-2 Input

**Activity One asked stakeholders to give examples of Perkins Township providing exceptional services, quality of life, and opportunities for those who live, work, and visit.**

Examples named as successes included:

- Well maintained roads, sidewalks and homes
- Many good jobs/employment opportunities
- A strong tourism industry
- Capable and committed township staff
- Great parks and amenities for families
- Outstanding township services (leaf pick up, snow removal, etc.)
- Safe and secure neighborhoods
- Collaborative relationship with surrounding communities, businesses, and organizations

**Activity Two probed participants to focus on areas Perkins Township needs to improve for those who live, work, and visit. Next, the committee had a productive conversation about some things Perkins Township can work on.**

Weaknesses or items of concern stated:

- Challenges with retaining staff
- Outdated city facilities (namely fire and police)
- The need to improve relations with the local paper
- Providing a variety of housing options
- Community resources like mental health, transportation, and additional amenities for seniors
- Attention to additional economic development opportunities for businesses that would enhance local tourist attractions
- Addressing barriers that exist due to state laws and other restrictions (traffic, crime, etc.)
- Improving the brand/identity of Perkins Township so people know when they are here

# Activities 3-4 Input

**Activity Three called on stakeholders to reflect on some of the problems discussed in Activity 2, and to think of potential solutions to those problems. The chart below shows their responses.**

Needs work	How do we address it?
Employee Retention	Increase salaries, create a better work environment, and increase incentives for employees.
Economic Development	Work with the OTA and state representatives and change the township's ability to use resources including state law changes or authority changes.
Updated Facilities	Create community buy in new locations and secure additional funding.
Public Transportation	Work with CTS and STS on rider education and additional shelters.
Lack of variety of housing options	Identify available land and attract developers.
Improve Perkins Identity	Continue to add signage throughout the township.
Inclusiveness	Retaining additional staff for needed services, having a central place to hold events, and engaging more with the community.
Updated Facilities	Create community buy in for a new location and secure additional funding.

# Activities 3-4 Input

## (Continued)

Needs work	How do we address it?
Traffic Patterns	Secure more funding and getting a traffic study.
Tourist activities	Visit other communities and areas to get ideas about activities.
Media Relations	Having a director of communications for the township.
Drug Taskforce	Have a joint task force with Erie County, Sandusky and Perkins Township regarding drugs in our community, as well as being proactive on drug education.

**Activity Four focused on the future and compiling all of the community input provided throughout the strategic planning process. It was facilitated by Burges and Burges Strategists, and used the feedback from the Activities 1-3 and the online community survey to identify the following five goals:**

1. Maintaining a safe community
2. Working to ensure the elderly population can age in place
3. Providing a wide range of housing options
4. Having a town center
5. Providing community resources

Activity four challenged stakeholders to create goal statements and to specify three initiatives for each of the goals above. Their responses crafted the strategic plan and goals at the beginning of this report, and their full responses are located in Appendix E.

# Online Survey Findings

Burges & Burges Strategists conducted an online survey on behalf of Perkins Township between the dates of June 27 and July 8, 2022 to collect community input to assist the township's strategic planning process. This is a self-selected sample of Perkins Township stakeholders, and while survey results should not be considered statistically valid, they do provide a significant amount of insight into connected stakeholders' perceptions, satisfaction, and priorities.

- 84% of participants indicated they live in Perkins Township, and 29% indicated they work in Perkins Township. 19% both live *and* work in Perkins Township.
- Two-thirds of participants (67%) rate Perkins Township communications positively.
- Nearly all (98%) agree the statement "Perkins Township provides excellent emergency services," with a majority of 54% strongly agreeing.
- Participants feel the least amount of progress has been made in creating a town center or core gathering place, but more than half (56%) think there has been at least some movement toward this goal (20% significant, 36% some).
- Participants feel the most progress has been made in creating a walkable community (46% significant, 40% some) and in improving the township's brand and identity (36% significant, 46% some).

The totality of the online survey results, including graphs, is located in Appendix F at the close of this report.



# Strategic Plan Implementation

In this time of change, Perkins Township was pleased to hear both compliments and critiques of the township. The community, both through stakeholders and the online survey, was able to contribute their thoughtful comments to the process. The research process, in its entirety, led to the five goals that Perkins Township now has to strive towards. Within the strategic plan, duties and responsibilities were assigned in order to ensure accountability. Perkins Township leadership and staff met to finalize the responsible party for each goal, as well as the timeline for each initiative within the five goals. As everything laid out is a priority, the implementation will take time. The entirety of the strategic plan timeline is located in Appendix H.