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**FREMONT**  
Michigan

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# City of Fremont Collaboration Plan 2011

*Prepared to Comply with the State of Michigan Economic Vitality Incentive Program (EVIP)*

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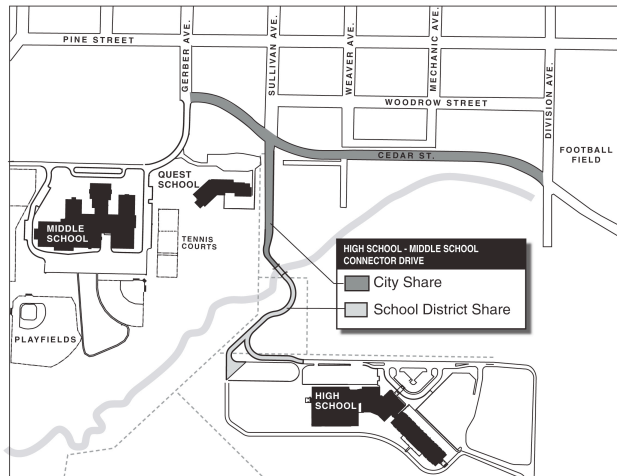
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# Background

**Introduction** “Collaboration” means “working together” to achieve a common purpose. Neighbors may disagree, but they all want a good quality of life for their neighborhood. The same should be said for local governments. Achieving a good quality of life often means combining resources to gain a level of service that would not be possible if each government worked alone. In this era of increasingly scarce resources, it is important to find appropriate ways to combine efforts and resources to reach the common goal of an excellent quality of life for our community.



*Cedar/Sullivan Extension with Fremont Public Schools*

**Purpose** The Collaboration Plan is prepared to comply with the State of Michigan Economic Vitality Incentive Program (EVIP) requirement that every city must prepare a report on collaboration and cooperation. The report must identify current and future collaborative efforts – as well as an estimate of cost savings of each collaboration.

This report will provide a brief history of current collaborations and an estimate of cost savings to the City of Fremont. Unfortunately, any discussion of cost savings will be estimates and therefore extremely imprecise.

Current and future collaborations will be discussed in each of the basic functions of our City’s operations: **Community/Economic Development, Recreation, Public Works and Police/Fire**. In other words, how well does the City work with surrounding entities at everything it does? The future will create more opportunities to work together. After reading this, we welcome any feedback you can provide.

# Collaborations

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## Community/Economic Development

1. Fremont Community Joint Zoning Planning Commission (FCJZPC) – In the mid-1990’s, the City of Fremont, Sheridan Charter Township and Dayton Township created a joint planning committee and developed a multi-jurisdictional master plan that discussed present and future land uses (*2001 Fremont Community Joint Comprehensive Development and Growth Management Plan*). In 2006, the City and the townships formally created the FCJZPC and group began work on a joint zoning ordinance which will become operational in 2012. Moreover, the FCJZPC will share the services of one (1) full-time planning and zoning professional. This position will be reduced from the two (2) full-time professionals which currently serve the City and the townships.
  - a. Future Collaborations: As described above, the FCJZPC will begin become operational – e.g., site plan reviews and zoning enforcement – in 2012 and share the services of a planning and zoning professional which will service the City and the townships.
  - b. Savings: The FCJZPC will save the City approximately \$30,000 per year once the shared position becomes operational because it will share the costs of a professional planner with the other jurisdictions.
2. Newaygo County Economic Development Office (NCEDO) – In 1999, the City eliminated its professional services agreement with a consultant which staffed its Economic Development Commission (EDC) and helped form (NCEDO) – a partnership with public and private entities to help stimulate and serve comprehensive economic development in Newaygo County. The City of Fremont maintains a financial contract with NCEDO and is represented on its Board.
  - a. Future Collaborations: The City will continue its active participation in NCEDO.
  - b. Savings: The City has saved a minimal amount of money – roughly the same amount is annually paid to NCEDO that was paid to the individual economic

consultant. However, we can assume that the City benefits by helping to develop a regional economy – what is good for the County is usually good for Fremont.

3. Fremont High School Building Repurposing – In 2009, voters approved a bond effort from Fremont Public Schools (FPS) to construct a new high school south of the current one located in downtown Fremont. Because the current high school is a prominent visual and active part its downtown, the City has engaged with the community to build a redevelop (“repurpose”) the building once FPS moves into its new campus in the fall of 2012.

Moreover, FPS and the City share an opportunity to improve the surrounding neighborhood – an area that includes various parking lots and a busy intersection located at Main St./Stewart St. The high school building could be redeveloped as senior housing as well as general community recreational center. The City and FPS have collaborated on grants from the Fremont Community Foundation to write feasibility studies for both possible uses. Currently, a private developer is working through due diligence on the housing portion of the project. The Fremont Area Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee is working through possible community-wide uses for the swimming pool, gymnasium and cafeteria.

- a. Future Collaborations: The City will continue to engage FPS to repurpose the original high school campus and surrounding neighborhood.
- b. Savings: The cost of not reusing the original FPS high school campus is immeasurable.

## Recreation

1. Fremont Area Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (FAPRAC) – The City has participated in a committee composed of representatives from Sheridan Charter Township, Sherman Township and the City of Fremont. Fremont Public Schools also attends the meetings and participates in an unofficial capacity. The FAPRAC writes the Five-Year Recreation Plan that is submitted to the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and meets multiple times each year to review and update an annual plan to improve recreational facilities in the Fremont area.

The FAPRAC is currently discussion the creation of an area recreational authority or district that would have a more defined source of revenue and greater coordination of facilities and programming – similar to a model used district libraries.

- a. Future Collaborations: The FAPRAC will continue to explore the feasibility of establishing an area recreational authority and determining a role in repurposing a portion of the old Fremont High School campus.
- b. Savings: The multi-jurisdictional nature of the FAPRAC allows it to score higher on grants submitted to the DNR. As a result, the group more revenue than the City or the townships would independent of one another. The group also gathers valuable input with regard to recreation from a broader section of the community.

## Public Works

1. Intergovernmental Aid Agreement – In 2011, city managers in Newaygo County began informal discussions on ways to collaborate or share services in the wake of difficult budget decisions. Oftentimes municipalities will own equipment or skillsets that other nearby governments do not. In order to promote efficiencies through sharing of resources, the City of White Cloud, City of Newaygo, City of Grant and the City of Fremont entered into an agreement to better share Public Works equipment and labor by setting the ground rules (e.g., methods of reimbursement) for the collaboration.
  - a. Future Collaborations : The agreement was recently finalized and executed, so all four (4) of the Cities in Newaygo County look forward to increased cooperation and efficiencies. Additional governments in the area – even those outside of Newaygo Country – could be added in the future if there is interest.
  - b. Savings: Cost savings will be estimated once the collaborations are fully operationalized. The biggest savings will likely be realized when the Cities are able to provide a service without needing new equipment. Likewise, Cities providing the equipment can generate revenue from equipment they otherwise might not be using at a given point in time.
2. Sheridan Township Sewer Agreement - In the late 1960’s, the City extended sanitary sewer to Sheridan Township and now provides service to 134 residences near or on Fremont Lake. The City bills Sheridan Township for the connections. Sheridan Township has intermittently discussed the merits of extending the sewer to additional residences around Fremont Lake.

The customers in Sheridan Township add revenue for the City’s sanitary sewer enterprise fund and benefit the entire system. Sheridan Township benefits by avoiding the high costs associated with operating a waste water system for relatively few residents. The entire community gains by removing harmful septic leakages associated with dense lakeside development.

- a. Future Collaborations: The City will assist Sheridan Township in extending sanitary sewer services around the lake if there is interest from the township.
  - b. Savings: As mentioned above, savings to the City could be estimated from the additional revenue that it generates from non-City residential sewer customers. Otherwise, the savings from this collaboration is difficult to determine.
3. Cedar St./Sullivan Ave. Extension – The new high school constructed by Fremont Public Schools (FPS) is located on the south side of the City of Fremont. The high school buildings are located on the far northwest portion of the property and a great distance from Stewart Ave (also a state highway - M82) (see map on Page 1). The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) required that FPS create an additional access drive into the northwest portion of their campus.

After discussing a number of alternatives, FPS began discussions with the City to link an access drive from the northwest part of their campus to a proposed extension of Sullivan Ave. The City then designed an extension of Cedar Street to better accommodate school traffic through its residential neighborhoods to the new FPS high school. Construction on the street extensions began in the fall of 2011.

- a. Future Collaborations: The City will continue working with FPS to complete the street extensions and link to its northwest access drive during the winter of 2011 and spring of 2012.
  - b. Savings: The financial gains to the City from this collaboration are difficult to estimate. FPS generated savings because the other access routes were more expensive than the drive route selected by FPS.
4. Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) – The City of Fremont and Fremont Public Schools (FPS) recently collaborated on a planning process to determine the barriers to students walking to schools. As transportation costs become more expensive, FPS was forced to eliminate busing services to students living inside the City. Meanwhile, the City has placed a priority on increasing walking and biking for its residents through annual sidewalk improvements, repairs and expansions – as well as its highly successful Town and Country Path that nearly circles the City.

The City and FPS recently applied for and were awarded a grant for \$338,754 from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to construct new sidewalks, bike paths and bike lanes in various parts of the City to help children safely walk to school.

- a. Future Collaborations – Construction will begin on this project in the spring of 2012. If additional money is available through this grant, the City and FPS will look for additional ways to increase pedestrian traffic and improve safety.
- b. Savings – MDOT does not require a matching amount from the City for the SR2S grant, so the City ultimately saves approximately \$328,754 from this collaboration - in other words, the total awarded grant amount minus the \$10,000 that the City would typically spend in a year to construct or maintain sidewalks.

## Police/Fire

1. Fremont Fire Department – In addition to covering the City, Fremont’s Fire Department serves five (5) townships (Bridgeton, Dayton, Garfield, Sheridan and Sherman) across 120 square miles as well as eight (8) mutual aid departments. In 2010, less than half of the departments overall number of runs were in the City itself – most were spread among the townships and mutual aid areas. The townships reimburse the City per a formula based on population and number of runs made to each respective township.
  - a. Future Collaborations – No additional future collaborations are anticipated. The current arrangement works well given the distance involved in serving the communities in the agreement. In other words, bringing in additional jurisdictions might increase the response times beyond what is practical for effective service.
  - b. Savings – Collaborating with multiple jurisdictions allows the department to generate revenue sufficient to operate with more equipment and personnel than it would by serving only the City.
2. Mutual Aid Agreement/Fire Department – The City is part of the Newaygo County Fire Department Mutual Aid Agreement made up of multiple departments - City of Fremont, City of Newaygo, City of Grant, Croton Township Fire Department, Big Prairie Township Fire Department, City of White Cloud, Village of Hesperia, Lilly Township Fire Department. The Agreement allows participating governments the ability to share equipment and personnel to fight fires and respond to emergencies. The City of Fremont also shares a mutual aid agreement with Muskegon County with the same functions.
  - a. Future Collaborations – No additional future collaborations are anticipated. Additional communities could be added as necessary and appropriate.
  - b. Savings - The unpredictable nature of emergencies makes it difficult to properly staff a fire department in the best of times. If the City faced a major emergency, it

is virtually guaranteed the ability to provide the necessary level of service in the City without having to hire more personnel and purchase more equipment than necessary.

3. Mutual Aid Agreement/Police Department – Similar to the Fire Department agreement, the City participates in a Mutual Aid Agreement with all of the Newaygo County police departments - including the department in the Village of Hesperia (located in adjacent Oceana County).
  - a. Future Collaborations - No additional future collaborations are anticipated. Additional communities could be added as necessary and appropriate.
  - b. Savings – As discussed above, the City is confident that the mutual aid agreement ensures that most emergencies can be covered in a reasonable fashion without additional expenditure.
4. Central Michigan Enforcement Team (CMET) – The City participates in a multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement team composed of personnel from Mecosta, Newaygo, Montcalm and Ionia Counties. The City pays an annual contractual fee to participate. CMET allows a specialized and highly-trained team to provide support to drug-enforcement situations in each community as needed.
  - a. Future Collaborations – No CMET changes are anticipated. Additional communities could be added as necessary and appropriate.
  - b. Savings – As with other collaborative ventures, CMET allows experienced personnel to trouble-shoot drug enforcement problems that otherwise could not be solved by a community acting alone.
5. Indoor Pistol Range – The City of Fremont Police Department enjoys the use of an indoor pistol range at City Hall. The facility is open to neighboring departments to use year-round for training purposes. Last year, six (6) agencies used the pistol range at a rate of \$6 per officer per event to cover the basic costs of operating the facility (electricity, materials, etc).
  - a. Future Collaborations – Operations at the indoor pistol range are anticipated to remain the same over the next year.
  - b. Savings – The City is able to augment the cost of the facility by allowing other departments to train at City Hall. The exact cost of savings is currently unknown.

6. Firefighter Training – The City of Fremont hosts and conducts training six (6) of twelve (12) annual training sessions per year in its facilities to Newaygo County Fire Departments. Because the trainings are held in Fremont, the City’s firefighters are able to better receive necessary training without having to travel to other communities. Moreover, firefighters in neighboring communities – all of whom participate in the Newaygo County Fire Department Mutual Aid Agreement – are better trained to handle situations in each of their respective communities, as well as communities that participate in the Mutual Aid Agreement.
  - a. Future Collaborations – Firefighter trainings are expected to remain consistent with previous years. Additional departments or personnel may be invited to participate.
  - b. Savings – Travel time for Fremont firefighters to other facilities is reduced.