



Pittsfield Charter Township

6201 West Michigan Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Phone: (734) 822-3135 • Fax: (734) 944-6103

Website: www.pittsfield-mi.gov

Office of the Supervisor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pittsfield Charter Township Board of Trustees & Park Commissioner
FROM: Mandy Grewal, Supervisor
DATE: November 18, 2020
SUBJECT: Michigan Avenue Infrastructure Improvement Project

As you should be aware, Pittsfield Township received \$30 million (not \$23 million) for improvements to the Michigan Avenue corridor, between Platt Road and Carpenter, after a decade of advocacy by my office and after the need for the same having been discussed by regional leaders since the 1980s. The first public forum for this project, scheduled for construction in 2022, was held by MDOT on November 12th.

Given the virtual nature of the forum, it is uncertain which elected official were present at this forum. The magnitude of this project (one of, if not the, largest singular infrastructure improvement projects in Washtenaw County), I write this memo to ensure third-party information does not take us down the road of being reactionary, as has been the case a few times since 2018. To that end, I have requested MDOT to provide a presentation specifically for Township elected officials.

Once we have the details for this meeting/presentation, staff will ensure you are notified of the same individually. In the interim, note that the November 12th public forum was hosted at my insistence at a very early and preliminary stage of project design to ensure MDOT heard, first and foremost, from Township residents. As with all other projects in the past that have been under Township control, the goal here is to be pro-active, inclusive, and deliberative in public engagement efforts and, as of now, we are thankful for MDOT's cooperation and participation with the same.

Lastly, note that MDOT mentioned at the public forum that there would be an extension of project boundaries further west of Platt to approximately the public safety building in order to provide for a transition to the upgrades being undertaken at the Platt/Michigan Avenue intersection. This led me to seek some clarification from them on the same. To the best of my understanding, this westward extension will require short-term disruptions to the Michigan Connector greenway (installed in 2015/16 by UMS/Supervisor using general fund monies, as approved by the Board) and will also require an approximately 10' encroachment into a portion of the property we spearheaded for acquisition by Washtenaw County's Natural Area Preservation Program (reference 2014 spring edition of Pittsfield Post).

I have requested MDOT to provide additional details and specifics at the presentation being scheduled for Township elected officials. In the interim, if you'd like to learn more, please visit: <https://www.pittsfield-mi.gov/projects>

DRAFT - To be discussed at November Policy Committee Meeting

October 13, 2020

Mr. Dee Parker, Region Engineer - University Region
2750 N. Elm Rd.
Jackson, MI 49201

RE: US-12 Non-motorized Improvements

Dee:

The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) wishes to express sincere gratitude to you and your office for work towards implementing a multi-modal solution to the US-12 corridor between Platt and US-23. As you know, this project has been a priority for the community for decades. With your support we believe this newer, smoother, safer, more efficient corridor will provide a multitude of community benefits.

Both WATS and Pittsfield Township have strong histories of advocating for complete streets, but more specifically, of prioritizing safety and accessibility. The fruits of this labor and focus can be seen all across Pittsfield Township. With US-12 serving as such a critical corridor in the township, county, and region, we applaud MDOT's efforts to incorporate facilities to provide accessible, safe, non-motorized travel.

Preliminary designs of the corridor include 8 ft. of available space on each side of the road designated as "shoulder". This approach provides more than 74 ft. of roadway for use to automobiles with nothing dedicated to non-motorized travelers. While 8 ft. may provide enough space for locals to retroactively add safe, dedicated non-motorized infrastructure, it does not help the community achieve their preferred goal of creating a separated multi-modal path. The project does include intermittent sidewalks on the south side of the project which will no doubt provide benefit to the community, however, for the admirable 31 million dollars being invested in this corridor, we believe non-motorized accessibility and safety deserves safe, dedicated space.

We understand that on a road such as US-12 8 ft. does not generally rise to the standard of a separated multi-modal path. However, given the context of our community, the numerous community plans calling to prioritize infrastructure for non-motorized travelers, and the inherent equity

POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

City of Ann Arbor • Ann Arbor DDA • Ann Arbor Township • City of Chelsea • City of Dexter
Dexter Township • Eastern Michigan University • Michigan Department of Transportation • City of Milan • Northfield Township •
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University of Michigan • Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners • Washtenaw County Road Commission • City of Ypsilanti • Ypsilanti Township •
• Ex Office: Federal Highway Administration • Southeast Michigan Council of Governments •

considerations necessitated by any public investment, the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study implores you to continue to work with local community and elected officials to find a final design solution which dedicates an appropriate amount of space to non-motorized travelers.

WATS staff look forward to assisting in any way we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Buck', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ryan Buck
Director
Washtenaw Area Transportation Study

cc: Mandy Grewal, Pittsfield Township Supervisor

Road Funding 101

An virtual introduction for local elected officials

Topics to be Covered:

- Road jurisdictions
- Federal, state and local funding sources
- Introduction to asset management

Join us on Zoom

Wednesday, January 27, 9 - 10:30 a.m.

OR

Thursday, January 28, 6 - 7:30 p.m.



bit.ly/WCRCVirtualMeeting



Dial (312) 626-6799,
Meeting ID: 184 341 317



Download the Zoom App,
Meeting ID: 184 341 317

Questions? Contact (734) 761-1500





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Office of the Supervisor

November 12, 2020

Administrative Operations @ Pittsfield Township

As you are likely aware, the number of positive COVID-19 cases are increasing significantly in the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County, and Pittsfield Township.

During the initial onset of the pandemic and spike of cases in the spring, local units of government had clear and consistent direction for conducting our operations as a result of the Governor's leadership and executive orders. With the Supreme Court decision to rescind these orders and replace them with a mix of state, county, and local directives combined with the steadily increasing number of infections, there is some ambiguity on how best we, as a local unit of government, can best strike the balance between the uninterrupted provision of services and protecting public health.

As has been the case since 2009 and, pertinent to this issue since March, I want to provide for full transparency of our work. To that end, I want to, first and foremost, reassure you that we are collaborating very closely with Washtenaw County Public Health to implement contact tracing and other measures such as requiring mask use in an effort to control the spread of infections locally.

As our administrative team members stagger work shifts, work remotely, quarantine, or recover from infections, we ask that you please be patient with us. These measures are intended to avoid situations similar to the City of Warren, which had to recently close their entire offices due to an extreme spike of positive COVID-19 cases within their team of administrative staff.

Please be assured that even as we undertake preventative measures to protect public health, our team remains committed to Setting the Gold Standard in Public Service. We have not missed a beat since the onset of the Great Pandemic and we do not intend to do so now. At the same time, I think it is important for you – the residents of Pittsfield Township – to be fully aware of our current situation so you may continue to partner with us.

It is imperative that we convey to you clearly and unambiguously that your Pittsfield Township officials and team members are available to you when you need them. Even though our administrative offices look and feel different because of the Great Pandemic and even though we will likely have to increase social distancing measures over the next few weeks to protect the health of our employees and public, you will always be able to reach a team member to help answer your questions or address your concerns.

Thank you for your continued partnership with Pittsfield Township. It is because of this partnership we have been so successful in establishing an inclusive and vibrant place for you to live, work, and recreate in. Please remember to be patient and kind with yourselves and each other.

Mandy Grewal, Ph.D.
Supervisor



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Gratitude & Resilience

Typically, November in Pittsfield Township is a month of expressing gratitude and thanks - to the over 100 local government Pittsfield employees that work extremely hard each day to deliver the Gold Standard of Public Service; to the many volunteer residents that serve on Township Boards/Commissions/Committees to help make our community a better place for everyone; and, of course, at a personal level, to our friends and family as we gather together to celebrate Thanksgiving.

As with everything else this year, these traditions that define the month of November will look and feel different as the pandemic counts surge once again! As such, I'd like to write this month about co-joining our need/desire to express gratitude and spend time with friends/family with the need, in 2020, to be not just resilient but emotionally resilient. Pandemic fatigue combined with the inability, for many of us, to connect with family/friends requires a different type of mental strength than the one we conjured up in the early months of the pandemic.

As we enter the colder months without the comfort of long-standing traditions, we must discover a deeper and longer-term source of mental strength that fuels our emotional resilience. For me, that source derives from being part of the Pittsfield community where we have established strong bonds of mutual trust. Some might say it is because Pittsfield has some of the most diverse land uses, housing stock, business sector, and demographics in Washtenaw County. With this, we have learned the basic truth: each of us doesn't have to look the same, vote the same, dress the same, etc., for us to trust that we will all pitch in to make our community a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

Working from that basic and common premise of trust, each one of us has contributed, in our own way, to making Pittsfield home; where we feel safe, welcome, and included. Over the last decade, we have built and earned that trust with each other by: transitioning from a community that historically had a reputation for racial profiling to one where we haven't had a single incident despite major upheavals both regionally and nationally. We've also provided public transit access to most residents with a focus on the most vulnerable without adding a monetary burden on anyone; provided local, healthy food options, especially to the food insecure; invested in infrastructure to provide safe drinking water for all, especially in the oldest residential neighborhoods; improved road conditions in a geographically equitable manner; expanded our housing stock to include multi-unit dwellings; and, most importantly, inculcated a culture of inclusivity and respect for all in Pittsfield Township.

So, let's give gratitude for and derive our resilience from the community that we have built together on the foundation of mutual trust. We are all in this together and will come out of it a more sustainable and equitable community by continuing to trust and work with - not against - each other. Most recent examples of this work are outlined in the fall Pittsfield Post. If you haven't received it due to ongoing postal delays, please check it out at: <https://www.pittsfield-mi.gov/post>

Thank you for your trust and for partnering with each other and Pittsfield Township's local government as we continually work together to enhance the quality of life for all in our community. Let's keep this focus and trust and use it to fuel our emotional resilience while expressing our gratitude in more virtual and unique ways this year. As always, remember to be kind and patient with yourselves and each other. Happy Thanksgiving!!

October 29, 2020

An open letter to our Washtenaw County Community

Dear Washtenaw County community members and visitors,

The days and week ahead include Halloween, a home University of Michigan versus Michigan State football game, and Election Day, as well as countless happenings important to our community, its members, and its institutions. It is an exciting time and an incredibly challenging one. Unfortunately, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 continues to circulate. Little has changed about that. As more activities have resumed, our community is one of many with a significant increase in cases, test positivity and hospitalizations. We must be united in our efforts to reduce the spread of illness and lessen the negative impact of COVID-19 in our community.

We the undersigned – including our elected officials, largest universities, and health authorities – urge everyone to work together to prevent the spread of illness whenever possible. Together we can make sure community events happen in new and safer ways. We can celebrate, compete, and exercise our right to vote as safely as possible. But we must do so together and using the best prevention strategies currently available.

COVID-19 is circulating, and cases are increasing in our community. Everyone should be alert to the possibility of exposure if out in public or in contact with others. The virus is primarily spread through direct, person-to-person contact. Social gatherings or events without precautions account for most local infections or exposures.

Everyone should continue to follow all public health guidance:

- Make absolutely sure you do not have any symptoms before going out in public or having contact with others. Don't assume symptoms are allergies or unrelated to COVID-19. **If you have ANY symptoms, stay home and away from others.**
- If you have had known exposure to someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days, stay home and in quarantine. A negative test during quarantine does not clear you from quarantine.

If you go out or are in contact with others:

- Wear a face covering over your nose and mouth. The only exceptions should be when you are eating, if you are alone, or only with others already in your household.
- Keep at least six feet away from others not in your household.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- If you start to feel ill or experience symptoms, isolate yourself from others as soon as possible. [Seek testing](#) and continue to stay away from others while you wait for your results.

Public health guidance for gatherings and events:

- In-person gatherings increase the risk of becoming infected with or spreading COVID-19. Plan to celebrate or cheer from the safety of your own home, and not with large groups of people. Be mindful of the potential exposure of other fans or your family and friends.
- Outdoor gatherings in the cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti are limited to no more than 25 people under [local health orders](#); we strongly encourage smaller groups. Indoor gatherings remain limited to 10 or fewer people not in the same household under [state health orders](#).

Gameday:

- Tailgating is prohibited in the lots surrounding the U-M stadium and strongly discouraged everywhere. There are no public ticket sales.
- There is currently a [stay-in-place order](#) for University of Michigan undergraduate students because of the steep increase in cases associated with U-M. Students and others are required to stay home and if they watch the game, to do so with their households.
 - Find virtual ways to connect, cheer and celebrate.
 - For students who will be going home for the Thanksgiving holiday, you can keep your family and friends at home safer by being as safe as possible now.
- While Eastern Michigan University is on the road for its first two football games on Nov. 4 and 11, it has a home game on Nov. 18. Tailgating on the EMU campus or in the parking lots around Rynearson Stadium is prohibited. There will be no guest admissions - only ticketed family members of participants will be permitted in the stadium.

Halloween:

- Halloween is not cancelled but should look different this year. Celebrate at home, virtually or using face coverings, distance, and frequent hand cleaning [to be as safe as possible](#).
 - If you decide to trick-or-treat or hand out treats, use face coverings and avoid gathering or close contact with others not in your household. Stay outdoors.
 - Find creative ways to keep distance, such as “handing” out candy from behind a 6-foot table or other marker.
 - Halloween activities are not exempt from the stay-in-place order for U-M students.
 - As with all events and activities, do not participate if you are having any symptoms or if you have been exposed to COVID-19 within the last 14 days.

Voting:

- Consider voting early or do so on election day as [safely as possible](#).
- Same-day registration is available in your city or township clerk office up until 8 p.m. on Election Day. Check your registration and find your clerk's office at Michigan.gov/Vote.

We strongly request and hope that all community members comply with local public health orders voluntarily, but these orders will be enforced if necessary. Failure to follow local public health orders are subject to misdemeanor charges, monetary penalties of \$500 to \$1000, and students may face student conduct violations.

We all wish for the best for our community now and always. We are at our best when we work together and value and protect one another to the best of our collective ability. We appreciate everyone's support and cooperation – while still celebrating, cheering, and voting as safely as possible.

Most sincerely,

Jimena Loveluck, MSW
Health Officer
Washtenaw County Health Department

Jason Morgan
Chair
Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners

Debbie Dingell
United States Congresswoman
Michigan's 12th District

James M. Smith, Ph.D.
President
Eastern Michigan University


Mandy Grewal, Ph.D.
Supervisor
Pittsfield Township

Lois Richardson
Mayor
City of Ypsilanti

Brenda Stumbo
Township Supervisor
Ypsilanti Township

Christopher Taylor
Mayor
City of Ann Arbor

Mark Schlissel MD, PhD
President
University of Michigan

 ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY	GENERAL ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS APPLICATION: All County Roads				
TITLE: Tree Policy	RESOLUTION NUMBER	SUPERCEDE	EFFECTIVE DATE	SUPERCEDE	POLICY NUMBER

INTENT

The Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) has a statutory duty to maintain a county road system that is reasonably safe and convenient for public travel. While carrying out this duty, either through the course of maintenance activities, improving roadside safety or constructing road improvements, sometimes trees must be trimmed or removed by WCRC staff, its contractors, or third parties under permit.

The intent of this policy is to provide guidance to staff making decisions regarding necessary tree removals and trimming while acknowledging the importance of trees to the Washtenaw County community.

BACKGROUND

The road right-of-way serves many purposes for road users. The roadside provides space to safely escape potential crashes or collisions, improves sight distances, offers space for maintenance activities such as snow removal and snow storage, provides an area that allows for proper road drainage and creates a sense of openness that contributes to driving ease and freedom from strain.

The roadside is also a common location for trees. Many of Washtenaw County's roads are valued for their tree-lined beauty and environmental features. While trees are community assets for these reasons, they are also the single most often-struck fixed objects along the roadside. Crashes involving fixed objects often result in serious injuries or fatalities.

Roadside trees frequently have branches that grow over the roadway and may interfere with or cause damage to large vehicles such as school buses, fire trucks and ambulances, garbage, and delivery trucks, farm equipment and snowplows. These trees also may shade the road surface which can create areas for moisture to collect on the roadway leading to potentially icy road conditions and potholes. Tree trimming allows for air circulation and sunshine to access the roadway, leading to safer conditions and a longer lasting facility.

The sometimes-competing interests of roadside safety and tree preservation must be taken into consideration and balanced as WCRC fulfills its statutory obligations and serves the traveling public in Washtenaw County.

PLANNING AND DESIGN

In all planning, design and maintenance activities staff will attempt to minimize impact to trees whenever possible, but there will be times when trees along public roads need to be trimmed or removed.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Staff will develop and follow procedures that reflect best environmental practices for tree trimming and/or removal. Examples include tree trimming practices that reduce susceptibility to oak wilt and following state/federal tree removal seasonal restrictions due to Indiana and Northern Long-Eared Bat roosting.

TREE REMOVAL CRITERIA

This policy shall apply to trees measuring six (6) inches or greater in diameter at a point four and one-half (4 ½) feet above the ground. Trees less than six (6) inches in diameter and greater than two (2) inches in diameter may be removed in the sound discretion of staff. Trees less than two (2) inches in diameter are considered to be brush and may be removed under the Roadside Vegetation Control Program.

The following additional criteria will be considered by staff to determine if tree trimming or tree removal is necessary:

1. **Drainage and Road Improvements** – Whether the tree(s) are in conflict with the construction or maintenance of necessary drainage and/or road improvements.
2. **Crash Frequency** – Whether there are specific locations or road segments with evidence of vehicle-tree crashes either from actual crash reports or scarring of the trees.
3. **Intersections and Railroads** – Whether the tree(s) are obstructing adequate sight distance at intersections of public roads or railroad crossings.
4. **Horizontal and Vertical Curves** – Whether the tree(s) are located in a target position on the outside of curves, obstructing sight distance on the inside of curves or overhanging the road and obstructing sight distance on hillcrests and sags.
5. **Shading** – Whether shading from the tree(s) is causing structural deterioration and/or intermittent ice or snow accumulation on the traveled portion of the road.
6. **Fallen Trees** – Whether the tree(s) have fallen within the traveled portion of the roadway. WCRC will prioritize removing trees, limbs or branches that have fallen across the traveled portion of the roadway.
7. **Dead Trees** – If the tree(s) are dead and within the public road right-of-way, a property owner may contact WCRC to have the tree(s) removed. Tree removal will be scheduled by the district foreman as time and resources allow.

8. **Potentially Hazardous Trees** – The Washtenaw County Highway Engineer retains the right to remove any tree(s) within the public road right-of-way which may pose a safety hazard to the public.

NOTIFICATION

Staff will follow the Community Engagement Policy and Procedure when significant tree trimming or tree removal is required in a specific area to ensure that appropriate community engagement occurs in a timely and professional manner.

WCRC will also make a reasonable effort to provide notification to a property owner when tree(s) will be removed from the right-of-way adjacent to his or her property. Included with the notification will be a wood disposal form that the property owner may return to WCRC stating whether the property owner would like to keep the wood from the felled tree or have WCRC remove it from the premises and dispose of it.

If a property owner wants to have a tree located in the public road right-of-way removed, trimmed or pruned, the property owner must seek WCRC permission through the permit application process before the owner engages in any such work. The permit application fee may be waived at WCRC's discretion.

TREE REPLACEMENT

When extensive tree removal is required on a specific road improvement project, WCRC staff may explore opportunities for tree replacement consistent with project design standards, statutory requirements, funding restrictions and public safety.

When allowed by funding sources, WCRC staff may seek grant opportunities for tree planting and replacement. WCRC staff will also support grant opportunities as requested by other organizations and consistent with the foregoing criteria.

Note: Revenue from the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF), WCRC's primary source of road funding, is restricted and may only be used for transportation purposes, which does not include replacing trees removed by the road commission

A property owner may plant trees or install other landscaping within the public road right-of-way only under WCRC permit and subject to current WCRC Procedures and Regulations for Permit Activities.

THIRD-PARTY TREE WORK

WCRC will make permit holders aware of this policy and request compliance regarding any third-party tree trimming and tree removal work, where practicable.