



Great Neighborhoods





INTRODUCTION

Similar to many other suburban growth communities in Southeast Michigan, Pittsfield Township has developed with a significant amount of single-use residential neighborhoods. While these areas may have been successful when originally planned for and developed, current land use and housing trends indicate they will not be sustainable forever. In other words, it is imperative that the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan create a balance between current and future housing needs, as we face the challenge of retaining and attracting young talent on the one hand, while also addressing the needs of a growing number of seniors on the other. In addition, as Pittsfield moves towards establishing dense, mixed-used development nodes there is a need to determine what residential types and units will be integrated into these sub-areas.

We acknowledge and respect the rural heritage of our community while at the same time planning for the needs of tomorrow. Pittsfield is home to people of different ages, interests, lifestyles, abilities, and incomes and all of their needs should be equally considered when making land use decisions relative to housing types and density. Results of the community survey and market research tells us that more and more people are choosing where they live based on the character of a neighborhood and the amenities it offers. There is no one size house or neighborhood that fits all.

The fact that the local public schools in Pittsfield Township are rated among some of the best in the state and nation makes its housing market very attractive. In fact, nearly 50% of respondents to the community survey cited local schools as being a positive attribute for Pittsfield. Consequently, the existing housing stock and residential neighborhoods are a relative strength for our community. The 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan builds upon and supports the existing neighborhood framework while also seeking opportunities to improve on the diversity of housing stock by including new neighborhood types for people of all ages, incomes, and lifestyles.

“Over 41% of the respondents chose “nice neighborhoods” as the reason they reside in Pittsfield”



Residential areas throughout the Township

In response to the community survey, nearly 80% of residents indicated living in a single-family housing unit, with approximately 60% of the respondents living in a unit built on a less than one acre lot. Residents went on to indicate that, in their opinion, the Township should not build more single-family units but hold steady with the existing stock.

However, there was a desire to see more affordable single-units and senior housing. With the understanding that single-unit dwellings are an integral part of our community's housing combined with an attempt to control sprawl, our aim is to build out existing neighborhoods in such areas as the: Ann Arbor-Saline & Lohr Road area; State & Ellsworth Road area; Washtenaw Avenue (between US-23 & Golfside); and Carpenter Road between Washtenaw Avenue & I-94.

In addition, the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan commits to ensuring multi-modal transportation connections from its residential neighborhoods to employment, retail, commercial, cultural, recreational and open spaces.



KEY CONCEPTS

SUPPORT & ENHANCE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

As noted, the existing housing options and quality of neighborhoods is one of the major positive attributes of Pittsfield Township. The primary aim is to ensure the continued vibrancy of our residential neighborhoods by addressing issues such as: neighborhood cut-through and speeding traffic, and preventative maintenance of roads.

Pittsfield acknowledges that for the most part, existing residential neighborhoods are in relatively stable condition. We have divided our neighborhoods into two categories: *stable* and *mature*. These *stable* neighborhoods can be further enhanced by provision of amenities like increased non-motorized connections, encouraging energy efficient building improvements, and allowing for additional features like accessory dwelling units. Some of the more *mature* and older neighborhoods in the Township can benefit from these and other additional enhancements such as infill development and empowering aging in place. More can also be done to buffer existing neighborhoods from adjacent commercial or retail land uses by providing for additional green spaces.

STABLE

These neighborhoods are generally consistent with the land use patterns recommended by this 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan. These residential developments are in stable condition and are not planned for change in use or character.

MATURE

These neighborhoods are consistent with the future development recommendations of this Plan. These neighborhood areas either are or can expect to experience residential reinvestment based on relative property values as well as the mixture of dates when homes were constructed in the neighborhood. Parts of these neighborhoods were constructed without some of the modern amenities desired by residents.

As noted, this Plan is committed to reducing sprawl and thus advocates for limiting future residential development to either the mixed-use development nodes or existing neighborhoods. Preserving the existing built environment and focusing new development in these areas, will permit the preservation of open spaces and natural resources in the Township. Preserving the investments that have already been made and reinforcing those neighborhoods are of the utmost importance to creating a sustainable and diverse community.

RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS TO STABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

- 1** Provide non-motorized connections.
- 2** Maintain existing infrastructure.
- 3** Encourage energy efficient building improvements and other 'green' enhancements.
- 4** Enforce building and site maintenance related codes.
- 5** Permit "granny flats" and accessory apartments, as appropriate.
- 6** The Township will support neighborhood associations and organizations in their efforts to improve these neighborhoods and create engaging civic activities for residents.

RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS TO MATURE NEIGHBORHOODS

- 1** Provide non-motorized connections.
- 2** Maintain existing infrastructure.
- 3** Encourage energy efficient building improvements and other 'green' enhancements.
- 4** Enforce building and site maintenance related codes.
- 5** Permit "granny flats" and accessory apartments, as appropriate.
- 6** The Township will support neighborhood associations and organizations in their efforts to improve these neighborhoods and create engaging civic activities for residents.
- 7** Identify opportunities to integrate parks and recreational facilities.
- 8** Develop building regulations that permit expansion and modernization of structures while at the same time preserving the established character of these neighborhoods.

PROVIDE HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD DIVERSITY

There will always be people who choose to live in a rural environment, people who want to live in a suburban environment, and people who want to live in an urban environment. Pittsfield acknowledges the need for all these choices while at the same time providing new opportunities to develop residential units as part of mixed-use nodes. Pittsfield recognizes that it must position itself to provide the housing and neighborhood options desired by current and future residents to ensure a successful economy and a vibrant community. Therefore, we must plan for new residential neighborhood types, such as mixed-use and transit-oriented developments (TOD), historic districts, senior housing, and higher-density single-unit residential developments, while simultaneously preserving and reinforcing existing high quality neighborhoods, open spaces, and natural features.

ENCOURAGE AGING IN PLACE

The mixture of housing types planned for Pittsfield will encourage the concept of aging in place. This concept makes it possible for a person to remain in the community throughout her entire life and have her housing needs met at each stage of her life cycle. Throughout her life cycle, a person who is aging may move from the large two-story house where she raised her family, into a smaller ranch style home for retirement, and then onto an assisted living community. Providing for a diversity of housing stock gives people the opportunity to shift from one housing type to another while remaining in the Township. By acknowledging that not everyone can or is willing to live in the same type of home or neighborhood environment, Pittsfield will position itself to attract and retain residents in the future. One step towards creating an environment that gives individuals the opportunity to age in place requires allowing for clustered nodes of senior housing that are well-served by amenities and multiple modes of transportation (including public transit).

INCLUDE RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN MIXED-USE NODES

Residential units within mixed-use developments allow for first-floor retail or commercial with offices and/or apartments above. They also allow for duplexes and condominium developments that offer a range of affordability for varying incomes and ages. Fostering this type of residential development has the advantage of encouraging people from different cultural, age, ethnic, ability, and income groups to reside in one residential neighborhood thereby expanding upon a neighborhood's diversity and vitality.

Such residential developments, invariably, rely on a robust transportation network to ensure their viability and success. In other words, these mixed-use areas require access to not just safe roadways but also public transit, sidewalks, and pedestrian and bike crossings. Close proximity to amenities such as retail outlets, restaurants, entertainment, and recreational opportunities contribute to ensuring the success of such diverse neighborhood structures, and create the density necessary to support a comprehensive transit system.



St. Louis Park, MN, mixed-use development
SOURCE: <http://www.tcbmag.com/>



Rowhouses in Washington, D.C. are an example of urban townhouses
SOURCE: <http://www.residentialarchitect.com/>



Rockville, MD is an example of mixed-use development that includes residential units above commercial spaces
SOURCE: <http://www.rockvilletownsquare.com/gallery/>

CREATE INCREASED CONNECTIVITY

A livable community “...is the sum of the factors that add up to a community’s quality of life – including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities.”

- Partners for Livable Communities

Pittsfield Township is home to or within close proximity to many elements that make neighborhoods “livable.” Historically, however, linkages to these elements or the inclusion of them in new developments or in close proximity to residential areas has not always been a priority. Pittsfield will work with local institutions, businesses, neighboring communities, and other agencies to ensure all areas of the Township are “livable”. As new residential areas are created and existing neighborhoods mature, emphasis will be on ensuring the crucial livable elements, such as easy access to good schools, employment centers, commercial and retail outlets, recreational facilities, libraries, arts and cultural institutions, and entertainment opportunities, and a variety of transportation options are provided.

The availability of and access to multi-modal transportation options is imperative to the future desirability of neighborhoods in Pittsfield Township. Increased residential density will be focused within the dense, mixed-use development nodes. These development nodes were identified through the community survey because of their established development patterns and infrastructure, location and proximity to multiple transportation options, and potential for leveraging available amenities. These areas are primed for redevelopment as walkable nodes adding diversity and destinations to the Township.



Top: Township street in the autumn
Middle: Montibeller Park
Bottom: Platt Road Greenway



KEY CONCEPTS

Support & Enhance Existing Residential Neighborhoods

Provide Housing & Neighborhood Diversity

GOALS

Support and enhance existing neighborhoods in the Township.

Provide the highest quality infrastructure to the community.

Continue to provide a variety of housing and neighborhood options.

OBJECTIVES

1. Reinforce or promote the viability of developed residential areas by encouraging housing rehabilitation, and creating regulations that permit the modernization and renovation of older housing stock.
2. Encourage the preservation and reuse of historic buildings and sites.
3. Revitalize the housing in mature neighborhoods.
4. Buffer existing neighborhoods from commercial uses through design and development standards.

1. Establish benchmarks that permit regular review of the quality of service and infrastructure provided. Services and infrastructure that should be reviewed include:
 - Utilities (sewer, water, and rubbish)
 - Public safety (police, fire, E-911 dispatch)
 - Transportation (roads, pathways, sidewalks, transit, and transit centers)
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Schools
 - Wireless and fiber optic communications and internet
2. Revise the Township’s Capital Improvement Plan, as necessary, to ensure it is consistent with this 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan.
3. Make it a priority to maintain and upgrade existing utilities in areas that are currently developed as or planned for higher intensity land uses.

1. Continue to respect the desire of residents to live in a variety of environments (rural, suburban, or urban) by encouraging development and preservation to occur in targeted areas of the Township.
2. Encourage aging in place by providing housing choices that allow residents to live their full life cycle in the Township.
3. Encourage the development of mixed-uses to provide opportunities for residents to live, work, and play that are within walking distance from each other.
4. Recognize areas of a community that provide activities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week are desirable to many existing and potential residents.



KEY CONCEPTS

Create Increased Connectivity

GOALS

Encourage racial, ethnic, age, and socioeconomic diversity within neighborhoods.

Provide safe, desirable and affordable housing choices that meet the needs of all Township residents.

Collaborate with institutions, businesses, neighboring communities and other agencies and stakeholders to ensure all areas of the Township are adequately served by multi-modal connections.

OBJECTIVES

1. Expand the stock of housing options for all ages, abilities, incomes, and lifestyles in a manner that avoids sprawl.
2. Ensure that areas of the Township are zoned to enable clustered nodes of senior housing located in close proximity to amenities and services.
3. Ensure that Zoning Ordinance regulations provide the flexibility necessary to accommodate senior housing (i.e. accessory dwelling units, increased density, and part of mixed-use developments).
4. Create more public gathering spaces for members of the community to interact and communicate with each other.
5. Plan for amenities that are desirable to the “creative class” of workers.
6. Discourage the development of homogenous residential developments by requiring a mixture of housing styles and price points.
7. Support organizations that provide services that help all residents meet their basic needs (e.g., Meals on Wheels, AATA, Foodgatherers)
8. Celebrate resident’s ethnic and cultural backgrounds by creating regulations which permit the installation of art and variety in architectural styles.

1. Encourage and incentivize affordable housing and senior housing opportunities near fixed transportation routes.
2. Promote equal housing opportunities consistent with federal, state, and local fair housing laws.
3. Require that parks and other open spaces are accessible to all residents.

1. Promote walkable and bikeable destinations and “nodes of development” (mixed-use commercial and residential, parks) adjacent to existing neighborhoods.
2. Ensure the Zoning Ordinance encourages (not simply permits), greater densities and mixed-uses in targeted areas in the Township.
3. Provide amenities that are consistent with a neighborhood’s typology. For example, sidewalks may not be appropriate in rural areas of the Township, while they are imperative to the viability of suburban and urban areas. Pocket parks may not be appropriate in rural areas, whereas they should be provided in urban and suburban areas.
4. Make sure that neighborhoods are developed within close proximity to amenities that make our community ‘livable’ such as schools, libraries, employment centers, parks, cultural institutions, etc.

2020 Sustainable Vision

GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS



In 2015, Washtenaw County's Office of Community and Economic Development released a report titled, "Housing Affordability and Economic Equity." This report highlighted the fact that Pittsfield Township is the only community within Washtenaw County's 'urban core' that has a diverse set of housing stock. In fact, the report noted that Pittsfield Township was providing a middle ground for home buyers and renters with a need to add only 342 more affordable units in the next 20 years.

The fact that Pittsfield Township offers a diverse set of high quality housing stock is borne out not only by regional studies, such as the "Housing Affordability and Economic Equity" report, but also by the fact that 58% of the survey respondents, when asked what their three most significant reasons for living in Pittsfield were, responded by noting cost/value of home as their top choice. This was followed by 'like the school district', 'nice neighborhood' and 'like the community.' 'Like the community', was identified by 22% of survey respondents as a reason to live in Pittsfield in the last master plan, about eight years ago. It jumped to nearly 30% in this master plan survey and is now the fourth most significant reason for living in Pittsfield Township. Even so, survey respondents want to ensure that



improving the appearance of residential neighborhoods (sidewalks, street lights, etc.) continues to be highly prioritized by Pittsfield Township for the next 5 to 10 years.

While there is a desire for mixed housing types that incorporate single family, condominiums and apartments, the issue of density is tricky. Pittsfield has typically provided for single family housing in areas that are not immediately adjacent to other housing types or land uses. However, as mixed use areas have developed in the last seven years, these buffers and barriers are being reduced. The provision, as outlined in the Zoning Ordinance, for greater buffering from existing residential developments should address concerns around this issue as we implement the sustainable vision for mixed-use areas that co-locates different housing stock close to such services as retail, art/culture, and restaurants inter-connected via multiple modes of transportation. This sustainable vision not only maximizes use of existing infrastructure and grey spaces but also reduces sprawl and need for more roads, utilities, and other services further and further into more rural areas.

With an average score of about 4.0 (on a scale of 1-5), the Working Group participants appreciated the diversity of housing stock in Pittsfield along with the progress made around provision of non-motorized amenities and traffic calming solutions within residential neighborhoods since 2014. They expressed a desire to make the pathways and other non-motorized amenities more interactive by providing gathering spaces and better access to destinations along with providing for signage at major entry points into Pittsfield Township.

The goals for this chapter have, for the most part, been retained from the 2010 Master Plan, while the objectives associated with each of the goals have been updated to reflect not just the progress Pittsfield has made but also to incorporate future needs around housing in our community and the region.



KEY CONCEPTS

Support & Enhance Existing Residential Neighborhoods

Provide Housing & Neighborhood Diversity

GOALS

Support and enhance existing neighborhoods in the Township.

Provide the highest quality infrastructure to the community.

Continue to provide a variety of housing and neighborhood options.

OBJECTIVES

1. Continue to establish additional historic districts and look for other ways to highlight Pittsfield's historical heritage.
2. Maintain buffering between residential neighborhoods and other land uses through, among other things, native plantings.
3. Continued implementation of rental inspection and code enforcement to provide for safe and secure neighborhoods.
4. Provide better non-motorized access to park and green spaces from existing and mature neighborhoods, especially in the northeast and northwest.

1. Establish benchmarks that provide for regular review of the quality of service and infrastructure, including a review of Utilities, Public Safety, Transportation, and Parks infrastructure.
2. Better signage and access to existing park spaces, especially the Pittsfield Preserve, by providing more trails and non-motorized amenities between residential and park/green spaces.

1. Continue encouraging housing that meets the needs of seniors and youth both at mixed-uses development areas and otherwise that provide pedestrian access to services.
2. Continue to respect the desire of residents to live in a variety of environments (rural, suburban, or urban) by encouraging development and preservation to occur in targeted areas of the Township.
3. Very important to encourage aging in place by providing housing choices that allow residents to live their full life cycle in the Township.



KEY CONCEPTS

GOALS

Encourage racial, ethnic, age, and socioeconomic diversity within neighborhoods.

Create Increased Connectivity

Provide safe, desirable and affordable housing choices that meet the needs of all Township residents.

Provide multi-modal connections to and from residential areas.

OBJECTIVES

1. Continue expanding the stock of housing options for all ages, abilities, incomes, and lifestyles in a manner that avoids sprawl.
2. Continue obtaining public feedback on development proposals to ensure incorporation of residents needs and desires.
3. Create more public gathering spaces that incorporate public art in order to facilitate wider public interactions and engagement.
4. Support organizations (e.g., Meals on Wheels, AAATA, Foodgatherers) and provide amenities (e.g., Farmers Market) that provide services that help all residents meet their basic needs.

1. Require that parks and other open spaces are accessible to all residents.
2. Continue promoting equal housing opportunities consistent with federal, state, and local fair housing laws.
3. Further expand senior and affordable housing along transit routes.

1. In compliance with the Zoning Ordinance, provide for non-motorized amenities.
2. Make sure that neighborhoods are developed within close proximity to amenities that make our community 'livable' such as schools, libraries, employment centers, parks, cultural institutions, etc.