# Appendix F
# 2015 SEMCOG Sponsored Walkability/Bikeability Audit

SEMCOG

# MEMO

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DATE December 18, 2015

TO: Mandy Grewal, Supervisor, Pittsfield Township
Matthew Bourke, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Pittsfield Township

CC: Mark Ferrall, Transportation Planner, Washtenaw Area Transportation Study
Chris Gulock, Planner, MDOT-University Region Office

FROM: Brian Pawlik & Alex Bourgeau

SUBJECT: Bicycle and Pedestrian Assessment-Platt and Carpenter Road Corridors

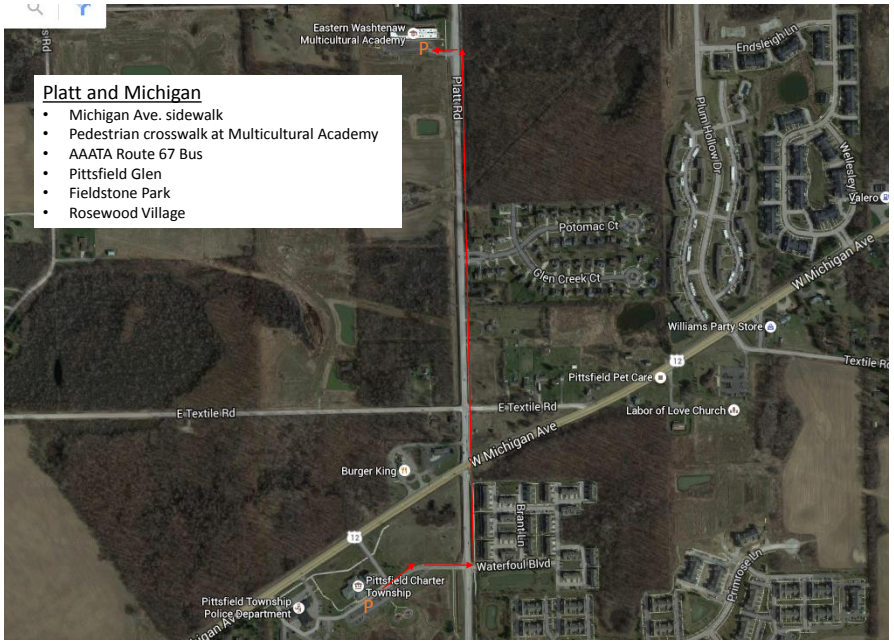
It was a pleasure to meet with you and other Pittsfield Township stakeholders on September 15, 2015 to discuss your progress in improving walkability and bikeability in the Platt and Carpenter Road Corridors. Below is a summary of our findings.

1. The Platt Road Corridor has great north-south connectivity, allowing bicycles and pedestrians to travel relatively safely between the City of Ann Arbor and Pittsfield Township Hall via a combination of shared-use side path and bike lanes and sidewalks. With the recent addition of bus service the corridor is clearly on its way to becoming a complete street.

   Crossing roadways still remains a challenge. With both bus stops and activity centers (i.e., schools, parks, residential subdivisions) on both sides of the street and the Platt Road Greenway on the east side of the road, there is compelling need for more marked crossing locations. SEMCOG staff offers the following advice:

   a. Consider adding a median to Platt Road during future road work. As an FHWA proven countermeasure, medians provide direct safety benefits to all roadway users and aesthetic value. In addition to providing safe refuge for pedestrians and bicyclists, medians can help serve as a barrier to illegal crossing behavior through the use of vegetation and landscaping swales. These medians could also be enhanced with green infrastructure elements like rain gardens or native plantings to address storm water runoff.

   b. Consider adding enhanced crosswalk elements as part of any sanctioned midblock crossing location, such as high-visibility crosswalk markings, rectangular rapid flashing bacons and HAWK signals, similar to what has been done in the




Carpenter Road Corridor. This is especially important near the Eastern Washtenaw Multicultural Academy. The FHWA document, Safety Effects of Marked Versus Unmarked Crosswalks at Uncontrolled Locations Final Report and Recommended Guidelines, can assist you in determining the most appropriate treatment.

c. Since the township is interested in transforming the intersection of Michigan and Platt Road into a community space, consider the following options for improving crossing conditions:

   i. As part of future land redevelopment, consider getting easements or purchase right-of-way to widen the sidewalk ramp at the southeast corner of Michigan Avenue and Platt Road. As part of the Platt Road Greenway, this section of sidewalk will get a mix of nonmotorized uses necessitating a wider operating space for bi-directional traffic.

   ii. As the area develops, consider removing pedestrian crossing push buttons at Platt Road and Michigan Avenue and instead require a pedestrian phase as part of the normal operation of the traffic signal. Pedestrian pushbuttons can work well in areas of low pedestrian volumes, but require additional maintenance and education to be effective. Given the township's plans for mixed uses in this urban town center, there will likely be enough pedestrian traffic to warrant the pedestrian phase.

   iii. If a roundabout is to be installed at the intersection of Platt and Michigan, ensure the roundabout is designed with pedestrian friendly design elements as outlined in AASHTO's Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 4th Edition (popularly known as the AASHTO Bike Book), such as a maximum vehicle entry speed of 20 to 30 mph. Such elements will ensure bicyclist and pedestrians can cross the intersection safely and effectively.

d. While the Township has done excellent work formalizing and raising awareness of secondary (side) street crossings, stops signs are prolific on the Platt Road Greenway and should be considered for removal or replacement with another more appropriate form of traffic control. Per the AASHTO Bike Book,

   *"the least traffic control that is effective should be selected… Installing unwarranted or unrealistically restrictive controls on path approaches in an attempt to "protect" path users can result in path users disregarding the signs and other traffic control devices at the intersection. This can lead to a loss of respect for traffic control at more critical locations."*

   Since most bicyclists treat stops signs as yield signs, it may prove more effective to use yield signs or pavement markings (that warn of an upcoming crossings) and reserve the stop signs for major street crossings that do not have signals.

2. Consider providing bicycle and pedestrian connection along Textile Road, connecting the Platt Road Greenway with the Lohr-Textile Greenway. This greenway is part of Adventure Cycling's Underground Railroad Bicycle Route, a route that connects Pittsfield (and Ann Arbor) with Canada (via Detroit and Marine City) to the north and Mobile, Alabama to the south.

   While an AASHTO compliant shared-use path may not be feasible along Textile Road within the Pittsfield Preserve, wide paved shoulders could provide this connection at a fraction of the price. SEMCOG and WATS can assist the Township with submitting grant applications such as the Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF).

3. Since it is the goal of the Township to be a truly multi-modal, complete streets community; as funds allow, consider additional winter maintenance activities such as salting and snow removal to promote year-round active transportation. Signs, specifically stating that sidewalks and paths have "No Winter Maintenance" give the false impression that the Township only values walking and bicycling in non-winter months.

4. Packard Road has seen some good pedestrian improvements, including reconstructed sidewalks and a midblock crossing. Packard Road could be further enhanced by:

   a. Removing the Bike Route signs associated with the Packard Road sidewalks. While some bicyclist may use them, sidewalks do not meet the needs of a shared-use facility as defined by AASHTO—there will likely be many safety conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians on these sidewalks. Furthermore, since sidewalks are designed for pedestrians, faster moving bicycle traffic is more prone to crashes with motor vehicles at driveways and intersections.

   b. Widening the paved shoulders on both sides of Packard Road to accommodate bicycle travel. Where roads have curb and gutter, guard rail, or other obstructions, at least five-foot wide shoulders are needed for one-way bicycle travel. If the shoulders are five-feet wide, they could be marked as bike lanes. While further research is needed, these wide shoulders/bike lanes may be created by either narrowing the motor vehicle travel lanes, reconstructing the curb and gutter closer to the adjacent sidewalks or a combination of the two.

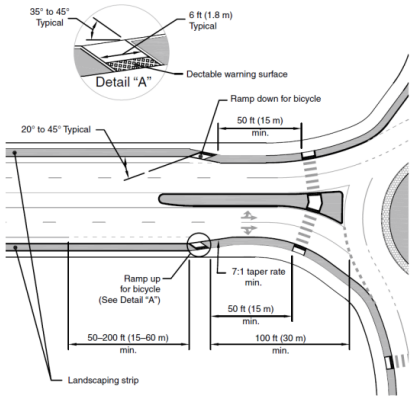
5. Carpenter Road has seen bicycle and pedestrian improvements including bike lanes and mid-bock pedestrian crossings. It is our understanding that these improvements were possible by reducing the motor vehicle lane widths to 10.5 feet and that anecdotal evidence is leaning towards a successful project. SEMCOG staff offer these actions for follow-up:
   a. Work with SEMCOG, WATS and the Washtenaw County Road Commission to conduct a before-after safety study of the project. If the evidence proves there has not been any significant decreases in safety, this project could be held up as a

great regional example of a "Lane Diet" and add to the growing body of evidence that there is little or no safety difference between 10-foot, 11-foot, and 12-foot motor-vehicle lanes on urban/suburban surface roadways.

b. Work with Washtenaw County Road Commission and MDOT on standard treatments for HAWK signals and other pedestrian beacons. This will provide traffic control uniformity and consistency throughout the corridor, township, and county. Examples include how to best mitigate wheelchair navigation concerns in the median refuge area and how to inform motorists of how they are expected to drive in these types of crossings.

c. Provide an enhanced treatment for bicycles traveling through the Washtenaw Avenue Intersection. Currently, the Carpenter Road bike lanes end just south of Washtenaw Avenue, with little guidance for bicyclists or motorists. Some examples to be explored include:

   i. If there is enough room, continuing the bike lane through the intersection to Hogback.
   ii. If there is not enough room, marking the turn lane as a shared lane, via "sharrow" markings.
   iii. Providing bicycle "off-ramps" from the bike lanes to the sidewalk so bicyclist can cross the street like pedestrians do. A similar concept is used at roundabouts. An excerpt from the AASHTO guide is below:




6. Since the Township already has bicycle and pedestrian facilities on Platt and Carpenter Roads, it may prove fruitful to work with Ypsilanti Township, WATS, and Washtenaw County Road Commission to identify a connection from one of these roadways to Rolling Hills Park.