



# A Vision for Tomorrow



**A VISION FOR TOMORROW**

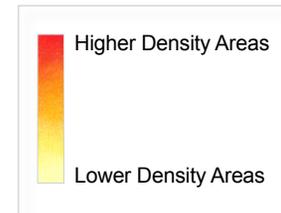
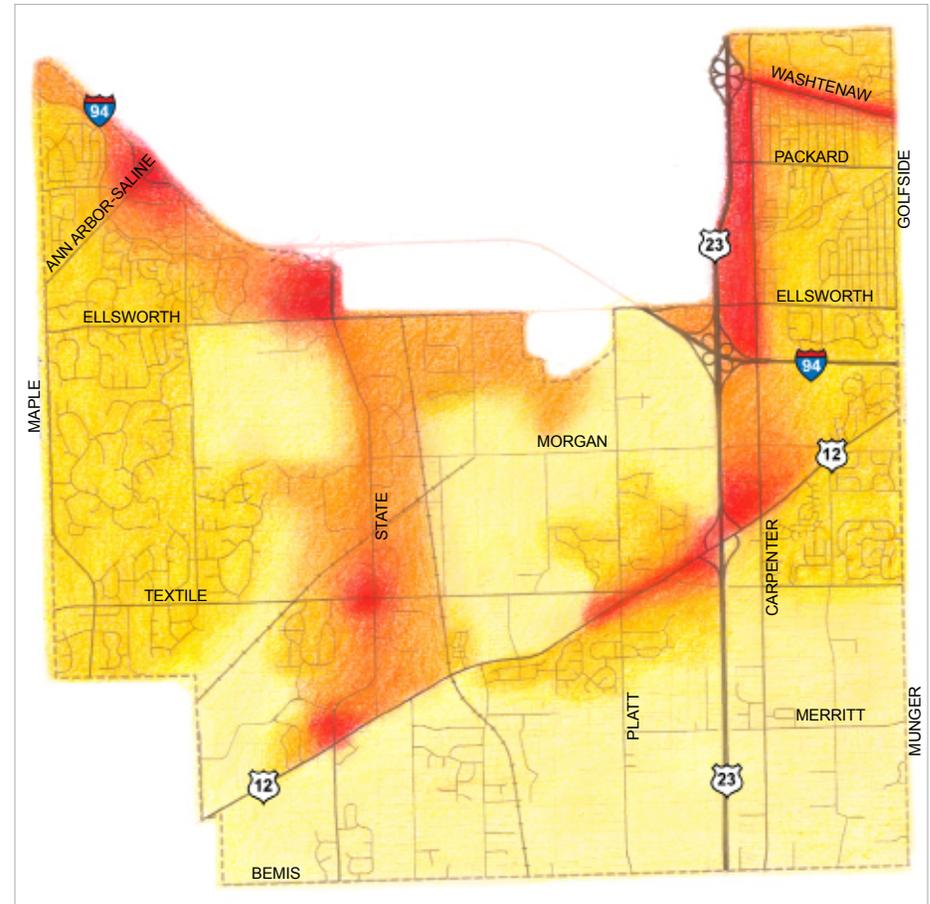
The 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan moves toward reframing the dialogue beyond the dichotomy of sprawl versus density toward one that highlights a spectrum of choices along a continuum of land use types. Neither end of the spectrum is a desirable alternative as one considers infrastructure and existing land use on the one hand, and changing demographics and the need to ensure socio-economic vitality on the other. Rather, we envision a community defined by open and green spaces that preserve our rich agricultural heritage while at the same time supporting mixed-use nodes that encourage infill and increased density within existing developed areas. Furthermore, and importantly, we envision these open, green spaces, and dense development nodes to be interconnected with each other and to commercial, retail, employment, cultural, and recreational spaces through multiple modes of transportation. The aim is to provide connections between land uses while respecting the existing diversity of land uses in Pittsfield, while also defining each one more specifically and cohesively as part of a Township-wide network.

Considering the existing mix of urban, suburban, and rural influences, along with the various mixture of land uses and its demographic diversity, Pittsfield is poised to take a leadership role in establishing a new standard for mainstreaming non-motorized transportation, dense mixed-use, and infill development within a non-urbanized and township context. Consequently, the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan not only complies with the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, but provides a narrative for the Township's past, present, and future potential. This narrative, encompassing the Township's policy priorities, looks to proactively define the change Pittsfield will undoubtedly be faced with because of its rich agricultural history, vibrant economic and commercial centers, diverse housing stock, abundant natural features and open space, and its close proximity to Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and Saline.

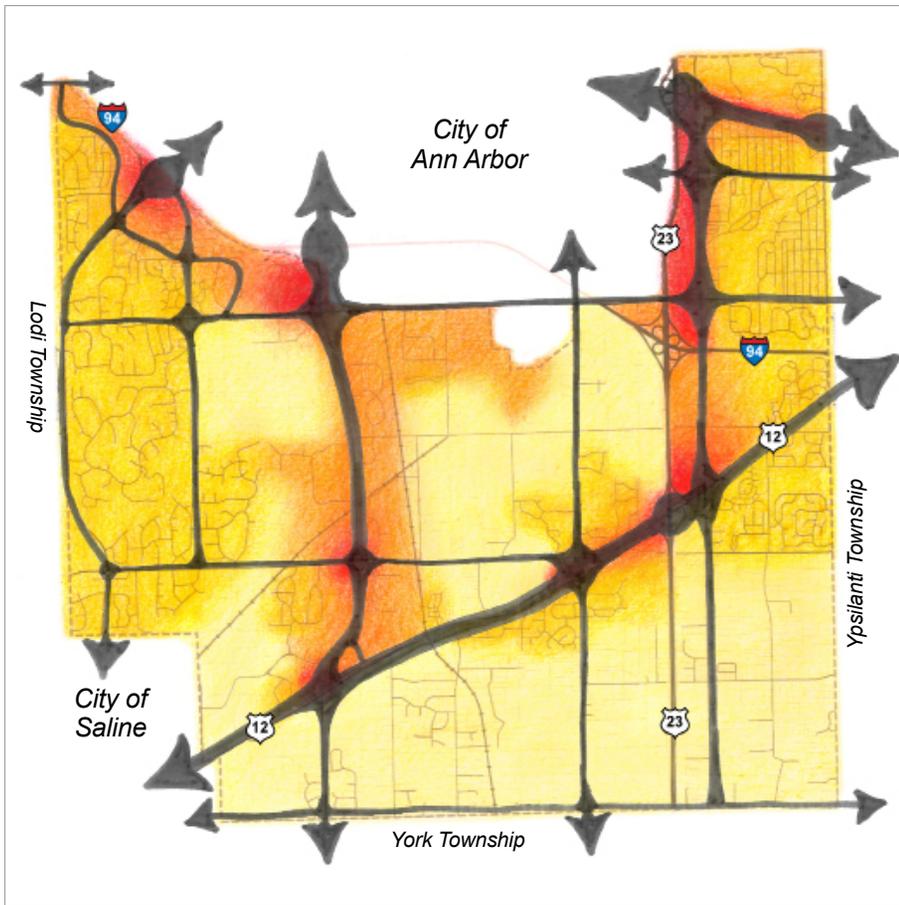
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The Development Intensity Map captures this approach wherein new development is focused at the intersection of major transportation routes and along corridors with existing development. It simultaneously preserves existing strong neighborhoods and rural, agricultural, and park lands concentrated in the center and south of the Township.

**DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY MAP**



## TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS CONCEPT MAP



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THE VISIONING PROCESS

The development of the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan was accomplished through meaningful and thorough research; a comprehensive public participation process; input from eight topical subcommittees; involvement from members serving on various Township boards, committees, and commissions; and outreach to numerous regional stakeholders, and residents. A website (<http://www.pittsfield-mi.gov/masterplan.html>) was developed to keep stakeholders engaged and informed of the planning process.



Website screenshot



Examples of Print Media Materials

In fact, public participation was one of the most important aspects of the 2010 Pittsfield Plan’s planning process. On the website, community members could learn more about why we master plan, keep up on the latest news, see a schedule for related events, review input from the public workshops, explore subcommittees’ ideas, and review documents. Community members were also encouraged to “Become a Fan” of the 2010 Pittsfield Plan on Facebook. We created the Facebook© page to generate discussion, post photographs from events, and share news and information about the planning process.

In addition to the website, a variety of print media materials, including posters, postcards, and the distribution of 2010 Pittsfield Plan business cards were used to engage residents and stakeholders in the process. As a result of this engagement, approximately 650 responses were received for the community survey. This survey was designed to gather information about the needs, desires,

and expectations of community members. It was posted online for two and a half months, and was also made available in paper form. There were two versions of the survey for individuals to take; the first version was designed for residents, the second version was geared towards non-residents and regional stakeholders.

Other processes used to gather feedback and input from the community, (between November 2009 and December 2010) included a bus tour, multiple community workshops held at various locations around the Township, public forums, design workshops and presentations, and a walking audit.

At the community workshops, residents were asked to work in groups, and brainstorm about the future of the Township through themed lenses. Themes included: the overall future vision for the Township, sustainability, housing, transportation, economic development, land use, open space, agriculture, and arts and culture. Participants recorded their ideas on large posters for review and discussion.

Students from University of Michigan Master of Urban Design program facilitated design workshops. Residents were invited to stop in and share their visions and priorities for the Township; these were folded into the concept designs. Presentations were made to the public about re-thinking suburban development patterns and focusing more attention on creating walkable mixed-use development nodes within the Township. The walking audit was hosted by the Township in conjunction with the Southeast Michigan Council of Government's (SEMCOG) transportation team and included various regional partners, including the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC), Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA), and Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) to assist in flushing out and refining the concept of dense development nodes. Feedback was used to develop a draft Non-Motorized Plan that was presented at a public forum in December 2010. Multiple public forums were hosted in 2010 to keep the community apprised of the planning process and its progress.

In addition to soliciting larger community input, eight topical subcommittees were formed. These were composed of residents and local and regional stakeholders. Subcommittees met numerous times between October 2009 and February 2010 to draft overarching visions, goals and objectives for their area of interest.



Examples of Community Involvement

## EIGHT TOPICAL SUBCOMMITTEES

- 1 **Transportation & Land Use:** They focused on connections between the varying land uses within the Township and surrounding communities and explored ways in which our transportation network can link people, locally and regionally, to jobs, commercial, retail, recreational, and open spaces.
- 2 **Economic Development:** They explored the vision for the future of Pittsfield's economy and identified characteristics of the Township needed to support economic development through the retention and attraction of businesses and the workforce necessary to support them.
- 3 **Housing:** They focused on housing opportunities that account for the needs of different demographic groups, future growth projections, and issues of affordability with an understanding of densities, existing and proposed land use patterns, and proximity to amenities.
- 4 **Arts & Culture:** For the first time a group of individuals was brought together for the explicit purpose of identifying how to develop a rich and vibrant arts and culture environment in Pittsfield while enhancing community identity through the use of public art.
- 5 **Open Space, Agriculture & Natural Features:** They focused on the protection and enhancement of strategically located undeveloped land within Pittsfield along with exploring options to make agricultural activity more economically viable.
- 6 **Green:** They focused on sustainability best practices for building and development, identifying ways in which the Township can be a resource to its residents to help individuals live more sustainable lives, and connect residents with existing programs to make their homes more environmentally friendly.
- 7 **Special Community Input:** This subcommittee identified various constituents' in the Township that may have specific needs (e.g. youth, seniors, people with disabilities, low-income residents, etc.) and how to better integrate their priorities into those of the Township.
- 8 **Community Infrastructure:** They focused on the variety of infrastructure that supports the Township, such as utilities, roads and pathways, schools, parkland, communication facilities, and public safety along with what infrastructural capacities must be accounted for to support the community's needs in the future.

These subcommittees served as important sources of information that were used to compile the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan. The subcommittee structure was used to determine the key concepts that have been used to develop the chapters for this document. Even though each topical area was treated as an independent unit of analysis during the community input and planning process, the links across topics/key concepts have been captured in multiple sections of the final document. These overlapping ideas demonstrate how Pittsfield Township functions as a dynamic system with interrelated components that rely on each other to create a well-functioning whole.

The topical framework provides the guidelines used to build the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan, which intends to set the foundation to assist in implementing the key concepts and to encourage the preservation and development of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, to ensure that uses of land are situated in appropriate locations, to ensure that new development and buildings respect the established character and support the creation of the desired character, while at the same time facilitating the general health, safety, and welfare of Pittsfield Township residents.

# KEY CONCEPTS BY TOPIC

As noted, the key concepts were derived from the topical treatments used during the planning process as we were outlining a future vision for Pittsfield Township. This vision, then, is committed to the following conceptual ideas:

## TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE

- A.** Building upon existing land uses to more clearly explicate a cohesive and logical pattern while providing a network of multi-modal transportation to interconnect various land uses.

- The Nodal Mixed-Use Development Model

- Increase Connectivity

- Build Upon the Public Transportation Network

- Capitalize on Community Infrastructure

## GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

- B.** Supporting and expanding upon the diversity of housing options in a manner that controls sprawl.

- Support & Enhance Existing Residential Neighborhoods

- Provide Housing & Neighborhood Diversity

- Create Increased Connectivity

## SUCCESSFUL ECONOMY

- C.** Promoting economic vitality along specific corridors and commercial vibrancy within defined nodes.

- Support Asset-Based Economic Development

- Set the Gold Standard in Service Delivery

- Improve the Physical Appearance of Business Districts

- Support and Promote Agriculture as Part of the Township's Economy

## GREEN

- D.** Furthering initiatives and policies designed to conserve energy and promote environmental stewardship.

- Reduce Pittsfield's Carbon Footprint

- Establish Green Building Standards

- Nurture a 'Green' Private Sector

- Protect our Water Resources

## ARTS & CULTURE

- E.** Documenting our rich cultural heritage, for the first time, while defining a plan to preserve and promote arts and culture in Pittsfield.

- Historic Preservation

- Create a 'Pittsfield Profile' and promote Cultural Events & Activities

## OPEN SPACE, AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

- F.** Protecting our heritage of vast open green spaces and promoting agricultural viability.

- Preservation of Open Spaces

- Minimize Development Pressure on Rural & Natural Environments

- Encourage the Economic Viability of Agricultural Land

- Provide Natural Area Linkages

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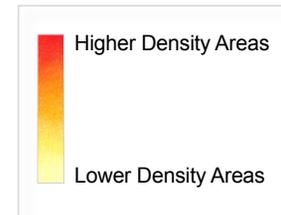
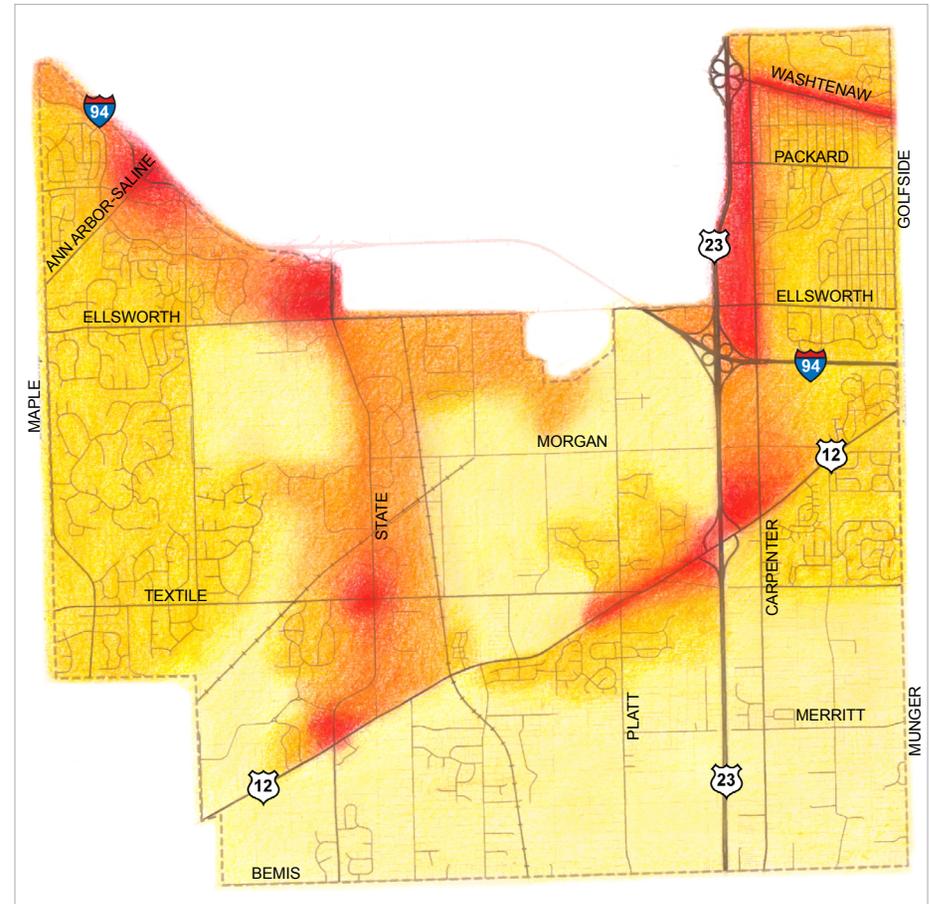
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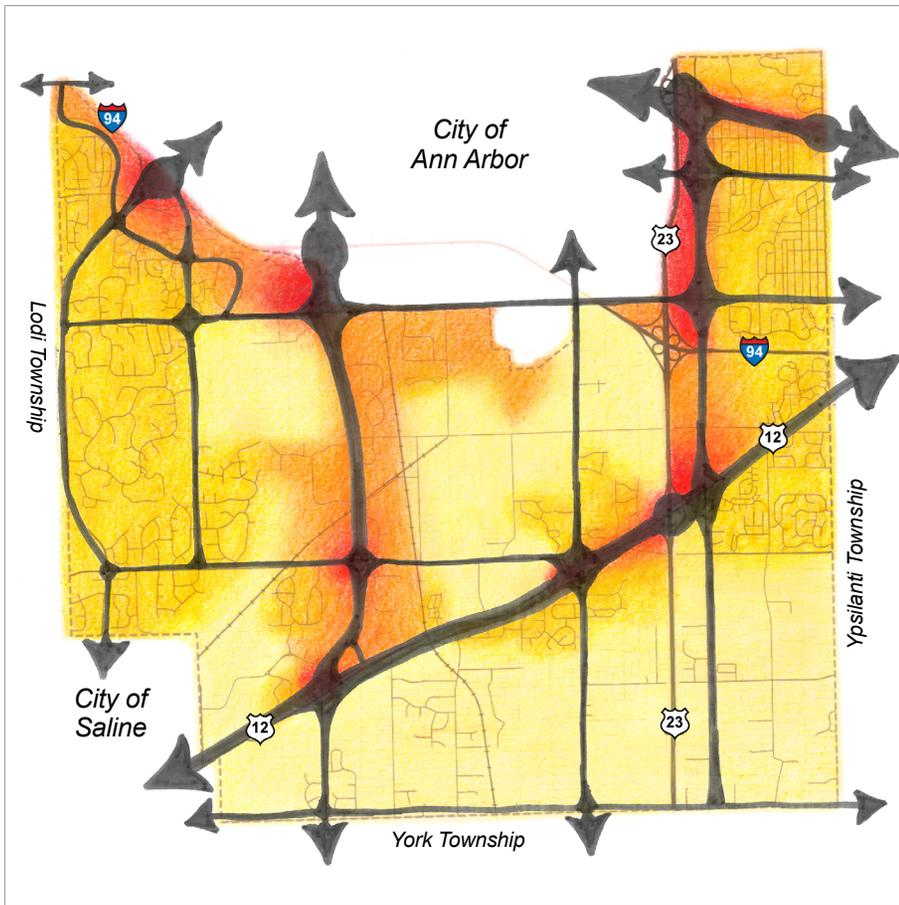
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After having, in seven short years, manifested the vision of “mainstreaming non-motorized transportation, dense mixed-use, and infill development within a non-urbanized and township context,” our next step is to hard-code sustainability into the DNA of our work processes and products.

For the purposes of this document and Pittsfield Township’s past and future prioritization of projects/initiatives, we are defining sustainability to mean: (a) the preservation and expansion of open/green/park spaces wherein native habitats, rain gardens, pollinator gardens and local farming are supported; (b) expansion of a multi-modal transportation network that reduces emissions and promotes public gathering spaces; and (c) development that relies on infill and density to minimize expansion of grey and impermeable surfaces.

This focus on sustainability arises as much from a need to preserve our environment as it does from creating a sense of place for all, including seniors and youth, such that everyone not only feels welcome but enjoys living, working and recreating in Pittsfield Township. By promoting infill and mixed-use development, our vision is to create spaces that provide immediate multi-modal access to services and amenities within a green and visually pleasing environment. By promoting non-motorized and transit, our vision is to provide everyone greater access to healthy lifestyles and services/amenities that are not in close proximity. By expanding our preserved and green spaces, our vision is to respect Pittsfield’s agricultural heritage by supporting local agriculture and access to local foods while providing for a seamless inclusion of green spaces and nature into the fabric of our community.



While the ultimate goal remains to strike the balance between preservation and (infill) development, the idea is to do so by expanding green/preserved spaces and non-motorized amenities that connect to regional networks and destinations while promoting mixed-use development within grey spaces. This focus not only further promotes sustainability but also a sense of place by supporting local farming, public gathering spaces, public art, local (green) businesses. The biggest challenge in meeting these goals is to retrofit our transportation corridors to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety for all users including motorists, bikers and pedestrians. As such, we must identify funding streams and sources to meet this challenge.

Regardless of challenges, the support from our community to centralize sustainability into the 2020 Sustainable Vision Master Plan gives us the needed incentive and energy to work toward manifesting the vision we have outlined for Pittsfield Township by not just meeting but, as we did with the 2010 Master Plan, exceeding the goals and objectives outlined in this document.

