

# **Successful Economy**





## INTRODUCTION

Pittsfield Township's location has been one of the main driving forces behind its economic success. The Township is ideally located within close proximity to the cities of Ann Arbor, Saline, Detroit, Chicago (IL), and Toledo (OH) with direct access to I-94, US-23, the Ann Arbor City Airport (ARB), and the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County airport (DTW). Pittsfield is also located in close proximity to the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University and Washtenaw Community College, which provide access to a talent pool of almost 100,000 students.

Pittsfield Township provides a home base for not just the young talent from these universities but the teaching and research faculty as well. Consequently, our community's residents represent the diversity and talent of the larger region. Over 50% of Township residents are equipped with a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to the U.S. average of 24.4% of the population (*U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000*). The median household income in Pittsfield is \$61,262 (*U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000*) with a regional median housing value of \$150,000.

Pittsfield Township has the critical advantage of being located to the immediate south of the City of Ann Arbor and providing an Ann Arbor mailing address while placing a much lower tax burden on businesses. Consequently, Pittsfield is second only to City of Ann Arbor with a total State Equalized Value (SEV) of \$18,290,507,000 in 2010. The Township has the second largest tax base in Washtenaw County, contributing 11.19% to the total SEV of the county (*Washtenaw County 2010 Equalization Report, Washtenaw County Equalization and Property Description Department*).

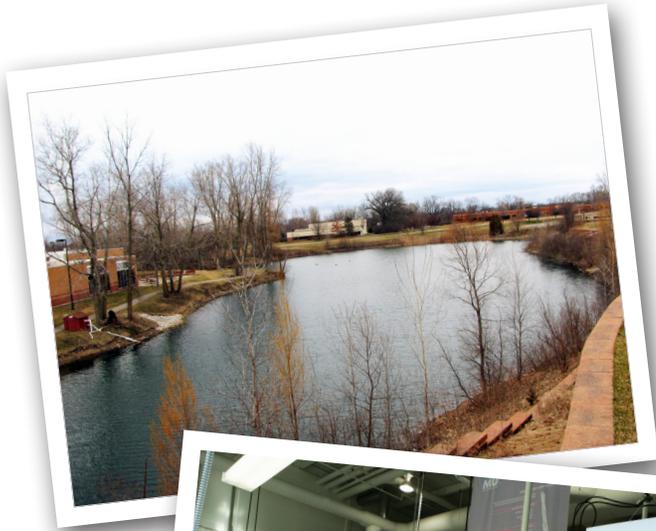
When reviewing the existing economic base of Pittsfield Township, it is clear that our hallmark is the diversity of businesses located in our community with a heavy focus on retail, research & development, and information technology. There are no major employment 'anchors' that dictate the future economic health of the Township. On the contrary, there are a variety of smaller businesses employing 100-250 people that provide a diversified economic-base. Many of these businesses are on the cutting edge of developing new technologies, including medical, information, and alternative energy models.

With the advent of the 21st century, there has been a global transformation in how business is done and in our economic base. In

# Share Your Vision

What types of industries do you envision the Township promoting to support Economic Development?

- ★ Improving State Street + Michigan Ave  
- Make it a boulevard.
- ★ Availability of mass transportation & pedestrian friendly areas. to get to + from local businesses.  
Also bike path infrastructure.
- ★ Encourage smaller, high tech R+D facilities;  
build on proximity to U of M.



the United States, we have shifted from a manufacturing based economy, to one with a particular emphasis on the fluid movement of information, knowledge, human capital, and technology. This transformation is sometimes referred to as the “new” or “knowledge-based” economy. Our knowledge-based economy is characterized by the following sectors: new media, information, research, finance and insurance, professional and technical services, health care, and education.

Even as we welcome these knowledge-based businesses in Pittsfield, the primary focus is to retain, foster, promote, and nurture our dynamic and diverse commercial and business sector.

It has been demonstrated that the sense of place, the housing and leisure opportunities that are available in a community, the quality and number of transportation options, and the quality of life that a community boasts is as important, if not more important than the availability of quality affordable floor area when a 21st century business makes locational decisions. Businesses want to ensure that they choose to locate in places that their workforce finds desirable or “livable.”

The 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan makes the point that the significance of place is not obsolete. Placemaking, through ensuring “livability,” will serve to further catapult our community into the forefront of economic success. The 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan clearly defines business districts, such as the State Street Business Corridor. Links are provided via multiple modes of transportation (e.g., public transit, bike, pedestrian, automobile) to connect employment centers, retail, commercial, open, recreational, and residential spaces with each other. Our focus on using infill development to preserve our natural resources, along with an integration of arts and culture into our community dialogue and public spaces, will provide a quality of life that is attractive to the talent and the businesses which employ them.

This plan also commits to nurturing and retaining existing businesses, and using them as the basis to attract similar or complimentary businesses. Together, these businesses will cultivate a milieu of creativity around alternative energy development and information technology companies.

Lastly, the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan looks to make the economic viability of agricultural activity a priority. Agricultural activity comprises the largest (28%) of the Township’s land use and is an integral component of our economy, character, and heritage.

Top: Businesses along the State Road Corridor; Middle: Inside UNIMERCO; Bottom: 2nd Annual B2B Mixer 2010

## KEY CONCEPTS

### SUPPORT ASSET-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Some of Pittsfield's future economic success depends on the Township's ability to build on local and regional strengths and leverage these assets to promote economic growth.

#### ACCESS TO REGIONAL RESOURCES

Pittsfield's geographic location gives the Township the ability to take advantage of the many cultural, institutional, and recreational assets in the area, which are identified in the map (right). The availability and access to these assets are considered when businesses and talent are deciding where they want to locate or expand. Pittsfield must take advantage of its location and provide both physical (e.g., roads, trails, paths) and psychological (e.g., branding, character corridors) linkages to these assets. Supporting and connecting to these places will improve the quality of life for residents, and will continue to make the community more attractive to alternative energy, information technology and other, especially existing, businesses.

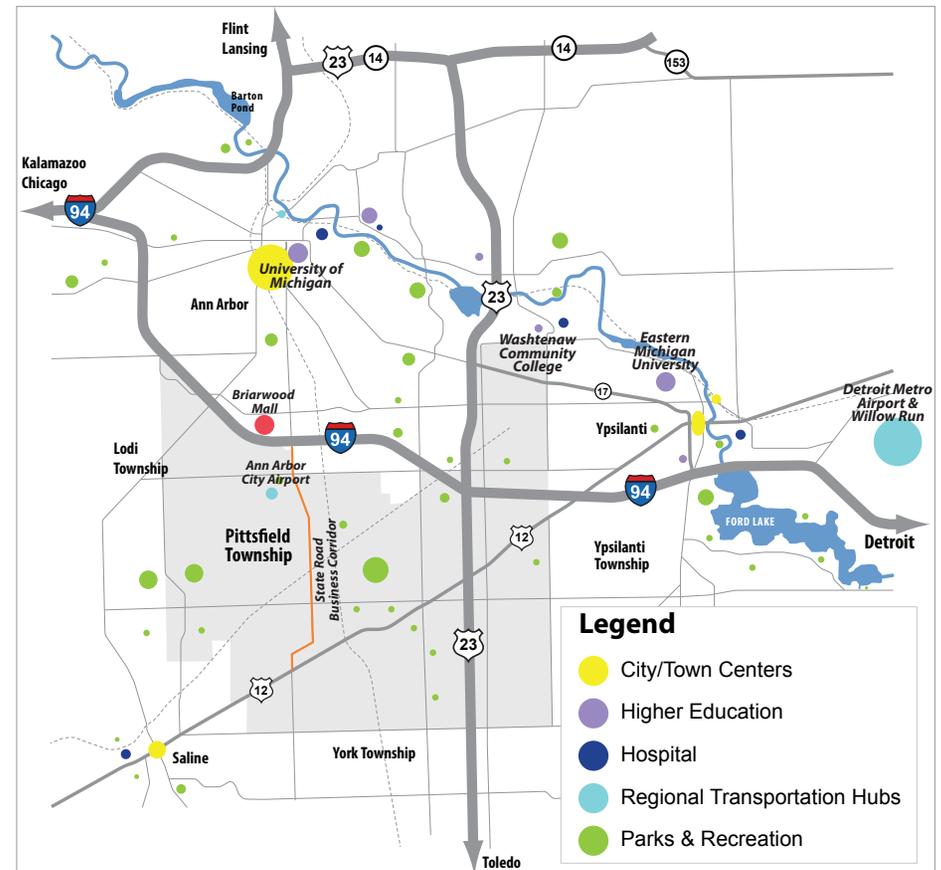
#### GEOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGE

Another asset the Township can leverage is its geographic location. Our location is desirable to businesses looking for an Ann Arbor mailing address, lower taxes, quick access to multiple modes of transportation and easy access to workers themselves. Many people choose to live in the Township not just because of our high quality housing stock and schools but also because of its proximity to their job.

40.3% of respondents live in the Pittsfield because of the Township's proximity to employment.

The Township has the ability to offer workers a diversity of housing options. Beginning with the 2010 Pittsfield Plan, a greater focus on increasing densities within existing neighborhoods and providing housing options connected to other compatible uses will greatly

REGIONAL ASSETS MAP



Source: McKenna Associates

enhance the Township's ability to continue to attract creative and knowledge-based workers.

### ACCESS TO TALENT

One of the existing advantages of Pittsfield is its access to a highly-talented labor pool. The availability of higher education at the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, and Washtenaw Community College; and the high quality K-12 public school districts serving the Township provide outstanding educational opportunities that prepare existing students and residents for jobs in the new economy. These resources also attract new talent to the Township.

56.3% of community survey respondents stated the most significant reason they reside in Pittsfield is because they liked the school district(s).

### FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

The Township must continue to work with these educational institutions and develop strong physical (e.g., transit, non-motorized connections), psychological (e.g., links on websites, identification in Township marketing materials), and organizational (e.g., representation on boards, commissions, and committees) connections and affiliations with them. Connecting to, participating in, and forming partnerships with these institutions is a key ingredient to attracting and retaining knowledge-based and creative industries.

In order to retain businesses and attract complimentary companies, there must also be an emphasis on fostering relationships with local businesses, and working closely with regional partners such as Ann Arbor SPARK and surrounding jurisdictions. Since 2009, the Township has been hosting an annual Business-to-Business (B2B) Mixer for local businesses with the explicit aim of establishing and maintaining relationships that will help existing companies grow and flourish within our community.

In addition, the Township has adopted a model of regional cooperation which postulates that what is good for our neighbors is good for us and vice-versa. In other words, rather than competing with other cities and townships for jobs we work together to develop a region that has the quality of life where businesses would like to locate. This approach is most clearly demonstrated in the Township's leadership in the regional Reimagine Washtenaw initiative.

### BUSINESS INCUBATION

Building upon these partnerships has the potential to provide other positive ripple effects. For instance, many creative and knowledge-based workers are self-employed. The ability to nurture or "incubate" these workers, their skills and ideas, will be another key ingredient to the continued success of the Township's economy. Opportunities to create places for these workers to build their start-up businesses must be provided by permitting alternative uses for existing buildings and mixed-use developments within dense nodes. Organizations such as Ann Arbor SPARK, provide many of the tools and resources, such as the Business Accelerator program, necessary to support such local entrepreneurial efforts.

**“Best place to make a future Forbes 400 fortune? Start with this proposition: The most valuable natural resource in the 21st century is brains. Smart people tend to be mobile. Watch where they go! Because where they go, robust economic activity will follow.”**

— Rich Karlgaard, publisher of Forbes Magazine

## SET THE GOLD STANDARD IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Pittsfield Township's administration is committed to providing highly efficient and highly effective services to Township residents, businesses and the development community. Providing a single point for information is paramount to integrating transparency and predictability into the functions and services provided by the Township.

### STREAMLINED & IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

Since 2009, the Township has been working diligently to streamline its operations and service delivery. In 2010, Pittsfield Township partnered with the University of Michigan to become one of a handful of public entities to engage in the Six Sigma process which has been applied in the private sector to maximize customer satisfaction, improve process efficiencies, and increase performance accountability. It is the intent of the Township to annually engage with the University of Michigan for this purpose and to develop benchmarks that will assist in measuring the Township's progress toward better serving the community.

### OUR APPROACH TO STREAMLINED AND IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

- 1** Internal reorganizations that remove silos and allow inter-departmental communications. Information and services provided will be comprehensive and do not send customers from one person to another.
- 2** Physical rearrangement of space within Township Administrative Building that will provide a Single Service Center wherein customers can receive answers to their queries.
- 3** A dynamic and interactive website that will allow customers to obtain information and provide Township services. The website will provide multiple 'toolboxes' that address the specific needs of businesses, developers, residents, and regional stakeholders.

## INCREASED FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Streamlined processes on the Township level have led to greater efficiencies and therefore lead to greater cost savings for the community. A continued commitment to efficiency will help to keep taxes for both our residents and the business community low. This effort to streamline processes has resulted in increased fiscal responsibility. As a result, Standard & Poor's upgraded Pittsfield Township's bond rating by two steps to a AA in 2010. These processes also maximized internal and external process efficiencies.



*Township Administration Building*

## EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES IN URBAN AREAS



Jamison Square Park, Portland, Oregon  
SOURCE: <http://en.wikipedia.org>



Plaza in Vancouver, B.C., Canada  
PHOTO: Kelly Koss

## IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF BUSINESS DISTRICTS

### CREATE A 'PITTSFIELD PROFILE'

The appearance of the exterior of buildings, surrounding landscaping, and signage are the basic elements that help establish the visual character of existing business districts and employment centers. These elements play a major role in the marketing success of these areas.

Public perception of these geographic areas has a great deal of influence on its economic success. By improving their physical appearance, a business or business district will have a much greater potential for attracting and retaining business because these visual improvements create a predictable environment for development. They also create an image of strong economic health and vitality.

Over the years many Township businesses have chosen to upgrade their image, physical setting, and economic performance through physical improvement projects. These projects, however, were often site-specific and not part of a larger overall area strategy to create a cohesive identity and sense of place within a larger geographic context.

The 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan introduces the arts and culture as integral components in our attempt to define community identity and to create a visual aesthetic for the 'Pittsfield Profile'. Using public art, public gathering spaces, and a signage and wayfinding system are some examples of how we can begin to promote a cohesive image for Pittsfield Township.

### GATHERING PEOPLE

Business districts and employment centers are also important places for people to gather and interact. The Township seeks to encourage these interactions through the creation of public spaces in mixed-use development nodes. An example of Pittsfield Township's commitment to creating places for people to gather is its participation in the regional Reimagine Washtenaw initiative. This initiative promotes a regional approach to creating a multi-modal transportation corridor along Washtenaw Avenue. This initiative transcends jurisdictional boundaries, and promotes connections between multiple uses for ease of access and creating a sense of place. Furthermore, the Township is working with numerous regional partners to undertake the rehabilitation of the State Street corridor that will comply with Complete Streets standards.

## EXAMPLES OF BUSINESS DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT CONCEPTS



### IDENTIFYING SIGNAGE

SOURCE: <http://www.mcwhorteronline.com/>



### PUBLIC ART

PHOTO: Kelly Koss



### STREET FURNITURE

SOURCE: <http://www.carspyshots.net>



### PUBLIC SPACES

PHOTO: Kelly Koss



### STREET PLANTINGS

SOURCE: <http://www.urbanbydesignonline.com>



### MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

SOURCE: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

## DEMAND FOR LOCAL FOOD

Demand for local, fresh food: The demand for fresh, locally-grown food spans demographic groups and has increased notably in recent years. Over the last ten years, the number of farmers markets nationally has increased 84 percent to over 5,000 in 2009 (USDA). In Michigan, there are more than 150 farmers markets. About 20 markets currently accept supplemental food assistance (Bridge Cards), which allows lower-income families to purchase fresh food at farmers markets. Studies have shown that market sales have increased notably as a result. Even large food retailers and supermarkets are trying to capture increasing consumer demand for local food. National chains like Walmart are trying to partner with farmers, and more local chains like Busch's, Hillers and Plum Market have begun to label Michigan-grown produce and Michigan-made food products.

Draft Policy Statement for the Michigan Association of Planning

## BENEFITS OF LOCAL FOOD

Food travels an average of 1,500 miles from farm to table and accounts for 50% of the trucks on our interstate system. Buying Michigan locally grown food is a fresher choice.

Many fruits and vegetables can lose up to 50% of their nutrients in just five days time.

If every Michigan family would buy just \$10 a week of local Michigan fruits and vegetables it would keep over \$37 million new dollars each week working for you right here at home.

Michigan Department of Agriculture Select Michigan Program

## PROMOTE AGRICULTURE AS PART OF THE TOWNSHIP'S ECONOMY

Agriculture is an important sector of the Township's and County's economy. Agriculture provides jobs, contributes to food and fiber production, preserves our heritage, provides a buffer between our unique landscapes, and enhances the quality of life for residents.

### COLLABORATE WITH REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS TO PRESERVE AGRICULTURAL LAND

The Township's agricultural sector is not independent of other communities' agricultural sectors; it is an integral part of a successful agricultural industry in Washtenaw County and in the greater southeast Michigan region. In order to sustain viable agricultural land, the Township should collaborate with other agricultural stakeholders in the County and throughout the State. The Township intends to support and promote agriculture by targeting development to specific areas of the community to reduce development pressure on agricultural lands, creating more agricultural zoning options and working with regional partners. The Township will continue its work with Land Conservancy groups, and Washtenaw County to promote Transfer Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase Development Rights (PDR) programs.

### ESTABLISH AGRI-BUSINESS FRIENDLY ZONING AND POLICIES

Through a focus on dense development nodes, the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan clearly defines protected green spaces not just for recreational but also agricultural use. The central core of the Township (East Central and South Pittsfield) remain predominantly rural in character. Farms and farmland contribute to the scenic beauty of these areas, and also produce goods that will continue to play a role in the Township's economy. The availability of locally grown and produced products is not only good for the health of the economy, but for the health of residents.

The aim is to nurture local businesses within established business and agricultural centers that work closely with each other and the community. This Plan promotes agricultural economic activity by proposing to revise the existing agricultural land use category, so that it includes more opportunities for farmers to fully utilize their land for traditional and non-traditional activities. One non-traditional activity may be to promote the production of alternative energy through methods such as biomass production or windfarming. Some more traditional activities may be

to enable farmers to set up food stands, hold farmers markets, and other activities that will foster a market for our locally grown produce and products. Given the Township's population of about 35,000 people, this approach will be economically beneficial to farmers, while simultaneously providing residents with easy access to healthy and locally grown seasonal produce.

Additionally, areas planned for rural residential uses will permit niche or small scale agricultural operations, such as raising chickens or bees, to add to the diversity of products offered and preservation of these rural areas of the Township.

### SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURIAL & PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Township supports education for producers, and is committed to educating the community about the value of supporting a localized food system. Helping residents re-imagine how our food is produced and how products are delivered to and within our community will add to the success of the Township in its effort to preserve and promote agriculture as part of our local economy.

## POSSIBLE EDUCATIONAL TOPICS FOR LOCAL AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS

*Some of the topics that may be addressed include:*

- 1** Adding value to food, through concepts like: packaging, branding, agri-entertainment, agri-tourism, etc.
- 2** How to market directly to consumers
- 3** Niche marketing of farm products, such as: ethnic foods, organic foods, specialty farm products, etc.



Dane County Farmers' Market, Capitol Square, Madison Wisconsin  
SOURCE: <http://www.alanjshannon.com/>



PHOTO: Kelly Koss



## KEY CONCEPTS

*Support Asset-Based Economic Development*

*Set the Gold Standard in Service Delivery*

### GOALS

Create an economic development marketing strategy to promote the Township and actively recruit and retain businesses.

Recognize that the quality of place in Pittsfield is an economic driver.

Continually monitor and provide feedback to residents and business owners on economic development initiatives in the Township.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Track the composition of businesses in the Township with regard to such things as growth, number of employees, and type of business to help understand their current and potential needs.
2. Highlight local businesses and their contributions to Pittsfield in the Township newsletter or on the website.
3. Create a venue in Pittsfield for local business to network with other local businesses and community leaders.
4. Continue to recognize that a diverse mix of businesses is necessary for a healthy economy. Marketing efforts should be targeted to the emerging sector industries identified by SPARK and MEDC, not just current businesses.

1. Focus on redevelopment and infill in areas of the Township with existing infrastructure and services.
2. Identify key areas in the Township where failing infrastructure (roads, sidewalks) is hindering the viability of existing businesses and the establishment of new businesses.
3. Continuously seek funding to improve and maintain infrastructure to ensure that Pittsfield Township is an attractive and livable community.
4. Provide clear, attractive, and functional multi-modal transportation linkages throughout the Township.
5. Regularly evaluate the housing needs and desires of those living and working in the Township and update building design regulations and standards to facilitate construction of desired units.
6. Create regulations that permit the integration of supporting retail and service uses at strategic locations in traditional business parks and office/ technology corridors.

1. Establish a predictable, streamlined process for development that is consistent with this plan to encourage businesses to locate in the community.
2. Create a “business liaison” staff position at the Township who works with existing and future businesses, and actively promotes and markets Pittsfield as a great place to do business.
3. Develop benchmarks for the Township to measure economic development progress.
4. Educate the community about economic development issues and keep them informed on a regular basis.



## KEY CONCEPTS

*Improve the Physical Appearance of Business Districts*

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

## GOALS

Recognize the importance of technology in the new economy.

Improve the physical appearance and functionality of the Township and make it more attractive to employers and workers.

Support and promote agriculture as part of an economically viable community.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Create an interactive website targeted at economic development in the Township which contains a "toolbox" of resources for business owners.
2. Work with local economic leaders and link the Township's website and efforts to SPARK, MEDC, and other economic development organizations.
3. Continue to invest and promote technology infrastructure in the Township, including fiber optics.
4. Concentrate economic development initiatives in areas that are served or planned to be serviced by technology providers (i.e. wireless, cable, internet, etc.).
5. Actively promote the Township to technology providers.

1. Plan for amenities that are desirable to the "creative class" of workers.
2. Recognize areas of a community that provide activities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week are desirable to many existing and potential residents.
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. Plan for and promote improved access to transit and other modes of transportation.
5. Require that parks and other open spaces are accessible to all residents.
6. Create attractive looking character districts in the Township through streetscape improvements, public art, signage, and public gathering spaces.

1. Partner with farmers and agricultural land owners, Washtenaw County, and surrounding communities to promote farming and agriculture related-businesses.
2. Balance the rights of farmers and adjacent residential property owners.
3. Limit the residential density in developments adjacent to agricultural areas consistent with available infrastructure (roads, public utilities, and public safety) to help minimize any potential impacts associated with agricultural operations.
4. Permit the creation of local outlets (farmers' markets, roadside stands, etc.) for farm products to be sold and marketed to residents and visitors in agricultural areas.
5. Recognize the needs of non-traditional or niche farmers when developing agricultural regulations.
6. Support farmers and agricultural land owner's efforts to grow products that have the potential to be a source for local energy production (e.g., biomass).
7. Encourage the preservation of agricultural lands encouraging infill development and promoting density in areas already served by public infrastructure.
8. Explore the establishment of a Township Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.

