



Arts & Culture





INTRODUCTION

For the first time ever, the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan incorporates an arts and culture component into the overall community vision. The Township recognizes the importance of arts and culture in defining the character of a community; promoting economic vitality; creating rich educational opportunities; sparking innovation; fostering dialogues across income, age, and cultural demographics; and enhancing the overall quality of life for residents. Public art and cultural amenities help define the public realm, promote community-based dialogue and interactions, and distinguish Township destinations.

Due to Pittsfield's proximity to larger cities with established institutions and identities, including Ann Arbor and Saline, the Township's identity often gets absorbed by these communities. It can be difficult for residents and visitors to know when they are experiencing Pittsfield versus the communities of Saline, Ann Arbor, or Ypsilanti. These surrounding communities provide the Township with unique access to world-class arts and cultural opportunities, however, the history of the Township is unique and distinct and should be documented and celebrated. Pittsfield is also home to a diverse and innovative set of artists and creative residents. Hence, we feel a responsibility to celebrate the distinctive historic heritage of Pittsfield, and provide venues for local artists to gather, showcase their work, and engage with the community.

We hope to create a stronger cultural presence in the Township through the creation of specific physical spaces and new initiatives that showcase our arts and culture, while simultaneously, leveraging regional opportunities that will provide Pittsfield residents with a plethora of vibrant, art and cultural venues. Pittsfield Township will contribute to the elite institutions in the region by building upon and further supporting their offerings while also establishing a distinct sense of place within the Township. Pittsfield will provide arts and cultural opportunities within its municipal boundaries along with linkages to the region's centers and their diversity, depth and excellence.



Saline Fiddlers at the 2010 Fall Harvest Festival, Sutherland-Wilson Farm, 2010 Harvest Festival

WASHTENAW COUNTY RESIDENTS' THOUGHTS ON ARTS AND CULTURE

PEOPLE VALUE ARTS & CULTURE

- 63% said arts and cultural programs were very important to their choice to live in Washtenaw County.
- 75% said that business support for arts and culture made a difference when they chose what businesses to patronize.

BUSINESSES RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF ARTS AND CULTURE TO THE BOTTOM LINE

- 63% said that access to arts and culture was important in their decision to locate or keep their businesses in Washtenaw County.
- 57% thought access to arts and cultural programs was important in helping to recruit and retain qualified workers.

THE CREATIVE SECTOR PLAYS A DISTINCT ROLE IN THE ECONOMY

- 4.6% of the county's total workforce works in the creative economy.
- 10% of the county's total payroll is generated by the creative economy.
- 823 students from the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University earned degrees related to the creative economy in 2007.

THERE IS A HIGH QUALITY OF CULTURAL OFFERINGS IN WASHTENAW COUNTY, BUT THEY ARE NOT ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

- 88% were satisfied with the quality of arts, heritage, and interpretive science programs in their community.
- 66% felt that good science and arts education is not equally available to students throughout the county.

ARTISTS (VISUAL, PERFORMING, AND LITERARY) ARE A SIGNIFICANT FORCE IN WASHTENAW COUNTY

- 2,530 individuals responded to the Artists' Census and were classified as Washtenaw County Artists. Of these, 1,173 individuals satisfied criteria and were identified as Working Artists.

Source: www.a3arts.org

QUICK FACTS

Pittsfield Township intends to continue to celebrate the diversity of its residents and businesses. Pittsfield believes that with a focus on its arts and culture, we can embrace the distinct differences (income, age, racial and ethnic) between people, geographic areas, and neighborhoods within the Township and link them together both physically and socially to define a uniquely 'Pittsfield Profile.'

Pittsfield has a rich and proud heritage of being: an integral part of Native American settlements in the region; a home to ancient Mastadons; a part of the first transportation grid that linked us to Chicago across the lower peninsula via the great Sauk Trail; an active participant in the Underground Railroad; and serving as a home to some of the original farmers and homesteads in Washtenaw County. The items listed above are only a few of the many reasons that historical preservation has to be a key component of highlighting the arts and culture in our community. We hope to celebrate the jewels of our history in a way that educates our residents and surrounding communities, while celebrating our past as we look towards the future.

We hope to undertake this task by dedicating public spaces to commemorate this history (e.g., Asher Ayer Park), committing to the preservation and maintenance of existing historic structures (e.g., Sutherland-Wilson Farm, the original Township Hall on Morgan Road), and acquiring historic natural habitats in partnership with regional programs such as the county's Natural Area Preservation Program. The Township will continue to develop spaces for cultural events and public art, including creating space at Township Administration building to visually showcase (e.g., documents, photographs, art) the Township's history and anticipate its future.

With the 2010 Pittsfield Master Plan, the Township begins the process of establishing programs and policies aimed at enhancing linkages with existing art and cultural resources while also creating venues and opportunities for new community-based programs, events, and exhibits. We want to celebrate and embrace the diversity of our population and commitment to our community by using arts and culture to generate dialogues across geographies, demographics, and cultures.

KEY CONCEPT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

We cannot advance or plan for the future without first acknowledging and celebrating Pittsfield Township's heritage and its history. There must a commitment to preserving our community's cultural heritage in a variety of ways.

The Township is committed to working with the Pittsfield Township Historical Commission (PTHC) to preserve our historical documents, narratives, photographs and art in both original and digital formats, and to preserve historic structures and sites.

The Township is home to several historic buildings and sites scattered throughout the community. The preservation of these historic and culturally significant community resources must be considered when making land use decisions because they create a sense of continuity, are an important aspect of the community's identity, and irreplaceable pieces of our heritage. In 2010, the Township established a Historic District Study Committee (an arm of the PTHC), charged with researching the feasibility of creating and steps for establishing our first Historic District at the Sutherland-Wilson Farm.

The success of historic preservation in Pittsfield is dependent upon the Township's proactive approach in implementing the policies listed in the box to the right.

PROPOSED POLICIES TO PROMOTE HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- 1** ***Continue to conduct an existing & potential historic sites survey:*** Continue efforts to maintain a listing of historic sites and buildings in the Township. These should be identified based on the guidelines outlined by the State Historic Preservation Office.
- 2** ***Consider the effects of development or redevelopment on historic sites:*** As the Township evolves, the impacts of development on a historic site or building must be evaluated.
- 3** ***Ensure ongoing use and maintenance of historic properties and structures:*** Ideally, the first choice for historic properties would be to maintain the original use(s) of the property. Flexibility in zoning and consideration of adaptive reuse of historic structures is encouraged, but must be authorized according to procedures that will maximize retention of the historically significant aspects of the site or structure.
- 4** ***Create public awareness of historic sites:*** Public awareness of historic sites/structures and historic preservation activities in Pittsfield should be bolstered through informational materials, the Township website, outreach to the real estate community to educate realtors and potential buyers about the benefits of historic structures, and other technical assistance and programs.
- 5** ***Create an environment that makes it economically feasible to preserve historic structures and sites:*** Many creative options are available to assist in the rehabilitation and renovation of historic properties, including state and federal tax credits, grant and loan programs, and local technical expertise.

CREATE A VISUAL DEFINITION OF THE 'PITTSFIELD PROFILE'

Pittsfield's identity often gets absorbed by the strongly defined communities of Ann Arbor, Saline, and Ypsilanti which adjoin the Township.

“When asked where you live, only 20.6% of residents say Pittsfield, while 51% say Ann Arbor.”

Pittsfield Township's identity will not be created through one location, destination, or image. The Township's geographic character oscillates from dense suburban development patterns to rural development patterns. Intertwined in these development patterns are distinct destination areas as well, such as: the commercial corridors along Washtenaw Avenue, Carpenter Road, and Ann Arbor Saline Road; the business centers along State and Ellsworth Road; farm land along Platt Road and south of Michigan Avenue. These destinations, in addition to the schools, neighborhoods, and natural areas of the Township contribute to our identity.

Pittsfield's identity is also influenced by the surrounding communities of Saline, Ann Arbor, and Ypsilanti. These communities have strong identities that are associated with their downtowns and institutions including the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University. Defining and accentuating the Township's identity will be done by complimenting rather than competing with our neighboring communities.

This process of defining our identity further integrates the Land Use & Transportation vision outlined in this Plan; it moves toward creating defined mixed-use nodes, employment centers, and diverse residential neighborhoods that are interconnected through multiple modes of transportation. This approach incorporates public gathering spaces that seamlessly incorporate varying land use patterns, and logical standards for signage that captures the character of a place and transitions from one area/use pattern to another. It also provides for establishing destination districts that are connected via multiple modes of transportation.

In other words, the mixed-use nodes that, among other factors, rely on transit-oriented development would use visual cues, such as a consistent streetscape design, public art, and spaces for public gathering to define a specific 'profile.' These visual cues will define a given district's beginning and ending points and let a person know when they have entered or exited it. These visual features may be installed over time as sites are developed or be completed at once,

depending on the given context. The impression created by the different destination districts in the Township will contribute to our collective community identity.

The following additional enhancements will assist in creating a uniquely 'Pittsfield Profile':

ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES AND PUBLIC ART

A critical aspect of the success of a destination district is to provide for a central community gathering space in each district. Along with fostering increased face-to-face interactions and dialogues within the community, these public gathering spaces will also encourage use of non-motorized transportation. This will enhance community safety as more 'eyes' are engaged at the street level rather than being isolated within an automobile.

Public gathering spaces in destination districts or other areas (e.g., business districts, open spaces and parks) of the Township also provide an additional venue to showcase the work of local artists and enhance the sense of community. These may include, among other things, outdoor sculptures.



View of the recently redeveloped Campus Martius Park, located in downtown Detroit
SOURCE: <http://www.positivedetroit.net/2010/08/work-on-detroits-campus-martius-park.html>

Public art can convey visual interest and reinforce a 'profile'. It also acts as a medium to convey a community's history and heritage. Encouraging art in public spaces is based on the belief that reclamation, revitalization, and creative expression are essential for the nourishment of our shared human experience and environment.

In addition to creating outdoor public gathering spaces at various locations, the Township's Administration Campus, (6201 W. Michigan Avenue), could also develop a flexible physical space that brings the community together for socio-cultural exchanges and opportunities to learn.

CREATE AN INTEGRATED SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING SYSTEM

The Township, through its Arts & Cultural Excellence in Pittsfield Committee (ACEIP), will work toward designing and identifying grant funding for installing a system of wayfinding signage. This concept provides for signs to be used within a given area or sub-area of the Township to create a clearly defined transition from one place to another. Each destination or area would have its own system that represents its character while also showing connections to other destinations or areas.

- A WAYFINDING SIGNAGE SYSTEM WOULD:**
- 1 Identify employment centers, parks, open and recreational spaces.
 - 2 Identify local historical buildings and places.
 - 3 Encourage bicycle and pedestrian exploration by identifying greenways and non-motorized pathways.
 - 4 Ensure that travelers on all modes of transportation can view the signage and wayfinding system clearly.



Example of a wayfinding sign for the Township

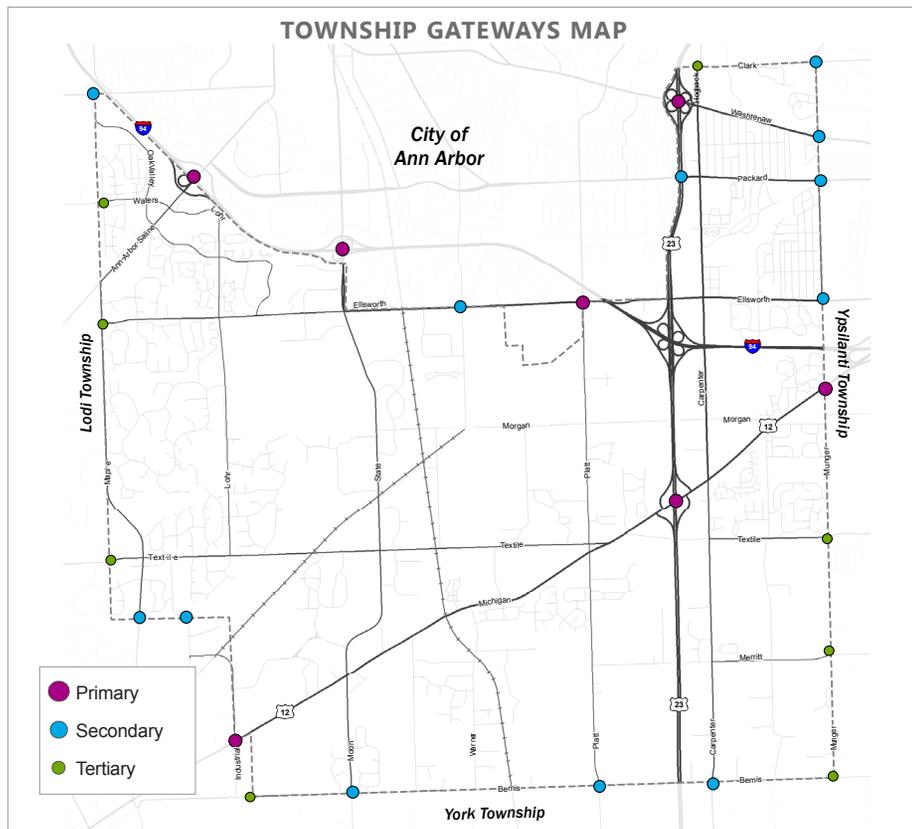


Example of a signage system designed for the City of Decatur, Alabama

CREATE GATEWAYS

There are three types of gateway points in Pittsfield: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary gateways are located at the intersection of major roadways that connect the Township to the region (e.g., State & Ellsworth Roads, Washtenaw Avenue & US-23). Secondary gateways are located at the intersection of primary roads that connect us to our neighbors (e.g., Ellsworth & Stone School Roads, Golfside Drive & Ellsworth Road). Tertiary gateways are located at the intersection of less traveled local roads (e.g., Hogback & Clark Roads, Textile & Munger Roads). Creating signage to identify these gateways as uniquely Pittsfield will help enhance the presence of the Pittsfield Profile.

The proposed gateway signage will be complimentary, yet separate from the wayfinding and the sub-area signage discussed earlier. Gateways give travelers their first impression of the Township, and create a visual impact on visitors as they enter Pittsfield. Given its geographic location, Pittsfield provides for a number of significant gateway points as demonstrated on the map below:



EXAMPLES OF ART IN STOREFRONTS IN SAN FRANCISCO



No One Seems To Care That I Want Roots by Liz Maher
PHOTO: Geneviève Masse



INFINITESIMAL INFINITY by Drone Dungeon Collective
PHOTO: Eduardo Solér



Giant Ghosts by Paul Hayes
PHOTO: Eduardo Solér



We Built This City by Tahiti Pehrson
PHOTO: Cesar Rubio

ART IN STOREFRONTS AND VACANT BUILDINGS

Pittsfield, like any other community, has a certain number of commercial and industrial buildings that are in a transitional stage and have unoccupied space. These unoccupied spaces create a void in our land use fabric before they transition to their next use. While these spaces are waiting for a new use or new tenants, policies and regulations should be established to permit the conversion of these spaces (temporary or permanent) to artists' galleries and studios. By permitting this conversion to take place, new life can be added to vacant storefronts and buildings and create a distinctive character for the area in which they are located.

Collaboration between the Township, property owners, and organizations such as the Washtenaw County Arts Alliance, can make this program possible. Art in storefronts programs have been successfully implemented in communities across the nation.

GOALS FOR AN ART IN STOREFRONTS & VACANT BUILDINGS PROGRAM

- 1 To spruce up non-residential areas that have seen an increased number of vacancies.
- 2 To give artists an ability to exhibit their work in a way that is easily accessible by the public.

ARTS INCUBATOR

This concept may be further developed if synergies occur to provide for a facility that serves as an 'arts incubator.' The purpose of such an incubator would be to provide a lower-rent facility that allows artists to access studio spaces, performance spaces, spaces to host seminars/workshops for the public, and gallery spaces. Such an incubator would allow for complimentary mixed-uses such as retail, restaurants and additional work spaces for creative businesses. This would further reiterate Pittsfield Township's commitment to improving the appearance of our business districts and employment centers and forging public-private and regional partnerships.

PROMOTE CULTURAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Since 2009, Pittsfield Township has been hosting the annual Fall Harvest Festival at the Sutherland-Wilson Farm; this event marks the beginning of the Township's commitment to provide venues for cultural events and public gatherings. The Fall Harvest Festival is jointly hosted by the Township and the Pittsfield Township Historical Society, with the aim of supporting historical preservation activities within the Township. Once the work of ensuring the structural integrity of the Sutherland-Wilson Farm is completed, we hope to make the facility available to the public for functions such as weddings and other such social gatherings.

The Township will continue to identify other venues, both public and private, in order to expand upon the availability of cultural events and activities within our community. One desirable alternative may be to encourage farms to host such activities as crop circles along with planting and harvest events. A focus on agriculture aligns with the Township's priority of ensuring the economic viability

of agricultural activity and farms in Pittsfield.

Depending on available funding and the potential for developing public-private partnerships, the feasibility of creating a central historic village may be explored by the Township. Such a village would define a specific geographic area within which a number of historic structures are colocated. The historic village would incorporate complimentary structures that would allow for a total experience for outdoor and indoor performances and entertainment events. This would allow Pittsfield to expand its destination centers to include those primarily focused on promoting arts and cultural activity in our community.



2010 Fall Harvest Festival at Sutherland-Wilson Farm
PHOTOS: Bob Wild Photography



KEY CONCEPTS

Historic Preservation

Create a 'Pittsfield Profile' and Promote Cultural Events & Activities

GOALS

To preserve and protect examples of Pittsfield Township's history.

Create a sense of community through the expansion of educational, arts, cultural, and leisure opportunities in the Township.

OBJECTIVES

1. To restore and enhance the Sutherland-Wilson Farm Museum.
2. To establish a Historic Preservation Ordinance.

1. Provide for public gathering spaces that, among other things, include public art.
2. Identify and establish gateways and gateway corridors at entry points into the Township.
3. Promote displays of arts in public buildings, including Township Administration building.
4. Develop cultural experiences for all ages and abilities.
5. Actively seek opportunities to create space for art, culture and leisure activities in new and redeveloped facilities.



KEY CONCEPTS

Create a 'Pittsfield Profile' and Promote Cultural Events & Activities

GOALS

Highlight the diversity of the community by utilizing and linking cultural organizations to share their richness and culture in the Township.

Create and support an economically viable arts community.

OBJECTIVES

1. Foster the development of cultural events and activities in partnership with regional organizations and other neighboring jurisdictions.
2. Seek to engage diverse groups in the community.
3. Identify/develop viable venues to host cultural events in the Township.
4. Provide platforms for local artists and historic preservationists to gather and engage in an ongoing dialogue/exchange of ideas.
5. Create multi-modal transportation linkages to community and cultural venues in the Township.
6. Promote the installation of art and sculptures in public gathering spaces.

1. Identify resources for arts funding (such as community contributions, foundation, etc.) and incentives for historic preservation.
2. Create a link to larger regional organizations and develop opportunities to share resources.
3. Provide for incubators or other spaces to allow local artists and others to nurture and promote their talents.
4. Incorporate the Arts into the Township hardscape, including (but not limited to) business districts and dense development nodes.

