

# Evolving Washtenaw Avenue Action Team Charter

## Purpose/Vision

Washtenaw Avenue represents the primary transportation corridor linking Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Cities while traversing Pittsfield and Ypsilanti Townships. Significant opportunities exist to improve the investment environment and promote infill development and redevelopment of the corridor in a mixed use, transit oriented fashion. This will revitalize neighborhoods, increase social interaction and pedestrian activity, increase economic opportunity, enhance safety and create the quality of place that draws investment, visitors and residents. By altering existing land use and development patterns and promoting mixed use centers in nodes of intense development, providing alternative transportation, and enhancing visual aesthetics, the corridor has the opportunity to be recognized as a regional magnet for attracting people and business.

The AARS Talent Team's planning for Washtenaw Avenue includes specific implementation actions for each sector and have transferability to other corridors, serving as a model for retrofitting existing suburban corridors to dense, compact, walkable mixed-use transit nodes implementing the concepts of Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

## Background

Past land use planning and development along Washtenaw Avenue resulted in sprawling and auto-oriented land uses, primarily serving as a commercial corridor. The current auto-centric development pattern limits the ability to provide compact, walkable development with mixed land uses and inhibits existing and new residents' ability to enjoy the high quality of place to which the Ann Arbor region is accustomed. Additionally, a lack of a regional coordination has undermined the potential value Washtenaw Avenue can serve for the entire region. Without a coordinated effort, analysis of existing policies and the identification of uniform approaches to redevelopment, communities could unintentionally limit the future potential of Washtenaw Avenue as a transit corridor.

The Communities prioritized the redevelopment of Washtenaw Avenue because of its location in Washtenaw County's largest population and employment centers. These centers need smart growth and TOD principles to enhance existing residents' quality of place and accommodate the needs of the innovative economy. This requires assessing changing market forces and creating opportunities through a new investment structure and reprioritization. This will be accomplished through evaluation of infill and redevelopment opportunities that incorporate efficiency, maximize existing assets and infrastructure, promote long-term stability, offer multi-modal transportation choices and promote regional collaboration.

Washtenaw Avenue Action Team commits to promoting the redevelopment and upgrade of the corridor through adopting more sustainable and proactive planning, coordinating investment in improved alternative transportation modes, and emphasizing how various segments of this corridor can contribute, perhaps uniquely at times, to a more vital place in our community.

## Members and Participation

Participation in the diverse group of representatives is voluntary. The County and participants' staff members provide the leadership, communication, coordination and technical assistance for the initiative. Resources for special projects will be apportioned among the membership.

- Mandy Grewal, Pittsfield Township Supervisor & Action Team Co-champion
- Dick Carlisle, Carlisle-Wortman Associates & Action Team Co-champion
- Brenda Stumbo, Ypsilanti Township Supervisor

- Terri Blackmore, Executive Director, WATS
- Chris White, AATA
- Jesse Bernstein
- Richard Murphy, Ypsilanti Planning Director
- Diane Keller, Ypsilanti Area Chamber
- Nancy Shore, GetDowntown
- Paul Montagno, Pittsfield Township Senior Planner
- Peter Pollack, Pollack-Design
- Karen Lovejoy Rowe, Ypsilanti Township Clerk
- Newcombe Clark, Principal Bluestone Realty
- Benjamin R. Smith, Plante Moran Real Estate Consultants
- Jeff Kahan, City of Ann Arbor Planner
- Karen Maurer, Maurer Management
- Bill Kinley, Phoenix Contracting
- Amy Cell, Managing Director, Talent Initiatives, Ann Arbor Spark
- Paul Lott, MDOT
- Jennifer Hall, Housing Program Coordinator
- Rhonda McGill, Director of Community Housing Alternatives
- Chuck Warpehoski, Director, Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice
- Joe Lawson, Ypsilanti Township Planner
- Laurence Krieg, Ypsilanti Township Planning Commissioner
- Mel Zimmerman, McKinley
- Eric Mahler, City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission
- Kirk Westphal, City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission
- Kyle Mazurek, Ann Arbor Chamber
- Rebecca Lopez Kriss, Concerned Citizen
- Bitsy Lamb, University of Michigan Transportation & Parking

#### Duration and Commitment

The transformation of the Washtenaw Avenue corridor must be championed by strong leadership and commitment from multiple stakeholders. A dynamic mixed use area, inter-connected by transit and non-motorized pathways requires a dramatic shift to new investment patterns along this corridor. The Washtenaw Avenue Talent Center action team members play an important role and it is incumbent upon each team member to take ownership for spearheading this transformation.

Team members commit to communicate the vision for corridor transformation, keep their organizations up to date of the process, bring concerns to this group and develop a plan that provides detailed implementation steps to achieve the goals for the area. Recommendations from the group requiring action must be approved by governing bodies. The community representatives are responsible for taking each recommendation to their respective governing bodies or organization for endorsement or acceptance.

The projected time commitment to create specific implementation actions is approximately one year, although specific improvements may take significantly longer to implement. For example, the creation and adoption of new land use regulations and design standards, or transit investment policies will require team members to commit additional technical resources. To the extent possible, Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning staff will assist with developing implementation actions.

Adopted by the Washtenaw Avenue Corridor Action Team on Thursday, July 9, 2009.