



Washtenaw County Update

Upcoming County Board Meetings

February 17, 2010

Board Meeting and Ways and Means

February 18, 2010

Board Working Session

March 3, 2010

Board Meeting and Ways and Means

March 4, 2010

Board Working Session

All meetings begin at 6:30pm. Watch live on CTN, channel 16, or online at www.ewashtenaw.org

It is an honor to serve the residents of Washtenaw County. Please contact me with any questions, comments or concerns at 734-646-2088 or judgek@ewashtenaw.org

*Sincerely,
Kristin Judge*

Number One Resident Concern

After my first year in office, I have been asked, "What is the number one reason residents call you?" The answer is simple: Cut-through traffic in neighborhoods.

If I can ask one thing of each resident in Pittsfield Township, it would be to take an extra two minutes on your daily commute to drive on main roads instead of driving through residential neighborhoods. The most obvious concern residents have is the safety of biking, walking and playing children and adults in front of their homes.

Most cut-through drivers studied go above the 25mph speed limit when recorded by the Washtenaw County Road Commission.

Here is what I am doing to address your concerns:

- Working with the Road Commission to create more efficient signal timing at the Lohr Road and Ellsworth Road intersection. Much of the cut-through traffic in the surrounding area was due to the slow light. Last month, Road Commission engineers changed the timing to allow for thru traffic to go at the same time as left – turn traffic when clear. On Feb. 4th, engineers programmed the signal controller so that when traffic is detected, the signal will switch back to the needed phase without going all the way around a complete cycle. More changes coming next month.
- Google Maps and MapQuest gave directions to Saline High School through a residential neighborhood rather than using the signal at Campus Parkway and State Street. I contacted both companies to share my concerns and will continue to do so until the directions are changed.

Another Popular Resident Concern

The second most frequent call I receive concerns snow removal. Below is an excerpt from an email from Jim Harmon, Road Commission Director of Operations. He has made himself available to residents with snow removal concerns.

It is important to note that our Road Commission is not funded by property taxes. Instead, our funding is principally derived from gasoline and diesel taxes and vehicle registration fees. These taxes and fees are allocated to Road Commissions, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and cities and villages through the Michigan Transportation Fund ("MTF"). Regrettably, this revenue source is declining. In fact, our Road Commission is projected to receive 5% less MTF revenue in 2010 than we received in 2009 (the 2010 revenue is expected to be equivalent to what we received in 1999). As a result, our Road Commission and all other road maintenance agencies within the State of Michigan have had to become much more fiscally constrained, resulting in workforce reductions, service level adjustments, cancelled or deferred improvement projects, etc.

Here's a link to our website that describes our winter maintenance services:

<http://www.wcroads.org/services/operations/wintermaint.htm>

Here's a link to our website that explains core service adjustments our Board of County Road Commissioners found necessary to make in response to difficult economic conditions:

<http://www.wcroads.org/news/archive/2009-archives/news-articles/2009-10-07-core-services-adjust-announce.htm>

Please consider reviewing our website for additional information on our services and the challenges that your Road Commission presently faces.

I encourage you to share this information with the community.

Sincerely yours,
James D. Harmon, P.E.
Director of Operations
Washtenaw County Road Commission
734.761.1500 Main Office
harmonj@wcroads.org
www.wcroads.org

C.R.A.M.: Return To Gravel Roads Growing

The number of road commissions reverting paved roads to gravel, and the number of miles of such roads, increased last year, the County Road Association of Michigan said in a report issued Tuesday.

There were 35 miles of paved road ground back to gravel surface in 2009, and 100 miles total across 38 counties were reverted since January 2007, as shown in this report: http://www.micountyroads.org/PDF/2010_Survey_Compare.pdf.

"As Michigan pauses to assess the condition of our great state, lawmakers must consider the condition of our long-neglected transportation infrastructure," CRAM Director John Niemela said. "Last year, newspaper headlines hailed the return to the stone age. This is exactly what we have seen in recent years."

Mr. Niemela said local road agencies had about the same level of funding last year as they did in 1998.

A survey of road agencies showed half of the 83 expect to have to at least consider returning some roads to gravel by the end of the year because they cannot afford required pavement repairs, and 81 counties are expecting reduced maintenance and construction programs in 2010, up from 73 counties in 2009, 66 in 2008 and 44 in 2007.

Only seven counties said they were not making substantial changes to plowing and winter maintenance programs, with most counties indicating limited overtime for plowing particularly secondary roads.

Upcoming County Transparency Initiative

Commissioner Wesley Prater and I are preparing to bring a Transparency Initiative to the Board of Commissioners. Our goal is to have revenue and spending information online and searchable in a format for you to understand. The county budget is YOUR money. I believe you should know how it is spent.

Internet Safety Task Force

After the community came together to welcome our national speakers last year, we wanted to continue our work to educate the community about cyber/Internet security. Community partners will be gathering together on February 19th to set goals and objectives for the new Washtenaw County Internet Safety Task Force. If you have a background in Internet safety and would like to help out, please contact me. The full list of partners will be in the next newsletter. As a member of the first generation of parents needing to keep our children safe from online predators, I believe this task force will play a vital role in our community.

Question of the Month

Each month, I will be asking for feedback on issues facing the County Board. If you are interested in giving your opinion, please email or call me.

Question: The idea of increasing revenue at the local and state level is being discussed in Washtenaw County and Lansing. Please share your thoughts on the following:

- Would you vote for a millage to pay for County Wide Transportation?
- Would you vote for a millage to fund Human Services (helping non-profits serve residents in need)? Washtenaw County currently spends approximately \$2.5 million on Human Services each year.
- How would you feel if the Michigan gas tax was increased to prevent the state from losing Federal Highway Funds in 2011?
- How did you vote for the school millage last fall and why?

MDOT Update – Platt Road and Michigan Avenue

The new left-turn signals are installed and working. Please let me know if this has made the intersection better for you as you travel. Do you believe a dedicated left-turn signal in the north-south direction is also needed? I will continue to work with MDOT to ensure this intersection is improved for your safety.

Seasonal Flu and Norovirus Information

For the latest information on vaccines and the flu call:

Public Health Department (734) 544-6700

Or go online to: <http://www.ewashtenaw.org/flu> and [Norovirus Information](#)

Ann Arbor –Detroit Rail Update

As a new representative of the County Board to SEMCOG, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, I wanted to share with you an update I received.

Ann Arbor – Detroit Regional Rail Project Update
January 2010

The project team continues to make progress on critical activities that will allow some service to start in October 2010. Below are some of the major activities that have taken place since the last update. Project Funding A \$3.5M earmark in the 2010 federal budget has been approved for the AA-Detroit Regional Rail project. A 20% match will be required. The awards for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) High Speed rail funding applications will be announced in early 2010. These funds will improve the quality of commuter service within the project area. SEMCOG will set up a meeting with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to discuss the status of the AA-Detroit project and the progress of federal funding approval.

Federal Railroad Administration

The project team met with the Federal Railroad Administration to discuss safety requirements and other project specifics to ensure that the commuter service will be in compliance with all federal laws.

Railroad Agreements

Memoranda of Understanding and other business issues are being negotiated with the railroad owners.

Locomotive RFPs

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) will use a Request for Proposal (RFP) procedure for the purchase/lease of locomotives. An RFP is

anticipated to be out in the next several weeks.

Cab Car/Coach Refurbishment

MDOT continues to negotiate with the Great Lakes Central Railroad on specific lease and buy out costs for the train cars. The first train set is scheduled for delivery in May 2010.

Woodside Capacity Analysis

The Woodside Consulting Group is using a model to develop the best service schedules for the commuter trains. These schedules should be available in April 2010. At that time, feeder bus schedules will be developed to meet all commuter trains and deliver passengers to their final destinations.

Environmental Clearance

Any federally funded projects will require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. Categorical Exclusions are desired for all projects in the AA-Detroit corridor to expedite service implementation. SEMCOG will meet with MDOT Environmental Section staff to advance the environmental work and will contact FHWA to determine who will approve the environmental document.

Stations

The project team plans to utilize design-build contracts to expedite construction of stations. The strategy will be to develop a 'core' station design paid for by MDOT/SEMCOG with the station communities contributing funds for any additional amenities. Core items include platform, shelter, and lighting.

Women's Exchange of Washtenaw Event "Find Your Voice in Public Policy"

If Women Business Owners were their own country, they would be the 5th largest GDP in the world! They have a strong collective voice that impacts government and public policy at a local, regional, and national level.

At WXW and WIPP's ([Women Impacting Public Policy](#)) event, attendees will hear stories and lessons learned from a panel of well-known women who've held government positions. The panel, which includes Jennifer Bisceglie President of Interos, Nicole Nystrom CEO of Midwest Strategy Group, Debbie Dingell President of A2 Strategies and Shannon Garrett Great Lakes Regional Director of The White House Project will be

moderated by Mary Kramer, Publisher of [Crain's Detroit Business](#).

After the panel, Barbara Kasoff, President of WIPP, will discuss how business women can become involved and politically active. Attendees will then decide on their area of interest (energy, environment, procurement, local government, etc.) and attend interactive sessions with legislators and public figures.

Finally, we'll wrap up the event with a happy hour full of hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, and stellar networking. To register visit: <http://wxwbusiness.com/>

**** JUST ADDED! FREE Pre-Event Workshop: "An Introduction to Federal Procurement" ****

(Offered from 2pm - 3pm before the main event)

Federal Contracting offers a tremendous business opportunity for women business owners to expand their business. In this special seminar you will learn if the Federal Government buys what you sell and it will help you understand what you need in order to navigate through the process. We will discuss registration on the CCR, how to use research tools and the importance of teaming.

NOTE: You can attend just the workshop for FREE, or just the main event for \$35, or both events! Please select the appropriate ticket type above to help us plan for the right number of attendees at each.