

WASHTENAW URBAN COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, September 6, 2023 - 2:00pm – 3:30pm (Remote)

This meeting is being held remotely in compliance with *the Michigan Open Meetings Act* and *Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners Resolution 22-007*. A link to Urban County Executive Committee roster with members' contact information is available [here](#).

I. Welcome & Introductions

- Roll Call – members shall state their physical location from which they are attending the meeting remotely.

II. Public Comment

Zoom link:

<https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/86396429527?pwd=NU5Ha3pwT3pZOXRPcENpRWhkN1VXdz09>

Passcode: 303114

Telephone: US: +1 470 250 9358 US or +1 470 381 2552 US or +1 267 831 0333 US or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 US

Webinar ID: 863 9642 9527

III. Announcements from Members and/or Staff

A. Member Announcements (All)

IV. Minutes

A. 07-12-2023 Meeting Minutes – Review & Approval (ACTION)

V. General Administration

- A. Approval of Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (ACTION)**
- B. Public Hearing on Draft 2022 CAPER**
- C. FY23-24 Allocation Letters**

VI. General Updates - Member Announcements

VII. Public Comment – See II. above for Zoom details.

VIII. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 4, 2023, 2:00 – 3:30pm, Location: Remote (Zoom)

WASHTENAW URBAN COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, July 12, 2023 - 2:00pm – 3:30pm (Remote)

Members in Attendance:

Supervisor Diane O’Connell (Ann Arbor Township); Holli Andrews (City Planner, City of Ypsilanti); Council Member Chris Watson (City of Ann Arbor); Supervisor Ken Schwartz (Superior Township); Heather Jarrell Roe (Clerk, Ypsilanti Township); Trustee Linda Adams (Augusta Township); Jessica West (Director of Community Development, Pittsfield Township); Council Member Bill Ruddock (City of Chelsea).

Members Absent: Mayor Brian Marl (City of Saline); Mayor Shawn Keough (City of Dexter); Supervisor Kathy Kennedy (Sylvan Township); Supervisor Chuck Tellas (York Township); Supervisor Duane Luick (Lima Township); Supervisor Laurie Fromhart (Bridgewater Township); Supervisor Diane Ratkovich (Dexter Township); Supervisor Gary Whittaker (Salem Township); Supervisor Jim Marion (Saline Township); Supervisor John Kingsley (Webster Township); Supervisor Ken Dignan (Northfield Township); Supervisor Ronald Milkey (Manchester Township); Supervisor Will Hathaway (Scio Township).

Facilitator: Commissioner Justin Hodge

OCED Staff Present: Tara Cohen and Jasmyne Townsend

Members of Public Present: Amy Krieg (Attorney & Compliance Officer, Habitat for Humanity), Wendy Carty-Saxon (Director of Real Estate Development, Avalon Housing), Amanda Carlisle (Executive Director, Washtenaw Housing Alliance)

I. Welcome & Introductions – Roll Call

Pursuant to [MCL 15.263 Sec.3](#), Cohen took roll call during which each member stated their name and physical location (I.e. City or Township, Washtenaw County, State of Michigan).

O’Connell: Participating remotely from Ann Arbor Township, Washtenaw County
Andrews: Participating remotely from City of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County
Watson: Participating remotely from City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Schwartz: Participating remotely from Superior Township, Washtenaw County
Adams: Participating remotely from Augusta Township, Washtenaw County
West: Participating remotely from Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County
Jarrell Roe: Participating remotely from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County
Ruddock: Participating remotely from City of Chelsea, Washtenaw County

II. Public Comment

Zoom link:

<https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/87514148686?pwd=QTFndWV6TkphL3g0R3hnV2FSVXpEdz09>

Passcode: 036269

Telephone: US: +1 470 381 2552 or +1 267 831 0333 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799

Webinar ID: 875 1414 8686

III. Announcements from Members and/or Staff

- A. OCED’s Housing & Infrastructure Manager Tara Cohen made an announcement concerning reauthorization for Urban County and Cooperative Agreement letters.

Ms. Cohen noted the City of Milan may be interested in joining, but it would be after FY2024, as they reached out past the deadline for non-participating local units to complete the required steps for obtaining HUD approval a year in advance.

IV. Minutes

A. 07-12-2023 Meeting Minutes – Review & Approval (ACTION)

Moved by Watson. Supported by Jerrell Roe.

ROLL CALL:

O'Connell: Yes

Andrews: Yes

Watson: Yes

Schwartz: Yes

Adams: Yes

West: Yes

Jarrell Roe: Yes

Ruddock: Yes

Ayes – 8; Nays – 0; **Motion carried.**

V. General Administration

A. Fair Housing Training (Pam Kisch, Fair Housing Center of Southeast and Mid-Michigan)

Pam Kisch, Executive Director of [The Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan](#) (FHC), provided a training to Urban County members covering basic fair housing law and the role of The Fair Housing Center, followed by time for Q & A. There were no questions from the group, but Council Member Watson mentioned he would contact Pam Kisch separately to discuss further training availability.

B. Public Hearing: Substantial Amendment to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (Tara Cohen, OCED)

Ms. Cohen gave a brief presentation of proposed changes to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan before opening the public hearing for comment. This presentation outlined changes made to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan voted and approved by Urban County Committee members at the March meeting. Ms. Cohen's presentation can be accessed [here](#) on pages 10-19.

The Public Hearing for the Substantial Amendment to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan opened at 3:08 pm and closed at 3:17 pm – comments are below:

Amanda Carlisle (Executive Director, Washtenaw Housing Alliance)

The previously proposed and approved allocation was primarily to support the development of permanently affordable fair housing which I was strongly in favor of as the best way to end homelessness and housing insecurity was to build new permanent affordable housing. Home funding has been previously used to support new developments or cost associated with preserving affordable housing developments in the community and I worry that the affordable developments currently in the pipeline that could have benefited from these HOME-ARP dollars will be hindered by the change to the previously proposed and approved allocation and it also is at the same time of construction becoming more costly as time goes on. Because it was not included in the communications I speculate the new proposed allocation for HOME-ARP funding tries to react to immediate needs that our homeless community is currently seeing such as increases in evictions and a rise in family homelessness and while we do need additional resources in the system I worry that most of the solutions proposed in the amended proposal are a temporary band aid on a really deep wound; one that is the result of rising

housing costs in our county. I also worry that the county is trying to redirect these HOME-ARP funds to support the hotel program for families started over the winter months which has had some issues. I think our work on veteran homelessness shows that if we have the right resource mix, we can reduce and end homelessness. The government has put resources into permanent housing to end veteran homelessness as a holistic way to end homelessness instead of temporary solutions. Both locally and on the national level this has resulted in reduction for veteran homelessness. The new proposed allocation provides temporary solutions but lacks the long-term strategy with permanent solutions that would have a longer impact in our community.

Wendy Carty-Saxon (Director of Real Estate Development, Avalon Housing)

We've submitted a written letter, but also wanted to provide verbal as well. It was noted there was a significant shift from the March County HOME-ARP proposal which had a budget of 3.5 million going towards new development to no dollars going towards new housing development with this new proposal. While definitely recognizing the challenges of balancing emergency needs with long-term solutions, I would say though that this type of one-time funding that is under the ARP can be used for capital and upfront development cost which could be used for affordable housing and add to the local housing stock and remain a source for affordable housing well into the foreseeable future. Housing development using these HOME-ARP funds would be expected to incorporate housing long-term affordability agreements which would generally leverage other funding sources to ensure the ongoing affordability of housing in our community. And with that I would note that development of affordable housing does require the leveraging of various funding so that lack of sufficient gap funding can result in delays or even prevent new development. Hope the County will reconsider going back to the original proposal – so that the community can benefit from long lasting units.

Holli Andrews (member/City Planner, City of Ypsilanti)

Thank you for letting me chime in. I have a really nice chance to work with Wendy and Pam as well here in the City of Ypsilanti on maintenance zoning reform to remove supportive housing from our regulation in terms of where supportive housing can be built in which zoning district and we were able to work with and bring in Avalon Housing to help support the zoning tax amendment by maximizing a parcel in Downtown Ypsilanti for I believe 21 brand new units that are in walking distance from public transportation, schools and parks, shopping, and other services. There are some things about the changes that maybe should be weighed in on. I love and support and agree we need affordable housing, but I also think people need to have choices on where they want to live. Sometimes when we put a lot of money into new development and end up with huge developments on the fringe and the outskirts of a city where the transportation is more expansive; I see that happening a lot. I do like the idea that some of this money will be geared towards supportive housing that will have landlords offer 24/7 maintenance and services – that is not a typical landlord. Also, maybe have some money for people who may want to buy a duplex and rent to a long-term renter such as seniors but buy something that people can afford and charge market price. I do believe the new plan does have some opportunity. Recently visited my hometown of Portland, Maine – the homeless encampments are worse than I've ever seen in all my 59 years. May be some possibilities in this new proposal with respect to where people can live affordably. I think the new plan does help diversify the funding and open more possibilities there.

Chris Watson (member/ Council person, City of Ann Arbor)

Affordable housing development has been toughest nut to crack from the point of view of the Ann Arbor Housing Commission and the County. I do want to applaud Ypsilanti for stepping up and building affordable housing units. In addition, Ann Arbor and this Urban County body has helped create affordable housing with the Catherine Street project which is supposed to be 62

new units for affordable housing. Our goal was to create 2000 over 10 years and we've created 189 over 4 years and change. The money that could be spent on affordable housing development I think that we need to still secure some still for that. The 3.5 million dollars that was proposed months ago to one development is not the biggest percentage to the overall cost but is money that can be leveraged for non-profits or other agencies. There are a lot of projects where that 3.5 million can be invested and be one of the final hurdles which could prevent the increase in housing cost. I want to point to the success that Ann Arbor has had, that Ypsi has had, even the successes the County has had. There is also the success in identifying space where it makes sense to build new development. The county has pointed to a lot of downtown areas such as parking lots and dense areas where this funding could be used. We are kind of starting to get on a roll here and to walk away from this funding would not be the smartest move right now. While I understand the immediate need, this type of funding only comes once and we need to use to our best advantage.

Bill Ruddock (member/Council person, City of Chelsea)

I agree we shouldn't take one-time money and spend it on something that's a continuing problem like homelessness other than to put it into capital expenses.

C. Fiscal Year 2023-24 Roster & Designee Forms (Jasmyne Townsend, OCED)

Ms. Townsend thanked members of the Urban County Executive Committee for submitting designee forms for FY 2023-24 by the June 6 deadline. Staff asked that if there has been a change to the elected official or designee to notify Ms. Townsend by July 20, 2023.

VI. Public Comment – See II. above for Zoom details. - None

VII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn – Moved by Jarrell Roe. Supported by Watson.
Adjourned at 2:46 PM

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 6, 2023, 2:00 – 3:30pm, Location: Remote (Zoom)

WASHTENAW URBAN COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (UCEC) MEETING
Wednesday, September 6, 2023, 2:00pm- 3:30pm

AGENDA SUMMARY

Approval of Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

Washtenaw Urban County's total HOME-ARP allocation is \$4,562,230, with a spend-down deadline of September 30, 2030. To date, HUD has released 5% of the grant to OCED for purposes of planning and administration.

The County submitted its original HOME-ARP Allocation Plan to HUD by the required deadline of March 31, 2023. HUD formally approved the Plan. As you are aware, we recently held a 30-day public comment period – including 4 public hearings -- to solicit feedback on the [June 30, 2023 Proposed Substantial Amendment](#) to the original HOME-ARP Allocation Plan.

A total of 57 comments, representing approximately 52 unique entities or individuals, were received during this public participation process. Comments were submitted both verbally and in writing, and they included a number of local agencies, businesses, elected officials, and Washtenaw County residents. A complete record of public comments received is included in your packet and can also be found in the appendix of the August 30th Amendment. The majority of comments expressed concern regarding the proposed shift in funding from affordable housing development to supportive services. Many of the comments also recommended returning to either a budget similar to that in the original HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (which placed the majority of funds in affordable housing development), or a budget that better balances the short term and long term housing and service needs as supported by local data.

Following the close of the public comment period, the County made additional changes to the Proposed Substantial Amendment in consideration of the input received. The updated Proposed Amendment being presented for Urban County's approval on September 6th is available to review [here](#) on the [HOME-ARP Allocation Plan](#) landing page.

The most substantive changes from the original Allocation Plan can be found on page 19 in the *Use of HOME-ARP Funding* table outlining the funding levels by activity type.

As shown below, the updated funding table allocates an equal 40% to affordable housing development and supportive services while maintaining the 15% for administration and planning (statutory cap), and 5% for Non-Profit operating costs (statutory cap). The administration and planning allocation is based on anticipated staffing costs for compliance and monitoring functions over the life of the grant, which runs through September 30, 2030.

Use of HOME-ARP Funding

Note: Items in blue reflect changes from the Use of HOME-ARP Funding table in the original Allocation Plan.

	Funding Amount	% of Grant	Statutory Limit
Supportive Services	\$1,824,892.00	40%	--
Non-Profit Operating	\$ 228,112	5%	5%
Administration and Planning	\$ 684,334	15%	15%
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	\$1,824,892.00	40%	--
Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters			--
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)			--
Non-Profit Capacity Building			5%
Total HOME ARP Allocation	\$ 4,562,230	100%	

Staff is requesting that the UCEC approve the revised (8/30/23) Substantial Amendment to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan as presented, after which it will go before the Board of Commissioners for their approval before staff can submit to HUD for final approval. Once approved by HUD, the County will share a timeline for Requests for Proposals for the competitive awarding of HOME-ARP funds.

Proposed Motion Language:

The Urban County Executive Committee moves to approve the updated Substantial Amendment to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (8/30/23 version) as presented, while acknowledging that no HOME-ARP funds will be awarded until said Amendment has also gone through approvals by both the Board of Commissioners and HUD.

Public Hearing: Draft 2022 Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report

The 2022-2023 CAPER provides information and accomplishment data related to Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships, and Emergency Solutions Grant programs for the time period July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023. This is Washtenaw County's fifth annual performance report for the 2018 –2022 Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

A 2-page overview of the CAPER highlights is available [here](#) and the full draft report can be accessed [here](#).

In addition to the 30-day comment period noticed on August 20th, this hearing is being held to obtain citizen input on the Draft 2022 Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report.

This hearing invites participation and/or written comments from any person having an interest, or their duly appointed representative, in the following Urban County jurisdictions: City of Ann Arbor, City of Chelsea, City of Dexter, City of Saline, City of Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor Township, Augusta Township, Bridgewater Township, Dexter Township, Lima Township, Manchester Township, Northfield Township, Pittsfield Township, Salem Township, Saline Township, Scio Township, Superior Township, Sylvan Township, Webster Township, York Township, and Ypsilanti Township.

Urban County 2023 CDBG Allocation and Donation Acknowledgment Letters

We received and executed the 2023 HUD grant agreements in early July. By the end of September, each member community will receive an email from OCED that includes a letter with information about their 2023 CDBG allocation. For communities that programmed their allocations in the 2023 Action Plan, the letter references your specific project(s). For all other communities, the letter notifies them of their final 2023 CDBG allocation under the approved formula and reminds them that their funds are being directed into the Single Family Rehab Program (which serves the entire Urban County). The practice of sending out allocation and donation acknowledgment letters to member communities upon executing the grant agreement with HUD began 4 years ago.

Additional Information

If you have any questions on any of the information included in this summary, please contact Jasmyne Townsend at 734-544-3056 or townsendj@washtenaw.org.

Appendix I: Record of Public Comments Received on the 6/30/23 Proposed Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

Public Comments Received on Proposed Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (July 5 - Aug 4, 2023)			
#	Commenter	Comment	Date / Format of Comment
1	Jennifer Hall (Executive Director, Ann Arbor Housing Commission)	The County's proposal to reallocate all of the funding from permanent affordable housing to transitional housing and short-term rental subsidies is a surprising change. The national best practice to address homelessness is to provide permanent affordable housing so that families have affordable housing options and do not become homeless. The County's change in funding is a short-term response, not a strategic investment in a long-term solution to the shortage of affordable housing in Washtenaw County. Why was this amendment proposed? The data, local experts and community comments in the plan do not demonstrate support for this significant change in public policy. In addition, the amendment includes an increase to 15% in administrative and planning fees. If that line item is approved, which is diverting funding from low-income households, it should directly support OCED staff to implement these programs and not be paid to support general County administrative costs.	7/9/23 (email)
2	Aubrey Patino (Executive Director, Avalon Housing)	I am writing this response on behalf of Avalon Housing in response to the proposed Substantial Amendment to the Washtenaw Urban County Home Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) Allocation Plan. There was a significant shift from the March draft of County HOME ARP that proposed \$3.5 million for the development of affordable housing to the current draft that proposes \$0 for the development of affordable housing. We recognize the challenges of weighing emergency needs versus long term solutions, however, the type of one-time funding under the ARP can be very effectively used for capital/up front development costs. Using it for capital costs can ensure that although the funding is time-limited, it results in affordable and supportive housing that add to our local housing stock and remain a source of affordable housing well into the foreseeable future. Housing developed with HOME ARP funds would be expected to incorporate long-term affordability requirements, thus codifying and ensuring on-going affordability. Best practices to address homelessness focus on the creation of permanent affordable housing. This has also been reflected by other nearby recipients of HOME ARP funding, including MSHDA, who have recognized the unique opportunity these time-limited funds provide and have dedicated the bulk of this funding toward the development of affordable housing. The development of supportive housing requires significant leveraging of funding. The lack of sufficient gap financing can result in significant delays in bringing new units on-line, reduce the number of units provided, or prevent new developments from coming on-line entirely. In addition, HOME-ARP was designed to work for supportive housing in a very specific way that conventional HOME funds don't; i.e. supportive housing services are an eligible expense; the per unit cap was dropped; reserves can be funded to guarantee affordability; reserves can be capitalized to cover the cost of a services coordinator. As CSH writes: "This means HOME-ARP can pay for up to the full capital costs for a unit, be used more effectively to fill gaps in projects, and cover other expenses such as operating and services to make projects viable." We suggest the County reconsider the current proposal of \$0 for affordable housing development and instead return to providing a significant amount of funding under the County ARP for affordable housing so the community can benefit from much-needed, long-lasting units.	Provided 3 times: 7/11/23 (email); 7/13/23 Public Hearing (verbal); 7/19/23 Public Hearing (verbal)
3	Amanda Carlisle (Executive Director, Washtenaw Housing Alliance)	The previously proposed and approved allocation was primarily to support the development of permanently affordable fair housing which I was strongly in favor of as the best way to end homelessness and housing insecurity was to build new permanent affordable housing. Home funding has been previously used to support new developments or cost associated with preserving affordable housing developments in the community and I worry that the affordable developments currently in the pipeline that could have benefited from these HOME-ARP dollars will be hindered by the change to the previously proposed and approved allocation and it also is at the same time of construction becoming more costly has time goes on. Because it was not included in the communications I speculate the new proposed allocation for HOME-ARP funding tries to react to immediate needs that our homeless community is currently seeing such as increases in evictions and a rise in family homelessness and while we do need additional resources in the system I worry that most of the solutions proposed in the amended proposal are a temporary band aid on a really deep wound; one that is the result of rising housing cost in our county. I also worry that the county is trying to redirect these HOME-ARP funds to support the hotel program for families started over the winter months which has had some issues. I think our work on veteran homelessness shows that if we have the right resource mix, we can reduce and end homelessness. The government has put resources into permanent housing to end veteran homelessness as a holistic way to end homelessness instead of temporary solutions. Both locally and on the national level this has resulted in reduction for veteran homelessness. The new proposed allocation provides temporary solutions but lax the long-term strategy with permanent solutions that would have a longer impact in our community.	7/12/23 Public Hearing (Verbal)
4	Wendy Carty-Saxon (Director of Real Estate Development, Avalon Housing)	We've submitted a written letter, but also wanted to provide verbal as well. It was noted a significant shift from the March County HOME-ARP proposal which had a budget of \$3.5 million going towards new development to no dollars going towards new housing development with this new proposal. While definitely recognizing the challenges of balancing emergency needs with long-term solutions. I would say though that this type of one-time funding under that is under the ARP can be used for capital and upfront development cost which could be used for affordable housing and add to the local housing stock and remain a source for affordable housing well into the foreseeable future. Housing development using these HOME-ARP funds would be expected to incorporate housing long-term affordability agreements which would generally leverage other funding sources to ensure the ongoing affordability of housing in our community. And with that I would note that development of affordable housing does require the leveraging of various funding so that lack of sufficient gap funding can result in delays or even prevent new development. Hope the County will reconsider going back to the original proposal – so that the community can benefit from long lasting units.	7/12/23 Public Hearing (Verbal comment)
5	Holli Andrews (UC designee, Ypsilanti/City Planner, City of Ypsilanti)	Thank you for letting me chime in. I have a really nice chance to work with Wendy and Pam as well as here in the City of Ypsilanti on zoning reform to remove supportive housing from our regulation in terms of where supportive housing can be built in which zoning district and we were able to work with and bring in Avalon Housing to help support the zoning tax amendment by maximizing a parcel in Downtown Ypsilanti for I believe 21 brand new units that are in walking distance from public transportation, schools and parks, shopping, and other services. There are some things about the changes that maybe should be weighed in on. I love and support and agree we need affordable housing, but I also think people need to have choices on where they want to live. Sometimes when we put a lot of money into new development and end up with huge developments on the fringe and the outskirts of a city where the transportation is more expensive; I see that happening a lot. I do like the idea that some of this money will be geared towards supportive housing that will have landlords offer 24/7 maintenance and services – that is not a typical landlord. Also, maybe have some money for people who may want to buy a duplex and rent to a long-term renter such as seniors but buy something that people can afford and charge market price. I do believe the new plan does have some opportunity. Recently visited my Hometown of Portland Maine – the homeless encampments are worse than I've ever seen in all my 59 years. May be some possibilities in this new proposal with respect to where people can live affordably. I think the new plan does help diversify the funding and open more possibilities there.	7/12/23 Public Hearing (Verbal comment)

Public Comments Received on Proposed Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (July 5 - Aug 4, 2023)

#	Commenter	Comment	Date / Format of Comment
6	Chris Watson (UC designee, Ann Arbor/Ann Arbor City Councilmember)	Affordable housing development has been toughest nut to crack from the point of view of the Ann Arbor Housing Commission and the County. I do want to applaud Ypsilanti for stepping up and building affordable housing units. In addition, Ann Arbor and this Urban County body has helped create affordable housing with the Catherine Street project which is supposed to be 62 new units for affordable housing. Our goal was to create 2000 over 10 years and we've created 189 over 4 years and change. The money that could be spent on affordable housing development I think that we need to still secure some still for that. The 3.5 million dollars that was proposed months ago to one development is not the biggest percentage to the overall cost, but is money that can be leveraged for non-profits or other agencies. There are a lot projects where that 3.5 million can be invested and be one of the final hurdles which could prevent the increase in housing cost. I want to point to the success that Ann Arbor has had, that Ypsi has had, even the successes the county has had. There is also the success in identifying space where it makes sense to build new development. The county has pointed to a lot downtown areas such as parking lots and dense areas where this funding could be used. We are kind of starting to get on a roll here and to walk away from this funding would not be the smartest move right now. While I understand the immediate need, this type of funding only comes once and we need to use to our best advantage.	7/12/23 Public Hearing (Verbal comment)
7	Bill Ruddock (UC designee, Chelsea/Chelsea City Councilmember)	I agree we shouldn't take one-time money and spend it on something that's a continuing problem like homelessness other than to put it into capital expenses.	7/12/23 Public Hearing (Verbal comment)
8	Ellen Rabinowitz (HHSAB member; Ann Arbor resident)	I just want to echo what Aubrey said. It's a real red flag for me that there is no money in this plan for developing permanent affordable housing. It's Always a challenge to balance emergency short term needs with long term needs. But we know from the affordability study that we are way behind on creating affordable units, and I would really encourage the county to change out this formula that they're requesting and put in significant dollars for permanent affordable housing.	7/13/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
9	Jean Leverich (HHSAB member; Ann Arbor resident)	I missed the last meeting, but after listening to Tara's presentation and hearing Aubrey's comments earlier, I don't understand why they switched the strategy. I'm seeing a lot of nodding.	7/13/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
10	Brenna McMahon (HHSAB member; Ann Arbor resident)	I'd also like it to be recorded that there were confused looks and shrugs from not only staff but Council members and members of the HHSAB about why the shift in strategy occurred.	7/13/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
11	Amanda Carlisle (HHSAB member; Executive Director, Washtenaw Housing Alliance; Ann Arbor resident)	I'll share the Washtenaw Housing Alliance, which is a coalition of nonprofit and government partners, we are working on our working on our public comment. We're doing a survey of our member organizations and that survey closes July 17th. So we'll share those comments hopefully at the Continuum of Care Board meeting. But the new proposed allocation is substantially different than we saw, than what was approved, so we have concerns about the why and the shift from permanent housing development, adding units, to these more temporary situations and projects. So we're very much in favor of using as much of the money possible for the development of permanent housing because we know that's what ends homelessness. We'll continue to look at this, but I speculate that this proposal is an immediate reaction to the immediate needs that we're seeing within the continuum of care, but that's putting a temporary bandaid on a deep wound that we have around affordability in the community and creating more units of affordable housing gets us to not having that issue as much. So really hoping that that can be switched, and also just raising concern about the County proposing the increase to planning and admin. We understand there's a need to make sure the work is done and done well, but I worry that takes away resources that could be used for development and related services that could be offered for folks.	7/13/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
12	Chris Watson (HHSAB Council Liaison, Ann Arbor City Councilmember)	I offered public comment at the Urban County, so that's been recorded, but I wanted to ask a question of OCED staff. The money for eviction prevention and rapid rehousing – if we sum all that money up and think about the spenddown phase through 2030 – would it be fair to think of these as recurring funds used per year for that 7 year period, i.e. dividing the 3.8 million out by 7 years to say we're going to spend \$550k a year at the same percentages? Is it fair to think of it that way or are we anticipating we use it as need arises and not fitting it to resemble a recurring expenditure?	7/13/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
13	Linh Song (HHSAB Council Liaison, Ann Arbor City Councilmember)	I appreciate the extended period so County Commissioners can take a bit of time and give the community some time to reflect on the impact of what withdrawing this funding would look like. It's unfortunate because we all just came out of the budget process, we all just entered a new fiscal year. Same with agencies, they all have the same calendar too. July 1 is the beginning of the fiscal year which means agencies and municipalities are planning out operations, hiring, responsiveness, and on our end it's planning out warming centers – before Thanksgiving we put out a schedule of where people can go to warming shelters. So, I understand there's this need to figure out emergency and temporary shelter, but it's not the same as permanent housing. And I feel like we've gotten off track from what the City in Arbor, in particular, has come to expect of us. We approved the affordable housing millage by a wide margin, so I think we have the support, the demand, to invest in affordable housing. That was in 2020, here we are in 2023, and something like this to happen at this fiscal year means it determines what will happen over the next decade. It takes a while to develop affordable housing, so that investment now and how it's used and matched several times over is really meaningful. I'm disappointed, and I'd like to see us be more responsive and reflect on how that demand in 2020, the plan came out in 2015. We recognized the crisis in 2015. I don't want to spend several decades for what has happened decades before. \$3.5 million is a lot. A million is a lot. Zero is tragic. So, I have strong feelings.	7/13/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
14	Faith Redwine-Otieno (Social Worker at Michigan Primary Care Association)	It's my first meeting. I just I am still trying to understand everything here. I guess my question is what...the ideas are great but there's still a population of people who do not meet the criteria regarding income because they make more and because apartments and everything is increasing. Substantially. It's kind of difficult to still pay rent. So I personally have another idea in mind of what kind of housing can't be provided for those who may not meet the certain criteria that you have mentioned. And I this is where I mentioned all the information...The ideas that Washtenaw County has -- and I am a resident of Washtenaw County -- are great but I still think that there's because like right now I'm a part of the Michigan Tenants Assembly and we're trying to get them to lower, we're trying to get all the apartment people, you know, the Beale, McKinley, et cetera, to lower their rental rates. However, there's still difficulty living because the rent is really high. I have personally found that cooperative housing works because you know, people who may exceed that that line, that amount of income that you cannot have to stay in subsidized housing, can still live there. So I guess expanding the kind of housing that's available – beyond subsidized, beyond family, beyond low income – will be great because it's hard to buy a house. It's hard to buy. You know, it's hard to live in an apartment complex because the rent is just ridiculous or the cost of housing is just too high. So I think opening the door to have more cooperative housing is a great idea because people of all incomes can afford it. And I'm somebody who almost experienced homelessness in Ann Arbor because although I have a great job making great money, the fact that rent is going up you have to pay for sewage, for trash, for water, is just ridiculous, and it's hard to really keep up.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)

Public Comments Received on Proposed Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (July 5 - Aug 4, 2023)

#	Commenter	Comment	Date / Format of Comment
15	Ruth Kraut (WC Deputy Health Office, speaking in personal capacity)	Listen, we all loved CERA. It was amazing for rental assistance. It was a tremendous amount of administrative work. And obviously had its problems but in its wake, we've seen lots of evictions, lots of people having their rent raised significant amounts of money. Barrier Busters is constantly running out of money for housing supports, and I totally recognize that. At the same time, I was fully supportive of the original plan. And I look at this plan. I think the fact that the changes are so significant that we have to go back through a whole round of public hearings raises a little bit of a red flag to me. But the bigger thing is that this is one-time money. And so like I think what we got from CERA is like it's here and then it's gone and it hasn't really changed anything. And so, I really urge you to keep that money into developing permanent affordable housing because that will stick around.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
16	Stephanie Krauss (Circling Back Peer Support Network)	This is really hard for all of us because the truth is, it's just not enough money to do all of it. But we're trying to figure out where to where to stop the hemorrhaging. I mean, it's just astronomical, what's happening here in our community and I just want to highlight, I guess, that the only thing about this that bothers me... is the lack of accountability still on the landlords and on the corporate entities that are profiting from the money that they're making that our folks are not able to pay consistently. And even after we pay it, they're still getting evicted. They're still losing their leases, they're still having to find alternative places to live. And the market keeps getting harder and harder to move around. I know I'm preaching to the choir, I know everybody knows this. Just from our side, I mean, we see that we're feeling it. I mean, literally my life right now is in this place, as a person who is struggling to figure out how to make the market work for me. As a person who wants to live and work and desperately feels this push out of this community. That I don't know how to stop, even as a person of privilege. Even as a person with education. Even as a person with all this life experience. So I don't know what the answer is. I just want to highlight that it's terrifying on all levels, and whatever we can do to try and provide stability wherever possible is where we need to put the money. And part of me says that is in permanent housing options, but ensuring that those housing options remain available to the population that needs it. I get a little anxious when I hear cooperative housing just because some of those co-ops started out as affordable housing and didn't end up affordable. It's a great model but so are Land Trusts...there's a lot of other models that we can look at for permanency in the system and developing a continuum that allows people a pathway out of a box, right? Everybody has to start somewhere. But we also want to remember that folks are constantly moving and wanting to move forward in that continuum of housing stability. So I guess that's all I have to say.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
17	Kathy Wyatt (WC Sheriff's Office, speaking in personal capacity)	We went through hearings, the whole process when we developed the plan around dedicating this one time money to creating affordable housing. I just don't quite understand what has happened or what has changed that focus. My other concern is that when we look at root causes, and when you drill down, and the bottom line in this crisis is that there is not enough affordable housing. And when we get into emergency situations when we're trying...we have clients or we have people that land on our doors who call us and they don't have housing. The bottom line problem is there just isn't places to send them. And so I am really really concerned that we focus on addressing those root causes, which is getting more units of affordable housing. Because it's heartbreaking -- when I have have a post-it on my computer screen that says "178 days to house 134 families". And the only way we're fundamentally going to change that on a long term basis is to have more units available. So that's my concern. I thank everybody who's worked on the original plan and on this plan, because there's there's so much need out there, but I am concerned about the change away -- anything that takes money away from that root cause of getting more units -- it concerns me. Thank you.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
18	Janet Cannon (Buenos Vecinos, speaking in personal capacity)	I'm sort of puzzled. Perhaps I missed in the discussion how this change came about. clearly there was a lot of response saying "but we also need all of these things." And we do, but if there isn't some some part going toward a long term improvement of the stock, it's clearly a problem too. But what I also really wondered is -- in the process of developing the plan, did it appear that there were people ready to take on the challenge of creating the those units? Is there land available and are there developers that are going to be ready to do that in the current market situation? I wondered if you could talk a little bit more about how how the complete shift came about.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
19	Sheryl Stumbaugh (Disability Network - Washtenaw Monroe Livingston)	I just wanted to make sure that when looking at securing permanent housing, that we're also making sure that they're accessible. And this goes beyond meeting the requirements of ADA, because that isn't adequately going to meet the needs that require accessible housing. So, you know, one for every complex that's not going to meet the need. And there's also a difference between "wheelchair access", where you can get in the front door, versus "wheelchair accessible", which has 36 inch doorways and X amount of turning radius, grab bars, things like that. Our population is aging, and the disability does not discriminate. You can join us at any time. So even if you think you don't need it now, you may need it in the future. And even if all the units can't be made accessible, if they're built with a universal design, which means the studs are already in place if grab bars need to be installed, or there is at least one bathroom that has a 36 inch doorway, one bedroom that has 36 inch doorways, so that if somebody acquires a disability they can also remain in their home. Thank you.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
20	Jim Mogensen	As we move forward with this program of finding the affordability I just remind people of the influence of time and that the investments be made in nonprofits committed to 99 year affordability, not 15 year affordability. A lot of developers are getting the tax credits, and once those things expire, then it's no longer capped. And I bring that up also as it relates to the co-ops. Yes, there were 40 year mortgages, but as many of us on this call can attest to, 40 years is not as long as it used to feel like. And when those HUD-sponsored mortgages expired, there was the move to privatize to make the co-ops market rents. And the one thing that stopped that from happening is the complexities of all the various people with their co-op units and the tax implications of doing it -- that was that was one of the things that prevented all of the Ann Arbor area co-ops from becoming market rate. So I just bring that up as moving forward just not to forget that. And there's also the funding of the housing commissions. If the funding for the housing commission ends, then those those 15 year tax credits will make all those things bump up to market rate. And just to keep to keep that in mind as we're moving forward and monitoring the investments that we make in these things.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
21	Zachary Fosler (Ypsilanti Housing Commission)	I find myself very conflicted on this matter. I agree we desperately need additional affordable housing in the county and I want to see it developed. That being said, I also look at the here and now of where our residents are and how far behind so many of our residents are in rent. And these are subsidized residents. And the number of people...we're trying to work with people so much right now and working out repayment agreements and plans and all those things. But the truth is that's not enough. There's very large sums of money that we're missing out on at our properties and what that does is it impacts our ability to manage them well. It causes issues with paying paying bills with vendors and people we need to really keep our properties up. And so, I do see the immediate need for some additional rental assistance in the community. I mean, we we can't write it all off; it's pretty significant. And so, while I might I don't know that I support taking everything away from the development of affordable housing, I absolutely support a fairly sizable amount of money going to emergency assistance.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)

Public Comments Received on Proposed Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (July 5 - Aug 4, 2023)			
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22	Daniel Kelly (Shelter Association of Washtenaw County)	Similar to what Zach said. I mean, obviously, it's a balancing act of short and long term needs. I know it's really difficult thing to do, and I think having some more dialogue about that as a community and then the COC is gonna be incredibly important. But I guess the question I have for the public comment is in any plans around how to do that balance longterm, and how to support those affordable housing efforts so we don't lose out on those things as a result of the change. I think that'd be a question like what, what we can do as a community or as a County, City, and other groups and the community level, to make sure that we're not as a result of the change, doing less around affordable housing. Because it is that long term need.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
23	Jan Little (Michigan Ability Partners)	I want to echo some of the comments already made. this feels like a one time gift with these funds and putting it into something that is sustainable and long term like actual units, affordable units, to me, you know...I was excited about the first go round with the public hearings where we had a chance to talk about this. And although I don't know the answer about the timing and how quickly we would be ready to go, we as a community would be ready to start constructing new units, I feel like that with the developers that there are within our system, that we do have that opportunity and whether that's through Avalon or whether it's through the Ann Arbor Housing Commission or other developers within the system, we definitely, I feel, owe it to ourselves to take advantage of this kind of one time gift of some permanent, you know, something that outlast all of us. And then also I do agree with Zach, and I am a little conflicted in that I do feel like there is an immediate need and some of the funding should go toward the immediate need right now for services and short term rental assistance. So that's all I wanted to mention. Thanks.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
24	John Hieftje (Co-Chair of CoC Board; Former Mayor of Ann Arbor)	I'm going to come down on the side of the longer term use in building affordable housing. In my experience, it won't be too long before we get into something like the great recession that we had back in 2008 and lasted for several years. It actually started before that in Michigan. There's going to be a time when the economy is not as good, and the economy's pretty good right now. And we need to find other ways of funding these short-term needs. But when there's a time when the economy is not so good when government budgets are strained, when we do not have a generous, well meaning administration in Washington...where we're going to need that affordable housing. That longer term build is really the only way to build resiliency. And that's all I would say here to the public hearing. Thank you Morgan.	7/19/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
25	Amanda Carlisle (WHA)	Washtenaw County recently released a public notice for comment period on a proposed substantial amendment to the Washtenaw Urban County Home Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) Allocation Plan. The Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA) submits the following comments for your consideration, which are based on responses to a survey WHA conducted with our 25+ member organizations that are working collectively to end homelessness and expand affordable housing options in Washtenaw County. WHA encourages implementation of best practices, which say that increasing permanent housing units and resources is the best way to end homelessness. We are concerned the substantial amendment shifts one-time, time-limited funding away from proven strategies to end homelessness, such as the development of affordable housing and will jeopardize current developments in the pipeline in terms of timing and costs. We recommend that at least 50% of the HOME ARP funding continue to be used, as originally proposed, for the development of permanently affordable housing. WHA understands deeply the current emergency needs for people experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, and relative housing unaffordability in Washtenaw County. However, we are concerned the County is proposing to invest in strategies, such as transitional housing, which are known to be less effective and more costly than permanent housing strategies such as permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing. We recommend \$0 be allocated for transitional housing and \$0 of this funding be allocated for move-in costs and income stabilization services, the latter of which is needed funding but should be found through other, long-term funding sources. Lastly, the County is now proposing to take 15% of the funds for Admin & Planning versus the 7% originally proposed and approved by HUD, and we are concerned this leaves less funding available for best practice programs and affordable housing development. We understand this proposed increase in Admin & Planning is the direct result of the changes to the allocation plan overall because the new allocations will pose greater administrative burden on the county. We recommend simplifying the allocations and reducing the percentage taken for Admin & Planning to 7-10%. Each time new affordable and supportive housing developments come online we see great reductions in the number of households experiencing homelessness. We have seen with our work to end Veteran homelessness that with more permanent housing resources, we no longer need as many temporary/emergency beds. These examples prove to us that we must focus on the creation of permanent affordable housing. We look forward to a revised proposal from the county that balances both long-term and short-term needs. Thank you for your consideration of our comments	8/2/23 Written Letter (email attachment) & Public hearing (verbal comment)
26	Michael Appel (Avalon Housing)	Repeated Avalon's statement as presented previously by Aubrey Patino (see row 2 above)	8/2/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
27	Tess Brauster	Commenter noted the importance of listening to those with lived experience when developing solutions to homelessness.	8/2/23 Public hearing (verbal comment)
28	Jessica West (Pittsfield Charter Township)	Pittsfield Township's letter expresses their concerns regarding the amendment's focus on shifting funds away from development of affordable rental housing to a budget that targets supportive services and direct assistance. Affordable housing remains a pressing concern for Pittsfield Township and Washtenaw County. They request more information on how the proposed amendment will ensure that affordable housing goals are still prioritized alongside the allocation for supportive services. They believe a balanced approach, encompassing both affordable housing development and supportive services, is necessary to create a comprehensive and sustainable solution to address the needs of our community. [For complete comments, see attached letter.]	8/2/23 (Email) - See attached letter
29	April Scanlon (Washtenaw County DHHS)	As a Prevention Specialist in Washtenaw County, I am concerned about the changes to the HOME ARP funding. A majority of Prevention referrals I receive for families with minor children are related to housing instability. When parents are constantly worried about meeting basic needs including adequate shelter, it affects children's well-being. They may not have consistent or adequate sleeping arrangements affecting their ability to perform in school and increasing behaviors which then adds more pressure on parents. Parents find it difficult to maintain employment, keep up with DHHS benefits requirements, support their children's education when they do not know where they will sleep or how they will feed their family. Permanent supportive housing and Rapid Re-housing are essential for supporting families so they have a chance to stabilize, grow, and focus on meeting children's needs. Some may need a one-time assistance to get caught up due to an unpaid leave from work or unexpected major expense, but often people need more time to increase their employability, obtain transportation, address mental health, and stabilize. We are often seeing people return for additional help to prevention eviction when they may have been helped already in the past year. I am in support of WHA's proposed amendments as they understand the housing needs of the community. Thank you.	8/2/23 (Email)
30	David Lutton (Scio Township Resident)	Commissioners: Please do not adopt the proposed Amendment. Please heed the counsel of the WHA and allocate the funds to the hard work of creating more permanent affordable housing. Thank you.	8/2/23 (Email)

Public Comments Received on Proposed Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (July 5 - Aug 4, 2023)

#	Commenter	Comment	Date / Format of Comment
31	Jennifer Erb-Downward (Univ of Michigan, Poverty Solutions)	I urge you to reconsider your amendment to the HOME ARP plan and return to the original proposal which allocated the majority of funds to the development of permanent affordable rental housing. As someone who has researched homelessness, it's causes, and it's solutions for over ten years, I can tell you that the evidence supports permanent affordable housing as a key to solving our current crisis. Research also points to the fact that one time funding is best spent on infrastructure projects - not programs that will be unable to sustain themselves when the funding expires. These ARP dollars are an opportunity to invest in a long-term solution to homelessness in our community.	8/2/23 (Email)
32	Julie Wheaton (Ann Arbor resident since 1975)	The WHA has submitted the following recommendations, which are based on responses to a survey WHA conducted with our 25+ member organizations that are working collectively to end homelessness and expand affordable housing options in Washtenaw County. •We recommend that at least 50% of the HOME ARP funding continue to be used, as originally proposed, for the development of permanently affordable housing. •We recommend \$0 be allocated for transitional housing and \$0 of this funding be allocated for move-in costs and income stabilization services, the latter of which is needed funding but should be found through other, long-term funding sources. •We recommend simplifying the allocations and reducing the percentage taken by the County for Admin & Planning to 7-10%.	8/2/23 (Email)
33	Paul Sher (Ann Arbor resident, 48108; HHSAB member)	I strongly oppose any attempt to shift funding away from permanent affordable housing. It is well documented and supported by research that permanent supportive housing is the best method for addressing homelessness. Transitional housing unfortunately has not been nearly as successful. Please communicate my opinions to the appropriate folks. Regrettably I am unable to attend the meeting tonight.	8/2/23 (Email)
34	Susan Whitlock (Ann Arbor resident, 48105)	As a concerned citizen of Ann Arbor, I write to underline my support for the Washtenaw Housing Alliance's recommendations regarding proven strategies to end homelessness, especially funding for affordable housing. It's time Ann Arbor took the need for affordable housing seriously with adequate investments.	8/2/23 (Email)
35	Garret Potter & Jillian Myers (Ann Arbor resident, 48105)	Since the organizations who would "benefit" most from the proposed amendment to the HOME-ARP plan do not want the amendment, but instead express their preference to keep the HOME-ARP plan as it is/as it was originally, it makes sense to keep the plan as it is/was without the amendment. The charts in the document (from the county website) show clearly that the need/gap for affordable housing units is far greater (thousands versus hundreds) than the need/gap for beds impacting homeless individuals/families in need of emergency services. Our family would like to lend our voices in support of building more affordable housing units in Ann Arbor with the original HOME-ARP plan. Our family is Garret Potter and Jillian Myers, and our children are ages eight and one.	8/2/23 (Email)
36	Idelle Hammond-Sass (Ann Arbor resident, 48104)	I am writing to let you know how important affordable housing and transitional housing is for helping the homeless. I have volunteered with the Art break program at the Delonis Center and heard directly from clients who have moved on from the shelter to transitional and affordable housing. These people are invested in becoming stable and productive. Please advocate for their well being by funding housing. Thank you!	8/2/23 (Email)
37	Ashley Blake (Avalon Housing Board of Directors)	Re-submitted the previous written comment from Aubrey Patino (Avalon Housing)	8/2/23 (Email)
38	Jan Wright (Pittsfield Township resident, 48197)	I was unable to attend the meeting last night, but I strongly support Washtenaw Housing Alliance's recommendations that would better implement best practices balancing both long-term and short-term needs for housing. I know these are tough choices and it would be better if we could do it all, but it seems to me there is evidence that shows this is a better long-term strategy.	8/3/23 (Email)
39	Joan Lowenstein (Ann Arbor resident, 48104)	I am writing as a former Ann Arbor Councilmember and current board member of the Washtenaw Housing Alliance. Many of us who have been housing advocates for decades are concerned that decisions about the very crucial county funding mechanism is happening without consultation with established experts and providers. Our county's history of providing for those who need housing assistance is stellar because we have existing agencies that have excelled at it. An example of this failure to use best practices is the proposed budget for HOME-ARP money that would zero out funding for building new units. We should not be patting ourselves on the back for housing people in hotels. It is way too expensive and has been done without consideration for alternatives. We could use precious funds for assisting building that is already in the pipeline and provide permanent housing for many instead of a temporary band-aid for a few. I urge the County Commission to be more deliberate about consulting existing, successful providers and experts to maintain and improve our housing services.	8/3/23 (Email)
40	Lesia Pikaart (Ypsilanti resident, 48197)	Thank you for the opportunity to submit comment on HOME ARP. My comments come from numerous years of experience working to address homelessness in Jackson, Hillsdale, Lenawee and Monroe Counties. This difficult and complex issue requires targeted efforts. Why works and what I recommend is that you focus on permanent affordable housing and particularly housing with supports available to address chronic mental health, disability and substance abuse (supportive housing). Without the concentration on the core issues, chronic homelessness will remain a growing problem in our county. Thank you for the opportunity to comment!	8/3/23 (Email)
41	Joan Painter-Jones (Milan resident, 48160)	The Shelter Association has had years of experience with people who are homeless. I regularly donate to them because I believe that they know how to help those who need shelter, food, education, and more. And sometimes they need a step before permanent housing is available for them. Transitional housing or a place to recover from substance abuse, etc. It takes experience to find out what works. Don't cut any funds for the Shelter Association, please.	8/3/23 (Email)
42	Carol Fletcher (Scio Township resident, 48103)	As a longtime supporter of the Shelter Association and Alpha House I am well aware of the need for permanent affordable housing. As is readily apparent if one looks at housing costs in Ann Arbor, there is a crying need for affordable housing. Therefore I urge that, when allocating funds, Washtenaw County focus on permanent, affordable housing. Temporary housing, while good in the short run, really only provides a bandaids for the housing issue instead of a long term fix.	8/3/23 (Email)
43	Francine Alexander	Having studied the issue of homelessness and the long term solutions to homelessness, I do not support the shift of investment from permanent housing to transitional housing/emergency needs. as proposed by OCED and the Administration. This is short term thinking and it fails to maximize the benefits these finds bring to the creation of affordable housing. And we KNOW permanent supportive housing to be a long term, highly effective solution. Please address the immediate needs (they are real and important) with ongoing budget reallocation from other areas within the County budget.	8/3/23 (Email)
44	Denise Firozi	Shah and Denise Firozi support and Advocate for the WHA's recommendations.	8/4/23 (Email)
45	Bridget Knyal (Ann Arbor resident)	As a resident of Ann Arbor for 27 years, I am deeply concerned about permanent affordable housing. I am voicing my support for the WHA-recommended allocation of 50% funding for permanent affordable housing and \$0 for transitional housing to build a sustainable future.	8/4/23 (Email)
46	Mitch Holdwick	Just wanted to voice my opinions and concerns. What's most critical through this process is to engage experts, housing system providers and ultimately create long term sustainable solutions. I sincerely hope these issues and topics are addressed and considered. Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinions.	8/4/23 (Email)

Public Comments Received on Proposed Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (July 5 - Aug 4, 2023)			
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47	Sara Carriere (Ann Arbor resident since 1979, Vincentian)	I have heard that funding is going to be taken away from SAWC. As a member of the St. Vincent dePaul Society I have been helping people go from homelessness into a home, working with social workers who are doing a great job to make this happen. They have strategies and methods which work really well and I would hate to see their job become harder with less funding and less support from Washtenaw County. We are seeing single mothers and their children sleeping in cars. This has never happened before in such numbers! These mothers need support services such as child care and job training and a stable home environment. Without a stable home environment it is impossible to tackle the next problem. Please keep the funding for SAWC and HAWC. The future of our children depend on it.	8/4/23 (Email)
48	Vicki Wyman (Ann Arbor resident, 48105)	Please use the Rescue Funds to support WHA's plan to support homelessness in Washtenaw County. It seems far better to support housed families before they become homeless than to pay hotel bills after the fact. Children need to feel secure and not transit moving from place to place. The children in the homeless families are the future of our County. All homeless persons need us to us funds in a smart matter. I strongly urge you to support WHA's plan.	8/4/23 (Email)
49	Sean Duval, President of Golden Limousine International	I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my strong advocacy for the crucial services provided by the Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA) and The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC). As a active board member of several countywide non-profits, a local business owner, and most importantly, a concerned community member, I firmly believe that transitional housing is an indispensable component in our collective efforts to address homelessness sustainably. The data presented in the recent public hearing on the HOME-ARP amendment, as well as the current situation, highlight the ongoing need for shelter and support services in our county. Despite the progress made so far, the demand for assistance remains unyielding. The Shelter's triage list's significant increase, the recent closure of Livingston Shelter, and the cessation of eviction funds underscore the pressing nature of the issue we face. Removing support for transitional, supportive housing at this time could have a devastating impact at a critical moment in our battle against homelessness. According to the 2020 Vulnerability Assessment results, individuals experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County have been disproportionately impacted by health conditions, with common issues including diabetes, seizure disorders, kidney failure, heart disease, COPD, mental health conditions, and substance use disorders. Disturbingly, client overdoses have increased by 300% over the last five years, highlighting the urgency of comprehensive support services. Mental health needs have also seen a drastic increase, with nearly 70% of individuals reporting a mental health condition. Addressing mental health challenges is paramount in providing holistic care to those experiencing homelessness. Amidst these challenges, the impact of transitional housing provided by the WHA and SAWC since 2015 has been significant. As measured at a point in time (PIT), homelessness has generally continued to decrease in Washtenaw County since 2015. Remarkably, 97% of people counted in 2022 were in shelter, and unsheltered homelessness has declined by 91% since 2015. Total homelessness has seen a decline of 43% since 2015, indicating the effectiveness of the efforts taken so far. Transitional housing has played a pivotal role in these achievements. By offering a safe and supportive environment, individuals experiencing homelessness have had the opportunity to access resources, address underlying health conditions, and gain stability. The WHA and SAWC have been instrumental in providing a lifeline to countless individuals who would have otherwise struggled to find their footing. As we look ahead, it is imperative that we continue supporting transitional housing programs. While the pursuit of permanent affordable housing solutions is essential, we must not overlook the immediate and critical need for transitional housing in our comprehensive strategy to combat homelessness. Sustainable solutions require a multifaceted approach, and transitional housing is a critical piece of this puzzle. In conclusion, I urge you to advocate for funding that supports both permanent affordable housing and transitional housing programs. Let us work together to ensure that the WHA and SAWC have the necessary resources to continue their invaluable work in guiding individuals and families towards stability and self-sufficiency. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the commissioner's support in ensuring the well-being of some of our community's most vulnerable members.	8/4/23 (Email)
50	Dave Wible (Ann Arbor resident, 48104)	I am a long-time resident of Ann Arbor and have long been interested in solutions for the homeless issue. I urge the commissioners to follow the recommendations of the Washtenaw Housing Alliance, to achieve more lasting and effective results with our county dollars rather than spending so many of them on temporary housing in local hotels. Thanks!	8/4/23 (Email)
51	Alan McCord	I encourage the Board of Commissioners to adopt the WHA's recommendations for revisions to the proposed HOME-ARP amendment to leverage existing best practices by organizations with proven track records.	8/4/23 (Email)
52	Anne McKee (Ann Arbor resident)	Homelessness in our community is important to me and something I've watched for decades and at times have assisted in projects regarding this issue. I strongly encourage the board to listen to the recommendations made by the Washtenaw housing alliance for funds that are available to work to end homelessness rather than using temporary housing and hotels which is a Band-Aid measure. I am familiar with the work of the organizations that work with the housing alliance and have confidence in their ability and commitment to address our homelessness issue. Please follow there guidance on this issue. Thank you	8/4/23 (Email)
53	Aubrey Patino (Executive Director, Avalon Housing)	Avalon spoke at the August 2 public hearing concerning the County's proposed Amendment to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan. At that hearing, we expressed our hope that the final adopted plan would allocate at least 50% of the funds to permanent housing development. We also expressed our support for the comments that were separately submitted by the Washtenaw Housing Alliance. Both of these remain our suggestions. We would like to add the following comments during this public input period, arising from the discussion between Commissioners and OCED staff at the August 2 Board of Commissioners meeting: •Leveraging: Commissioners were interested in how HOME-ARP funds could be used together with other financing to create affordable housing. The HOME-ARP funds are extremely flexible and can be combined with other federal, state, local and private funds. There is every reason to expect these HOME-ARP funds should and will be used to leverage additional financing for any proposed development. Although the final allocation of funds for housing development would be up to County staff, the BOC and the Urban County Executive Committee, based on previous Avalon developments that were financed using County support, rather than the 8-9 units referenced in the staff overview, these funds could be meaningfully used to fill gaps in developments creating 20 - 80 units. •Timing: The affordable housing development pipeline often takes 3 - 5 years from the original project conception until units are ready to lease. Avalon has a number of projects--totalling 160 units--that are already somewhere along this pipeline, are not yet fully funded and on which we expect to close within the next 2 years. Depending on how the funds are allocated, this means that units could be available in as soon as 1 1/2 - 2 years. •Need: These funds are arriving at a time when affordable housing developments throughout the nation are threatened by rising costs and delays. These funds can be used to keep projects moving forward, rather than stalled due to funding gaps. These challenges include: oConstruction cost increases: There appears to be no immediate lessening of the cost increases throughout the construction industry. Affordable housing construction--both rehab and newly built developments--are all finding that construction costs continue to rise. oInterest rate increases: Although affordable housing often has fairly small permanent debt, there is almost always a substantial construction loan. Interest increases increase the total development cost for construction, and also increase the need for subsidy by reducing the size of an affordable permanent loan. oMaterial delays: The construction industry is still facing delays in the availability of materials, and long lead times for key construction items. These delays increase the cost of development, and delay when units are ready for occupancy. •Impact: We understand the challenge in weighing immediate, emergency needs with longer term responses that address the underlying causes. It is worth remembering that when Avalon opened its Hickory Way Apartments--70 1-bedroom units--our community saw an immediate impact on the subsequent Point in Time Count of chronically homeless persons (31% reduction in chronic homelessness). Focusing on the most effective solutions that add affordable units remains the best practice in reducing homelessness.	8/4/23 (Email)

Public Comments Received on Proposed Substantial Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (July 5 - Aug 4, 2023)

#	Commenter	Comment	Date / Format of Comment
54	Ben Miles (Saline resident and President of Chelsea Hospital)	I am writing to share my support for long-term housing solutions which are informed by local agencies who have expertise in the area of housing. Short-term fixes, like hotels, miss the mark. I strongly encourage you to consider enlisting and supporting ideas by such agencies, like the Washtenaw Housing Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to lend my voice.	8/4/23 (Email)
55	Sarah Paspal-Jasinski (Shelter Association of Washtenaw County)	Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) Allocation Plan. The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC) submits the following comments for your consideration, which are based on our work with the Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA) and the local network of over 25 partner homeless and housing service organizations across the community as well as our 40-year History of Ending Homelessness, one person at a time. This letter is intended to share our position on strategies that end homelessness rather than temporarily displace it. As a shelter provider we understand the need for both short term and long-term solutions to end homelessness in our community. Transitional housing is not a comprehensive solution to homelessness. It can provide temporary relief for individuals experiencing homelessness, but it does not address the root causes of homelessness, nor does it provide long-term housing solutions for those who are chronically homeless. Transitional housing has only been shown to be effective with certain specific sub-populations of those experiencing homelessness like survivors of domestic violence or individuals struggling with a substance use disorder. A combination of temporary shelter to meet immediate basic needs while increasing permanent housing options is needed to end homelessness in our community at this time. Temporary shelter can provide immediate relief for those experiencing homelessness, while permanent supportive housing provides individuals with a stable and affordable place to live. By combining these two approaches, we can address both the short-term and long-term needs of individuals experiencing homelessness over time and work toward our goal of there being enough affordable, permanent housing for everyone in Washtenaw County to have a place to call home. The homeless landscape can be characterized by individuals facing significant challenges including disabilities, mental illness, and substance use disorders. These individuals face considerable physical and mental health disparities, which makes improving their health and housing outcomes the most important thing we can do for them. In most instances, transitional housing is a distraction from these key outcomes. With transitional housing, individuals may experience high levels of stress due to the uncertainty of their living situation. They may be unsure of how long they will be able to stay in the housing or if they will be able to find permanent housing in the future. This uncertainty can lead to feelings of anxiety and worry. In contrast, permanent housing provides individuals with stability and a sense of security. That is why we recommend that at least 50% of the HOME ARP funding to continue to be used, as originally proposed, for the development of permanently affordable housing. We support WHA's recommendation that \$0 be allocated for transitional housing and \$0 of this funding be allocated for move-in costs and income stabilization services, the latter of which is needed funding but should be found through other, long-term funding sources. We hope that the county will take all of our recommendations into consideration and work towards evidenced based best practices that strike a balance	8/4/23 Written Letter (Email attachment)
56	Jackie Lapinski (Board member, Washtenaw Housing Alliance; 20+ year Washtenaw County resident)	I'd like to submit the following for public comment as you develop the plan for HOME ARP. First I'd like to express gratitude for openness for public comments. Most importantly, I'd like to urge this Board to involve experts and those with lived experience in developing this plan. We are fortunate to have deep and broad expertise in our current system of care / housing agencies. I know these experts would provide helpful input to ensure the plan includes the most effective and proven measures using very good stewardship. In particular I believe it's very important to use scarce available dollars for known, long term actions including screening, supportive housing, eviction prevention, and weave these countermeasures into the fabric of the existing systems of care for housing and homelessness in Washtenaw County. Thank you for your willingness and openness to comments. And thank you for your service to the county.	8/4/23 (Email)
57	Mary Ellen Wible	I am writing to urge you to PLEASE listen to the experienced advice of the The Washtenaw Housing Alliance in the allocation of the rare and precious HOME-ARP funds. I do not want funds used for transitional housing. I want our county to invest in permanent housing strategies that have a proven track record. Band Aid approaches do not serve us as a community in the long run. To this end, I urge you to allocate at least 50% of the HOME ARP funding for the development of permanently affordable housing and NOTHING for temporary, transitional housing. People need a permanent solution and so do we as a caring community. I am interested in long term solutions not temporary band-aids. for these precious one time dollars. These temporary problem solving methods must be built into our annual financial plans. I also think it is inappropriate for the county to take more than 7% for the administration and planning of these funds when we already have well established, experienced and cohesive leaders in housing who have offered an effective plan. I strongly advocate revising the proposed substantial amendment with the WHA's recommendations that better implement best practices balancing both long term and short-term needs. I sincerely hope the county will rethink this short sighted amendment.	8/4/23 (Email)



August 2, 2023

Tara Cohen, Housing Infrastructure Manager
Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development
Sent via email: cohent@washtenaw.org

Dear Ms. Cohen,

Washtenaw County recently released a public notice for comment period on a proposed substantial amendment to the Washtenaw Urban County Home Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) Allocation Plan. The Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA) submits the following comments for your consideration, which are based on responses to a survey WHA conducted with our 25+ member organizations that are working collectively to end homelessness and expand affordable housing options in Washtenaw County.

WHA encourages implementation of best practices, which say that increasing permanent housing units and resources is the best way to end homelessness. We are concerned the substantial amendment shifts one-time, time-limited funding away from proven strategies to end homelessness, such as the development of affordable housing and will jeopardize current developments in the pipeline in terms of timing and costs. We recommend that at least 50% of the HOME ARP funding continue to be used, as originally proposed, for the development of permanently affordable housing.

WHA understands deeply the current emergency needs for people experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, and relative housing unaffordability in Washtenaw County. However, we are concerned the County is proposing to invest in strategies, such as transitional housing, which are known to be less effective and more costly than permanent housing strategies such as permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing. We recommend \$0 be allocated for transitional housing and \$0 of this funding be allocated for move-in costs and income stabilization services, the latter of which is needed funding but should be found through other, long-term funding sources.

Lastly, the County is now proposing to take 15% of the funds for Admin & Planning versus the 7% originally proposed and approved by HUD, and we are concerned this leaves less funding available for best practice programs and affordable housing development. We understand this proposed increase in Admin & Planning is the direct result of the changes to the allocation plan overall because the new allocations will pose greater administrative burden on the county. We recommend simplifying the allocations and reducing the percentage taken for Admin & Planning to 7-10%.

Each time new affordable and supportive housing developments come online we see great reductions in the number of households experiencing homelessness. We have seen with our work to end Veteran homelessness that with more permanent housing resources, we no longer need as many temporary/emergency beds. These examples prove to us that we must focus on the creation of permanent affordable housing. We look forward to a revised proposal from the county that balances both long-term and short-term needs.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments,

Amanda Carlisle
Executive Director



Pittsfield Charter Township
Department of Community Development

6201 West Michigan Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Phone: (734) 822-3135 • Fax: (734) 944-6103
Website: www.pittsfield-mi.gov

Mandy Grewal, Supervisor

Jessica K. West
Director of Community Development
westj@pittsfield-mi.gov

August 2, 2023

Tara Cohen, Housing & Infrastructure Manager
Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development
415 W. Michigan Avenue
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Amendment to HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

Dear Tara,

On behalf of Pittsfield Charter Township, I am writing to express our concerns regarding the proposed substantial amendment to the Washtenaw Urban County's HOME-ARP Allocation Plan. In particular, we are concerned by the amendment's focus on shifting funds away from the development of affordable rental housing, which is desperately needed, to a budget that targets supportive services and direct assistance.

We understand the urgent need for homelessness assistance and supportive services in our county. As a community dedicated to the well-being of our residents, we support the allocation of funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) to address these critical issues. However, we believe that it is equally vital to maintain a strong emphasis on affordable housing initiatives. Affordable housing remains a pressing concern for Pittsfield Township and Washtenaw County, and it directly impacts the stability and quality of life of our residents. The availability of affordable rental units plays a pivotal role in fostering an inclusive and resilient community. Therefore, we are apprehensive about the potential consequences of reallocating funds away from the development of affordable housing.

We kindly request more information on how the proposed amendment will ensure that affordable housing goals are still prioritized alongside the allocation for supportive services. We believe that a balanced approach, encompassing both affordable housing development and supportive services, is necessary to create a comprehensive and sustainable solution to address the needs of our community.

Thank you for considering our concerns and providing clarity on how the proposed amendment will align with the affordable housing goals. We look forward to engaging in further discussions and working together to create a brighter future for all residents of Washtenaw County.

Sincerely,

Jessica West
Director of Community Development
Pittsfield Charter Township

CC: Washtenaw County Commissioner, Caroline Sanders



The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County

312 W. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Ph: 734-662-2829
Fx: 734-996-3022

August 4, 2023

Tara Cohen, Housing Infrastructure manager
Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development
Sent via email: cohent@washtenaw.org

Dear Ms. Cohen,

Washtenaw County recently released a public notice for comment period on a proposed substantial amendment to the Washtenaw Urban County Home Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) Allocation Plan. The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC) submits the following comments for your consideration, which are based on our work with the Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA) and the local network of over 25 partner homeless and housing service organizations across the community as well as our 40-year History of Ending Homelessness, one person at a time.

This letter is intended to share our position on strategies that end homelessness rather than temporarily displace it. As a shelter provider we understand the need for both short term and long-term solutions to end homelessness in our community. Transitional housing is not a comprehensive solution to homelessness. It can provide *temporary* relief for individuals experiencing homelessness, but it does not address the root causes of homelessness, nor does it provide long-term housing solutions for those who are chronically homeless. Transitional housing has only been shown to be effective with certain specific sub-populations of those experiencing homelessness like survivors of domestic violence or individuals struggling with a substance use disorder.

A combination of temporary shelter to meet immediate basic needs while increasing permanent housing options is needed to end homelessness in our community at this time. Temporary shelter can provide immediate relief for those experiencing homelessness, while permanent supportive housing provides individuals with a stable and affordable place to live. By combining these two approaches, we can address both the short-term and long-term needs of individuals experiencing homelessness over time and work toward our goal of there being enough affordable, permanent housing for everyone in Washtenaw County to have a place to call home.

The homeless landscape can be characterized by individuals facing significant challenges including disabilities, mental illness, and substance use disorders. These individuals face considerable physical and mental health disparities, which makes improving their health and housing outcomes the most important thing we can do for them. In most instances, transitional housing is a distraction from these key outcomes. With transitional housing, individuals may experience high levels of stress due to the uncertainty of their living situation. They may be unsure of how long they will be able to stay in the housing or if they will be able to find permanent housing in the future. This uncertainty can lead to feelings of anxiety and worry. In contrast, permanent housing provides individuals with stability and a sense of security.

That is why we recommend that at least 50% of the HOME ARP funding to continue to be used, as originally proposed, for the development of permanently affordable housing. We support WHA's recommendation that \$0 be allocated for transitional housing and \$0 of this funding be allocated for move-in costs and income stabilization services, the latter of which is needed funding but should be found through other, long-term funding sources.

We hope that the county will take all of our recommendations into consideration and work towards evidenced based best practices that strike a balance between short- and long-term solutions, not temporary ones so that we can advocate for the best interests of those experiencing homelessness in the Washtenaw County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Kelly".

Daniel Kelly, MSW
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Paspal-Jasinski".

Sarah Paspal-Jasinski
Development Director

WASHTENAW URBAN COUNTY CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT YEAR IN REVIEW

The following overview highlights a series of initiatives that were executed between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023:

Housing and Homelessness

37

Homeowners served through the Housing Rehabilitation Program.

1,643

Individuals received homelessness prevention services, including shelter, rapid re-housing, rental assistance through the Emergency Solution Grant (ESG).

51,650

Bed-nights were provided at homeless shelter facilities (66% capacity utilization) through the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).



Community Services

207

Individuals from 93 low to moderate income households were served by Peace Neighborhood Center through after-school programming, family case management, and family enrichment programming.

174

Youth from low-income households received educational after-school and/or educational summer day camp programming from Community Action Network (CAN).



Photo: youth reading/writing outside of Bryant Community Center | Courtesy of CAN

[Click here to view the full CAPER](#) | [Click here for public comment options](#)

Questions? Contact Tara Cohen | Housing and Infrastructure Manager | cohent@washtenaw.org



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Collaborative solutions for a promising future

Community Infrastructure

11

Curb cuts at 3 intersections were created or corrected to meet ADA compliance in the City of Ypsilanti to increase accessibility for people with physical disabilities and pedestrians as a whole.

1,125

Individuals benefitted from design and engineering carried out by the City of Ann Arbor for the Russell Street paving and stormwater improvements.



Photo: Construction site of Russell Street Paving & Stormwater Project

3,295

Individuals benefitted from the installation of an ADA compliant sidewalk in Community Park carried out by Superior Township. This sidewalk provides access from the existing parking lot in Community Park to the playground area.

Affordable Housing Initiatives: In 2022 PY, Washtenaw County completed the following activities to further access to affordable housing:

- Avalon Housing Inc. completed the annual CHDO recertification process and was awarded \$71,463 in operating assistance.
- Avalon Housing effectively completed the construction and lease up of 24 units of new affordable housing at Hilltop View Apartments on Dan Hoey Road in Dexter. However, this project could not be closed out until the 2023 program year.



Photo: Hilltop Apartment Construction Site



Photo: Completed construction of Hilltop Apartments

[Click here to view the full CAPER](#) | [Click here for public comment options](#)

Questions? Contact Tara Cohen | Housing and Infrastructure Manager | cohent@washtenaw.org

Community Infrastructure (Continued)

18

Residents from Census Tract 4106 participated in community engagement sessions to provide input to the Urban County on priority investments to be funded with CDBG Program income during Summer 2022.

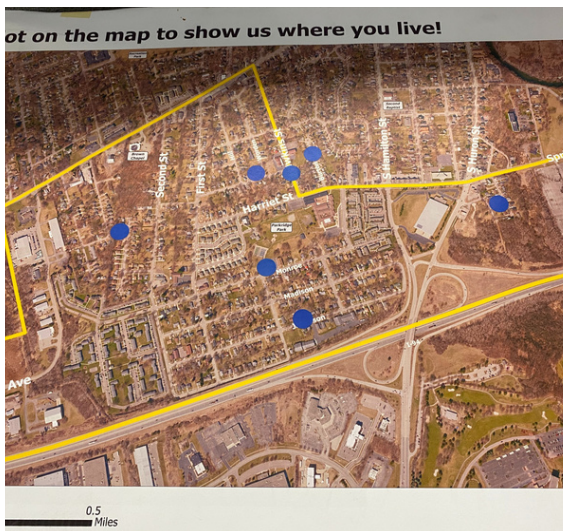


Photo: A plotted map of where residents lived in neighborhoods within Census Tract 4106



Photo: Residents gathered at Parkridge Center to prioritize neighborhood investments

In progress or starting up in the 2023 Program Year:

- The completion of the Russell Street paving and stormwater project in the City of Ann Arbor
- Additional ADA curb cut improvements throughout the City of Ypsilanti
- ADA accessibility improvements and pavilion repairs in Ypsilanti's Parkridge Park
- Green infrastructure in Pittsfield Township
- ADA compliant pedestrian pathway infill in Superior Township
- Construction of affordable housing at Avalon Housing's The Grove at Veridian on Platt Road in Ann Arbor

[Click here to view the full CAPER](#) | [Click here for public comment options](#)

Questions? Contact Tara Cohen | Housing and Infrastructure Manager | cohen@washtenaw.org