



*The Village of Friendliness – Since 1870*

Good Afternoon Everyone.

This is the City Manager's week in review for the week of March 22, 2021.

**COVID** –City Hall doors are open to the public per the increased occupancy and gathering guidance. The public is asked to please observe appropriate mask and hand sanitization guidance. For the protection of municipal employees, the public is limited to the lobby area unless directed by an employee.

**Open Meetings Act** – Revisions to the Open Meetings Act (PA 254 of 2020) due to COVID restrictions are anticipated to expire on April 1 and unless determined otherwise, public meetings will resume in person with a Zoom component effective April 1, 2021. City Hall has updated recording and broadcasting equipment to accommodate Zoom meetings. There are a variety of situations that remain in place throughout 2021 that will allow an individual member of the public body to participate by remote attendance. Those situations include:

1. Member is in military service
2. Member has a medical condition (i.e. illness, injury, disability or other health-related condition)
3. Statewide or local state of emergency or state of disaster that would risk the personal health or safety of members of the public or the public body if the meeting were held in person.

Members are to announce at the beginning of the meeting that they are participating remotely.

Beginning January 1, 2022, the last two conditions will no longer be permitted.

**I-196 Construction** – MDOT began work Monday on a \$33 million project to reconstruct the southbound lanes of I-196. The project will close exit 41 into early July. Southbound Blue Star Highway traffic will be routed through Douglas to get to exit 36 to enter the highway. See attached. We also learned that the underside of the 196 bridge will be painted as part of the project and a barge will be in place in the river to complete that work. Boating traffic should proceed with care through the work zone.

**Blue Star Improvements** – Council-appointed committee members met with the City Engineer this week to go over a number of potential improvements to Blue Star Highway between Main and Center Streets. The list of items and associated costs included projects such as moving curbs, straightening lanes, setting back guardrails, widening turning radii, and sidewalk improvements. The committee provided their top three priorities and the City Engineer will work on bidding those projects. If a contract is awarded to make the improvements, the contractor will have to be creative about how to get the work completed with the detour mentioned above in place.

**Schultz Park Boat Launch** – Work on the Schultz Park boat launch concrete apron started this week. The ramp will be ready and open to the public in the first few weeks of April. The new apron is being installed in response to a number of maintenance issues with the gravel approach at the top of the boat ramp.

**Wiley Road Non-motorized Trail** – The construction project for the Wiley Road Trail is being advertised to contractors for bidding in the very near future. The trail project will be installed on the north side of Wiley Road from BSH to Wiley Court. Notice of Construction letters are being sent to homeowners impacted by the work.

**Water Main Easement** – City staff spent some time this week searching for a water main easement between St. Peters Drive and Center Street. We are aware that a water main exists but are unable to find the coordinating easement documentation for the main. The research was generated by a request to trim trees in the easement area. Absent locating the easement, City staff will have to work with the City Engineer to create an easement.

**American Rescue Act** – The City Treasurer and I have been getting information about President Biden’s stimulus plan. We know very little about the process yet, but we understand funding will come to each municipality for projects that put people back to work. I’ve attached a document from Michigan Municipal League that lists some talking points.

**School Superintendent** – The three community managers met with the school superintendent this week and discussed a variety of topics ranging from the school’s bond improvements, student population, LGBTQ dynamics, future housing developments, and community recreation. This was also an opportunity for the new managers to meet Dr. Travis face to face.

**Bonding** – The City Treasurer and I met this week with a bonding agency to begin the discussion about improvements to municipal facilities as well as other capital improvement projects. With interest rates at a very low rate, now is one of the best opportunities to consider bonding for capital improvement projects.

**Social Districts** – The DDA, at their last meeting, made a recommendation to City Council to approve social districts. A social district is a tool that businesses can request to allow purchased adult beverages to leave the selling establishment with the condition that the adult beverage be restricted to a well-defined district. In light of the COVID pandemic, the social district is an opportunity for people to distance themselves and still enjoy local food and retail establishments. The topic will be coming to City Council on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Erosion** – Wednesday, I took the Township Manager to Douglas Beach and discussed lakeshore erosion and the variety of revetment projects implemented to protect the bluff and Lakeshore Drive. We also took the opportunity to look at the intersection of Wiley and Lakeshore and discussed concerns about the failure of the bluff and the impact on residents, utilities, and emergency services.

That’s all I have for now. Have a good weekend.

Rich LaBombard  
City Manager

# American Rescue Plan Talking Points for Michigan's Local Governments

Posted on [March 23, 2021](#) by [Matt Bach](#)



The Michigan Municipal League has received a lot of questions about the recently approved American Rescue Plan from our members. Many of your answers can be found in [this blog by the League's Chris Hackbarth](#). But we've also received feedback from members seeking best practices about how to discuss the American Rescue Plan with the public and media. In response, we've prepared the following talking points and common questions and answers to help guide you. Feel free to use these talking points and questions and answers below and adjust them to fit your community's needs.

## Local Official American Rescue Plan Talking Points

- The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) represents a historic moment for **[insert community name]**.
- This financial support is an opportunity to invest in our future by building community wealth.
- The funds are also a long overdue acknowledgement of local government's outsized role in the day-to-day services that support a high quality of life.
- History: This pandemic has put our communities through hell.
- This fresh hell is on top of more than 20 years of persistent disinvestment and erosion of local control and decision-making ability for our community.
  - We know the story, Headlee, Proposal A, revenue sharing cuts, pre-emption of local control, etc.
  - Since 2000, Michigan communities have lost more than \$9 billion to these policy decisions.
- **[Insert community name]** has done more with less for two decades, and the American Rescue Plan is a lifeline that will help ensure our community can host, support, and accelerate a robust recovery for all our residents.
- Crisis after crisis we have stepped up to find creative, innovative ways to serve our residents.
  - We've endured through population decline, once in a lifetime flooding, infrastructure failure, social and racial unrest, economic devastation, major demographic shifts, drug epidemics, declining public health—both physical and mental—topped off by a global pandemic that threatened to bring us to our knees, and I wish I could say that was the end of the list.
- We have risen to the occasion to serve our residents every time while keeping the wheels turning on the basics of local government (public safety, roads and infrastructure, parks, etc.). While the pandemic might be global, its affects are felt locally.
  - Our restaurants and small businesses have suffered tremendously.
  - Our children and schools have struggled to adapt to remote learning.
  - Our trails and parks have hosted neighbors near and far seeking a break from isolation.

- Our infrastructure has been transformed to set up COVID testing facilities while our ability to perform basic maintenance has suffered.
- Local government belongs to its residents, and we will work with our residents and businesses to ensure these funds are invested strategically so that our whole community will benefit long into the future.
- We will take our time. There are several weeks before the U.S. Treasury releases official guidance on our specific allocation and rules for implementation. Beyond that, we have until 2024 to spend these dollars.
- We will revisit our [**master plan/asset management plan/etc.**] which will serve as a guideline, but we will also take time to reengage the entire community on our priorities.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How much money is your community receiving?**

There are various lists of anticipated ARP dollars by community, but these lists have inaccuracies and are incomplete. We're waiting for more accurate numbers, as well as additional direction and information from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. It's worth nothing that we can take our time in determining the best uses of this one-time funding because the ARP law gives us until the end of 2024 to use this community investment.

### **How will you spend this money?**

The short answer is "carefully and strategically." Local governments have been under funded for decades to the tune of \$9 billion since the year 2000. We have crumbling infrastructure needs, public safety needs, human service needs, and our downtowns and parks need improvement and maintenance.

### **This is an extremely large sum of money. How can the public be assured that it will be spend responsibly and not wasted?**

This isn't [**insert community's**] money, this is the public's money. We are going to take our time to engage the community to ensure the that it goes to where their priorities are. The goal is to ensure these funds are used strategically so that every corner of our community makes a full recovery.

### **Are there any guidelines on how American Rescue Act funds can be spent?**

The Department of Treasury will be issuing guidance detailing its interpretation and implementation of eligible uses, but the statutory language specifically authorizes the following uses of these funds:

- To respond to the pandemic or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;
- For premium pay to eligible workers performing essential work (as determined by each recipient government) during the pandemic, providing up to \$13 per hour above regular wages;
- For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the pandemic (relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency);
- To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure

### **Are there things that the American Rescue Act funds CANNOT be used toward?**

Yes, the Act prohibits states from offsetting, either directly or indirectly, a tax cut made since March 3, 2021; and prohibits states and local communities from depositing these dollars into a pension fund.

**I-196 Stage 1: March - July 2021  
Reconstruct I-196 Southbound Roadway**

**Saugatuck  
Rest Area Closed**

**Southbound I-196 Traffic Crossed  
over to Northbound Lanes**

**I-196 Southbound Ramps Closed.  
Traffic Detoured to Exit 36.**

**I-196 Northbound  
Ramps Open**

**Temporary Barrier Wall on  
Northbound I-196.  
I-196 Reduced to One Lane in  
Each Direction.**

**Southbound I-196  
Traffic Crossed back  
to Southbound Lanes**

**Blue Star Highway Ramps  
Remain Open**

**Exit 36**

**Exit 41**

