Michigan Township INSIGHTS

July 31, 2026

New laws affecting local government



Several additional bills recently passed by the Legislature—and previously reported in *Township Insights*—impacting local government were signed by the governor:

- Public Acts 68 & 69—Protect the elderly from exploitation by appointed guardians by requiring an appraisal of property to ensure it is sold at fair market value, and prevent a guardian from changing their ward's residence (e.g., moving from their home to a nursing facility) without finding from the court that the move is in the ward's best interest
- PA 70—Expands Michigan Indigent Defense Commission Act to include indigent defense of youth
- PA 73—Expands population threshold for municipalities authorized to allow golf carts on streets
- PA 79—Eliminates sunset (expiration) dates for certain programs to assist residents in avoiding foreclosure due to delinquent property taxes
- PA 90—Creates a new type of ambulance operation license (ambulance operation adaptive care license) to allow certain basic life support ambulance services to provide limited advanced life support when they have the staffing and equipment to safely offer higher level of care

Bill re-introduced to modify public employer contributions to medical benefit plans

Legislation passed at the end of the 2023-2024 session and recently vetoed was reintroduced this week. Senate Bill 1136, sponsored by Sen. Kevin Hertel (D-St. Clair Shores), would amend the Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act to require public employers to pay an increased amount toward public employees' medical benefits. The bill, a reintroduction of former House Bill 6058, would eliminate the current contribution cap and raise the maximum contribution amounts, removing local discretion and imposing increased financial obligations. The legislation is one of nine bills reintroduced this week that were subject to litigation resulting in a Michigan Supreme Court decision earlier this month. The bill was referred to the Senate Government Operations Committee.



UPCOMING MTA TRAINING

Aug. 12: *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar Sticky Situations: Ethics in Everyday Decisions

Hot Topics in Planning & Zoning evening workshops:
· **Aug. 18** - Frankenmuth
· **Aug. 26** - Gaylord
· **Aug. 31** - Lawrence

Sept. 9: Emerging Issues in EMS Services workshop - Frankenmuth

Sept. & Oct. Regional Meetings & UP North Summit:
· **Sept. 22** - Bay City
· **Sept. 23** - Jackson
· **Sept. 29-30** (2-day U.P. summit) - Harris
· **Oct. 7** - Thompsonville
· **Oct 8** - Spring Lake
· **Oct 13** - Gaylord



ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS



MSC rules marijuana odor alone does not justify vehicle searches

In a 5-2 decision issued this week, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that the odor of marijuana, even when coupled with a driver's admission to possessing a legally permitted, civil-infraction amount, does not provide law enforcement with probable cause to conduct a warrantless vehicle search. Writing for the majority in *People v. Wilkins* (MSC Docket No. 167737), Justice Kimberly Thomas concluded that because Michigan voters removed small-quantity marijuana possession from the criminal code, the state's interest in enforcing the law no longer outweighs an individual's constitutional privacy protections. Justices Brian Zahra and Richard Bernstein dissented. The decision builds on the Court's 2025 ruling in *People v. Armstrong* and takes immediate effect, reshaping vehicle search practices for law enforcement agencies across Michigan.

Rolling applications, upcoming webinar for Renewables Ready grant program



A local government hosting or permitting any portion of an eligible large-scale renewable energy project may apply for the Renewables Ready Communities Award (RRCA) grant program. The program is designed for municipalities involved in large-scale renewable energy projects (wind, solar, battery storage, or hybrid project 50 megawatts (MW) or larger) that were approved through the local permitting process after Sept. 1, 2023. Grant eligibility occurs once the project is permitted, and the local unit may receive up to $5,000 per MW via the grant. Changes to the program were recently implemented that now require the project to meet a Project Labor Agreement requirement. If it does not, the local unit's final payment will be 80% of the maximum. Thus, under the change, the RRCA will award a local government $4,000 per MW; the award may be increased by 20% if the developer of the project establishes a satisfactory Project Labor Agreement for the construction of the project. If the host and permitter are separate (e.g., with county zoning), each local unit receives half of the award ($2,000 per MW.) The RFP for the latest round of funding is now open, and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy will host an informational webinar on Aug. 25 at 2 p.m. Applications for grant awards will be accepted on a rolling basis until the $90 million is depleted.

ACRISURE
www.Acrisure.com/GreatLakes

MI Par Plan
MICHIGAN TOWNSHIP PARTCIPATING PLAN
www.theparplan.com/

MERS
Municipal Employees' Retirement System
www.mersofmich.com

* Adna Technologies

* Bauckham, Thall, Seeber Kaufman& Koches PC

* Consumers Energy

* Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

* Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC

* Hartleb Agency

* ITC Holdings Corp.

* Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, P.C.

* Mika Meyers, PLC

MTA QUICK LINKS
Answer Center
Training
Advocacy
Classifieds
Community Connection
Webcasts
Store
Township Governance Academy
Allied Service Providers
NATaT

Member input sought for MTA's 2027 legislative issues

Township officials can review and provide input on the MTA legislative policy platform. The legislative policy objectives—reviewed, updated and approved annually—guide the Association's government relations efforts and reflect emerging issues and goals. MTA members are encouraged to review the current 2026-2027 Policy Platform and share any proposed additions and revisions by Monday, Nov. 23. Member-proposed policy changes will be reviewed by MTA policy committees and will be presented at the 2027 MTA Annual Meeting in conjunction with our 2027 Annual Educational Conference in April. Contact legislation@michigantownships.org with questions, comments or suggestions.



STC offers October MMAO program

The State Tax Commission (STC) is now accepting applications for the October 2026 Michigan Master Assessing Officer (MMAO) program. Applications must be received by the STC by Sept. 4.

Grant opportunities for law enforcement

- **Crisis response training:** Local law enforcement agencies and regional training centers are eligible for match-free funding to support de-escalation and crisis response training and resources. Eligible programs must offer training on de-escalation and alternatives to force, safely responding to individuals experiencing a mental health or suicidal crisis, responding to individuals with disabilities in crisis situations, participating in a crisis intervention team or providing effective community-based referrals. Learn more about the program on the Safer Outcomes website. The standard form is due Aug. 27, with full applications due Sept. 3.
- **Enhanced security for houses of worship:** The U.S. Department of Justice is accepting applications from local law enforcement agencies for overtime expenses incurred while providing visible, uniformed security presence at houses of worship during services, events and other high-risk periods. The Enhancing Security Measures for Houses of Worship Program has a maximum award amount of $150,000 for law enforcement agencies. The program also has a sub-category for houses of worship to receive funding for enhanced security measures. Agencies should signal

their interest through Grants.gov by Sept. 2, with full applications due by Sept. 9.



Federal grants fund lead remediation, home modifications, environmental job training

- **Lead hazard reduction:** Additional federal funding is now available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for lead-based paint hazard control in privately owned rental or owner-occupied housing. Local governments are eligible to receive the funding and must provide or source a minimum of 10% matching funds. Learn more on the Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program webpage, where applications will be accepted until Aug. 31.
- **Older adult home modifications:** Local governments are eligible for funding to institute a home modification program for low-income older adults in their communities, with an aim to help older residents to age in place. Up to $3 million can be awarded to a local government to maximize low-cost, high-impact home modifications for residents to reduce the risk of falling, increase accessibility and improve their functional abilities in their homes. Applications must be submitted by Aug. 31.
- **Brownfield jobs training program:** Communities looking to grow their environmental remediation workforce can apply for funding to host a brownfield jobs training program for unemployed or underemployed populations. The funds can be used to offer a variety of training programs, including the assessment and cleanup of solid and hazardous waste, chemical risk management, stormwater management relating to site cleanup, planning and site preparation for low-impact development activities, site preparation for green infrastructure installation, and vulnerability assessment and contamination mitigation planning. Apply online by Sept. 23 or attend an informational webinar on Aug. 6 at 2 p.m. to learn more.

MDOT seeking comment on Five-year Transportation Program

As the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) continues to work through updates to its primary planning documents, it recently announced that the State Transportation Commission has approved the draft 2027-2031 Five-year Transportation Program (5YTP) for public release and comment. The 5YTP is designed to connect long-term plans for asset management with near-term project management and performance metrics. The draft includes a

list of planned highway and bridge projects, as well as public transit, rail and aeronautics program updates. Interested individuals may provide feedback until Aug. 31 through a comment form or to MDOT-Five-Year-Program@Michigan.gov.

Registration is open for MTA's *Regional Meeting* series



Register today to join MTA at the *Regional Meeting* nearest you this fall for a full day of insights into the latest issues impacting townships.

Connect with MTA staff, legal counsel, municipal vendors and fellow officials while learning strategies for navigating legal pitfalls and avoiding costly missteps. You'll get financial fundaments, the latest legislative news and practical answers to the most frequently asked township questions. Don't miss this opportunity to hear from the experts and exchange ideas with fellow officials facing the same challenges—all in one day! Click here for dates, locations and details.

Federal updates for week of July 27

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships Weekly Legislative Update for the latest on federal actions impacting townships.



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

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