

# Michigan Township **INSIGHTS**

March 22, 2024

## Speed limit measure providing greater flexibility heads to governor

Townships and other local units will soon have greater flexibility in setting speed limits under MTA-supported legislation that received final approval this week.

Sponsored by Rep. Bradley Slagh

(R-Zeeland Chtr. Twp.), [House Bill 4012](#) clarifies situations for local units of government to set speed limits based on the 85th percentile of free-flowing traffic and allow traffic engineering practices that provide an objective analysis of the characteristics of the highway to be considered. It also allows additional flexibility in setting speed limits by rounding to a multiple that is within five miles per hour of the 85th percentile speed. The bill retains townships' ability to set speed limits between the 85th percentile—the speed vehicles are traveling at or under on a segment of road—and a floor of the 50th percentile in certain circumstances. The bill now goes to the governor for signature. Once signed, the bill will become effective.



## Township engagement critical in state BEAD Challenge Process

Townships have a critical role in the process in which the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) will determine the unserved, underserved and served high-speed internet status of every home, business and community anchor institution (such as schools, libraries and other similar organizations.) in the state. Michigan's State Challenge Process launches on **March 25** and runs through **April 23**. This is the period for townships to view the [Michigan broadband mapping](#) for served, unserved or underserved locations within their communities. The challenge process allows you to confirm whether the areas in your township are served to

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## Upcoming MTA Training & Events

March 22 *Now You Know*  
lunchtime webinar:  
[Legislative Insights](#)

April 22-25: [Annual  
Educational Conference  
& Expo](#)

April 22 [Pre-Conference  
sessions:](#)

\*\*[Assessor's Renewal:](#)

[March Madness](#)

\*\*[Understanding](#)

[Assessing Basics](#)

\*\*[Defining Your](#)

[Township's Land Use](#)

[Future](#)

\*\*[Show Me the Money](#)

\*\*[Legal Institute for](#)

[Township Attorneys](#)

improve access in your community. View MIHI's [Eligible Challenger webinar](#) to learn what types of challenges will be accepted, what type of evidence will be required, and how to use the State Challenge Portal to submit challenges and evidence. A [Community Anchor Institutions webinar](#) is also available for viewing. MIHI encourages officials to pre-register as you will need to have an account to submit challenges on behalf of your township. Sign up for an account at [Michigan Broadband Map](#); click "Sign In" in the upper right corner and then choose "Create an Account."

Individual members of the public can also provide data issues that they have with a high-speed internet connection or with their speed of service. Concerns can be reported through [a tool developed by Merit Network](#) developed by Merit Network. (Please note that the MIHI portal is for eligible challengers, including townships and other local units of government. The Merit website is specifically for individuals.)

MIHI will hold virtual office hours during the challenge submission phase—no registration is required, and you can join anytime during that window. Links to the MIHI support hours are:

- [Thursday, March 28, 12:30-2:30 p.m.](#)
- [Thursday, April 4, 12:30-2:30 p.m.](#)
- [Thursday, April 11, 12:30-2:30 p.m.](#)
- [Tuesday, April 16, 12:30-2:30 p.m.](#)
- [Thursday, April 18, 12:30-2:30 p.m.](#)
- [Monday, April 22, 12:30-2:30 p.m.](#)

For more information on the challenge process, visit MIHI's [Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#) webpage.

**STG**

2024 MTA EXPO  
BOOTH 103

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#### MTA QUICK LINKS

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[Training](#)  
[Advocacy](#)  
[Classifieds](#)  
[Community Connection](#)  
[Webcasts](#)  
[Store](#)  
[Township Governance](#)  
[Academy](#)  
[Allied Service Providers](#)  
[NATaT](#)

#### ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS



[www.Acrisure.com/GreatLakes](http://www.Acrisure.com/GreatLakes)



[www.mersofmich.com](http://www.mersofmich.com)

\* [Bauckham, Thall, Seeber Kaufman & Koches PC](#)

\* [Consumers Energy](#)

\* [Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC](#)

\* [Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.](#)

## Recount reform measures approved by Senate committee

Multiple changes to the recount process are included in two bills approved by the Senate Elections and Ethics Committee this week. For township clerks, one of the changes would allow local clerks, their staff and elections workers to submit a sworn affidavit stating that a precinct should be recounted even if a ballot seal is compromised, or a precinct is out of balance if those circumstances can be explained. [Senate Bills 603](#) and [604](#), sponsored by Sens. Stephanie Chang (D-Detroit) and Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), would additionally prohibit recounts in races where the number of precincts being recounted would not alter the outcome. The bills also change the thresholds for automatic recounts, create automatic recount thresholds for legislative races, shorten the time allowed for recount petitions and counter petitions to be filed, as well as increase the deposit costs for recounts. The bills will next be considered by the full Senate.

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## Bill to allow emergency service authorities to serve partial municipalities moves closer to passage



Two or more townships, counties, cities or villages could soon incorporate an authority that covers a portion of their unit for emergency services such as fire or police protection or emergency medical services under [House Bill 4360](#), an MTA-supported bill. Currently, an authority created under the statute must have jurisdiction over all territory located within the incorporating municipalities. Sponsored by Rep. Felicia Brabec (D-Pittsfield Chtr. Twp.), the measure would allow incorporating municipalities to determine the territory to be served by an emergency service authority—including a portion of the local unit. The legislation would also require the articles of incorporation for any emergency service authority to be published on the website of each incorporating municipality, instead of in a newspaper. If any of the municipalities did not have a website, the articles of incorporation would have to be published in the clerk's office of each municipality. The bill was approved by the Senate Local Government Committee this week and will be considered by the full Senate in April.

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\* [Hartleb Agency](#)

\* [ITC Holdings Corp.](#)

\* [Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, P.C.](#)

\* [Mika Meyers, PLC](#)



## 'Make it in Michigan' legislation sees major changes prior to Senate approval

Local communities would receive 50% of the funding (up to \$250 million annually) when the state offers money to lure large economic development investments under bills passed by the Senate this week. Senate Bills [559](#) and [562](#), sponsored by Sens. Mallory McMorrow (D-Royal Oak) and Mary Cavanagh, (D-Redford Chtr. Twp.), would revamp the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve (SOAR) Fund, which was created in 2021 to make Michigan more attractive for large-scale economic development projects. The bills create the Michigan 360 program, which would ensure that 50% of the total amount of the award would go toward targeted investments in the communities where the projects are located. The eligible expenditures were also expanded in the bills passed to include regional transit, childcare, broadband expansion, education, housing and placemaking—in addition to workforce development, education, and wraparound services. Sponsors stated the changes were made to better position the state for growth.

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## Bills change recall petitions and boards of canvassers

The timeline would be extended for a board of canvassers to review a recall petition to determine if it is clear and factual under a bill approved by the House Elections Committee this week. [House Bill 5550](#), sponsored by Rep. Penelope Tsernoglou (D-East Lansing), would allow up to 40 days from the current 20 days to review the petitions. The second bill approved by the committee this week, [HB 5551](#), sponsored by Rep. Noah Arbit (D-West Bloomfield), would prohibit an individual convicted of an elections-related offense from serving on the Board of State Canvassers or on a board of county canvassers. Both bills now move to the full House for further consideration.

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## Bill to allow emergency action regarding bottomlands passes Senate

An owner of a structure or fill located in the bottomlands of an inland lake or waterway could soon be ordered to take emergency action to repair or remove the structure or fill if found to be in violation under legislation approved by the Senate this week.

[Senate Bill 398](#), sponsored by Sen. Sean McCann (D-Kalamazoo), would allow the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to take the necessary action and recover costs in a civil action if the owner failed to comply with EGLE's order. The bill is now before the House for consideration.

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APRIL 22 - 25, 2024  
**MTA EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE & EXPO**  
REGISTER BEFORE MARCH 25 TO SAVE!  
[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

One Team logo and Michigan Townships Association logo are also present in the banner.

## Treasury issues numbered letter for accounting for State Pension Grants

For [townships and other local units of government](#) that received a state pension grant in 2023, the Local Audit and Finance Division has issued [Numbered Letter 2024-01, Accounting for State Pension Grant – PA 166 of 2022](#), to provide direction on the accounting and reporting of the grant. The [Protecting MI Pension Program](#) was created to help Michigan's underfunded municipal pension systems. The state pension grants were awarded to eligible local governments in August 2023. Call (517) 335-7469 with questions.

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## Election reminders from the BOE

**MOVE deadline.** The 45-day deadline to transmit ballots to military and overseas (MOVE) voters for the May 7 election is **Saturday, March 23**. The state Bureau of Elections (BOE) Helpdesk will be available from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday to assist clerks with questions regarding MOVE ballots. If something occurs in your township that prohibits you from meeting this deadline (for example, litigation delays or ballot printing), email [BOERegulatory@michigan.gov](mailto:BOERegulatory@michigan.gov) as soon as possible. Tools are available in the Qualified Voter File (QVF), including a report that details every MOVE voter in your township. After the deadline, BOE staff will review this report and reach out to local clerks to troubleshoot issues that may have occurred. Clerks are asked to check your email provided in eLearning or update it if necessary.



### **April 15 deadline for new, changes to early voting agreements.**

Jurisdictions that conducted early voting on their own for the presidential primary have until **April 15** to enter a municipal or county agreement to conduct early voting for all state and federal elections in 2024 and 2025. For those part of an early voting plan, any changes to existing plans should be submitted to the county clerk.

**Early AV processing deadline.** Clerks intending to process or tabulate absent voter (AV) ballots prior to the May 7 election must submit written notice to the Secretary of State by **April 9**. The deadline to post the location, dates, hours and number of election inspectors for an AV counting place is April 19 and the deadline to post any revisions is April 26.

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## DNR seeking input on proposed e-bike rule change

The expansion of electric bicycles (e-bikes) to be used on state park non-motorized trails is being considered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and public input is being sought. Currently, only Class 1 e-bikes (those that are pedal-assisted and can go up to 20 mph) are allowed on improved

surface trails—trails that are paved or consist of gravel or asphalt. The law allows **local entities to expand or further regulate e-bike usage in their respective communities**. DNR's proposed land use change would expand allowable e-bike use to include Class 1 e-bikes on natural surface, nonmotorized trails on state park land open to bicycles. In addition, the proposed change would allow operation of Class 2 e-bikes (throttle- and pedal-assisted and can travel up to 20 mph) on both paved trails and state park natural surface trails if a cyclist had applied for and received a permit to do so (currently, Class 2 e-bikes are only allowed with a permit on non-motorized, natural surface trails). DNR is requesting public input by **March 31** on the proposed rule change through a [public survey](#). Survey results will be shared during the April 11 Michigan Natural Resources Commission meeting, with possible approval of the new rule at the commission's May meeting.

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## Free MDOT course explores planning and design for bicycle-friendly rural communities

Township officials, planners and staff can register now to attend a "Rural Bikeways Planning and Design Training," held via Zoom on [April 10](#) and [April 30](#). The free half-day course from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is part of the popular "Training Wheels" classes, aimed at educating staff and community leaders in making Michigan a more bicycle-friendly state. This three-hour online course features planning and design approaches for bicycle facilities in a rural context. The program will look deeper into the challenges and solutions for establishing safe and connected bicycle networks within and between rural communities. These concepts will be illustrated using national best practices, case studies and actual projects in rural communities. **RSVP by April 5 for the April 10 class or by April 26 for the April 30 class.** The class link will be provided by a separate email prior to the day of the class.

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## Still time to get discounted registration for MTA's 2024 Conference & Expo

Get the best rate for MTA's [Annual Conference & Expo](#) when you register by **March 25**. This one-of-a-kind event



returns to the Grand Traverse Resort on April 22-25, offering premier education on [50 timely township topics](#), unique [networking opportunities](#), plus an [expo featuring nearly 100 municipal vendors](#) offering services that can help you improve your community. With workshops on a wide variety of key township topics, you're sure to find something for everyone on your township team! Get all the details on [MTA's Conference webpage](#) or [click here to register now](#).

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### **Get MTA on-demand training for half-off this month!**

MTA's [Online Learning Center](#) is home to a wide variety of webinars all designed with township officials in mind. From assessing to zoning, you're sure to find something for everyone on your township team. Get even more value this month with our March sale, offering 50% off nearly all recorded classes. Too busy to watch right now? We get it! With MTA webcasts, you can buy now and watch on-demand later, for up to a year from purchase. Visit [learn.michigantownships.org](http://learn.michigantownships.org) to get started; use discount code **March2024** when you check out.

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### **Federal update for week of March 18**

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships [Weekly Legislative Update](#) for an update of federal actions impacting townships.