



INSIDE YPSI Spring/Summer 2016

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City of Ypsilanti Refinances Water Street Debt

The finish line is in sight for the City of Ypsilanti. While Water Street debt has been looming over the City for the past ten years, the City has successfully reduced principal and interest (P&I) payments by over \$6 million through debt refinancing.

Bond refinancing is one part of a series of events that has led to the City reducing Water Street debt payments from \$29.4 million to \$14.5 million, to be paid over the next 15 years.

“When we first started the Water Street project everyone was excited and eager for it to happen. Unfortunately, just as we thought we could get started, our developer pulled out and the economy tanked leaving us in a bad situation, just like the recession left many of us in our own lives.” said Mayor Pro-Tem Lois Allen-Richardson providing historic context.

Water Street

Since 2009, the City has made nearly \$9 million in payments. In the spring, the City refinanced the bonds and made a cash payment of \$2.2 million resulting in an annual payment of \$924,500, instead of \$1.3 million. Additionally, the City’s bond interest rate was also lowered to 3.33%, from the original 6.16%.

“This is huge,” said Ypsilanti Mayor Amanda Edmonds. “So much hard work has gone into this, and so much progress has been made thanks to all of the dedicated individuals who have worked on this project.”

Later this year, the City is planning to make a second cash payment of \$700,000, which will reduce annual payments by another \$73,000 per year.

“The next phase is to secure a revenue source for the remaining payments,” said City Manager Ralph A. Lange.

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“It is not in the City’s best interests to deplete additional cash reserves on Water Street debt,” said Lange. “The debt payments divert general fund dollars that could be used on City services.”

In April 2016, City Council unanimously adopted a resolution to place a Water Street debt referendum on the August 2016 ballot. The 2.3 mills expiring in 2016 from the 2001 Street Program would be replaced with 2.3 mills to pay Water Street debt.

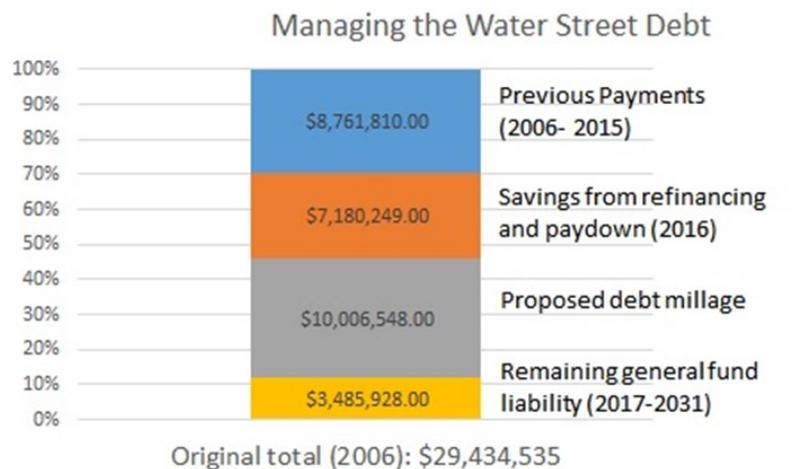
Councilman Pete Murdock, who spearheaded the resolution stated, “converting an expiring debt millage and applying it to Water Street debt is a significant action that causes no net increase in current taxes and the least possible pain.” He added, the City will be able to focus on other pressing issues if the debt payments are funded.

If the millage is approved, approximately \$10 million in Water Street debt payments would be funded and the general fund would only pay about \$232,000 per year, an 83% reduction from the original payment.

“We are at a crossroads,” said Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson. “We have an opportunity to get on an even financial footing, but we need the help of our community.”

“In our families, when hard times hit we come together and everybody makes a sacrifice until things get better. We are relying on our community to come together and sacrifice just a little longer by extending the expiring 2.3 road mills, until things get better — and they will,” said Richardson. “There is light at the end of the tunnel. Together we can make our City better than ever.”

A finish line is now in sight, but there is much more work to be done. City officials will spend the next few months informing residents on the progress that has been made and unveil the plan to resolve the Water Street Debt once and for all.



Background on Water Street Debt

- The Water Street Redevelopment area is a 38-acre site acquired by the City beginning in 1997. The City financed the project through bonds and has sought developers to purchase the site. One project has been completed and the City is communicating with prospective developers.
- The Water Street bonds were consolidated in 2006 with debt of \$15,740,000. Including interest, the payments owed for the life of the 25 year loan totaled about \$29,000,000.
- Since 2009, the City has paid about \$8,700,000 on the debt, which has limited the City’s ability to support police, fire, roads, parks, and other City services. Annual payments were about 12% of the City’s 12.5 million dollar operating budget.

For more information about the Water Street Development Area and how the City has managed the debt, please visit cityofypsilanti.com/millage to view the Water Street Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions.

Elvisfest Returns to Ypsilanti for 17th Year

Get ready to sing along to all your favorite Elvis songs at the largest Elvis festival in North America, which features Elvis impersonators from all over the world. On July 8 and 9, Elvisfest, a two-day annual outdoor Elvis tribute festival, will be returning to Riverside Park for its seventeenth year.



At this year's festival, attendees can enjoy performances by Dwight Icenhower, Ryan Pelton, Ted Torres Martin, and many others.

However, Elvis is not the only highlight at the festival. There will also be performances that pay tribute to Tom Jones, The Blues Brothers and James Brown. Whether you like Elvis or not, you should plan to go to the festival since this year is going to be extra special. Elvisfest Director Mary Decker said this year's festival will feature performances by Elvis tribute artists who they have been trying to get for years.

Director of Marketing and Communications at the Ypsilanti Area Convention and Visitors Bureau Marissa Kurtzhals said Elvisfest is definitely worth checking out if you have not already attended. "I really loved my first time at Elvisfest," Kurtzhals said. "It was great to have music bringing people together and it was a lot of fun to see all of the Elvis outfits of the attendees."

While people may not think of Elvis when they first think of Ypsilanti, Decker said she could not imagine a better place for Elvisfest.

"I believe Ypsilanti is the perfect place for this festival since the city is so unique, and Elvisfest is certainly a festival that is different from the rest," she said. For more information, visit mielvisfest.org.

Special Events: Spring/Summer 2016

Name	Date	Times	Location
Back to the Bricks	June 10	12 PM - 9 PM	Cross Street
The Color Run	June 25	8 AM - 12 PM	Riverside Park
Camaro Superfest	July 1	6 PM - 9 PM	Cross Street
Camaro Superfest	July 2-3	8 AM - 4PM, 8 AM - 4PM	Riverside Park
Elvisfest	July 8-9		Riverside Park
Unity-N-Community Gospel Fest	July 16	9 AM - 8 PM	Parkridge Park
The Ton-Up Motorcycle and Music Festival	August 13	12 PM - 8 PM	
Michigan Firehouse Museum Fire Truck Muster	August 20	10 AM - 3 PM	Riverside Park
Heritage Festival	August 26-28	12 PM - 8 PM 10 AM - 8 PM 11 AM - 6PM	Riverside Park
Parkridge Summer Festival	August 27	12 PM - 6 PM	Parkridge Park

NOTICE: There are several street closures from 7 a.m. to noon the day of The Color Run. Go to visitypsinow.com/color-run to learn more about the run route.



Did You Know? Water Street

Proposed City Millage — City Council unanimously approved a plan to place a referendum on the August 2, 2016 ballot. In essence, 2.3 mills expiring from the 2001 Local Street Program debt would be replaced with 2.3 mills to pay Water Street debt, causing no net increase in current taxes based on this referendum. If approved, approximately \$10 million in Water Street debt payments would be funded through the millage and about \$3.5 million would remain funded by the General Fund over the next 15 years.

Frequently Asked Questions

- ◇ **Why didn't the City refinance or pay down more of the debt? And why not sooner?** The City must maintain an above average cash reserve while trying to reduce the principal and interest of the debt; and refinancing before 10 years would have resulted in a substantial penalty.
- ◇ **The 2.3 mills expiring are from the 2001 Local Street Program debt, will this impact road repairs?** No. The Street Program repairs were completed over 10 years ago. The mills collected over the past 15 years were to pay off the debt.
- ◇ **If the millage is not approved, then what?** City Council would have to make very difficult decisions about the budget and related City services.
- ◇ **If the millage is approved, then what?** Funding for the bond payments will finally allow the City to get on even financial footing. Instead of diverting general operating dollars to pay debt, the City will be able to focus on enhancing services and investing in a strong community for all of our residents, businesses and visitors.
- ◇ **Will the 2.3 mills be used to clean up and/or develop Water Street.** No. The mills will exclusively be used to pay down the remaining debt owed by the City. Brownfield tax credits, grants, developers and other sources of funding will be used to develop the site.
- ◇ **What else has the City done to reduce the debt and/or raise revenue?** For more detailed information, visit cityofypsilanti.com/Millage.

Depot Town May Have A Rail Stop In Its Future

A rail stop on the Wolverine line would be a huge deal for the City of Ypsilanti. According to City Manager Ralph A. Lange, the City has been trying to secure a rail stop for 32 years with no luck. However, recently an updated analysis by MDOT concluded favorable results to bring rail service to Ypsilanti.

"This is a major project since four different approvals need to happen before we can go forward with the rail stop," Lange said. "There is a real chance, though, that the rail stop will happen as long as we follow all of the steps that are required by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)."



The project is coming along. According to Lange, "the City has approved a contract with OHM for preliminary design services for a platform and the master rail site development plan. The accessible platform will need to be located, between Forest Avenue and Cross Street on the east side of the tracks, in order to secure train service as quickly as possible."

New Business Spotlight: a2vintage Finds Home in Ypsi

Kelly and Anne Callison, owners of a2vintage, knew 109 W. Michigan Avenue should be the home of their antique shop as soon as they first walked in the door of the building.

While they looked at half a dozen options in Ypsilanti, Kelly said Michigan Avenue just felt right to them.

"We found Michigan Avenue to be a really attractive place to start our antique shop since the whole stretch consists of family-owned businesses," Kelly said. "We thought that was really unique."

While it may have taken some time to find the perfect spot in Ypsilanti, Kelly said they never once considered any other cities because they felt strongly about making Ypsilanti the home of their business.



"We both believe a part of what makes Ypsilanti different from other cities is that people know your name and ask about your family," she said. "We are not sure you could find that sense of community anywhere else."

Kelly added her interest in the antique business started out at a very young age.

"Since I was 7 years old, I have been going to antique shows," she said. "I love breathing new life back into old things and discovering the stories behind all of the antiques."

She added a2vintage has many uncommon items that come from different areas, including California and Canada. "We have a knack for finding stuff that is not run of the mill," Kelly said.

While owning the antique shop is rewarding in itself, Kelly said the people they meet each day is a part of what makes each day so great.

"It has been a lot of fun to meet so many interesting individuals who are as excited about us being here as we are," Kelly said.

To learn more about a2vintage, visit a2vintage.com.

Ypsilanti Curbside and Recycling Services

Tired of all of the clutter in your home and planning to do some cleaning? No worries!

The City of Ypsilanti has a lot of great resources to help you reduce clutter inside and outside.

Simple Recycling — a curbside recycling program for clothes, shoes and other household items. Pick up is on trash day, and you can contact Simple Recycling at (866) 835-5068 for bags. A limited supply of bags are also available at the Department of Public Services and City Clerk's Office.

Double Trash Week — twice each year Ypsilanti allows double trash collection. The first double trash week for 2016 took place the week of April 25th, the second will be during the week of August 15th.

Yard Waste — Ypsilanti's yard waste service is great if all those bags of leaves, branches and grass clippings are piling up. Pick up is on trash day.

Recycling Drop Off Center should be kept in mind for any additional recycling needs when curbside service is not available. It is located at 651 Rice Street and is limited to Ypsilanti residents only. All items taken in the curbside recycling program are accepted and it is the only location that accepts Styrofoam.

Please visit cityofypsilanti.com/PublicServices for more info.

Employee Spotlight: Stan Kirton



Stan Kirton has been working for the City of Ypsilanti for almost 29 years. He began his tenure with the City as the Facilities Manager and Facilities Project Manager, which eventually led to his current position as Director of the Department of Public Services in February 2008.

In all of these positions, he has been responsible for helping out with a number of projects to help improve the City. There is one project, though, that stands out the most from his time with the City.

Kirton said he really enjoyed leading the City's recent initiative to switch to LED street lights. "I thought this project was really special because it had a great impact on the entire community," Kirton said. "It was also a one-of-a-kind project since we were the first City of our size to convert to LED street lights."

Aside from having the opportunity to work on exciting projects, Kirton said he really enjoys the challenges that come with his job.

"I enjoy what I do because I love finding solutions to situations and I like that there is always something going on so there is never a boring day."

He added there is a lot more to what his department does for the community than what comes to mind when people think about the Department of Public Services.

"We consider ourselves first responders, and I think a lot of people do not see it that way," he said. "Without the Department of Public Services, firefighters would not be able to make it out to fires and ambulances would not be able to get to hospitals due to road conditions."

"Everything we do helps the City to continue to go strong and for residents to be happy."

He said Ypsilanti is a great community to be a part of because it continues to set high standards for other areas. "Ypsilanti is really setting a pace for other areas," Kirton said. "It is a progressive City that has an interest in new methods and technologies."

New Option to Pay Parking Tickets Online



The City of Ypsilanti introduced new options for paying parking tickets in May 2016.

In addition to accepting payments via mail and in person at City Hall, parking tickets can now be paid online via parkingticketpayment.com/Ypsilanti or through the City's website.

To pay a parking ticket online, you will need your ticket number, the state in which your vehicle is registered, and your vehicle's license plate number. Payments are accepted by Visa, MasterCard, Discover and PayPal.

If you are in need of additional information about parking ticket payment options, contact the City Clerk's Office at (734) 483-1100. Or visit cityofypsilanti.com/CityClerk.

Weddings in Ypsilanti

Is your heart set on getting married in the City of Ypsilanti? It can be very overwhelming to plan a wedding. Here is a quick list of things to consider if you are planning to get married in the City. Hopefully it will help you feel a little more at ease leading up to the big day.

State and Local Laws for Weddings

- ◇ Visit [Washtenaw County's website](#) to familiarize yourself with the laws and information on how to obtain a marriage license.
- ◇ The Mayor can marry people anywhere within Washtenaw County.
- ◇ The City's fee is \$25 for the Mayor to officiate the wedding.



Married by the Mayor

- ◇ The Mayor is happy to marry couples of any gender within Washtenaw County, pending her availability.
- ◇ Officiating can normally be done within the City Hall Council Chambers, but locations may vary.
- ◇ If you are interested in Mayor Edmonds officiating your wedding, you may contact her at mayor@cityofypsilanti.com or call (734) 483-1100. Please schedule at least 3 weeks in advance.

Weddings in the Park

- ◇ Weddings taking place within a City Park such as the Riverside Park Gazebo and Frog Island are subject to the City's [Special Events Policy](#) and [Fee Schedule](#).
- ◇ Applications for Weddings must be received at least 15 days prior to event.
- ◇ If you are interested in having your wedding in a City park, a [Special Events Application](#) can be completed online, and then you will be contacted by the Special Events Coordinator.

More detailed information can be found at cityofypsilanti.com/weddings.

Yankee Air Museum



Are you interested in aviation history, events and exhibits? Ypsilanti residents can receive free admission to the museum from June 1-30!

You will be required to show a valid driver license or State of Michigan identification to document residence in Ypsilanti.

For more information visit yankeeairmuseum.org.

City Boards and Commissions

If you are interested in learning inside information about various City projects and plans, please consider attending one of the City's board or commission meetings.

You may also want to consider joining a board or commission to get more involved.

To learn more about the boards and commissions and how they function or to apply to join a board or commission, please visit cityofcpsilanti.com/BoardsandCommissions.

Regular Board and Commission Meetings

- Historic District Commission: meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.
- Parks and Recreation Commission: meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Ypsilanti District Library.
- Planning Commission: meets the 3rd Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.
- Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority: meets the 3rd Thursday at 8:30 a.m. at SPARK East.
- Zoning Board of Appeals: meets the 4th Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.



Amanda M. Edmonds, Mayor
Cityofypsilanti.com/Mayor



Nicole Brown, Ward 1
Cityofypsilanti.com/NBrown



Lois Allen-Richardson, Mayor Pro Tem
Cityofypsilanti.com/ProTem

Meet Your CITY COUNCIL



Daniel Vogt, Ward 2
Cityofypsilanti.com/Vogt



Anne Brown, Ward 2
Cityofypsilanti.com/ABrown



Brian Robb, Ward 3
Cityofypsilanti.com/Robb



Pete Murdock, Ward 3
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