



Annual Report

June 1, 2018 - May 31, 2019

City of Auburn Hills Planning Commission

Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, the Planning Commission is required to provide an annual report to the City Council. This report is intended to coincide with the City Council's review of the City budget.

This report discusses the following topics:

- Summary of the Commission's operations during the past 12 months
- The status of any on-going planning activities
- Recommendations to the City Council related to planning/development and funding

Commission Operations

The Commission is governed by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and the City's Zoning Ordinance. During the 12 month period starting on June 1, 2018, and ending on May 31, 2019, the Commission's membership was as follows:

Greg Ouellette, Chairperson
 Sam Beidoun, Vice Chairperson
 Eric Mendieta, Secretary
 Ron Moniz, City Council Liaison
 Chauncey Hitchcock
 Laura Ochs
 Carlene Pederson
 Bob Pierce
 Carolyn Shearer



Auburn Hills Planning Commission Members and Support Staff

During this time period, the Commission held 11 meetings and recommendations were made to the City Council on 54 development-related items.

Measurable	Y2010 -2011	Y2011 -2012	Y2012 -2013	Y2013 -2014	Y2014 -2015	Y2015 - 2016	Y2016 -2017	Y2017 -2018	Y2018 -2019
Meetings	18	11	12	12	11	14	13	11	11
Site Plans	6	3	5	12	7	10	17	12	12
Special Land Use Permits	12	6	3	6	7	8	11	7	8
Tree Removal Permits	4	3	5	6	8	6	7	11	13
Planned Unit Developments	0	1	1	3	4	4	5	6	6
Rezoning	3	1	8	0	1	3	4	4	5
Master Plan Amendments	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Text Amendments	1	1	5	1	2	2	4	1	2
Total Projects	26	15	27	28	29	34	62	42	54

Professional Planning Support Staff

Steve Cohen, Director of Community Development, provides primary staff support to the Commission. Mr. Cohen has served the Commission since October 4, 1999. He is certified as a professional planner (AICP) with the American Planning Association. He has Bachelor and Master Degrees in Urban and Regional Planning from Michigan State University.

Shawn Keenan, City Planner, also provides staff support to the Commission. He is certified as a professional planner (AICP) with the American Planning Association. He has a Bachelor of Science in Public Law & Government and a Master Degree in Public Administration from Eastern Michigan University.

Notable Commission Items

1. Development Applications

Notable projects reviewed by the Commission were the following:

- FANUC America Corporation – 461,525 square foot light-industrial building.
- Residences at River Trail – Six, three-story apartment buildings totaling 106 luxury-style units.
- Autoliv – 71,207 square foot three-story building addition.
- Fountain Circle of Auburn Hills – Seven, three-story apartment buildings totaling 258 units and one clubhouse
- Speedway Vehicle Fueling Station and Convenience Store – Automobile fueling area with 16 fueling positions, commercial vehicle fueling area with three fueling positions and 4,608 square foot convenience store.
- White Corners, LLC (a.k.a. Giffin, Inc USA) – 100,000 square foot light-industrial building.
- Bob's Discount Furniture – Two-story, 35,037 square foot furniture store.
- Harmon Road Development – 101,825 square foot light-industrial building.
- Visioneering, Inc. – 91,200 square foot light-industrial building addition.
- Ridgewood Villas - Open space development with 113 detached one-family homes and one clubhouse.
- Executive Hills North (Unit 10) – 138,200 square foot technology and research facility.
- Auburn Hills Outdoor Storage (a.k.a. 415 Collier Road) – Vehicle storage lot.

2. Rezoning

- Rochester Soccer Club Property - The rezoning of three parcels totaling 29.4 acres located at 3200 Dutton Road from R-1A, One-Family Residential District to T&R, Technology and Research District.
- Oakland Community College and WMU-Cooley Law School Properties - The City initiated the rezoning of five parcels to help further the City Council's goal to proactively prepare underutilized properties for redevelopment. The rezoning included include the following:
 - The rezoning of three parcels from SP, Special Purpose District to T&R, Technology and Research District
 - The rezoning of one parcel from O, Office District to T&R, Technology and Research District
 - The rezoning of one parcel from SP, Special Purpose District to T&R, Technology and Research District.

3. Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

- I-1, Light Industrial Districts - The Ordinance amendment was brought forward by the City, in cooperation with Oakland Community College (OCC), for the following reasons:
 - To facilitate a billboard project previously approved by the City Council via consent judgment in January 2016.
 - To allow OCC more land use flexibility if they choose to redevelop their land in the future.
 - To make the zoning of OCC's property consistent with the City's Master Land Use Plan.

3. Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance (cont.)

- Article IV. R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 One Family Residential Districts R-1A – The Ordinance amendment was designed to help implement the policy recommendations of the Northeast Corner Neighborhood Master Plan and designed to provide the City Council additional flexibility when considering R-1A, Open Space Development option projects.

4. Master Land Use Plan

The Planning Commission updated and adopted the City's Master Land Use Plan. The primary changes to the map include the following:

- Changing Oakland Community College's property from Public to Non-Residential.
- Amending the planned housing density for the parcel located on the north side of Squirrel Court, between the former Yoursource building and Riverside Park, from 10.0 units per acre to 15.0 units per acre to reflect the density of the recently approved Riverside Townes PUD.
- Changing 2791 Auburn Road from Non-Residential to Residential.
- Adding the changes to the land use map relating to the Auburn Hills DPW Facility and Oakland County Animal Control Shelter Property (2017), Northeast Corner Neighborhood Plan (2015/2016), and West Auburn Road Neighborhood Master Plan (2012) amendments.
- Adding the Riverwalk Master Plan (2009), Age-Friendly Action Plan (2015), Industrial Property Analysis (2015), West Auburn Road Neighborhood Master Plan (2012), and the Palace of Auburn Hills Site Redevelopment Study (2017) to the list of plans on the document.
- Re-writing the general description of the community, updating the land use calculations, and updating the list of public officials.
- Clarifying in the interpretation section of the master plan that residential uses may be allowed within the non-residential land use classification via Planned Unit Development Option (e.g. Five Points of Auburn Hills Apartments project).
- Removing the Clinton River District call-out map and Commonwealth Neighborhood call-out map.
- Amending the planned housing density for open-space developments within areas identified in the Northeast Corner Neighborhood Master Plan from 2.5 units per acre to 3.0 units per acre.

5. Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2019-2023 (***Recreation Commission***)

The Recreation Commission updated and adopted the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Highlights of the 2019-2023 Plan include:

- Continued emphasis is placed on developing and enhancing existing City parks and properties.
- Completion and opening of the Amphitheater, Plaza and Splash Pad at Riverside Park downtown
- Completion of the new Lodge at the E. Dale Fisk Hawk Woods Nature Center
- Development of Linear Parks and Greenways: Riverwalk (between Riverside Park and River Woods Park); Galloway Creek Trail (connecting N. Squirrel to Bald Mtn. at Hawk Woods); Water Trail (Kayak Point Park to River Woods Park); Squirrel Rd. Parkway Concept (South Blvd to Dutton).
- Continued development of the Riverwalk downtown and connecting the park system is a high priority.
- For Non-Motorized Pathway Plan – complete the areas (gaps) of our pathway system that are difficult to complete, continue with the northeast corner neighborhood loops and northwest corner neighborhood loops, complete the system by 2025, prepare and plan for replacement/more maintenance of pathway system as it ages.
- Develop more programming targeted at Gen Z (up to age 23)/Gen Y.1 (ages 24-28), two of the fastest growing segments of the population in Auburn Hills.
- Offer more diverse food and music offerings at festivals and programs.
- Continue to develop new partnerships to enhance programming and events while reducing operating expenses (i.e., high schools, colleges for music, drama and art shows/performances at new Amphitheater)

6. Support Staff Training

Steve Cohen attended the *APA's National Planning Conference* held in San Francisco on April 13-16, 2019 and Shawn Keenan attended the *Michigan APA Conference* held in Grand Rapids, on September 20-22, 2018.

AICP planners, like Mr. Cohen and Mr. Keenan, are required to obtain professional development training in order to maintain their credentials. AICP planners must earn a minimum of 32 CM credits (1 hour = 1 CM credit) within a designated two-year reporting period. A minimum of 1.5 credits must be on the topic of ethics, and another 1.5 credits must be on the topic of current planning law. Mr. Cohen has earned 76.5 CM credits thus far for the current reporting period of January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019. Mr. Keenan has earned 60.25 CM credits thus far for the current reporting period of January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019.

7. Commission Training

Training is a high priority for the Commission and City Council. Members are faced with an enormous responsibility to help guide the physical development of the community. Poor decisions could lead the City into costly litigation. The Commission has benefited greatly over the years from training; whether they are new members who want to learn about planning or veteran members who need to keep up to date with changes in the law and planning practices.

Members Ouellette, Beidoun, Mendieta and Moniz attended the *Michigan APA Conference* in Grand Rapids, on September 20-22, 2018.

Auburn Hills has been involved with a very limited number of development-related lawsuits over the past 20 years; which is mainly attributed to a proactive Commissioner training program and well-trained staff. It is our understanding that this record of accomplishment has helped the City lower its general liability insurance rates over the years, which saves taxpayers money.

8. The City's Woodlands Preservation Ordinance – City's Tree Fund

During this reporting period, the two developments established that the planting of the required replacement trees on-site was not possible and an appropriate off-site location was not available. In each case the applicant chose to make a payment into the City's Tree Fund and/or utilized the alternative provision of Section 34-310(b)(4) in a way in which the City Council believed the highest and best outcome could be achieved.

- FANUC America Corporation – The applicant, made a payment of \$687,420 into the City's Tree Fund to account for the 1,809 replacement trees that could not be planted on-site or alternate location. Since the balance of the Tree Fund was greater than \$250,000, \$550,000 was directed by the City Council to build and furnish a new lodge at E. Dale Fisk Hawk Woods Nature Center. The City Council agreed with the Planning Commission's assessment that the new lodge constitutes a public benefit and provides a public value.
- JB Donaldson Company Mass Grading/Speculative Building – The applicant made a payment of \$194,560 into the City's Tree Fund to account for the 512 replacement trees that could not be planted on-site or alternate location.

Planning Commission Terms and Attendance Records

During this reporting time period, the Commission held 11 Regularly Scheduled meetings. No Special Meetings were held.

Name	Term Endings	Regular Meetings	Special Meetings
Greg Ouellette	July 2021	11 / 11	0 / 0
Sam Beidoun	July 2020	11 / 11	0 / 0
Eric Mendieta	July 2021	9 / 11	0 / 0
Chauncey Hitchcock	July 2021	11 / 11	0 / 0
Ron Moniz	Nov. 2019	11 / 11	0 / 0
Laura Ochs	July 2020	2 / 11 *	0 / 0
Carlene Pederson	July 2022	10 / 11	0 / 0
Bob Pierce	July 2022	11 / 11	0 / 0
Carolyn Shearer	July 2022	8 / 11	0 / 0

** Excused absences due to illness*

On-Going Planning Activities based on the City Council's Y2020 Strategic Goals and Objectives

1. Explore actions identified in the Main Street Oakland County Plan that will further enhance Downtown Auburn Hills
2. Continue to foster the redevelopment of the Palace of Auburn Hills site
3. Continue Downtown Auburn Hills Development and expansion. Encourage vertical development to four stories and support the creation of a public gathering space
4. Continue to foster development along the M-24/Opdyke Road Corridor
5. Make safe pathway connections in underdeveloped areas, where desired by residents
6. Continue to keep Auburn Hills friendly and livable for all ages and abilities

Commission Recommendations to City Council

The Commission respectfully recommends that the City Council ensure that the Y2019 City of Auburn Hills Budget allows for the following items:

1. Continued staff support from Mr. Cohen, Mr. Keenan, and the City's Administrative Development Review Team
2. Funding planning activities (e.g., citizen participation, maps, printing, technical research, Master Plan and Zoning Ordinances updates, etc.)
3. Funding for educational materials and technical training for Commission members