



2020 Annual Report Ypsilanti Planning Commission

INTRODUCTION

The Planning Commission of the City of Ypsilanti is governed by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, State of Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008, and by the City of Ypsilanti's Zoning Ordinance.

In 2020, the Planning Commission's membership was as follows:

Matt Dunwoodie (chair)
Jared Talaga (vice-chair)
Eric Bettis
Jessica Donnelly
Phil Hollifield

Michael Simmons
Mike Davis Jr.
Heidi Jugenitz (resigned December 2020)
Michael Borsellino (resigned July 2020)

Under the Planning Enabling Act, the Commission must provide an annual report to City Council, as the legislative body of the City. This report discusses,

1. The operations of the Commission during the past year
2. The status of any on-going planning activities
3. Recommendations to the legislative body related to planning and development

PLANNING COMMISSION OPERATIONS

The Planning Commission held twelve total meetings during 2020 which moved to a virtual platform once the state and city were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Two meetings had been cancelled. One meeting was a special meeting, and one meeting was a special joint meeting with the Sustainability Commission. Overall, Planning Commission acted on 31 items in 2020.

Applications

The Commission reviewed 13 site plan review applications- three as full site plan reviews and ten as limited site plan reviews. The Commission also reviewed 12 special use permit applications. All site plan review and special use permit applications were eventually approved; a few were tabled first for more information or clarity, then approved.

There were three zoning text amendments. Two were applied for by members of the public, one was applied for by the City. One zoning text amendment was recommended for denial; City Council subsequently denied the amendment as well. The other two were recommended for approval and were ultimately adopted by City Council. These involved updates to the medical and recreational marijuana portions of the zoning ordinance, to streamline provisions and make the ordinance more readable.

Special Planning Topics and Master Plan

The special planning topics included the Housing Affordability and Accessibility Report & Recommendations and the Sustainability Plan. Both of these topics were incorporated into the draft Master Plan update, which was recommended to City Council in December.

Planning Commission's Housing Affordability and Accessibility subcommittee and Non-motorized Advisory subcommittee continued to meet throughout 2020.

Bylaws

The bylaws were amended twice. One amendment clarified conflict of interest rules, and the other amendment updated the order of the meeting agenda.

Included in this year's annual report is the implementation matrix from the 2013 Master Plan. Note that the Master Plan is currently being updated.

Figure 1: Planning Commission Applications by Type (past five years)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Site Plan Review	9	7	5	6	12	8	13
Approved Site Plan Amendment	1	--	--	2	1	1	--
Special Use Permit	2	6	5	1	11	5	12
Zoning Map Amendment	1	1	2	1	4	--	--
Zoning Text Amendment	1	2	5	1	8	4	3
Master plan amendment	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Planned unit development	--	2	1	1	1	--	--
Amend approved PUD	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Alley/Street closure/Vacation	2	--	2	--	--	--	--
Change in non-conforming use	--	--	1	--	--	--	--
Capital Improvements Reviews	2	3	3	1	1	4	--
Special topic planning (begins 2010)	--	--	--	3	1	--	2
Study item (begins 2010)	--	7	1	--	--	--	--
Conditional Rezoning	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Modification of Sign Standards (begins 2012, ends 2016)	--	1	--	--	--	--	--
Special Use Revocation (begins 2015)	--	1	--	--	--	--	--
Designation of Special Nonconforming Status (begins 2015)	--	6	6	1	--	--	--
Total Applications / Deliberations	18	36	31	17	39	23	31

Figure 2: Planning Commission Actions by Year (percent)



Master Plan Implementation Matrix

These goals and their matrices are taken directly from the Master Plan, adopted Oct 2013.

Capital Improvements Plan = CIP; Zoning Ordinance = ZO

Key	Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Enviro	Economy	Primary Mechanism	Completion or Benchmark Date	Next Steps	
Center	C1	Building standards for centers that preserve the architecture	2014-2015	All Centers					Zoning Ordinance	Ordinance passed 2014	Completed	
	C2	Allow renewable energy facilities on all buildings	2014-2015	All Centers					Zoning Ordinance	Ordinance passed 2014	Completed	
	C3	Continue and expand the numbers, types of festivals and events	Ongoing	All Centers						Convention & Visitors Bureau (event attraction, destination marketing) Special Events policy (enabling)		Ongoing
	C4	Finish upper stories	Ongoing	All Centers						Zoning Ordinance (enable private investment) DDA (business & investment attraction)	Ordinance passed 2014 MEDC façade grant 2018	Ongoing- ZO completed. DDA ongoing efforts
	C5	Maintain and expand transportation options	Ongoing	Downtown						Capital Improvements Plan Zoning Ordinance (require last-mile infrastructure)	Capital Improvements Plan adopted 2015 Zoning Ordinance passed 2014	Ongoing

Key	Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Enviro	Economy	Primary Mechanism	Completion or Benchmark Date	Next Steps
C6	Draft a business attraction plan for Downtown, Depot Town and Cross St	2014-2019	All Centers						DDA	RRC Certification obtained 2015	Ongoing
C7	Encourage business and event activity during the day and evening	2014-2019	All Centers						Zoning Ordinance (encourage mix of uses) DDA (business development)	Ordinance passed 2014	Ongoing
C8	Create a marketing campaign for the City of Ypsilanti	1-5 Years	All Center						Convention & Visitors Bureau	Community Tourism Action Plan adopted 2014	Ongoing- Update CTAP 2019. Also, City is working on Marketing Plan.
C9	Build curbsless "festival" street on Washington	2014-2019	Downtown						Capital Improvements Plan	Capital Improvements Plan adopted 2015	CIP annual update/review
C10	Use vacant storefronts for temporary retail uses	2014-2019	Downtown						DDA (landlord outreach)	Ordinance passed 2014	Ongoing
C11	Permanent year-round home for Downtown Farmer's Market	1-5 Years	Downtown						Zoning Ordinance (enabling) DDA (attraction)	Downtown Farmers' Market established 2016	Completed
C12	Permanent year-round home for Depot Town Farmer's Market	1-5 Years	Depot Town						Zoning Ordinance (enabling) DDA (attraction)		Ongoing
C13	Install a wayfinding system	1-10 Years	All Centers						Convention & Visitor's Bureau	Complete, 2017	Completed
C14	Increase walkability (2-way streets & raised intersections)	2014-2024	Downtown						MDOT coordination (20-year	Capital Improvements	Capacity reduction planning 2019-2022

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									horizon) Capital Improvements Plan	Plan adopted 2015	
C15	Curbless "festival" street on River and Cross Street	2014-2024	Depot Town						Capital Improvements Plan	Capital Improvements Plan adopted 2015	Funding
C16	Create a public space at new train station	2014-2024	Depot Town						Capital Improvements Plan	Capital Improvements Plan adopted 2015 Proposed Amtrak Stop Feasibility Study completed 2018	Ongoing- Applied for CRISI (Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements) grant but was not awarded grant.
C17	Separate Cross and Washtenaw	2014-2024	Cross Street						Capital Improvements Plan	Capital Improvements Plan adopted 2015	Capacity reduction, 2-way conversion
C18	Create a "front door" for EMU with reconfiguration of Cross and Washtenaw	2014-2024	Cross Street						MDOT coordination Capital Improvements Plan	Capital Improvements Plan adopted 2015	Capacity reduction, 2-way conversion
N1	Continue and increase rental inspections and enforcement	Ongoing	All neighborhoods						Building Department		Ongoing
N2	Assist continuation and expansion of EMU Live Ypsi program	Ongoing	All neighborhoods							Program continuing	Ongoing

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Neighborhoods	N3	Plan and zone for range of housing typologies for the needs of all ages and abilities	Ongoing	All neighborhoods					Zoning Ordinance	Ordinance passed 2014	Completed
	N4	Streamline multiple-family living arrangements into categories based on number of units and form, instead of use	2014-2015	All neighborhoods					Zoning Ordinance	Ordinance passed 2014	Completed
	N5	Continue home-based entrepreneurship	2014-2015	All neighborhoods					Zoning Ordinance (enable)	Complete	Completed
	N6	Regulate the form of buildings to preserve the character of neighborhoods	2014-2015	All neighborhoods					Zoning Ordinance	Complete	Completed
	N7	Preserve the character of the area by using regulations on street type, building type as well as use	2014-2015	Central neighborhoods					Zoning Ordinance, Engineering Standards	Complete	Completed
	N8	Regulations of the variety of housing types, uses and lot sizes will be calibrated to the existing patterns	2014-2015	Central neighborhoods					Zoning Ordinance	Complete	Completed
	N9	Limit uses to predominantly single-family residential uses in areas with small	2014-2015	Outlying neighborhoods					Zoning Ordinance	Complete	Completed

Key	Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Enviro	Economy	Primary Mechanism	Completion or Benchmark Date	Next Steps
	houses, suited for only single-family use										
N10	Create 'Eco-Districts' in neighborhood parks	2014-2024	All neighborhoods						Zoning Ordinance (enable); Parks Plan > Capital Improvements Plan (planning & Execution)		Ongoing
Corridor	Co1	Designate the appropriate building form for each corridor based on existing patterns and vision for that corridor	2014-2015	All corridors					Zoning Ordinance	Complete	Completed
	Co2	Retain the mix of uses within each corridor but allow them throughout the area	2014-2015	All corridors					Zoning Ordinance	Complete	Completed
	Co3	Reinforce the preservation of historic buildings	2014-2015	Historic corridors					Zoning Ordinance; Historic District ordinance	Complete	Ongoing
	Co4	Maintain River Street as a historic boulevard	2014-2015	Historic corridors					Zoning Ordinance, Capital Improvements Plan		Ongoing
	Co5	Require a pedestrian-friendly building form while allowing a mix of uses for both students and	2014-2015	General corridors					Zoning Ordinance		Ongoing

Key	Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Enviro	Economy	Primary Mechanism	Completion or Benchmark Date	Next Steps
	residents along Huron River Dr, LeForge & Railroad corridors										
	Co6	Coordinate regulations for Washtenaw with the County Re-Imagine Washtenaw Ave Plan	2014-2015	General corridors					Zoning Ordinance	Ongoing	Ongoing
	Co7	Restore Harriet St as the Main St of adjacent neighborhoods	2014-2015 for ZO / 2014-2024 years for street improvements	General corridors					Zoning Ordinance, Capital Improvements Plan	Ordinance passed 2014, ongoing	Ongoing
	Co8	Restore two-way function to Cross, Huron and Hamilton Streets	2014-2024	Historic corridors					MDOT Coordination Capital Improvements Plan	Capital Improvements Plan adopted 2015	Capacity/lane reduction project
District Areas	D1	Update regulations to create walkable areas at the border of the City and EMU campus	2014-2015	EMU					Zoning Ordinance	Complete	Completed
	D2	Create regulations that support the existing building form but assure access by all modes of transportation	2014-2015	Health & Human Services					Zoning Ordinance	Complete	Completed
	D3	Allow renewable energy facilities, such as solar panels, on industrial land	2014-2015	Job Districts					Zoning Ordinance	Complete	Completed
	D4	Reduce the minimum lot size and width in	2014-2015	Job Districts					Zoning Ordinance	Complete	Completed

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		the industrial park to create more opportunity									
	D5	Align economic development incentives and programs to encourage emerging sectors that align with the Guiding Values and the employment potential of residents	1-5 years	All Districts						In Progress	Ongoing
	D6	Create "Welcome to Ypsilanti" packages for new EMU students, including web version	1-5 years	EMU					Website & PDF Authorship?		Package creation
	D7	Encourage use or redevelopment of unused parking lots	2014-2019	HHS & Job Districts					Zoning Ordinance (enable)	Complete	Completed
	D8	Create a 'front door' for EMU in the area created by the reconfiguration of Cross and Washtenaw	2014-2024	EMU					MDOT coordination Capital Improvements Plan		Capacity reduction & conversion to 2-way
General	G1	Establish "Aging in Place" programs	2014-2019	All neighborhoods				Zoning Ordinance (enable), Capital Improvements Plan (accessibility)	Ordinance passed 2014, Capital Improvements Plan 2015	Ongoing	

LOOKING FORWARD

At the end of 2020, these planning projects remain in progress:

- An update to the Master Plan is currently taking place. Plan update was distributed for public comment. Planning Commission public hearing for Plan will likely be at April 2021 meeting.
- 2020 goals included housing affordability and accessibility; housing density; sustainability planning; non-motorized transportation; traffic on Hamilton, Huron, and Washtenaw; Water Street; 220 N. Park; 206-210 N. Washington; and general implementation updates. These continue to be priorities going into 2021.
- The Planning Commission will continue to provide review of the annual Capital Improvements Plan prior to adoption by City Council, per state act.

ACTION

At its January 20, 2021 meeting, Planning Commission **approved** the 2020 annual report and its transmittal to City Council.