



# Annual Report

June 1, 2016 - May 31, 2017

## *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, 2016 and ending on May 31, 2017, the Commission's membership was as follows:

Greg Ouellette, Chairperson  
 Sam Beidoun, Vice Chairperson  
 John Burmeister (City Council Liaison)  
 Chauncey Hitchcock  
 Susan Justice (Served as Secretary through 7-13-16)  
 Eric Mendieta, Secretary (Elected Secretary 9-14-16)  
 Laura Ochs  
 Carlene Pederson (12-14-16)  
 Bob Pierce  
 Carolyn Shearer

During this time period, the Commission held 13 meetings and recommendations were made to the City Council on 62 development related items.

Measurable	Y2008 -2009	Y2009 -2010	Y2010 -2011	Y2011 -2012	Y2012 -2013	Y2013 -2014	Y2014 -2015	Y2015 - 2016	<b>Y2016- 2017</b>
Meetings	17	10	18	11	12	12	11	14	<b>13</b>
Site Plans	10	2	6	3	5	12	7	10	<b>17</b>
Special Land Use Permits	8	6	12	6	3	6	7	8	<b>11</b>
Tree Removal Permits	3	1	4	3	5	6	8	6	<b>7</b>
Planned Unit Developments	1	0	0	1	1	3	4	4	<b>5</b>
Rezoning	2	1	3	1	8	0	1	3	<b>4</b>
Master Plan Amendments	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	<b>1</b>
Text Amendments	4	8	1	1	5	1	2	2	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Projects</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>62</b>

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, Assistant 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 Master Degree in Public Administration from Eastern Michigan University.

### **Notable Commission Items**

1. **Michigan Association of Planning Award for Best Practice – 2015 City of Auburn Hills Industrial Property Analysis**

The City of Auburn Hills received the 2016 Planning Excellence Award for Best Practice from the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) for the innovative industrial study in October 2016. The publication became a driving force in forecasting the City's development and finances and has been an important reference tool for guiding policy changes such as the recently amended Tax Abatement Policy.



2. **Development Applications**

Notable projects reviewed by the Commission were the following:

- Five Points of Auburn Hills – Six, 3-story luxury apartment buildings comprising of 178 units with one clubhouse.
- Panda Express – 2,593 sq. ft. restaurant with a drive-through and outdoor seating area.
- Auburn Crossing – Renovation of the existing shopping center, which includes the demolition of 10,849 sq. ft. of existing 36,380 sq. ft. retail building and construction a second 7,728 sq. ft. retail building with a drive-through and outside seating area on the site.
- Renshaw – 20,070 technology and research facility.
- Brown Road Speculative Building – 130,000 sq. ft. industrial building.
- Blossom Park PUD Phase Two – One, 3-story 212,032 sq. ft. Senior Living Center comprising 119 independent living units, 25 assisted living units and 16 memory care units.
- Reserves of Auburn Hills – 65 attached-unit condominium development.
- Martinrea – 108,200 sq. ft. technology and research facility.

- Magnum Industrial Building – 137,560 sq. ft. industrial building.
- The HUB Stadium – Redevelopment of the 26,545 sq. ft. Big Buck Brewery building into a “bomb-bowling” entertainment venue.
- Legend Valve and Fitting, Inc. Expansion – 59,826 sq. ft. light industrial building addition.
- Hilton Garden Inn Hotel – One, 3-story 67,740 sq. ft. hotel with 96 rooms.
- Pacific Drive Development – 50,000 sq. ft. industrial building.
- Stadium Gas Station – Construction of a gas station with six pumps and canopy that includes the demolition of an existing restaurant on the site.
- Five Points Community Church – Construction of a 16,019 sq. ft. building addition that includes the demolition of the churches southern wing, garage and one story accessory building.
- Rapid Shred – 21,050 sq. ft. industrial building.
- FEV North America, Inc. – 25,600 sq. ft. research and laboratory facility.
- Hutchinson – 60,502 sq. ft. North American Headquarters
- The HUB Stadium – 9,212 sq. ft. building addition.

3. Basement - Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

The Ordinance was amended to update and clarify the definition of a basement. The Ordinance amended addressed the following items:

- Simplified the language.
- Update the basement diagram to better display the intent of the definition.

4. R-1A Open Space Option and Attached Units in the One-Family Residential Districts – Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

The Ordinance amended addressed the following items:

- Reduced minimum required open space from 30% to 25% of the site to correspond with the increase in allowable unit density.
- Eliminated private park provision requiring a one acre park designated for active recreational purposes for parcels 10 acres or greater due to the cost burden it places on HOAs.
- Allows wetlands to be included in density calculations in an effort to improve the economic viability of projects and encourage new housing development.
- Increased the allowable density from 2.5 to 3.0 units per gross acre to encourage developers to save open space, woodlands, and other natural features.
- Allows attached duplex units similar to those constructed in the Arbor Cove and Auburn Grove condominium projects.

5. Universal Design and Visitability – Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

The Ordinance amended added Section 1830 Universal Design and Vistability and addressed the following items:

- To implement Action Plan Item #1 in the Housing Domain of the 2015 Age Friendly Action Plan which recommends that the City “*encourage developers to think about universal design features.*” incorporate universal design elements and features into their new home designs.
- To make the housing stock in Auburn Hills more accessible and visitable for people of all ages and abilities.

6. Planned Unit Development Option – Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

The Ordinance amended the “criteria for qualification” section of the PUD Ordinance and addressed the following items:

- To implement Action Plan Item #1 in the Housing Domain of the 2015 Age Friendly Action Plan which recommends that the City “*encourage developers to think about universal design features.*” incorporate universal design elements and features into their new home designs.
- Provision of open space or public plazas or features and/or financial contribution to assist with the creation and maintenance of off-site public spaces and improvements.

- Commitment to construct a project that obtains certification from the U.S. Green Building Council or similar nationally recognized green building program.
- Mitigation to offset impacts on public facilities such as road and utility improvements and/or the contribution to the City of equipment and/or assets.
- Installation of plug-in electric vehicle charging stations for use by employees and visitors and/or the installation of other infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles.
- Creation of a plug-in electric vehicle ready residential development with garages and/or carports prepped for electric vehicle charging stations.

7. Amendment to the Northeast Corner Neighborhood Master Plan

The following amendment were made:

- To allow a residential open space development on the property at a density of up to 3.0 units per gross acre, in lieu of the planned 2.5 units per gross acre.
- To allow attached duplex-style units in only open space developments.
- Change the Master Plan designation from “single family residential” to “single family residential transitional” for properties adjacent to Shimmons Road Curve (PID Nos. 14-12-151-001, 14-12-151-002, 14-12-151-003, 14-12-151-004) which would allow an open space development with attached duplex-style units and an increase in housing density from 2.5 to 3.5 homes per acer (not to exceed 28 homes).
- Change the Master Plan designation for “single family residential” to “non-residential transitional” for the Kensington Community Church (PID No. 14-01-100-028) and Rochester Soccer Club properties (PID Nos. 14-01-100-029, 14-01-100-026, 14-01-100-027) located on the south side of Dutton Road just east of Bald Mountain Road

8. Draft Amendment to the Master Land Use Plan – 1500 and 1700 Brown Road

The amendment would change the land use classification of the City’s DPW facility (1500 Brown Road) and Oakland County’s Animal Shelter and Pet Adoption Center (1700 Brown Road) from public to non-residential. The proposed amendment is to facilitate the rezoning of 1700 Brown Road (Oakland County’s Animal Shelter and Pet Adoption Center) from R-1, One-Family Residential District to either I-1, Light Industrial District or I-2, General Industrial District in August 2017. Oakland County anticipates selling 1700 Brown Road in the future to allow it to be redeveloped into one or more industrial building sites.

9. The Palace of Auburn Hills Site Charrette

Community Development staff held a charrette to create a vision of how the Palace of Auburn Hills site could be developed if the complex was ever to be demolished. Two teams were formed consisting of staff from various departments including Assessing, City Managers, Community Development, Engineering, Finance, Fire, Police, and Public Works. Each team provided an overview of their vision on how the site could be developed. Community Development staff created a final vision of the site by utilizing the similarities each teams concept plan.

10. Staff Training

Steve Cohen and Shawn Keenan attended the *Michigan APA Conference* held in Kalamazoo, on October 26, 27 & 28, 2016. They also attended Michigan’s Association of Planners Spring Institute Housing Summit held in Lansing on April 14, 2016 and participated APA Connecticut Chapter, on line event titled “Planning for Religious Land Uses in an Age of Religious Diversity and Lawsuits” held on August 5, 2016.

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 39 CM credits thus far for the current reporting period of January 1, 2016 and

December 31, 2017. Mr. Keenan has earned 41 CM credits thus far for the current reporting period of January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2017.

11. 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 Beidoun and Ouellette attended the *Michigan APA Conference* in Kalamazoo, on October 26-28, 2016. Several members also attended seminars locally offered by Oakland County. Auburn Hills has been involved with a very limited number of development-related lawsuits over the past 18 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.

**Planning Commission Terms and Attendance Records**

During this time period, the Commission held 13 meetings, of which 11 were regularly scheduled meetings and 2 were special meetings.

Name	Term Endings	Regular Meetings	Special Meetings
Greg Ouellette	July 2018	11 / 11	2 / 2
Sam Beidoun	July 2017	11 / 11	2 / 2
John Burmeister	Nov. 2017	10 / 11	2 / 2
Chauncey Hitchcock	July 2018	7 / 11	2 / 2
Susan Justice*	July 2016	1 / 1	0 / 2
Eric Mendieta	July 2018	7 / 11	2 / 2
Laura Ochs	July 2017	7 / 11	1 / 2
Carlene Pederson**	July 2019	4 / 5	0 / 0
Bob Pierce	July 2019	11 / 11	1 / 2
Carolyn Shearer	July 2019	7 / 11	2 / 2

\*Term expired 7-13-16 \*\*Began serving term on 12-14-16

**On-Going Planning Activities through May 31, 2017 and Beyond**

1. Update the City’s Master Land Use Plan
2. Finish the Complete Streets Policy

**Commission Recommendations to City Council**

The Commission respectfully recommends that the City Council ensure that the Y2018 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