



Annual Report

June 1, 2022 - May 31, 2023

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 ongoing 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, 2022, and ending on May 31, 2023, the Commission's membership was as follows:

Greg Ouellette, Chairperson
Sam Beidoun, Vice-Chairperson
Laura Ochs, Secretary
Brain Marzolf, City Council Liaison
Chauncey Hitchcock
Cynthia Pavlich (appointed on 9-12-22)
Carlene Pederson (served until 7-13-22)
Bob Pierce (served until 7-13-22)
Raymond Saelens
Carolyn Shearer
Dominick Tringali (appointed on 9-12-22)



During this time period, the Commission held nine meetings, and recommendations were made to City Council on 31 development-related items.

Measurable	Y2012 -2013	Y2013 -2014	Y2014 -2015	Y2015 -2016	Y2016 -2017	Y2017 -2018	Y2018 -2019	Y2019 -2020	Y2020 -2021	Y2021 -2022	Y2022 -2023
Meetings	12	12	11	14	13	11	11	9	7	6	9
Site Plans	5	12	7	10	17	12	12	10	3	7	7
Special Land Use Permits	3	6	7	8	11	7	8	9	4	11	5
Tree Removal Permits	5	6	8	6	7	11	13	9	1	4	10
Planned Unit Developments	1	3	4	4	5	6	6	4	3	1	7
Rezoning	8	0	1	3	4	4	5	0	1	0	1
Master Plan Amendments	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Text Amendments	5	1	2	2	4	1	2	1	1	1	1
Private Road	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Total Projects	27	28	29	34	62	42	54	42	14	25	31

Note: The Planning Commission's regularly scheduled meetings in August, October and January were canceled due to a slowdown in construction.

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 a Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Urban and Regional Planning from Michigan State University.

Shawn Keenan, City Planner, also provides staff support to the Commission. Mr. Keenan has served the Commission since March 15, 2011. He is certified as a professional planner (AICP) with the American Planning Association. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Law & Government and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Eastern Michigan University.

Notable Commission Items

1. Development Applications

Notable projects reviewed by the Commission were the following:

- The Parkways (Phase 3) – The revised plans included the construction of a total of 50 residential units. Three owner-occupied townhouse-style condominiums totaling 18 units and five townhouse-style apartment buildings consisting of 32 units.
- TA Systems – The plan called for the construction of a 71,775 square-foot clean, high-tech facility that will serve as their new corporate headquarters, bringing more than 100 jobs to the City.
- 2111 North Squirrel Road – The development included a 3,480 square-foot Panera Bread restaurant with a drive-through facility and outside seating on the north end of the property and a 10,196 square-foot one-story retail center on the south end.
- FANUC America – The proposal included a 671,100 square foot light industrial facility (West Campus building) to house manufacturing, engineering, and R&D projects and the repurposing of the existing 132,745 square foot law school building into an R&D center and educational facility for the next generation of robotics and automation workers.
- Clean View Car Wash – The request called for the construction of a 16,307 square-foot automobile laundry with a wash tunnel and a 15-stall indoor vacuum wing.
- The Webster – The plan called for constructing a six-story mixed-use building in Downtown Auburn Hills, with 7,476 square feet of first-floor retail space, a 22-space parking garage, and five floors consisting of 85 residential apartments.
- TI Fluid Systems – The development includes the construction of a 49,374 square-foot building addition and associated parking and improvements at the existing TI Fluid Systems building. The expansion will increase the facility to 193,282 square feet in size.
- UL Solutions - This is a request from Cunningham-Limp Company to construct an 83,061-square-foot high-tech research and testing facility with 12,600 square feet of office space, 50,000 square feet of research and development space, 10,394 square feet of warehouse space, and 10,067 square feet of testing space.
- Atlantic Boulevard Light Industrial Speculative Building – The request called for the construction of a 55,422 square foot light industrial building with 11,696 square feet of office space, 21,863 square feet of manufacturing space, and 21,863 square feet of warehouse space.
- Magna Seating – The proposal called for the construction of a 280,000 square-foot light industrial building.
- GM Electric Vehicle Parts Assembly, Distribution, and Office Facility – The plan included constructing a 1,100,764-square-foot light industrial building that will operate as a “Value-Added Assembly” (VAA) facility manufacturing various automotive components for the assembly lines at the company’s Orion Assembly Plant.

2. Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Article VIII, B-1, Limited Business Districts, and Article IX. B-2, General Business Districts. The Ordinance amendment was designed to address the permitted locations for the four adult-use marihuana establishments to be allowed in the City of Auburn Hills. The Ordinance also repealed the map of required locations for the four (4) allowed adult-use marihuana establishments near Lapeer Raod and Brown Road/Dutton Road as outlined in Section 18-232 – Limitation of Adult Use Marihuana Establishments of Ordiance No. 22-932.

3. Support Staff Training

Steve Cohen and Shawn Keenan attended the *APA's National Planning Conference* held in Philadelphia on April 1-4, 2023. In addition to the national conference, Mr. Cohen attended the *Michigan APA Conference* held at Mackinac Island on October 12-14, 2022, and Mr. Keenan attended the conference virtually. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Kennan also participated in several other virtual planning webinars in 2022 and 2023.

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 1.0 credits must be on the topics of planning law, ethics, equity, and sustainability & resilience. Mr. Cohen has earned 50.25 CM credits thus far for the current reporting period of January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2023. Mr. Keenan has earned 52.25 CM credits thus far for the current reporting period of January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2023.

4. 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.

Member Beidoun attended the *Michigan APA Conference* at Mackinac Island on October 12-14, 2022.

Planning Commission members attended the City's training session on Parliamentary Procedures and the Open Meetings Act presented by Eleanor "Coco" Wiewert, Professional, Registered Parliamentarian, and Derk Beckerleg, City Attorney.

The City of 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.

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

During this reporting period, one development established that the planting of the required replacement trees on-site was not possible, and an appropriate off-site location was not available. In this 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, West Campus – The applicant made a payment of \$217,360 into the City's Tree Fund to account for the 572 replacement trees that could not be planted on-site or at alternate locations.

Planning Commission Terms and Attendance Records

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

Name	Term Endings	Regular Meetings	Special Meetings
Greg Ouellette	July 2024	7 / 9	0 / 0
Sam Beidoun	July 2026	8 / 9	0 / 0
Laura Ochs	July 2026	5 / 9	0 / 0
Brian Marzolf	Nov. 2023	9 / 9	0 / 0
Chauncey Hitchcock	July 2024	8 / 9	0 / 0
Cynthia Pavlich	July 2025	7 / 7	0 / 0
Carlene Pederson	July 2022	0 / 2	0 / 0
Bob Pierce	July 2022	2 / 2	0 / 0
Raymond Saelens	July 2024	7 / 9	0 / 0
Carolyn Shearer	July 2025	6 / 9	0 / 0
Dominick Tringali	July 2025	6 / 7	0 / 0

Ongoing Planning Activities based on the City Council's Y2024 Strategic Goals & Objectives

1. Explore options for industrial redevelopment within the community.
2. Continue to foster development along the M-24/Opdyke Road Corridor.
3. Focus redevelopment efforts on TIFA, city-owned, and private properties.
4. Continue to keep Auburn Hills friendly and livable for all ages and abilities.
5. Provide input during the process of updating the Auburn Hills Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Commission Recommendations to City Council

The Commission respectfully recommends that the City Council ensure that the Y2024 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