



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
2023 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE
PLANNING COMMISSION, JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION,
AND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Submitted by Eric Zuzga, Director of Community Services

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Introduction

The [Michigan Planning Enabling Act](#) (MPEA) allows for the establishment of local Planning Commissions, master plans, and other associated activities. The City of Marshall's Planning Commission is established in local ordinance 151.02 and consists of nine (9) members. The Planning Commission is responsible for:

- Developing the community's master plan which provides a framework for orderly growth and redevelopment.
- Creating a zoning ordinance to translate master planning goals to land use regulations.
- Reviewing and approving development requests (site plans and special land uses)
- Drafting a capital improvements plan
- Studying special topics or conducting other special projects as requested by the governing body

This report contains a record of the Department of Community Service's activity over the past year. Highlights of the commission's work include:

- Creation of a new zoning district for major industrial sites
- Nine (9) Site Plan Approvals
- Four (4) Property Rezonings
- Two (2) Special Land Use Approvals
- Two (2) Dimensional and three (3) Use Variances
- Preparing for the Master Plan Process

Membership

Planning Commission members for this reporting period were:

Name	Meeting s Attende d	Member Since	Term Expires	Voting Member
Tim Banfield, Chair	6/7	9/1/2000	11/1/2024	Yes
Lisa McNiff	5/7	10/7/13	11/1/2025	Yes
Julie Burke Smith	4/7	12/7/2009	12/13/2022	Yes
Jim Zuck	2/7	5/21/2012	11/1/2025	Yes
Tim Fitzgerald	7/7	10/18/2021	11/1/2024	Yes

Ian Stewart	1/1	11/20/2023	11/1/2026	Yes
Chris Longyear	4/7	11/1/2021	11/1/2024	Yes
Carter Bright	1/1	11/20/2023	11/1/2026	Yes
Christine Zuzga	3/6	10/19/2020	11/1/2023	Yes
Stephanie Hall	5/6	11/16/2020	11/1/2023	Yes
Katy Reed	5/6	10/21/2019	11/1/2023	Yes
Scott Wolfersberger, Ex Officio	N/A	N/A	N/A	No

Hall, Reed, and Zuzga did not seek re-appointment to the Planning Commission. Bright and Stewart were appointed to fill two of these positions.

Joint Planning Commission

The Joint Planning Commission reviews and advises the City Council on matters like site plans for new developments and zoning issues on properties that have been transferred into the City via PA 425 agreement. This board has 6 regular members, 3 city and 3 township, appointed from the respective Planning Commissions.

Name	Meetings Attended	Represents
Tim Banfield, Chair	3/3	City
Katy Reed	2/3	City
Julie Burke Smith	3/3	City
Tim Fitzgerald, Alternate	1/3	City
Robert Lyng	3/3	Township
Phyllis Gresley	3/3	Township
Kevin Hoffman	2/3	Township
Joanna Johnson, Alternate	1/3	Township

Hoffman recused himself from a meeting due to a conflict of interest and Reed's term expired prior to the November meeting.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

The ZBA hears requests for variances from the ordinance when a request has been denied by the Planning & Zoning Administrator or Building Official. This board of 5 regular members, plus 2 alternate members, is made up of local volunteers with various backgrounds, especially in law

Name	Meetings Attended	Term Expires	Voting Member
Justin Fisher-Short, Chair	3/3	3/10/2027	Yes
Russ Byrne	2/3	3/10/2027	Yes

Arthur Hill	3/3	3/10/2025	Yes
Jeff Karns	3/3	3/10/2025	Yes
Jeff Daily	2/3	3/10/2026	Yes
Scott Wolfersberger	3/3	3/10/2027	Yes

Daily resigned from the ZBA prior to the December meeting.

Meetings

The MPEA requires that local Planning Commissions meet at least four times a year. The City of Marshall's Planning Commission meets on the second Wednesday of the month and held seven (7) meetings during the year. A summary of meeting activity is below:

Meeting Date	Summary
January 11	New Zoning District Creation, One Rezoning, 2023-2024 CIP Approval
February 8	Two Site Plan Reviews
April 12	One Special Land Use and Site Plan Review, Potential Zoning Ordinance Changes in B-4 Zoning, Master Plan RFP Discussion
June 14	One Special Land Use and Site Plan Review
July 12	One Site Plan Review
September 13	Three Site Plan Reviews, Two Rezonings
December 13	2024-2025 CIP Approval, Site Plan Review

The Joint Planning Commission meets on the second Tuesday of the month and is held as needed. A summary of meeting activity is below:

Meeting Date	Summary
April 25	Ford Blue Oval Battery Plant Rezoning
September 12	Rezoning on West Hughes
November 14	Tractor Supply Site Plan

The Zoning Board of Appeals meets on the third Thursday of the month and is held as needed. A summary of meeting activity is below:

Meeting Date	Summary
January 19	Two Dimensional Variances
March 16	One Dimensional and One Use Variance
December 14	Use Variance

Master Plan Status

The Planning Commission is responsible for regularly reviewing and updating the master plan to ensure it continues to be relevant to the community's needs. The community's current master plan [2015 City Master Plan](#) was adopted on June 10, 2015. The MPEA requires a formal review (and update or reaffirmation) occur at least every five years. The Planning Commission formally reviewed the Master Plan in 2020 and reaffirmed that it was still relevant for the City with the intention to update the Master Plan following the retirement of the City Manager and the current Mayor deciding not to run for re-election in 2022. We intend to issue an RFP and update the Master Plan in 2024/2025.

In addition to the MPEA-required five-year review, the community's efforts to maintain alignment with the [Redevelopment Ready Communities](#) Best Practices includes annual progress assessments to determine if the community is on track for meeting the plan's goals and actions. The following is a table of actions planned for 2024 or currently underway.

#	Goal	Action Item	Lead	Target	Status
1.B.1	Maintain Character of Community	Identify the specific uses the City finds appropriate for historic buildings in areas of the NHLD	Community Services/ MAEDA	2023-2024	Multiple projects In progress
2.B.1	High Standards for Aesthetics & Design	Consider developing a W. Michigan Corridor Plan to provide detailed recommendations for development and redevelopment, including streetscape enhancements and access	Public Services	2025	Discussion as part of Master Plan update

		management improvements			
2.C.1	High Standards for Aesthetics & Design	Continue to promote façade and building improvements and encourage renovation and restoration of Downtown buildings.	DDA	2023-2025	Ongoing, Façade program reinvigorated
3.A.3	Housing	Review and amend, if necessary, existing blight and property maintenance ordinances and improve enforcement efforts throughout the City's neighborhoods.	Police, Building Dept	2025	Police assigned code. Building Dept to explore enforcement options
3.D. 1-3	Housing	Promote Upper story Downtown Building Renovations for housing- including funding	Community Services/ MAEDA	2023-2026	Ongoing
4.A.1	Commercial Center	Identify Priority Redevelopment Sites for RRC	MAEDA/Council	2024-2025	Initial work done, to include in Master Plan update
4.D.2	Commercial Center	Attract New Businesses to Marshall	MAEDA/MEDC/ City staff	2023-2026	Ford project announced, 2 new banks approved, other

					development in progress
5.A.1	Employment Base	Review and amend, where applicable the zoning ordinance to permit growth industries such as industrial greenhouse uses, food production facilities, and other manufacturing and technology industries	Community Services	2023	New I-3 District Created for MAJOR Campus
7.A.1	Transportation	Develop a comprehensive non-motorized transportation plan	Public Services, Community Services	2024	Included in Master Plan RFP

Zoning Ordinance Amendments & Rezoning

Zoning is the legal mechanism which turns planning goals into reality via development regulations. It is imperative that a community maintain an up-to-date zoning ordinance which aligns with those goals and addresses emerging trends. Throughout the year, the Planning Commission discussed the following amendments:

Topic	Summary	Status
Major Industrial Sites Zoning District (I-3)	The commission drafted a proposed ordinance which	Recommended: Yes Adopted by Council: Yes
B-4 Zoning Changes	Staff suggested raising the maximum building height in the B-4 District to allow for four story hotels. PC suggested that the idea be studied more and surrounding residential areas protected	Recommended: No Adopted by Council: No

The Planning Commission and Joint Planning Commission are also responsible for making recommendations on rezoning requests. Such requests must align with the master plan's future land use map or acknowledge there have been changes since the last master plan was approved.

Address	Existing Zoning	Requested Rezoning	Planning Rec.	Council Decision
211 Spruce Street	Research & Technology (I-1)	Regional Commercial (B-4)	Yes	Yes
13700 West Michigan	Township Zoning	Industrial & Manufacturing Complex (I-3)	No	Yes
913 Industrial Drive	Residential Estate (R-1)	Multiple Family Residential (MFRD)	Yes	Yes
14555 18 1/2 Mile Road	Suburban Residential (R-2)	Public/Semi-Public Services (PSP)	Yes	Yes
West Hughes	Township Zoning	Multiple Family Residential (MFRD)	Yes	Yes

Site Plan Reviews & Variances

Site plan review is a primary role of the Planning Commission and Joint Planning Commission and helps ensure that new development in the community aligns with the zoning ordinance requirements. Prior to Planning Commission review, staff conducts an internal review process as well. When needed, variances are considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Project Type	Location	Description	Status
Site Plan Review	106 Winston Park Drive	New American 1 Credit Union facility	Approved by Planning Commission on February 8
Site Plan Review	211 West Spruce Street	New event center (Millhaven)	Approved by Planning Commission on February 8

Site Plan Review	421/423 Mitchell Street	New Self-Storage Facility	Approved by Planning Commission on April 12
Site Plan Review	902/1102 West Hanover Street	New Self-Storage Facility	Approved by Planning Commission on June 14
Site Plan Review	1111 Arms Street	New Marshall Tire facility	Approved by Planning Commission on July 12
Site Plan Review	14555 18 1/2 Mile Road	Expansion of County Juvenile Facility	Approved by Planning Commission on September 13
Site Plan Review	14555 18 1/2 Mile Road	Solar Field Addition at County Juvenile Facility	Approved by Planning Commission on September 13
Site Plan Review	1114 West Michigan Avenue	New Consumers Credit Union Facility	Approved by Planning Commission on December 13
Site Plan Review	15859 West Michigan Avenue	New Tractor Supply Store in 1/3 of a former Kmart Building	Approved by Joint Planning Commission on November 14
Special Land Use	421/423 Mitchell Street	New Self-Storage Facility	Approved by Council (PC Rec: Approve) on April 17
Special Land Use	902/1102 West Hanover Street	New Self-Storage Facility	Approved by Council (PC Rec: Approve) on July 17
Use Variance	302 North Madison Street	Use of residential home as a construction office for Oaklawn projects	Approved by ZBA on March 16

Use Variance	1114 West Michigan Avenue	Allow a drive-through at a new bank	Approved by ZBA on December 14
Dimensional Variance	115 South Eagle Street	Request for a larger projecting sign	Approved by ZBA on March 16
Dimensional Variance	423 Mitchell Street	Setback reductions and parking deferment for a self-storage facility	Approved by ZBA on January 19
Dimensional Variance	1102 West Hanover Street	Setback reductions for a self-storage facility	Approved by ZBA on January 19

Public Engagement Summary

Redevelopment Ready Communities Best Practice 1.4 includes an annual summary of public engagement activity in the community, guided by the community's goals and tools outlined in an adopted public participation plan; City of Marshall's [Community Engagement Statement](#) was adopted in 2015.

Highlight from the past year include:

- Public hearing for the creation of the I-3 Zoning District
- Public hearing at Planning Commission (or Joint Planning Commission) and City Council on five (5) Rezoning Requests.
- Public hearing at Planning Commission and City Council on the two (2) Special Land Use Requests
- Public hearing at Zoning Board of Appeals on five (5) Variance Requests

Training Update

Redevelopment Ready Communities Best Practice 4.6 supports the creation of training plans for community officials. Training is essential to providing the community with the tools needed to achieve local goals. The development of a training plan for each board is in process and will be adopted in 2024. The Planning Commission planned an orientation and training session in January 2024.

Economic Development Plan Status

In 2016, the city adopted an Economic Development Plan as part of its efforts to meet RRC certification. In addition to the Master Plan required five-year review, the community's efforts to maintain alignment with the Redevelopment Ready Communities Best Practices includes annual progress assessments to determine if the city is on track

to meet the Economic Development Plan's goals and actions. The following is a table of actions planned for 2024 or currently underway.

#	Goal	Action Item	Lead	Target	Status
1	Expanded Utilities to Strategic Locations	Expansion of utilities to serve Ford/MAJOR Campus	MAEDA/Public Services/Community Services	2026	Extension underway for new Ford facility
2	Tax Base Increase due to housing	Housing Market Analysis	Community Services	2024	Updated Housing Market Analysis Underway
2	Tax Base Increase due to housing	New Diverse Housing added	Community Services/MAEDA	2025	Multiple Projects In-Progress
4	Fiber	Fiber to the Premises	Fibernet	2023	Fiber is available to all properties in City
7	River District	Increasing connectivity between downtown and River District	MAEDA	2025	In-Progress, expanded Christmas decorations at River District, exploring funding for additional projects

In Closing & Looking Forward

The Planning Commission had a busy year with the announcement of the Ford Blue Oval Battery Park and development associated with that project.

Looking forward to 2024, the Planning Commission aims to accomplish the following:

- Beginning the master plan update

- Update the B-4 and FS Districts to allow for greater building height
- Review and update the sign ordinance
- Providing training opportunities for board members.
- Update the Community Engagement Strategy
- Update their Rules of Procedure
- Complete Redevelopment Ready Communities Recertification
- Update B-4 District to allow Drive-Throughs at Financial Institutions