



VAN BUREN

CHARTER TOWNSHIP

Kevin McNamara | Supervisor · **Sharry A. Budd** | Treasurer · **Leon Wright** | Clerk
Bryon Kelley | Trustee · **Kevin Martin** | Trustee · **Sherry Frazier** | Trustee · **Donald Boynton Jr.** | Trustee

January 6, 2024

Van Buren Township Planning Commission
Charter Township of Van Buren
46425 Tyler Road
Van Buren Township, MI 48111

Subject: Planning Commission Annual Report for 2023

In accordance with P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended, MCL 125.3801 et seq, Michigan Planning Enabling Act, please find the attached annual report regarding the Planning Commission activities for 2023. Following acceptance by the Planning Commission, the report will be forwarded to the Van Buren Township Board of Trustees. The report includes updates on the Planning Commission's progress in implementing the Township-wide 2020 Van Buren Township Master Plan, Engagement Activities, and Economic Development Plan (future), as well as an overall listing of the Planning Commission's activities. The report is summarized as follows:

Public Participation Activities

As you know, the Township is well along the way to being certified as a Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Consistent with the RRC's Best Practice 1.4, to meet expectations for RRC Certification, the Township is including an update on the year's public engagement efforts to the Board of Trustees as part of this Annual Report document. The Township adopted a Public Participation Plan in 2018 as part of Best Practice 1.4. Various forms of public engagement have been taken by Van Buren Township's Planning Commission, consistent with the public participation formats that are included in the Public Participation Plan.

- **Public Meetings:** The Planning Commission held 25 public meetings this year, including 21 regular meetings, and four (4) special meetings. The special meetings included a workshop to discuss economic development strategies and marketing as part of Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) certification, a joint training session between Board of Trustees and Planning Commission members, and a joint Planning Commission meeting held with the Planning Commissions of the City of Belleville and Sumpter Township, along with a special meeting to address a site plan amendment item.
- **Public Hearings:** The Planning Commission held ten (10) public hearings.
- **All** public meetings of the Van Buren Township Board of Trustees and Planning Commission have been accessible for view and participation through a virtual format (Zoom). Meetings were also broadcast to YouTube. Participants were able to dial in to the Zoom format to participate by phone, or could



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attend via web access which also allowed typed chat and question-and-answer capabilities.

- **Direct postcard mailings** on seven (7) requests before the Planning Commission were sent to 186 property owners.
- **Social media platforms** were used to announce Planning Commission activities.
- **Emailed and written comments** by residents to Planning Commissioners were shared at various Planning Commission meetings.

The Township's Adopted 2018 Public Participation Plan is available for view visiting the Department of Planning and Economic Development section of the Van Buren Township website (www.vanburen-mi.org), and navigating to "Zoning Ordinance & Master Plan > Other Plans and Reports".

Overall listing of the Planning Commission's Activities

- **Preliminary Site Plan Approvals:** The Planning Commission granted four (4) preliminary site plan or preliminary condominium plan approvals.
- **Final Site Plan Approvals:** The Planning Commission granted seven (7) final site plan or final condominium plan approvals.
- **Planned Residential Development (PRD) Final Approvals:** The Planning Commission granted one (1) final PRD approval.
- **Combined Preliminary / Final Site Plan Approvals:** The Planning Commission granted six (6) combined preliminary / final site plan approvals.
- **Special Land Use:** The Planning Commission recommended three (3) special land use approvals to the Township Board.
- **Site Plan Amendments:** The Planning Commission granted seven (7) site plan amendments.
- **Temporary Land Use Approvals:** The Planning Commission granted six (6) temporary land use permits.
- **Rezoning Recommendations:** The Planning Commission made three (3) rezoning recommendation to the Township Board.
- **Zoning Text Amendment Recommendations:** The Planning Commission held eight (8) discussions about potential Zoning Ordinance text amendments and made two (2) zoning ordinance text amendment recommendations to the Township Board. These included modernized minimum height regulations for detached single-family dwellings and modifications to the minimum required separation distance between child care uses, to support child care capacity in the Township.
- **Zoning Ordinance Amendment Research Subcommittees** were organized to explore prospective sets of Zoning Ordinance text amendments on two (2) topics:
 - 1. Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations and associated infrastructure. Two (2) meetings were held with this subcommittee.
 - 2. Agricultural Tourism (Agritourism). Three (3) meetings were held with this subcommittee.



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- **Tree Removal Permits:** The Planning Commission granted one (1) tree removal permit.
- **BZA Commentary.** The Planning Commission made commentary related to cases before the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) on two (2) occasions.
- **Previous site plan extensions.** The Planning Commission granted two (2) extensions to previous preliminary or final site plan reviews.
- **Administrative updates.** The Planning Commission has discussed administratively reviewed projects on three (3) occasions.
- **Bylaws / Rules and Procedures** were updated one (1) time.
- **General planning discussions and other items.** Ten (10) other general planning discussions were held including minor modifications to approved fencing or landscaping on different projects, initial discussions regarding long-term planning focus areas, concept plan review and discussion, elections of officers, and the adoption of the 2024 meeting schedule.

Master Plan Implementation:

- A key identified housing objective in the 2020 Master Plan was pursued through a training with Planning Commission and Board members on “Missing Middle” housing held on June 8, 2023, and through the passage of a Zoning Ordinance text amendment that allowed for an increase in the minimum allowable height for detached single family residential dwellings:
 - *Encourage the development of new housing in “missing middle” formats and/or layouts that are currently absent or in short supply, by creating zoning districts and design standards as necessary in the appropriate areas of the Township.*

Strategies or objectives that are listed as “ongoing” in the 2020 Master Plan are not listed in this report but should be implemented as part of recommendations and actions by the Planning Commission related to Zoning Ordinance development and development review.

Significant Activities:

Significant construction progress has been made at several major project sites which were approved by the Planning Commission in the past several years. Current and recent significant construction activities tied to Planning Commission-approved projects include the following:

Industrial Projects

- **Our Next Energy** continues with their first phase of construction (prototype line) to prepare a line for LFP electric vehicle battery production at the ~660,00 square foot “Crossroads North Building 6” at 42060 Ecorse Road. ONE has contracted with BMW to demonstrate the IX series EV batteries.

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- **Crossroads North Distribution Center 11, LLC**, or Ashley Capital, has gained preliminary site plan approval for a **630,417 square foot distribution center** south of Van Born Road and west of Haggerty Road, launching Phase 2 of their Crossroads North Business Park.
- **JSB Builders** will soon begin construction on a **16,280 industrial speculative multi-tenant building** at 6060 Schooner Drive.

Commercial Projects

- **Kenworth** recently opened their 62,750 square foot **truck sales facility** at 44660 North Interstate 94 Service Drive.
- **Camping World** has re-started renovations of their building at 43646 N I 94 Service Drive. At the outset of the project, the site will be fully redeveloped with new stormwater detention, parking, and **RV sales**.
- **Multi-tenant Belleville Road Retail**. Revised plans are in for a 10,362 square foot **multi-tenant retail building** by Jason Kishmish at 10573 Belleville Road.
- **Meijer** has completed remodels to their store and their gas station, and has invested in significant site paving and landscaping improvements on their 39.4-acre site at 9701 Belleville Road.
- **Wal Mart** recently invested in store upgrades and the construction of a curbside pickup parking area on the north end of their site.

Residential Projects

- **Infinity Homes** is currently building 52 attached units in the Cobblestone Creek residential project near Hoeft Road and Huron River Drive and is building 67 detached units in the Townsend Park Phase II project near Ecorse and Morton Taylor Roads.
- **Boji Home Builders** is completing infrastructure for a 69 unit detached housing project in Cobblestone Creek.

Community and Senior Housing Projects

- **The Township's Community Center Addition** is well underway including a 21,763 square foot addition which will include new gymnasium and entertainment facilities.
- **Clover Communities** is constructing a **128-unit senior apartment building** at 8470 Belleville Road, across from Robson Road on the west side of Belleville Road with 124 2-bedroom and 4 1-bedroom units.
- **Hampton Manor** is constructing **84 assisted living and Memory Care units in a 62,516 square foot building** at the southeast corner of Morton Taylor and Tyler Roads.



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- **Brookwood**, a single-story attached **(2-, 4- and 6-plex) senior housing** project gained final site plan approval and broke ground on approximately 44 acres of property on the north side of Tyler Road between Morton Taylor and Haggerty Road in Fall 2023.

More information about current development projects can be found on the Van Buren Township website (www.vanburen-mi.org) and visiting the “Development and Planning Portal” on the homepage.