

# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Mount  
Pleasant  
Planning  
Commission



# **2015 Annual Report**

## **Mt. Pleasant Planning Commission**

### Planning Commission

Keith Cotter, Chair  
Lesley Hoenig, Vice-Chair  
William Dailey  
Michael Kostrzewa  
Mark Ranzenberger  
Corey Friedrich  
Glen Irwin  
Susan Horgan  
Tim Driessnack

### Staff

Jacob Kain, City Planner  
Becky Murphy, Office Professional

## **Introduction**

This report is provided in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008. It reports the Commission's operations during the 2015 calendar year and the status of planning activities.

## **Review Activity**

The following table and chart provide a summary of the number of applications processed by the Planning Commission in 2015, as well as the previous five years. Activity in 2015 represented a significant increase over the preceding four years.

**Planning Commission Applications by Type**

<b>Application Type</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Special Use Permits	14	9	15	13	12	17
Site Plan Reviews	25	17	21	20	21	24
Map Amendments (Rezoning)	5	4	1	3	1	0
Text Amendments	1	2	0	3	1	9
Street and Alley Vacations	0	0	1	0	2	0
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>50</b>

## **Achievements**

2015 was a year of significant accomplishments for the Planning Commission, with several lingering issues resolved and several more new issues identified and addressed, along with plans made for a potentially transformative 2016 and 2017.

Of particular note, the Planning Commission brought closure to the ongoing discussion of zoning issues in the M-2 district surrounding the redevelopment of non-conforming properties. Following nearly two years of discourse on student housing and behavior, in 2015 the Planning Commission held an additional two public forums, two work sessions, and one public hearing which culminated in the recommendation of a comprehensive zoning ordinance amendment that substantially changes the way in which new development and redevelopment in the M-2 district will occur moving forward. The new standards will help to produce housing that is more compatible with the neighborhood's traditional housing stock. Coupled with changes in the City's code and law enforcement approaches, the Planning Commission is confident that the student neighborhoods are poised to become a greater asset to the community.

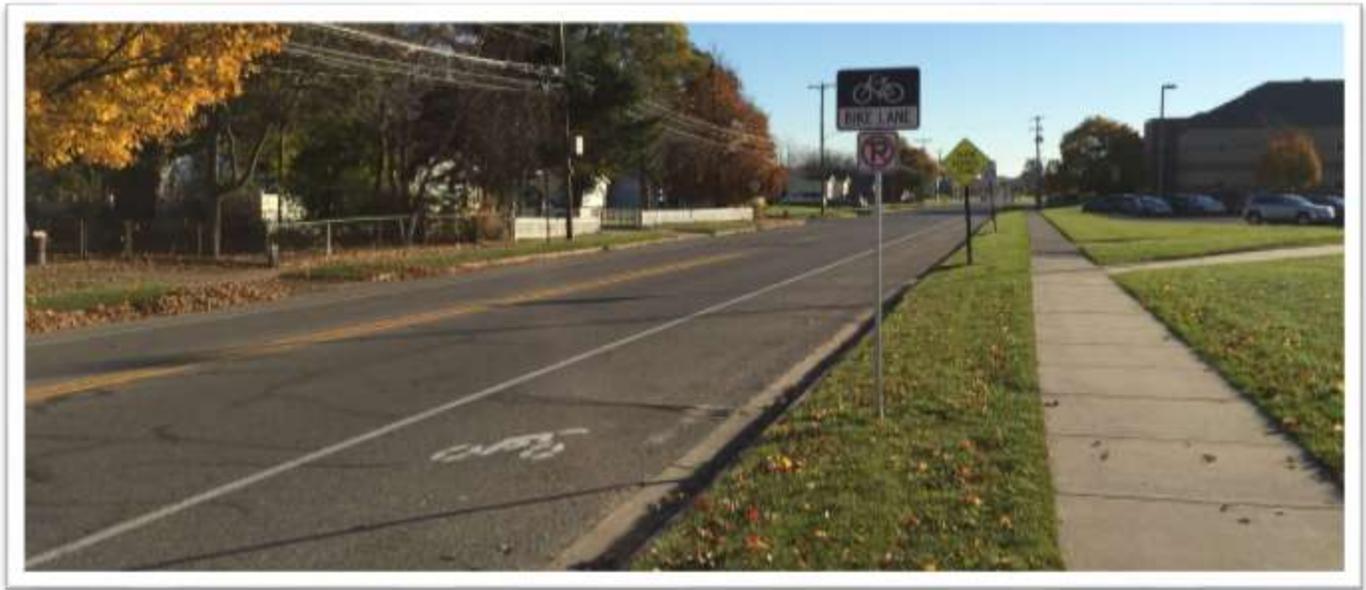


**Figure 1.** Redevelopment along S. Washington Street in the M-2 zoning district.

Another legislative achievement was the adoption of a Complete Streets ordinance. As recommended in the 2014 Master Plan, the ordinance ensures that roadway projects in the City will be built for all user's safety and convenience regardless of mode. The City is the 26<sup>th</sup> local government in Michigan to adopt a Complete Streets Ordinance.

Procedurally, many changes have occurred in 2015 that are designed to create a process that is more transparent, more efficient, and more predictable. In accordance with the zoning ordinance, the Planning Commission created an administrative review process for small scale site plan reviews that has in less than half a year resulted in four site plan approvals in less than half the time previously required. In addition, a development guidebook and pre-application meeting process were implemented to provide more information to potential applicants early in the process and to ensure more complete and conforming application packages. The color palette and symbology of the zoning map has been updated so that the map is easier to read and

understand

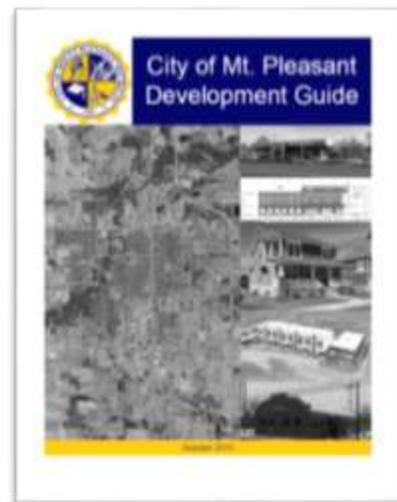


**Figure 2.** Bike lanes were added in 2015 to Bellows Street from Mission Street to Isabella Road in accordance with both the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and the adopted Complete Streets Ordinance.

and more consistent with map conventions. In addition, new public notice signs were created that will further ensure the general public is made aware of pending actions by the Planning Commission.



**Figure 3.** New zoning notice signs



**Figure 4.** New Development Guide

In addition to the two work sessions held on the M-2 zoning district update, the Planning Commission also participated in joint meetings with the City Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals as well as held two work sessions, one on the role of the Planning Commission and the other on the Owner-Occupied Incentive Program and Mission Redevelopment Overlay Zone.

## **Project Highlights**

Several projects of note were approved in 2015. As in previous years, the approvals include several housing, commercial, and industrial developments.

A large-scale industrial development project known as Roosevelt Park was approved at 617 W. Pickard. Built atop the former Roosevelt Refinery, the new project promises to significantly improve the aesthetics, environmental health, and economic vitality of the site.

The Planning Commission (with their procedural partners at the Zoning Board of Appeals) approved six redevelopment projects in the M-2 zoning district, including one project that will remove a long-standing non-conforming use from the neighborhood immediately north of campus.



**Figure 5.** Approved Campus Commons development at 1718-1722 S. Mission Street.

A significant redevelopment project was approved utilizing the Mission Overlay Redevelopment Zone. This project, known as Campus Commons, includes a mix of commercial and residential uses and will also include the construction of an additional connector street between Mission Street and East Campus Drive.



**Figure 6.** Completed reconstruction of the Chippewa River District Library parking lot at S. Franklin and E. Wisconsin Streets includes new landscaping, reduced driveway connections, and improved stormwater management.

Several smaller-scale projects were also approved, including improvements to the Chippewa River District Library parking lot, reconstruction of the rooming dwellings located at 715 Edgewood, expansion of Konwinski Construction in the South Industrial Park, and amendment of the site plan for Eagle Pointe Condominiums to facilitate continued construction of that project.

### **Other Activities**

**Planning Staff Changes** – In January, Jacob Kain began work as the new City Planner. The position had been filled on an interim basis since July 2013 by Alan Bean of The Spicer Group.

**Training** – Planning Commissioners Corey Friedrich and Susan Horgan, along with City Commissioner Tony Kulick and City Planner Jacob Kain, attended a MiPlace placemaking training sponsored by MSU Extension. This training provided an overview of placemaking concepts and examples of how to implement strategies in our community.

In addition, Planning Commissioner Lesley Hoenig completed the Michigan Citizen Planner program. That program fosters a greater awareness of land use decision makers' roles and responsibilities, resulting in more livable communities, the protection

and conservation of natural resources, and better overall land use decisions throughout Michigan.

**Community Improvement Awards**

The Planning Commission is proud to recognize the following projects, completed in 2015, for their outstanding contributions to improving our community.



*Commercial Award*  
Art Reach of Mid Michigan  
111 E. Broadway



*Single-Family Residential Award*  
John R Harkins Trust  
1108 Watson



*Multi-Family/Non-Family  
Residential Award  
Olivieri Management Inc.  
808 Pleasant*

### **Looking Ahead**

2016 is expected to be a busy year for the Planning Commission. First and most significantly, the City will engage with a consultant to draft an entirely new zoning ordinance. The current zoning ordinance, which was adopted in 1984, is significantly outmoded and neither reflects current market conditions nor current City goals and objectives. The new zoning ordinance is an opportunity to create a framework that will encourage positive development and redevelopment activity and help to lead the City forward.

The City is also formally engaged with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities Program. Participation in the program ensures continued progress will be made in creating an open, equitable process.

Finally, it is expected that planning activities will take place centered on the "Tree" neighborhood and the Mt. Pleasant Center property. These projects will complement the others in creating a foundation for a better future for our community.