

 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2023-13			
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Meeting:	January 25, 2023 Planning Commission	Attachments:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	2022 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Commission Annual Report		

INTRODUCTION:

The 2022 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Commission Annual Report was prepared pursuant to the requirements of Section 19(2) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (“MPEA”), which states:

A planning commission shall make an annual written report to the legislative body concerning its operations and the status of planning activities, including recommendations regarding actions by the legislative body related to planning and development.

This report is intended to serve as the Planning Commission’s report to the Township Board in accordance with the MPEA as quoted above. It will also outline the Planning Department’s activities during 2022.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

The Planning Director and Deputy Planning Director serve on various committees and provide support services to several boards and commissions, including but not limited to:

- Garfield Township Board of Trustees (Staff)
- Garfield Township Planning Commission (Staff)
- Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission (Staff)
- Garfield Township Zoning Board of Appeals (Liaison)
- Joint Traverse City and Garfield Township Planning Commission (Staff)
- Joint Traverse City and Garfield Township Recreation Authority (as needed)
- Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative (TTCI) (Technical Committee Member)
- Grand Traverse County Road Commission (Garfield Township Alternate Representative)

ADMINISTRATION:

The Planning Department was responsible for generating 115 Staff Reports in 2022 for the various boards and commissions listed above. Day-to-day tasks of the Planning Department also include dialogue with Garfield Township residents, the development community, community stakeholders, and partner organizations; review of new and ongoing development applications; monitoring development approvals as they proceed through completing the approval process; administering grants and parks and recreation activities; developing plans and related studies; preparing zoning analyses and drafting new ordinance text; and conducting site visits.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Staff Reports</i>
2022	115
2021	144
2020	166
2019	159
2018	125

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The Planning Commission meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month and is responsible for reviewing development applications, preparing plans, and making recommendations to the Township Board on development applications and zoning amendments. This meeting schedule allows for the Planning Commission to hear, review, and decide on projects during the first meeting and to advance the interests of the community by holding a work session during the second meeting of the month. This schedule will continue throughout 2023.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

In February 2022, Planning Department staff provided a year-end report to the Township Board regarding its activity that supported the Strategic Plan in 2021. No changes were made to any of the Strategic Plan goals in 2022.

MASTER PLAN:

No changes were made to the Master Plan in 2022. The most recent change to the Master Plan occurred in June 2020 when the Barlow Garfield Neighborhood Plan was incorporated into the Master Plan and adopted by the Township Board. The Master Plan continues to provide policy guidance for the Planning Department and Planning Commission.

The Master Plan is anticipated to be reviewed and updated in 2023. Staff and Planning Commission began several tasks in 2022 to prepare for the Master Plan update, including the following:

- **Joint Meeting of Township Board and Planning Commission** – A joint meeting of the Township Board and Planning Commission was held on February 23. The Planning Commission discussed potential topics for the joint meeting at their January 26 study session. The joint meeting provided for an opportunity to focus on three questions:
 - *Where are we now?* – Topics covered existing conditions and trends in population, housing, parks, and commercial developments, and anticipated residential development (build-out analysis).
 - *Where do we want to go?* – Discussion topics included infrastructure, housing types such as starter homes, blighted properties, transportation, and desired development.
 - *How do we get there?* – An overview of the anticipated Master Plan update process was provided, with pre-planning activities in 2022 to include data gathering and initial public engagement including an updated community survey.
- **Proposed Master Plan Timeline** – The Planning Commission reviewed a proposed Master Plan update timeline at their March 23 study session, anticipating a process of at least two years with all pre-planning activities. The Planning Commission also motioned to direct Staff to issue a Notice of Intent to Plan in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.
- **Community Survey** – An update to the 2015 Community Survey was conducted as part of public engagement and input for the Master Plan process. The Planning Commission reviewed questions for the survey at their April 27, May 25, and June 8 meetings. Using a random sample process to ensure accuracy, a total of 875 Township residents responded to the survey.

The results of the survey were shared with the Planning Commission at their September 28 meeting and shared on the Township website. There was strong support for incentivizing redevelopment of outdated commercial and industrial areas, protecting agricultural and rural areas, more pathways, improvement of commercial corridors, more parkland, and accessory dwelling units. Respondents also indicated strong opposition to marijuana dispensaries, short-term rentals, and tall buildings.

- **Preliminary Demographic Analysis** – As part of reviewing existing conditions of the Township, the Planning Commission reviewed a Preliminary Demographic Analysis at their study session on May 25. Key findings include that the population of Garfield is expected to continue to increase, Garfield has a relatively low average household size, poverty affects a significant portion of the population including one-third of all children in Garfield, and 44% of all rental housing units in the County are in Garfield.

- **Existing Land Use Analysis** – The Planning Commission looked at a preliminary Existing Land Use Analysis at their June 22 study session. According to this analysis, major land use categories included single-family residential (25%), agricultural (19%), vacant / unbuilt (17%), recreational (8%), industrial (7%), commercial (5%), right-of-way (5%), institutional (4%), and multi-family residential (3%). This analysis will be refined and included in the Master Plan existing conditions.
- **Potential Focus Areas / Corridors** – At their June 22 study session, the Planning Commission reviewed potential focus areas for the Master Plan including neighborhoods, nodes, and corridors. This discussion is intended to highlight areas of Garfield which may warrant specific attention or analysis as part of the Master Plan process.
- **Future Land Use and Infrastructure** – The Township Engineer, Jennifer Graham from Gourdie Fraser, presented at the July 27 Planning Commission study session on the relationship between infrastructure and land use and how the Master Plan process can be used to guide future Township policy in these areas. She gave some examples demonstrating how planning for the infrastructure improvements ahead of time has benefited multiple developments, and how such an approach can be used in coordinating between future projects.
- **East Bay Township Master Plan Review and Discussion** – The Planning Commission reviewed the updated East Bay Township Master Plan at their July 27 study session and commented on some items of interest to Garfield, including the Mitchell Creek Watershed and the Future Land Use and traffic along the South Airport Road and Hammond Road corridors.
- **Transportation and Recent Development Activity** – The Planning Commission discussed two items at their August 24 study session. First, Commissioners looked at recent development activity since 2018 which was found to be heavily concentrated along the LaFranier Road, South Airport Road, and US 31 corridors.

Commissioners also held a discussion on transportation. Staff gave an overview of the East-West Corridor Study of the Grand Traverse County Road Commission, as well as some potential items of interest to Garfield including access management, intersection improvements, and a future river crossing. Commissioners also discussed key corridors that may warrant more specific focus in the Master Plan.

ANNUAL WORK PLAN:

At the beginning of each year, the Planning Commission updates its annual work priorities. The Planning Commission reviewed their annual work plan at their January 26 study session, including the Master Plan implementation matrix, and identified several priority projects for 2022. Accomplishments among the 2022 priority projects included the following:

- **Community Survey** – Conducted an updated community survey as part of the Master Plan public input and engagement process (described above).
- **Community Trend Analysis** – Compiled a trend analysis of the Township including a build-out analysis, population estimates and projections, infrastructure evaluation, definition of focus areas and corridors, and other pre-planning activities.
- **Zoning Ordinance Amendments Package** – Recommended a package of minor amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, including clarifying wetland regulations and allowing for changeable copy signs in the industrial zoning districts.

REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITIES:

Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) is a technical assistance and statewide certification program offered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to evaluate and certify communities which integrate transparency, predictability, and efficiency into their daily development practices through a set of best practices. The Township started in the RRC program in 2020. Although RRC tasks were not the highest priority in 2022, some items will ultimately help the Township advance towards certification in the future. For example, Staff expanded their use of the BS&A Planning, Zoning, and Engineering (PZE) module in 2022 to enable better electronic tracking of projects and developments.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEWS:

Conceptual reviews allow for applicants to appear before the Planning Commission with little more than a concept for development. This process is intended to provide an applicant with valuable feedback to gauge the Planning Commission’s interest in a potential project before a full application is submitted. This process has been utilized by several applicants as they are able to discuss a potential project without having to first enlist surveying, planning, and/or engineering services to complete an application. The following projects were conceptually reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2022:

- **Zoning Ordinance Amendment** – proposed text amendment for electronic changeable copy signs
- **3525 West Front Street** – proposed consideration of multi-family residential on a parcel currently zoned as C-O Office Commercial
- **2537 N US 31 South** – proposed drive-through coffee shop at former bank property
- **Brewery Terra Firma** – proposed addition of kitchen and food service at existing brewery

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS:

In some specific cases, the Planning Director can administratively approve projects provided they meet all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. This procedure significantly improves efficiency in the review of minor requests. The Planning Department requires any Administrative Amendment to be justified through written findings. The following applications were administratively reviewed and approved in 2022:

- **PUD 2020-01-C – Oakleaf Village of Garfield Township Administrative Amendment**
The Oakleaf Village of Garfield Township (PUD) is located at 5143 North Long Lake Road, west of Zimmerman Road. The subject amendment is for a revised lighting plan, including a reduction in the number of poles, pole heights, and revisions to the fixtures.
- **SPR 2000-09-L – Chelsea Park West Administrative Amendment**
Located north on Hartman Road east of US 31, the original Chelsea Park PUD was approved in 2000 with a total of 326 residential units. After amendments in 2019, 2020, and 2021, the Chelsea Park West portion consists of 192 total apartments. The subject amendment is for the addition of a swimming pool and fire pit in the clubhouse area.
- **SUP 2021-02-A – South 22 Multi-Family Housing Administrative Amendment**
The subject parcel is located at 1532 W Hammond Road, west of LaFranier Road and zoned R-3 General Commercial. The subject amendment is for several changes including small shifts in the location of some buildings, amenities, and sidewalks; removing the reconstruction of Lloyd Lane; adjusting parking spaces; and small increases in the building footprints.
- **SUP 2005-06-D – Culver Meadows Administrative Amendment**
The subject parcel is located on the north side of West Silver Lake Road, just south of Secor Road. The parcel address is 1661 N. West Silver Lake Road and is zoned as R-1 One-Family Residential. The subject amendment is for the addition of a 192-square foot pavilion.
- **PUD 2020-02-A – BATA TCHC Administrative Amendment**
The BATA TCHC Transit-Oriented Mixed-Use PUD was approved in March of 2022. The subject application is for a portion of the PUD located north of Hammond Road, east of LaFranier Road,

and containing The Flats at Carriage Commons. The subject amendment is for the shifting of one of the apartment buildings out of a gas pipeline easement area and involving minor adjustments to the location of utilities, parking, walkways, and landscaping.

- **SUP 2020-02-A – Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Administrative Amendment (Approved January 2023)**

The subject parcel is located on the east side of LaFranier Road, north of Hammond Road, between the Village at LaFranier Woods PUD to the north and BATA/TCHC PUD to the south. The subject amendment is to reduce the size of the building, parking lot, retention pond, snow storage area, and parking lot landscaping islands, and to remove the child care center use.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS:

The Planning Commission reviewed numerous projects in 2022 including Site Plan Reviews, Planned Unit Developments, Special Use Permits, and amendments. These are summarized by the following:

- **SUP 2015-01-D – Ridge45 SUP Landscaping Minor Amendment (Approved)**
A Special Use Permit for Phase 4 of the Ridge45 multi-family housing development was approved for the subject location in 2018 including a landscaping plan with a Type “C” buffer. The applicant requested an adjustment to the required landscaping. While credit for some existing landscaping was granted, it was determined that some medium/small trees and evergreen trees still needed to be planted. The Planning Commission approved the request, on the condition that 19 medium or small trees and 7 evergreen trees be planted.
- **PUD 2020-02 – BATA/TCHC Transit-Oriented Mixed-Use Development (Approved)**
This Planned Unit Development application was approved with conditions for a transit-oriented, mixed-use development including multi-family residential apartments; single-family residential; BATA administration building, bus maintenance facility, and bus storage garage; transfer station; café; and childcare center. The project is on 53.2 acres of an existing 77.1-acre site at the northeast corner of LaFranier and Hammond Roads.
- **SPR 2022-01 – Sportsman’s Warehouse Display Area (Approved)**
A site plan was approved for an outdoor display area at Sportsman’s Warehouse, located at 3500 Marketplace Circle.
- **SPR 2022-03 – Fox Motors Commercial Vehicle Service Center (Approved)**
A site plan was approved for a commercial vehicle service center on a site located at 3536 N US 31 South, south of the intersection with Franke Road.
- **SPR 2022-04 – Wendy’s Sign Application for Cherryland Center (Denied)**
Wendy’s, located at 1686 South Garfield Avenue in Cherryland Center, applied for a freestanding sign, and this application was referred to the Planning Commission by the Zoning Administrator. This application was denied upon finding that freestanding signs for individual businesses in the Cherryland Center are not permitted, a finding which was supported by the Township Attorney.
- **SPR 2022-02 – Traverse City Curling Center (Approved)**
A site plan was approved for an indoor recreational facility, the Traverse City Curling Center, at 1712 South Garfield Avenue in the former Kmart at Cherryland Center.
- **SPR 2022-05 – 3566 North US 31 (Approved)**
A site plan was approved for a multi-tenant commercial building including a restaurant with drive-through, retail, and restaurant located at 3566 North US 31, near the intersection with Franke Road.
- **PUD 1997-01-F – Meijer PUD Minor Amendment (Approved)**
A minor amendment to the Meijer PUD was approved for a project to completely remodel the store interior, update building façades, reconfigure and expand the pharmacy drive-through, and install new stormwater management improvements. The Planning Commission asked that the applicant work with MDOT to study if any improvements are needed to the main intersection with US 31; it was later determined upon completion of the study that no improvements were needed.

- **SPR 2022-07 – Fairfield Inn Amendment (Approved)**
An amendment to a site plan was approved for a hotel on US 31 near the intersection with Franke Road, proposed as Fairfield Inn. The amendment covered additions to the patio and the relocation of some parking spaces to the front of the building.
- **SPR 2022-06 – 7Brew at Cherryland Center (Approved)**
A site plan was approved for a drive-through coffee shop at Cherryland Center along West South Airport Road, at the former Hometown Pharmacy site.
- **SUP 2022-01 – 7Brew at 2537 North US 31 (Approved)**
A special use permit was approved for a drive-through coffee shop at 2537 North US 31, site of the former PNC Bank. The application was initially tabled because of concerns about the proximity of the drive-through to the US 31 and South Airport Road intersection and potential conflicts with left turns both into and out of the site. A traffic impact report was prepared by the applicant and reviewed by OHM Advisors, on behalf of the Township, and by MDOT. The final approval of the application included safety improvements to the shared drive between this site and the neighboring site to the north, Mutual Gas, and recommended monitoring of the operation on traffic patterns by MDOT to ensure safe traffic movement.
- **SUP 2002-06-E – Kensington Park PURD Major Amendment (Approved)**
A major amendment was approved for the Kensington Park Planned Unit Residential Development (PURD) located west of the Cherryland Center site and roughly bounded by Carson Street, Linden Avenue, Floresta Street, and Woodward Avenue. The amendment was to accommodate expanded building footprints for several duplex units and to build them as single-story instead of two-story units. The requirement to construct sidewalks on Carson Street, Linden Avenue, Floresta Street, and Woodward Avenue, forming a loop around this phase of the development, remains in place, and a condition of the approval addressed the phasing of the sidewalk installation.
- **SPR 2022-16 – Birmley Hills Site Condominium (Approved January 2023)**
A site condominium subdivision was approved by the Township Board for a property at the end of Farmington Drive and Birmley Estates Drive, which both provide access from Birmley Road. The site condominium development will consist of 35 single-family residential lots between 15,000 and 38,000 square feet in area.
- **SUP 2001-03-A – Loving Neighbors Preschool (Under Review)**
A special use permit is currently under review for a proposed child care center as an additional use at the existing Northern Lakes Community Church, located at 5444 Herkner Road.
- **SPR 2022-021 – K1 Speed Indoor Kart Racing (Approved)**
A site plan was approved for an indoor recreation facility, intended for indoor kart racing, at 1212 West South Airport Road in the former Sears at Cherryland Center.
- **SUP 2022-03 – Traverse City Christian School Early Learning Center (Under Review)**
A special use permit is currently under review for a proposed child care center as an additional use at the existing Church of the Living God, located at 1514 Birmley Road.

ZONING ORDINANCE MAP AMENDMENTS (REZONING):

Two applications for zoning ordinance map amendments (rezoning) were considered in 2022:

- **Amendment 31 – Z-2021-02 Gauthier Property R-3 Rezoning (Approved)**
This application requested the rezoning of one parcel located at 2105 North US 31 South, totaling approximately 18 acres, from its split zoning of Agricultural (A) and Highway Commercial (C-H) to the Multi-Family Residential (R-3) zoning district.
- **Amendment 34 – Z-2022-02 Hammond Road Apartments R-3 Rezoning (Approved)**
This application requested the rezoning of land north and west of the intersection of Garfield and Hammond Road, totaling 23.86 acres, from the Agricultural (A) to the Multi-Family Residential (R-3) zoning district.

ZONING ORDINANCE CONDITIONAL REZONING AMENDMENTS:

One application for conditional rezoning amendment was considered in 2022:

- **Amendment 32 – Z-2022-01 Life Story I-G Conditional Rezoning (Approved)**
This application requested the conditional rezoning of a parcel at 400 West Hammond Road, with a total size of approximately 5.5 acres, from its current zoning of the C-G General Commercial zoning district with restrictions to the I-G General Mixed-Use Industrial Business zoning district with new restrictions. The conditional rezoning restricts the site to being used for a crematorium and mortuary / funeral home.

ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS:

The following proposed zoning ordinance text amendments were considered in 2022:

- **Z-2021-01 – Serra Automotive Zoning Text Amendment (Withdrawn January 2022)**
This application submitted by Serra Traverse City, LLC was for a proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment to allow for additional freestanding signs along major thoroughfares and for individual tenants in a multi-tenant parcel. Concerns were identified regarding how the proposed amendment would impact other sites in the same zoning district, and it was found that the proposed amendment would not allow the applicant to install the signage they were intending to install. The application was withdrawn by the applicant with no action taken by the Planning Commission.
- **Amendment 33 – Zoning Ordinance Amendment Package (Adopted)**
Planning Commissioners reviewed several proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance at the study sessions on March 23, April 27, May 25, and June 22, and prepared a package of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance which was approved in September 2022. This amendment covered several sections of the Zoning Ordinance, including the following:
 - Prohibit chain link gates from being used for dumpster enclosure gates
 - Clarify applicability of wetland regulations, require wetland delineations, and apply the 25-foot setback wetland setback to snow storage areas
 - Require snow storage areas to be outside of any required riparian vegetative buffer
 - Lower the required separation between an accessory structure and any other structure on the lot from 10 feet to 3 feet and clarify that this measurement is from the furthest projection of the building (e.g., roof / eaves), not the walls
 - Allow the Zoning Administrator to review areas for outdoor display on administrative site plan reviews and have the discretion to refer such a review to the Planning Commission, and require outdoor display areas to be located to avoid any interference with landscaping areas, parking lots, vehicular maneuvering lanes, sidewalks, and pathways
 - Adopt luminance standards for sign lighting for changeable copy signs
 - Allow changeable copy signs in the I-G and I-L zoning districts

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSIONS:

The Planning Commission discussed several other topics in 2022, including the following:

- **Proposed Service Drive – Chick-fil-A to Lowe’s**
The Planning Commission discussed this potential service drive at their March 23 study session. Staff have been looking at the feasibility of a shared drive from Lowe’s at 3150 N US 31 South to the Grand Traverse Mall and have talked with the owners of these and several adjacent properties. Other than the mall, these property owners are interested in developing this service drive, and the Township Engineer has developed two concept drawings. Part of the drive would be constructed by Lowe’s per a condition of their approval from 2003.

- **MSU Urban Planning Students Presentation: Non-Motorized Opportunities and Analysis**
Planning Commissioners heard a presentation from Michigan State University (MSU) students at their April 27 study session. Their project focused on sidewalks and trails in Garfield Township, including analyzing neighborhoods of the Township to target sidewalk and trail investments and developing a methodology for determining future priorities.
- **Chick-Fil-A SUP Update**
Chick-fil-A was originally approved in May 2021 and opened in March 2022. Upon opening, there were several long queues onto the site which backed up into US 31, and overflow parking was seen on a gravel lot adjacent to the site. The Planning Commission discussed the Chick-fil-A site over several meetings, and Staff continued to monitor the site throughout the year. Queuing issues had mostly subsided after a few months, and the parking on the gravel lot may be resolved through the development of a hotel on this site, which is currently undergoing an administrative review.
- **Brookside Commons PUD – Use Discussion**
Staff asked the Planning Commission to discuss possible new commercial uses for undeveloped portions of the Brookside Commons PUD at their June 8 study session, including residential above commercial as a potential use.
- **Zoning Ordinance – Drive-Through Standards Discussion**
The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the drive-through standards in Section 730 of the Zoning Ordinance at their August 24 study session, including clarifying setbacks from the road and utilizing traffic engineers or other professionals with relevant expertise to help review drive-through designs. These standards will continue to be reviewed and any potential changes may be proposed for a future Zoning Ordinance amendment.

JOINT TRAVERSE CITY AND GARFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION:

The six-member Joint Planning Commission is comprised of two Traverse City Planning Commissioners and one Traverse City resident appointed by the Traverse City Commission, and two Garfield Township Planning Commissioners and one Garfield Township resident appointed by the Garfield Township Board.

The Commission meets at least four times per year roughly once every three months, typically at 5:15 PM on the third Wednesday of the month. Recent meetings in 2022 have covered the Commons Natural Area design planning process, modifying membership criteria for the Grand Traverse Commons Zoning Board of Appeals, and an infrastructure assessment focused on the Brownfield Plan area.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION REQUESTED:

Following review, if the Planning Commission is prepared to accept the 2022 Annual Report in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the following motion is suggested:

THAT the 2022 Planning Commission Annual Report, as provided in Planning Department Report 2023-13, BE APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Township Board.