

	Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2022-7	
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Meeting:	January 26, 2022 Planning Commission	Attachments: <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	2021 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Commission Annual Report	

INTRODUCTION:

The 2021 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, and it will also outline the activities of the Planning Department during 2021.

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 144 Staff Reports in 2021 (compared with 166 in 2020, 159 in 2019, and 125 in 2018) for the various boards and commissions listed above. The 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.

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 2022.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

In February 2021, Planning Department staff provided a year-end report to the Township Board regarding its activity that supported the Strategic Plan in 2020. In June 2021, the Strategic Plan was reviewed by the Township Board; no changes were made to any Strategic Plan goals.

MASTER PLAN:

No changes were made to the Master Plan in 2021. 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. Staff anticipates working on public engagement and gathering data in 2022 in anticipation of updating the Master Plan beginning in 2023.

ANNUAL WORK PLAN:

At the beginning of each year, the Planning Commission updates its annual work priorities. For 2021, the Planning Commission developed a list of priority projects for the next three years and created a master plan implementation matrix to track how priority projects assist in implementing the Garfield Township Master Plan. Accomplishments among the priority projects identified for 2021 were the following:

- **Housing Review and Discussion** – The Planning Commission took time at several study sessions to discuss housing issues and welcomed Yarrow Brown, Executive Director of Housing North, as a guest speaker at one study session. Staff also reviewed the Housing Ready Communities checklist to help generate topics for discussion.
- **Preparation of a Public Participation Plan** – The Public Participation Strategy was adopted by the Township Board in June 2021. This Strategy helps meet the goals of identifying key Township stakeholders, determining the most effective ways to communicate with stakeholders, and tracking and conveying the outcomes of community engagement efforts.
- **Zoning Ordinance – Use Chart** – The Zoning Ordinance amendment establishing a use chart in Article 3, updating definitions in Article 2, and refining supplemental use standards in Article 7 was adopted in September 2021.

REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITIES:

Staff worked on several items in 2021 which coincide with the Best Practices of the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program, which the Township began in 2020. RRC is a no-cost, technical assistance, 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. Major projects done in 2021 were the following:

- **Public Participation Strategy** – The Township Board adopted the Public Participation Strategy in June 2021. This Strategy serves as a guide for the Township to utilize effective and inclusive public engagement methods by identifying key stakeholders, describing public participation methods and the appropriate use of each method, and explaining how the results of engagement efforts will be reported. In 2021, the Township conducted a park user survey asking about which parks people visit, what amenities they use, what they like and don't like, and what changes they would like to see. This Strategy will be used to help guide planning activities going forward including the Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and others.

- **Guide to Development** – The Guide to Development was completed October 2021. This Guide provides an overview of the development process in the Township including pre-application and conceptual reviews, different types of applications, meeting procedures, recording of documents, permits, and other information. The Guide is posted on the Planning Department’s webpage.

Staff will continue to work on RRC-related projects to help advance the Township towards certification.

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 2021:

- South 22 – proposed apartment complex / Special Use Permit
- Gauthier Property / 2105 North US 31 South – proposed rezoning
- Ashland Park PUD Storage – proposed Planned Unit Development amendment

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 2021:

- **PUD 2020-01-A 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 to permit three footprint options to the proposed independent living detached villas (“cottages”) in Phase 1 of the PUD.
- **SUP 2019-02-A Living Hope Church Expansion Administrative Amendment**
The subject parcel is located on the west side of South Airport Road, just north of Day Drive, with an address of 3050 W South Airport Road and is zoned R-1 – One-Family Residential. The request is to amend the Living Hope Church Expansion Special Use Permit to alter the layout and substitute planting materials for the landscaping plan for the east buffer, relocate the dumpster enclosure, and extend the front sidewalk to the Day Drive curbed approach.
- **SUP 2001-01-H Ashland Storage Ashland Park PUD Administrative Amendment**
The subject parcel is located at 1067 Rusch Road near the intersection of Rusch Road and North Garfield Road. The parcel is included in the Ashland Park PUD which was originally approved in 2001 and amended several times since then, most recently in 2019. The request is to amend the Ashland Park Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval to alter the layout and substitute planting materials for the landscaping plan around the self-storage units.
- **SUP 2001-01-I Ashland Park PUD Traditions Administrative Amendment**
The subject parcel is located at 857 Ashland Drive within the Traditions development of the Ashland Park PUD. The parcel is Unit #139 of the Traditions condominiums, part of the Ashland Park PUD originally approved in 2001 and subsequently amended several times, most recently in April 2021. The request would amend the Ashland Park PUD approval to construct an accessory building for use as a garage and storage building for the development. The driveway for this building will initially be located on the same parcel. Future development will include a house on the adjacent parcel to the west and the combination of these two parcels, with a new driveway serving both this building and the future house.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS:

The Planning Commission reviewed numerous projects in 2021 including Site Plan Reviews, Planned Unit Developments, Special Use Permits, and amendments, as summarized by the following:

- **SUP 2020-03 Ligon Bed and Breakfast (Approved)**
A Special Use Permit was approved to permit a bed and breakfast establishment for use within an existing single-family residence at 5885 Hainey Lane.
- **SUP 2000-08-K Copper Ridge PUD Building 7 (Novello) Sign Review (Approved)**
An application was approved for a wall sign in the Copper Ridge PUD at a 50% increase in the maximum square footage. The Planning Commission has the authority to modify any of the wall sign standards in PUDs, including maximum square footage, based on the criteria described within Section 630.G. (3) (b) of the Zoning Ordinance.
- **PUD 2020-02 BATA/TCHC Transit-Oriented Mixed-Use Development (Under Review)**
This application is 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. The application received preliminary approval by the Township Board and is currently in final review.
- **SPR 2021-01 Burger King Cherryland (Approved)**
A site plan was approved for this project to demolish and replace the existing Burger King building at 1800 South Garfield Avenue, located at the northwest corner of South Garfield Avenue and West South Airport Road. The existing parcel is just over one (1) acre.
- **SUP 2021-01 Chick-Fil-A Restaurant (Approved)**
A Special Use Permit was approved for a proposed 4,978-square foot Chick-fil-A restaurant with seating for 104 inside the building and 20 outside at the patio. The 2.1-acre site is zoned as C-G General Commercial and is located at 2700 N US 31.
- **SUP 2020-02 Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Approved)**
A Special Use Permit was approved for a proposed 8,768-square foot church including sanctuary, fellowship hall, and childcare center. The 5.94-acre site is on LaFranier Road north of Hammond Road and is zoned A-Agricultural.
- **SUP 2002-06-D Kensington Park PURD Minor Amendment (Withdrawn)**
The Kensington Park Planned Unit Residential Development (PURD) was originally approved by the Planning Commission in June 2003. Over the past several years, there has been confusion over whether sidewalks are required as part of this development. This application for Minor Amendment to the PURD requested to officially remove the requirement for sidewalk installation. Research into the project history raised some questions regarding a 2005 Planning Commission decision to remove the requirement to install sidewalks and allow a three-foot designated walking area on the roadway itself, including the validity of this decision and the feasibility of designating a walking area on the roadway itself. The application was withdrawn by the applicant with no action taken by the Planning Commission.
- **SUP 2018-05 Grand Traverse Oral Surgery SUP Extension Request (Granted)**
A request was granted to extend the approved Special Use Permit to construct a new oral surgery clinic building on a 10.53-acre site at the southwest corner of Hammond Road and Garfield Road. The one-year extension allows the applicant until May 20, 2022 to begin construction.
- **PUD-2020-01-B Oakleaf Village of Garfield Township PUD Minor Amendment (Approved)**
A minor amendment was approved for the Oakleaf Village of Garfield Township PUD to allow for 20 additional memory care units to a proposed adult care facility at 5143 North Long Lake Road. The application originally received preliminary PUD approval for 229 dwelling units including a mix of independent living apartments, assisted living units, memory care units, detached villas, and

single-family homes. This was reduced to 187 units following removal of a future addition to the Adult Care Facility due to Metro Fire building access requirements. The minor amendment brings the overall development to 207 total units.

- **SPR 2000-09-K Chelsea Park West PUD Minor Amendment (Approved)**
A minor amendment was approved for the Chelsea Park PUD to replace four (4) 12-unit residential buildings and attached garages with two (2) 24-unit apartment buildings with no carports, the same apartment building type being constructed in Chelsea Park West. There is no net change in number of dwelling units as part of this minor amendment, but there is a reduction of the building, parking, and overall impervious areas. The minor amendment also resulted in a larger contiguous central open space indicated as “dedicated open space.”
- **SUP 2021-02 South 22 Multi-Family Housing (Approved)**
A Special Use Permit was approved for a proposed 216-unit multi-family housing development on a 21.02-acre site at the northwest corner of LaFranier Road and Hammond Road. The site is zoned as R-3 Multi-Family Residential and is immediately south of the Ridge45 apartment complex.
- **SUP 2021-03 Marengo 31 Multi-Family Housing (Approved)**
A Special Use Permit was approved for a proposed commercial district housing development with two 30-unit apartment buildings (60 total dwelling units) behind the Baymont Inn at 2326 N US 31 South. The 15.83-acre site is zoned as C-H Commercial Highway.
- **SUP 2017-02-A City of Traverse City LaFranier Reservoir Minor Amendment (Approved)**
A minor amendment was approved for the City of Traverse City LaFranier Road Water Reservoir originally approved in 2017 to add the second water tank. Part of the landscaping for this site had been the then-existing landscaping within the DTE easement, which DTE has removed as they have upgraded their infrastructure. The minor amendment allowed for an amended landscaping plan and covered other issues, including constructing sidewalk to the north lot line and paving the main entrance drive. The 4.95-acre site is located on LaFranier Road south of the intersection with South Airport Road and is zoned as A-Agricultural.
- **SUP 2021-01-A Chick-fil-A Restaurant Major Amendment (Approved)**
The approved Special Use Permit for Chick-fil-A included a proposed sidewalk at the front of the site from the Mall Trail to the front of the proposed building. The sidewalk design was found to be constrained by a steep slope requiring handrails to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and MDOT requirements for stormwater detention within their right-of-way. A major amendment was approved allowing the sidewalk to be relocated along the south property line.
- **SPR 2021-02 3570 North US 31 South Proposed Medical Clinic (Approved)**
A site plan was approved for a proposed urgent care medical clinic on part of the former Bill Marsh automobile dealership at 3570 N US 31 South, near the intersection with Franke Road and south of McDonald’s. The site is about 1.61 acres and is zoned C-H Highway Commercial.
- **SUP 2003-06-E Premier Place PUD Minor Amendment (Approved)**
This PUD was originally approved as a phased residential project in 2003, including a phase at the north end of the site for five 10-unit buildings with detached garages. The applicant intends on completing this phase of the project with some minor modifications proposed to the site plan (i.e., changed location of garage buildings). Also, it was discovered that a previously approved major amendment had expired, and conditions of that approval were still relevant and had not yet been met. The proposed minor amendment was approved allowing for minor site plan modifications and carrying over the relevant conditions. The site is located at the northwest corner of Premier Street and Woodmere Avenue.
- **SPR 2021-03 Biggby Cherryland (Approved)**
A site plan was approved for a proposed Biggby Coffee on a 0.53-acre parcel on West South Airport Road, just west of South Garfield Avenue next to Burger King. The proposed building would be 349 square feet and offer only drive-through and walk-up service, with no dine-in service. The site is zoned as C-P Planned Shopping Center and is accessed from within Cherryland Center.

ZONING ORDINANCE MAP AMENDMENTS (REZONING):

One application for a zoning ordinance map amendment (rezoning) was considered in 2021:

- **Amendment 27 – Z-2020-05 Carter Lumber I-G Rezoning (Approved)**

This application requested the rezoning of one parcel at the southeast corner of Garfield Road and Hammond Road, totaling 36.50 acres, from the A-Agricultural zoning district to the I-G General Mixed-Use Industrial Business zoning district.

ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS:

The following proposed zoning ordinance text amendments were considered in 2021:

- **Amendment 25 – Requirements for Siting Solar Energy Systems (Adopted)**

A zoning ordinance text amendment was adopted in January 2021 to establish regulations for Solar Energy Systems including siting, design, installation, abandonment, decommissioning, distinctions between Accessory and Primary Solar Energy Systems, and associated definitions. Primary Solar Energy Systems are allowed by Special Use Permit in all zoning districts; Accessory Solar Energy Systems are allowed by right in all zoning districts.

- **Amendment 26 – Child Care Centers, Major Thoroughfares (Adopted)**

A zoning ordinance text amendment was adopted in March 2021 to update the definitions so that a “major thoroughfare” includes both “arterial” and “collector” roads, base road-related definitions on the National Functional Classification (NFC) system as used by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and allowing Child Care Centers in the A-Agricultural zoning district via the Special Use Permit process.

- **Amendment 28 – C-P Planned Shopping Center and PUD Signs (Adopted)**

A zoning ordinance text amendment was adopted in March 2021 regarding sign regulations in the C-P Planned Shopping Center zoning district and Planned Developments including merging two subsections of regulations for consistency, adding an “Applicability” section, clarifying regulations for signs permitted by right, refining criteria for the Planning Commission to modify or waive sign requirements, and allowing “gooseneck” style downward lighting of signs in the C-P district.

- **Amendment 29 – C-P Planned Shopping Center and PUD Freestanding Signs (Adopted)**

In April 2021, the Township adopted a moratorium on applications for freestanding signs within the C-P Planned Shopping Center zoning district and within Planned Developments, to address and correct language in the Zoning Ordinance that allowed for the inadvertent proliferation of large freestanding signs. A zoning ordinance text amendment was adopted in June 2021 which included lowering the maximum size of freestanding signs, adopting a sliding scale for sites with over 10,000 square feet of retail space to “upsized” one freestanding sign, specifying “monument sign” as the type of permitted freestanding sign for certain uses, allowing a maximum of two freestanding signs per roadway frontage, clarifying that freestanding signs shall be located at the roadway entrance, and clarifying the maximum permitted signage for sites with mixed uses.

- **Amendment 30 – Articles 2, 3, and 7: Including the Use Chart, Crematorium Definition and Conditions, and Zoning Considerations for Marijuana Compliance Facilities (Adopted)**

A zoning ordinance text amendment was adopted in September 2021 enacting several changes to Articles 2, 3, and 7 of the Zoning Ordinance. Changes included adding new definitions, clarifying several existing definitions, adding a use chart, creating a consistent name for each use across the entire Zoning Ordinance, and listing all supplemental regulations in Article 7. Before this zoning text amendment was adopted, other proposed changes were also studied and included as part of the amendment: a definition and conditions for crematoriums and consideration of marijuana safety compliance facilities (as defined under two different State Acts) as research and design facilities.

- **Z-2021-01 – Serra Automotive Zoning Text Amendment (Withdrawn)**

This application submitted by Serra Traverse City, LLC was for a proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment which allow 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.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSIONS:

The Planning Commission discussed several other topics during their study sessions in 2021:

- **Winter Igloos** – Staff was approached with an idea to establish a type of land use not currently provided for in the Zoning Ordinance: temporary “igloos” or other similar structures which could be placed outdoors on an agricultural property. The idea was to allow the use during the winter as a seasonal use, allow customers to rent out space, and have limitations including no food or drink service and limited hours of operation. After discussing the issue at several study sessions, initial interest in the idea had cooled and the Planning Commission took no action.
- **4051 Cedar Run** – Staff brought this item to look for direction from the Planning Commission on the future uses of this corridor given the interest in this parcel. A rezoning request in 2020 for this parcel was withdrawn. Staff had also heard a request to use the front end of the parcel for a building maintenance service business (office and garage) and the rear of the parcel for residential.
- **Housing** – Staff and Planning Commission had several discussions about different housing topics over several study sessions. Yarrow Brown, Executive Director of Housing North, attended one session as a guest speaker and provided her professional expertise. Discussions about housing will continue in 2022 as the Township begins the process to update the master plan, but several topics to consider include Garfield Township’s place in the urbanizing area, policies for projects using payment in lieu of taxes (PILT), master plan policies, and zoning ordinance standards.

JOINT TRAVERSE CITY AND GARFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION:

The Joint Planning Commission is a six-member commission comprised of two City and two Township residents appointed from their respective Planning Commissions and one City and one Township resident each appointed by their respective elected officials. An amendment to the Joint Planning Commission Agreement was adopted in June 2021 to expand the commission from five to six members as described above. Previously, the fifth member (non-Planning Commission member) was jointly appointed by both municipalities.

The Commission meets every January, April, July, and October at 5:15 PM on the third Wednesday of the month. Recent meetings have focused on continued redevelopment of the historic buildings, the Commons Natural Area design planning process, a request for a tent for an outdoor seating area, establishment of a Joint Zoning Board of Appeals, and work plan activities under the Brownfield Development Agreement.

RECOMMENDATION/ACTION REQUESTED:

Following review, if the Planning Commission is prepared to accept the 2021 Annual Report in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the following motion is suggested:

THAT the 2021 Planning Commission Annual Report, as provided in Planning Department Report 2022-7, BE APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Township Board.