

Village of Lexington

Planning Commission

Annual Report for 2022

1. Introduction

The goal of the Lexington Planning Commission is to guide and promote the efficient, coordinated development of the Village of Lexington in a manner that will best

- promote the health, safety, and general welfare of its people;
- preserve and protect the Village and its natural resources, and
- address the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan.

The following acronyms will be used frequently throughout this report:

CBD	Central Business District
C-MU	Corridor-mixed use
CEDAM	Community Economic Development Corporation
DDA	Downtown Development Authority
G-MU	Gateway-mixed use
LBA	Lexington Business Association
MEDC	Michigan Economic Development Corporation.
RRC	Redevelopment Ready Communities
ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals

This year, the Planning Commission continued implementing the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. They adopted the design guidelines prepared by the SmithGroup with significant input from the Commission. It was funded by a \$12,000 MEDC grant with the \$3000 local match provided by the DDA.

2. Purpose of Report

Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, this report documents the Planning Commission's operations, the status of planning activities, and recommendations regarding actions by the Village Council related to planning and development. It promotes information sharing between the Commission, staff, other boards, and Council and allows anticipation of upcoming issues and priorities to prepare and budget, if necessary.

3. Membership for 2022

Planning Commission Member	Term Expires
Mike Ziegler, Chairperson	2024
Wil Morris, Vice-Chairperson	2023
Jackie Huepenbecker, Secretary	2023
Mike Fulton, Village Council	2022
Kristen Kaatz, Village President	2024
Dave Picot, Commissioner	2023
Jamie McCombs, Commissioner	2022
Jim Macksey, Commissioner	2022
Steve Stencil, Commissioner	2024

4. Meetings

The Planning Commission met twelve times, exceeding the Michigan Planning Enabling Act requirement of four annual meetings. The Village Clerk takes the minutes; usually, the Zoning Administrator and Village Manager attend. The agendas and minutes are posted on the Village Website and the door of the Village, Moore Public Library, and Jeff's Marketplace.

5. Master Plan Review

The Steering Committee for implementing the Master Plan (Mike Fulton, Dave Picot, Wil Morris, Larry Adams, Jackie Huepenbecker) identified gaining support for the Master Plan and continuing the steps to become a Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) as the most critical issues.

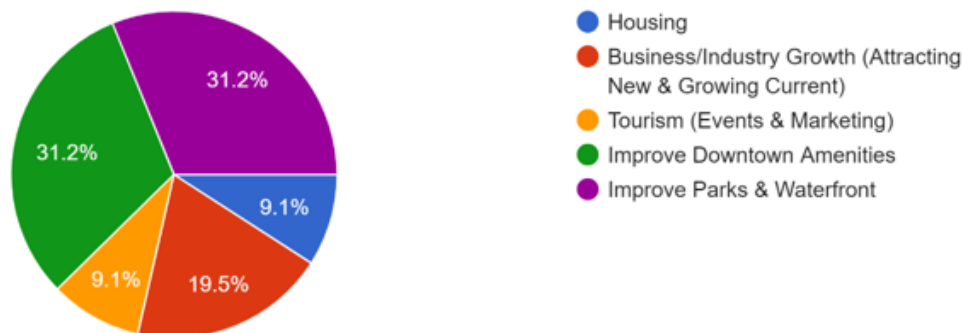
Anticipating that most business owners and village residents will not read the entire Master Plan, the Steering Committee and Clear Ideas developed a promotional brief, brochure, and short survey.

The brief, a one-page document with a survey and link to the whole plan, was mailed with the water bill to all residents and distributed by volunteers at the mobile home park.

The brochure, an eight-page overview of the Master Plan (Intent, Guiding Principles & Goals, Land Use & Development, Downtown & Waterfront, and Economic Development & Marketing Strategy), with a link to a survey, was distributed to business owners at a reception held in March at the Hidden Cavern. Find the brochure on the Village website (Planning Commission).

The purpose of the survey was to gain input on priorities and guide the next steps for implementing the Master Plan. It was posted on the Village website and compiled by Clear Ideas. Find the full results on the Village website (Planning Commission).

The question asked was: Which of these areas of focus do you believe benefits the community the most and should be the next step?



The survey showed that respondents favored these two areas of focus and strategies:

- Improving Downtown Amenities
 - Create a public square, a public-owned gathering place in the downtown area.
 - Expand walkability, market local assets, create wayfinding signage
- Improving parks and Waterfront.
 - Street parking and sidewalk creation/improvement
 - Boardwalk and bathroom updates
 - "Great lawn" updates. Provide space for community and small group gatherings

Most comments were about parking, the need for restrooms in the downtown, the Mobile Home Park, and retaining the small-town character.

Action Plan The following items were addressed in 2022.

ENCOURAGE COMPATIBLE INFILL DEVELOPMENT WHILE MAINTAINING LEXINGTON'S SMALL-TOWN CHARM		
IC6	Use incentives such as historic rehabilitation tax abatement/credits and facade improvements grants to encourage the rehabilitation of historic properties	<p>The Smith Group facilitated the development of Design Guidelines for the CBD, C-MU, and G-MU zones.</p> <p>In April, Kathleen Duffy (Smith Group) presented the final version at a Planning Commission meeting attended by some members of Council members and DDA.</p> <p>The Planning Commission recommended approval to the Council, and Council approved them at their April meeting.</p>
IC11	Adopt design guidelines or standards for commercial and mixed-use districts that encourage context-sensitive design	
IC12	Strengthen facade improvement program with design guidelines and criteria for funding	
IC24	Develop sign design standards for Village's commercial and mixed-use corridors	

PROMOTE A HEALTHY QUALITY OF LIFE BY CAPITALIZING ON THE VILLAGE'S WALKABILITY, ACCESS TO LAKE HURON, AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES		
QL1	Foster stronger relationships between the public schools, local government, student groups, and community groups	Planning Commission members made a concerted effort to attend DDA, Council, and LBA meetings.
QL9	Promote and seek community involvement in recreation programming, as well as community feedback on present offerings and facilities	The Parks and Recreation Committee worked with McKenna to survey the community on recreational desires.
QL24	Continue to improve marketing materials that promote Downtown Lexington's historic ambiance, cultural attractions, lake resort atmosphere, and walkability.	The DDA took the lead in developing a website for the Village that provides greater access to local businesses, attractions, and activities.
QL26	Continue to update and issue First Resort North materials that highlight local businesses and attractions.	

MAINTAIN QUALITY VILLAGE SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE, FISCALLY-RESPONSIBLE STRATEGIC GROWTH, AND MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE-OWNED PROPERTIES		
S17	Update the Parks and Recreation Plan every five years	The Parks and Recreation committee worked with McKenna to develop a new plan that Council approved in December.

Since the Master Plan has only been in effect for two years, amendments to the Master Plan were not discussed.

6. Zoning Ordinance Amendments

Council approved a request to rezone Jeff's Marketplace from CBD to C-MU, despite the Planning Commission's recommendation to deny it.

7. Development Reviews (none involved Council)

Project type	Location	Description	Status	Date of Actions
Final Site Plan	5461 Main St.	Remodel gazebo from retail business to a carry-out restaurant ("Superstand" featuring hot dogs)	Approved site plan, accepting several waivers, but required modification of plan for rainwater and did not allow tree removal. In June, the owner decided to sell the building rather than renovating it.	1/3/2022
Cottage Lot Review	5475 Washington	Revised plan for home on a cottage lot	Approved The revised plan was for a smaller home within the previously approved plan's parameters	9/12/2022

8. Variances and Appeals to Zoning Board of Appeals (none involved Council)

Type	Location	Description	Status	Date of Action
Non land use variance	5562 Union St.	Replace asphalt driveway with concrete, keeping it the same width on the south side but increasing it slightly on the north side. (The south side exceeds the boundary limits)	Approved	6/9/2022
Non land use Variance	(corner lot, so has two front yards)	Permit storage of boat in front yard	Denied	6/9/2022
		Allow four-foot fence on the two fronts of a corner lot	Denied	6/9/2022
		Allow six-foot fence in backyard that did not meet required setback	Approved	6/9/2022
		Allow six foot fence on north side of property which did not meet setback requirements	Approved	6/9/2022
		Allow fence to connect the house and garage on front side of lot	Approved	6/9/2022

9. Actions by Village Council.

- March 28 Approved hiring Wade Trim (Adam Young) for “as-needed” services for planning and zoning.
Supported the Planning Commission’s offer to draft an EV charging station ordinance for the Village and asked the Commission to identify funding sources
- April 25 Approved the design guidelines developed by the SmithGroup and recommended by the Planning Commission.
- June 27 Decreased the Planning Commission’s budget request of \$26,550 budget to \$14,625 (request for \$16,200 to increase hours for zoning administrator was reduced to \$8,000)
- July 25 Rejected the Planning Commission’s recommendation to deny rezoning Jeff’s Marketplace and instead rezoned it from CBD to C-MU.

10. Zoning Map

The Council rezoned Jeff’s Marketplace from CBD to C-MU.

11. Training Attended by Planning Commission Members

Planning Commission members are required to attend at least 4 hours of training per year. Jamie McCombs was the chair for Training in 2022.

Topic	Length	Dates	Attended by
Placemaking Webinar Corey Northrup, MSU Extension Was organized by Dave Picot and made available to Council and all Village committee members.	1 ½ hours	Online 1/25	All Planning Commission members attended
Solar Energy Webinar Brad Neuman, MSU Extension	1 ½ hours	Online 5/12 available	J. McCombs W. Morris D Picot S. Stencel
AI Rural Partners Conference MEDC	10 hours	5/16 - 5/18	M. Fulton
Problem with Solar Energy isn’t Investment; It’s Location National Public Radio	1 hour	Online 9/29 available	J. Huepenbecker J. McCombs D Picot S. Stencel
Health in All Policies Michigan Municipal League	1 hour	Online 10/4	J. McCombs M. Ziegler
How to Write a Better RFP Michigan Association of Planers	1 ½ hours	Online 11/30	J. Huepenbecker
Renewable Energy Sanilac County Planning Commission	2 hours	Online 12/12 Available	Dave Picot Steve Stencel

12. Joint Meetings

The Council held quarterly Town Hall meetings quarterly. They haven't been well-publicized, so participation has been minimal, but this is a good start.

Planning Commission members frequently attended Council, DDA, and LBA meetings.

13. Other Notable Items

- Finding and keeping a zoning administrator is a challenge. The Village manager had to assume the duties, and we were without one for ten months, and it appeared minimal effort was being made to secure one. Finally, in October, Dennis Klaas was employed, and he hit the ground running. He has already completed the Citizen Planner training and plans to complete the Zoning Administrator Training in February.
- Electronic changeable signs continue to be a hot topic. While our citizens cited a charming, traditional town as one of their major "wants" for the Village when the Master Plan was developed, many support permitting them all along M-25.
- Lack of the financial resources to properly plan for our Village and enforce the ordinances that have been adopted has been difficult. While the Commission recommended a budget of \$26,550, only \$14,325 was allocated. The line item request for the zoning administrator was trimmed from \$16,200 to \$8,000.
- Planning Commission subcommittee, led by Dave Picot wrote and submitted a grant for a CEDAM fellowship, which would provide the Village with a fellow to work full-time for a fifteen-month placement to manage specific community economic development projects and seek additional resources, like funding and volunteers to support future sustainability.

Next year, we look forward to:

Continuing to implement the Master Plan

Collaborating with other Village committees and boards

Completing the requirements to become a Redevelopment Ready Community.