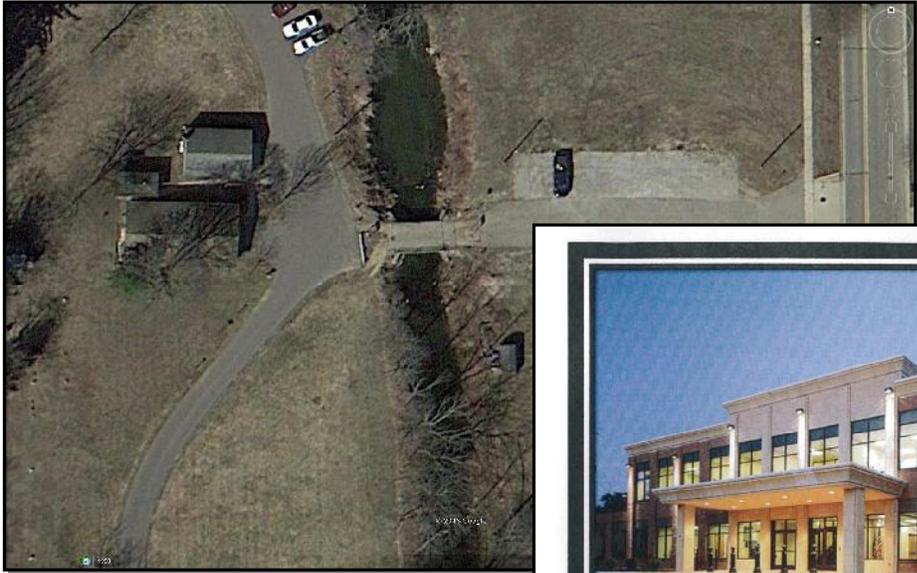
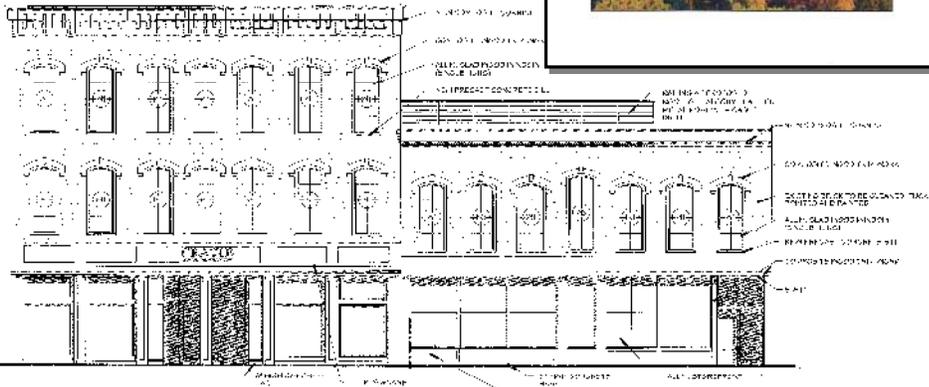
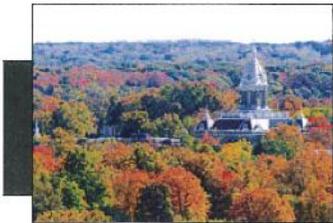
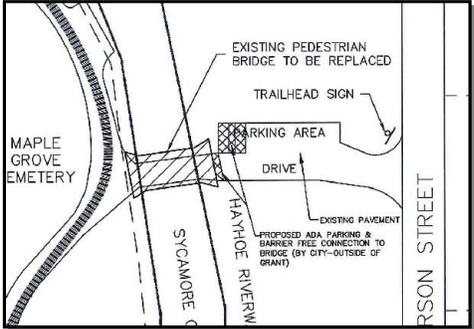


CITY OF MASON

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT 2013 ANNUAL REPORT



City of Mason, Michigan Master Plan Update



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION

CITY OF MASON, MICHIGAN

Mission Statement

Mason is a community founded upon a respect for our historic past, while encouraging an atmosphere that values family, business, the environment and arts, creating a sense of place for present and future generations.



INTRODUCTION

During the past year the Department of Zoning and Development continued to provide services to the community relating to planning, zoning, building inspections and code enforcement.

Department Responsibilities

The Zoning and Development Department provides staffing to various Boards, Commissions and Committees, including the following:

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Building Code Board of Appeals
- Sign Board of Appeals
- Historic District Commission

The Zoning and Development Department is responsible or participates in the coordination of plan review and enforcement for the following Chapters of the Mason City Code:

- Chapter 30 (Floods)
- Chapter 31 (Historic Preservation)
- Chapter 50 (Planning)
- Chapter 58 (Signs)
- Chapter 60 (Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control)
- Chapter 74 (Subdivisions and Other Divisions of Land)
- Chapter 94 (Zoning)

In addition to the code responsibilities described above, the Department is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance needs for City Hall, the Police Department, the Mason Library, and other City property, including 972 Mason Street and 1020 E. Ash St.

The Zoning and Development Department is comprised of the following personnel:

- David Haywood, Zoning & Development Director
- Ginger Kenney-Sweet, Caryl Clark, Shannon Orłowski – Reception staff (permit support staff –processing applications, inspection scheduling, data entry, etc.)

STAFF ACTIVITY

The Zoning Division was involved in a variety of activities during 2013, including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Prepared staff reviews for special use permits, site plans, zoning amendments, site plan reviews for building permits, code enforcement, assignment of addresses for new commercial and residential structures, and land division requests.

- B. Conducted Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control permit application reviews, site inspections and enforcement.
- C. Worked with the City Administrator, Planning Commission and Department Heads to complete the Capital Improvement Plan for the fiscal years 2013-2018 (Planning Commission).
- D. Attended Mason Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee meetings informing members of City business and development activities.
- E. Attended monthly Tri-County brown-bag lunch meetings (planner's networking).
- F. Through Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, served as a member to the Urban and Rural Service Boundary Committee.
- G. Continued to report on current department activities through use of the Mason Newsletter, City website, and Facebook.
- H. Completed fourth successful season of the community garden program, including community input meetings and volunteer leadership training – donation of over 200 pounds of produce to the Capital Area Community Services food pantry and Jefferson Square Apartments.
- I. Completed the Master Plan Update. (Planning Commission & City Council)
- J. Met bi-weekly with the code enforcement officer to provide experience and assistance in letter writing, code knowledge, procedures and due process requirements, including dangerous building hearings.
- K. Coordinated inspections/plan reviews with Fire Chief regarding proposed and damaged structures.
- L. Supervised building inspections, plan reviews and building code enforcement.
- M. Provided orientation support for reception staff and incoming Board and Commission members.
- N. Solved complicated building maintenance issues for City Hall, roof leaks, fan motors, wall cracks, door locks, plumbing, lighting, temperature, etc.
- O. Successfully repaired building maintenance issues at Library, such as leaking faucets, roof leak, lighting, HVAC equipment, door mechanisms, electrical repairs, etc.
- P. Supervised janitorial cleaning services and day-to-day cleaning needs of staff at City Hall.
- Q. Participated in the update of the City's Wellhead Protection Plan.
- R. Prepared year-end budget projections for fiscal year 2013.
- S. Prepared budget request for fiscal year 2014.
- T. Staff liaison to the Michigan Environmental Commission project to study the public interest in public transportation routes between Mason and Lansing.

TRAINING

Staff attended/conducted the following training courses:

1. Michigan Association of Planning annual conference – various tracks
2. Transportation Bonanza – American Planning Assn., MI Chapter
3. Sustainability Consortium Meeting – Tri-County Regional Planning (HUD)
4. Guest lecturer – MSU college of planning
5. MSU Planning Alumni Development Group – MSU Alumni



FACILITIES

City Hall Facilities

Staff continues its commitment to report and achieve compliance with warrantee requests related to City Hall. Staff has successfully completed identification of all remaining warrantee deficiencies and is nearing completion of their repair.

Mason Library

Staff continues to support the great services provided by the Capital Area District Library (CADL) by responding to the facility maintenance needs as they arise.

1020 E. Ash St.

This structure was acquired along with the property on Temple Street largely consisting of agricultural lands. Staff is currently exploring options for disposal of this building either by relocation or demolition, pending budget approval.

972 N. Mason St.

This single family residential structure was acquired in 2011. Due to the current condition and location, the structure is scheduled for demolition in 2014 pending budget approval. Staff has completed initial asbestos survey and acquired estimates for removal.

PLANNING, ZONING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Zoning and Development Department has been active in the past year with development permits and variances. The following table illustrates the comparative levels of zoning permits from 2011 through 2013.

Zoning Permit Type	2011	2012	2013
Rezoning	0	1	2
Text Amendments	-	-	1
Special Use Permits	3	1	4
Public Hearings	-	2	7
Preliminary Site Plan Reviews	2*	2	8
Final Site Plan Reviews	2	2	7
Plats (Preliminary / Final)	0	0	0
Planned Unit Developments	0	0	0
Parking Lot Plan Reviews	0	0	0
Land Divisions (Division/Conveyance/Combination)	2	3	1
Zoning Board of Appeals	6	3	1
Historic District Commission	8	7	5
Building Code Board of Appeals	0	0	0
Sign Code Board of Appeals	2	0	1
Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control	15	20	23
TOTAL	35	41	60

* Site plan reviews not covered by special use permits.

Ordinance Amendments

Michigan Medical Marijuana Act – Staff continues to provide general background and updates on the ever-changing landscape of pending legislation, legal opinions, case law, and ordinance samples.

Ordinance No. 195 – Amended the M-1 (Light Manufacturing) zoning district to allow the sale of used vehicles as an accessory use to auto body and paint shops.

Used Vehicle Sales – Explored the appropriateness of allowing used vehicle sales as an accessory use to auto body and paint shops city-wide.

Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control

The City of Mason took control as the municipal enforcing agency of soil erosion and sedimentation control, as permitted by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in 2009. Since then staff has experienced challenges in completing required

inspections due to staff reduction and limited resources. In 2012, the MDEQ determined that there was inadequate staff support assigned to the program, particularly in the area of field inspections. This ruling forced staff to secure third party inspection services. Wolverine Engineering was retained to conduct field inspections and reporting for each soil erosion permit issued. Wolverine Engineering has surpassed expectations in their level of experience and reporting skills. In early 2014, the MDEQ determined that the field inspections are being conducted in accordance with their standards. However, professional inspection services come with a cost. Currently service costs are exceeding revenue about two to one. Staff is doing everything in its power to minimize the cost of inspections, including staying in close contact with both inspectors and contractors to minimize return trips for compliance. Staff is also utilizing drawing on bonds to complete work where contractors have not met compliance orders.

Urban Service Management

As a member of the Urban and Rural Service District/Urban Service Boundary Committee, staff continues to participate in forwarding the mission of this Tri-County Regional Planning Commission work group:

The Regional Growth Initiative's Urban and Rural Service District Boundary Committee Mission is:

- *to keep urbanized areas viable*
- *to protect farmland, open space and rural quality of life*
- *to preserve priority conservation areas*
- *to utilize existing infrastructure*
- *to save costs through cooperation and efficiency*

Master Plan Update

The Mason Planning Commission has completed the update to the Master Plan. Commissioners Burns, Brown, King, Waltz and Naeyaert, as well as Councilmember Brown, had been courageous enough to volunteer their Saturday mornings to the effort. The adoption ends a three year effort to update the plan to current trends, planning and zoning law and community input.

Mason 150th Celebration Planning

The Mason 150 Committee has been steadily preparing and planning the celebration of the City's beginning including, developing memorabilia, creating a Mason 150 logo, developing a tree legacy program, developing a master calendar of events, developing a sponsorship program, etc. The timeframe for the celebrations has been announced as July 2 through July 5, 2015, in addition to the actual anniversary date event of March 9, 2015.

Mason Welcome Sign

Larry Miller, through a grass-roots service organization effort, has constructed a new welcome and entrance sign at the northwest entrance to the City on North Cedar Street near the Mason City Limits and bowling alley. The sign is similar in design to the existing entrance signs located at the entrances to the City on North and South Jefferson



Streets. The sign also includes area service organization logos that participated in fund raising to pay for expenses associated with the construction of the sign.

Public Transportation Study

The City of Mason is collaborating with the Michigan Environmental Council, the Mid-Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability and the Community Reinvestment Fund to engage interested parties in dialogue on mass transit visioning for the route(s) between Mason and Lansing. The program involves engaging the community to gauge the opinion and interest in public transportation between Mason and Lansing.

Community Garden

Staff is proud to report on a fourth successful community garden growing season. The purpose of the garden is to provide space for individuals to grow produce for their personal consumption, as well as provide space for volunteers to grow produce to donate to area organizations in need, such as Jefferson Square Apartments, the Mason Capital Area Community Services food pantry, Green Acres, etc. The garden is located at 213 North Jefferson Street just south of the Hayhoe Riverwalk trailhead.



Volunteer garden coordinators, Jill Slade and Jason McMahon, worked very hard to complete a successful year, completing nearly 80 hours of volunteer time. Together, they were responsible to regular communication with gardeners being responsive to concerns regarding garden pests and irrigation functionality by solving complex watering system designs, resulting in a nice watering system that is easy to use by all gardeners.

Staff and the volunteer coordinators were able to successfully recruit volunteers and gardeners to obtain compost, fencing, tilling, hose, rakes, shovels and other miscellaneous materials necessary for the garden.

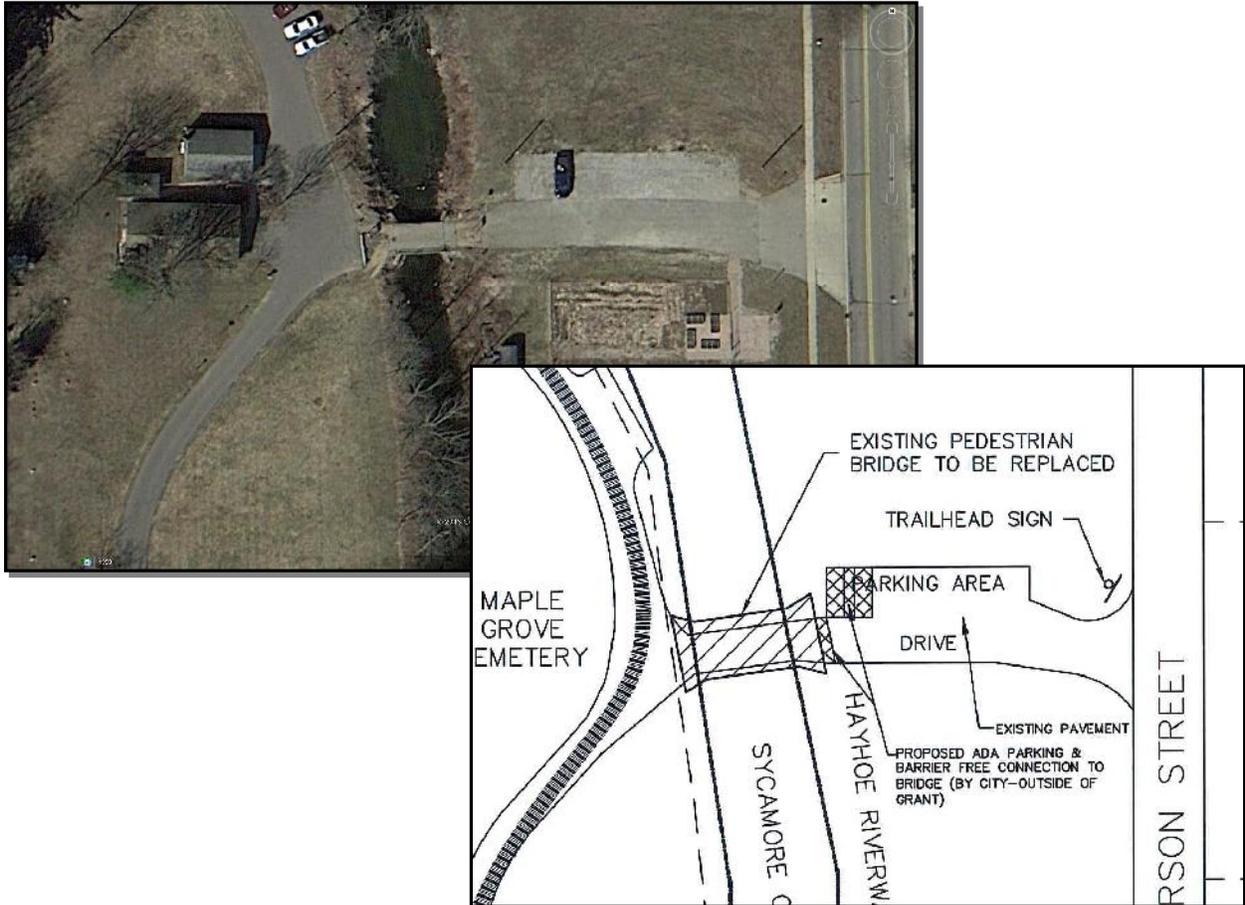
Staff is proud to report that volunteer gardeners continue their service to the community! Staff is also proud to report that with the guidance of volunteer coordinator Kelli Green the program was directly responsible for growing and delivering over 200 pounds of produce to residents in need. **According to the FDA, that's enough to feed a family of four for one month! Thank you Kelli Green, and thank you Mason gardeners!**



The Mason Community Garden is a proud affiliate of the Lansing Garden Project.

Recreation

Thanks to the Zoning & Development Department, the City received \$60,000 in grant funding to replace the bridge in front of the Cemetery offices on South Jefferson Street. The funding will pay for a new eight foot wide pedestrian bridge and associated parking and trail signage. The bridge is the first step in providing trail linkage to the east side of the City and future linkage to the Dansville area.



Planning Commission

The Mason Planning Commission welcomes three new members:



Tim Fischer – the former Deputy Policy Director for the Michigan Environmental Commission and now the Chief Administrative Officer for M1-Rail in Detroit, Tim is no stranger to land use and transportation planning. In addition to a law degree, Tim brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in planning, policy and implementation in the transportation sector.



Elizabeth Hude – currently a planner for HNTB in the transportation field, Elizabeth brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in transportation planning to the Commission. Elizabeth is also a native resident of Mason.



Seth Waxman – As the Business Development Specialist for Service Master of Mason, Seth brings a local business perspective to the Commission. Seth is a resident of the downtown area and passionate about local planning and development.

BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION

The Department strives to provide contractors, applicants, property owners, tenants and residents with expert consultation in a way that anyone can understand. Our goal is to provide anyone with an interest in improving their property with the resources they need to get the job done right, on-time and as cost effectively as possible.

The overall level of building permits issued in 2013 increased slightly as compared to permits issued in 2012. Residential permits are also slightly down from a year ago, with all new residential permits in the single-family category. The following table illustrates the comparative building activity in the City for the past three years:

Building Permit Type	2011	2012	2013
New Single Family Homes	8	17	15
Value	\$817,000	\$1,882,000	\$1,661,222
Multiple family permits (incl. two fam.)	3	0	0
Value	\$238,000	\$0	\$0
Commercial permits	13	10	16
Value	\$15,787,006	\$174,500	\$5,072,783
Sign permits	6	8	14
Demolition permits	11	11	5
Other permits	134	193	152
Total permits	175	239	202
Total value of construction	\$18,040,462	\$3,632,948	\$7,925,270
Total permit fees	\$123,521	\$34,726	\$63,863

The major commercial, office, industrial, and institutional buildings receiving building permits in 2013 are as follows (permits over \$10,000):

1. Community Mental Health, 556 N. Cedar St.
2. Efficiency Productions, Inc., 685 Hull Rd.
3. Service Master, 210 State St.
4. MSU Federal Credit Union, 1133 S. Cedar St.



Building Inspections

Meridian Township inspectors are providing building inspection service on a on-call basis. Meridian Township inspectors and support staff are providing an exceptional service to the City and community. Permits are typically issued within 48 hours of receipt and in many cases issued the same day.

Inspections are performed within 24 hours of request. Inspectors are timely, courteous and professional. Inspection results are communicated effectively to reception staff and in return to property owners/applicants.

Year End Highlights

The year brought much needed demolition to a total of five (5) damaged or functionally obsolete structures (4 residential) including the following:

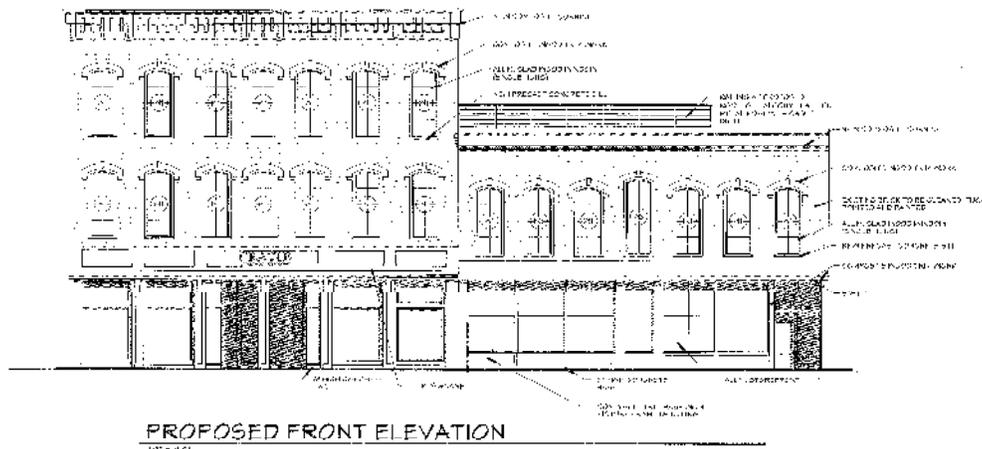
- 848 S. Jefferson St. (residential)
- 140 N. Rogers St. (residential)
- 1133 S. Cedar St. (commercial)
- 110 S. Park St. (residential)
- 354 E. South St. (residential)

Staff has worked diligently with property owners to facilitate and assist their needs with regard to demolition projects, such as providing contacts with area demolition contractors, assisting with permit process and utility disconnection.



124/140 E. ASH ST.

The former Shopping Guide building at 124/140 East Ash Street has been approved for redevelopment. Many agencies have been involved in the development of this site including the Mason Downtown Development Authority, Ingham County Land Bank, Ingham County Housing Commission, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Mason Planning Commission, Mason Historic District Commission, Kincaid Henry Development Group, and Oracle Financial Solutions (Mason).



Upon completion of the project, Oracle will occupy the entire first floor and a portion of the third floor. Oracle plans to consolidate and move their two satellite offices from Lansing to Ash Street. Ten new apartment housing units are proposed for the remainder of the building. The project is expected to be completed by spring of 2015.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Staff has been working very closely with the Code Enforcement Officer, Jim Duthie, to provide assistance in procedural issues, case history, experience, etc. Staff meets with the code officer on a weekly basis to discuss relevant issues. It is the goal of the Zoning Department to continue to provide assistance to code enforcement officer in order to make him (the position) self sustainable.

The Zoning & Development Director responded to 17 complaints ranging from building construction commencing without a permit to complicated zoning violations. Staff also responded to 23 soil erosion violations with compliance at nearly 100%.