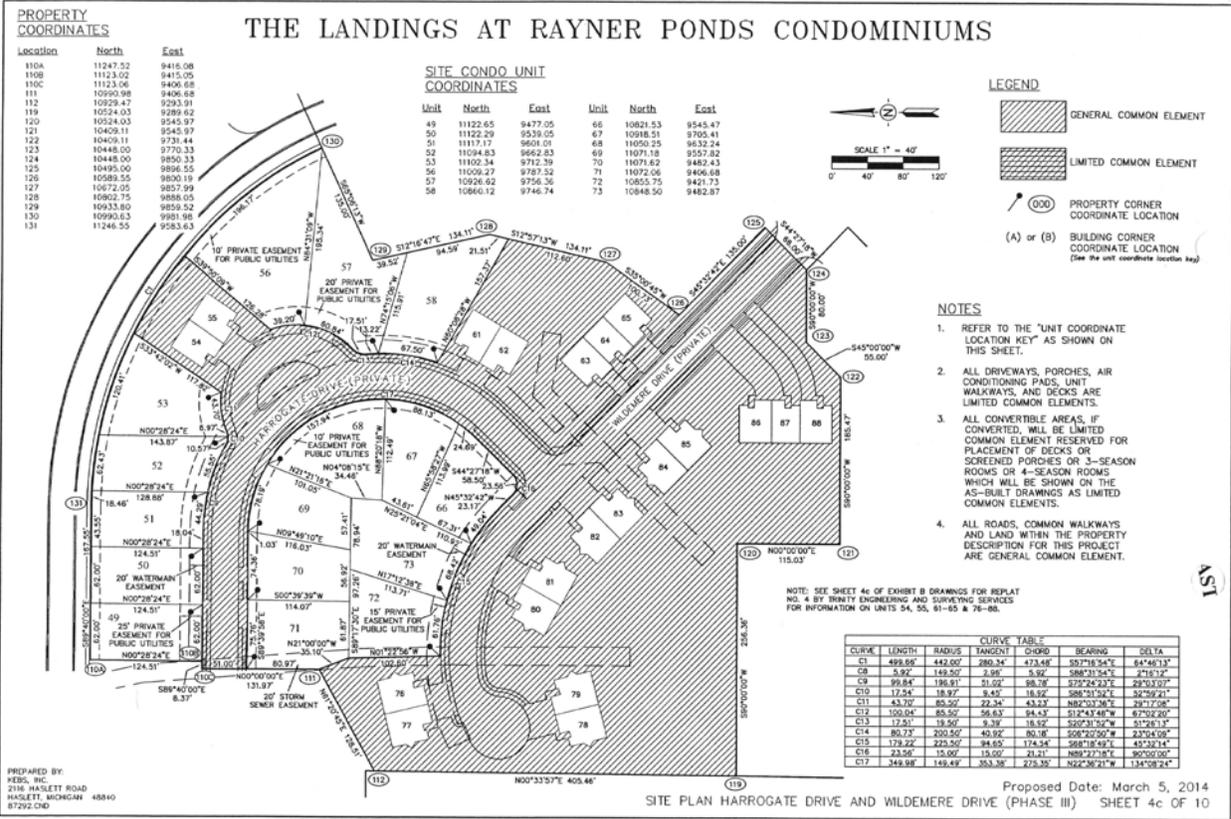


# CITY OF MASON

## ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



# 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 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
- Shannon Orłowski, Mary Grace – 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 2014, 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 2014-2019 (Planning Commission).
- D. Attended Mason Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee meetings informing members of City business and development activities.
- E. Through Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, served as a member to the Urban and Rural Service Boundary Committee.
- F. Continued to report on current department activities through use of the Mason Newsletter, City website, and Facebook.
- G. Completed fifth successful season of the community garden program, including community input meetings and volunteer leadership training – donation of over 340 pounds of produce to the Capital Area Community Services food pantry and Jefferson Square Apartments.
- H. Assisted the Planning Commission in initiating implementation of the Master Plan. (Planning Commission & City Council)
- I. Met as-needed with the code enforcement officer to provide experience and assistance in letter writing, code knowledge, procedures and due process requirements, including dangerous building hearings.
- J. Coordinated inspections/plan reviews with Fire Chief regarding proposed and damaged structures.
- K. Supervised building inspections, building plan reviews and building code enforcement.
- L. Provided orientation support for reception staff and incoming Board and Commission members.
- M. Solved complicated building maintenance issues for City Hall, roof leaks, fan motors, wall cracks, door locks, plumbing, lighting, temperature, etc.
- N. Successfully repaired building maintenance issues at Library, such as leaking faucets, roof leak, lighting, HVAC equipment, door mechanisms, electrical repairs, etc.
- O. Supervised janitorial cleaning services and day-to-day cleaning needs of staff at City Hall.

- P. Prepared year-end budget projections for fiscal year 2014.
- Q. Prepared budget request for fiscal year 2015.
- R. Prepared the Capital Improvement Plan for 2014-2019.
- S. Staff liaison to the Mason-Delhi Township connector trail feasibility study.
- T. Completed the environmental remediation and demolition of City owned property at 927 North Mason Street.
- U. Attended MDOT non-motorized plan public input meeting in December and informed of City planned sidewalk and trail improvements for incorporation into MDOT planning.
- V. Participated in the public transportation study, *Getting There: Mason Public Transit Survey Analysis*.

## 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. MSU Planning Alumni Development Group – MSU Alumni
5. Guest lecturer – MSU Planning Student Enrichment Workshop



## **FACILITIES**

### **City Hall Facilities**

Staff continues its commitment to high quality facilities care.

### **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 has secured contract for asbestos remediation scheduled for the spring of 2015 and eventual disposal of this building either by demolition after July 1, 2015.

### **972 N. Mason St.**

Staff has completed the asbestos remediation, demolition and well abandonment of this property.

## 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 2014.

Zoning Permit Type	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rezoning	0	1	2	0
Text Amendments	-	-	1	1
Special Use Permits	3	1	4	1
Public Hearings	-	2	7	1
Preliminary Site Plan Reviews*	2	2	8	2
Final Site Plan Reviews	2	2	7	3
Plats (Preliminary / Final)	0	0	0	0
Planned Unit Developments	0	0	0	0
Parking Lot Plan Reviews	0	0	0	0
Land Divisions (Division/Conveyance/Combination)	2	3	1	2
Zoning Board of Appeals	6	3	1	0
Historic District Commission	8	7	5	7
Building Code Board of Appeals	0	0	0	0
Sign Code Board of Appeals	2	0	1	0
Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control	15	20	23	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>38</b>

\* Site plan reviews not covered by special use permits.

### Ordinance Amendments

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

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. Due to limited staff resources available to effectively administer the

program in compliance with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the significant costs associated with site inspections, the program was repealed and given back to the Ingham County Drain Commissioner in July of 2014.

### **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*

### **Public Transportation Study**

The Zoning and Development Department collaborated 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.

The resulting report and analysis, *Getting There: Mason Public Transit Survey Analysis*, prepared by ICONIC Strategy & Writing (May 2014), indicates that there is “support for increased frequency in public transit access between Mason and Lansing among survey respondents”. The analysis recommended that “more study of the issue would be beneficial in determining a full understanding of the attitudes and preferences related to transit along this route”.

### **Community Garden**

Staff is proud to report on a fifth 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, logging nearly 40 hours of volunteer time. Together, they were responsible for regular communication with gardeners, being responsive to gardener concerns.

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 Gail Love, the program was directly responsible for growing and delivering over 340 pounds of produce to residents in need. **According to the FDA, that's enough to feed a family of four for nearly two months! Thank you Gail, and thank you Mason gardeners!**



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

### **Recreation – Hayhoe Riverwalk Trail Pedestrian Bridge Update**

Thanks to the Zoning & Development Department, donations continue to roll in. To date the City has received approximately \$72,000 in grants and donations toward the bridge.

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.

Staff participated in a regional effort to study the feasibility of connecting the Hayhoe Riverwalk Trail with the Delhi Township non-motorized trail system. By request of the Michigan Fitness Foundation and the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, a feasibility study was prepared to determine the best route for a recreation/non-motorized trail connecting the Delhi Township trail system to the Hayhoe Riverwalk Trail. The feasibility study was conducted by the Mannik Smith Group and made possible by funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development administered through the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Mid-Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability.

The purpose of the study was to analyze how best to cross US-127. It analyzed five different route alternatives and ultimately recommended alternative #1, utilizing Howell Road and Cedar Street. The estimated cost for this route alternative is \$3.8M. The likely sources of funding include, but are not limited to, State of Michigan Trust Fund, Ingham County, City of Mason, private donations, etc. The proposed project is supported by the City's Master Plan, Recreation Plan, and Capital Improvement Plan. The projected timeframe for implementation of this project has not been determined at this time, but is likely 2016 or later.

On December 8, 2014, Vevay Township adopted a resolution endorsing the proposed trail location.

Trail connections to a larger regional network of trails, including Vevay Township and Dansville area, are part of the City's recreation and master plan documents.

## Planning Commission

Master Plan Implementation – The Commission formulated a subcommittee to explore and gather public input in updating the planning descriptions for the County Fairgrounds East Buffer Area, Airport, and Cedar Street Interchange planning areas.

Medical Marihuana – The Commission in cooperation with the City Council stayed abreast of legal interpretations, court cases, and state legislative activity related to the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act.

Master Plan Update 2014 – The Commission in coordination with the City Council completed the preparation and adopted a revised Master Plan.

Used Vehicle Sales as Accessory to Auto Body Shops – Commission studied the ramifications of allowances of similar uses in other zoning districts.

### New members:

**Tim Scott** – Mr. Scott's experience as an infrastructural engineer and firefighter will bring a unique perspective to the Commission related to facilities management, including building, fire, technology and utility systems.

**Lori Hagle** – Ms. Hagle's experience in the legal and health professions, as well as her participation in the community schools and girl scouts brings a well-rounded community perspective to the Commission. Ms. Hagle is already volunteering for subcommittee works and shows an eagerness to participate.



**Marlon Brown** – this former Mason Planning Commissioner left the Commission to serve on the City Council. Serving as the newly elected Mayor Pro Tem, Mr. Brown represents the City Council in the capacity as the Planning Commission Liaison. Mr. Brown brings a wealth of experience in government financing as he is a budget and policy analyst for the State of Michigan. Welcome back Marlon!

## 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 citizens 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 2014 decreased as compared to permits issued in 2013. Residential permits are significantly up from a year ago, with nearly 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	2014
New Single Family Homes	8	17	15	26
Value	\$817,000	\$1,882,000	\$1,661,222	\$4,177,729
Multiple family (incl. two fam.)	3	0	0	10*
Value	\$238,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Commercial permits	13	10	16	9
Value	\$15,787,006	\$174,500	\$5,072,783	\$690,916
Sign permits	6	8	14	9
Demolition permits	11	11	5	4
Other permits	134	193	152	119
<b>Total permits</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Total value of construction</b>	<b>\$18,040,462</b>	<b>\$3,632,948</b>	<b>\$7,925,270</b>	<b>\$9,435,213</b>
<b>Total permit fees</b>	<b>\$123,521</b>	<b>\$34,726</b>	<b>\$63,863</b>	<b>\$57,048</b>

\*Covered under one single permit for the mixed-use development at 124/140 E. Ash Street.

The major commercial, office, industrial, and institutional buildings receiving building permits in 2014 are as follows (permits with a construction value over \$10,000):

1. Dr. Suess Medical (office rehabilitation), 200 Temple Street
2. Zielinski Dental (office addition), 640 West Ash Street
3. Ingham County Fairgrounds (new arena), 700 East Ash Street
4. Hungry Howie's (new roof), 222 North Cedar Street
5. Cherry Grove Apartments (Siding & misc.), 703 South Rogers Street

## **Building Inspections**

Meridian Township inspectors are providing building inspection service on contractual 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 four (4) damaged or functionally obsolete structures (3 residential) including the following:

- 222 W. Ash St. (commercial)
- 2721 Howell Rd. (residential)
- 972 N. Mason St. (residential)
- 245 W. Maple 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.

### **368 S. Jefferson St. (Vault Deli building) – rehabilitation**

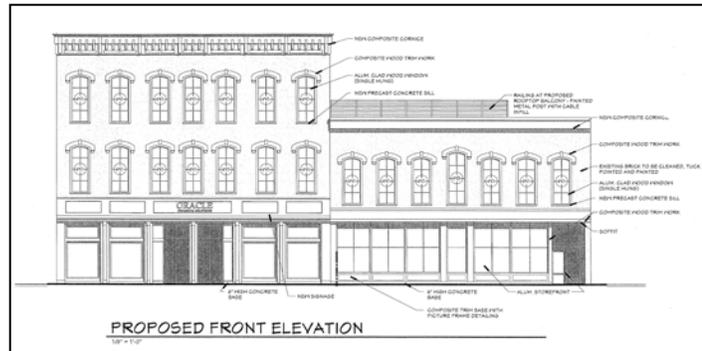
Zoning and Development Department, in addition to other City staff, provided support to the owners of the Vault Deli building in their vision to create new apartments on the second and third floors of this building. Staff provided opportunities for the owner and their architect time to meet discuss building code requirements. The Building Official and the architect were able to discuss applicable code requirements to facilitate construction plan development.

### **154 W. Maple St. (former Mason Shoe Store) – blight certification**

Zoning and Development Department, in addition to other City staff, provided support in pursuing State funding (Michigan Economic Development Corporation) by certifying blight status at the former Mason Shoe Store building. Utilizing the Building Official's knowledge and experience identifying deteriorated, outdated and unsafe building conditions, a blight certification qualifies a structure for certain State funding sources. The owners of the property are continuing to pursue funding sources to rehab this important landmark, including new residential loft units on the second floor and a complete façade reconstruction. By providing blight certification, the project is a step closer to becoming a reality and ultimately becoming a productive part of the commercial vibrancy of downtown Mason.

## 124/140 E. ASH ST.

The former Shopping Guide building at 124/140 East Ash Street redevelopment project is now underway and making significant progress. Staff has stayed in close contact with the project superintendant and witnessed a transformation not seen in many communities. With ten new residential units, fully occupied first floor local company (Oracle Financial Solutions) and a full façade restoration, this project is sure to turn heads in 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.