

April 6, 2026: Planning Commission Review (Adopt)
April 13, 2026 (anticipated): Village Council Review (Receive & File)

Planning Commission 2025 Annual Report & 2026 Work Plan

Village of Lake Orion, Michigan

Introduction & Purpose

As required per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) PA 33 of 2008, as amended, the Planning Commission shall submit a report of its 2024 activities:

In addition to fulfilling this requirement, the Annual Report increases information-sharing between staff, boards, commissions, and the governing body and allows for the anticipation of upcoming priorities. The Commission's Annual Report is a summary and status report of planning activities over the past year and is a communication tool to share recent achievements and plans for future community goals.

Membership

We thank the following Commission members for their time commitment and contributions:

- James E. Zsenyuk, Chairperson
- Edward Sabol, Vice Chairperson
- Henry Lorant, Secretary
- Larry Dunn, Commissioner
- Teresa Rutt, Council President
- Michael Lamb, Council Representative
- Darwin McClary, Village Manager

“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.”

Meetings

The Village of Lake Orion Planning Commission met nine times in 2025. This meets the requirements of the MPEA, which requires a minimum of four meetings annually.

The public is welcome to attend all Planning Commission meetings and the “hearing of the public” is an agenda item at every meeting.

1. Monday, January 6, 2025
2. Monday February 3, 2025
3. Monday, April 7, 2025
4. Monday, May 5, 2025
5. Wednesday, June 18, 2025
(Special Meeting: Joint Public Hearing)
6. Monday, August 4, 2025
7. Monday, September 2, 2025
8. Monday, October 6, 2025
9. Monday, December 1, 2025



2025 in Review

The Village continued to experience steady redevelopment and reinvestment in 2025, with the Planning Commission reviewing and recommending several significant projects, including; mixed-use developments, multifamily and townhome projects, lot splits and land divisions, condominium conversions, special land uses, and Planned Unit Developments. Major themes included compatibility with existing neighborhoods, traffic mitigation, water and sewer capacity, stormwater management, environmental protection, and public infrastructure coordination.

Additionally, over 50 administrative Zoning Compliance permits being issued this past year for small-scale or single-unit residential and commercial property improvements, temporary uses of the Village right-of-way, and signage.

Development Projects

NAME / LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
West Harbor Orion 225 Lake Street	Two single-family homes.	PC / Council Lot Split Approval: January 6 / 13, 2025 Demolition: In Progress Recording: Ready per Engineering Approval April 22, 2025 Zoning Review: TBD; required for each new build. Status: Construction: Demolition ongoing
Eastport	PUD/Site Plan review for 89-unit multi-family residential and mixed-use development on historic high school property.	Site Plan Submitted: May 5, 2025 (Township portion submitted as PUD Concept) Village-Township Joint Public Hearing: June 18, 2025. Pre-Construction Meeting: Pending Final Engineering— Status: Awaiting submittal.
Orion Lumber Yard	Mixed-use redevelopment of historic site.	Planning Commission Pre-Application Discussion: September 2, 2025. PC PUD Eligibility March 2, 2025. Village Council, No quorum, tabled: March 9, 2025
West Village Townhomes	Demolition of school admin building and construction of 15 townhomes	Planning Commission Approval: September 2, 2025. Awaiting applicant submittal of revised plans to address conditions of approval. STATUS: Awaiting applicant submittal of revised plans to address conditions of approval.

Variations Reviews

NAME / LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
424 Algene Dr.	Dimensional Variance: The applicant requested a variance from the required 25-foot waterfront setback in the RL Zoning District to allow renovation and expansion of an existing single-family residence. The request involved a 4.59-foot reduction of the required setback due to an existing nonconforming deck that encroached into the waterfront yard.	Denied
635 Central Dr.	Dimensional Variances: The applicant requested two side yard setback variances (west and east) to allow nonconforming deck and balcony expansions that were constructed in violation of an approved zoning permit. The proposed improvements further expanded existing nonconformities.	Denied (Both Requests)
37 E. Flint St.	Signage Variances: The applicant requested variances to permit a larger projecting sign, increased sign height, and internal illumination, exceeding Downtown Core sign ordinance standards. The sign was intended to improve business visibility in the downtown area.	Approved With Conditions
493 Algene Dr.	Dimensional Variance: The applicant requested a 2.9-foot side yard setback variance to construct an addition to an existing lakefront residence. The request was based on the narrow lot width and placement of the original structure, which limited the buildable envelope while maintaining modern residential standards.	Approved
256 S. Broadway	Dimensional Variance: The applicant requested an 11-foot 5-inch waterfront setback variance to allow an already constructed pergola accessory structure at a lakefront restaurant. The structure was built following miscommunication regarding zoning approval, though building permits were later denied due to lack of zoning authorization.	Approved After Being Tabled
694 Victoria Island	Dimensional Variance: The applicant requested a 10-foot 5-inch rear yard setback variance to allow the expansion of a small, historic cottage into a modern single-family residence. The island property's unique configuration, lack of street frontage, and limited buildable area constrained compliance with standard setbacks.	Approved

Capital Improvement Planning and Infrastructure

Capital Improvement Plan:

The Capital Improvement Plan was reviewed by the Planning Commission and adopted by the Village Council. FY2025–2031 CIPs include more than \$26M in identified infrastructure needs. These include:

- Sanitary sewer pump stations
- Sidewalk system rehabilitation
- Streets and pavement management
- Public parks and facilities
- Stormwater and lake protection

Sidewalk Improvement Program:

The Sidewalk Improvement Program is a formal, long-term policy adopted by the Village Council to systematically repair, replace, and connect sidewalks throughout the Village in a fair, transparent, and legally defensible way. The program was created to:

- Improve pedestrian safety and accessibility
- Address deferred maintenance and deteriorating sidewalks
- Close gaps in the sidewalk network
- Ensure compliance with ADA standards
- Spread costs equitably over time rather than reacting on a case-by-case basis

DDA Public Infrastructure Fund:

In 2025, a new agreement was adopted between the Village Council and the Downtown Development Authority that governs how Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenue is shared and used for public infrastructure projects.

The primary objective of the agreement is to allocate funding for infrastructure projects within the DDA district, such as:

- Sidewalk gaps and repairs
- Street and pavement improvements
- Stormwater and bank stabilization
- Utility infrastructure
- Public access, mobility, and safety improvements

Looking Ahead: 2026 Work Plan

In the coming year, the following are projects for the Planning Commission to consider:

Master Plan Amendment #3: Strategic Action Plan

The Planning Commission and Village Council will complete final review, public engagement, and formal adoption of the Master Plan Strategic Action Plan. Adoption will provide a clear, implementation-focused roadmap to guide land use, development, infrastructure investment, and policy decisions over the coming years.

Village Staff will work with the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Council, and other agencies during the adoption of ordinances and resolutions; review of development, special land use, and rezoning proposals; review of variance requests; and issuing of permits to actively align decision-making with these strategies. The five-year review process will also give the Planning Commission the opportunity to review the current status of strategies to determine if they have been completed, are in progress, need to be modified or removed, or can be supported by or can themselves support other strategies.

Village-Owned Parcel and Right-of-Way Inventory

In 2025, Village staff, in coordination with planning and engineering consultants, conducted a comprehensive inventory of all Village-owned properties, DDA parcels, and Village-owned rights-of-way (ROW) within Lake Orion. The effort also includes the lake's bottomlands, portions of which are owned by the Village. This inventory is expected to be completed in early 2026 and will provide critical information to support initiatives such as updates to the Master Plan, as well as code enforcement related to structures or uses that encroach on public property.

Coordinated Planning, Engineering, and Building Policies and Services

Planning and zoning do not occur in isolation, and it is essential to recognize the many entities involved in the development review process. The Village, having outsourced Building Services to Orion Township for several years, has worked collaboratively with the Township to establish a more efficient approach to communication and to the processing of applications that do not require review by a board or commission.

The Planning and Zoning staff from McKenna have begun working part time at Orion Township Hall in efforts to streamline the permitting process, allowing easier access to Township files and personnel. The Village staff now has access to the Township's BS&A system on Cloud, allowing permits to be reviewed from anywhere. For a six-month trial basis, McKenna staff's in-person office hours will be performed at the Township Hall Offices, while the later portion of the day will be conducted at Village Hall Offices. This will ensure maximum coordination between all departments and entities.

Ordinance Codification and Enforcement

The Village should continue efforts to modernize and codify ordinances to improve clarity, usability, and enforcement consistency. This work supports fair administration, reduces ambiguity, and aligns local regulations with current planning, engineering, and best-practice standards.

Continue Sidewalk Improvement Program

Building on the successful implementation of District #1, the Village will advance the Sidewalk Improvement Program by initiating evaluation, public engagement, and construction planning for District #2. The program will continue to improve pedestrian safety, accessibility, and system connectivity in a fair and predictable manner.