



A HERITAGE OF GOOD LIVING

2025 Planning Commission Annual Report

January 2026

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Introduction

The Lathrup Village Planning Commission plays a vital role in shaping the city's future by guiding land use decisions, reviewing development proposals, and ensuring compliance with local and state regulations. In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended), the Commission is required to prepare and present an annual report to the City Council. This document serves not only to fulfill that requirement but also to highlight the Commission's accomplishments, key projects, and planning initiatives throughout 2025.

Comprised of seven members with expertise in architecture, business, finance, city planning, and education, the Planning Commission brings a diverse range of perspectives to its decision-making process. This collective knowledge ensures balanced, well-informed deliberations that support responsible growth and development in Lathrup Village. The Commission remains committed to fostering a sustainable, vibrant, and well-planned community while maintaining transparency and public engagement in all planning efforts.

2025 Planning Commission Roster (*as of December 31, 2025*)

The composition of the Planning Commission saw extensive changes in 2025. With the retirement of longtime member and former chairman Les Stansbury, and the resignation of William Fobbs III, as well as the term for Mark Dizik ending all happening within two months of each other in 2025. This left three vacancies that would be quickly filled by Sharon Abaraham, Jerianne Clarke and Jo Robinson.

Name	Term Ending
Jason Hammond, City Council Liaison	
Sharon Abaraham (Vice Chair)	2028
Jerianne Clarke (Secretary)	2028
Jo Robinson	2028
Tim Hillman (Chair)	2027
Dennis Nordmoe	2027
James Scussel	2026

Community & Economic Development Department Staff

Austin Colson, Community & Economic Development Director

Thomas Kennedy, Community & Economic Development Project Coordinator

The City of Lathrup Village receives planning and zoning services through its partnership with Giffels Webster (GW). The GW team provides essential support to city staff by handling technical planning and zoning inquiries, including phone calls, emails, and in-person visits.

In addition to daily assistance, GW is responsible for preparing reviews, memoranda, and reports for the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and City Council as needed. They also attend all Planning Commission meetings and participate in City Council meetings upon request. They have also taken the lead on Lathrup Village's Master Plan update process, freeing staff to handle day-to-day duties.

The GW team is led by Jill Bahm, AICP, a partner at Giffels Webster, with support from Eric Pietsch, senior planner, and the GIS team, ensuring that the city's planning and zoning efforts are well-coordinated and effectively managed.

2025 Department Activities

Development Reviews

In 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed four (4) site plan reviews, five (5) zoning amendments, and the Zoning Board of Appeals considered one (1) application.

Site Plan Reviews. Site plan review is conducted when applications are submitted for new construction, building additions, or changes in land use. This process ensures that proposed development complies with the objective standards of the City's Zoning Ordinance, including requirements related to setbacks, landscaping, lighting, and parking. These standards are largely non-discretionary and are applied consistently to evaluate conformity with adopted regulations.

During 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed site plan applications for a range of commercial and redevelopment projects along the Southfield Road corridor. These projects included new commercial establishments, expansion of existing restaurant space, and the adaptive reuse of a historic building for mixed-use and residential development. Collectively, these projects reflect continued reinvestment in existing commercial spaces and the preservation of community assets.

The site plans reviewed included:

- 26021 Southfield, Ste 103 – Screen printing business
- 26710 Southfield Road – Prepared meal retail company.
- 27651 Southfield Road – Restaurant interior seating expansion.
- 27700 Southfield Road – Adaptive reuse of historic building for mixed-use and residential.

Special Land Uses. Certain land uses may be permitted in designated areas of the City through the Special Land Use process, subject to compliance with the standards established in the Zoning Ordinance. These standards include both general criteria and use-specific requirements. While many of the standards are objective and applied consistently, others require the exercise of discretion by the Planning Commission during its review.

A site plan is required for all Special Land Use applications to demonstrate compliance with applicable zoning requirements. The Planning Commission reviews the site plan and forwards a recommendation to the City Council regarding the Special Land Use request. No Special Land Use applications were submitted in 2025, following the approval of two Special Land Uses in 2024 related to the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Public Input/Public Hearings.

The Planning Commission meetings are open to the public, and “Public Comment” is an agenda item at every meeting. Public hearings are required for Planned Unit Developments (PUD), special land use, and rezoning applications.

Zoning Updates

In 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed, held public hearings on, and recommended approval of four zoning ordinance amendments aimed at addressing emerging land use issues, protecting public health and safety, and ensuring consistency with the City’s Master Plan. Collectively, these amendments focused on regulating uses with potential community impacts while maintaining flexibility for appropriate redevelopment.

Two amendments addressed financial-related uses, including cryptocurrency automated teller machines (ATMs) and money service businesses. The cryptocurrency ATM amendment established definitions, limited the use to specific zoning districts as an accessory use, and adopted consumer protection standards such as licensing, required disclosures, fraud warnings, transaction limits, and enforcement provisions. The money service business amendment introduced formal definitions, restricted the use to the Commercial Vehicular (CV) zoning district as a Special Land Use, and imposed a minimum one-mile separation requirement to prevent overconcentration.

Additional amendments focused on land use compatibility and long-term planning goals. New regulations for solar energy systems and battery energy storage systems established comprehensive standards for installation, screening, inspection, and decommissioning, supporting sustainability while protecting public safety. The Planning Commission also recommended an ordinance regulating small box retail discount stores, limiting the use to the Commercial Vehicular (CV) district as a Special Land Use and requiring one-mile separation between stores to evaluate impacts on grocery access and surrounding businesses.

Other Highlights

- The Community & Economic Development Department continues to have discussions about long-range improvements to Southfield Road with the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC).
 - City staff are looking into the GM on Main grant, which would provide the city funds to work on road projects up to \$60,000. These projects must be designed to make safer streets/roads within a community, and only communities in counties that house a GM facility can apply.
- The Community & Economic Development Department continues its collaboration with Main Street Oakland County (MSOC) to develop redevelopment strategies and provide organizational support. Additionally, in affiliation with the City of Southfield's DDA and Oak Park's Corridor Improvement Authority, the Tri-City Partnership works to support local business communities by offering educational workshops, seminars, and networking mixers throughout the year.
- Lathrup Village's DDA Staff have reacquired Redevelopment Ready Certification through the MEDC, which opens up access to grant opportunities, training opportunities, and promotions for the city's businesses, and provides technical assistance for city staff and the city overall, including board/commission members.

Meetings

Body	Number of Meetings
Planning Commission	11
Zoning Board of Appeals	2
Joint City Council, Downtown Development Authority & Planning Commission	1

The Year Ahead

The Comprehensive Plan includes zoning action strategies that recommend specific updates to the Zoning Ordinance to support the city's evolving needs. In 2025, significant progress was made on zoning amendments aimed at expanding housing options and promoting sustainability within Lathrup Village.

The Planning Commission will act as the overseeing body during the city's Master Plan update. This update is planned to be more extensive than the one prior, conducted during the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020, and during Pandemic Lockdowns. The goal will be to illicit greater levels of public feedback than prior years.

While the Planning Commission, Giffels Webster and City Staff all tackle the Master Plan, city staff will be attempting to form partnerships with local and county groups to craft an overlay district that supports artisan crafts, small-scale manufacturing, supports and promotes maker spaces, while also supporting local businesses already in the city by allowing them to start their own small-scale manufacturing or artisan craft within their building. This also supports our local property owners who may be having difficulties in acquiring businesses to rent their buildings. This provides an avenue for new, fresh markets to plant their roots in the city, lowering vacancy rates while increasing taxable revenue.