

Community Development Annual Report



Here's what has happened in the last (fiscal) year and what's to come!

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 22 of 2008, as amended) requires the Planning Commission to prepare an annual report documenting its operations and the status of planning activities.

This report will fulfill the state requirement. Beyond satisfying the state requirement, this document will also provide an overview of the Community Development Department, as well as a summary of permitting and inspection activities, code enforcement and overall accomplishments. Also included is a comprehensive FY 2025/2026 work plan listing short-term and long-term projects for the Planning Commission and the Community Development Department, as a whole, that we hope to achieve in the coming fiscal year.

The FY 2024/2025 Community Development Annual Report provides an overview of all Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Community Development Department activities from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

Highlights

Planning
Commission
and ZBA
Activities

Building
Services Data

Department
Achievements

Future Plans

Planning Commission Activities

The Planning Commission is comprised of seven members, from a variety of professional backgrounds. The varied perspectives of the members make for a well-rounded group that conducts fair and thoughtful deliberations. The list below encompasses members as of June 2025. The Planning Commission held 9 regular meetings and no special meetings during FY 2024/2025 and reviewed 5 site plans, 1 rezoning (in the form of an Amendment to a Planned Unit Development), 1 special land use and 0 zoning text amendments, outside of the Zoning Ordinance rewrite. Details on approvals are provided later in the report. One special land use request was ultimately denied by the City Council: An in-home day care for 7-12 children at 1818 Mortenson was recommended for denial by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner	Term Expires
Lisa Kempner, Chair	2025
Lisa Hamameh	2027
Mike Woods	2026
Joe Bartus	2026
Shiloh Dahlin	2025
Eric Arnsman	2027
Josh Stapp	2025

PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVALS

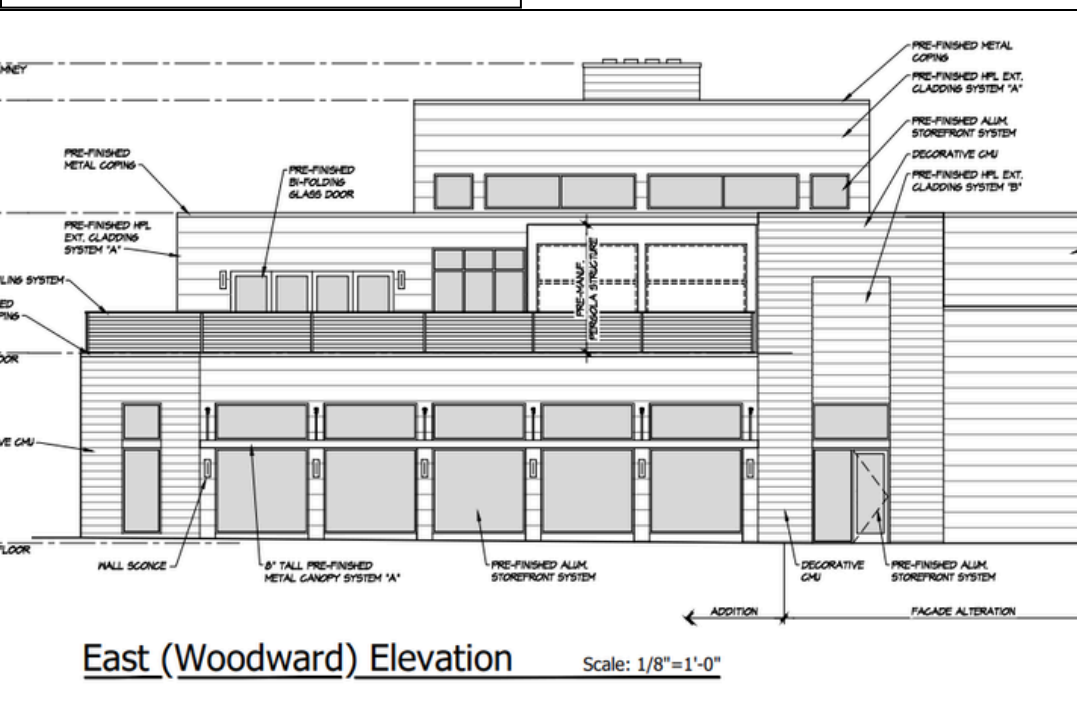
3340 ELLWOOD

The Planning Commission approved plans for the expansion of the parking lot for Green Lantern behind the existing Country Oven parking lot. Between restriping of the existing lot and the expanded area, 14 spaces would be added.

THE COLUMBIA PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT



The Planning Commission held the public hearing and recommended approval of a proposed Planned Unit Development Amendment to The Columbia PUD. Plan changes included a reduction in the number of units (57 to 51), consolidation of all units into one building on the northernmost parcel, facade alterations and an expansion and relocation of the proposed pocket park. This amendment was approved by Council.



2576 COOLIDGE

The applicant received approval in January 2025 for revisions to a plan originally approved in 2022. The updates included a revised facade and some changes to the parking lot layout.

THE J ON WOODWARD

The J on Woodward, at 27333-27387 Woodward (next to Einstein's Bagels) received the Planning Commission's approval for revisions to their previously approved site plan. The main changes were the removal of the carry-out food service restaurant and some updates to the facade.

3391 TWELVE MILE

The Planning Commission approved plans for facade renovations at 3391 Twelve Mile. This includes the removal of the existing mansard roof and the installation of additional transparent glass areas. The applicant plans to occupy the building with an office use.

4162, 4150 & 4138 TWELVE MILE

The Planning Commission approved the site plan for the expansion of Mug and Jug into a larger retail location with a gas station and an accessory restaurant use. Gas stations are a special land use in this district. Council approved the special land use request.

3170 COOLIDGE



The Planning Commission approved proposed facade changes and a small cooler addition for a new restaurant at the corner of Coolidge and Beverly. A parklet is also proposed and will be approved administratively. Construction is well underway here!

Zoning Board of Appeals Activities

The Zoning Board of Appeals is comprised of seven members. This group carefully deliberates whether a requested variance meets the standards for approval outlined in the City's code and by state law. The list below encompasses members as of June 2025. The Zoning Board of Appeals held 4 regular meetings and 0 special meetings during FY 2024/2025 and reviewed 2 mural determinations, 9 dimensional variances and 0 use variances. Details are provided on the following pages.

Board Member	Term Expires
Sue McAlpine, Chair	2026
Joseph Krug	2025
Erick McDonald	2027
Joann Serr	2025
Kevin Wilner	2026
Steve Allen	2025
Andrew Creal	2027

Zoning Board of Appeals Activities

Type of Request	Address	Request and Outcome
Mural Determination	2985 Twelve Mile	The applicant requested a determination that a proposed mural did not contain a commercial message. This request was approved.
Mural Determination	3116 Twelve Mile	The applicant requested a determination that a proposed mural did not contain a commercial message. This request was approved.
Dimensional Variance	3072 Robina	The applicant requested a dimensional variance to construct a second story addition. This request was approved.
Dimensional Variance	1992 Gardner	The applicant requested a dimensional variance to construct a second story dormer. This request was approved.

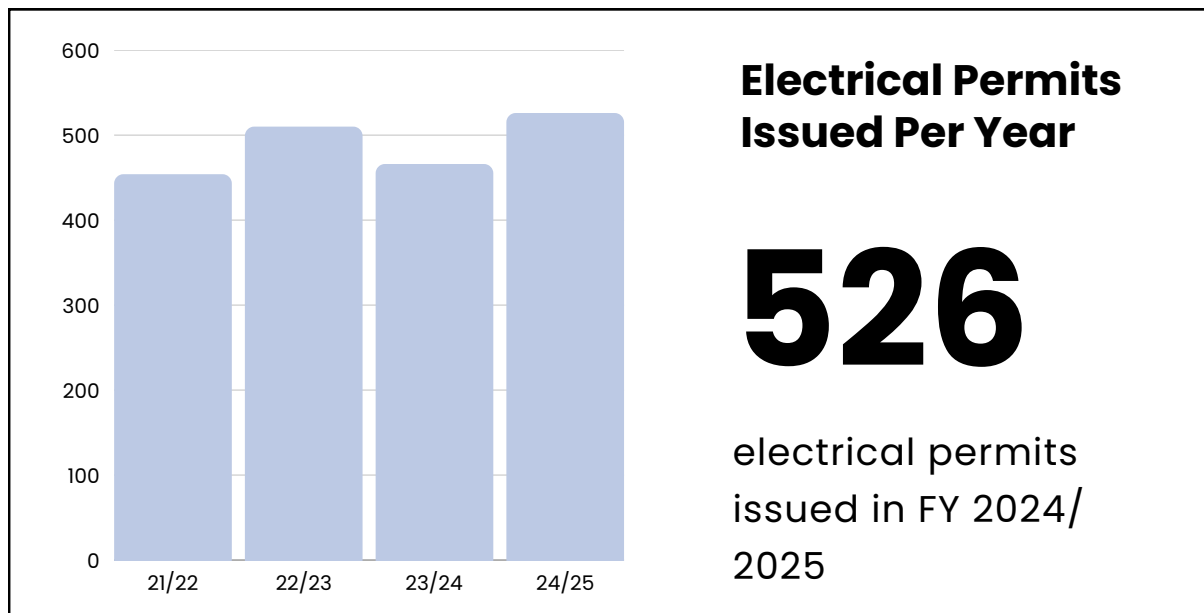
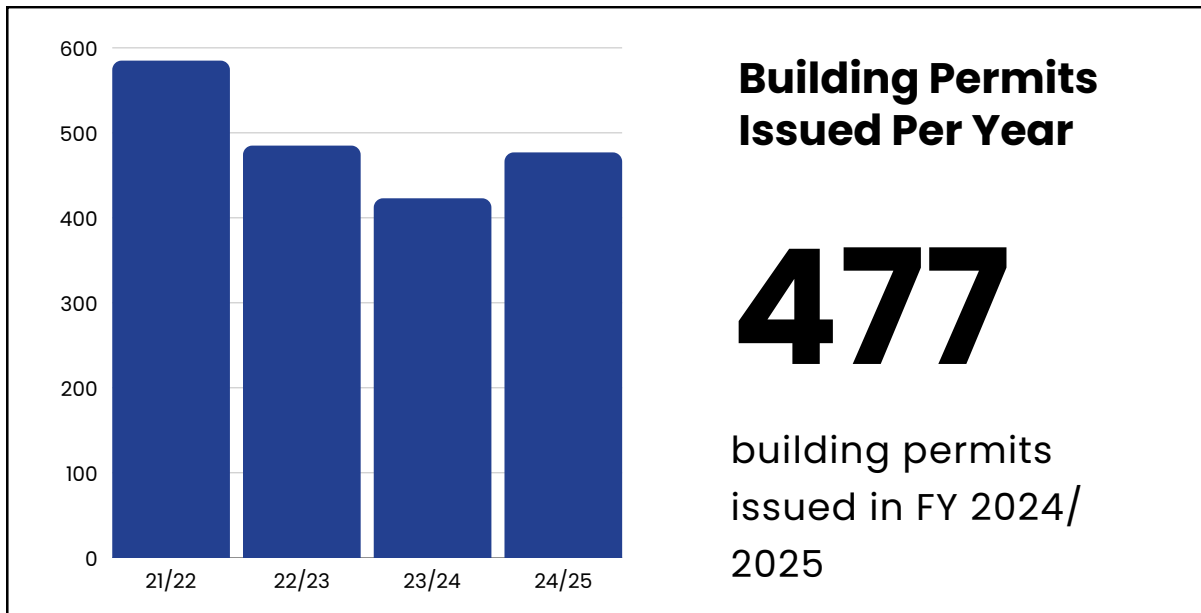
Zoning Board of Appeals Activities

Type of Request	Address	Request and Outcome
Dimensional Variance	3600 Kenmore	The applicant requested a dimensional variance to construct a second story addition. This request was approved.
Dimensional variance	2274 Earlmont	The applicant requested a dimensional variance to construct an addition. This request was approved.
Dimensional Variance	3764 Tyler	The applicant requested a dimensional variance to construct an addition. This request was approved.
Dimensional Variance	3176 Twelve Mile Rd.	The applicant requested a dimensional variance to allow a sign larger than permitted at the rear building entrance. This request was denied.

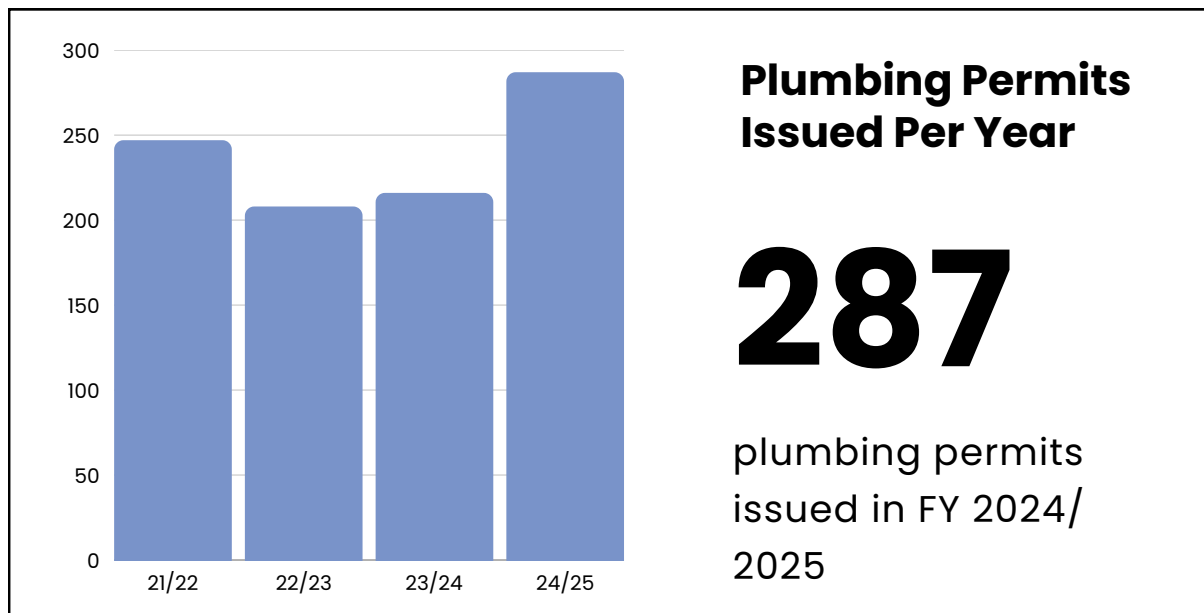
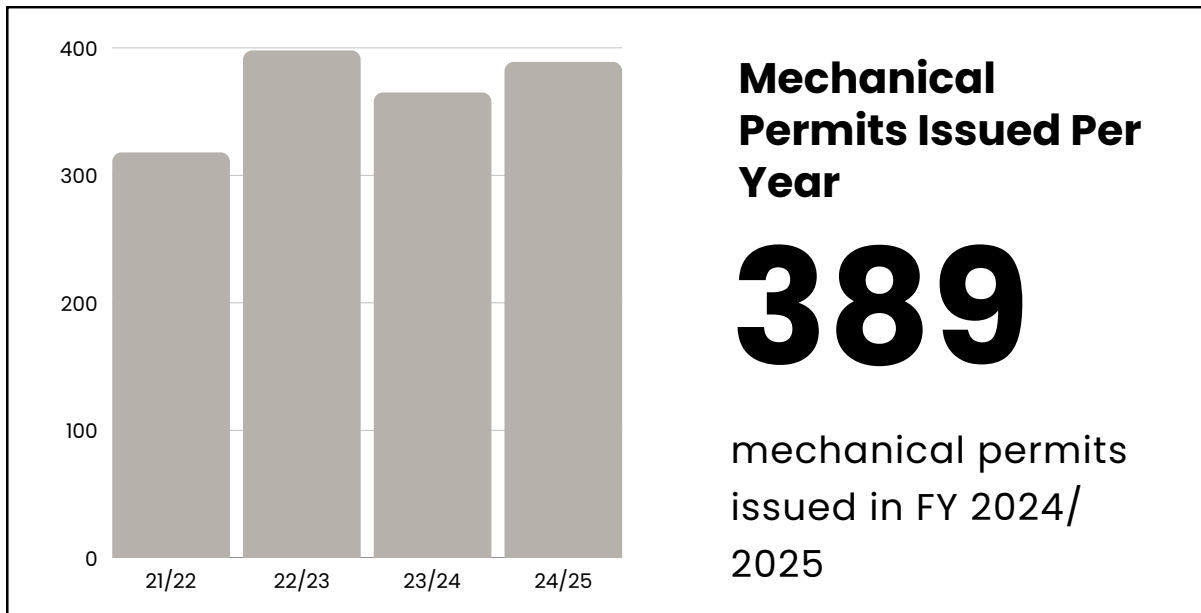
Zoning Board of Appeals Activities

Type of Request	Address	Request and Outcome
Dimensional Variance	2400 Greenfield	The applicant requested a dimensional variance to allow for additional signage. This request was approved.
Dimensional variance	3462 Greenfield	The applicant requested a dimensional variance to allow for additional signage. This request was approved.
Dimensional Variance	2945 Coolidge	The applicant requested a dimensional variance to allow occupancy of a lease space with deficient parking per ordinance requirements. This request was approved.

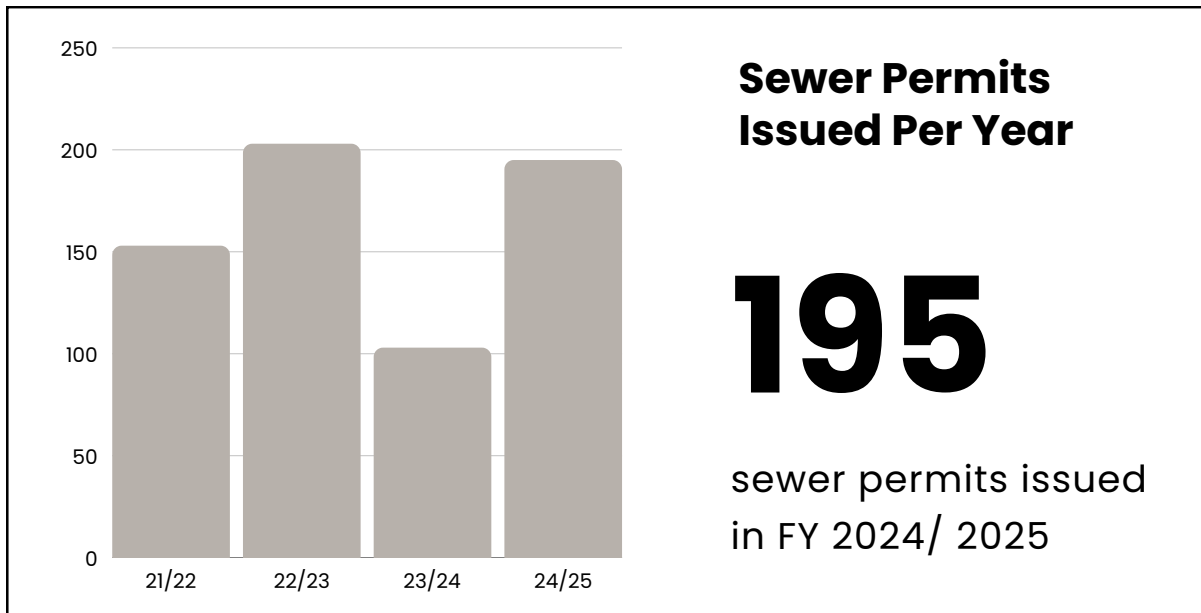
Construction



Construction



Construction



In addition to the permitting shown above, the Building side of the Community Development Department reviewed and processed business licenses, rental certificates, vacant property certificates, zoning certificates and sign permits. A few highlights are included below.

- Staff reviewed and issued 25 sign permits.
 - 27 business licenses were issued in the 24/25 fiscal year.
 - 2,151 building inspections and 1,641 trade inspections were completed in the last fiscal year.
 - Staff renewed or issued new rental certificates for 352 properties.
 - 2 vacant properties were registered with the Community Development Department.
 - Zoning certificates for fences, driveways and other minor projects were issued for 170 properties.
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Code Enforcement Activities

The goal of code enforcement is to bring properties into compliance with the City's codes and ordinances. This is most often done through warnings or approaching property owners to explain the issue and the remedy. Should those interventions not work, a violation is issued and ultimately the issue is escalated to the courts, if need be. Below is an example of a before and after code enforcement violation that was brought into compliance.



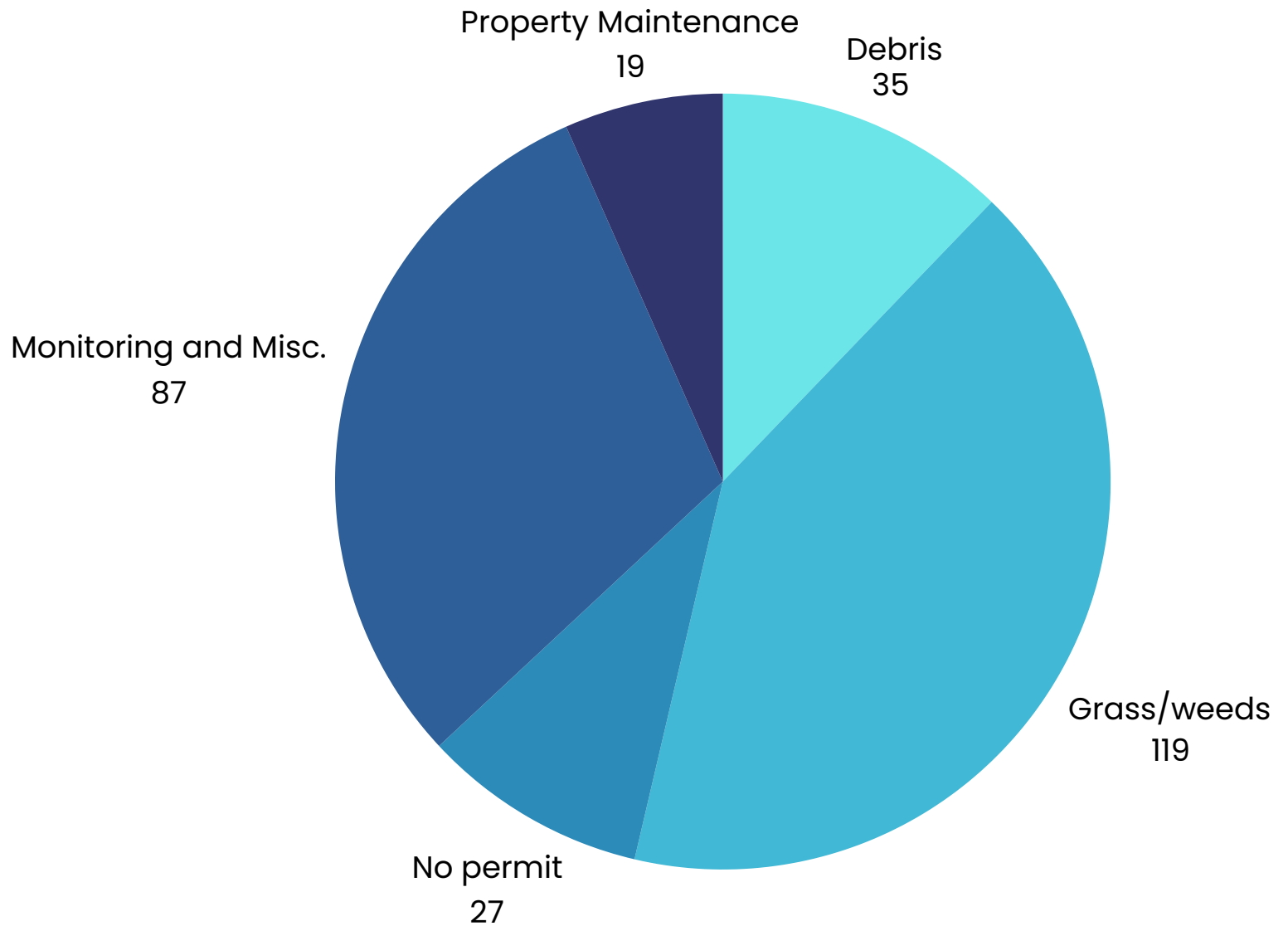
BEFORE

AFTER



Code Enforcement Activities

549 enforcements were logged. Below is a breakdown of the most common or repeated enforcement actions in the City.



City Code Amendments

The Community Development Department brought a number of City Code amendments forward to the City Council in the past fiscal year. All of the following amendments were approved.

- Amendments were approved to the Parklets ordinance to address issues businesses have identified with implementation and to allow a business to locate a parklet directly in front of a neighboring business with that business's permission.
 - The rental ordinance was amended to clarify that all commercial rentals must be registered and inspected at two-year intervals and to provide regulations and requirements for short term rentals.
 - An amendment was approved to remove a timeframe for registering vacant properties to allow for flexibility in the case of properties for sale and under renovation.
 - A subdivision ordinance was approved in its entirety, closing a gap that previously existed in the City Code.
 - Several amendments were approved to address inconsistencies and section references along with the Zoning Ordinance rewrite and Engineering Design Standards, both covered later in this report.
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Rebuilding Berkley's

ZONING ORDINANCE

In November 2021, the City of Berkley adopted a new Master plan. The City retained the planning consultant services of Carlisle Wortman Associates to assist with the development of the Master Plan and has worked with them over the past fiscal year on implementation of that plan via a new Zoning Ordinance. This included a section by section rewrite of the entire Zoning Ordinance and Sign Ordinance and the incorporation of new sections that the current Zoning Ordinance is missing.

The previous year, the Zoning Ordinance Steering Committee met on a monthly basis to review each new or revised section of the Zoning Ordinance. This committee was comprised of representatives from City staff, members of the Planning Commission, City Council members, the Zoning Board of Appeals and a resident at large. In the next phase of adoption, the Planning Commission went over the new Zoning Ordinance in detail at several regular meetings, ultimately holding the public hearing and recommending adoption in January of 2025.

In addition to Zoning Ordinance Steering Committee meetings, which were attended by some members of the public, four public open houses were held as part of the rewrite. Each of these was designed around a central theme: New Zoning Districts, Housing, Parking and Development Processes. Outreach was also accomplished through City newsletters, via the City website and social media channels. Property owners and any interested parties were also able to view changes to their specific property via an interactive map that showed the 'before' and 'after' for each property in the City. In October 2025, a public engagement booth was included at the City's annual 'Bookley' celebration. Participants were able to view the new ordinance, use the interactive map and talk with staff and consultants. The Michigan Association of Planning has recognized the public engagement efforts that were part of the Zoning Ordinance rewrite and awarded Berkley with the Public Outreach Award for Planning Excellence.

City Council adopted the new Zoning Ordinance in March of 2025 and it has been effective since April.

Community Development Accomplishments

The Community Development Department has seen a lot of transition over the past several years and FY 2024/2025 was no different. Below are some highlights of the updates and improvements we have made this fiscal year.

- **Online GIS Interactive Mapping for Residents:** Previously, residents and website visitors could only access static pdf versions of the most common Community Development maps. Staff worked with the City's engineering consultant, HRC, to create an online interactive map so residents, business owners and prospective investors can navigate to their property and see up-to-date development information all in one place.
 - **Economic Development :** The department has begun to incorporate more economic development focused activities into our days. This includes small things, like making sure our processes are easy to follow and that we're providing good customer service and larger initiatives like the development of a PILOT ordinance and building relationships with state and county development agencies and local businesses and developers.
 - **Short Term Rental Process:** Amendments were made to the rental ordinance to create regulations for short term rentals. As part of this effort, a process for inspection, forms, etc. was also developed and put in place.
 - **Zoning Ordinance Implementation:** With the adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance came a slew of implementation activities. All new zoning classifications meant each parcel record had to be updated City-wide, all of the department's forms and handouts had to be revised and new processes had to be put in place and documented.
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Cross Department Accomplishments

Community Development has had opportunities over the past fiscal year to work with other City departments on several big picture projects.

- **Engineering Design Standards:** In partnership with the Department of Public Works, Community Development worked with HRC to develop Engineering Design Standards to address items like utility, road design and stormwater design standards that are either missing from the City Code or scattered throughout. This also included necessary City Code amendments.
 - **Dorthea Stub Street:** The City was awarded a planning assistance grant from SEMCOG to develop conceptual designs of the Dorthea stub street reimagined as an urban plaza/pocket park. Conceptual drawings were completed with the assistance of the Downtown Development Authority. As a lead-in to potential permanent closure, the Community Development Department assisted various City Departments, led by Parks and Recreation and the City Manager's Office, with a temporary closure and activation of the space to gather community feedback.
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Future Work Plan

In addition to reporting on the activities and successes of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and the Community Development Department, we have several goals that are working toward in the next year.

- **Redevelopment Ready Certification:** This item has been carried over as a future to-do through several annual reports and with the completion of the Zoning Ordinance, the Community Development Department feels confident this can be achieved in the next fiscal year. There are three documents left to complete: Development Guide, Economic Development Strategy and Marketing Strategy.
 - **Lease of Municipal Parking Spaces and Payment in Lieu of Parking** The new Zoning Ordinance includes provisions for the City to move forward with the creation of policies for the lease of municipal parking spaces and payment in lieu of providing parking spaces. Community Development Department staff have begun to work with other departments and the City's planning consultant to draft policies for Council consideration.
 - **Performance Guarantees** The new Zoning Ordinance also included regulations for the establishment of performance guarantee bonds to ensure sites are completed or left in a safe manner if they cannot be completed. This also involves developing a tracking system and more thorough site inspection process, among other things. The Community Development Department will be working internally with other city departments to put the necessary pieces in place.
 - **Expansion of the Berkley Outdoor Social Scene** With recent activity on Coolidge, the Community Development Department will be exploring expanding the BOSS Social District to Coolidge.
 - **Ordinance Updates to Nuisance and Noise** Code enforcement has been a big focus of the last part of the last fiscal year and as the Community Development Department and Public Safety Department utilize the noise and nuisance ordinances more and more, it has become apparent that some amendments are needed. We have begun working through those and will have drafts to present to Council in the first half of the next fiscal year.
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