

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Wendy Rampson, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: **Planning Services FY15 Year-End Report**

DATE: August 7, 2015

The following is a brief summary of the status of the Planning Commission work program and Planning Services activities for FY14-15.

Master Plan/Study Initiatives

- *Capital Improvements Plan:* CIP asset category teams made up of Planning staff and over 50 additional City staff members worked to identify and prioritize capital projects during the first quarter of FY15. For the first time, this evaluation incorporated the adopted Sustainability goals. The City Planning Commission's CIP Committee met in October 2014 to review the CIP prioritization process and provide recommendations for the draft plan. The full Planning Commission reviewed the prioritization process and draft plan at its November 12, 2014 working session and adopted the FY2016-2021 Capital Improvements Plan on December 16, 2014. The approved plan is posted on the City website at www.a2gov.org/cip. *Next steps:* Staff and Commission will make off-year adjustments to the FY2016-2021 CIP in the second quarter of FY16.
- *Allen Creek Greenway Plan:* From August to December 2014, Planning staff provided assistance to graduate students from the University of Michigan's Urban and Regional Planning Program working to identify a route for a long-discussed trail along the Allen Creek drain. The students presented their "Green the Way" report to the community in December 2014, with recommendations for routing, design and phasing for the Allen Creek Greenway. The report contains a comprehensive assessment of past plans and actions, a summary of community input gathered during the process, and four scenarios for trail alignment, which the students used to create a recommended route. *Next steps:* This report will be used as a base for a project to incorporate the Allen Creek Greenway into the City Master Plan, which will begin in FY16.
- *Affordable Housing Needs Study:* In the first quarter of FY15, the Planning Commission Affordable Housing Committee and Planning staff participated in interviews for the Washtenaw County Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Analysis. In January 2015, the Washtenaw County Office of Community Economic Development (OCED) presented the study findings to a joint City Council/Planning Commission working session. The Planning Commission met to discuss implementation strategies for the study's recommendations at a working session in

March 2015 and at its annual retreat in April 2015. *Next steps:* To implement the recommendations of the study, the Commission anticipates beginning work on zoning amendments to encourage creation of accessory dwelling units. Planning staff will identify a consultant and begin work on this initiative after completion of the downtown zoning amendments.

- *Connector Study Alternatives Analysis:* In 2014, the Connector Study project team, led by Systems Planning, refined a series of six alignment alternatives for the Connector, a high-capacity transit route that would connect major destinations from northeast to south Ann Arbor. In FY15, the project team refined the detailed ridership and cost modeling for the six alternatives and is conducting additional detailed analysis to answer questions about mode choice, growth scenarios, project phasing and finance planning. *Next steps:* The consultant and project team will present a locally preferred alternative for the Connector route. More information may be found at www.aaconnector.com.
- *Downtown Street Design Manual:* Beginning in June 2014, the Planning Commission and staff participated in a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) initiative to create a tool to ensure downtown streets provide a high quality of place for all users, with a particular focus on pedestrians and how streets can be used as public space. A planning commissioner participated in the advisory committee for the project, attending monthly meetings throughout the fiscal year. The planning manager participated in the leadership team. The full Planning Commission reviewed the street framework goals and typology at its November 2014 working session and the final guidelines for the manual at its June 2015 working session. *Next steps:* Planning staff will assist the DDA and Project Management Unit in finalizing the technical documents for inclusion in the Public Services Standard Specifications. Moving forward, Planning staff will have an ongoing role in the staff team that will review public and private construction projects for consistency with the Downtown Street Design Manual. The design manual and policy best practices report may be found at <http://www.a2dda.org/current-projects/downtown-street-framework-plan/>.
- *Reimagine Washtenaw Corridor Improvement Plan:* Planning staff continues to meet monthly with the Reimagine Washtenaw Joint Technical Committee (JTC) to coordinate planning initiatives along the Washtenaw Avenue corridor. Planning staff assisted a consultant team in researching and developing recommendations for a HUD-funded corridor improvement study, which was completed in March 2014. To show regional support for the study's transportation and right-of-way recommendations to the Michigan Department of Transportation, the four participating jurisdictions and Washtenaw County each presented a resolution of support to their elected bodies in FY15. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the resolution of support for the study in January 2015. City Council considered the resolution in February 2015 and requested that staff seek additional public comment from the business community and the general public. Planning staff

hosted a neighborhood meeting in March 2015 and responded to Council questions subsequent to this meeting. City Council approved a resolution endorsing the Corridor Improvement Study in June 2015. *Next steps:* Planning staff will work the Information Technology Unit to include the Corridor Improvement Study's future right-of-way delineation in the City's GIS system and work with the Attorney's Office to develop zoning amendments that will require setback dimensions to be measured from the future right-of-way line.

- *North Main/Huron River Corridor Land Use Amendments:* Due to a focus on other planning initiatives, work on implementing the land use recommendations of the North Main/Huron River Corridor Vision Task Force was not started in FY15. The Commission has included these amendments in the FY16 work program, to begin in the last quarter of 2016.

Ordinance Revisions

- *Downtown Zoning Amendments:* Staff and the Ordinance Revisions Committee (ORC) met monthly through the fiscal year to continue the implementation of the 2014 Downtown Zoning Evaluation Report recommendations. In the first, second and third quarter of FY15, Planning staff worked with the ORC to develop massing and height amendments for the East Huron corridor. These amendments were approved by City Council in July 2015. In March 2015, Planning staff hired ENP & Associates to assist in development of floor area premium options. ENP conducted extensive public engagement in late April 2015 and presented to the Commission a report summarizing input and providing initial recommendations in May 2015. In June 2015, the ORC provided ENP with guidance for development of ordinance language. *Next steps:* ENP will provide draft premium amendment language for ORC and Planning Commission consideration in the first quarter of FY16. After completion of the premiums project, Planning staff will work with the ORC to evaluate edge properties for potential rezoning.
- *Citizen Participation Ordinance Evaluation:* The reorganized City website went live in the first quarter of FY15. Planning staff developed additional resources for developers and citizens, including an introduction to the Planning Commission for distribution at Commission meetings and a citizen meeting checklist for developers.
- *Zoning Ordinance Reorganization Project:* Minor progress was made on this project in FY15. *Next steps:* Staff will send revisions to the consultant to incorporate into the public review draft. The technical review committee will be reconvened and a public meeting will be scheduled to get feedback on the draft code, after which staff will work with consultant to finalize the draft and start the amendment process at Planning Commission.
- *Redevelopment Ready Communities:* In the first quarter of FY15, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) started the assessment audit process,

working with Planning staff to obtain documentation of the city's development processes and interviewing local developers about their experiences. The Community Assessment Evaluation Findings Report was presented to City Council in October 2015 and discussed at the joint City Council/Planning Commission working session in January 2015. Consistent with the memorandum of understanding with the MEDC, City Council authorized city staff to proceed toward implementation of several Redevelopment Ready best practices. *Next steps:* Planning staff will work with the City Administrator to implement 5 of the best management practices identified in the MEDC assessment. City Council and the Planning Commission will identify an ad-hoc committee to review the City Council role in site plan approval and to submit any proposed changes to Council for approval. In addition, City staff will identify priority redevelopment sites and resources for the prioritized redevelopment sites and to report on them to Council prior to assembling a property information package for the sites.

- *R4C/R2A Study:* Due to a focus on other ordinance amendment initiatives, work on implementing the R4C/R2A recommendations was not started in FY15. *Next steps:* Planning staff will identify a consultant and begin work on this initiative after completion of the downtown zoning amendments. This effort is targeted to begin in the third quarter of FY16.
- *Floodplain Ordinance:* In the first half of FY15, Systems Planning provided oversight to a team of graduate students from the University of Michigan, who researched flood issues and developed a white paper and draft floodplain ordinance during the Fall 2014 semester. *Next steps:* Planning staff will work Systems Planning and the City Attorney's Office to refine the draft floodplain ordinance. Working with the Ordinance Revisions Commission, staff will develop a public engagement strategy and a schedule for reviewing the draft ordinance and moving it forward to the Commission and City Council for adoption in FY16.
- *Accessory Dwelling Units:* See "Affordable Housing Needs Study" under Master Plan/Study Initiatives.

Additional Work Efforts

- *Annexation Initiative:* In October 2014, City Council approved a resolution authorizing an application to the State Boundary Commission requesting annexation of nine utility-owned and residential islands located in Ann Arbor Township. In April 2015, the State Boundary Commission notified the City that the application contained several errors. Planning staff coordinated with Project Management and Systems Planning staff to correct these errors and resubmitted the annexation application in May 2015 to City Council for its approval. The revised application was transmitted to the State Boundary Commission in June 2015. *Next steps:* Staff will assist the State Boundary Commission in setting up the mandated public hearings. Once these

annexations are complete, staff will evaluate the process and determine how to proceed with the next set of annexation applications.

- *Electronic Plan Review:* During FY15, Planning staff implemented electronic plan submissions for the Design Review Board, Brownfield Review Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals and Historic District Commission. *Next steps:* Planning staff will work with Information Technology Unit staff to improve the submittal and review capabilities through the Trakit software.
- *Sale of City-Owned Properties:* Planning staff provided assistance to the City Administrator in implementing City Council directives related to the marketing and sale of city-owned parcels.
- *South State Street Plan Implementation:* During FY15, Planning staff served on the technical committee for the South State Street Transportation Plan project, currently in progress.
- *Website Reorganization:* Working with Information Technology staff, Planning staff reviewed web analytics for the unit website and restructured it in coordination with the citywide web update. The updated structure includes four topics that are maintained by Planning staff:
 - Planning (www.a2gov.org/planning) – contains information on the Planning Unit, Planning Commission, City master plan, work program initiatives, economic development and neighborhood associations
 - Development Review (www.a2gov.org/development) – contains information on the development review process, submittal requirements, petitions under review RSS feed, citizen participation process and Design Review Board
 - Zoning (www.a2gov.org/zoning) – contains information on zoning regulations, information sheets on common zoning topics, zoning maps and Zoning Board of Appeals
 - Historic Preservation (www.a2gov.org/hdc) – contains information and maps on historic districts, Historic Commission process and district study reports
- *Neighborhood Association Update:* In the third quarter of FY15, Planning staff sent up letters to all registered neighborhood associations requesting confirmation that the association was still active, and if so, requesting updates on the neighborhood boundaries and contact person. The neighborhood contact information and maps were updated in May 2015 and uploaded to the website (www.a2gov.org/neighborhoods).

Cross-Unit Activities

In addition to the Planning work program initiatives noted above, Planning staff participated in the following cross-unit activities in FY14:

- Village Oaks Storm Water Study
- ALT (Alternative Transportation) Committee
- North-South Rail Initiative
- Ann Arbor Station Environmental Assessment
- Connector Study
- UM/City Coordinating Committee
- South State Street Transportation Study
- Nixon/Green/Dhu Varren Intersection Traffic Evaluation
- City Organizational Strategic Planning Effort
- Bike Share Program

Training and Development Activities

- Three Planning Commissioners and the Planning Manager attended the annual Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) conference on Mackinac Island in October 2014.
- A Planning staff member attended the MAP Spring Institute in March 2015.
- A Planning staff member attended the state Historic Preservation Network conference in May 2015.

Board Activities

Zoning Board of Appeals applications:

- 22 (17 in FY14)

Design Review Board applications:

- 4 (5 in FY14)

Brownfield Review Committee applications:

- 0 (0 in FY14)

Historic Preservation Activities

Historic District Commission:

- Determination of Appropriateness applications: 47 (71 in FY14)
- Notice to Proceed applications: 0 (1 in FY14)

Staff review applications:

- 213 (177 in FY14)

Zoning Administration Activities

- Zoning compliance permit reviews: 315 (240 in FY14)
- Zoning compliance reviews as part of building permit: 1,275 (1,152 in FY14)
- Zoning code cases opened: 29 (22 in FY14)
- Zoning letters/reports completed: 66

Development Review Activities

Planning Commission review:

- Annexation/zoning applications: 2 (6 in FY14)
- Land division applications: 9 (5 in FY14)
- Zoning/PUD applications: 10 (20 in FY14)
- Site plan/PUD site plan applications: 23 (29 in FY14)
- Special exception use applications: 9 (11 in FY14)

Staff review:

- Administrative land transfer applications: 8 (6 in FY14)
- Administrative amendment applications: 19 (13 in FY14)

Site Compliance Activities

Site compliance projects initiated: 27 (28 in FY14)

Site plan compliance activities for the following construction projects:

- Retail Plaza (3980 Platt)
- Second Baptist Church (850 Red Oak)
- Ann Arbor City Apartments (201 S. First)
- Michcon Remediation (841 Broadway)
- Packard Square (2502 Packard)
- DTE Buckler Substation (984 Broadway)
- AATA Blake Transit Center (331 S. Fourth Ave)
- Malletts Creek Office (385 E. Eisenhower)
- Upland Green Phase 2 (1777 Plymouth)
- Michigan Islamic Academy (2301 Plymouth)
- 515 N. Fifth Avenue
- 413 E. Huron Apartments
- 618 S. Main Apartments
- Blue Heron Pond (2536 W. Liberty)
- 401 N. Fourth Ave
- 414 N. Main St.
- Honda Testing Facility (3947 Research Park Dr)
- Hideaway Lane (2000 Traver)
- Hampton Inn (2910 Jackson)

- Germain Motors (2575 S. State)
- Belle Tire (590 W. Ellsworth Rd.)
- 278-280 Collingwood Office
- Briarwood Restaurants (720-760 Briarwood Circle)
- Planet Fitness Parking Lot (2350 W. Stadium)
- Arbor Ace Parking Lot (2105 W. Stadium)
- 544 Detroit St Condominiums (544 Detroit St.)
- Montgomery Building (210 S. Fourth Ave.)
- 116-120 W. Huron/Marriott Residence Inn (116 W. Huron)
- Traverwood Apartments (2225 Traverwood Dr.)
- Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church (1717 Broadway)
- U-Haul Storage (3655 S. State St.)
- 624 Church/Arbor Blu Apartments (624 Church St.)
- 515 Oxford Sorority (515 Oxford)
- The Summit Townhomes (2081 E. Ellsworth)
- 2625 Jackson Retail (2625 Jackson)
- Ruth's Chris Restaurant (314 S. Fourth Ave)
- State Street Village (2221 S. State)
- Bank of Ann Arbor (125 S. Fifth Ave)
- Maple Cove (1649 N. Maple)
- Holiday's Restaurant (2080 W. Stadium)
- Gift of Life Addition (3841 Research Park)
- South State Center Retail (3945 S. State)
- Dusty's Collision (2310 South Industrial)
- 121 Kingsley West (121 W. Kingsley)
- Concordia Kreft Addition (4090 Geddes)
- Running Fit Addition (121 E. Liberty)
- The Mark Condominiums (318 W. Liberty)
- State Street Shell (2991 S. State)
- UM Credit Union (2725 S. State)
- Fourth and William Parking Structure (115 E. William)
- Plum Market Addition (3601 Plymouth)
- Concordia Athletic Complex (4101 Geddes)
- 2300 Traverwood (2300 Traverwood)
- Delta Chi Fraternity (1705 Hill)
- Busch's Market (2020 Green)
- Flagstar Bank (3600 Plymouth)
- CrossFit Treetown (815 Wildt)

Planning Trends: FY11 to FY15

Historic Preservation/Historic District Commission

| | <i>Historic District Commission Review - Determination of Appropriateness Applications</i> | <i>Historic District Commission Review - Notice to Proceed Applications</i> | <i>Staff Review - Applications</i> |
|-------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>FY11</i> | 42 | 1 | 120 |
| <i>FY12</i> | 47 | 0 | 157 |
| <i>FY13</i> | 52 | 0 | 168 |
| <i>FY14</i> | 71 | 1 | 177 |
| <i>FY15</i> | 47 | 0 | 213 |

Other Boards and Committees

| | <i>Zoning Board of Appeals Applications</i> | <i>Design Review Board Applications</i> | <i>Brownfield Review Committee Applications</i> |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| <i>FY11</i> | 22 | 1 | 2 |
| <i>FY12</i> | 23 | 2 | 2 |
| <i>FY13</i> | 24 | 4 | 2 |
| <i>FY14</i> | 17 | 5 | 0 |
| <i>FY15</i> | 22 | 4 | 0 |

Zoning Administration

| | <i>Zoning Compliance Permits Issued</i> | <i>Zoning Compliance Reviews as Part of Building Permit</i> | <i>Zoning Code Cases Opened</i> |
|-------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>FY11</i> | 302 | 713 | 26 |
| <i>FY12</i> | 303 | 903 | 21 |
| <i>FY13</i> | 336 | 1144 | 13 |
| <i>FY14</i> | 240 | 1152 | 22 |
| <i>FY15</i> | 315 | 1275 | 29 |

Development Review - Planning Commission Review

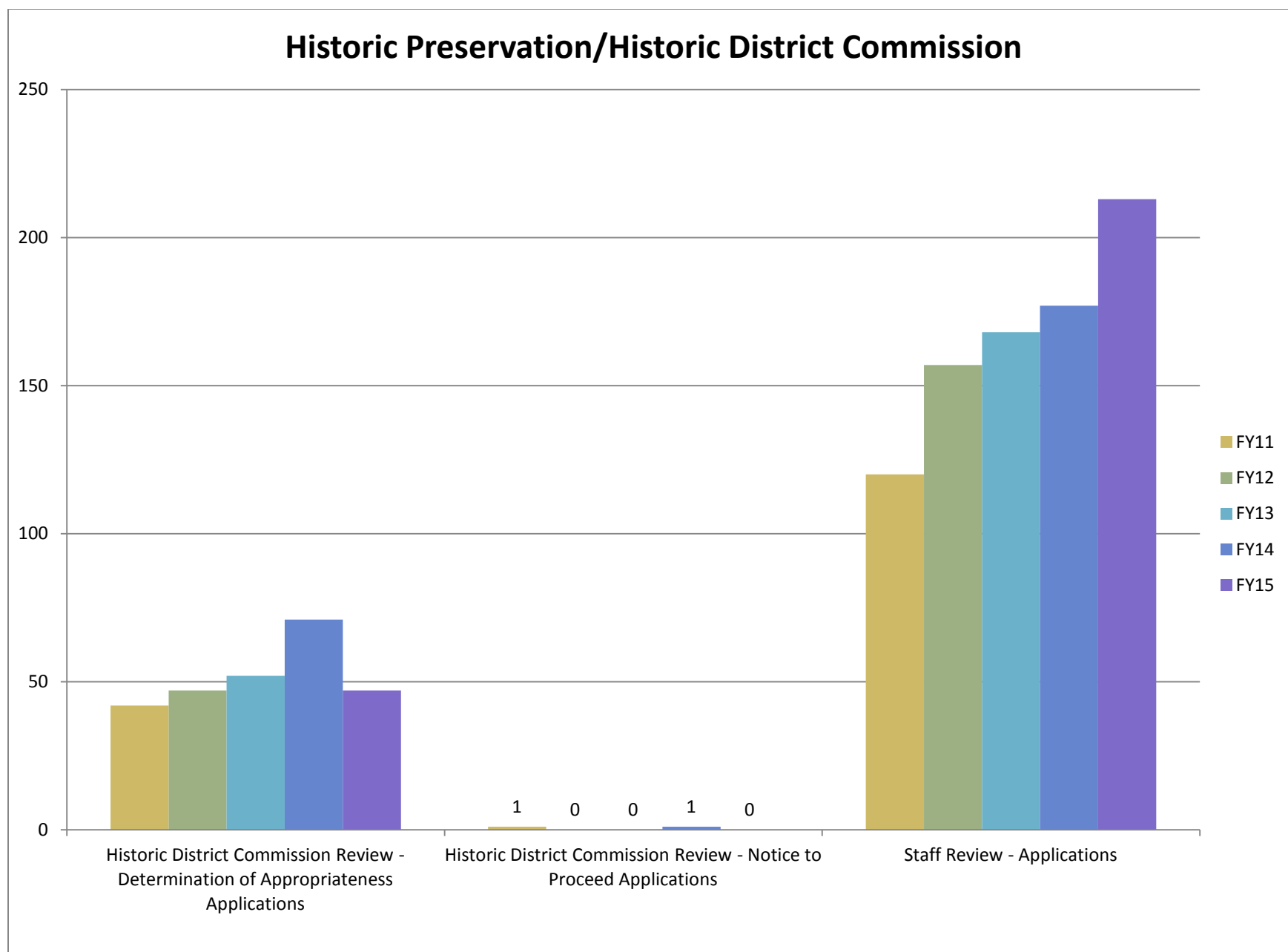
| | <i>Annexation/Zoning Applications</i> | <i>Land Division Applications</i> | <i>Zoning/PUD Applications</i> | <i>Site Plan/PUD Site Plan Applications</i> | <i>Special Exception Use Applications</i> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>FY11</i> | 5 | 3 | 1 | 13 | 5 |
| <i>FY12</i> | 7 | 3 | 13 | 28 | 4 |
| <i>FY13</i> | 6 | 4 | 16 | 25 | 3 |
| <i>FY14</i> | 6 | 5 | 20 | 29 | 11 |
| <i>FY15</i> | 2 | 9 | 10 | 23 | 9 |

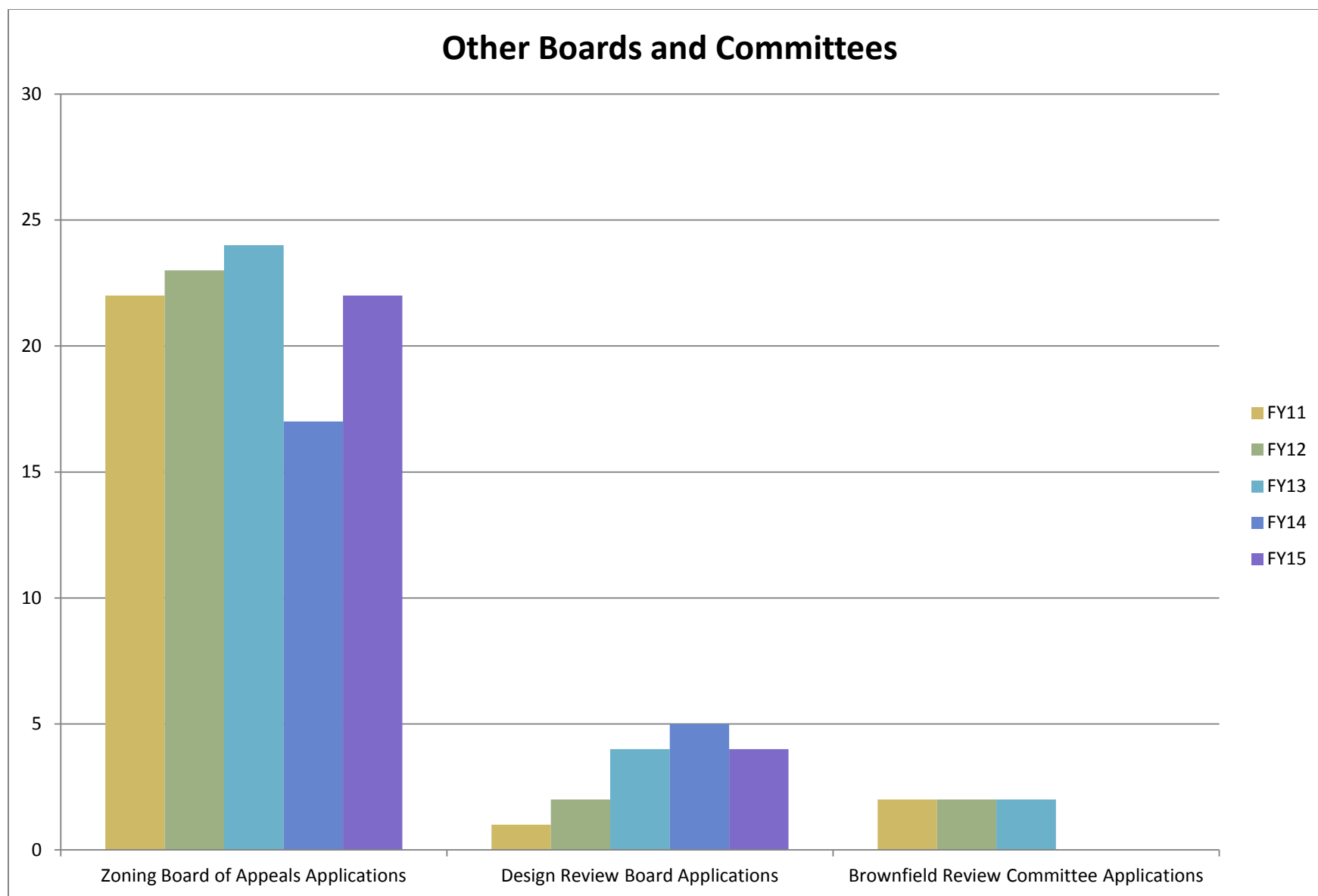
Development Review - Staff Review

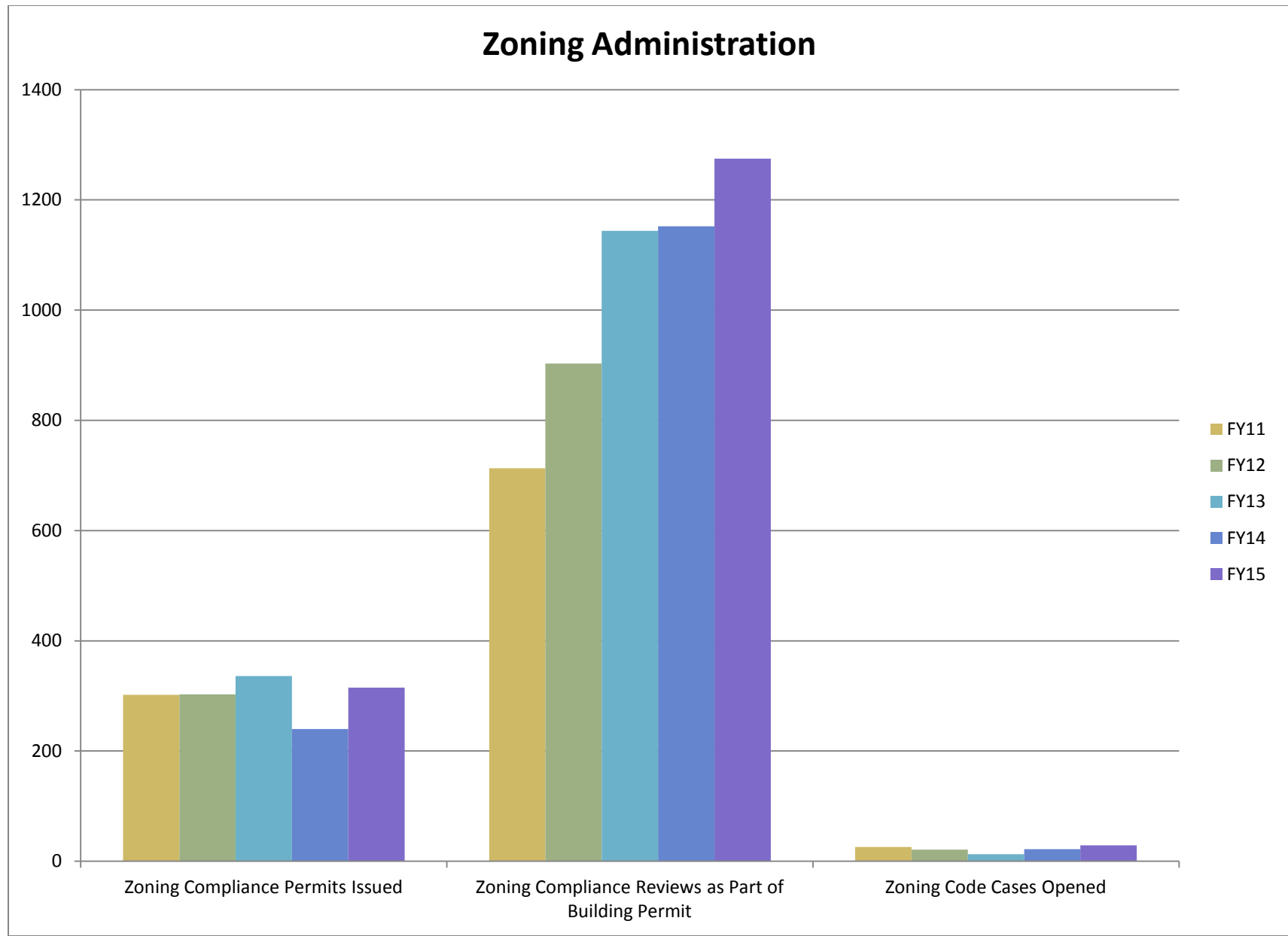
| | <i>Administrative Land Transfer Applications</i> | <i>Administrative Amendment Applications</i> |
|-------------|--|--|
| <i>FY11</i> | 5 | 12 |
| <i>FY12</i> | 5 | 11 |
| <i>FY13</i> | 5 | 12 |
| <i>FY14</i> | 6 | 13 |
| <i>FY15</i> | 8 | 19 |

Site Compliance

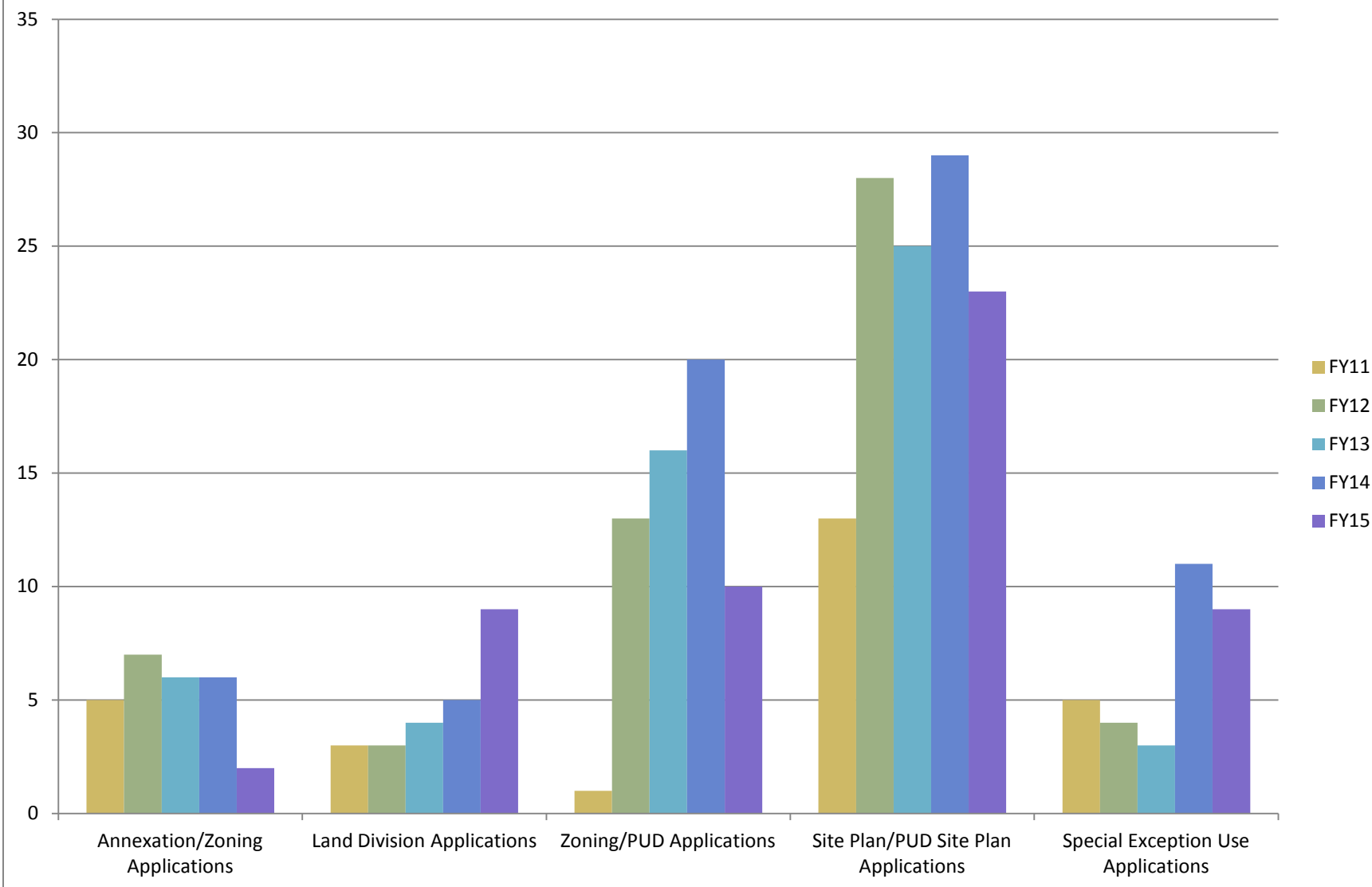
| | <i>Site Compliance Project Applications</i> |
|-------------|---|
| <i>FY11</i> | 18 |
| <i>FY12</i> | 21 |
| <i>FY13</i> | 22 |
| <i>FY14</i> | 28 |
| <i>FY15</i> | 27 |



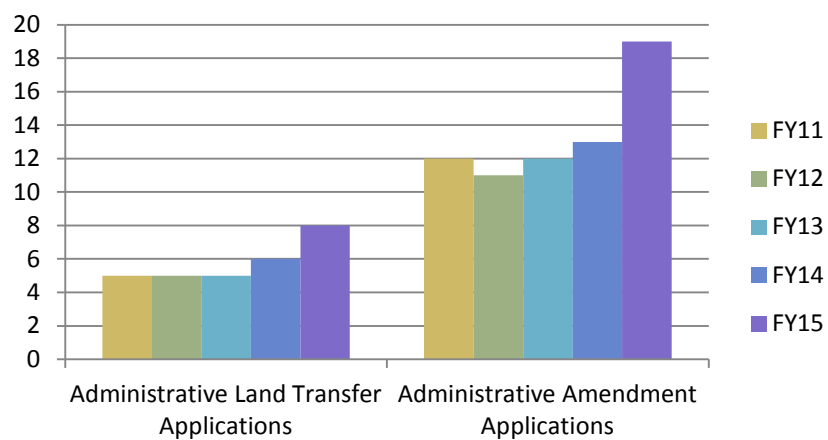




Development Review - Planning Commission Review



Development Review - Staff Review



Site Compliance

