

HILLS HIGHLIGHTS

Winter 2025 #104

Mayor
Lauren Fisher

Mayor Pro Tem
Susan McCarthy

City Commissioners:
Brad Baxter
Alice Buckley
David Fisher

City Manager
David Hendrickson

City Hall
45 East Long Lake Road
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
48304-2322

Telephone: 248.644.1520
Facsimile: 248.644.4813
www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net

City Office Hours:
7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday – Thursday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Friday

Non-Emergency:
Police and Fire: 248.644.4200

Emergency: 911

City Commission Meetings:
Second Tuesday of every
Month at 7:30 p.m.

Planning Commission Meetings:
Second Tuesday of every
Month at 4:00 p.m.

**Zoning Board of
Appeal Meetings:**
Third Tuesday of every
Month at 4:00 p.m.



LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

By: Lauren Fisher, Mayor

It is an honor to serve as your Mayor and continue the legacy of maintaining Bloomfield Hills as a beautiful, safe, and well-managed community. I was first elected to serve as City Commissioner in 2021 and re-elected in 2023. Prior and during my time serving on the City Commission, I have also served terms on the Bloomfield Hills Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals since 2018.

My husband, Greg, and I have lived and raised our four children in Bloomfield Hills for over 30 years. I've long appreciated the unique beauty of Bloomfield Hills, its mature tree canopy and rolling terrain, where the absence of sidewalks preserves the natural flow of the landscape and a sense of openness. This natural landscape is something all of us representing the City are committed to preserving.

Under the leadership of our City Council, our outstanding City Manager Dave Hendrickson, along with his exceptional team of Bloomfield Hills staff, we have recently accomplished the following:

Financial Responsibility: The city has maintained a healthy, balanced budget with financials that have again earned a AAA bond rating and clean audit, thanks to our bright and dedicated Finance Director / Treasurer Sandra Barlass.

Infrastructure: Every year, we are committed to road improvements in the City, without issuing new bonds to cover the expense. Thank you for your patience with the road diversions on Long Lake and Eastways last year.

The City has updated our cybersecurity protections and invested in new public safety equipment, including a new fire truck and police vehicles.

Public Safety: We have hired a new Chief of Police, Jeff King, who brings a wealth of experience and leadership skills with great energy to the Public Safety team. Chief King has expertise in crime prevention and has strong relationships with State and Federal agencies to enhance our safety. I would like to commend our officers, led by Captain Lockard, for earning the "Public Safety Accreditation Certificate", for which they endured a rigorous review. Only 88 of over 600 police agencies in Michigan earned this award.

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As we look ahead, I am happy to share some of the initiatives for the City:

Community Engagement: We are excited to host the Public Safety Open House in the fall of 2025. I encourage you to attend to connect with the public safety department and the community as a whole at this wonderful family event.

Transparency & Accessibility: We are enhancing the city website to highlight and improve access to public information.

Technology: The City is working to identify fiberoptic options for residential customers and we will be installing updated audio-visual equipment at City Hall to improve public meeting presentations.

Ordinances: As part of the Master Plan Resolution approved by the City Commission and Planning Commission, the City Commission has set a goal to bring both ordinance clarity and public education for building and development expectations. For example, did you know that residents are only allowed to cut down 3 mature trees per year on their property? Clear-cutting is prohibited. Did you know that residents and builders who deviate from approved building plans or zoning requirements will each get a fine and a misdemeanor? Let's all work together to preserve Bloomfield Hills' rolling hills and mature, diverse tree canopy to maintain its beauty and character.

Community Engagement & Election Participation: Thank you to the registered voters for exercising your right to vote in the Presidential Election. Our city had a 73% voter turnout. I would like to applaud Amy Burton, Assistant City Manager / City Clerk and staff member Jennifer West for conducting an efficient and trustworthy election without long wait times for voters. I would also like to personally thank the residents who lent their time and integrity to this important process as election inspectors.

Woodward Avenue Noise: Lastly, I need to report on the City's efforts to reduce the noise pollution on Woodward Avenue. We have collaborated with other cities along the Woodward Avenue corridor to urge the Michigan legislature to pass a bill to authorize effective tools for our Public Safety officers to curb excessive vehicle noise. Unfortunately, this effort has been postponed by the State legislators. We continue to push for legislative changes and intentionally provide a local law enforcement presence day and night on Woodward to deter the noise nuisance. I encourage you to communicate with your State Senator and State Representative to move this initiative forward.

On behalf of my fellow City Commissioners, thank you for your continued support of our city government. Alongside your dedicated City Manager Dave Hendrickson and our city staff, we will continue to work hard to maintain and improve Bloomfield Hills' standards of excellence. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to us or to our friendly, highly competent city staff.

All the best in 2025,

Lauren G. Fisher

Mayor, City of Bloomfield Hills

Hills Highlights – Available Electronically

In between the printed editions,

the City publishes electronic newsletters throughout the year.

If you are interested in subscribing to the e-newsletter, please visit the Open Government tab on the website at www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net.



New Public Safety Director

By: David Hendrickson, City Manager

Chief Jeff Gormley has retired after 25 years of dedicated service to the City. The City appreciates Mr. Gormley's service and wishes him well in his future endeavors. The Director of Public Safety position is a critical one for the City. To replace this leadership position, the City Commission contracted the Michigan Municipal League (MML) to conduct an executive search. The Commission challenged MML to attract a broad list of qualified candidates by reaching out nationwide to find the best person suited for our community. MML developed a professional list of candidates, including an internal candidate. The variety allowed the City Commission to compare several highly qualified individuals, before eventually choosing one that best fit the needs of the City and our Public Safety Department.

Ultimately, the Commission chose Jeff King to extend a conditional offer of employment to. After passing a series of pre-employment requirements, Mr. King was appointed the City's new Public Safety Director. Jeff started December 9, 2024 and brings to his new position 29 years of law enforcement experience, the last five of which have been as the Chief of Police for the City of Farmington Hills. Jeff holds a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and a Master's in Leadership from Central Michigan University. Director King is a graduate of Northwestern University's Police Staff and Command and has served on multiple boards and commissions involving law enforcement in Oakland County and Southeast Michigan.

Director King will employ his experience and successes in collaboration, consensus building, training, labor contracts, supervision, and leadership to help keep the department on track in delivering the exceptional service our community expects and deserves.

Director King is excited to become engaged in our community and is available through email at jking@bloomfieldhillspolice.com or by phone at 248-530-1427.



Get your 2025 Dog License



Dog licenses must be purchased annually, a valid rabies certificate required. The cost for a dog license is \$10.00. Please note, Michigan law now requires dogs to be licensed at 4 months of age.

Residents can purchase the annual dog license either:

- In-person at City Hall during regular business hours
- By making payment online at www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net and emailing the current rabies certificate and payment verification to city staff at ap@bloomfieldhillsmi.net





Trees, Trees, Trees!

By: Brad Baxter, City Commissioner

The City of Bloomfield Hills is known for its tree canopy and in fact it is part of the city's master plan to preserve and protect trees – *Woodlands and woodlots are often found in conjunction with other natural features. Most development in the City is abundantly landscaped with trees and shrubs. This landscape is a visual asset and supports the City's wildlife...* (excerpt from *Master Plan*, 2009, and updated in 2024).

Based on the goals of the Master Plan, the Tree and Woodlands Protection Ordinance was adopted in 2012. Links to the municipal code, Chapter 22, Vegetation, *ARTICLE II. – Tree and Woodlands Protection* can be found on the city's website, bloomfieldhillsmi.net (code of ordinances section).

Trees contribute significantly to the natural beauty, character, and value of property within the city. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, emit pure oxygen, help lower the temperature in the environment, clean and reduce air pollution (excerpt from the *Tree and Woodlands Protection Ordinance*).

Key points from the ordinance to consider*:

- Permits are required to remove regulated or landmark trees except as described below.
 - ◊ Regulated trees are trees that have a DBH of 6 inches or greater.
 - ◊ Landmark trees are trees that have a significantly higher DBH.
 - † An Oak landmark tree is defined by a DBH of 16 inches or greater.
 - † A Pine landmark tree is defined by a DBH of 18 inches or greater.
 - ◊ DBH means the diameter of the tree at breast height or 4 ½ feet from the ground.
 - ◊ A removable or exempt tree is a tree that is either a 'junk' species such as Box Elder or Tree of Heaven for example, OR a tree that is within a proposed building pad (plus 15 feet), or a tree within a required drainage feature.
- Tree removal not requiring a permit
 - ◊ For parcels 1 ½ acres or more, up to 3 regulated trees may be removed within a 2 year period.
 - ◊ For parcels less than 1 ½ acres, up to 2 regulated trees may be removed within a 2 year period.
- Nonexempt trees that are removed, must be replaced per below.
 - ◊ Regulated trees must be replaced by trees that equal or exceed 50% of the total DBH removed.
 - ◊ Landmark trees must be replaced by trees that equal or exceed 100% of the total DBH removed.
- Examples of nonexempt tree replacement
 - ◊ A group of four regulated trees with a cumulative DBH of 24 inches would need to be replaced by three trees each with a DBH of 4 inches (total replacement DBH of 12 inches).
 - ◊ A landmark tree with a DBH of 20 inches would need to be replaced by 5 trees with a DBH of 4 inches.

*Please refer to the complete ordinance before proceeding with any tree removal, or permit applications.

In addition to the Tree and Woodlands Protection ordinance, the city has also instituted an annual program planting approximately 75 to 80 trees within the city right-of-way which can include portions of residents' front and side yards if so requested. If you're looking to add some shade to your yard, love the color of a Red Maple in the fall,

or want to plant that legacy Oak that will live up to 200 years, contact the city to get on the list for the next annual fall planting!

And don't forget to avoid cutting, trimming, or pruning oaks from April through October to avoid the spread of Oak wilt. Oak wilt is a fungal disease that is transmitted by a beetle. Once infected, a tree can pass the disease to other trees through its root system. It can be devastating if it takes hold – best to take precautions and avoid it all together.

Enjoy the canopy!



Focus on Public Safety

By: David Fisher, City Commissioner

Since you live in Bloomfield Hills, you enjoy the protection of a very responsive and professional Public Safety Department. As a City Commissioner and proud resident of over 58 years, I am committed to supporting a highly trained group of individuals to provide police, fire, and medical first responder services.

In the City, we are fortunate to have a low crime rate and limited fire occurrences. Nevertheless, tragedy and dangerous situations occur. Our Public Safety Department is constantly evaluating its ability to respond to all emergencies to ensure their policies, practices, and training are consistent with best in class standards. The Department voluntarily applied and earned Accreditation through the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Program.

Accreditation is a proactive and time-proven way to help law enforcement agencies evaluate and improve their performance. The foundation of Accreditation voluntarily adopts standards containing a clear statement of professional objectives. Participating agencies conduct a thorough self-analysis to determine which of their existing operations meet some of the standards. Where there are gaps, the procedures can be modified to meet the standards and professional objectives. When the procedures are in place, a team of trained Commission assessors verify that applicable standards have been successfully implemented and the agency is in compliance. I am proud to report that we have achieved this important milestone. Accreditation is valid for three years, and during that time, our agency must submit annual reports attesting to its continued compliance with the standards under which it was initially evaluated.

The ultimate goal of the Bloomfield Hills Commission on Public Safety is to provide a highly trained and effective emergency response team. By providing our financial support, the city has been able to purchase a new state-of-the-art fire truck and insure the Bloomfield Hills officers have the necessary training, technology, and equipment as part of our ongoing commitment to the community. Additionally, our recent hire of a new Police Chief, Jeff King, will support their hard work earning their future Department Accreditation.

Thank you for your continued support of these hard working men and women who toil tirelessly to keep all of us safe in times of need. I am proud of our Department and am confident their efforts will continue to protect the Bloomfield Hills community for years to come.



The Future of Transit on Woodward

By: Alice Buckley, City Commissioner

Lots of plans for Woodward Avenue's future are underway!

Bloomfield Hills now has a bus stop on both the northbound and southbound sides of Woodward at Long Lake Rd. We have not yet seen much activity at these stops.

SMART has ramped up its busses and hired more drivers. Busses seem to be everywhere along Woodward these days.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the agency that has primary control over Woodward, has formed a group called "Mayors on Woodward" including representatives from MDOT, SEMCOG, the RTA, SMART, Oakland County and all of the cities along Woodward from Detroit to Pontiac.

The aim of this group is to study and consider a myriad of new alternatives for Woodward. They are looking into roadway designs, pedestrian crossings, dedicated bike lanes, traffic signals, transit options, sidewalks, road diets, traffic lanes, parking, sustainability, drainage, etc. with a focus on safety for all modes of transportation, including cars, trucks, busses, bicycles and pedestrians. There are participants in this group who would like to see dedicated bike lanes on Woodward from Detroit to Pontiac similar to those recently installed in Ferndale.

The Mayors on Woodward has engaged a consulting firm to conduct a study which is underway to come up with an overall plan and series of recommendations for MDOT's Woodward Avenue Right-of Way that can serve as a strategic approach for future MDOT investments in the Woodward Corridor.

The consulting firm is seeking public input by means of in-person and virtual open houses and on-line surveys. The first in-person open house will be on Tuesday, February 18 from noon to 2:00 p.m and from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Pleasant Ridge Community Center and will cover an overview of goals and evaluation criteria. Open house materials, including a public survey, will be available at Michigan.gov/WoodwardPlan. One can also join a virtual first open house at Michigan.gov/WoodwardPlan on Thursday, February 20 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Please see the "Open House Invite" in this newsletter and on the Bloomfield Hills' website for further details. I urge everyone to participate.

Simultaneously with MDOT's activities, the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) is seeking grant funds for planning and designing enhancements to the SMART FAST bus stops, pedestrian safety features and traffic flow enhancements to benefit the FAST busses. Traffic flow enhancements could include dedicated transit lanes, signal prioritization, queue jumps and bus bulbs.

The FAST busses that we see on Woodward are an elevated version of the basic SMART busses. The FAST service promises fewer stops, faster transport and nicer bus shelters with heat and technology delivering current bus scheduling information.

The two bus stops in Bloomfield Hills are intended for the FAST service and could be affected by the RTA's proposed changes.

Woodward Avenue cuts through the very center of Bloomfield Hills and plays an essential role in defining our city. Let's all play a part in defining its future.



M-1(Woodward Avenue) Corridor Plan OPEN HOUSE INVITE

IN-PERSON OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2025

Noon-2 p.m. and 4-6 p.m.

Pleasant Ridge Community Center
4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069

View informational boards, ask questions, and provide feedback. Open house materials will also be available on Michigan.gov/WoodwardPlan.

Free on-site parking is available.

The nearest transit stop to the community center is SMART (Route 450 and 460) at Woodward Avenue and Millington Road.

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025

4-6 p.m.

Join the virtual open house at Michigan.gov/WoodwardPlan.

Attendees who require mobility, visual, hearing, written, or other assistance for effective participation should contact Orlando Curry at 517-241-7462 or CurryO@Michigan.gov, preferably at least five business days prior to the scheduled meeting. Forms are located on the [Title VI webpage](#). Requests made after this timeframe will be evaluated and honored to the extent possible.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is undertaking a corridor plan for M-1 (Woodward Avenue). The intent is to establish a comprehensive vision for the corridor that balances the needs of all users (autos, pedestrians, transit, and bicycles) to provide a strategic approach for future MDOT investments. Information on transportation data, safety, previous plans, and other existing information will be presented. We are looking for input on improvements to consider as the plan proceeds to the next phase.

Your voice matters! Please take the survey below and visit our website for more information.



Michigan.gov/WoodwardPlan



Public Survey



Finance Update

By: Susan McCarthy, City Commissioner

The city budget undergoes a thorough review and audit each year. This year, we achieved another "clean audit," thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Finance Director/Treasurer, Sandra Barlass, City Manager Dave Hendrickson, and their team. This team diligently monitors expenses and spending, which has enabled the city to remain financially stable.

Currently, the total fund balance (savings) stands at \$7.1 million, with an unrestricted fund balance of \$5.14 million. The unrestricted fund balance as a percentage of expenditures is 40.4%, exceeding the City Commission's policy range of 30-35%. The \$2.3 million increase over the past five years is mainly due to tax revenue increasing by 26%, while total expenditures have risen by a more modest 17%. The rise in expenditures is largely due to increasing healthcare costs, funding for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), and contributions to the pension fund. The city has also prioritized reducing debt. A 15-year road bond was paid off last October, with all road projects after 2010 being financed with cash. Additionally, the refinancing of the pension bond in 2021 is expected to save about \$300,000, with that bond scheduled to be paid off in 2034.

The city takes pride in its ongoing commitment to fully fund our pension and OPEB funds. We are in compliance with the State of Michigan's Protecting Local Government Retirement and Benefits Act for both pension and OPEB with our funding levels exceeding the minimum percentages set by the state. To further improve our outstanding liabilities, the City Commission has budgeted additional contributions to both accounts, helping us reach a fully funded status in the next five to ten years.

To view budget statements, financial statements and OPEB/Pension reports, visit: www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net.



City of Bloomfield Hills
45 E. Long Lake Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304-2322

Upcoming Holidays – City Hall Closed

Presidents' Day – February 17, 2025

Good Friday – April 18, 2025

2025 Bloomfield Hills City Commission:

Lauren Fisher, Mayor

Susan McCarthy, Mayor Pro Tem

Brad Baxter, Commissioner

Alice Buckley, Commissioner

David Fisher, Commissioner

CITY STAFF:

David Hendrickson, City Manager

Amy L. Burton, Assistant City Manager / City Clerk

Sandra Barlass, Finance Director, Treasurer

Jeff King, Director of Public Safety

Brian Vargason, Building Official

Jamie Spivy, DPW Foreman

John Rogers, Code Enforcement Officer

EMERGENCY:

Police, Fire, Medical – dial 911

After hours (non-emergency) (248) 644-4200

CITY GOVERNMENT:

Manager's Office – (248) 530-1404

Building Official – (248) 530-1408

Clerk's Office – (248) 530-1403

Finance & Treasurer – (248) 530-1402

Police / Public Safety Dept. – (248) 644-4200

Public Works – (248) 530-1412

Where to Get Answers

CITY SERVICES:

Animal Control – (248) 644-4200

Building & Permit Info. – (248) 530-1409

Code Enforcement – (248) 530-1410

Library Service – (248) 647-1700
(Baldwin Public Library)

Police Services (Non-emerg.) (248) 644-4200

Property / Assessing Info. – (248) 858-0084
(Oakland County)

Sanitary Sewer Service & Billing – (248) 858-1110
(Oakland County Water Resources Commission)

Street Maintenance – (248) 530-1404

Trash & Waste Pick Up – GFL
(586) 772-8900 or (888) 877-4996

Voting Information – (248) 530-1403

Water Service & Billing – (248) 858-1100
(Oakland County Water Resources Commission
hours – 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

Water and Sewer Line Repair – (248) 858-0487
(Oakland County Water Resources Commission
hours – 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

OTHER SERVICES

AT&T Repair Service – (800) 515-7272

Amtrak (Info / Reservations) – (800) 872-7245

Baldwin Public Library – (248) 647-1700

Birmingham (City) – (248) 530-1800

Birmingham Public Schools – (248) 203-3000

Birmingham / Bloomfield Chamber – (248) 644-1700

Bloomfield Hills Country Club – (248) 644-6262

Bloomfield Hills Schools – (248) 341-5400

Bloomfield Township Senior Services – (248) 723-3500

Bloomfield Open Hunt – (248) 644-9411

Comcast Customer Service – (800) 934-6489

Customer Advocate – (734) 254-1557

Consumers Power (Service, Billing & Emergencies) –
(800) 477-5050

Cranbrook Educational Community – (248) 645-3000

DTE Energy – (Customer Services & Emergencies) –
(800) 477-4747

Haven (Domestic Violence Counseling) – (248) 334-1274 or
(877) 922-1274

Oakland County – (248) 858-1000

Oakland County Assessor – (248) 858-0776
or (248) 858-0740

Oakland County Health Dept. – (248) 858-1280

Oakland County Clerk / Register of Deeds – (248) 858-0581

Oakland County Treasurer – (248) 858-0611

Oakland Water Resources Commission –
main: (248) 356-6299 emergencies: (248) 624-6366

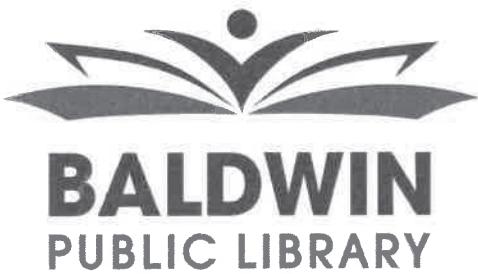
Road Commission for Oakland County – (877) 858-4808
weekday hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

After hours & weekends call – (248) 858-4895

U.S. Postal Service – 2050 South Blvd. (248) 332-3981

Village Club – (248) 644-3450

48th District Court – information & probation:
(248) 433-9373 criminal: (248) 647-1141



DELIVERY SERVICE NOW AVAILABLE!

The Baldwin Public Library now offers holds delivery to the City of Bloomfield Hills office. All items are delivered by noon on the Thursday following your request and are then available for pickup during regular business hours at the City office. Pickup is available for books, DVDs, vinyl, CDs, and magazines. Idea Lab items, Library of Things items, and Internet to Go kits must be picked up in person at the library.

To request that items be delivered to the City of Bloomfield Hills office, please have your Library Card number and list of requested items handy and contact us in one of the following ways:

1 Call the Library:

248-554-4630 for items already held for you
248-554-4650 for Adult and Teen materials
248-554-4670 for Youth materials

2 Email the Library at bplcirc@baldwinlib.org

3 Fill out and submit the online form at baldwinlib.org/offsite-pickup/



Need a library card? Visit baldwinlib.org/get-library-card/
or scan this QR code.

House Key Program

The House Key program is a free service provided to the residents of the City of Bloomfield Hills by the Public Safety Department. The purpose is to provide a safe and secure location for an additional key to your house to be stored.

Should you become locked out of your house, you can call the Public Safety Department and an officer will respond with the key and assist you in opening your home. Your key will only be used by this department in cases of an emergency such as medical or fire emergencies.

Please call 248-644-4200 to ask more about the House Key program.



Baldwin Lending Library at City Hall

City residents have additional Baldwin Library resources now available at City Hall. The Baldwin Lending Library, in the lobby of City Hall, has an expanded selection of books and DVDs available for city residents to borrow. The materials in the lending library are provided to residents as part of Baldwin's service to the community. Please take as many items as you like and return them to the shelf at City Hall when you are finished. New materials are stocked regularly by Baldwin Library staff.

House Watch Program

The House Watch program is a free service provided to the residents of the City of Bloomfield Hills by the Public Safety Department. During your time away, an officer will periodically check the outside of your home and if anything unusual is found, you or your contact person will be notified.

To take advantage of this free service, please call 248-644-4200 and ask to be placed on the House Watch program.



Thank you to the Department of Public Works Team

A big thank you to our DPW crew who work hard year-round, but notably during the winter weather to keep the city's roads cleared from snow and ice to ensure safe travels throughout the city.

