



CITY OF
**Sterling
Heights**

InnovatingLiving

Sterling Heights, Michigan
City Planner



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EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

The Position in Brief

The City of Sterling Heights is seeking qualified planning professionals to apply for the position of City Planner. The Office of Planning is part of the City Development Department. Interested candidates are encouraged to review the position responsibilities and minimum qualifications to apply to work with an exceptional city.

The Community

[The City of Sterling Heights, MI](#) (pop. **134,346 (2020)**) is the second largest suburb in Metro Detroit and the fourth largest city in Michigan. Sterling Heights was incorporated in 1968 and consistently ranks as “safest city in Michigan” with populations over 100,000. The city is 36.8 mi² and is 16 miles from Downtown Detroit. The City’s southern border is 6 miles from Detroit’s northern border. The city’s high quality of life is rooted in its thriving local economy, wide variety of housing choices, safe neighborhoods, beautiful, natural environment, high performing school districts, rich history, and effective local services. The city’s vision is “*A vibrant, inclusive community for residents and businesses that is safe, active, progressive and distinctive. Sterling Heights – a bold vision for an exceptional quality of life.*”



Sterling Heights at a Glance*

For more information, please visit the [Southeast Michigan Council of Governments \(SEMCOG\)](#).

Population: 134,346	Land Area: 36.8 sq miles
Household Units: 54,909	Median Age: 40.4
Median home value: \$198,300	Owner-Occupied Housing: 72%
Median Household Income: \$66,346	Bachelor's degree or higher: 58%

* 2020 Census Data



Government

The City of Sterling Heights is widely recognized as a destination community for those seeking a high-level of public services. Its quality of life is exemplified by exceptional neighborhoods, first-rate library, and parks and recreation facilities and programming. It provides full-service, state-of-the-art fire and police departments, outstanding schools, and low crime rates complimented by low taxes. It is a culturally diverse community that embraces the differences in its resident population. Sterling Heights is fortunate to have one of the best industrial tax bases in the State of Michigan that fuels job opportunities in many desirable, highly compensated employment sectors.

There are 7 Departments with over 20 divisions and offices that carryout the day-to-day operations of City government. Sterling Heights' municipal organization features over 480 full-time and over 130 part-time professionals. The city operates under a Council-Manager form of government where the executive leadership team, including the City Development Department, reports to the City Manager.



History

Although the City of Sterling Heights was incorporated in 1968, generations of residents have inhabited the area for many years. Historical accounts of the people of the community and their efforts to build the City of Sterling Heights are detailed in the four stories listed on the left option bars of this page. For additional historical information, please [visit the Historical Commission's Official Library webpage](#).

Education

The City is served by the [Utica Community Schools \(UCS\)](#) and [Warren Consolidated School Districts](#). UCS consists of 44 schools ranging from elementary to high school ages and serves the northern half of the City. UCS supports two high schools for the City. It also provides adult classes, ESL (English as a Second Language) and other special education services. Warren Consolidated School District (WCS) consists of 24 schools, 13 of which that have received the Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School Award and serves the southern half of the City. WCS has one high school.



The City Planner Position

The City Planner directs the planning activity of the city and is responsible for the orderly development of land and other physical assets of the City in compliance with adopted master plans and planning policy. The City Planner reports to the City Development Director. This is a highly responsible management position that oversees the positions of Assistant City Planner/City Development Manager, a Planner II, a Planner I, and manages a budget of approximately \$400,000. The City Planner provides administrative leadership to the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Sustainability Commission; is the liaison to the Corridor Improvement Authority; and serves as the Executive Director of the Sterling Heights Housing Commission. The City Planner is part of the Michigan Association of Public Employees Supervisory Union.



Sterling Vision Strategic Plan

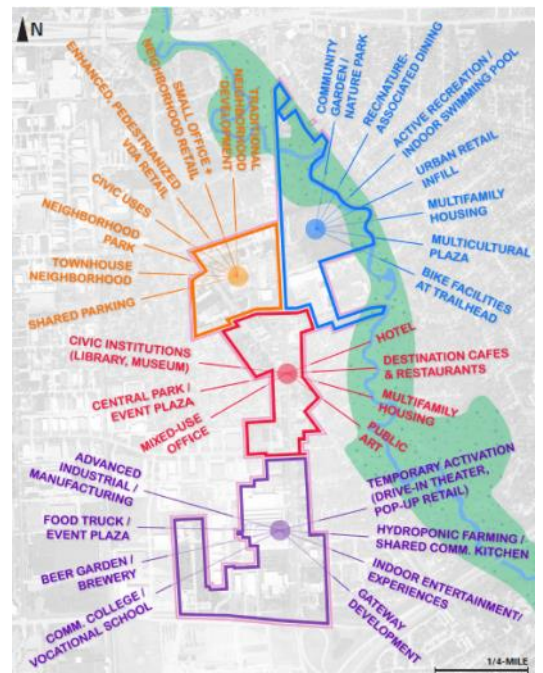
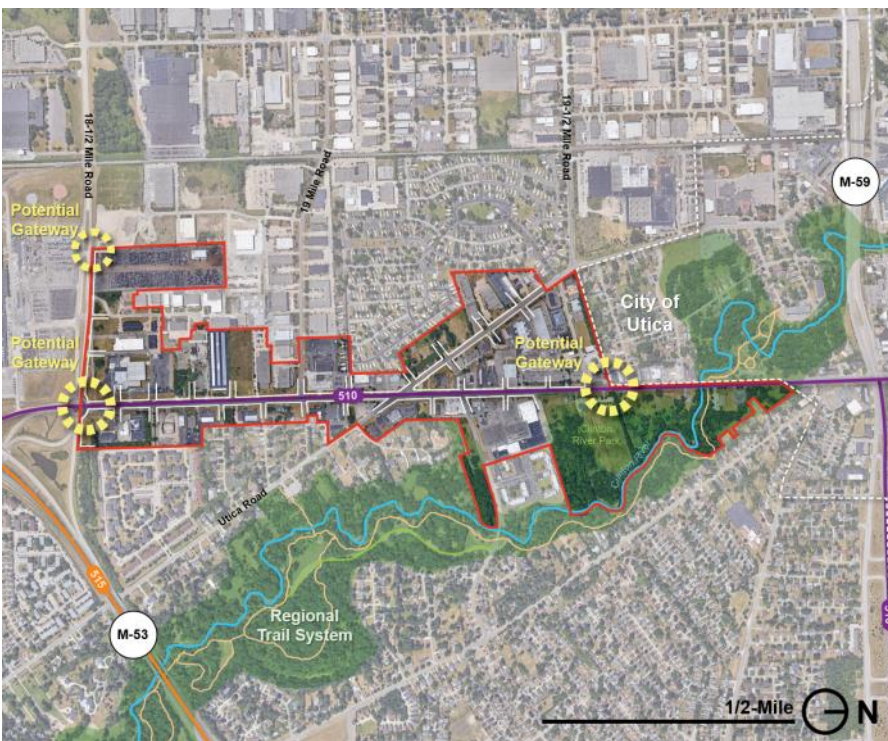
The City has created the [Sterling Vision Strategic Plan](#) focused on the city's future through 2030. It is focused on sustainability by meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The next City Planner will have an integral role in working on the next – 2040 – Strategic Plan.

Master Land Use Plan

The [City Master Land Use Plan](#) was last updated and adopted in 2017. The plan has served the community well. As the next City Planner starts their tenure with the city, they have an opportunity to be part of the beginning phase of updating the City's Master Land Use Plan.

New Parks Master Plan

In January of this year, the City adopted a comprehensive [Parks, Recreation and Non-Motorized Master Plan](#). The City Planner will have the opportunity to work cross-departmentally to help the community realize the vision set forth in the new plan.



Opportunities for the Sterling Heights Office of Planning

Sterling Heights is looking for a dynamic and innovative planning professional to lead its Planning staff. The new City Planner will join the Office of Planning that includes the positions of Assistant City Planner / City Development Manager, Planner II, and Planner I. Together, this group has the opportunity to help create and implement a model for 21st century redevelopment of a suburban city.

Innovation as a Top Priority. The elected and appointed leaders of Sterling Heights are looking for the Office of Planning to be innovative and create entirely new planning concepts to redevelop a built-out suburb of Detroit. The city recognizes the importance of planning and depends on this office to lead the way both in the approval of appropriate planning concepts and to provide recommendations to avoid detrimental concepts. This recognition has led to significantly increasing the Office of Planning budget and adding new positions to the team. The city is poised to make progress in the areas of sustainability, multi-modal transportation, inclusive parks, and environmental stewardship. The city works with excellent consultants on an as-needed basis, but the core team of three planners have the amazing opportunity to actively guide the elected and appointed officials to innovate the future of suburban redevelopment.

Employee Engagement and Office Culture. The next City Planner will have an opportunity to build a positive and innovative team culture. The Planner II and Planner I are exceptionally talented employees excited to work as part of a team that values communication and teamwork. The successful applicants will be a commitment to the recruitment and retention of a talented workforce that is representative of the demographic composition of the community. The successful candidate must show a dedication to the growth of each team member through the facilitation of team building, mentorship, and individual development plans.

Cross-Department Collaboration. The Office of Planning works closely with departments from across the City. The City Planner must be skilled in building cross-department cooperation and highly sensitive to the needs and responsibilities of other City leaders. Specifically, the City Planner will consistently collaborate with the City Development Director, City Engineer, Building Official, and Fire Marshal on a range of matters. This team of leaders must work seamlessly to ensure expedient and thorough review of site plans under the community development and customer service principles of a “one-stop-shop.” When there are challenging nontraditional redevelopment plans, it is essential that the City Planner and other leaders work with synergy and innovation to ensure developments that support the City’s vision moving forward.





New Planning Concepts. Private sector development interest in the city is extremely high. Since Sterling Heights is a mature suburb, the redevelopment plans are complex and require the Office of Planning to think through complex topics when reviewing redevelopment plans. There are many exciting planned private developments in process in the city, including the Mocerri Veranda, Maple Lane redevelopment, a luxury, master-planned community to include golf courses designed by Raymond Hearn. In addition to private developments, the city is exploring a city-wide traffic calming study, the impact of electrification of transportation, and cutting-edge, mixed-use zoning for intersection notes.

Redevelopment of Lakeside Mall – a City in a City. One the most exciting redevelopment opportunities in the country is poised to happen in Sterling Heights. Developed by A. Alfred Taubman, Lakeside Mall opened in 1976 as a forward thinking 1,505,504 sq ft indoor mall with 7,745 surface parking spaces. The Mall spurred tremendous development along the “Golden Corridor.” As experiential shopping and living has changed, the city is working with stakeholders to redefine this one-of-its-kind geographic space into an urban center for the next century. Over the past half-dozen years the city has worked through concepts, including a [Sustainability Assessment](#). The next City Planner now has the opportunity to use flexible zoning and innovative planning practices to move forward with this generation-defining, multi-project development.



North Van Dyke Corridor Improvement Plan.

In fall 2020, the city and the Van Dyke Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority endeavored to create [a master plan for the future of the North Van Dyke corridor](#). This stretch of road has amazing potential for public and private investment, opportunities for placemaking, district branding, and creative visual identity concepts. The Office of Planning has a terrific opportunity to work with stakeholders to reimagine this corridor into a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, pleasant place with a distinct identity. Currently dominated by strip malls and auto-oriented uses, the objective is to create a place that feels organic, reflects the cultural diversity of the City, provides a modern interpretation of a “main street,” and creates a roadway that is livable while providing space for pedestrians and multiple modes of transportation.

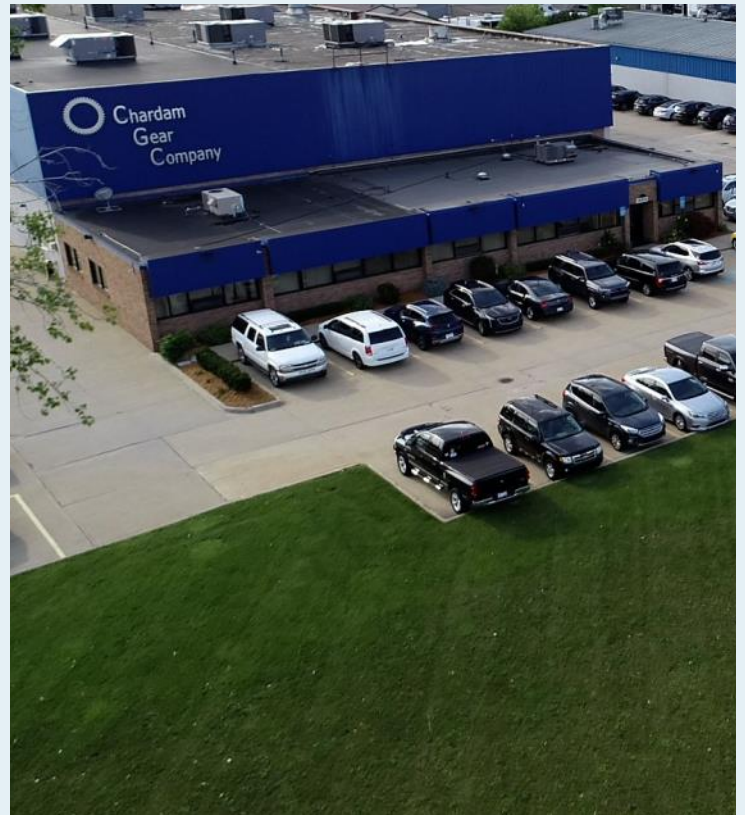
Qualifications, Responsibilities, and Experience Level

Position Responsibilities

- Directs the update of the Master Land Use Plan and recommends amendments to the Zoning Ordinances.
- Assists the City Manager as a point of contact for prospective retailers and to market the City's assets to attract retail business to the City. Establishes and maintains relationships with area real estate professionals.
- Collaborates with owners and/or developers of industrial, residential, and large multi-use sites and champions area redevelopments to include new design concepts and retail formats, public environments, amenities, tenant mixes, use mixes, unique parking configurations, neighborhood links, and customer experiences tailored to fit the needs of the community.
- Acts as a technical adviser to employees regarding site plan and subdivision plat reviews, subdivision design principles and land use relationships, zoning ordinances, etc.
- Analyzes data and prepares comprehensive reports regarding planning-related matters (e.g., land use patterns, population projections, housing trends, commercial feasibility, and market analysis, etc.), as needed.
- Presents planning-related information to City Council, the City Manager and others in meetings as needed. Prepares evidence for presentation in court; testifies in planning related lawsuits.
- Oversees the Community Development Block Grant Program.

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's Degree in Public or Business Administration, Urban Planning or related field including training in real estate, principles of management, and real estate appraisal is required. Master's Degree in Public or Business Administration, Urban Planning or related field is highly preferred.
- Eight (8) years of progressive experience in public planning preferably in a municipality, including experience in managing planning professionals.
- AICP or other similar accreditations, certifications, or specializations, is highly preferred.
- Knowledge of construction, planning and design fields including architecture, urban planning, transportation planning and landscaping.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.



Salary and Application

Total compensation for this position, inclusive of base annual salary and compensatory pay, is up to \$140,943 annually with regular increases, performance pay, plus excellent benefits. The City provides a comprehensive and competitive benefits package inclusive of a BCBS medical coverage plan with an annual HSA contribution by the City, dental at no cost, vision benefits, retirement benefits, a generous schedule of paid holidays and leave time, parental leave benefits, and disability benefits. The City also operates a physician-staffed, on-site medical clinic for all full-time employees and their dependents.

Apply online at www.GovHRjobs.com with resume, cover letter, contact information and three (3) professional references. Questions regarding the position may be directed to the attention of Jaymes Vettraino, Vice President, GovHR USA, Tel: 847-380-3240.

Candidates will be reviewed upon receipt of application, with preliminary reviews to be completed by February 16, 2023.

As an equal opportunity employer, the City of Sterling Heights prohibits and condemns discrimination and harassment of any kind based on race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law. The City is dedicated to providing a safe and inclusive workplace; is committed to the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all areas of employment; values each employee and appreciates the unique qualities every employee possesses.

[Click HERE to Apply!](#)

***Credit for contributing to the narrative a photographs: the City of Sterling Heights, census.gov, semcog.org*

