

memorandum

DATE: October 17, 2018

TO: Sara Roediger, Planning & Economic Development Director

FROM: Rod Arroyo, Jill Bahm, and Eric Fazzini, Giffels Webster

SUBJECT: 2018 Master Plan Update

In 2017, the City of Rochester Hills initiated an update to the 2012 Master Plan. The theme of this Master Plan Update is “Preserve, Enhance and Diversify.” While these concepts are woven into the Plan, they are most clearly seen in the Plan’s direction to preserve existing neighborhoods, enhance certain redevelopment sites and diversify housing options. The Plan is intended to serve as a guide for how the city can become the place its residents and businesses desire.

Plan Process

The planning process included the following activities:

- 1. Visioning Activities.** The Master Plan process included three Visioning meetings (leadership staff, Youth Council and joint Planning Commission and City Council) intended to outline influencing themes for the planning process. The following themes emerged:
 - **Age-Friendly Community:** The Master Plan should explore what it means to be an “age-friendly” community and provide current and future residents of all ages with a variety of options for housing, transportation, goods and services, and community facilities/resources.
 - **Sustainability:** The Master Plan should direct growth, development, and redevelopment in ways that preserve natural features, reduce storm water runoff, and enhance non-motorized transportation.
 - **Transportation:** While the city will begin updating its Thoroughfare Plan in early 2019, the Master Plan should support connectivity throughout the city and anticipate how changing technology will impact our mobility.
- 2. Review of background information.** Other plans prepared within the past five-to-ten years were reviewed along with existing conditions, demographics and a market assessment (an update from the 2016 assessment prepared in conjunction with the Auburn Road Corridor Plan).
- 3. Public input.** City residents and business owners were encouraged to participate in the planning process in a variety of ways. The multiple platforms and opportunities were designed to meet the needs of the community. Opportunities included:

- **Public Input Survey.** An online survey tool gathered input from the community about potential redevelopment sites, housing needs and wants, and ways to improve the image of Rochester Hills. This survey ran during the analysis portion of the project—from January to April 2018. The survey was completed by 748 people.
 - **Crowdsource Story Map—Picture This!™.** This online tool is an engaging online platform that gives the community the opportunity to submit photos and comments about things people like in the city and other communities. This tool was intended to be intuitive and user-friendly, and to be used on a computer, tablet, or phone. Eighteen people responded on this platform.
 - **Public Open House #1 – April 23, 2018.** Following data collection, the public was invited to attend an open house to review the findings and offer additional input. This open house was held at Rochester College and laid out the information collected in stations that allowed attendees to spend as much time as they wanted to learn about the city, ask questions, and offer their comments. Approximately 40 people attended the open house. Attendees were generally positive about the direction of the city in terms of land use, but did express concerns over the affordability of housing, traffic, and the preservation of natural features.
 - **Open House Story Map.** Following the open house, an additional story map was developed that included the posters and summary of input received. Comments were welcomed through this format as well and responses were generally consistent with the open house.
 - **Fourth-Grade Surveys.** As part of its curriculum, 4th graders in Rochester Hills schools visit City Hall each year. This year, students were asked what their favorite Places were in the city, what they wanted to see in their neighborhoods, what they wanted near their schools, and if they thought they might want to live in the city when they grow up. Over 400 children provided feedback.
 - **Art Contest.** Young people ages 5-18 were asked to consider what makes a Great Place and respond by drawing or painting a picture, writing a poem, or taking a photograph of their favorite Great Places in the City of Rochester Hills. Winning entries are included in the Master Plan Update.
 - **Public Open House #2 September 15, 2018, at the Village of Rochester Hills.** At this open house, the draft Plan was largely complete. Attendees were asked to consider the changes to the Future Land Use Map as well as weigh in on the concepts for the redevelopment sites. Feedback was positive, and no changes were made to the Plan following this open house.
4. **Goals and Objectives:** We have refined the goals and objectives from the 2012 Master Plan for clarity as well as to help better guide action strategies that will follow. The format is intended to illustrate what the city wants and the challenges to overcome.
 5. **Future Land Use Map:** Our presentation of the changes to the Future Land Use Map included identified locations, aerial images, zoning, and current land use maps. The changes are summarized on page 74 of the draft Plan. The 2012 Master Plan land use categories were refined for consistency with previous planning documents. We are recommending clarifying the “Flex” categories and adding a new residential land use category, R5, to accommodate additional housing types and densities. These descriptions have been updated since the last meeting, primarily for formatting clarity and also to add in text for special purpose, parks, and open space.

6. **Redevelopment Sites:** The plan explores redevelopment site concepts for the Bordine’s site, the Suburban Softball/Landfill site, and the Hamlin Landfill areas. The concepts each address site background, precedent images, and discussion of form and site considerations.
7. **Housing Assessment:** Discussion of built and planned density of residential dwellings per acre throughout the city. Densities range from a low of 0.8 dwellings per acre for single-family residential to a high of 20 dwellings per acre for multiple-family residential. Generally, the built density is in alignment with the planned density throughout the city.
8. **Distribution to Reviewing Agencies:** At its October 16 meeting, the Planning Commission unanimously passed a motion requesting that City Council authorize staff to distribute the draft Master Plan Update to neighboring communities and reviewing agencies as required by state law. At its upcoming October 22, 2018 meeting, City Council will be asked to approve the distribution. Once released, these agencies have 42 days to review the draft and share any comments with the City of Rochester Hills. It should be noted that agencies are not required to comment and also that comments do not convey any type of “approval” or “disapproval” of the city’s plans. Based on comments received, revisions to the draft may continue to be considered until the point of adoption. The Planning Commission’s motion to recommend distribution included the following modifications to the draft:
 - Finalize Executive Summary and Appendix
 - Page 68: Add that City View was intended to also be more walkable in addition to the Village of Rochester Hills
 - Page 79: Update Map 11 Age of Housing to exclude commercial sites shown on map
 - Page 80: Correct the density for the R4 district to 3.4 in the table
 - Page 84: Clarify that any increase in building heights in the Auburn Road corridor will be subject to further study with stakeholders in that area; clarify that the illustration of four-story building height may be appropriate for larger redevelopment areas and not Auburn Road.
 - Page 90: Clarify that the house within the landfill area exploded, rather than just caught fire.
 - Page 91: Change the year of the proposed rezoning from 2004 to 2014.
 - Future Land Use Map:
 - Correct a few areas based on updated GIS data and recent developments.
 - Continue to refine the colors of the residential land use designations so that they are easier to distinguish.
9. **Public Hearing.** Following the 42-day review period, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing in mid- to late-December/early January.
10. **Adoption.** Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission will take action on the Master Plan Update. It is expected that the Planning Commission and City Council will have a joint workshop in January to discuss the implementation chapter and prioritize action strategies.