

# memorandum

**DATE:** October 29, 2019  
**TO:** City of Rochester Hills City Council  
**FROM:** Giffels Webster  
**SUBJECT:** Brooklands District Zoning (BD)

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## Discussion & Requested Action for Council

Over the past seven months, the Planning Commission has been working on ordinance language that would replace an existing zoning district, CI – Commercial Improvement district, with a new district, BD, Brooklands district. The Auburn Road Corridor Plan and the 2018 Master Plan Update informed the development of this district. In addition, starting with an open house in April 2019 (held at the DPW facility on Auburn Road), the Planning Commission sought feedback on proposed uses and building form throughout the process. Other opportunities for public input (beyond Planning Commission meetings, which are always open to the public) included an online survey (with 296 responses) and open house preview prior to the public hearing, held on September 17. At its October 28, 2019 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended that the BD district be adopted by council, subject to refined language relating to an existing drive-through use and existing gas stations as well as refined graphics that illustrate building height consistent with ordinance standards. Those changes have been made in the attached document.

In addition to the ordinance that creates a new district, the Planning Commission also recommended that the parcels currently zoned CI with Flexible Business 2 overlay zoning be rezoned to BD. The district is based upon the Auburn Road Corridor Plan, Auburn Road Reconstruction and Streetscape Plans, and Master Plan Update. It encompasses both sides of Auburn Road extending to rear alleys, between Culbertson Road to the west and Dequindre Road to the east.

City Council is asked to consider adopting the BD district and amending the zoning map accordingly.

## Background and City Action

- 2016 Auburn Road Corridor Plan. The Corridor Plan includes a zoning audit and recommends the CI District be amended to update uses, schedule of regulations, building design, parking, signs, and landscaping.
- 2018 Master Plan Update. The Master Plan addresses the corridor's redevelopment potential as part of the build-out analysis, housing plan, and implementation zoning action items. The Plan notes that redevelopment in the corridor may warrant additional building height sufficient to accommodate up to 25 dwellings per acre for the area, but any increase in height should be subject to further study with the city and stakeholders in the area. Zoning action items include a review of and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to provide standards for the Brooklands area that align with the 2016 Corridor Plan.

## Current Language: CI – Commercial Improvement district

- Principal Uses Permitted (per FB-2 overlay district)
  - Residential: Dwelling unit in a mixed-use building, Live/work unit, Multiple-family dwelling unit, State licensed residential facilities (all types)
  - Lodging: Bed and breakfast
  - Commercial: Entertainment and recreation, General commercial, Place of assembly, Restaurant
  - Office
  - Civic: Childcare center, Community facility, Place of worship, Recreational facility, Essential services, Public parking, Transit facilities
  - Educational: Learning center, Research facility, School, Special training/vocational
- Conditional Uses (per FB-2 overlay district)
  - Residential: One-family detached dwellings
  - Lodging: Inn, Hotel
  - Commercial: Alcoholic beverage sales (for on-premise consumption) accessory to a permitted use, Drive-through facility accessory to a principal use, Open air retail
- Required Conditions: except as permitted above, all businesses, servicing, storage and processing, except for off-street parking and loading, shall be conducted within a completely enclosed building.
- Area, Bulk and Development Requirements

- Minimum Yard Setbacks

Front	Side	Rear
0' min. to 10' max.*; PC may approve a larger setback	None required	25' min.; 4' roof overhang into setback permitted

\*Buildings existing prior to 1986 within 3' or in the proposed r/w may have architectural projections up to 3' beyond the front wall with a minimum 8' sidewalk clearance

- Parking/Loading
  - Parking space size requirements may be reduced to nine feet by 18 feet and maneuvering lane width may be reduced to 22 feet for 90-degree parking.
  - New Development. New developments shall provide the number of parking spaces required by Section 138-8.600 (Parking), based on intended use.
  - Loading/Unloading. For all properties in the district, no loading/unloading zone shall be required.
- Landscaping. Whenever a site plan is required, the front yard provided and the area between the existing and proposed rights-of-way shall be planted with lawn and/or landscaped except in areas where sidewalks or parking areas are located.
- Building Design. Buildings shall comply with the building design standards of Section 138-8.502 (FB overlay). Renovations or expansions to existing buildings shall comply with the requirements of Section 138-8.502 as much as is reasonably practical.

- Signs. As permitted for the B-2 General Business District provided that for buildings located within one foot of or in the proposed right-of-way, a sign may be mounted on the vertical face of a building or on an architectural feature. In this case, the sign shall be parallel to the face of the building or architectural feature and shall not extend more than 12 inches beyond the vertical face of the building or architectural feature.

## Proposed Brooklands district

### The proposed Brooklands (BD) district

- Uses in the BD district include those outlined in the Auburn Road Corridor Plan, such as retail, service and eating establishments as well as offices, financial institutions and civic uses. Definitions are provided for “makerspace” and “small scale brewery.” Residential dwellings are permitted on upper floors only. Existing auto-related uses, gas stations and repair shops, are permitted to continue as legally non-conforming uses, but no expansion is permitted. Note that a gas station could expand the retail portion of its business, but no expansion of gas pumps is permitted. Drive-through uses are not permitted, but, like gas stations, the existing restaurant with an accessory drive-through facility may continue as long as there is no expansion of the accessory drive-through portion of the establishment.
- Standards are provided for area, height and building typology. Illustrations support the text and provide additional clarity.
- Building height is restricted to two stories, unless the city approves a third story when stepped back ten feet as a conditional use. Additional standards will apply.
- Buildings should be generally set at the front property line to support the public realm – those sidewalks, streets and plazas that are intended to promote a vibrant walkable district.
- Building elements, materials and transparency standards are included to ensure quality design as well as long-term maintenance and appearance. Materials including plain concrete block, plywood and vinyl or aluminum siding are prohibited.
- Parking is a big concern in this district and the Planning Commission discussed a variety of alternatives to provide a balance between encouraging redevelopment and sufficiently accommodating the parking of vehicles off-street. Parking standards are provided for residential and non-residential uses; they may be modified by the Planning Commission when it is demonstrated that sufficient parking will be provided. Updated shared parking calculations have been provided. With the addition of on-street parking on Auburn Road and a public parking lot, some of the initial parking demand may be relatively easily met; however, this will be something the city may wish to monitor and adapt as needed.
- Landscaping standards are provided that reflect the conditions of the corridor.

## Public Input

- 2016 Auburn Road Corridor Plan. The Plan Appendix includes a summary of public participation results related primarily to the roadway project received from open houses held in 2016 and an online survey. Generally, participants expressed a preference for buildings one to three stories in height, with sit-down restaurants, cafes, service, and retail uses. They strongly favored short brick buildings with façade offsets, small pitched roofs, awnings, canopies and signs projecting

over the sidewalk. Also, two-story buildings with simple neotraditional design were seen as favorable.

- 2018 Master Plan Update. Public input responses received included the redevelopment of the aging corridor as a land use issue and a need for further study of the corridor. The online survey asked respondents how satisfied they are with the appearance of the Auburn Road (Brooklands) area with about a third of respondents being unsatisfied (26%) or very unsatisfied (8%) (note: 42% had no opinion).
- April 2019 Road Project Open House. At the open house to kickoff the road reconstruction project, posters were displayed seeking public input on uses, drive-through facilities, housing, building form and materials to provide direction for the amendment. Feedback regarding the information presented at the open house relating primarily to the road project and secondary to anticipated redevelopment was overwhelmingly positive as there has been numerous public input opportunities and buy-in initiated by city leadership and staff to-date.
  - Uses
    - Desired: small bakery/café, restaurant/bar, retail, outdoor retail, office, small brewery/distillery, small assembly/machining, community/recreation center
    - Neutral: day care center, school/training/vocational, place of worship
    - Not desired: bed and breakfast, makerspace
    - Not desired strongly: hotel, auto-related services, outdoor storage
  - Drive-through facilities as a permitted use was strongly not desired, even when screened or within a building.
  - Housing. Participants supported live/work housing, but not other stand-alone housing types, such as townhomes or apartments.
  - Building Height and Form. Participants generally favored lower building heights – no more than three stories, with two stories preferred.
  - Building Materials Participants generally favored higher quality building materials.
- Visual Preference Survey. Between September 1 and October 21, 2019, an online visual preference survey focused on two issues: building height and drive-through uses. Generally, respondents supported two story buildings and there is some support for a third story when stepped back. Respondents do not support any accessory drive-through uses. (See survey results attached).
- Open house/Public Hearing – September 17, 2019. Generally, participants supported efforts to encourage redevelopment in this district but do have concerns over parking and traffic. People who live in this area would like to see business in this district that are supported locally.