

memorandum

DATE: December 13, 2018

TO: Sara Roediger, Planning & Economic Development Director

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

SUBJECT: **2018 Master Plan Update – Public Hearing**

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.
 - **Public Hearing – December 18, 2018.** The public hearing, required by state law, is the final opportunity for the public to participate and provide input.
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. The goal of this agency review is to ensure that the city's plans do not negatively impact adjacent communities. Following approval from City Council, staff distributed the plan as required. None of the adjacent communities provided comment. Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Services reviewed the plan and provided an extensive summary for the city's review. In short, they found that the plan provides "good strategies led by the information from the public input process which seemed beneficial to the plan. The outcome of the process with the creation of the goals, strategies and the overall plan implementation seems on point." The county finds the plan to be "not inconsistent" with the plans of neighboring communities and the county.
9. **Public Hearing.** As noted under item 3 above, the public hearing is being held December 18, 2018.
10. **Adoption.** Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission will take action on the Master Plan Update at a joint meeting with City Council on January 29, 2019. At this workshop meeting, the implementation chapter will be discussed and action strategies prioritized.