



Planning and Economic Development

Ed Anzek, AICP, Director

From: Jim Breuckman
To: Planning Commission
Date: 4/25/2013
Re: Small Area Planning Update

Staff plans on presenting an update to the Planning Commission on our small area planning effort, and how our thinking about the location, role, and character of the small planning areas has evolved over the past year. As established in the last Master Plan, the idea is to create nodes of walkable development at targeted locations within the City (and to be clear, we will be leaving well over 90% of the City, including nearly all residential neighborhoods, alone as they exist today).

As we contemplated the small area plans we realized that we could not develop credible plans without first taking a step back and arriving at some clear understandings about our intent as a City, and what we are and are not willing to do to facilitate different styles of development in targeted areas of the City. If we first do not arrive at some basic understandings about how the way we operate as a City needs to change to facilitate our small area planning efforts, then we will always be trying to shove square pegs in round holes with undesirable results.

Rather than jumping into small area planning efforts, we believe that the next step is to create a consensus around a shared understanding of where we are going as a City and how we can best get there. The Planning Commission, as the forward thinking body within the City, will have to be a leader in any transformative efforts.

Accordingly, we would like to open up a frank discussion with the Planning Commission about:

1. Our current situation as a City
2. The environment in which we operate in now and the environment in which we will operate in the future, including the regional, global, economic, and demographic trends that will shape and influence the environment going forward
3. What's at stake if we stay where we are or if we actively work towards desired change
4. What our shared vision of the future is, and
5. How we will chart a course from where we are to where we want to be.

We will not reach agreement on all, and may not achieve agreement about any of the five above items next week, but opening the dialogue is the first step towards shaping the City's future path.

We are also attaching a recent article that summarizes a trend that may have a powerful impact on Rochester Hills in the coming decades. We will discuss what we see as the implications of that and other trends and factors that will shape the environment in which the City operates. Again, we hope to have a frank and open discussion with you about how we can best prepare to capitalize on those trends and forces.