



Rochester Hills

Certified Copy

Administration: RES0182-2025

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Request for Approval to distribute the 2025 Master Plan update to adjacent communities for review and comment in accordance with State Law

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills City Council hereby approves the distribution of the proposed 2025 City of Rochester Hills Master Plan to adjacent communities for review and comment.

I, Leanne Scott, City Clerk, certify that this is a true copy of RES0182-2025 passed at the Rochester Hills City Council Regular Meeting held on 8/11/2025 by the following vote:

Moved by Carol Morlan, Seconded by Jason Carlock

Aye: 6 – Blair, Carlock, Deel, Morlan, Mungoli and Walker

Absent: 1 - Neubauer



Leanne Scott, MMC, City Clerk

September 22, 2025
Date Certified

NEW BUSINESS

2025-0338

Review and Consideration for Recommendation of Distribution of the Draft 2025 Master Land Use Plan

(Roediger memo dated 8/11/25, Master Plan Presentation dated 8/7/25, City of Rochester Hills 2025 Master Plan, Draft Planning Commission Worksession Minutes of 7/15/25, Planning Commission Worksession Minutes of 6/17/25, 4/17/25, 2/18/25, 12/10/24, 11/19/24, 10/15/24, 9/17/24, 7/16/24, 6/18/24, 5/21/24 and 3/19/24, Planning Commission Regular Minutes of 5/20/25 and 12/10/24, and Planning Commission-City Council Joint Minutes of 11/18/24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

In attendance representing Giffels Webster were Ian Hogg and Julia Upfall.

Sara Roediger stated that she is really pleased with where the Draft Plan has landed, which upholds all of the principles and policies that make Rochester Hills great, and why everyone chose to live here, raise families, have a workplace, and play. She stressed that tonight's meeting is a step toward finalization. She explained that the State requires a public distribution period where notice is provided to surrounding communities, a public meeting will be held, and the plan will progress to a final draft for adoption hopefully later this year.

She stressed that a lot of changes have been made along the way to the draft to uphold all that everyone loves about Rochester Hills and reinforce those policies and visions. She stated that hopefully the Planning Commission will feel comfortable recommending distribution tonight at this meeting; and Council will recommend distribution at their regular session tonight.

Ian Hogg noted that the Draft Plan reaffirms the character and values in Rochester Hills, and does that by reaffirming the 2018 Plan throughout the whole process. He pointed out that there have been a number of different public input opportunities to provide feedback.

He explained that typically a master plan is a PDF; however, Planning Staff wanted to implement a more interactive website and give people an opportunity to with interact with the plan in a different way. He stated that the Plan uses five different planning neighborhood areas, which are based on the high school districts, and the goal of these neighborhoods is to help residents identify with the neighborhood level of recommendations.

He stated that the plan is broken out into five main components or chapters - Housing, Economic Development, Transportation and Mobility Preservation, Sustainability, and Community Amenities. He noted that the Master Plan is a way to bridge the gap between all of the different plans that have been adopted by the City, including the Transportation and Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and serve as an umbrella to bring all those strategies and recommendations into one plan.

Mr. Hogg noted that filters were used throughout the planning process, which helped influence the discussions and the plan itself. These filter included age-friendly, sustainability, and innovation, which were used as a way to ensure alignment between public feedback and the discussions with City Staff. He explained the planned vision is called Timeless Tradition. He stated that this vision preserves the existing residential character of the neighborhoods, and maintains stability of the city and suburban lifestyle. He stressed that single family housing is the main type of housing going forward. In addition, they will be looking for ways to strengthen pedestrian connectivity, preserve natural resources, and expect high quality development.

He reviewed the community engagement process, reporting that over the past year and a half, over 2,000 people participated in surveys and in-person events. Community engagement was broken out into five different phases beginning in January of 2024. He noted that based on what was learned from the community engagement opportunities and processes, residents want to increase walkability and safety, preserve natural features, focus on single family housing, and maintain stability and the high level of satisfaction here in Rochester Hills.

He pointed out that the Future Land Use Map illustrates the intended land use for the future, and he explained that this is different from zoning, because zoning is legally binding and provides regulations on what can or cannot be done with property. He stressed that the key component of the 2025 Future Land Use Map is that it took the 2018 categories and consolidated them to ease reading and understanding, and stated that the density of the residential categories did not change. He moved on to the non-residential categories, and explained that Residential Office Flex and Commercial Residential Flex 2 and 3 have now been consolidated to one category and labeled as Mixed Use.

He mentioned the residential categories on the 2025 Future Land Use Map, stating that the updated map better reflects what is currently in the built environment and provides an opportunity where there is still a need for additional single family homes to better reflect the demands of today's market.

Ms. Roediger noted that a lot of the discussion at the Planning Commission level has been about balancing the single family character of the community and allow for some attached units that provide for a different lifestyle. She mentioned that many of the attached single-family ranches promote low maintenance, and appeal to an aging population who do not want a large home with stairs. She pointed out that many of the projects that everyone is already familiar with were developed by Jim Polyzois over the past years, including Crestwyck and Breckenridge, which all have first floor masters and are duplexes.

She stated that while duplexes historically have had a negative connotation, she wanted to point out examples of existing attached residential units that give somewhat of a single family neighborhood character, and she mentioned that there have been members of Council and the commissions that have lived in developments like Sanctuary in the Hills or Kings Cove. She commented that there are examples of fairly low-density attached units that exist and there is a

high market demand for that in the right location along busy roads, especially if it can allow for preservation of trees and other natural features while keeping the same density of surrounding developments. She stressed that they are not looking to increase the density at all, but are looking to change the form of what the houses look like as attached instead of being single. In answer to Ms. Mungioli's question regarding pricing, she commented that Breckenridge started at \$650,000 and went up from there.

Ms. Morlan asked if these would be condominium ownership with a monthly fee.

Ms. Roediger responded that many of them are owner-occupied and they are like a condominium. She mentioned the condominiums in Kings Cove and suggested that she would assume there is a monthly fee as they handle all lawn maintenance and snow removal.

Ms. Neubauer stated that one of the things that changed in the approach after the last meeting was the idea of affordable housing and how it is not an attainable goal for the community. She added that the word "duplex" has very negative connotations, but stressed that along arterial roads, density will not increase and stressed that this will be where the aging population or new homeowners can go if they do not want monster housing in large developments. She suggested incentives to allow a developer to put perhaps 30 percent of their development as single layer housing with ranches or first floor masters.

Ms. Roediger noted that mandating more single floor units or first floor masters would require a Zoning Ordinance amendment.

Ms. Mungioli stated that the City cannot restrict what a builder is going to charge per unit regardless of how many units are in an acre or whether they are off of or on a main road.

Ms. Roediger stated that there is an obvious cost for the land and construction; and that defines how affordable something is for less units. She stated that they are looking at trying to diversify the housing stock because right now the vast majority of the city contains single family detached houses, which are good for a certain segment of the population; however, not for other segments of the population such as empty nesters or young professionals.

Mr. Blair expressed his thanks that this part of the presentation includes photos, and stated that Sanctuary in the Hills is an example that does not strike him as a duplex. He asked if there would be guidance or materials recommendations as to how they would want the duplexes to look, as no one wants to see cookie-cutter duplexes in the city.

Ms. Roediger responded that the City's architectural design guidelines are outdated, and one of the recommendations of the Plan is update the guidelines in the Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Neubauer noted that this was the intention of the wording in the Plan, stating that the Planning Commission did not want to see quadplexes and triplexes.

Council President Deel noted that he lives across from Crestwyck which he finds to be a harmonious development. He cautioned that he loathes to do anything where it would mandate a developer put in so many of these types of units and would be more apt to allow the market to dictate whether there is a demand for it.

Ms. Morlan asked if this would fall into multiple family residential.

Ms. Roediger responded that Kings Cove and Huntington Park are actually four unit buildings. She noted that if someone wanted to do something more like Sanctuary in the Hills and Crestwyck, where it looks and feels like the surrounding neighborhood in terms of density and scale, those could be appropriate along major roads such as along John R and Auburn Road. She stated that this is what is being seen with the infill developments where there might be a street that comes off of a main road with a couple of attached units on it. She commented that they are not seeing large-scale subdivisions like they did in the 1980s and 1990s as there is no room.

Mr. Hogg moved on to give a snapshot of the planning neighborhoods, based on the high school districts.

Ms. Mungoli suggested that Rochester East and Rochester West be renamed Rochester Hills East and West, as they could be confused with the City of Rochester.

Ms. Roediger noted that these districts were based on the school names. She stressed that the thought is that people identify with the high school boundary that their home is in. She stated that the idea is not to have a one-size-fits-all approach because these are very different neighborhoods with different concerns and recommendations.

Mr. Hogg responded that they could review district naming, and highlighted the neighborhoods.

- Adams Neighborhood. 300 people participated in the community engagement activities from the Adams Neighborhood. Action strategies include to maintain and reinvest in existing neighborhoods, preserve natural features, work with safe routes to school and develop Nowicki Park. The Future Land Use Map for the Adams Neighborhood reflects the consolidation of categories, and what has been developed since 2018 to ensure everything is aligned.

Mr. Carlock called out an area that was previously residential and is now labeled multi-family, noting that the definition of multi-family is eight to 12 units per acre. He questioned whether that area was proposed for apartments. He also mentioned an area on the far east side and asked whether Suburban Residential or Neighborhood Residential might be a better term.

Ms. Roediger responded that there were two particular areas that averaged the different types of existing multiple family, including two senior living areas which

are probably closer to 20 units per acre. She stated that the intent was not to change what is out there, and suggested that they can better clarify the text. She noted that the area to the east included Kings Cove which is closer to eight units per acre, more dense than the single family neighborhoods. She reiterated that the language could be fine-tuned to make sure that it is clear that they are not looking to intensify anything. She commented that these areas should be shown correctly that if some disaster came through and took out a development like Kings Cove, they would want them to be able to build it again.

Ms. Mungoli stated that as the map says "Future Land Use", it is not clear to her that it is just being changed to represent what is currently there and could possibly suggest that the density could increase.

Ms. Upfal stated that they would add language to the text to stress the intent that the density does not change.

- Stoney Creek Neighborhood. Mr. Hogg noted that 134 people participated in the public engagement, and some of the action strategies involved improvements to Bloomer and Yates Park. He pointed out that there were areas that were changed to conservation-open space and those are based upon the City potentially buying certain vacant lots to convert to conservation areas.

- Rochester West. Mr. Hogg noted that 472 people participated; and some of the strategies include continuing to improve Innovation Hills, replacing the gazebo at Veteran's Memorial Pointe, and looking toward traffic management options at Avon and Crooks. He noted that a lot of the traffic action items in the Plan are based on the Capital Improvement and Transportation Master Plans. He added that changes are meant to reflect the future land use category consolidation and current land use to better reflect what is there today.

- Rochester East. Mr. Hogg noted that 300 people participated, and strategies include improvements to Spencer Park, passive recreation options at the Eddington property, and working with OPC on potentially looking to improve or expand the transportation service. The Future Land Use map follows the same as the other neighborhoods, reflecting current land uses and the consolidation of categories.

- Avondale. Mr. Hogg noted that 159 people participated here, and action strategies include looking at Livernois to complete pathway gaps, and ensuring that the Zoning Ordinance accommodates flexible office, research and maker spaces. The Future Land Use Map reflects changes as in the other neighborhoods.

Ms. Mungoli asked how the property with the Bebb Oak might be able to be moved to a conservancy park, with nothing built within the root structure of the tree. She stressed that it is the symbol of the City and she would not want multifamily or anything there.

Ms. Roediger responded that the property is privately owned. She pointed out that the south portion of the site calls for residential and there could be single

family homes constructed there. She noted that the Bebb Oak is a specimen tree, which is held to the ultimate standard in the ordinance.

Ms. Mungioli suggested whether there could be a way to protect that piece of property, restricting it to residential with two acre lots.

Ms. Roediger reiterated that they can make it a specific recommendation in the action plan or implementation table about ensuring to the greatest legal extent possible the preservation of that tree and the City would not do anything to jeopardize it.

Mr. Hogg stated that the plan goes into much greater detail with each of the highlights, scattered through various chapters. He mentioned design standards, placemaking, and community identity, looking for ways to strengthen the character of nearby development and looking to implement different recommendations from the Gateways and Streetscape Master Plans. He added the 2024 Natural Features Inventory is a guide for preserving natural features. He stated that they look for ways to preserve Rochester Hills' character and history to ensure it is here for future generations.

He commented that the Plan also discusses redevelopment strategies, broken out into three different tiers. The First Tier looks to improve the exterior of existing development to freshen the look. Tier Two is outlot development, looking at potential areas that could be good for future development and provide some recommendations on what that could look like. Tier Three focuses on those sites that are underutilized or obsolete and provides recommendations and strategies on the best way to go about redeveloping those areas.

Ms. Mungioli called out the grocery store retrofit in the Hampton center, noting that it is non-conforming to the rest of the center. She stated that she wanted to ensure that when encouraging a facelift that it does not result in one that looks very different than what surrounds it.

Ms. Roediger stated that the Architectural Guidelines in the Ordinance provide the ability to regulate that. She noted that if there is stronger language in the Zoning Ordinance about architectural building materials, certain things could be required. She commented that the current guidelines are very general and were more written for residential zoning.

Ms. Mungioli noted that regarding outlot development, the City has seen patterns of drive-throughs, banks, or standalone businesses and asked how to balance having the encouragement for development, but having something that is economically viable and not becoming blight.

Ms. Roediger responded that outlot development is not necessarily encouraged, but is allowed. She pointed out that the uses seen in strip mall development have changed over the past 20 years, and noted that there is less retail and more services and restaurants. She added that because of some of the changes in the Zoning Ordinance, hopefully there will be more studios, flip spots, and other recreation-oriented types of businesses.

She mentioned the Kroger shopping center and stated that hopefully the outlot in front encourages the owner of the center to up his game to compete, noting that from they have let the center's maintenance slide.

Ms. Mungioli stated that she has heard from residents who have questioned why Starbucks was allowed to go in front of Von Maur when that store should be the showcase of the development. She stated that she does not rely on outlots to make her area more walkable, and commented that there is no dance studio she would go to as a senior residing in place.

Ms. Roediger pointed out that Deborah's Stage Door moved into the Kroger shopping center; and she stated that this is a great example of things that can backfill some of these spaces, and it is a convenience as parents can run into Kroger while they wait. She noted that it is a cross synergy of different uses, and she stated that there is a diminishing demand for retail that is being replaced with experience and service-oriented uses.

Ms. Mungioli stated that she wants to ensure that the outlot does not block the view of the primary business that was a part of the original development. She added that she has concern that a lot of the outlots are vacant.

Ms. Roediger pointed out that the property owner has to be the one that initiates an outlot. She mentioned that Meijer has specific sightline rules, and she commented that Starbucks in the Village worked with Von Maur.

Mr. McLeod added that the uses of today are different than the uses when the shopping centers first went in. He noted that restaurant and service-oriented businesses want to be out front and do not want to be in a line. He stated that walkability and ensuring that everything works together physically is a good thing to look at; however, if those restaurants or service businesses stay in the back, they will not make it or will not want to stay there. He mentioned North Hill, noting that Verizon wants to be out front, and was willing to move to the back to wait for a new building. He stated that more of a destination-type user can be in the back of the center. He commented that walkability is important, but it is also making sure that those uses are viable going forward as it continues to evolve.

Mr. Blair commented that the Target center has become a place to store automobiles and he stressed that he does not want to promote this becoming a pattern, especially in parking lots adjacent to other dealerships. He asked if there is a plan to address this and if the City has received complaints.

Mr. McLeod responded that as of right now this is a temporary situation. He stated that Serra is coming toward the completion of their construction, and added that while they could put them behind the center, visibility adds security and could discourage anyone from breaking in to the vehicles. He suggested that going forward, City staff could bring forward options for addressing this issue.

Mr. Blair suggested that the Master Plan could contain recommendations of

things that the City does not want to see.

Chairperson Hooper commented that the City is a victim of its own circumstances as it created the parking standards, which led to enormous parking lots that are not needed. He noted that after the Zoning Ordinance was revised, reducing the parking standards made the outlots and other areas of development available. He mentioned that Rochester Hills Chrysler Jeep has been using the area behind Dick's Sporting Goods for several years, noting that this is prime for outlot development and the parking is not needed.

Ms. Roediger commented that the City has a concept plan in that it is beginning to review for an outlot in the Target Center for Chick-fil-A.

Mayor Barnett stated that it is important to not forget that the City is doing things well, based on property values being as high as they have ever been in every corner of the city, and vacancy rates being generally as low as they have ever been. He commented that while no one wants to see all of those cars parked in those lots, the ownership of the properties generally are okay with it because it is a revenue stream. He pointed out that almost all of the dealerships have undergone some pretty significant work and have used the parking. He mentioned that sometimes it is the way the dealerships have to purchase a certain amount of product, and he commented that there would most likely be pushback from both the dealerships and the property owners if it were to go completely away.

Ms. Mungoli noted that there was mention of public-private partnerships, but did not want to see the City say that they are going to give tax breaks, loans, or tax incentives to make it happen.

Mr. Hogg noted that the next step would be for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to City Council to distribute the Plan, and at Council's Meeting, they would consider approving distribution of the Plan. Further down the line, while the Plan is out for distribution, they would work behind the scenes to get the plan text into the website format and ensure that things are working right. After the public review period, Staff will look at all of the public comment, make any necessary updates to the Plan, and then prior to the Planning Commission hosting the public hearing, a Master Plan Open House would be hosted, with the completed website up and available for residents to come in, experience the Plan, and interact with the Plan here at City Hall. He stated that they look toward October for the Planning Commission to host the public hearing and adopt the Plan and recommend approval to City Council, and November approval at City Council.

Chairperson Hooper noted that he has one Public Comment card, and invited Scot Beaton to speak.

Scot Beaton, 655 Bolinger, recalled that 40 years ago, the Bebb Oak tree was part of the Oakland County right-of-way, and was not private property, with its drip line within the right-of-way. He commented that the proposed Master Plan upzones the land around the Oak from R-4 to suburban residential, allowing for

six homes per acre instead of four. He mentioned that per the suggestion, this upzoning, combined with the inability to build single-family homes on mile roads, permits the construction of quadplexes, triplexes, and duplexes on this property, although single-family homes are still being built on mile roads elsewhere. He also raised concerns about the mixed-use zoning across the street from the Bebb Oak, which he believes encourages a four-story apartment. Additionally, he questioned the zoning of a property on the Auburn side of the Bebb Oak as a strip mall, given it has been zoned retail for 40 years without development. He suggested rezoning this property and supported the idea of a 50-yard inclusion zone around the tree where no construction would be allowed.

Seeing no more public comment, Chairperson Hooper closed Public Comment.

Ms. Roediger responded to Mr. Beaton, noting that there was no zoning happening as a part of this Plan, stressing that it is a planning document. She stated that in terms of the Bebb Oak, it is the same as in the last Plan. She pointed out that the Auburn Road corridor has always been zoned Flex Use Commercial, and it was shown that way on the last Master Plan and is in the zoning that is being kept in terms of zoning it up to Neighborhood Residential. She stressed that the property is single family zoned and would be an example of a site that could accommodate a couple of duplexes at the south end, leaving the north end and the location of the Bebb Oak completely natural. She explained that it would be a great example of allowing some attached residential at the same density as a surrounding neighborhood and allow for a public park-type area around the Bebb Oak. She stressed that it is consistent with every future land use plan that the City has had for this area. She stated that it is not upzoning or even up-planning that property.

Mayor Barnett stated that he wanted to update the group on a common thread that appears on survey after survey of the biggest issues in the country, affordable housing. He commented that affordable housing here is seen as too much as people do not love the idea of higher density. He mentioned that in the City's recent resident survey, one growing concern is the cost of housing and the cost of living. He added that overdevelopment as a concern has dropped over the last two years with traffic congestion remaining about the same. He stated that while everyone is on the same page of what they would like to see here, those in Lansing are in the process of introducing legislation that has bipartisan support entitled the Michigan Home Program that would essentially take away the ability to control development as a local municipality.

He explained that he was on an emergency call this week along with a number of elected officials with the Michigan Municipal League trying to determine what a secondary plan might be if something is going to happen. He noted that while he does not have all the details, the legislation proposes duplexes in any single family home, and they are proposing maximum setbacks of 25 feet in any zoning. He stated that the goal of this, and a reason why it is popular with groups, is that creating affordable housing is difficult and local planning commissions and councils make it difficult for builders to build affordable housing. He explained that what they are proposing is essentially local

preemption, making the rules in Lansing, therefore allowing more houses to be built. He pointed out that it could impact funding to the City.

He commented that they are hearing that this has the support it needs to pass and it could dramatically change the course of not just this community, but communities across Michigan under the guise of trying to solve the idea of affordable housing. Lansing is making cities like Rochester Hills, Birmingham and Bloomfield the bad guys as they do not want to go higher, deeper or denser. He stressed that this is a real threat happening right now possibly with a vote before the end of the year. He mentioned that many of the gubernatorial candidates are going to be asked if they are going to support the MI Homes program. He stressed that this is something that will need to continue to be monitored.

Ms. Morlan asked if they are defining affordable housing, noting that the city has some high densities that are fairly expensive.

Mayor Barnett added that what he has heard is that this gives certain developers resources and access to funds to do different things that comes directly from the State, and a lot of the big home builders are in support of it, as density increases their ROI. He commented that in the last Master Plan, they tried to incentivize more affordable housing, but the market tends to drive the product. He stated that legislators are trying to solve a really challenging problem and the result will probably be a solution that is not great.

Mr. Hetrick commented that the group discussed 45 minutes ago that they did not want to mandate certain things happening in Rochester Hills, and it sounds like this proposed legislation will do just that.

Mayor Barnett stated that it goes so far as to eliminate or almost eliminate the petition process for people to oppose it, puts a maximum lot size on developments, and indicates a goal of getting 10,000 new homes built in six months with a lot of incentives from the State for developers and cities that participate. He pointed out that the challenge is that the City may not be able to opt-in or opt-out.

Ms. Mungioli suggested getting more money to clean up the brownfield so this way high-density apartments can be put in the brownfield areas.

Mayor Barnett responded that it's a great program, but other communities are already unhappy that the City received most of the money for the entire state.

Ms. Mungioli associated "affordable" housing with low-income or high-density developments, drawing a comparison to projects in New York, which they do not want in Rochester Hills. She suggested exploring alternative locations for development, such as brownfield sites, where there are large areas available and which might be less desirable for traditional building.

Ms. Roediger likened it to how communities must allow group daycare and senior living homes in residential districts for up to six people by right, with

DISCUSSION

2025-0308

Master Plan 2025

(Giffels Webster Memo dated 7/15/25 and Updated Draft Full Master Plan Text, Draft Plan Recommendations, Land Use, Housing and Economic Development, Draft Plan Recommendations - Transportation, Draft Plan Recommendations, Parks and Natural Features, Draft PC Worksession Minutes from 6-17-25, PC Regular Minutes of 5/20/25, Planning Commission Worksession Minutes of 4/15/25, 2/18/25, 12/10/24, 11/19/24, 10/15/24, 9/17/24, 7/16/24, 5/21/24, 6/18/24, 3/19/24, Planning Commission Regular Minutes of 12/10/24, and Planning Commission-City Council Joint Meeting Minutes of 11/18/24 and 1/29/24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present for Giffels Webster were Jill Bahm and Ian Hogg.

Mr. McLeod stated that the plan text included in the packet is the content of what the plan will ultimately include. He explained that barring any additional changes as it is reviewed, based on State statute there will be a 63 day review period with the clock beginning as soon as the Planning Commission and Council sends it out. He mentioned that it has been challenging to generate the plan into the format that they ultimately want to get it to; and they wanted to get back to basics and focus on the content. As the review period is ongoing, they will take that time to put all the bells and whistles back together to have ready for adoption at the end of the review period. He stressed that they will be focusing now on content versus glam, and he turned the discussion over to Ms. Bahm.

Ms. Bahm stated that the content presented last time was further refined based on feedback from the last meeting. She referred to the cover memo, and noted that it was discussed that Neighborhood Residential on page 28 was revised to be more clear.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic stated that she still did not agree with the entire area north of South Boulevard to Hamlin Road being covered by Neighborhood Residential, and commented the language that it is compatible with four to six units per acre bothers her. She noted that there are many lots that are 120 or 150 feet wide and disagreed with grouping that in with R-5 and Multi-Family. She pointed out that they never identified an area where R-5 would work showing small scale homes and attached duplexes, triplexes and quad units appropriate in Neighborhood Residential. She stressed that the most discussion was about John R and maybe along arterial roads, not in the middle of neighborhoods.

Ms. Bahm responded that they tried to make that clear in the second paragraph of Neighborhood Residential description right after the land use designation that Mixed Residential R-3, R-4 and R-5 were located along major thoroughfares. She quoted that attached dwellings may be appropriate as a transition along major thoroughfares or to preserve natural features when new development meets the density of the adjacent neighborhoods, and she stressed that they were trying to be more clear about that. She asked that the current Future Land

Use Map from 2018 be displayed, noting that she thought it might be helpful to see where R-5 was included on that map.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic commented that the way this is presented it looks like an overlay. She stated that the four to six units is bothering her, and Suburban calls for three to four units.

Ms. Bahm read from page 28 of the draft, noting that where it does overlay the R-3 and R-4 particularly in the southern part of the City, lot sizes range from three to four dwelling units per acre based on existing development patterns.

Chairperson Hooper commented that the verbiage of density conflicts with the zoning of the property. He noted that it is a guide and not zoning, and they would have to change the setbacks and zoning in order to make the density even a chance.

Ms. Roediger stated that she does not think there was a plan to change the zoning districts. She commented that she is trying to understand the concern because she thought the concern was about allowing attached units anywhere, and that is not the intent. She stressed that the intent is only along major roads.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic concurred that it is the understanding she had.

Ms. Bahm stressed that it says that in both Suburban Residential and Neighborhood Residential.

Ms. Roediger stated that she will review that page because she thinks that the intent is not to allow attached units anywhere in the middle of the neighborhood, except along major roads. She mentioned that they talked about clustering to save natural features.

Ms. Neubauer asked if clarifying language could be added so that there is no chance for misinterpretation.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic moved on to read from page 38 of the draft, the descriptions for Suburban Residential and Neighborhood Residential. She expressed concern that this is the vision for the future and they are calling for smaller lots. She asked why they did not consider the Brooklands area Suburban Residential versus Neighborhood Residential.

Ms. Bahm reiterated that it is the same language as on page 28, and to be clear it is on the major thoroughfares and not within the neighborhoods. She suggested that perhaps they should come up with a different way to express it; however, she thought it was pretty clear.

Mr. Hetrick suggested that the problem is that when viewing the pictorial, it gives the appearance that the entire area has a possibility of having multifamily dwellings when they are trying to keep the location in the case of the Brooklands around Auburn Road. He stated that what Vice Chairperson Brnabic is implying is that she does not want a developer six blocks from the Brooklands believing that it would be permitted. He commented that this is the Master Plan and is not

changing the zoning. He noted that as Chairperson Hooper stated, the Ordinances will support someone not suggesting cherry-picking an area.

Ms. Bahm confirmed that the Ordinance language will really tell the developer what they can and cannot do. She stressed that the language can say that the parcel has to have frontage on a major thoroughfare.

Ms. Roediger countered that she does not think that they are trying to add more multiple family. She stressed that by trying to categorize it along the major roads it would be misleading. She stated that they are not trying to say that it has to be attached; however, she mentioned that there are developers out there like Jim Polyzois who always plans projects with a lot of duplex-type dwellings and currently they would not be permitted. She commented that the map contains general categories; but the text goes hand in hand, and says attached only along major corridors and to preserve natural features.

Ms. Neubauer asked if a compromise was possible, perhaps adding an asterisk at the map that states that the map is to be interpreted in conjunction with the language of whatever it is clarifying.

Ms. Bahm noted that there most likely was a disclaimer in the old map, a general sort of statement of the purpose of the map.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic asked if the districts in the Ordinance were going to be renamed and the text amended to coordinate.

Ms. Roediger responded that the only reason it is tied to the zoning is because the Planning Act indicates that the future land use categories have to be affiliated with current zoning. She stressed that it does not state that the zoning ordinance, map or district names have to be changed. She added that they are not trying to change zoning districts, create a new district, or change anything within the zoning districts. She explained that it is for classifying the kind of character in the area of the different districts and neighborhood. She commented that they struggled with this quite a bit internally, trying to almost differentiate Suburban versus Neighborhood; and explained that the Neighborhood felt like more of the older established neighborhoods that tend to have more of a grid network. She stated that it is more traditional rather than what she would call the suburban sprawl of the 80s and 90s. She mentioned that they were debating using Traditional Residential.

Ms. Bahm noted that it is not like they are small lots, but they are smaller than they are in places in the north end of the city for example. She stressed that the effort was to look at the existing built environment and how the city developed over so many years.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic asked additional questions about R-5 and commented that she did not think that it would support duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes. She commented that they have not figured out an area where that would work. She questioned why manufactured housing was grouped in with that area as well. She stressed that a lot of small builders might find a lot that would encourage attached housing.

Ms. Bahm responded that in thinking about rezoning, it is not possible to rezone a lot in the middle of an R-4 district to R-5.

Chairperson Hooper added that this would be spot rezoning and is not allowed.

Ms. Bahm noted that the zoning change was made to create the R-5 district, but it is currently a paper district, and it needs to be included.

Ms. Roediger responded to the comment regarding mobile home parks, noting that they would want those areas open to single family residential should something happen and the park go away. She noted that this is why they were lumped in with Neighborhood Residential.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic mentioned nonconforming lots in the R-4 district. She cited page 41 of the draft.

Ms. Bahm responded that the change was to say that this is an area of study to assess whether the lot sizes in the Brooklands should be influencing or guiding the alignment with the R-4 district. She noted that this would make it easier for homes and lots in the Brooklands to not have to go to the ZBA for certain variances.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic stated that on the ZBA they have seen more requests relative to R-3 as it requires 90 feet and applicants wanted to do a lot split for two 80-foot lots which are not permitted in that district. She noted that applicants brought up that there were some 80-foot lots in the surrounding area. She commented that she cannot recall seeing a lot width variance request in the Brooklands.

Mr. McLeod responded that they have denied a lot of requests, and stated that right now the Zoning Ordinance says that in the R-4 District they do have the ability to get to a 60-foot lot if the context allows for it; and he explained that this is something that they have struggled with administratively between Planning and Building. He questioned whether they should look at the block, or several blocks, or the Brooklands as a whole. He noted that they have had perhaps four, five or more lot split requests that have been attempted in the Brooklands trying to get to 60-foot lots that have been denied based on the character that the neighborhood is 60 percent over the zoning requirements versus being smaller. He suggested that staff would like that provision eliminated. He stressed that this area needs to be studied as to whether it makes sense to eliminate the provision or some areas where it might make sense. He stated that perhaps it needs further definition to say that the context has to be within 500 feet, 1,000 feet, or two blocks, whatever is determined. He commented that one of the main surveyors the City has dealt with has said that 10 years ago these were approved every week as they used to look at the entirety of the Brooklands.

He noted that they try to discourage people from going to the ZBA as much as possible; and stated that in reality just because someone did it 50 years ago, that does not give justification to do it now.

Ms. Roediger noted that the Master Plan calls for an evaluation to determine whether the Ordinance should be amended.

Mr. Hetrick stated that what Mr. McLeod is inferring is that something needs to go in the Master Plan about evaluation, and once it's in there, it gives Staff the opportunity to adjust the Ordinance accordingly.

Ms. Bahm stressed that it would be to bring it to the Planning Commission, and the language gives the foundation of understanding the context of why they should be studying it.

Mr. Hetrick added that the Plan will promote some discussion about ordinance changes. He concurred that he would not want to be in a neighborhood and have someone build a duplex next to them.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she had an interesting discussion with the City Attorney after a court opinion was rendered that favored the City. She noted that they were discussing the language ensuring that there are not so many exceptions in the ordinance language and that across the board Planning and Zoning, ZBA, and Building were consistent. She stressed that litigation is such an unnecessary cost on the City.

Ms. Bahm stated that they will tweak the language a bit more so that it is clear and when zoning changes are discussed after the first of the year, they will remember what the context was and why it is being studied.

She moved on to discuss redevelopment and the Bordine property, and following the discussion it was noted that perhaps nothing specific needed to be included on this topic. She referred to page 30 of the draft, noting that it describes a tiered approach, including a Facelift or Refresh, Outlot Development, and Full-Scale Redevelopment. She mentioned giving the Commission or staff leverage for opportunities to make suggestions to further enhance a site and make things happen.

Ms. Roediger noted that this is something that they try to encourage in practice. She cited the old Genysis Credit Union that is now an Enterprise, explaining that they just wanted to move in and do a change of occupancy; and mentioned the shopping center on Walton that used to house the keg liquor store. She explained that the shopping center wanted to do a quick facade change and they made them install parking lot islands, redo the lot, connect to the pathway, change lighting and install street trees. She stated that the plan helps establish that middle ground where they are getting improvements on some not-brand-new buildings, but are improving the site incrementally.

Mr. Struzik commented that older developments look tired and often include a paved parking lot with no islands or trees, and he stated that this is huge.

Mr. McLeod stated that so many of these things happen on a regular basis, and stated that perhaps things can be changed incrementally. He mentioned Walton Boulevard, noting that if there are two or three different developments, all

of a sudden the complexity of the south side of Walton has changed. He mentioned that there is a fine line of pushing just enough but not discourage the development.

Ms. Neubauer asked if there is any remedy for properties like the old Barnes and Noble where the developer gets denied, the Ordinance has changed, and now it is wasting away. She stated that Ordinance is out there almost every week, and two homeless families have been removed from there. She mentioned that there is hanging electrical, it is an eyesore, and it is next to the beautifully redone Ford dealership.

Ms. Roediger stated that this would be a recommendation to work on a vacant building ordinance.

Ms. Neubauer suggested that if they cannot get a developer to work on a building right away, perhaps one of these intermediate development phases might get them to correct it. She mentioned listing various steps that need to be accomplished, and if they are not, the City would just tear it down.

Ms. Roediger stated that they have tried to encourage the owner to demolish it. She noted that he is paying all of the citations. She suggested perhaps adding a section about redevelopment, or about vacant buildings. She added that this would not be a part of the zoning ordinance, and is a code ordinance modification.

Ms. Neubauer suggested adding a section that says that they will study available remedies for vacant, abandoned, or unkempt properties.

Ms. Bahm stated that they were in another community this morning where they were having the exact same conversation and they were asking about a vacant building ordinance or one for property owners who just sit on their properties thinking that they are worth millions of dollars, while they continue to deteriorate.

Ms. Roediger mentioned that they went to a lawsuit with the Bosana property and they were going to have to demolish the building unless they made improvements; and they subsequently made the improvements so it looks better and is no longer a safety concern.

She stated that she feels that the culmination of the plan after all of these meetings is that there are not really a lot of land use changes, if any. She commented that it was more of a consolidation, trying to simplify it with focus on some of the attached units along major corridors, which they have historically done with Mr. Polyzois' type of projects. She explained that the next step is to take the plan to the joint meeting with Council, and approve it for distribution. During that 63-day public period, there would be an open house and then it would return for a Public Hearing with the Commission in October. She noted that probably before the Joint Meeting or at the Joint Meeting there will be a summary of changes from the last Master Plan to this Master Plan, because there really are not a lot. She stressed that they are really focusing on and enhancing what they already have.

She mentioned that the City received the community public opinion survey back, although it has not been presented to Council yet. She noted that 95 percent of the responders said that they would recommend Rochester Hills as a place to live. She commented that comparing with other communities, for example, Orion Township's recommendation rate was 67 percent. She stated that they know that they are doing something right and they want to continue and preserve it and keep it new. She pointed out that they do not want to become stale and not attract future generations, and want to ensure that they do not have old shopping malls that fall into disrepair.

She noted that after consulting with the City Clerk, it looks like the joint meeting would be held on August 11, at 5:30 p.m., right before the regularly-scheduled Council meeting. She mentioned that Council has a lot of meetings in August because of the budget, and they are trying to minimize another night meeting.

Ms. Neubauer suggested that when the proposed Plan is presented to Council, it should be stressed that there are minimal changes.

Ms. Roediger stated that their focus is on developing architectural guidelines that everyone agrees on. She commented that she doesn't think the Plan will win awards for creative new ideas; however, hopefully it will be winning awards for how it is presented through the website.

Ms. Bahm added that they believed that having this traditional version helped the Commission feel more comfortable with what is in it; and stated that she thinks that there was a feeling when presenting it a couple of months ago that no one was really sure where everything was living. She commented that this lack of confidence made the document tonight more useful; and she noted that it will be useful for Council too to know that this is the content of the web page, which will be presented in a more interactive way.

Ms. Neubauer suggested that they remind Council that this may prompt zoning changes to ensure consistency, as this is a very big issue for them.

Ms. Denstaedt asked about a reference to Green Acres in the Avondale Section.

Ms. Roediger noted that the demographic profiles for each neighborhood were compiled by ESRI, the data company.

Mr. McLeod explained that all of the mapping that the City does is based out of the ESRI software program, and he commented that they think it's fun to come up with cute little names.

Ms. Roediger stated that she felt ESRI's snapshots were interesting, barring the names of what they called these areas; however, she thought that it was a really nice description of the people and the demographics of the area.

Chairperson Hooper mentioned a reference on page 47 about a study about the need for increased office and commercial, and asked where that came from.

Ms. Bahm responded that this was done last October and the Chesapeake Group was hired. She noted that not all of the office will be in office buildings. She mentioned that some of it may be work-from-home space too.

Ms. Roediger noted that a lot of it is medical because of the proximity with Beaumont and Henry Ford. She pointed out that the city hardly has any office vacancy, while the national mentality is that there is too much office. She noted that for industrial, there is no vacancy.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic commented that a lot of medical offices are looking for upgrades because so much has been here for a long time. She questioned whether they like a newer facility.

Ms. Roediger responded that the successful doctors want their own private practice buildings, like the one built on Auburn. She added that dentists want their own specialty office, or a group of specialists will want a custom-built facility.

Mr. McLeod noted that it is big now for medical offices to bring in surgery centers and they can range from 15,000 to 30,000 square feet. He commented that they do not want to be in with anyone else.

Ms. Roediger asked if there were any more comments.

Ms. Neubauer reiterated that it should be super clear for Council to remind them that everything got turned around.

Ms. Roediger stated that they will create a one-pager summary of the highlights.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic commented that maybe there is no solution, but would question whether they have dropped the idea of encouraging or offering an incentive to come in and build ranch homes. She noted that there is one developer that does this and considers it financially feasible, and wanted to know if there was a way to incentivize it.

Ms. Roediger responded that the way to incentivize a developer is with density bonuses, and she commented that height and density are considered two dirty words in Rochester Hills. She noted that she does not know of any way other than cash. She stated that this is what they are trying to do along the main corridors to open up more areas for opportunities for attached ranch units so that they can be built. She noted that this can set the stage for ordinance amendments that could state that attached duplexes or triplexes could be on major roads under these circumstances, perhaps along a road with a minimum 90-foot right-of-way. She added that perhaps it could be incentivized to allow more units as long as it was compatible with the density of the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Struzik asked if the goal was to make housing more attainable or to have homes where individuals with mobility issues can have everything on one floor.

Ms. Neubauer suggested that if someone comes in to build a new subdivision,

perhaps a percentage of 25 or 30 percent would have to be ranch-style homes.

Ms. Roediger stated that she would make a note regarding the possibility of a zoning amendment requiring a minimum percentage of single-story homes. She commented that Rochester Hills has primarily been known as a family-forming community, with four bedroom suburbia houses; however, the population is aging and only a third of the households have children under 18. She stated that the demand for four bedroom colonials is not what it used to be. She commented that they will take note of this and envision a call-out that talks about the demand for ranch housing.

Chairperson Hooper referenced page 25 where existing land use percentages were mentioned, and suggested that public institutional and brownfield landfill percentages could be added.

Ms. Roediger commented that it would be interesting to do a comparison of the existing percentages of the city versus the percentages of the city with the future land use, which shows that it is still single family. She commented that this is very good to point out to Council.

She stated that they will have an updated version of this to go out, along with a one-page summary. She stated that the point of the Joint Meeting will hopefully be to gain Council support for it to go out for public distribution. She stressed that it is not an adoption, and is to get it sent out to all of the neighboring communities, having an open house sometime during the 63-day period, and coming back in October for the public hearing.

Discussed

DISCUSSION

2025-0270

Master Plan 2025

(McLeod Memo dated 6/17/25, Giffels Webster Memo 6/13/25 and Draft Document Text, Draft PC Regular Minutes of 5/20/25, Planning Commission Worksession Minutes of 4/15/25, 2/18/25, 12/10/24, 11/19/24, 10/15/24, 9/17/24, 7/16/24, 5/21/24, 6/18/24, 3/19/24, Planning Commission Regular Minutes of 12/10/24, and Planning Commission-City Council Joint Meeting Minutes of 11/18/24 and 1/29/24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present for Giffels Webster were Jill Bahm and Ian Hogg.

Mr. McLeod noted that Giffels Webster would lead the Commission through the draft Master Plan as it now stands along with their memo provided. He commented that this hopefully the last input of what the Commission wants to see for the Master Plan; and once this process is complete and everyone is satisfied with the text, staff will be moving on to finalize the website hub.

Ms. Bahm explained that at the last study session, the Commission looked at the hub site platform which will provide a really unique master plan experience for the community. She stressed that this will be more engaging and easier for people to find the information that they are interested in. She added that they also want to make sure that they are meeting their statutory requirements including the things that are needed for the master plan document.

She commented that there have been a lot of churning discussions about how to build the site, because it is based on the Arc GIS platform which is a mapping platform used to present spatial data. She commented that it is challenging to put in all of the bells and whistles of an interactive site that would be fun and engaging. She stated that they needed to step back and complete the whole text document to provide the information needed, which is not what they thought they would have to do at the beginning. She noted that they originally thought it would all be online; but as there were so many things they needed to ensure they captured, they thought better to have it here. She explained that the document is text heavy right now because they will be adding the photos, maps and links to embedded maps such as the regional development forecast and Oakland County information. She reviewed highlights of the document:

- The plan will be interactive and people will be able to dive in more if they are interested.*
- Planning in neighboring communities was acknowledged.*
- Community engagement included the small group workshops and the OPC meeting held last week.*
- The document dives into neighborhood planning through the maps.*
- Relative to the land use plan, there is a chapter that explains existing land use, what it is, some of the strategies that have been discussed and things that have been accomplished over the last couple of years. There are descriptions of the land use categories and the map.*

Vice Chairperson Brnabic commented that it appears the categories are changing again, noting the mapping colors. She commented that it appears that the entire Brooklands area running all the way up to Hamlin has been categorized under Neighborhood Residential, and asked why it was not categorized under Suburban Residential. She mentioned that she went back to the April 15, 2025 minutes and it stated that R-5 is proposed to change to Neighborhood Residential. She stated that she does not know why they would look at R-5 for that entire area.

She stated that she knows there was another reference to it because of some of the setbacks in the area and the way the area was platted, with 40 foot lots. She noted that most people bought side-by-side lots for 80 feet and mentioned that there are lots created that were 120 feet wide. She commented that while in general, most of the lots are within ordinance standards, there were a few odd lots where someone bought from street to street, and she stated that this causes a problem for a variance. She mentioned because of the larger lots, the City had started permitting 60 foot because with 120 foot width it was a way of getting two homes on a lot split.

Ms. Bahm responded that they were looking at the way that the lots were platted and the current conditions, and commented that they seemed to match the conditions that they were thinking of for Neighborhood Residential.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic stated that she would disagree if thinking of R-5, noting that this is not the neighborhood environment for duplexes or triplexes.

Ms. Bahm noted that what was talked about was if there was a lot that could fit two houses, they could either be done separately or two houses side-by-side; and stressed that it would be the same lot with the same number of homes. She stated that it is not saying that there is a lot with a single family home, and each home could be a duplex.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic responded that she does not think that is right for the area, and commented that it had been discussed perhaps off arterial roads such as John R or Dequindre. She stated that she does not agree with including the entire Brooklands area with a R-5 zoning perspective.

Mr. McLeod stated that for the Master Plan text right now, the Neighborhood Residential district didn't actually bring in the R-5 and it was consistent with the R-3, R-4. He stressed that one thing the Master Plan probably needs to expound on is the discussion that happened in April. He pointed out that there is the potential of connecting units along John R and along other major arterials that was discussed or in instances where natural features may otherwise push units around it; however, he stressed that the key is that the overall density or character does not change. He stressed that this does not necessarily automatically plug in R-5. He commented that he thinks realistically that it is a variation, whether it is MR or something new, that allows this to occur; noting that it would ensure that the overall density and character is maintained.

Commissioners suggested that the draft text is not consistent with the

discussion at the April worksession, as it does not emphasize that these types of homes would be allowed only on arterial roads and would not affect neighborhoods.

(Mr. Gallina entered at 5:40 p.m.)

Vice Chairperson Brnabic stated that the Future Land Use map is referenced by developers, and expressed concern that it would be the vision for the future.

Ms. Bahm stated that in looking at the old map, this is trying to give a name to the district so it made more sense. She stressed that the boundaries of this is the same as the boundaries on the map. She commented that R-4 went to Neighborhood Residential and R-5 did not appear anywhere.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic asked what is the distinguishing difference between Suburban and Neighborhood Residential.

Ms. Bahm responded that it is the size of the lots and right now they are basing it on the built environment. She commented that she believes the point is that the location is for the arterial lots and not in the middle of the neighborhood.

Ms. Neubauer commented that just in the last week someone appeared before the Zoning Board of Appeals and asked for a 1.8 foot variance on each side to allow a parcel to be divided into two parcels. She stated that it is so unfortunate that it is only 1.8 feet; however, such requests have been denied all the way back into the 1990s. She stressed that it needs to be clear so a developer cannot come in thinking that they can just get an exception because of some vague language or misunderstanding. She commented that the residents must be treated equally, whether it is in the Brooklands or on the Auburn Hills border.

Mr. Struzik noted that the Brooklands is seeing a lot of investment, and he would want to keep the character of the neighborhood.

Ms. Neubauer stated that it is the oldest, most established neighborhood in the entire city. She stressed that the Plan needs to take into consideration for the future that the Brooklands was affordable and the values have increased. She commented that it's important to preserve the integrity of those residential neighborhoods and ensure that those residents are not being displaced.

Discussions continued relative to the lot sizes currently in existence in the Brooklands area.

Ms. Bahm asked whether the established lot sizes in the Brooklands should be presented for subsequent R-4 developments.

Mr. McLeod stated that this would probably lead to an additional potential Zoning amendment. He suggested that Planning and Building have been conversing about whether the 60 foot reduction should be removed so that there is no confusion.

Ms. Neubauer concurred, stating that she thinks that would be better. She

commented that the Zoning Board of Appeals has been educational for her, as she believes that the more vagueness or loopholes that are left open, developers are led to waste money in asking for things they cannot get. She added that it is not fair to the residents and would surely eliminate the conversation if it was clear on what is being allowed or not allowed and the rules are kept the same. She commented that progress doesn't mean big dramatic change; and it can be small things that perhaps weren't done correctly before such as making school areas more walkable and protecting kids as they cross the street. She stated that these are the things that make the city number one in the state and number nine in the nation.

She commented that residents feel that there is so much overdevelopment and she encourages them to come to the Master Plan meetings. She stated that the difference between property that can be developed and green space needs to be explained better. She noted that a master plan does not mean that everything needs to be uprooted; and this needs to be communicated better.

Ms. Bahm stated that she is glad that things changed gears and whipped the car around in another direction. She commented that she wants to keep as close to the timeline as originally intended; however, they want to make sure it's right and that the Commission is comfortable with it.

(Mr. Hetrick arrived at 5:56 p.m.)

Ms. Bahm continued and asked if the plan should do a better job of explaining why the City needs a master plan or zoning, and noted that the answer is that people own property and they have a reasonable expectation that they can do something with it.

Ms. Denstaedt stated that it needs to be an overall message to everyone as no one understands what the Commission does and what a Master Plan is.

Ms. Neubauer added that there are so many people on the community media pages and suggested that an introduction be added on the community pages. She stated that it should be kept simple to state that they are not changing things, or doing this to take away or add, and to explain to the people who have property what they can do with the property they have.

Ms. Bahm cautioned that an introduction cannot be too detailed because it will have to be defended.

Chairperson Hooper commented that perhaps it can be said that 97 percent, or whatever appropriate number, will not see a change to the regulations to their existing site.

Ms. Neubauer suggested that it is the perception of change, in that 97 percent is already developed and this only affects the three percent that is not.

Mr. Weaver countered that this would be a tricky thing, as if that site falls in that percentage it could be developed or redeveloped.

Walton Oaks was mentioned, where a single owner sold and more home sites are being developed.

Ms. Neubauer suggested that explanations be included relative to a private owner and his right to sell his property, and the fact that 10 acres are needed to do some multiple-story projects.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic stated that the city has been in a stage of redevelopment for 25 years, and this will happen. She noted that expressing that the Commission tries to work toward the best possible development that can be done for the city while following the Ordinances. She stressed that she is glad that the Planning Commission and City Council opinions have worked to guide limits as the community does not generally want to see four, five or six-story buildings.

Mr. Weaver suggested incorporating a way to say that this doesn't promote new development; but sets guidelines should a property owner wish to develop his property.

Mr. Struzik suggested incorporating a history of the Green Space Millage, and that it has been a priority in the past and some parcels have been captured that will never be developed.

Results of the meeting at the OPC were mentioned, noting that four years ago, the big three concerns mentioned were traffic congestion, housing for empty-nesters, and deer. It was noted that this time, deer was not mentioned at all, but the other two topics were discussed. A third topic this year was walkability, and this topic appears to span all of the generations, along with preservation and sustainability.

Discussion ensued over where four stories should be permitted in the city, and it was noted that it has turned into a conditional use with minimum property sizes. It was noted that four stories is permitted in the FB district with 10 acres; and along Rochester Road, four acres was required. It as mentioned that developers are now buying up backyards of deep lots to allow them to amass 10 acres to construct a subdivision.

Ms. Neubauer stated that the right language should be provided as they are trying to preserve the integrity of the city as it is. She asked how to ensure in the Master Plan that people cannot use up people's backyards in order to be able to put up a four-story building, when the whole intention is to make sure that there are no four-story buildings.

Mr. McLeod countered that the only way to do this is to write four stories out of the Zoning Ordinance as an option. He stated that without this, someone will always find a loophole and a way to do it.

It was noted that Legacy Apartments have four stories; however, that was the result of a Consent Judgment approved by City Council.

Mr. Hetrick commented that this took a lot of work, and previous Council

Member Morita and the developer were willing to work together and the four-story buildings were moved on the plan so there were only two stories next to existing homes. He added that the developer had to make the money and tax abatement work to clean up the site. He commented that once the density was agreed upon, they were fine.

Ms. Neubauer commented that the developer wanted to build micro units.

Mr. McLeod noted that in the FB district there is no minimum size of the dwelling units, but it relies on parking. He explained that when a zoning ordinance is drafted, in order to have absolutes it should be one of the standards. If wanting flexibility, then the conditional use can flow with that; such as to say, for example, that it can only happen when completely surrounded by non-residential uses.

Chairperson Hooper stated that it is probably not a good idea to eliminate four stories entirely. He stated that the Commission should be careful should the Bordines property move toward redevelopment. He pointed out that the hotel next to the Holiday Inn Express is four stories.

Ms. Neubauer asked if there would be a way to tighten up the regulations without using exclusive language.

Mr. McLeod suggested that the Commission should be drafting provisions around conditions that push it in that direction.

Ms. Neubauer asked if this would be referencing commercial buildings as well or no four story apartments or apartment complexes.

Mr. McLeod stated that it would be buildings in the FB district, and explained that right now buildings in the FB district may be permitted up to an additional story and 15 feet, and it allows four stories for sites of at least 10 acres in size with conditional approval. He added that it states that the siting of the building or buildings is designed to maintain a reasonable expectation of privacy for adjacent residential uses and shall not negatively impact the residential use with respect to enjoyment of direct sunlight. Also, the ordinance requires that the site must include a third place of interest, which must be dedicated to either landscaping, natural feature preservation or open space. He added that additional setbacks in Table 10 apply, which refers to starting to step the building back for additional height.

Ms. Neubauer noted that there is no reference to density, and a developer may be able to have 500 square foot units and have 100 of them.

Mr. Weaver stated that nobody will be making a tower as it would not meet the Ordinance, and no one would rent or lease a 200 square foot room. He added that there are landscaping stipulations, and the Commission has the power to review a proposal and determine that it does not fit. He mentioned the shipping container coffee shop, and stated that it gives the Commission the authority to review it and say that it does not fit the character of Rochester Hills.

Mr. Hetrick commented that there are certain features that can be incorporated around how the buildings can be placed for sunlight or setback. He pointed out that even though Legacy was a part of a consent judgment, the four-story buildings were moved to the outside of the property and the two-story buildings were placed near the existing homes.

Ms. Neubauer mentioned that she received a phone call from a developer that stated that he wants to build something that is small and affordable.

Mr. McLeod stated that those are called micro units.

Mr. Hetrick asked if those would be considered a conditional use.

Ms. Bahm responded that some of them could be permitted.

Mr. McLeod noted that in the FB district there is currently no minimum size for dwelling or definition of unit size, and explained that it relies on the regulations of street or on-site parking.

Mr. Hetrick mentioned Old Orion Court, and noted that if they wanted to build micro units there, they would have needed more parking spaces which they would not have been able to get on that site.

Ms. Bahm noted that she is hearing that a brief land use description may not be enough for the Planning Commission to have a supporting foundation needed to make some of these decisions. She commented that they may have to go back to a longer version. She suggested that the Commission think about what they don't like about the four stories and why does it not fit well.

Ms. Neubauer responded that it is a density issue. She suggested that a minimum square footage per unit would prevent the micro units.

Ms. Bahm suggested that perhaps the Ordinance could limit the number of micro units and mentioned 10. She asked if they were worried about increased traffic.

Ms. Neubauer responded that it is not consistent with the aesthetics of the current community and did not think that it would be consistent with the aesthetics of the future community to have small micro units. She stressed that as it was mentioned in the joint meeting with City Council, Rochester Hills is not necessarily a starter community, and people move here when they are established. She commented that one of the goals in the Master Plan was to make sure that the people who are here can stay here, which may have something to do more with legislative factors such as the uncapping of taxes. She noted that if residents have lived here for more than 10 years and want to move, they have to pay the higher rates. She stated that it should be something in order to make it more affordable for them to continue to stay here. She stressed that this is not an apartment building community, such as Southfield.

Chairperson Hooper asked what the size of the typical assisted living unit is now, and mentioned that his mother lived in Sunrise for five years and it was 500

square feet.

Mr. Struzik stated that this is similar to a dorm such as in Rochester Christian University. He stated that he wanted to ensure that they would not do anything that would prohibit building student housing.

Ms. Neubauer responded that student and university housing is regulated differently, by the State.

Ms. Bahm noted that page one of the Master Plan, under Community Vision, states that "this vision aims to maintain stability and the suburban lifestyle in Rochester Hills while strengthening pedestrian connectivity and preserving natural resources". She moved on to mention the second bullet, noting that it states, "The City will maintain its current patterns of land use and development practices. Single family detached housing will continue to be the preferred choice for residents."

Mr. Struzik asked whether there is an opportunity to engage with HOAs and suggested giving them a playbook of what should be done if there is a 10-acre or five-acre parcel right next to their neighborhood to potentially preserve it from development. He noted that it could be offered that they should review their subdivision bylaws to ensure that they do not have any restrictions against purchasing property. He stated that they should talk to their membership to see how much they might be willing to spend to make a preemptive offer to the current homeowner, and look for the parcel to go for sale and be prepared to purchase it at market rate.

Mr. McLeod stated that there is a lot riding on the HOA education line of thought, including how to take care of stormwater retention ponds and how to manage their open spaces. He commented that he likes the idea of also suggesting that they buy adjacent areas for green space. He noted that unfortunately, this is not the purpose of the Green Space Fund; however, the HOAs do not understand that they have to be high on the scale in terms of environmental assets whether it is wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes or rivers. He stated that this could be a presentation with Planning, Engineering, and Parks and Natural Resources or be incorporated into the HOA forums that are done twice a year.

Ms. Bahm concurred, noting that it fits in with the section on neighborhood preservation. She commented that education for HOAs will help promote environmental stewardship in regards to tree removals and general open space maintenance and best practices. She added that there was discussion about places that do not have an HOA and how to create a framework within that to address maintaining existing housing stock, upgrading infrastructure where upgrades are desired, and providing for redevelopment that does not outscale existing homes.

Discussion moved on to the EGLE grant properties.

Mr. McLeod noted that originally it was two planning areas A and B, Hamlin and Madison Park, and then City properties were added as area C. EGLE came

back and said to open up the entire City for any contaminated property to be able to apply for funding. He cautioned that the idea is that this is initially intended for landfills and they do not want every gas station coming as that is not the purpose of the funding.

Mr. McLeod returned to respond to the question regarding assisted living square footage, and noted that floor sizes are 300 square feet for efficiency, 400 square feet for one bedroom, and 550 for two bedroom. He suggested that there could be different standards for apartments versus assisted living or nursing facilities.

Ms. Bahm pointed out that most assisted living facilities are not likely to have in-unit kitchens. She moved on to discuss redevelopment opportunities. She noted that in the last Master Plan they had three sites, including the two landfills and the Bordines site. She explained that it has been updated for today, but had not been discussed yet. She highlighted the concepts for redevelopment, including a mix of commercial uses including small, independent, and/or local retail shops and restaurants. A big box store was discouraged for this location, and it would be ideal for attainable housing including townhomes, attached condominiums or apartments. She stated that this would be the only place that the word "apartments" was used, and pointed out that it was from the last document.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic asked if the Bordines property had an FB overlay.

Ms. Bahm responded that she thought it did, but not on the entire site.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic noted that they would have the opportunity to do four stories, and it was not only dependent on the size of the property.

It was pointed out that the American House adjacent to that site had three stories.

Chairperson Hooper stated that to have a blanket statement of no four stories in the City would be exclusionary.

Ms. Neubauer suggested not using exclusionary words, but it should come back to the idea that it is not what they are looking for and should be made as difficult as possible to attain.

Mr. McLeod noted that the City has newly-acquired open space to the north, the cemetery and duplex property to the east and then roads on the south and west.

Chairperson Hooper noted that an offer was made 20 or 30 years ago by Walmart to purchase that property and it was turned down. He commented that he did not think it would sell anytime soon.

Ms. Neubauer pointed out that the property is right in the center of everything. She commented that if the Commission is saying that they do not want four stories on the outskirts on 10 acres, and now it is saying that maybe it could be on the Bordines site because how it is zoned, it makes her nervous.

Mr. Struzik commented that he gets more worried about four stories when it is directly next to residential. He noted that there is a buffer of City property to the north side. He stated that he is foreseeing more diversity in housing types in certain areas but not in the existing neighborhoods, and is not opposed to apartments in certain areas. He pointed out that when Legacy was first constructed, they heard comments that the concrete looked like jail cells; however, once the facade was put on it, he thinks they look good.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she still hears comments about it. She mentioned that Legacy has a waiting list. She commented that when talking about diversity in development, they were thinking more about ranch homes in subdivisions as opposed to the monster developments that have occurred. She stated that nobody is building 1,500 to 2,000 square foot homes anymore and they are all 3,500 square feet or more. She mentioned that the general consensus is that high and dense development is not what people are looking for.

Chairperson Hooper suggested that the vocal minority are what people are hearing, and noted the topic of deer. He stated that people came to speak that did not even live in the community; and now they have disappeared.

Ms. Neubauer stressed that she is not saying that they can please everyone; however, they are doing things right because they keep getting awards and people want to move here. She commented that property values are still going up, and suggested focusing on walkability, safety around the schools and the Master Plan.

Ms. Bahm noted that the 2018 plan showed the outside edges along Hamlin and Rochester Roads of the Bordines property as mixed use with retail on the bottom and apartments above. She stated that it would be whatever the Ordinance allowed, and would now be four stories. She added that townhomes were all in the center around a green and against some of the other residential areas with parking tucked away. Bordines was going to keep a part of it.

Chairperson Hooper noted that there were several iterations including a big box.

Discussion continued regarding three story versus four story. It was mentioned that a movie theater needed four stories for a screen; however, it would not be constructed with four stories of windows. It was also mentioned that the Emagine Theater has a business buffer between it and adjacent condominiums.

Ms. Neubauer stated that for the immediate master plan and beyond she wants to fix the walkability around the schools and neighborhoods first; and once that is done, then she wants to fix the walkability everywhere else.

Ms. Bahm related that for another community they worked with, their Commission wanted one thing and their Council wanted another relative to building heights. She suggested that they look down the road five years from now and added that it would depend on what kind of growth and change happens between now and the next Master Plan. She noted that while not ruling it out, there are things they want such as seeing the existing shopping centers

revitalized.

An image in the previous plan was mentioned relative to the Bordines redevelopment, and it was suggested that it be taken out as it was from a previous plan. It was pointed out that retail faced inwards. It was suggested to make the buildings three stories instead of four, and to have the retail face out so that it had more of a presence on Rochester Road to facilitate more walkability and visibility. It was suggested to perhaps remove that particular image and replace it with an illustration.

Mr. Struzik cautioned that if the building height is restricted down it could become a Costco, for instance, and it could be much worse for traffic. He commented that this is an option where people could live there and have shops.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she is not saying that people cannot live there; but that it does not have to be four stories. She commented that it could be two story plus retail.

Chairperson Hooper cautioned that he would not want to set the City up for a lawsuit.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she is not anti-development nor anti-progress, but she just wants to ensure that they are doing things well and do not have to drastically change. She stressed that when it comes to the Master Plan, she wants to ensure that there is enough in there that can actually be accomplished, and the big picture is trying to bring it back to walkability. She commented that it needs to be narrowly-focused and not hypothetical so that they can actually accomplish what is in the plan. She added that she wants to make sure that what is being done is not contradictory.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic stated that there would be one more workshop right before it goes to the open house. She asked if there would be renderings and picture examples.

Ms. Bahm responded that the tool would be back to the website and this will be the foundation of it. She stated that the pictures would be on the website. She stated that there would be a paper version and an online version.

Vice Chairperson Brnabic stated that she would like to have a paper version to refer to when she is not by a computer.

Ms. Bahm responded that the paper version will be the executive summary, which will be in the range of 20 pages or one-third of the online document that will meet the statutory requirements and refer to the online sections. She stated that hopefully at the next worksession most of the information will be on the website.

NEW BUSINESS

2025-0237

Master Plan Discussion with Staff

(Memo to Planning Commission dated 5-20-25 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Ms. Roediger stated that the planned presentation of the draft Master Plan for this evening's meeting would not take place. She explained that unforeseen delays in finalizing the document, stemming from ongoing collaboration with Giffels Webster, scheduling issues, and other concurrent deadlines, which prevented the completion of a presentable draft. She acknowledged the complexity and time needed to compile the plan, and noted that to refine the plan in its new online format was significant. Consequently, the work session previously scheduled for the evening was canceled to utilize the Commission's time in a more efficient manner.

She noted significant progress on developing the website interface for the Master Plan, which she described as cutting-edge and the first of its kind for the City of Rochester Hills. Due to the innovative nature of the plan's presentation format, the process has involved a steep learning curve, especially regarding formatting. While much focus has been placed on technical formatting aspects, the Planning Department's efforts must now shift towards refining the actual content of the Master Plan.

Ms. Roediger explained that it was initially intended to present the draft plan to the Commission on this date, followed by a joint session with the City Council and a public open house on June 3rd. However, given the draft plan's delay, Ms. Roediger proposed canceling the June 3rd meetings. She emphasized the importance of the Planning Commission reviewing the plan before a public presentation to ensure proper consideration and input. The revised plan is for a study session to be held on June 17th, during which the draft plan would be presented to the Planning Commission. Depending on the outcome and discussion at the June 17th study session, further scheduling in July will be considered for additional meetings and public engagement. She reassured the Commission that progress had been made on the plan despite the delay. She explained that Mr. McLeod will provide a brief overview of the progress made since the last work session for informational purposes only. She stressed that there is no content for decision and no decisions are required this evening.

Mr. Struzik commented that the innovation and this kind of technology making it so accessible and easy to navigate between high level information and drilling in deep gets people involved and engaged in the longer term.

Ms. Roediger explained that the Master Plan process involves creating six parallel plans: one citywide and five for specific areas including Adams, Stoney Creek, and Avondale. She noted that these different pages must parallel each other with their content. She highlighted the clarity of the future land use map in Rochester East as an example and invited Mr. McLeod to elaborate.

Mr. McLeod explained that the interactive master plan allows users to click on different land use designations, such as "suburban residential" or "neighborhood residential," to view them individually. Clicking a designation highlights it on the map and provides detailed information, including acreage and percentage of land use in the neighborhood. The plan also highlights areas with modifications since 2018 using red boxes. Clicking these boxes reveals the specific changes made, such as a change from "park and public open space" to "hybrid industrial." This feature is intended to be transparent and part of the final Master Plan. Further detailed information about these designations will be available, though the exact format is still being developed. The overall goal is to provide easily accessible information through an interactive platform, eliminating the need to flip through pages or rely on static documents. This digital format aims to be more user-friendly and ensure everyone understands the plan's details and origins.

Chairperson Hooper commented that this is great, and noted that it was used this evening to look at Maple Hill Townhomes.

Mr. McLeod added that a feature to search by address will ultimately be enabled.

Ms. Roediger noted that in zooming to a certain level, the aerial will pop up as well, and noted that this will add context to where a property is located within the City and will be very helpful.

Mr. McLeod provided a detailed overview of the interactive Master Plan's features. When zooming into specific areas, the aerial view becomes more prominent, providing context. Each neighborhood section includes an introductory "snapshot view" summarizing key points and then transitions to the future land use plan for immediate access. Changes to the neighborhoods are described in text, and goals and objectives, which might be repetitive, are detailed with specific neighborhood-focused objectives. Action items are presented with a timeline (short-term, long-term, ongoing) and framed within the City's three main lenses: age-friendly, sustainable, and innovative. These action items are connected to the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and other city plans. The plan allows users to scroll through or click through various action items categorized by topics such as transportation, economic development, housing, and community amenities, using icons for clarity. Background information, surveys, current land use data, and demographics are included for each neighborhood, providing insights into residents' ages, employment, and household income. Users can navigate between neighborhoods, and a glossary and list of related plans are also available, offering access to various City documents. The overall aim is to provide a fully accessible and navigable platform for comprehensive master plan information.

Discussed

DISCUSSION

2025-0176

Master Plan 2025

(Giffels Webster's Goals, Objectives and Future Land Use Discussion memorandum dated April 9, 2025, Public Comment received, Planning Commission Worksession Minutes of 2/18/25, 12/10/24, 11/19/24, 10/15/24, 9/17/24, 7/16/24, 5/21/24, 6/18/24, 3/19/24, Planning Commission Regular Minutes of 12/10/24, and Planning Commission-City Council Joint Meeting Minutes of 11/18/24 and 1/29/24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present representing the City's Master Plan Consultant, Giffels Webster, was Jill Bahm and Ian Hogg.

Chairperson Brnabic welcomed everyone to the worksession meeting and noted she had received one card for public comment, and she opened the floor for public comment.

Scot Beaton, 655 Bolinger St. - Mr. Beaton said that he likes the new land use categories for the Master Plan and noted that no other municipality does meeting minutes like Rochester Hills. He said that it appears that Millennials really like the color gray in architectural design. With regard to the new gas station at Adams and Walton, he noted that he had asked the question online as to whether the architecture matches the region, and comments came back 50-50. He said with regard to the public hearing tonight on the site condos, he wished that more of them had a neighborhood park like the one proposed so that people have a place to gather. He said that he would also like to see a grand plan for Rochester Road. He said that the board is doing a terrific job and he would like to hear some feedback.

Ms. Roediger stated that next year the City's Master Transportation plan is due to be updated and that would be an appropriate time to discuss the future of Rochester Rd. She said that one of the biggest jobs as part of this process is to convert the Master Plan into a digital format. She commented that there are not a lot of changes and instead more design guidelines incorporated and smaller changes focusing on aesthetic appeal.

Ms. Bahm noted that the challenge is to convert what one normally thinks of as a PDF plan to a more engaging online format, to allow the user to choose their own adventure and focus on the neighborhood where they live. She explained that the goals and objectives are similar to previous plans in that it asks the question what we are trying to accomplish, why, and how to achieve these goals. She mentioned that two objectives were added for preservation and sustainability.

She reviewed the proposed Future Land Use map and noted the changes that were made to the descriptions.

Chairperson Brnabic commented that she did not recall a discussion for

allowing duplexes and triplexes along arterial roads, and stated that the discussion went nowhere when it was brought up previously.

Ms. Bahm reminded everyone that the Future Land Use Map and the Master Plan is all about helping establish policies to make land use decisions. She stressed that neither the Map nor the Plan are regulatory; however, they can help guide decision-making.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that developers often tell how their plans coincide with the Master Plan, and her concern is that how things are described in the Master Plan convey a reflection of the vision for the future. She noted that there was mention about clustering homes and reducing setbacks, and she stated that she wants more detail on that.

Ms. Bahm noted that the discussion was about housing variety and types to maintain the character of the city, while not wanting to increase density or overburden areas. She suggested in certain areas to permit a different type of housing similar to the surrounding density.

Ms. Roediger noted that a four-unit attached dwelling takes up less space and saves more trees and woods, maintaining natural views and providing meaningful open space.

Chairperson Brnabic asked for more detail on the idea of meaningful open space.

Ms. Bahm responded that it is not just increasing the setbacks, but providing a natural area that is meaningful, perhaps with a trail, piece of art, or bench.

Commission members discussed opportunities for creating more density by providing a means for clustering homes and reducing setbacks in the Plan, noting that a definition page needs to be added so that it is not a source of confusion.

Ms. Neubauer noted that she doesn't understand the reference to clustering homes by reducing setbacks to maintain open space and said that is vague.

Ms. Roediger drew a sketch for the commissioners of two developments of the same size, one as a single family development layout under conventional zoning, and the second as a complex of duplexes with open space set aside. She pointed out that only the bright yellow areas on the map were calling for attached units, and mentioned including along John R, along Auburn in the Brooklands District, and on the west side of Auburn and Adams adjacent to traditional neighborhoods and not in the middle of neighborhoods. She pointed out that some of the areas already allow this under the MR zoning; however, they need a 10-acre minimum. She stressed it was not to increase density but to maximize space. She added that they heard during the process that people want single floor housing for seniors, and developers like attached condominiums.

Chairperson Brnabic referenced the Joint Meeting noting that care must be

taken so that it does not push higher density housing as a connection to affordable housing.

Ms. Neubauer concurred with the discussion that was held at the joint meeting, noting the vocabulary needed to be adjusted to eliminate the words "affordable housing".

Mr. Hetrick commented that the word "attainable" should be in place of "affordable".

Mr. Struzik stated that \$500,000, \$600,000 or \$700,000 is not attainable housing. He commented that having more diverse options increases the pool for people who can move in, and does not raise the density. He stated that it is a win-win.

Ms. Roediger noted that it will probably not make the price lower.

Ms. Denstaedt commented that the arterial roads are those areas that are more attainable to purchase housing in the city.

Mr. Struzik asked whether this could help a wetland going through development.

Mr. McLeod stated that the Plan does not need to define attainable housing as it cannot dictate the market. He stressed that it would provide a variety of housing opportunities. He mentioned that most people are not going to build a single family home that fronts on a major road.

Mr. Hetrick commented that it is not a matter of affordability, it providing is a mix of housing options that makes sense.

Ms. Neubauer commented that at the Joint Meeting, they were proud of the catchphrase that Rochester Hills does not have to be everything to everybody.

Chairperson Brnabic asked how City Council or the public will view the idea of meaningful open space.

Ms. Roediger responded that the Master Plan will be very graphic.

Ms. Bahm's presentation summarized the proposed changes, noting the following:

- Residential Land Use Categories

- Estate Residential is changed to Open Space Residential, reflecting the natural feel of the existing neighborhoods, found mostly in the northern part of the city, primarily north of the Clinton River. The category includes four areas zoned Rural Estates as well as areas zoned R-1. Many of the older neighborhoods are predominantly 1/2 to one acre in size. No new areas are proposed for this zoning designation as there are few undeveloped parcels sufficient in size for this type of more rural, sprawling development.

- Residential 2, 2.5, 3 and 4 are proposed to change to Suburban Residential. These designations are based on the existing single-family development pattern

and permit varying densities of detached single-family development based on the established character of the neighborhood. Lot sizes range from three to four dwelling units per acre, based on existing development patterns.

- Residential 5 is proposed to change to Neighborhood Residential. This land use designation is intended to provide residential areas that accommodate homes on smaller lot sizes with an expectation that these areas may be well-suited to empty-nesters and young professionals looking for more affordable housing, home sites with lower maintenance, and housing within walking distance of goods, services, and employment centers. These areas support a density of four to six dwelling units per acre, consistent with surrounding residential development. Manufactured housing communities are also included in this category, although no new communities are planned. Land use aligns with Mixed Residential Overlay, R-3, R-4 and R-5 when located along major thoroughfares. Attached dwellings may be appropriate as a transition along major thoroughfares, or to preserve natural features, when the new development meets the density of adjacent neighborhoods.

- Mixed Residential Overlay - Category is removed, some areas are reclassified as Neighborhood Residential.

- Office Related Land Use Categories

- The Office category is removed.
- Changes from the previously-designated "Office" land use areas to Mixed Use include the area around Barclay Circle, along Auburn Road/Crooks, Walton and Brewster, and South Boulevard south of M-59.
- Changes from previously designed "Workplace" and "Technology and Office Image Corridor" land use areas to "Light Industrial/R&D" include that areas between Hamlin Road and M-59, between Hamlin Road and the Clinton River Trail, east of Livernois, and south of M-59 to Auburn Road, between Adams Road and Crooks Road, including the existing development east of Crooks Road.

- Business/Flex-Related Land Use Categories

- The Future Land Use map continues to offer flexibility and includes a Mixed-Use category to accommodate a range of residential, office and commercial uses as standalone uses, or within mixed use buildings or areas. The majority of areas planned for Mixed Use are currently used for commercial uses or have a Flex Business Overlay zoning designation. Mixed Use areas are intended to prevent the expansion of strictly commercial parcels beyond their current boundaries. Mixed Use areas provide responsiveness and incentive for property owners to redevelop older commercial developments.

- Regional Employment Center Land Use Categories

- Interchange replaced by "Regional Commercial". Much of the recent commercial development in this area has taken place west of Adams Road and south of M-59 in the Adams Marketplace development. The large footprint and strip mall style developments are not planned to change, and future land use considerations should focus on the stability, visibility and connectivity of the area.
- Technology, Office and Workplace - Proposed as Light Industrial/R&D. Areas designated Light Industrial are employment development areas, or workplace areas, that serve light industrial and R&D Users. Includes areas

along the M-59 corridor where there are high visibility buffers from residential areas, and this category offers opportunities for more intense uses that seek to establish a presence along the M-59 corridor. Areas without direct access to M-59 are primarily developed as office/research/industrial parks and accommodate a variety of users.

- *Flex Category - Proposed as Mixed Use* - Most of the commercial corridors in the City are included in this land use category. It is envisioned that corridors and intersections away from Rochester Road provide goods and services to the local neighborhoods. Properties along the Rochester Road corridor will serve the greater community, given the traffic volume and function of this roadway in the region. Housing is also envisioned in mixed use areas, consistent with the development pattern of local neighborhoods.

- Other Land Use Categories

- *Industrial - Proposed for Hybrid Industrial*. Areas planned for industrial uses are appropriate for light industrial land uses that are characterized by light manufacturing operations that are not of sufficient size or scale to negatively impact surrounding non-industrial use areas. Examples of such light industrial uses include bump and paint shops, warehousing and wholesaling, and light assembly operations. In the Hamlin/Avon Landfill area, light industrial is envisioned to be developed consistent with low-impact design features and/or be businesses that focused on or support, sustainability, energy generation and/or recreation.

- *Special Purpose - Proposed as Institutional/Campus*: This land use category includes colleges (Oakland University and Rochester University) and institutional uses such as Ascension Providence Hospital. The City's DPS facility is included in this category as well.

- *Public Recreation/Open Space* - is proposed as Public Recreation/Open Space. The city's publicly owned parks and trail facilities are included in this land use category. In the Hamlin/Avon Landfill area, lands designated for public recreation and open space may include privately-owned recreational facilities when connections such as shared-use paths are provided to adjacent public recreation facilities. Two new parcels were added along Rochester Road between Avon and the Clinton River and another between Hamlin and Eddington.

Ms. Bahm commented that the density is not increasing, and it is just mimicking what is adjacent to it.

Ms. Roediger stressed that the Commission should not get bogged down by what is there today and should think about what they would want for a future use in each location.

Chairperson Brnabic asked if Council will see a draft moving forward and have time to review it.

Ms. Roediger suggested that a Special Meeting could be held on June 3 with Council invited.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that she had a few questions on the neighborhood descriptions relative to density, and mentioned the Avondale and Rochester

East Neighborhoods.

Ms. Roediger responded that the R-4 current zoning allows four units per acre.

Ms. Denstaedt asked if there was a way to emphasize the future aspect of it and not what is there now.

Mr. Hetrick commented that this is consistent with what the Commission has been doing, and will be consistent in the future to maintain the integrity of the city.

Chairperson Brnabic asked about reducing setbacks for cluster homes and asked if it would explain that it would take a process to do so.

Ms. Bahm responded that there would be a flexibility of dimensional standards.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Thomas Yazbeck, 1707 Devonwood Drive, expressed concerns that the City's Master Plan may not be innovative enough. He highlighted that household sizes are shrinking and demand for diverse housing types is growing, but restrictive zoning limits housing supply and prevents people from finding suitable housing. Yazbeck argued that walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods are desirable and better for seniors aging in place. He urged the City to be innovative and consider solutions like accessory dwelling units, reduced parking requirements, smaller lot sizes, and mixed-use development, suggesting pilot projects to test these solutions in specific areas.

Scot Beaton, 655 Bolinger, noted that dwelling units over garages are also called FROGS (finished room over garage), and stated that they could bring more housing options. He expressed concerns about the need to listen to young people and the importance of education, highlighting the high ranking of Rochester schools. Beaton argued against urban sprawl and for increased density, suggesting exploring ways to reinvent the city and increase density in certain areas. He mentioned an upcoming proposal with transitional architecture that will be coming to the Regular Meeting later in the evening. He noted that 85 percent of the residents of the city do not want change, and this is understood that 85 percent of the areas will not change. He stressed that change can happen in certain areas.

DISCUSSION

2025-0041

Master Plan 2025

(McLeod Memo dated 2-13-25, Overview of Sustainability Priorities Discussion dated 2-12-25, Sustainability Background Information dated 2-12-25, Sustainability Bracket, and Minutes from the Planning Commission Regular Meeting of 12/10/24 and Worksessions of 12/10/24, 11/19/24, 10/15/24, 9/17/24, 7/16/24, 6/18/24, 5/21/24, 3/19/24 and PC-CC Joint Minutes of 1/29/24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present representing the City's Master Plan Consultant, Giffels Webster was Ian Hogg.

Ms. Roediger introduced the third and final topical discussion work session focused on sustainability in Rochester Hills. She emphasized that this Master Plan will be included on an interactive website, providing easily accessible information and recommendations. She highlighted Mr. McLeod's work in creating an interactive hub for the PED Annual Report and the updated Natural Features Inventory. She explained that the goal is to establish a baseline, and then brainstorm future recommendations for sustainability in the Master Plan.

Mr. McLeod provided a detailed description of an interactive Master Plan website that is being developed. He stated that it is driven by the desire to create a resource that is engaging and informative for the public and to create a plan that is not going to just sit on a shelf. He stated that this web-based format

will be more accessible and user-friendly than a traditional PDF document.

He highlighted the online Natural Features Inventory, stating that the website is a combination of GIS and a story map that creates an intuitive interactive and hopefully attractive web map. He explained that it tells the story of the City's natural features and allows users to explore different aspects of the city's environment.

He showed how users can click on any parcel or enter an address to see if it is impacted by a natural feature, the quality of that feature, and relevant City ordinances. He noted that the map also provides detailed scores for each natural feature based on specific criteria, such as total habitat and core area.

He explained that the primary goal of the interactive master plan is to make information about the city's natural features easily accessible to both the public and city staff. He commented that he believes that this website will be a valuable tool for planning and decision-making, as well as for educating the public about the importance of environmental protection in a user-friendly and interactive approach.

He explained that there is a legend and scoring matrix included. He stated that the map includes detailed information about each natural feature, categorizing them as high, medium, or base quality, as defined in the Natural Features Inventory adopted last year. Users can delve deeper into specific features like wetlands and woodlands, and view how they are regulated within the city. The map also shows steep slopes and floodplains, including acreage data.

He added that the map compares natural features to land use, providing a visual representation of their impact. He highlighted a "before and after" feature, demonstrating that the city's natural features have remained largely unchanged over the past 20 years due to effective ordinances and enforcement. He noted that some areas, like woodlands, have even increased due to more accurate mapping and identification.

The map also identifies the most sensitive natural features in the city and describes their characteristics. He mentioned that the Forestry Division contributed to the identification and qualification of these features.

Mr. McLeod emphasized that this interactive map will be a valuable tool for both City Staff and the public, providing easy access to information about Rochester Hills' natural features.

Ms. Roediger noted that an interactive website is what is envisioned for the Master Plan, and could encompass tabs for individual neighborhoods allowing the user to zoom right in and find demographic data and specific recommendations for each neighborhood as well as the city as a whole. She commented that she has never seen anything like this from other communities. She stated that while it is very common to have interactive zoning maps and development maps, to have this level of information linked to the Ordinances making it pretty easy for the average resident to go and click on a parcel and find information is extremely transparent and huge.

Commissioners commented that this is an award-worthy type of accomplishment.

Ms. Roediger stated that a lot of the efforts in the coming year and beyond will include this more interactive web-based information.

She noted that Ian Hogg from Giffels Webster was in attendance to lead a discussion about some of the different sustainability recommendations and topics to think about, and the worksession will include a sort-of March Madness-type game to get to the priorities. She explained that the group will make choices about priorities and see what the sustainability "final four" will be that will come out on top from the Planning Commission as things to focus on for the Master Plan moving forward. She indicated that with the Commissioners present, they would break into three groups.

Mr. Hogg explained the exercise, and how the groups would arrive at their "final four" in four categories. He stated that after the groups had the chance to find their "final four" each group would review their results.

The Commission broke into their groups and began the exercise. After the exercise, the groups summarized their results.

Group one highlighted their final four as wildlife and habitat preservation, being age-friendly, places to meet and connect with others including bike and walkability, and a supported workforce. This broke down into a final two of bike and walkability and being age-friendly. Bike and walkability was the ultimate final result.

Group two listed infrastructure and being bike-able, being age-friendly, supporting wildlife habitat, and fostering innovative technology and research. Wildlife and habitat preservation and fostering innovative technology and research made their final two, and the ultimate winner was fostering innovation and technology.

Group three reported that their "final four" of sustainability in Rochester Hills, the biking and walking, supporting the economic factors through quality local jobs, and high tech innovative technologies. Biking and walking was a final winner and was tied in with technology.

Group four stated that they discussed that they could pick whatever they wanted to pick, but would question how they would know if it was affordable. They mentioned stormwater as an imminent problem, walkability and viability around the schools, and stated that research and fostering innovative technologies could merge with creating local jobs, suggesting partnering with universities to create a network.

Ms. Roediger stated that the results will help guide the draft recommendations, and the next worksession would be in April. She mentioned that relative to economic development strategy, these are a lot of the things that Pam Valentik is working on and will be important in the long-term. She noted that the Master

Plan will drill down into the neighborhoods, and suggested that they will be working with the Engineering Department to look where flooding problems most occur and could identify more specific targeted areas to focus on addressing stormwater.

A question was raised how to incentivize developers to actually plant trees rather than to pay into the Tree Fund.

Ms. Roediger noted that when the Tree Preservation Ordinance was updated a few years ago, it increased the percentage of trees on the property that had to be saved and noted that this obligation cannot be opted out of anymore.

Mr. McLeod noted that there are ongoing conversations with the Forestry Division relative to the cost of paying into the Tree Fund. He mentioned that the City's cost per tree is calculated low because of the ability to do bulk purchases, and this needs to be balanced between the City not being allowed to overcharge for things to make money.

The Commissioners asked if they were the first group to undertake this type of exercise.

Mr. Hogg noted that there were similar exercises; and mentioned that it was Ms. Roediger's and Mr. McLeod's idea to incorporate the idea of a "final four" bracket with March Madness coming up.

Ms. Roediger reviewed the upcoming timeline, noting that the goal is to use May as a month incorporating the next level for public involvement and push the draft plan out on social media and online, have a public meeting, and meet again with stakeholder groups. June will be a month to regroup and again look at the modifications and review comments and get a final draft prepared for review. She explained that State Law notes that the Master Plan must be out for public review for 90 days, and this will put the Plan out in draft form for comment over the summer with an anticipated fall adoption date. She thanked the Commissioners for their input this evening.

Discussed.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Roediger noted that she indicated at the Work Session that Ms. Renee Cortright, Executive Director of the Older Persons' Commission had been invited to attend the Session and provide a view from her perspective about some of the topics being discussed in the Master Plan process in terms of walkability, affordability, community health, and some of those other items that are being looked at. She stated that unfortunately, she forgot to mention that the Work Session started at 5:30 p.m., and Ms. Cortright arrived at 7:00 p.m., right on time for the regular meeting. She commented that she would love to invite her up now to provide some insight from her perspective. She mentioned that Ms. Cortright has a background in planning and is a former City Planner for Springfield, Illinois. She stated that Ms. Cortright has a wealth of knowledge gained directly from the city's seniors and invited her to share some of her insights as the Commission moves forward with the Master Plan.

Ms. Cortright stated that she is always willing to talk about what is happening within the senior community and what OPC is doing. She noted that they have had a huge increase in the use of their facility which goes to show that as the community continues to age in place, the health and other services that they provide to support aging in place in the community are vital. She mentioned that they have seen a 10 percent increase in the individuals needing Meals on Wheels, going from 95,000 last year to 112,000 meals that were served, prepared and delivered in the community. She added that they are definitely seeing this trend throughout the three communities they service. She commented that this need speaks to the cost of living, and noted that the program is for individuals who are not able to shop or prepare a meal for themselves. She stated that the statistics show that those individuals are continuing to try to age in place.

Since the passing of the transportation millage in 2022, she noted that they have also seen a 46 percent increase in rides provided, representing an increase in the need to get individuals to their doctor's appointments, to their dialysis appointments, to grocery stores, to the facility and within their community. She added that they pretty much stay within the three communities because they have found that most individuals do not go more than a five-mile radius from their home. She mentioned that they have expanded their hours which were from 8am to 4pm and are now 6:30am to 8pm. She noted that they have up to 22 buses on the road each day, and have expanded getting people to medical appointments throughout facilities in Troy, and to Royal Oak Beaumont (Corewell).

Ms. Cortright stated that there has been a 16 percent increase in supportive services, which would be individuals looking for information and referral. She mentioned that two facilities, Avon Towers and Danish Village (Samaritas) show that there is a need for low-income housing and those residents also look for supportive services from the Center. She noted that they also look to provide support with minor home repairs, snow removal, and yard cleanup; and stated that they are seeing an increase in those needs within the community.

She stated that she was reviewing some of the information received regarding the Master Plan. She stated that they are talking a lot about the fixed route coming up Rochester Road and over to Oakland University; and commented that they are looking at different avenues to meet and connect with the fixed route to get individuals on that last mile to their home if they are taking the bus. She added that they are looking at a flex service which is currently being offered in Troy and the Pontiac area, and plan to bring it into this area as an Uber-type service. She stated that OPC is a known entity as a transit provider, and she commented that she believes that they provide good customer service. She stated that as such, if they took the lead on the flex service for the community it would be fantastic.

Chairperson Brnabic thanked Ms. Cortright for her comments.

DISCUSSION

[2024-0618](#)

Master Plan 2024

(McLeod Memo dated 12-10-24, Transportation and Community Health presentation, Draft PC Worksession Minutes of 11-19-24, PC Worksession Minutes of 10-15-24, 9-17-24, 7-16-24, 6-18-24, 5-21-24, 3-19-24, and Planning Commission-City Council Joint Minutes of 1-29-24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof.)

Present were Jill Bahm and Ian Hogg representing Giffels Webster, the City's Planning Consultant.

Ms. Bahm expressed thanks to the Commission for attending the study session and appreciation for their time dedicated to the Master Plan update process. She noted that today's session would focus again on community components. She mentioned that they came to the Joint Planning Commission-City Council meeting in November thinking that they heard the Commission's direction for the scenarios being discussed as in the Two to Three area; however, it was very clear at the Joint Meeting that this was not what the Commission was really saying in the previous two meetings. She commented that she believes that the difference came when looking at the neighborhood level. She stressed that one of the things that should be made clear is that they are not necessarily saying that the scenarios need to apply the same way throughout the entire community, but there may be places and pockets where some of those strategies would be appropriate. She stated that perhaps at the Joint Meeting that part was not heard to the extent it should have been. She commented that from working with the Commission in the past on the last plan and this plan, their job as planners is to present information and ideas and trends and what communities are doing locally, regionally, and other places. She noted that ultimately she wanted to make sure that everyone understands and feels comfortable that they are listening to the Commission and recognize that this is their community; and they want to help make it the best community that the Commission and City Council envisions. She commented that it may sound like sometimes the Commission is being pushed, but it is in the exercise of having them stretch their brains and think about different things and how they do or do not fit. She noted that the Commission will never be told what they have to do or that there is only one way to plan for the community.

She stated that tonight's session will focus on transportation, the network of roads, public transportation, pedestrians and cycling infrastructure that allows residents to access goods, services, jobs and community facilities. She added that it allows residents the access to interact with each other as well, and social factors are important. She recalled that after the last Master Plan update, the Transportation Plan followed, and commented that she will touch a little bit on what was in the Transportation Plan. She stressed that the State of Michigan and the Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires that community master plans include a Complete Streets plan. She reminded the Commission that Complete Streets does not mean that every street needs to serve every user, but the

transportation network as a whole should give people the mobility options that they need to access the business services and community facilities found in the community.

She mentioned the planning filters considered, noting that they include being an age-friendly community, a sustainable community, and a community that demonstrates innovation. Based on public input, sustainability, paying attention to natural features, the city's natural resources, and being age-friendly goes hand in hand with the community's wishes to be and to continue to be a family-friendly community. Also as people are getting older, the plan should accommodate and provide for them as well as the children in the community, that can also benefit.

She noted the scenario planning that has been undertaken for the past several months is a way to consider what the preferred future would be so that the Master Plan can support that vision and continue to illustrate the ways in which the community components are interconnected. She highlighted the following summary of the preferred vision of Timeless Tradition:

- The long-range focus of the Master Plan is preserving the stability and quality of life that centers on the city's desirable suburban single family neighborhoods*
- The city will maintain its current patterns of land use and development practices. Single family detached housing will continue to be the preferred choice of residents.*
- As a family-friendly community and one where residents age in place, the City will explore housing options that accommodate older residents and promote walkability for residents of all ages.*
- Recognizing that the local and regional transportation network primarily supports personal automobile travel, the City will strive to support other transportation modes, focusing on strengthening the City's sidewalk and pathway network.*
- Community facilities, parks, and preserved open spaces are key to the City's success; resources will be dedicated to sustainability and the ongoing maintenance of aging infrastructure and public services.*

She asked if that was what the Commissioners had in mind as a vision and focus for the whole city, stressing that it does not mean that they cannot do certain things in certain places.

Mr. Hetrick commented that with regard to transportation and the sidewalk and pathway network, it also seemed that they were trying to accomplish enhancing the recreation and health of the residents. He stressed that this did not mean he wanted to bring back Option Two, but there was a part of Option Two that they agreed was important. He noted that he can use pathway to get to the Clinton River Trail, where he can ride his bike and get fresh air.

Ms. Bahm stated that in viewing transportation and community health, transportation is important to be able to connect residents to medical services, healthy food, and recreational facilities. Sidewalks and pathways can be used for recreation but can also be used to help people satisfy their daily needs for goods and services, and potentially for commuting to school and work.

Reducing car dependency affects air quality, lowering emissions which reduces respiratory issues, and allows social connectivity. She stressed that public transportation and/or pedestrian friendly areas foster social and mental health. She noted that social isolation is identified as one of the contributing factors to depression in older adults. She stated that well-planned streets can reduce traffic accidents and protect pedestrians and cyclists. She stated that thinking about the filter of being age-friendly, master plan and land use strategies should promote good transportation, community health, and mobility for all ages. These strategies will ensure the City meets the needs of older adults, families and younger residents alike.

She noted that innovative mobility solutions could include bike or ride sharing, prioritizing pedestrian and cycle safety with well-connected sidewalks, bikeways and greenways. She mentioned integrated land uses connecting to neighborhood goods and services, parks and civic facilities so residents can live, work and play within a short distance of home. She mentioned that in 2021 the goals included creating a safer transportation system, easing traffic congestion, exploring or enhancing multimodal facilities, preparing for new technology, maintaining the current infrastructure and exploring public transportation options. She stated that the master plan included some good recommendations and strategies to alleviate congestion, improve safety, and improve non-motorized options; and focused on a lot of intersections, considered road diets and included one freeway crossing road.

She displayed a map identifying high schools and their half-mile radius which is about a ten-minute walk from each school.

Ms. Denstaedt asked why Avondale Middle School was not identified.

Ms. Roediger responded that Avondale was not included and only Rochester Community Schools were shown. She noted that Rochester's policy is elementary students do not get a bus if they live within one mile; however, Avondale provides busing for a half-mile and farther.

Mr. Struzik commented that his children were bussed to Hampton Elementary, they were not bussed to Reuther Middle School, and were bussed to Rochester High. He stated that they were just under the mile-and-a-half distance to Reuther and had to cross two main roads, John R and Auburn. He mentioned that there was two or three years in a row where a student was hit by a car going to school in the morning, and added that there is total gridlock in taking them to school. He stated that the school has some of their students walking way too far, and it is causing gridlock by not busing the kids.

Ms. Roediger responded that the schools cannot find the bus drivers; so even if they were convinced to increase their budget and add buses, there is nobody that will drive. She suggested that it could be a recommendation of the Master Plan to engage in conversations with the schools and see if there are partnerships or ways that the City can help. She noted that the schools are a huge component in walkability and congestion, and pointed out that not many kids north of Walton ride buses.

Mr. Struzik suggested that some of this can change how they do road design. He mentioned he would have done Auburn in front of Reuther Middle School differently to accommodate more right-turn queuing rather than Culbertson.

Mr. Hetrick mentioned enhancing crossings and adding lighting.

Ms. Roediger responded that it is also a bit of a challenge because of the way Rochester Hills developed. She stated that the City was so proactive in getting pathways along major roads; however, it does not have sidewalks or lighting in most neighborhoods. She commented that parents have concerns about getting their students to the pathways. She pointed out that to receive funding through Safe Routes to Schools, improvements need to be made to both sides of the road. She commented that for example in a neighborhood, they would not be able to add sidewalk to one side of the road and receive funding. She added that people also do not necessarily understand exactly where the right-of-way ends and their yard begins, and putting in sidewalks would tear up a lot of the front yard they have adopted.

Ms. Bahm added that one of the challenges is distracted drivers, so public awareness around the presence of people walking is another strategy.

Ms. Roediger noted that she sees many kids riding electric scooters to school now.

Ms. Bahm stated that there was public input related to transportation, and it was noted that traffic and congestion was listed as a major challenge facing the city. She commented that if the roads will not be made wider, then they would try to offer other ways people can get around, especially for the short trips. She mentioned one survey question which asked if someone was considering moving from their home, does Rochester Hills provide what they would look for in their next home; and she reported that 45 percent of the people answering stated that they would choose to live in an area with more transportation options. She noted that having said that, they also turned around and said that they will not ever ride or walk to community destinations.

Mr. Hetrick commented that part of it will be educational in how to bike safely.

Ms. Bahm noted that there are initiatives at the national level that communities do locally, such as ride your bike to work day in May, and a "walking school bus" where the idea is that instead of carpooling, kids walk together. She noted that asking about private transportation, most people stated that they would use Uber or Lyft as opposed to a taxi.

Mr. Struzik commented that there is a lot of inertia to a community that has been car dependent, and it will take a while for people to use the bus service. He stated that he has not used the bus service due to the frequency of only once an hour, and that is not an acceptable choice for someone who has a car to drive. He pointed out that he rode the bus for an entire year previously, driving to Troy to access it; and he noted that there are entire communities with denser populations who do not have a car or perhaps do not have a license and take the bus downtown. He commented that these opportunities will take time to

happen in the city.

Ms. Bahm added that it is similar to a chicken-and-egg scenario. They might run the buses more frequently if people were riding them, and more people may ride them if they ran more frequently.

Mr. Struzik suggested partnering with private businesses to provide park and ride lots so that people would have a place where their car would not get towed for parking on private property. He mentioned that it is a mile walk for him to access the nearest bus stop.

Ms. Bahm noted that two concerns were just raised, one the frequency and the second how to get people the last mile from their home to the transit stop. She commented that the partnerships with local business is a valid suggestion, and could be a way to better utilize some of the extra parking at some establishments.

Ms. Roediger asked if the Commissioners were familiar with SMART's Flex policy, where they essentially provide an uber-style service for the first and last mile. She explained that it is in Pontiac and Auburn Hills where it is like an app within the main app where they will pick up and drive anywhere within that area. She added that it is a dollar or two and contributes toward the bus fare. She stated that SMART is proposing adding a flex district in Rochester Hills in the Walton South area.

Mr. Struzik suggested that there might be opportunities for large events such as the Christmas Parade, providing a shuttle, for instance at the Hampton Shopping Center.

Ms. Denstaedt noted that a lot of the bars up and down Big Beaver Road use it because it is a way for them very inexpensively for them to put someone who has been drinking a little too much in a car and get them home.

Ms. Roediger mentioned OPC, and stated that OPC's Executive Director Ms. Cortright was invited to attend, but must have gotten tied up. She noted that one has to be 55 and older to use the OPC services, but they have obviously received a lot of funding from the millage and are upping their transportation options. She noted that Ms. Cortright had spoken from a senior's perspective in terms of community health about how challenging it is for them as they serve the community seniors, and that the Meals on Wheels program has doubled this year. She commented that Ms. Cortright sees a huge need for the senior population at OPC for affordability, housing, meals and transportation.

Mr. Hetrick stated that based on the conversation, they still have in the Master Plan the idea of different housing profiles, meaning the idea of duplex housing that could be more attainable for seniors who would be downsizing out of \$700,000 homes into \$400,000 homes. He added that the word "attainable" is easier to deal with than "affordable".

Ms. Bahm noted that the important qualities one looks for in a community are the school district, transportation, access to natural features, a family-friendly

atmosphere, proximity to retail and restaurants. She noted that many of these things are tied closely to transportation. She added that these were just some of the themes from the survey, and referred to environmental preservation and green space, walkable neighborhoods, reducing traffic congestion, improving road conditions, enforcing speed limits, better traffic management, and looking at community services and facilities. She mentioned increasing the number of community events, adding dog parks, and group transportation, which were common themes. She stated that there are three discussion starters, including thinking about the vision for the future and thinking about that balance, looking for opportunities to strengthen and support the things that the city already has, and some of the feelings of efficiency, connectivity, supporting maintenance and physical improvements and improving access. She stated that with the number of attendees she would break the group into two and ask that these things be considered with regard to the various neighborhoods. She asked the group to consider how things might look different from one community to the next and how it might vary from neighborhood to neighborhood.

Mr. Struzik asked if the groups should consider things like mid-block crossing locations or possible roundabouts. He stated that roundabouts increase vehicle safety and asked if they decrease pedestrian safety.

Ms. Bahm responded that there has been a lot of conversation about pedestrian and bicycle safety in roundabouts, and suggested backing up the crossings so that they are not in the roundabouts. She added that people still need to learn how to use them. She explained the maps that the groups were being given, and asked for the groups to think about ways that can help support the various neighborhoods.

Chairperson Brnabic noted that Mr. Beaton had requested to speak.

Scot Beaton, 655 Bolinger, stated that he provided the Commission with information. He stated that he was really sold on the Complete Streets idea for a long time; however, the problem is that the bike lanes are not protected by anything that sticks up in the air. He suggested that if bike lanes will be installed, there must be visuals installed too. He added that improvements will cost money and there will probably be a need for a tax increase. He suggested a bike street that is a completely separated piece of infrastructure that bicycles, e-bikes and other kinds of one-wheel modes of transportation could use. He stated that the bike paths could be made a couple of feet wider.

Mr. Hetrick suggested that Drexelgate could be an example as that path is separated.

Mr. Beaton noted that he added online links to modern architecture in the documents he provided, and stated that it is sad that 85 percent of the community will say that they do not like modern architecture. He suggested the Master Plan address this issue.

Ms. Roediger noted that the original plan for Barclay Circle called for physically separated lanes; however, Council wanted to do it as a pilot project before investing in all of that infrastructure and use just the paint. In answer to a

question, she stated that she did not know of any accidents occurring there, but recalled that there was consternation online when they were first installed because there was no dedicated turn lane. Subsequently it was tweaked, and once the turn lanes were restored, that all seemed to go away.

Mr. Struzik noted that it is much safer to be separated from the driving lane.

Mr. Beaton stated that he was passed on Barclay Circle by someone who went into the bike lane. He commented that there needs to be some separation.

Mr. Struzik stated that from the perspective of someone who lives there, they want traffic to slow down. He noted that cars on Barclay are going closer to 35 mph now because it is three lanes instead of five.

Ms. Roediger noted that Barclay was the lower cost effort, whereas Drexelgate has physically moving curves. She added that there was a lot of the same opposition in the Brooklands because of the median and roundabouts that were installed with the intention of slowing traffic. She noted that it was also an intended consequence of the city trying to slow the traffic on Barclay, to discourage people from using it as a cut-through to avoid an intersection.

Ms. Bahm directed the groups to think about how to scale improvements based on the population that will be using them.

Discussion ensued regarding expansion of bike lanes around Hampton Circle.

Ms. Roediger noted that the entire square mile of the Hampton development was designed to be an all-inclusive development that has retail, offices, single family homes, multiple family, a golf course, a community center and schools. She explained that extending the bike lanes into Hampton Circle creates that kind of first-last mile where someone's child who lives in the apartments can go to Emagine Theater without having their parent get onto the road to drive them. She noted that the Master Plan for Transportation calls for the next step.

The attendees broke into two groups and discussed infrastructure, transportation, funding, pathways and walkability.

Upon regrouping, Ms. Bahm asked if the discussion found any differences between the neighborhoods, perhaps how one neighborhood might be more well-suited to certain kinds of transportation enhancements.

Mr. Hetrick responded that they looked at it from the broader scope that they need to fill in the gaps for more students to get to school. He noted that they mentioned a person with disability that wanted to use the pathway, it had gaps.

Ms. Bahm commented that in doing things to make it easier for the most vulnerable people in the community, the disabled or the older residents, it is good for everyone.

Mr. Hetrick stated that since the cost of infrastructure is high, he knows that the City is great at putting the exclamation point on grants and any other sources of

funding so that it is not always coming out of the City's tax base.

Ms. Bahm noted that these were different comments than five years ago, when everyone was saying that there were too many deer, the roads are too congested, and there is not enough housing for empty nesters. This time it was empty nesters and no deer. Instead of congestion it is walkability.

She noted that the next study session will be on environment, and she commented that Mr. McLeod will have some good resources that he will share.

Ms. Roediger commented that there will be more study sessions in 2025 and are planning for perhaps a January session with February off, and then perhaps a draft to consider in March.

Ms. Bahm noted that at that point they will be meeting with the small groups again.

Ms. Roediger added that at that point the tentative plan will be adjusted accordingly.

DISCUSSION

2024-0522

Master Plan 2024

(McLeod Memo of 11-13-24, Home Sales Statistics by Neighborhood dated 11-12-24, PC Worksession Draft Minutes of 10-15-24, and PC Worksession Minutes of 9-17-24, 7-16-24, 6-18-24, 5-21-24, and 3-19-24, and PC-CC Joint Minutes of 1-29-24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof.)

Present were Joe Tangari and Ian Hogg representing Giffels Webster, the City's Planning Consultant.

Mr. McLeod welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that the Commission is coming fresh off of last night's Joint Meeting between the Commission and City Council. He noted that there is a lot to take from last night, and tonight's meeting will focus on housing and general development ideas. He stated that the Commissioners hear from the planners all the time, and three different developers were invited to attend tonight's meeting to provide a different perspective. He introduced Jim Polyzois, Mark Gesuale, and Ryan Schultz, representing area builders and developers, and noted that they will provide a general conversation about what they see in the development world, what trends they are seeing, good practices, what they are seeing in other communities, and what they see in the Rochester Hills market.

Chairperson Brnabic noted that she received one public comment card and invited Scot Beaton to speak.

Scot Beaton, 655 Bolinger, expressed concern and disappointment that the public did not want to get more involved in the Master Plan process. He suggested that the survey was good, and that many people are hesitant to touch a button on a computer and prefer a paper survey. He mentioned that he wrote Mayor Barnett a long letter on urban sprawl and sustainability and shared the letter with Ms. Roediger; and he stated that what has been created over the last 40 years is a low density environment that will be very expensive to serve within the next 10 to 15 years. He mentioned that the City has 289 miles of roadway to maintain and the City will have to find a way to pay for it; and he noted that Scenario Three is the only scenario that needs to be signed off on to sustain the lifestyle we have.

Mr. McLeod stated that he appreciated Mr. Beaton's comments. He invited the developers to speak, and provide information on their backgrounds.

Jim Polyzois introduced his partner, Mark Gesuale, and noted that they developed Shadow Pines and Somerset Pines on South Boulevard as their first projects in the city. Once they were approved, they sold them to other developers. He explained that they developed and built out Sanctuary at River's Edge along the Clinton River Trail, consisting of 20 unique custom homes; and Brampton Park and Crestwyk Estates, condominium projects along John R. He added that they are working on Breckenridge Condominiums and

Livernois on the southwest corner. He mentioned that they are primarily focused on smaller units, for people who want to transition from the bigger size home to condominium living, first-floor ranch-styles, and people who want to buy their first house and perhaps cannot do the big mansions north of Rochester but want a new construction home.

Mr. McLeod asked what they feel the price range, asking about Breckenridge as an example.

Mr. Polyzois responded that Breckenridge is unique because it was born out of the inquiries from Brampton Park and Crestwyk Estates. He stated that a lot of the buyers that were transitioning from 5,000 or 6,000 square foot homes wanted something new with a first floor master bedroom; and they wanted 2,500 square feet and not 1,700 or 1,800. He stated that this development is just 12 units to focus on the niche buyer. He commented that overall their projects are ranch units with minimal impacts to neighbors at about 1,900 square feet. He stated that Breckenridge is in the high \$600,000s, and those are attached. He noted that Crestwyk wrapped up last year and those units are under 1,800 square feet and start in the \$490,000s. The detached unit was 1,994 square feet and was in the mid \$550,000s. He mentioned that an assortment of buyers bought those homes, and everyone who purchased spent thousands more in upgrades. He added that what they give as their product standards are premiums for other builders. He noted that people came in and wanted enhanced countertops and finished basements and other extras which drive the price up.

He gave a breakdown of buyers noting it is a 16-unit community with eight detached and eight attached units. He stated that 12 Rochester Hills residents purchased these units, four were from Shelby Township. One couple and a family of four that were in apartments moved into these units. Three buyers were young people that were living with their parents and decided it was time to get their own unit, and two couples were first time buyers, professionals, who were out of college. He added that two elderly couples purchased because their homes had upstairs bedrooms and both wanted a first floor master for medical reasons. He stated that one couple's townhome sold for \$410,000 and the home sold for \$590,000 as they transitioned to these units. He commented that they freed up two units perhaps for a family that wanted an existing home with landscaping all set to go.

He mentioned that three other residents downsized due to divorce, and points of sale for their previous homes were \$730,000, \$860,000 and \$980,000; and they sold those houses and downsized into the mid \$500,000 in their development. He added that they were able to stay in Rochester Hills and continue to retire near their kids. One former Rochester Hills couple moved back, and one resident moved from a two-story condo, which she sold for \$229,000.

In answer to a question, he noted that finished basements took the new unit prices up to \$650,000 to \$660,000.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she believes everyone agrees that people want ranch homes and first floor masters, and those are the kinds of homes for someone

who is a senior and does not want to live in a 5,000 square foot house or starter home anymore. She noted however, that these homes are \$500,000 or \$600,000, and she commented that there is a disconnect between what is wanted and what is possible relative to affordable or attainable housing. She asked how the gap can be bridged toward attainable homes, and commented that material prices were high after Covid and that was a factor that drove up the prices of homes, along with higher interest rates.

Mr. Polyzois responded that he is also a real estate broker, and did a quick analysis of Macomb and Oakland County for new construction available on the market today. He explained that he reviewed everything that was \$400,000 or less, and out of both counties, there were probably 100 \$400,000 homes in the south section which were primarily square boxes with vinyl siding. He stated that he is not looking to build this product with the standards that Rochester Hills imposes for exteriors of brick and stone, and he will not do linoleum and vinyl tile. He stated that he cannot downsize and bring the cost down to sell a product that he does not want to sell, and he does not have the leverage on the trades like a major regional builder would have to drive the cost down. He commented that they focus on one project at a time, and their developments are boutique.

Ms. Neubauer stated that they do not want him to downgrade his materials.

Mr. Schultz noted that what the Commission is trying to do is to tie policy to the direction that the community wants to go to provide extra doors for people that want to move here but cannot right now. He stated that it is a tough bridge to cross, and he pointed out that everyone reaps the reward of housing prices going up in value. He noted that the community is for the most part built out, and while the City wants to provide attainable housing and workforce housing, there simply isn't affordable land, and the other elements keep going up in price.

Ms. Neubauer noted that Scenario Three is very high density. She commented that as an attorney, she looks at things from a different perspective. She mentioned the \$400,000 homes noted before and asked if the bulk of them were in Macomb.

Mr. Polyzois responded that they were in Hazel Park.

Ms. Neubauer stated that these are not comparable communities to Rochester Hills. She commented that the conclusion may be that the land is not available and this is not a community that can provide affordable housing, but can provide the downsized housing.

Mr. Schultz added that there may be opportunity to focus on the reuse of current property, perhaps not in the current mindset but perhaps in five or 10 years. He pointed out that zoning is the piece of the equation.

Mr. Polyzois reiterated that he had three young buyers that previously lived with their parents for several years after school and elected to buy a new house. He mentioned one couple had been living in an apartment for three years in Troy, and they purchased an old house on the south end of Rochester Hills for \$200,000 to be torn down for a new home. He noted another buyer is coming

from Sterling Heights and will be building a million dollar house. He stated that his first home was 900 square feet in Warren and he worked his way up. He added that every detached or attached condo transitions the majority of buyers into these units and frees up their house for sale.

Ms. Neubauer asked which areas of Rochester Hills they are thinking of suggesting to change the zoning or what commercial area could be considered for repurposing.

Mr. Schultz responded that while he does not know the lifecycle of the business, he might say Bordines, even though it could be years. He stated that it could allow a higher density residential development to create the housing segment that would allow a family to come into the community and then migrate into the other products.

Ms. Neubauer asked how to do this with a five-year Master Plan.

Mr. McLeod responded that this was behind the idea of splitting into groups at the last meeting knowing that everyone was looking at their own neighborhoods, perhaps looking at a tired shopping center. He stated that it was to identify areas where the Master Plan needs to take a deeper dive, and the Commission needs to make a transition into a more localized view of the Master Plan. He commented that he would concur that generalizations are scaring people. He stressed that when a community is 80 or 90 percent built out, most of the community will not really change. He stated that it should look at the three-acre piece on a major roadway, or a tired shopping center, or vacant piece between a shopping center and the next house.

Chairperson Brnabic asked the developers what they would need if they were building 1,500 square foot homes.

Mr. Polyzois responded that buyers would not want the 1,500 square foot house because it is not big enough and will not market well. He mentioned Brampton Park, noting that they included a unit at 1,700 square feet with a covered patio and most people wanted three bedrooms in order to have two bedrooms and an office.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that at the same time, they do not want tall buildings. She commented that they are looking at options that they might consider being a little bit higher in density.

Mr. Polyzois stated that density can be offset by making sure it is a ranch unit and not a two story. He noted that perhaps there can be more flexibility with units backing up to a parking lot next to a church. He stressed that with his buildings, there are no swimming pools or accessory buildings to impact neighbors; and there is an extensive landscape buffer imposed on them more than on a typical subdivision. He stated that they build these units with higher standards in mind. He mentioned that he reviewed Apartments.com and noted that new apartments in Rochester Hills are going for \$3,000 to \$4,000 a month; and that could equate to someone that could get a \$600,000 mortgage and buy. He added that the downpayments these days are minimal at three percent.

Mr. Struzik noted that last night's discussion was that everyone wanted single family homes; and he pointed out that Crestwyk included some attached units. He commented that he thinks it looks great. He noted that it was similar housing with an 11 percent price difference; and while it may not be affordable or attainable for some people, the pool of buyers that can buy at \$490,000 is larger than the pool of buyers that can buy at \$550,000.

Mr. Weaver stated that the level of housing that everyone is getting stuck on is available within 10 to 15 miles. He commented that people do not move to Rochester Hills because it is attainable; and this is not the market people want in Rochester Hills. He stated that he thinks they are trying to fill a gap or solve a problem that does not exist.

Mr. Struzik pointed out that they are building duplexes and selling them.

Mr. Weaver stated that this whole conversation started last night because everyone thought they wanted Scenario One with certain aspects of Two and Three, and it sounds like the direction in their minds of where to go is being confirmed with what they are being told tonight.

Ms. Denstaedt asked what the developers are hearing from seniors who are being aged out of their homes and if this price point was good for them.

Mr. Polyzois responded that if he had another 50 units at Crestwyk, they would be gone, and if they had another 20 units at Sanctuary they would be gone too. He stressed that the homes built in the 70s, 80s, and 90s have master bedrooms upstairs; and seniors need a first floor master, but they do not want to leave the area. He added that this demographic has saved their money and will sell their current homes for good money. He pointed out that some of the units at Crestwyk were attached because that property was split with some wetlands and they needed to achieve some sort of density component to justify the development. He noted that when the site is challenging from setbacks to lot dimensions, he will revert to attached units.

Mr. Hooper commented that it speaks to the Tree Ordinance and Wetland Ordinance taking away private property, and something must be done that gives a return on value.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she thinks the Commission is getting to the point where they can all agree that 1,900 to 2,500 square foot three-bedroom, one-story homes are what is desired and needed in Rochester Hills.

Mr. Weaver asked what has to be done with the Master Plan to set it up so that if things change and that is not desired in five or 10 years the Plan can still be relevant and work.

Ms. Neubauer stated that this is why the Commission needs to go section by section as this high level view is not working.

Mr. McLeod asked the developers what they are hearing as the future housing

trends and how they see the market trending.

Mr. Polyzois responded that empty nesters do not want to stay in 5,000 square foot homes, and they want to transition to something smaller and manageable, spend time in Florida, and not take care of a big home.

Mr. Schultz noted that he was on the Planning Commission when the Redwood development was approved, and at the time it was an unheard of product in Rochester Hills. He suggested establishing guardrails to allow that product to exist. He pointed out that while Redwood focuses on a 55 and older client, there is no age requirement. He noted that if allowing a product like that to exist in the community on sites like Bordines or granular sites for infill, it will give the opportunity for the 65- or 70-year-old retiree that wants something different or wants a rental option to remain in the community. He mentioned that he has a project in Royal Oak now where they are purchasing the former GFL recycling facility which had been industrial for years, and is turning the site to residential with re-use of the industrial buildings. He noted that it has pickleball, a swim school, and a daycare. He noted that it starts at \$2,250 per month. He mentioned a development in Holly Township that are 1,200 square feet homes with a craftsman feel, but there are no amenities and they are still expensive.

Chairperson Brnabic said that she didn't think the rates at Redwood were that high when that was constructed.

Mr. McLeod mentioned that Redwood is so successful they are looking toward a phase two.

Mr. Schultz stated that guardrails allowed the developer to look outside the bubble, and it has become wildly successful. He suggested establishing the guardrails and letting the developer determine how to make the economics of it work.

Ms. Neubauer pointed out that the City received a \$75 million grant and will be cleaning land that was previously not available; and mentioned that there are certain places and specific hidden spots inside of the city. She commented that it will be helpful to evaluate areas on a case-by-case basis for the Plan. She stressed that nobody will be getting a four-story building. She said that the map presented previously showing pathway gaps was magical, and made it clear where there could be improvements made, especially around schools to allow for better walkability and safety. She said that having those areas identified on a map will help the commission move forward with the Master Plan. She stated that they have heard from the community as to what they want and are willing to accept who they are as the second community someone comes into. She mentioned the cost of seniors relocating, and commented that most seniors do not want to move with interest rates at seven percent, and non-homestead tax affecting rent prices. She mentioned the idea of allowing a senior who has lived in Rochester Hills for 10 years to move still within the community without their tax rate being uncapped. She mentioned rental prices and noted that her properties are renting at high rates.

Mr. McLeod asked for opinions as to why the market is allowing for such high

rental rates.

Mr. Gesuale mentioned that most of their empty nester buyers do not have mortgages and they are cash buyers.

Mr. Polyzois noted that everyone has their reason to live in Rochester Hills, and often they begin elsewhere such as downtown Detroit and then transition out here after marrying and starting a family.

Mr. McLeod stated that they've heard that younger people don't want mortgages or to be tied to a particular area, and asked if that applies to Rochester Hills or not.

Mr. Schultz mentioned that those very young people do not choose Rochester Hills, they choose Detroit or Royal Oak which cater more to singles. At some point in their lives they may end up in Rochester Hills and they pay high rates to live in those cities. Mr. Schultz mentioned that one thing that hurts them now is the change in insurance right now, when they have a non sprinklered unit the insurance companies leverage them on it. There is a lot of complexity involved for them to make relatively narrow profit margins.

Mr. Weaver noted the discussion about the aging population who have the 5,000-6,000 square foot homes on three or four acre lots, and asked if there was a potential to redevelop them into something a little more dense, whether it be duplexes or single family homes.

Mr. Polyzois responded that he does not know what the future holds for those large homes, and mentioned that their focus is south of downtown Rochester, where they are buying older homes that have been neglected for years and are slated for teardown, and redeveloping and repurposing the land. He commented that they have not focused on the north end due to the zoning.

Mr. Weaver stated that because the area is 90 to 95 percent built-out, as the Master Plan is being reworked it may be something to consider whether a property that is currently R-1 should potentially be R-2 so the density could be 15 homes on 10 acres. He commented that this could be a trend in housing that they will see moving forward for the next 15 years as population starts aging and people are getting too old to take care of large properties and are willing to move on.

Mr. Schultz mentioned the FB district on the commercial side that gives flexibility; and suggested a section in the Ordinance to allow trigger points to put together parcels and increase density, such as clustering options. If it could be determined that properties present a functional obsolescence, then the ordinance could perhaps allow for a more intensive redevelopment and therefore allow for more affordability.

Mr. Weaver stated that housing will need to bring in tax dollars over an extended period of time in order to maintain the standard of lifestyle that Rochester Hills has to offer. He added that if the tax base needs to be raised to maintain this lifestyle people may not want to pay those taxes. He commented that in 15

years, if the Master Plan does not make appropriations to maintain the tax base or income that the City has to maintain its parks or offer new parks and be innovative, it may not have the lifestyle it has now and it may not be as desirable. He stressed that they have to be open to some things that may not feel comfortable now, but may be desirable in the future so what the City does have can be maintained.

Mr. Hooper stated that he reads Scenario Two as flexibility.

Mr. McLeod stated that the first thing that will happen with the Plan is removing the scenarios. He added that in terms of commercial redevelopment, obviously Rochester Road has some large parking lots. He commented that ideally there would be a shopping center up front and residential in back.

Mr. Schultz pointed out that this community really does not have that language established anywhere to have a mix of housing and commercial and this would be a wholesale change that may not be in anyone's appetite.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she thinks that they need to be flexible but not overly flexible. She stressed that they need to be realistic and look at a map. She commented that they do not hate developers and are not anti-development, but want to ensure that they are not just a community of apartment buildings and quadplexes. She added that the Commission does not want to be tricked and wants to give flexibility but not have anyone abuse that flexibility. She stated that they don't want big high-rise apartments or super-dense areas.

Mr. Schultz stated that ultimately he wants the same things and wants a fair shake in front of commissions. He stressed that they want a good project in the community that feels like it fits into the network of the community appropriately. He commented that a good portion of his career was spent redeveloping those seas of parking lots, and the focus and flexibility needs to be there to explore those options. He stated that the more the Commission can interact with the development side and tailor that conversation to get the products they want, the outcome will be successful for the developer and the City will get the product it wants.

Mr. McLeod suggested a "homework assignment" for the Commission to get to a point where each member in their neighborhood can identify areas that they feel need attention for whatever purpose. He asked for the Commissioners to email him with the locations of these areas/properties so that they can be brought up in discussion.

Mr. Schultz stated that a lot of master plans are a wish, and this is a community that does not need a wish. He stated that it is more of a guideline; and in a perfect world, these things would happen.

Ms. Neubauer stated that it is important to know who we are, what we are, and what we're trying to accomplish. She agreed that they have to get to the granular level. She noted that there is the land that is being cleaned up that will be available and that will be open to many things.

Chairperson Brnabic asked if by next month for the work session there might be the possibility of combining different areas in conversation.

Mr. McLeod stated that the Commission needs to talk about elements of what it really wants in the community and what it wants to see. He suggested that they will get away from labels because they can have a negative connotation. He noted that next month they are slated to talk about transportation and community health.

Chairperson Brnabic asked if there will be more detailed conversation on pathways.

Mr. McLeod responded that it will be a part of the conversation.

NEW BUSINESS

[2024-0521](#)

Master Plan 2024

(McLeod Memo of 11-13-24, Giffels Webster Memo of 11-13-24, Giffels Webster Memo of 11-11-24 - Supplemental Information provided for the meeting, Home Sales Statistics by Neighborhood dated 11-12-24, PC Worksession Draft Minutes of 10-15-24, and PC Worksession Minutes of 9-17-24, 7-16-24, 6-18-24, 5-21-24, and 3-19-24, and PC-CC Joint Minutes of 1-29-24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof.)

Present were Jill Bahm, Julia Upfall, and Ian Hogg, representing Giffels Webster, the City's planning consultant.

Mr. McLeod thanked everyone for attending and noted that this is the halfway point of the Master Plan process. He stated that the goal is to try to find the ultimate direction of the Master Plan that will guide the development of the actual document moving forward. He explained that the Plan document will be finalized over the spring and summer and stressed that there will not be anything decisive this evening as this is a work in process not set in stone. He mentioned that the agenda should have included the Giffels Memo of 11-11-19 which was emailed to the Commission earlier and Council earlier today and provided tonight in hard copy and apologized for its omission. (Memo was attached to the Legislative File as Supplemental Information for the record after the meeting).

Ms. Bahm stated that they enjoy the opportunities to have joint meetings between the Planning Commission and City Council to share what has been discussed along with things that they have wrestled with over the past several months. She explained that the Planning Commission is the body that has the authority to prepare and adopt a Master Plan, and after much discussion this is the opportunity to take a pause and check in with Council and get a pulse for what they are feeling. She stated that the Planning Commission has seen this information over the last several months; however, this will be fresh information for Council.

She explained that at the beginning of the year, it was discussed that the process will be a little different for this cycle. She stated that neighborhood identities were created based around high school boundaries; and she noted that when people want something, they tend to want it in their neighborhood. She commented that when talking about the Master Plan, they are thinking about five main community factors: Housing, transportation, natural features, community health, and the economy.

Ms. Bahm explained that the Master Plan process took a broad approach to collecting input from the communities. She noted that an initial survey was undertaken, presentations made to the HOA Presidents and the Youth Council, met with residents at the OPC Senior Center, and small group discussions held

twice. She added that community toolkits went out and three were returned. She stated that they want to know what things are important to Council and the Commission.

She pointed out that it is interesting that five years ago top issues discussed were housing, particularly for empty nesters and how people could not find something to downsize into, congestion, and deer. She commented that deer was not mentioned this time at all, housing is still an issue, and instead of congestion they heard more of a demand for walkability. She mentioned that this is something that they are hearing in other communities as well, and it has been a shift over the past five years. In answer to a question, she defined walkability as something that can be for people who want to walk for exercise or to get somewhere; and include walking or biking. She commented that when thinking about improving walkability, there needs to be sidewalks and pathways; and that they need the physical infrastructure but it needs to be safe, comfortable and convenient.

Ms. Bahm noted that breaking down into neighborhood groups stems from the idea that not everything will be right for every part of the city. She mentioned planning filters which are like the guiding principals that were in the last plan, such as remembering that the desire is to be an age-friendly community, and helping address the needs of older members of the community along with younger members. She stated that it should be things that are good for everybody, including sustainability, addressing the needs of today along with future residents, a spirit of innovation, thinking of creativity, and embracing new ideas leading to progress.

She stated that the third component of the Master Plan process is the idea of scenario planning, including not only planning for the worst case of how to provide services in times of an emergency, but planning for a preferred alternative. She commented that this process has shown the give-and-take and balance that needs to happen. She explained that three different scenarios were included in the packet and will be at the tables as the group breaks into "neighborhoods": Tomorrow as Today, where things are not changed much; however the group will need to address some of the downsides of that scenario such as the potential for declining tax revenues and increased expense for housing. Enhancing Connections, starts to look at different housing types that the city currently has and questions how to provide more types to tackle housing affordability and attainability, and how to address the concerns of the folks who want more walkability. She mentioned a conversation with an older resident at the OPC who had been frustrated that her car had broken down and she could not even walk to Starbucks because there was no sidewalk where she lives. Rochester Hills Reimagined is the third scenario, which has the larger amount of change where it made sense to add more housing, and create more compact development in a way that fosters walkability. This scenario questions what needs to be done to promote transit in the area, how to ensure natural features will be preserved, and how to increase sustainable building practices.

She explained that the Commission discussed these scenarios in June, July, September and October, eight small groups including the Youth Council had 52

participants, and a "thinking about the future" survey had 751 responses. She noted that adding up all of the participation, it came between scenarios two and three from the community. She stated that the survey included a question about natural resources and the level to which the participants felt that the City should protect or not protect them, and the idea to the answer was that in valuing the protection of natural resources, the City needs the resources to do that and wants to see its property tax revenues increase. It will need the funds to be able to do those things, and those things should be done in a compact way, which led to scenario three being more of the predominant choice. She commented that Ms. Roediger pointed out that people who also felt the City should protect natural resources were more of the types of people who did not want to see anything change, so that item in the survey was rescored and the results brought the survey between scenario two and three.

Mr. Blair stated that while his data may be more anecdotal, as he knocked on thousands of doors in the neighborhoods and spoke with people on their porches, the message he got overwhelmingly was that they do not want any more development, and what the City is doing right now needs to stop. He commented that this was the center point of a recent election and it was a huge issue, and he is trying to understand why options two and three are so popular as it is a stark contrast to what he and his Council colleagues have been hearing from the residents.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she thought that the Commission was leaning toward scenario one, and took pieces from scenarios two and three, including pathways, affordable housing, and encouraging a percentage of housing to be ranches.

Ms. Bahm responded that this may have been the discussion at earlier meetings; however at the last meeting there was a recognition that while they do not want this everywhere, the discussion was for specific redevelopment areas such as the Target shopping center and along Rochester Road.

Ms. Neubauer stated that from the way it is being presented, it looks more like scenario two and three than scenario one, and having it limited to maybe one or two areas in the city needs to be more clear. She commented that the only things they were taking from scenarios two and three were walkability and asking developers to put a certain percentage of smaller housing within those huge developments. She stated that she does not understand how the data has shifted.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that there was a discussion on affordability and how developers give a price and all of a sudden it is 30, 40 or 50 percent higher. She commented that she would question if there are specific areas to consider for R-5 for affordability, and noted that duplexes came up in conversation and nobody wanted them in the middle of their neighborhoods. She stated that they do not want to stay at a standstill but could move toward walkability by finishing pathways.

Mr. Hetrick commented that as a Commission, they have gone round and

round above what affordability means, and it ultimately boils down to a perception of the buyer. He noted that if someone is coming from a place where they were in a \$200,000 house, buying a \$350,000 house is perfectly affordable for them. He commented that affordability is not a number, and it is a feeling. He stated that people think of affordability as low income housing, and that is not what they are driving at. He commented that they were leaning more toward scenario two with some things taken out of it so they were not pushing the envelope.

Mr. Carlock asked how to balance any of the scenarios against question two of the survey, where it indicated that 74 percent want to focus mainly on single family homes, and question four where 70 percent of the respondents said they need to protect or improve natural resources.

Ms. Bahm responded that they are not talking about doing this throughout the entire city and are talking about the different planning neighborhoods and how these things fit within each neighborhood. She explained that one may have a need for more housing, and others may have a need for more sidewalks or pathways. She added that this is the pivot point where they begin to write the plan and determine what it will look like. She stressed that they know that people want single family housing primarily; however, they also said that they felt that there should be housing options for older people in the community who cannot afford to downsize and stay here as well as the young first-time households. She stated that they cannot shut the door because they know that the population will grow along with the number of households. She pointed out that the key that everyone is struggling with is there will have to be some kind of a push and pull.

Council President Deel stated that the two issues are linked, and commented that Rochester Hills is not an island. He pointed out that if one draws a point in the middle of the City of Rochester, everything that has been talked about can be found within a radius of 10-15 miles. He stated that the question becomes whether Rochester Hills needs to be everything to everyone or if it just needs to do what it does well, which is to be a single family home bedroom community. He mentioned that Rochester looks different, as does Auburn Hills and Oakland Township. He questioned whether all of these considerations need to be here within the city borders. He asked for a definition of attainability versus affordability, noting that his house is affordable because if it wasn't, he would not be here. He stressed that affordability and attainability in Rochester Hills will look differently than in Ferndale, Hazel Park or Warren; however, it is radically different than New York City.

Ms. Bahm responded that housing that is attainable is affordable to someone who makes between 80 and 120 percent of the area median income. She mentioned the individual speaking during public comment, noting that he is a young potential future house owner who will be a teacher; and stressed that if he got a job in Rochester Hills, he may not be able to afford to live here. She questioned how far out he would have to go to find housing that he can afford at his salary level, and stated that they are not talking about Section 8 subsidized housing.

President Deel commented that perhaps this is not a first home community and people would buy their first home somewhere else and move here when they have kids. He mentioned that many of the young lawyers he speaks with do not want to live in Rochester Hills as they are single and there is no nightlife here, and it is a great place if one has kids.

Mr. Hooper stated that his take was scenario one was do nothing, scenario two was to attempt to provide more flexibility for future development for areas that can be developed, and scenario three was to blow the whole thing up and redo it. He stressed that his takeaway was that they do not want to do nothing, and landed on scenario two but very limited. He added that when he ran for Council 17 years ago he heard the same thing from voters to not let anyone in. He noted that once on Council he saw that private property rights must be balanced against feelings against development, and he stated that he thinks that the City has historically had a good balance of private property rights with certain restrictions such as wetlands and tree preservation. He commented that the City has survived legal challenges for 40 years with the restrictions it has and has been reasonable with private property development; however, it cannot say that no more development can occur.

Ms. Morlan stated that what she is reading in scenario one is not do to nothing, but to maintain its current pattern of land use and development practices. She stated that single family detached housing continues to be the preferred choice for residents, and saying that scenario one refers to the terminology of doing nothing is a disservice. She commented that saying scenario one does not mean that no one young will ever be able to move in again, nor does scenario three mean that every senior and every young person will be happy.

Mr. Hooper stated that he would like to clarify that his words of "do nothing" relate to develop as-is for current zoning. He suggested going the way that they are going currently with zoning changes and developments planned as they occur, with aspects of scenario two to provide more walkability and flexibility to encourage development to possibly do some of the additional things that are trending that people claim they want, while respecting private property rights.

Ms. Morlan added that zoning is fluid and zoning and ordinances will change.

Mr. Walker stated that the term "affordable" has changed to "attainable". He commented that as a real estate agent he was able to take a deep dive into 80 to 120 percent of AMI in Rochester Hills which is \$115,000, adjusted to 2023 which is \$120,000, with ranges from \$96,000 to \$144,000. He noted that the question becomes how much house can one afford, and stated that the low side would be \$329,000 with a high side of \$493,000. He compared those numbers to what was sold in Rochester Hills over the last year, and reported that represents almost a thousand homes, with 227 condominiums and 600 single family homes. Of the 227 condominiums, 186 were under \$410,000 (82 percent), and of the 600 homes, 200 homes were under \$410,000 (33 percent). He stated that there is attainable housing in Rochester Hills and there are numbers to support the inventory. He questioned why they would build what already exists.

Ms. Bahm responded that information from the Michigan Housing Data portal showed that there are a significant number of households that are cost burdened. Noting it was 6:30 p.m., she stated it would be helpful to talk within the neighborhoods to discuss opportunities to add pathways and make sidewalk connections, areas where they would like to see commercial goods and services to better serve the neighborhoods within walking distance, and neighborhoods where there might be a potential for a different housing type. She suggested breaking into groups and asked for markups of those areas that can be discussed by the larger group on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis.

Ms. Mungioli stated that she and her husband moved here 37 years ago because it was a bedroom community and they wanted a neighborhood with families and subdivisions and places for their children to play. She stated that they did not have to worry about businesses or large developments like Troy where real estate is empty or a company goes out of business. She stated that the tax base was stable over the long term which gives financial security and stability over the years. She commented that she cannot force someone to lower the price of their home to make it attainable or to build something that costs less. She mentioned the Brooklands noting that there have been conversations that the starter homes are purchased as cheap property and larger homes are built. She pointed out that property values in the Brooklands has gone up to allow someone to sell their home when they retire and have a nest egg for their future. She mentioned the one story homes on Brewster, noting that those homes were more expensive than homes that seniors were selling and downsizing from; however, she could not tell that developer to drop the cost. She mentioned Auburn Oaks, stating that those single family homes will be \$800,000, and commented that they have already set a standard of what is available in the community.

Ms. Bahm stated that this is an important point, leading to the tomorrow as today scenario and stressing that they need to be thinking about the people in the community that cannot sell their homes because there is nowhere for them to go, but want to stay here. She asked how to make their homes safe, are they up to date, can they maintain them, are they socially engaged, and do they have mobility to get around. She commented that the do nothing scenario also means that there are other things that can be done to take care of the people that have a need. She mentioned the Worksession where the Commissioners were given an assigned role and had the ability to see some of the different needs of the community. She added that when speaking about scenario one, two or three, it does not mean everywhere. She mentioned the Planning Commission's focus on the shopping centers with their sea of parking, and asked if that was the best they could do there.

Mr. McLeod noted that the question becomes in 20 or 30 years what people are seeing in the community. He mentioned that Youth Council members spoke about wanting to return to Rochester Hills to raise their families and asked whether they will be able to attain their dream. He stated that as leaders for today, they will set the foundation for tomorrow.

Ms. Bahm added that she would clarify that the area median income includes the metropolitan area, not the city's median income, which is obviously higher.

President Deel stated that this is exactly his point, in looking at area median income, one needs to look at available housing stock within the area; and is not saying that Rochester Hills needs to serve the needs of everyone in the Detroit metro area.

Mr. Weaver asked how to draw people from other communities here.

Ms. Bahm responded parks, open spaces, schools, and things to do.

Ms. Neubauer stated that what sparked this conversation is the idea that they are between scenario two and three, and really they are at scenario one but taking small bits from scenarios two and three for walkability and pathways, and building one-story homes rather than 5,000 square foot houses. She commented that the presentation stating that they are leaning toward scenario two and three is not reflective of what they did in planning. She stated that they all agreed that they were leaning toward scenario one with small bits of two and three.

Ms. Bahm directed the Council and Commissioners to get into their groups and mark up their maps per their discussions with notes and questions.

Starting at 6:50 p.m., the groups spent 40 minutes in discussion, and topics mentioned included pathways, e-bikes, transportation, neighborhood parks, density, redevelopment, places that could be considered for duplexes or other similar housing, living inside and working outside of the community or living outside and working inside the community.

Ms. Bahm noted that it was 7:30 p.m. and some attendees needed to leave. She thanked everyone for sharing their input and stated that everyone was having some good conversations. She commented that what they have heard tonight is very much in line with scenario one, yet people want to see more connections and walkability. She noted that the question will be how to balance that desire to minimize the impact on the rest.

DISCUSSION

[2024-0474](#)

Master Plan 2024

(Giffels Webster Memo dated 10-9-24, PC Worksession Draft Minutes of 9-17-24, and Worksession Minutes of 7-16-24, 6-18-24, 5-21-24, 3-19-24, and PC-CC Joint Minutes of 1-29-24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof.)

Present in addition to staff were representatives from Giffels Webster, the City's Planning Consultant, Jill Bahm and Ian Hogg.

Ms. Bahm stated that this evening they would provide a review of the findings of the public engagement results, share what they heard as a result of the small group meetings held back in September, and prepare for the Joint Meeting with Council set for November 18. She noted that there were seven individual meetings and a meeting with the Youth Council held. She noted that the packet included all of the different discussions which walked through the three different scenarios and then opened the discussion up for comment from the attendees.

She noted that the initial reaction was for scenario number one; however each attendee talked about their particular perspective. She stated that the business owners talked about what it was like to do business in the city and how much they enjoyed it, but noted the challenges they faced. The LDFA talked about economic development in a different context. One pastor participated, at first stating that everything should remain the same; but then he noted that housing should be addressed as he wanted his parishioners to be able to live nearby. Ms. Bahm added that there were similar results from Council members as well. She commented that attendance for the meetings varied, with six or seven business members, three LDFA members, one pastor, 11 staff members, 10 from nonprofits, two residents, five members from different City commissions, and 14 Youth Council.

Mr. Hogg noted that the Youth Council members generally preferred scenario two. He explained that they love where they live, but also recognize that the city has to move forward a bit. He noted that they were asked where they saw themselves in five or 10 years, and many said they would move away for college but would love to come back and raise a family here. He added that they talked a lot about connectivity.

Ms. Bahm explained that they did a quick survey of six questions, with questions including which neighborhood the attendees were in, and then more questions about gauging values and then tying the value to what the scenario encapsulated. She commented that they were surprised about the results, which moved more toward scenario two or three. She noted the following regarding the discussions:

- People are concerned about the members of the community that are aging and want to make sure there is sufficient housing and can stay in the community.

- A significant number (70 percent) said that the City should prioritize to protect resources and improve natural features.
- The discussion included how that translated to the three scenarios. The thought was that it takes money to do these things and the third scenario, with its potential ability to increase the tax base, would allow for more money available.
- It was noted that the R-5 District is on paper now, and it needs to move forward with a plan. Most people would not want the density of duplexes or triplexes in the middle of their existing neighborhood.
- Pathway gaps should be a priority before moving forward to other measures for further connectivity.
- The number one answer was to ensure that housing for seniors is adaptable and affordable while providing transportation options that keep seniors independent.

Resident Scot Beaton mentioned that the Fire Department burden is greater and the senior buildings do not pay back into the City as a tax base.

Ms. Bahm noted that the things that are wanted and are valued need to be supported with resources and that property taxes will either fall on the residents or it can fall on the new development. The question becomes how to balance that development within areas of the city where it is deemed appropriate as it is not really appropriate everywhere. She reviewed the online neighborhood maps, and stated that the discussion next month with Council will focus on what scenarios they need to address in each neighborhood. She commented that it may be more of a focus on natural features or it might be a focus on completing the sidewalk network so residents can be connected.

Ms. Roediger noted that she lives in the Adams neighborhood and pointed out that if someone wanted to downsize and stay in the same area, the only options for downsizing are Kings Cove, and a couple of apartments on Walton that are within the Adams High School area. She commented that there are no other options for those that cannot afford a single family home, and asked if there were any other properties that might make sense either at the Village or by Oakland University if something along Walton opened up. She suggested that they need to start thinking about the neighborhood-specific areas and prioritize what they want to see in each of those neighborhoods.

Ms. Bahm stated that continuing to look back at values and things that everyone has said they wanted, everything cannot stay exactly the way it is.

Ms. Brnabic stated that in her opinion, the first issue that should be considered is filling in the pathway gaps. Ms. Roediger previously mentioned that most of the funds were used for maintenance, not many gaps were completed each year.

Also, R-5 is a district still on paper. She questioned what areas might be suitable in moving that forward, considering the lack of affordability in the community. In regard to the possibility of considering duplexes, no neighborhood will want duplexes built in the middle of their subdivision.

Ms. Roediger stated that for the joint meeting on November 18 they would divide Planning Commission and Council into neighborhoods, trying to keep people near where they live. They would be asked to think about what some of the recommendations might be based on scenario planning in looking at the neighborhoods with a keen eye in terms of the pathway gaps and what vacant lots would potentially make sense for an R-5 zoning district.

She mentioned the vacant property north of Ferber on Rochester Road which is zoned Office, and commented that staff receives many inquiries for that property. She asked what the Commission realistically would like to see on that property, and asked if it would be a good transitional property for some attached duplexes or something of that nature to transition from the Ferber industrial to the single family neighborhood. She noted that there is property on Adams south of Meijer that is vacant right now and is zoned office, but was a part of the Consent Judgment and they have had a number of requests for multiple family there. She pointed out that it is across the street from Auburn Hills in a location that has all multiple family on that side of the road. She commented that it would be really interesting to do that deeper dive like the Commission did for the Flex Business district, where they went around the city with an eye on what the future scenario might be. She noted that this would be a hands-on work session with Planning Commission and Council. She explained that after the recommendations, the next step is presenting a draft version of the plan for the public to respond to; and the data gathering done to date leads to this moment.

Ms. Roediger noted that the last session included a good discussion speaking from different perspectives and noted the following topics:

- Ways to incentivize affordable housing and what the City's role would be.
- Accessory dwelling units were discussed and how in the past it was decided that it was not for the city; however, in looking through the different neighborhoods the question is whether there might be some areas where it might make sense. About 90 percent of the neighborhoods are subdivisions that will have very strict regulations about what they can do; however, would it make sense to allow an ADU on the occasional lot that is five acres.
- Where would senior living make sense if the City hired more firefighters. The answer is not in the Avondale neighborhood as there is already a lot there; it will need to be more in the north.
- Bike lanes are a touchy topic right now. The City did revert turning lanes back on Barclay and is receiving a lot of questions on what the point is because the lanes do not go anywhere. Ms. Roediger would argue that the one-mile block is meant to be somewhat all-containing where someone who lives there should be able to go to school, to a park, to the movies, or go to work via biking. She commented that the next phase is extending the road improvements along Hampton Circle, so that if you live in those apartments or houses you could safely get to Barclay Circle, and then to the pathway along Rochester or Auburn Roads.

Mr. Struzik stated that he has used the bike lanes quite a bit since they were introduced and they are working well. He mentioned that when he gets to the end of the road, he gets into a lane and makes his left turn, but instead of going under Rochester Road, he will go onto the sidewalk and then head to where he is going. He commented that restoring the turn lane has not had that much of an

impact on him as a bike user, but it has been wonderful for cars. He stressed that completing those pathways are important, and mentioned that he borrowed an electric bike to get a sense of what it is like to use an E-bike in the city. He stated that it really helps extend the range of where he can go without a car. He commented that he should not have to cross over Rochester Road, but has to do it twice because of pathway gaps, putting him in a lot more danger.

Ms. Roediger asked if the gaps were at Eddington, noting that both of those gaps are getting fixed.

Mr. Struzik commented that that will be nice, and stated that there are still pathway gaps on John R, and getting over the freeway entrance ramps on Rochester Road is problematic.

Ms. Roediger agreed that there are issues on all of the bridges other than Crooks.

Mr. Struzik stated that with the price of E-bikes coming down and battery technology is getting cheaper, there will be a lot more bike users and the city needs to do things to help keep them safe. He noted that taking his bike to the library is one less car on the road.

Ms. Roediger added that in her neighborhood she sees kids zipping around on electric scooters, extending their range.

Mr. Gallina stated that as E-bikes are becoming more affordable they must be kept in mind.

Mr. Hooper noted that affordability is a key issue in considering the R-5. He pointed out that the project that the Commission will be considering tonight noted that the one bedroom row homes are in the range of \$200,000 to \$400,000, and stated that those should be the least expensive.

Ms. Roediger commented that at the Walton Oaks groundbreaking it was indicated that the neurotypical houses may be a tad more expensive than normal, as there is a trade-off as they have to somewhat subsidize the cost of building the IDD homes up front.

Mr. Hooper asked where in the city it could be affordable, as with the cost of real estate in Rochester Hills he does not know if it is even feasible.

Mr. McLeod noted that affordability is a relative statement, as it is easier to get into a \$250,000 townhouse than it is to get into an \$800,000 to \$1 million house. He stated that he likes to use the term more attainable as it is a little bit more realistic for an average person or someone entering the market or going from a rental house or smaller house to something more significant. He commented that the term "affordable housing" has a bad stigma attached to it and that is not really what could be accomplished.

Ms. Roediger noted that this has not been presented yet and housing will be specifically discussed at the next meeting, most likely the joint meeting. She

mentioned that they talked about having a couple of developers come in and give their perspective on what it costs and their experience; however, the information has been updated on house sales in the past 12 months in Rochester Hills. She explained that broken down by the five neighborhoods, for the cheapest neighborhood the average sale price is \$500,000. She added that this would be a house on the smaller side that probably needs work.

Mr. Beaton contributed that there is a lot of strip mall development and asked if there had been a consideration to put residential on top of strip malls to infill and take care of underperforming asphalt. He suggested the mall by Target could be infilled. He suggested that the Village could have a second floor, and a second or third floor be incorporated by the Walmart development as it overlooks a beautiful wetland. He suggested that this is a way to bring more attainable housing to Rochester Hills and not place it in the middle of someone's neighborhood.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that many people intermingle or confuse the difference between affordable housing and low income housing.

Ms. Bahm explained that attainable is generally defined as housing that is affordable to people earning between 80 and 120 percent of the area median income, and that would include teachers and public safety officers.

Ms. Roediger stated that for the next meeting it would be good to know what 80 percent of the area median income is and commented that this would be a good number to reference.

Ms. Denstaedt asked if there is a breakdown of who is moving to Rochester Hills, whether first time or second time home buyers and if there are any numbers to correlate to dollar values.

Ms. Bahm responded that they do not know if they could tie that information to sales price; however, they have census data. Mr. McLeod noted that the census data available shows median household income is \$116,000.

Ms. Roediger stated that Jim Polyzois is one developer that they have talked to about wanting more attached ranch-type units. She noted that he has built many in the city and they have to charge \$800,000 for them. She suggested that he could explain why that is and what would have to happen from a density or size standpoint if they want \$500,000 units instead of \$800,000 units. She added that obviously land values cannot be controlled, nor construction costs. She mentioned that the demographic of the neighborhoods are shown on the maps and noted that the groups were broken down by data psychographics, such as a "Savvy Suburbanite", and what they preferred to see.

Ms. Denstaedt stated that when she was a first-time home buyer, \$500,000 was not an option.

Ms. Bahm cautioned that census data is always a lagging indicator and falls behind what actual prices are.

Chairperson Brnabic recalled that long ago staff was concerned about the density in the city, and noted that she could see the Fire Department saying that high density presents a safety issue. She asked what staff members were in the employee focus group.

Ms. Bahm noted that her sense from the employee group was that they are very confident about the way the City is being run, they feel good about the work that they do, and they don't feel like a lot needs to change.

Ms. Roediger noted that these conversations occur on many levels, and not just Fire. She mentioned conversations with Parks and Engineering for every park that is developed about how much maintenance costs and where the extra staff person will come to maintain it. She noted that every pathway gap and fill is part of the maintenance schedule. She commented that staff's comment is that open spaces have to be managed for invasive species, and that the City gets more and more but does not have more staff to maintain it.

Ms. Bahm stated that in speaking about that scenario, there are resources that will be needed to support it.

Mr. Gallina mentioned the human resources would be needed and asked whether the city had the physical resources to handle more employees such as a larger City Hall or new Fire Stations. He noted that growing staff will need places to put them.

Ms. Roediger noted that there has been a discussion about City Hall, as it has been 20 years since it was remodeled and has quite a bit of underutilized space because of operations going more digital. She pointed out that there are areas where cubicles were doubled in size, so there could definitely be space improvements.

Mr. McLeod mentioned a good example is the Building Department where no one drops plans off for plan review or applies for permits, as that is now all handled digitally. He stated that trips into the building are being reduced. He noted that he came here from Sterling Heights and there was very high traffic there even though they were very digital; however it is much more quiet here.

Ms. Bahm asked if there were any other questions about the groups that met.

Mr. Struzik mentioned comments about the existing neighborhoods. He noted that the character needs to be preserved and duplexes cannot be put into an existing neighborhood. He stated that he likes the idea of being able to accommodate more than just middle and upper-middle class families that are in their good income earning years. He stated that he wants the city to be a place where people can graduate high school and get their first house there and have some kind of living option instead of being pushed to somewhere else with the hope of maybe someday returning to Rochester Hills.

Ms. Roediger stated that people have sticker shock when going out east and to other areas such as California, and stated that it is relative. She commented that from that viewpoint, Rochester Hills is affordable.

Ms. Denstaedt asked about the conversation with business owners, and asked if they were concerned about their employees and housing costs.

Ms. Bahm responded that it was more small business oriented, and discussions were how to drum up more business.

Ms. Roediger noted that the owner of Nothing Bundt Cakes was saying how he wants to open another location in the Rochester-Auburn area, and he commented that he wants a location with more front yard parking and he would not go in the Brooklands because he wants to see parking in front. He had added that he would never locate next to a Starbucks because it backs up too much. She commented that it is part of the evolution of businesses, and is indicative of the things that business owners think about in terms of their deal breakers.

Mr. McLeod mentioned the Culvers/Clean Express car wash developments and noted that Culvers was still insisting on getting one additional parking spot in front of their store because they feel they need it. Both the local and corporate Culver's are stressing they need this parking in front of the door because people do not want to be inconvenienced.

Ms. Roediger mentioned that she frequents Breadless and they have terrible parking in front, with parking reserved for Panera and for the bank, but she still goes there.

Ms. Bahm commented that this is a part of supporting walkability in the community, and this is a part of educating the community as to what that means. She stated that it means that one doesn't put a drive-through in an area that is intended to be walkable, or parking in front of a business when instead they want a sidewalk to connect to the sidewalk out front.

Ms. Roediger asked what people were thinking about the Trio project, and noted that it is a retail center that feels accessible by walking or biking. She noted that to get there, they needed to have smaller setbacks.

Ms. Denstaedt responded that she thinks it looks amazing, but it is a tight congested corner. She asked what the rent pricing would be for the apartments there. She added that the gym has opened there and other things are opening.

Ms. Roediger responded that hopefully the people who live there will go to that gym and to that pharmacy, and will walk to the IAGD across Auburn.

Mr. Struzik suggested that perhaps people will take a walk or bike ride to Trio and it would result in a trip reduction. He commented that he thinks it looks good.

Mr. McLeod responded that Trio ranges from \$1,570 for a 620 square foot apartment to \$3,145 for a 1,400 square foot unit, and that represents about \$200 to \$225 a square foot.

Mr. Hooper stated that Legacy is a positive improvement, with high end apartments probably from \$2,000 to \$5,000 a month.

Ms. Roediger stated that it is a good problem that people want to be here.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that she doesn't know the answer to comments about developments that are given a projected price and when they go in due to different factors, the price has gone up. She asked if there was any way to hold an developer accountable to a projected cost.

Ms. Roediger responded that the only way to do it is to have the City be involved in subsidizing the costs.

Mr. Bahm added that for a developer who is willing to do it, it could be a part of a development agreement, perhaps not specific dollars, but maybe tied to between 80 and 120 percent of the AMI. She mentioned that they are talking with a community up north where a community land trust owns a 10-acre parcel and they want to do an attainable housing project there. She added that this will be a different kind of developer focused on providing that kind of housing. She mentioned that there are other strategies some communities use specific to affordability of housing, such as payment in lieu of taxes normally assessed on the property. She explained that there is an ordinance that goes along with that and two of the senior facilities in the community have been allowed to do that for a long time.

Ms. Roediger stated that there are MSHDA grant programs where they will pay for "X" amount of costs but then a certain percentage of the units must be kept at a certain range. She noted that the Gerald developers are looking into the Michigan Strategic Fund. She commented that historically all of the City's incentives offered have been for big non-residential developments, noting that abatements are for large investments and job creation. She added that the City could do incentives for residential if that is something that it wanted to do. She stated that this is something that could be looked at as one of the plan recommendations.

Mr. Beaton contributed that many apartment buildings in mid-town Detroit have tax abatements, and that area is exploding by Wayne State University. He commented that they are stunning and walkable. He added that Detroit has great incentives for start-up companies as well.

Mr. McLeod stated that typically when funding comes into play there is a cap on a certain number or percentage of units that is automatically locked in; and if that cap is broken, the incentive goes away and has to be repaid. He pointed out that Sterling Heights has a big apartment building going in on Van Dyke just south of Hall Road being constructed as a part of the Chaldean Community Foundation. He noted that Detroit can play by different rules because of size. He mentioned Danish Village has a payment limit for taxes, and questioned how to do this with a developer. He stated that the other alternative is to incentivize it with density.

Mr. Struzik mentioned Frankfort in northern Michigan, which has a seasonal

population and had trouble getting employees to work in their businesses; and he noted that they used a community land trust as a way to keep housing affordable.

Ms. Roediger noted that a lot of these things go back to subsidizing, and commented that there has to be some type of agency that oversees it, such as a housing authority or land trust that helps with the cost.

Ms. Bahm noted that the other tool is using tax increment financing to offset housing costs. He stated that this was recently enabled through State legislation, like a Brownfield or DDA type of TIF program.

Mr. Struzik stated that he likes the idea similar to what is at the Gerald, with retail on the first floor and housing above it. He mentioned that the Bordines site, if it were ever to turn over, is a hot corner that he is sure a developer would love to maximize with some multi-story buildings with retail on the first floor and housing on the second and third floors.

Mr. Beaton contributed that people like destinations, and mentioned that when he lived close to downtown Rochester, he would walk and spend the whole afternoon there. He added that they spend an afternoon at Partridge Creek. He stated that he would love to see the people who own the Target area ask why they cannot have a Partridge Creek there, or build more residential along Barclay Circle.

Ms. Roediger stated that City Walk is a great example.

Mr. Struzik stated that the Hampton Shopping Center is the exact opposite of that vision, because if someone is going to two stores on opposite ends of the center, most people drive.

Ms. Roediger responded that Brixmor, who owns that shopping center, has outlot plans, but she does not know if Rochester Hills will be the place to break through to that market. She commented that this was kind of what the Flex Business district was born out of in finding those nodes.

Mr. Struzik pointed out that the Hampton Shopping Center buildings have an age and will eventually be rebuilt. He mentioned Oakland and Lakeside Malls.

Ms. Roediger stated that the joint meeting will take a deep dive exercise into each Commissioner's neighborhood, or one close to them.

DISCUSSION

[2024-0447](#)

Master Plan 2024

(Giffels Webster Memo dated 9-12-24, Scenarios and Data dated 9-12-24, Master Plan Market Study Summary dated 9-6-24, Market Study for Rochester Hills dated 9-12-24, Roles of Community Members and Advocacy Positions, and PC Worksession Draft Minutes of 7-16-24, and Worksession Minutes of 6-18-24, 5-21-24, 3-19-24, and PC-CC Joint Minutes of 1-29-24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof.)

Present in addition to staff were representatives from Giffels Webster, the City's Planning Consultant, Jill Bahm, Julia Upfal and Ian Hogg.

Ms. Bahm stated that this evening the Commission will continue conversations about scenario planning and the different directions that could be planned for Rochester Hills. She noted that a full day of small group meetings are scheduled for next Monday, September 23. The intention is to present the preferred scenario of the Planning Commission, the pros and cons associated with each of the scenarios, and have some dialogue of what they think and if they have any other pros and cons to talk about.

She noted that at the last meeting, the Commission was leaning toward Scenario One with some features of Scenario Three. She stated that they wanted to have some focus particularly on housing and cost burden issues, but also on transportation and some of the natural features concerns. She mentioned that supplemental information is included in the meeting packet along with the market study summary from the Chesapeake Group.

(Ben Weaver entered the meeting at 5:49 p.m.)

She asked the Commissioners to now think about the scenarios from the perspective of a community stakeholder and consider some of the concerns they might have. She had Commissioners select a slip of paper which contained a category of stakeholder and to revisit the first scenario from that perspective and voice what they thought someone in this category would be advocating for. Categories included senior citizen, empty nester, young people starting households, and others. She reviewed Scenario One, listing the pros and cons, including rising home prices and property values, stability and continuity, quality of life, maintaining the current setup of community facilities, parks and open spaces, low density appeal, focus on continued investment in maintaining aging infrastructure, and sense of identity. Cons included somewhat limited housing, affordability continuing to be an issue for certain members of the community, increased congestion associated with reliance on personal automobiles, lack of innovation, a generational shift as the community continues to age, and lack of economic resilience to economic fluctuations and infrastructure costs. She asked for input relative to the Commission's particular perspective based on their role in the exercise.

Mr. Hetrick commented from the perspective of a young family getting started,

stating that quality of life and a stable community would be important when raising a family.

Mr. Hooper stated that from the perspective of a senior citizen, he would want to encourage ranch duplexes or single level homes if a senior could not remain in their family home. OPC, parks, green spaces and safety would be important to him; and as he ages out of his house, availability of assisted living and other options would become important.

Mr. Struzik stated that from the perspective of a municipal official or staff member, Scenario One would produce the least amount of friction of residents upset about a change in direction. He commented that he would be worried about the ability to deliver efficient services, and this scenario would also exacerbate traffic. He added that this scenario also offers fewer opportunities for residents with a wider variety of backgrounds to move to the city.

Mr. Gallina chose empty-nester, noting that he would look at amenities such as parks and open spaces, and property values to sell at a high point even though there are not many options to downsize.

Mr. Dettloff stated his role was that of a young person starting a household, and commented that quality of life would be first and foremost. He stated that he would think that modern infrastructure like coworking spaces, reliable transportation, and digital connectivity that supports flexible work options would see increased demand.

Mr. Hetrick commented that for the young family finding affordability of housing would be difficult. He added that when he speaks to his younger neighbors they want to be able to ride their bikes and go places on a bike path.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she drew the community and public health advocate, and mentioned a focus for mental health and well being, healthcare, green spaces, healthy food options, incorporating physical activity into daily routines, environmental quality, wellness programs and housing and resources for vulnerable populations. She commented that she does not know how the City can solve these issues other than providing resources through community organizations. She stated that regarding housing for vulnerable populations, these have to be defined whether low income, elderly or younger generations. She mentioned that the price of housing in Rochester Hills is a problem.

Mr. Weaver stated that his role was as a small business owner, so stability and continuity, and quality of life would be very important to him. He would want to make sure that the community is fitting for himself and his employees, and he would want people to feel safe coming to his business. He added that he would want to ensure economic resilience in case of a downturn. He noted that lack of innovation could be an issue if there were economic opportunities missed.

Mr. Hooper commented that the City's tax rate is favorable for the business community.

Ms. Upfall stated that each of the different scenarios evoke a different sense of

identity; however Scenario One is specifically more suburban/traditional. She asked how the identity associated with that scenario would be for a business owner.

Mr. Weaver responded that it depends on the type of business; however, he would want it to be something favorable to the residents so he could maintain a client base compatible with the sense of community.

Ms. Neubauer stated that Rochester Hills has Oakland University and Oakland Community College nearby, and many people who go to those schools end up working here. She added that the Mayor's Business Council is comprised of businesses that are based here and represent a kind of suburban family.

Ms. Denstaedt commented that businesses look for that when they are coming to a community and want to build somewhere where they know their employees will want to live and stay.

Mr. Hetrick stated that businesses care about and base their investment decisions on demographics.

Ms. Denstaedt added that they look at school districts, and Rochester Hills has multiple districts that other communities do not have. She noted that her role was as environmentalist, and stated that Rochester Hills has amazing parks that offer different things for different people. She stated that there is a need for more walkability. She stated that while it is a pro that the City has so much to offer, it must figure out how to maintain it and look toward ride shares and busing.

Ms. Neubauer stated that housing affordability is not just a problem in Rochester Hills, and mentioned that houses in Warren that were at an \$80,000 price range and are less than 1,000 square feet are over \$200,000 now. She stated that to try to solve that problem with development may be a mistake. She noted high interest rates, and stated that these contribute to the affordability of housing. She stated that for some communities, people go there because it is more affordable and not for the school districts.

Mr. Struzik stated that he lived in Warren during the recession, and pointed out that there is not a lot of variety in housing. He commented that it is mostly post-war housing, ranches and uppers, and during the recession there was a rapid change in the makeup of neighborhoods. He stated that without variety, a quicker turnover can be experienced.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that she had drawn the role of a large employer, and they like to retain a quality workforce, encourage updated infrastructure, and want a business-friendly environment. She noted that this also creates quality of life in the community as a competitive advantage. She stated that some employees are looking for housing within the community and limited options or affordability could be a consideration. She commented that large employers want infrastructure, updated stability, continuity and quality of life. She added that they would be looking for product profit, and would strive for a sense of identity and separation.

Mr. Hooper stated that there is not enough real estate for a large company to come in here, and that Ms. Valentik is constantly fighting that battle.

Ms. Roediger noted that when they have non-residential developments, or even some residential developments, there is resident pushback. She mentioned Suburban Softball, and noted that this will probably be a large non-residential development and she is certain that they will have residents coming out and complaining about traffic. She stated that this gives a reputation of not being very friendly to businesses, and noted that Ms. Valentik attended a conference where she was chastised because of the anti-development mentality that some applicants feel from residents of the community.

Mr. Hetrick questioned how an employer could expand a facility and stay in Rochester Hills.

Ms. Roediger responded that this is where there is a need to redevelop sites.

Chairperson Brnabic responded that the City has managed and has had businesses that have expanded and are thriving here.

Ms. Neubauer commented that it is ironic that Ms. Valentik was chewed out for being anti-development, as residents come and accuse the City of only caring about the developers.

Mr. McLeod stated that there are several key sites left within the city and there will be difficult decisions to be made in terms of what happens with those properties and what direction to go. He commented that some are leaning one way or another; but whatever those outcomes are, it will make some people unhappy. He added that some of those sites could lend themselves for non-residential development; however, going toward the housing side will not make people happy either as that will lead to transportation concerns as well. He stated that those key parcels have a reason why they have not yet been developed, and they will be the hardest ones.

Ms. Neubauer noted that Ms. Valentik brought statistics in January on how much space was needed and what the current vacancy rate is in the city.

Mr. McLeod responded that in the economic study undertaken, it was noted that the city could build industrial or tech industrial, as the city has a niche market there and these businesses want to cluster.

Ms. Bahm responded that the businesses would come, but there is not a workforce to support all that new development. She stated that businesses might be hamstrung by a lack of employees due to the lack of affordable housing and reliable transportation. She commented that she is hearing some of the same things that had been discussed at the last meeting, taking a twist as they look at these topics from different perspectives. An environment that is safe, clean, with natural features, parks, and providing all of the commercial goods, services and health care is much like what people want today. She noted that a concern is being articulated about a lack of housing diversity and

affordability. She stressed that this does not necessarily mean the answer is to build low-income housing, but a diversity of housing. She added that looking at improving walkability and transportation options, can in some case help offset some of the transportation or housing costs. She mentioned that the rule of thumb is 30 percent of income spent on housing, and if adding transportation is the second largest expense, that rule becomes 45 percent. She commented that this is hard to attain for a lot of people.

Mr. McLeod noted that for Rochester Hills, 35 percent of the community spends 35 percent or more of household income on rent.

Chairperson Brnabic asked what Rochester Hills could offer to developers as an incentive to build ranch homes, noting that it does not sound as they are at all affordable.

Ms. Roediger noted that considering the affordability of land and construction costs, the density can be changed; however, everyone wants to shy away from that. She mentioned that the State of Michigan has some programs for low-income housing; however, she did not know if Rochester Hills wanted to move toward that.

Ms. Bahm noted that there is some push for attainable housing; however, she stated that when looking at the expanse of parking lots a question is raised as to whether repurposing is possible.

Mr. Hooper commented that the City's parking standards were changed to reduce impervious surfaces. He added that there could be redevelopment opportunities there.

Ms. Roediger mentioned that the Hampton Center has plans for four or five different outlots throughout the parking lot.

Mr. Hooper added the Meijer has the same plan, noting that a change in parking standards allowed these to come together.

Ms. Bahm asked what kind of development the Commission would want to see.

Mr. Hetrick responded that it is not a shipping container coffee shop. He added that affordable housing does not mean wanting subsidized housing. He stated that it would be more like a first-time house.

Ms. Neubauer suggested an 1,800 square foot three bedroom ranch or even smaller.

Mr. Hooper commented that this would be \$350,000 easily at the cheap end. He stated that he does not know if there is an answer. He noted that near his home there are one- and two-bedroom smaller condominiums with a mix of senior citizens and families, and they are well over \$121,000 for those units with nothing less than \$150,000.

Mr. Hetrick commented that affordability is likely a perception as well as a

quantitative number. He stated that young families are paying in excess of \$300,000 for a home in his neighborhood because it fits them and they like the schools, community, large lot size and two-car garages. He suggested a scenario where they could go to a park without having to hop into a car.

Ms. Bahm stated that improving bike-ability and walkability would be helpful.

Mr. Struzik mentioned the density of the Hampton neighborhood, and pointed out that there are pathway gaps on Rochester Road that pose an issue to walkability. He added that there are still pathway gaps on many of the major thoroughfares and some of the densest neighborhoods pose an issue to walkability and the ability to go somewhere without a car.

Ms. Bahm listed statistics and noted that the cost burden of housing to seniors is higher than other households for both owners and renters. She commented that looking at the different scenarios, while the Commission has expressed that Scenario One is supported, there are drawbacks. She stated that the rest of the document will focus on how to address some of the items that have been identified as concerns, and will be the topic of the small groups next week.

She moved on to the second scenario, noting that it entails looking at smaller multi-unit housing types and select locations. She mentioned that this could mean duplex, triplex or apartments and it is not meant to signify one kind of unit. She added that the conversation included a diversity of housing types. She described single family, residential housing maintained throughout most of the community and new developments create walkable neighborhoods, and mixed-use areas integrating residential, commercial, and office spaces, providing housing opportunities for younger buyers and those looking to downsize. She stated that housing costs may still continue to rise. She added a focus on transforming some roads into pedestrian-friendly streets where automobiles are de-emphasized where appropriate, and stated that this would not be everywhere. She commented that including bike sharing programs on demand and public transportation, traffic congestion may ease with providing effective and efficient transportation options. She reviewed the pros of this scenario, noting a diversity of housing, more walkable neighborhoods, improved transportation choices, reduced traffic congestion. She noted some of the cons of this scenario, noting that housing costs will continue to rise, implementation costs include the cost of infrastructure and transportation improvements, and there is a resistance to change and a displacement risk. She cautioned that where there are areas that have been more affordable now, it should ensure that they are not displacing people making the problem worse.

Mr. Hooper commented that Rochester Hills is not in the business of producing inexpensive housing; and if it is built, the price will immediately skyrocket.

Mr. Struzik stated that as City staff, he would be excited at the possibility of higher density leading to lower cost per unit. He mentioned that cities like Clawson are pretty much built out and are in an infrastructure crisis, not being able to afford maintenance. He noted that cities like Rochester Hills have had many new subdivisions come online in the last 10-20-30 years and the developer has paid for the infrastructure; the next time it needs to be redone, the

cost will be on the City.

He commented that he likes denser neighborhoods, such as duplexes like those that were constructed on several streets along John R. He stated that as a staffer, he would not necessarily want to change the makeup of an existing neighborhood, but there are opportunities in the last few developments that will be undertaken to have some denser styles or more of a mix of housing. He suggested that the Mayor does a great job of getting people on board for his shared vision, and there could be opportunity to take things over the finish line such as completing the sidewalk network. He added that there are other opportunities for a reduction in roads for bike lanes, and noted that in the future they might be able to move the curbs to provide pathways, and he mentioned that this would make the road easier to maintain.

Chairperson Brnabic noted that the City has a millage for pathways, and is surprised when she sees spots where they are not finished.

Ms. Roediger responded that there are many gaps throughout the city, and commented that the millage only allows for about one pathway gap per year, with the rest of the funding going toward rehabilitation and maintenance. She added that there is a list of gaps and many are filled when they relate to a project that is already ongoing in the area.

Mr. Hooper noted that many neighborhoods like his do not have the capability to put sidewalks in.

Mr. Struzik noted that acquiring the land for the pathway is often an obstacle.

Ms. Roediger stated that she is going to push for more funds for pathways.

Ms. Bahm suggested that this can be supported in the Master Plan. She asked for any additional thoughts on Scenario Two.

Mr. Hetrick stated that for a young family, he would not want to buy a cheap house; however, a duplex would allow for a lower entry cost while still allowing for some backyard. As a senior, a duplex might also fit him. Regarding walkable neighborhoods, he stated that young families tend to be more health conscious and they want their children to go outside. He mentioned resistance to change, noting that people have said it multiple times that they do not want a house torn down in a neighborhood to build a duplex.

Mr. Struzik stated that the voices that are resistant to change are very well represented, and those who are in favor of change are less likely to show up and advocate for it.

Mr. Weaver stated that this goes back to public input, knowing that it is hard to overcome the voices who are in opposition.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that she does not remember much opposition to Redwood on Avon.

Ms. Roediger responded that there are not many neighbors to that development.

Ms. Neubauer noted that there is still opposition toward Legacy.

Ms. Roediger pointed out that the residents did not want Legacy to be cheap because they were afraid it would become a ghetto development.

Ms. Neubauer pointed out that she had in her notes they would be a certain price range, and when she looked on their website it was almost double.

Mr. McLeod pointed out that house prices have almost doubled in five years as well, and prices are just going with the market.

Ms. Neubauer commented that this feels like something outside of the scope of the Master Plan. She commented that she does not think people come to Rochester Hills for affordable housing.

Mr. Hetrick stated that it is relatively affordable housing. He stated that in playing the role of a young family he would come to Rochester Hills because of the parks, schools and neighborhoods and not because he thinks he can buy a house for \$90,000.

Ms. Neubauer stated that having employees for Rochester Hills businesses be able to afford housing is important; however, she feels that it is outside of the scope of the Master Plan.

Mr. Hetrick suggested that the ordinance could designate areas for this type of redevelopment.

Ms. Roediger suggested that the R-5 is a paper district now; but rezonings could be initiated by the City to designate some land for smaller lots and allow for duplexes and up to four units connected.

Ms. Neubauer asked if there is a way to identify remaining areas within Rochester Hills that a tech developer would be interested in, and the possible rezoning of an area around it.

Ms. Roediger suggested that it could be areas that would be within walking distance to downtown Rochester and immediately bordering Rochester, or in the Brooklands as there are already 60 foot lots there.

Ms. Bahm commented that the whole idea of the different scenarios is that there is a recognition that there are pros and cons to everything. She stated that the goal of the scenarios is to focus on what they are trying to achieve and the reasons why they want to do it, and then recognize and deal with the challenges.

Several areas were mentioned, including an empty property near Lifetime or along Childress.

Ms. Bahm directed the conversation to the last scenario to be discussed, with a

more intense urban style and a diverse and inclusive community, with strategic redevelopment of aging commercial areas with a mix of uses and an intention to reduce car dependence. She noted the pros, mentioning the reduction in car dependence, diverse housing options, financial resources for infrastructure sustainability and green spaces. She mentioned maintaining and uplifting transportation options, civic engagement, and economic opportunity, and noted that there would be potential resistance from single family neighborhoods, displacement concerns, infrastructure overload, public transit expansion costs, loss of familiar suburban identity and a need to manage diverse interests. She suggested not allowing it everywhere but instead in strategic locations.

Ms. Roediger stated that in the last Master Plan, they talked briefly about accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and decided at that time that it was not something desired and was recommended to revisit the topic in the future. She pointed out that many subdivisions have their own HOAs and probably would not be appropriate for ADUs; however, she noted there are homes not in HOAs on acreage. She questioned whether an ADU would be appropriate in that instance.

Ms. Neubauer questioned who would own the ADU, and if the homeowner would be able to rent it out. She suggested that there would have to be a minimum acreage required for an ADU and the size would have to be limited.

Ms. Roediger commented that over 80 percent of the city would not fall into that category; however, perhaps 10 percent would.

Ms. Neubauer responded that this may be one of those ideas where locations would have to be specified and then conditions listed where they might be appropriate, along with minimum acreage and maximum size.

Ms. Bahm noted that they have heard from a lot of communities in the last five years that are wanting more information on ADUs and are more open to it.

As the meeting was winding down for the break before the regular meeting would begin, Ms. Roediger reiterated that the small group discussions were coming up and the HOA meeting would be held tomorrow evening. She added that there was a quick survey that would be released and start being promoted hopefully by tomorrow encompassing 10 questions which will determine what scenario someone would end up with. She noted that this will be promoted at the HOA meetings and with the small groups, and will be highlighted on social media for the general public's thoughts. She stated that the survey link would be sent out directly to the Commissioners.

DISCUSSION

[2024-0344](#)

Master Plan 2024

(McLeod Memo dated 7/10/24, Rochester Hills Community Components dated 6/12/24, PC Draft Work Session Minutes of 6/18/24, PC Work Session Minutes of 5/21/24, PC Work Session Minutes of 3/19/24, and PC-CC Joint Minutes of 1/29/24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof.)

Present in addition to staff were representatives from Giffels Webster, the City's Planning Consultant, Jill Bahm, Julia Upfal and Ian Hogg.

Ms. Bahm stated that this will be a continuation of last month's discussion relative to different components of the community and the things that will be focused on in this Master Plan. She mentioned the components of housing, transportation, natural features, community health and the economy, looking through the filters, thinking about how policies and strategies can be age-friendly, promote sustainability and reflect innovation in the planning process. She stated that they started to talk about scenario planning, with a recognition that all things have to be thought of in a balanced approach and cannot necessarily go all one way or the other. She commented that needs will have to have certain strategies that go along with them; and people may or may not like all of those things. She stressed that keeping the overall goals and ideas in mind is helpful in using scenario planning for this planning process. She commented that often scenario planning is for the purpose of avoiding something. In this instance, however, it can be used to think about multiple future scenarios and implications of each, deciding which scenario is where the City's vision lies, and determining the steps to get there. She likened it to thinking about the preferred future.

She stated that based on the Master Plan and data from the community, three scenarios were developed that reflect varied outcomes for the future, and presented the balancing of competing interests that are associated with making changes to those community components of housing, transportation and community health. She noted that there is no right answer, and they would be talking through the pros and cons of each and whether there are opportunities to blend some things together. She stressed that they will look at the current wants and needs of those who are here today along with the people who are not here yet to plan for the future and arrive at a balanced approach.

She explained that the attendees would be broken into smaller groups and would then reconvene to share their discussion. She briefly reviewed the three scenarios, Tomorrow as Today, Enhancing Connections, and Rochester Hills Reimagined, and provided printouts and slide packets to the groups. She asked the groups to spend 10 to 15 minutes on each scenario and noted that the whole group would reconvene around 6:25 p.m.

(Mr. Hetrick arrived at 6:10 p.m.)

Upon reconvening at 6:27 p.m., Ms. Bahm asked each group to review their discussion.

Mr. Struzik stated that for Scenario #1, Tomorrow as Today, many people are happy with this scenario and will defend it. He noted that some people are open to changing things.

Ms. Denstaedt noted that they used that scenario as a baseline and used bits and pieces of the other scenarios to fit into it.

For Scenario #2, Ms. Denstaedt stated that their discussion group did not like anything in it. She noted that their discussion was more about the housing types, and their group wanted to stick with single family. She stated that looking at ranches, they can be helpful for both the demographics of new homeowners and for seniors looking to stay within the community.

Ms. Neubauer noted that their group discussed transportation options. She pointed out that it was on the ballot and nobody wanted it. Oakland County brought it in, and her understanding is that the bus system has not yet been greatly utilized in Rochester Hills. She commented that multi-unit housing is not something that people are excited about, and she pointed out that the Ordinance was amended last year to avoid tall buildings. She stated that they discussed staying with the scenario of one type of housing, but changing the housing to single family. She commented that instead of building a 6,000 square foot house in developments similar to the new houses on Butler, it could become a requirement that a certain percentage would have to be ranch-style homes on single levels.

Mr. Struzik stated that for Scenario #2, his group did not discuss the busing situation. He stated that as a former commuting bus rider, a big obstacle to living in Rochester Hills is that you have to have a car, and now there is another option. He commented that other issues affecting transportation are frequency and reliability, and he noted that right now the bus runs about once an hour and it has to entice a rider who has the ability to drive.

Ms. Roediger noted that she had busing statistics for the second quarter, and the number of people that got on or off in Rochester Hills or Rochester was 9,360, which is more than was expected. She added that SMART indicated that it usually takes 18 months to get up to what the ridership numbers will be.

It was noted that the population of Rochester Hills and Rochester is 90,000 and 11,000 respectively.

Mr. Struzik stated that they need to provide opportunities for people to transition from car to bus, such as parking their car in a sanctioned place to assure the driver that their car will be fine and not be towed from private property. He added that weather is a factor in ridership as this area has harsh winters. He noted that they discussed the idea of bike sharing and stated that the group did not think there would be enough density for sharing to be successful as most people will have their own bikes. He stated that they discussed that ultimately the idea would be to reduce car trips but not necessarily car dependency; and

perhaps they can convert some of the trips over the year into walking or bike trips.

He stated that their group discussed that there was not a lot of opportunity in the city left to redevelop things as there would not be many large spaces. He mentioned as a part of Scenario #2 that perhaps there was an opportunity to develop some sort of a trolley system to connect the four quadrants of the city on a regular basis.

Ms. Denstaedt stated that their group took a lot of things from Scenario #3 and put them into Scenario #1. She commented that some of the bigger cities that utilize bike shares find that many of the bikes are not put away as they should be and bikes are left laying on the ground. She noted that they discussed diversity in home ownership and how to bring in more ranch-style and other single family homes into the community. She added that they discussed opportunities for parks, keeping that aspect and moving it into Scenario #1.

Ms. Neubauer stated that their group did not like the duplex, triplex or quadplex idea. She noted that the increase in non-homestead taxes will drive up costs because the property taxes will be higher for rental properties and that would be counterproductive to keep housing costs low. She stated that she did not think that people want the higher density type of housing in Rochester Hills and still want to keep single family homes. She stressed that houses that are ranches will help, and commented that \$500,000 is not a starter house.

Ms. Upfal asked if there was much demand for multi-generational households.

Ms. Neubauer responded that she does work for probate, and commented that often while the kids want their parents to live with them, the parents want to keep their independence. She added that most of the housing that currently exists is four bedrooms homes where parents would have the ability to come live with their offspring.

Ms. Roediger mentioned that a lot of the developments that have been recently approved are single level, and those like Brewster Village are being sold in the \$600,000s or \$700,000s, and they will not help.

Ms. Neubauer stated that the demand is so high that people are willing to go over asking price. She commented that if there is more housing of this nature available, the demand won't be so high for it. She noted that having a condo is different than having a single family home, as the association fees are often more than they would pay someone to come do the grass every week.

Ms. Roediger stated that except for the Clear Creek Subdivision, they have not had a subdivision residential plat development approved in the City in 30 years; and every neighborhood is a condominium in some form.

Ms. Bahm stated that they are called site condos and still have a common element association where fees are associated. She commented that one of the changes being discussed at the State level in the Legislature is relative to making plats easier so housing can become more affordable.

Mr. Hooper commented that for site condos, they act like a single family home and people cut their own grass. He stated that the reason 99 percent of the people came here is that they wanted a single family safe community. He noted that good schools create the commercial, business, and restaurant areas, and that is why everyone is here. He stated that the scenario suggests that existing single family residential neighborhoods are maintained with the additional granny-flats, duplex, triplex or quad, and he stated that this will not happen.

Ms. Bahm asked about accessory dwellings.

Mr. Hooper responded that people do not want increased density, and it will require more impervious area at the back of a home to add those dwellings.

Ms. Roediger mentioned she would picture someone living over a loft garage, and stated that right now the Ordinances will not allow that.

Mr. Hooper noted that those dwellings will require unwanted stairs.

Ms. Neubauer noted that this would change things into a rental property, and if people want that they will move into Royal Oak or Ferndale where those types of housing are available.

Mr. Hetrick commented that everyone has talked about the need for senior housing to age in place; and if the Master Plan is unwilling to deal with that concept, it is wrong. He stated that it seems that the idea of ranches or duplexes is getting shoved to the side in favor of status quo.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that for years they have had conversations about building ranches, and developers always want two story. She commented that developers are always pushing for higher density because of the higher profits. She pointed out that Jim Polyzois had the vision for that demand and built ranch-style units and they are sold out. She concurred that if more were offered, the price may not be so high. She asked how to determine where to put these developments.

Mr. Struzik stated that there are a few different options for granny-flats. He stated that he is a little more open to the idea, but noted that his neighborhood would not be conducive to it as they do not have the deep lots that would allow an ADU or a granny-flat.

Ms. Bahm asked whether it should be explored if an older resident might wish to move into the smaller unit and rent out the large home.

Mr. Struzik stated that he did not necessarily have an issue with that; however, it might lead to increased density that people do not want. He noted that it could promote a cluttered look building a small home behind an existing house or adding to the top of a garage with a staircase. He noted that their group briefly discussed duplex, triplex or quad, and had some of the same conclusions in the existing neighborhoods. He noted one neighborhood along John R south of School Road where there are a number of duplexes or a mixture of single family

and duplexes and stated that he would be open to that. He stated that his group did not necessarily want to see it in an existing neighborhood that had an established characteristic and type.

Ms. Bahm suggested that they think about revising their scenario, and asked about what things in this scenario that the groups liked.

Ms. Denstaedt responded that it was connectivity and parks.

Ms. Neubauer suggested improving infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists to make it easier to reach destinations, provide a sense of belonging, and support parks and open spaces. She noted that their group crossed out the part about duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes.

Ms. Roediger noted that there are quite a few examples of newly-built duplexes and attached units, and noted that these can make the development a bit more affordable than a standalone single family.

Ms. Neubauer commented that in order to get affordability in housing, higher density is required. She pointed out that while they have gotten feedback that there is a lack of affordable housing in Rochester Hills, no one expects there to be as they do not want the density. She mentioned the Legacy development, noting that people are unhappy about what it looks like in that small area, yet they are almost sold out.

Mr. Struzik mentioned Walton Oaks, and pointed out that people buying into the adjacent neighborhood knew that there was a stub road there. He commented that if that stub road had been opened up, people would not have been happy. He stated that if that had been a development of similar single family homes, they should have looked at using the stub road and not having access off of the main road. He noted that it would have been an opportunity to make it a connected neighborhood. He added that another community off of John R has access to the adjacent neighborhood but with the addition of a fire gate, as the neighbors did not want them connecting through their neighborhood. He mentioned that the Planning Commission considered whether to extend the sidewalk to Gravel Ridge. He stated that in the future, the Commission should actually look toward building these connections. He commented that just because the neighborhoods were developed at different times, does not mean that they have to become islands that come off of main roads.

Ms. Roediger mentioned that Dr. Bowyer initially ran for Council after she was unhappy with Cumberland connecting through to Livernois. She recalled that after Dr. Bowyer joined Council, she understood why this was done to connect neighbor to neighbor.

Ms. Neubauer commented that she does not think people would be as opposed to the connection for the sake of walkability and a path.

Mr. Hetrick commented that the one thing that has been consistent during public input is connectivity; yet when they have the opportunity to do it, no one wants it in their backyard.

Chairperson Brnabic mentioned that for Gravel Ridge, a lot of traffic would have come through there from John R as a cut-through. She noted that the sidewalk only went so far and there were questions of who would maintain it.

Mr. Struzik responded that there is a tremendous amount of foot traffic on Gravel Ridge going to the church.

Mr. Hooper commented that he thinks that duplexes are a good idea.

Ms. Neubauer stated that if she had to choose between duplexes, triplexes or quads, she would choose duplexes. She mentioned quadplexes in Rochester that are owned by landlords and are all falling apart for lack of maintenance.

Ms. Bahm stated that this is another reason that more housing is needed because there is insufficient housing. She mentioned that she was in Lansing attending a small forum of legislators hosted by the American Planning Association and the Michigan Association of Planning, discussing housing in Michigan and the different approaches communities are taking. She stated that one of the things that they talked about was that there is so much bad housing. She commented that the population is not growing dramatically, but the households are growing and there is a need for more housing units.

She noted that the group needed to wrap up to move on to the Regular meeting, and stated that they would develop a scenario based on the feedback. She stated that she thought they might want to meet one more time before moving on to a joint meeting, and commented that she thinks it might be helpful to pull data on housing forecasts and population age. She mentioned a statistic that it costs \$96,000 to build any new housing unit, which is part of the affordability problem. She noted that people are suspicious of home builders because they say that their housing will be affordable. She commented that there must be a balance of affordable housing versus the developer's right to make a profit.

Ms. Neubauer commented that developers initially mention a price range; and when the houses are listed, they are three or four times as much.

DISCUSSION

[2024-0299](#)

Master Plan 2024

(McLeod Memo dated 6/18/24, Rochester Hills Community Components dated 6/12/24, PC Draft Work Session Minutes of 5/21/24, PC Work Session Minutes of 3/19/24, and PC-CC Joint Minutes of 1/29/24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof.)

Present in addition to staff were representatives from Giffels Webster, the City's Planning Consultant, Jill Bahm and Ian Hogg.

Ms. Bahm reviewed the five main components of a community that are reviewed in a Master Plan, including Housing, Transportation, Natural Features, Community Health and Economy. Through the presentation, she explained "Planning Filters" and noted that they are ways to measure/assess how policies align with the planning themes discussed previously. She likened them to lenses that people can look through to see how the city is doing in these areas, including the following:

- Age-friendly*
- Sustainability*
- Innovation*

She described Scenario Planning, noting that it is a way of thinking about the long-range future of a community.

- Some methods focus on how to achieve a desirable vision for the future or how to avoid a disaster.*
- Others attempt to forecast multiple futures and prepare for the implications of each.*
- For the long-range planning process in Rochester Hills, staff is focusing on a "preferred" future or long-range vision for the community that will illustrate the way in which community components are inter-connected.*
- This approach will lead to objectives and action strategies that align with the wants and needs of the community today and in the future.*

She explained that based on the 2018 Master Plan, recent data, and community input so far, three scenarios were developed that reflect varied outcomes for the future. She explained the scenarios, and stated that they reflect the balancing of competing interests. She stressed that there is no one "right" answer and there are pros and cons of each. The key idea is to recognize a balanced approach to land use policies associated with a future vision. She reviewed the scenarios:

- Scenario 1 - Tomorrow as Today.*

Components:

** Continued pattern of development. Focus on large single-family homes; no new options for multi-family housing; no significant increase in density. Housing costs continue to rise, with lack of options for young families and seniors to*

downsize.

- * Continued reliance on cars encourages auto-oriented businesses, traffic congestion increases, limited public transportation options.

- * Pressure remains to develop privately held open space; environmental concerns rise. Parks remain a key asset for the community.

- * Growing isolation and inactivity for some residents due to car dependence. Aging population puts stress on public health facilities.

- * City remains a desirable place to do business; employers may continue to be concerned about managing quality staff.

Filters:

- * Reliance on personal automobiles leaves youth and aging residents dependent on others; existing housing options not adaptable for mobility limitations; younger families find it difficult to afford their way of life.

- * Limited focus on renewable energy or green building practices; lack of investment in innovative stormwater infrastructure.

- * Limited innovation as the focus is to remain relatively stable.

- Scenario 2 - Enhancing Connections

Components:

- * Multi-unit housing such as granny flats, duplex, triplex and quadriplex homes permitted in limited areas offering additional housing choices at different price ranges.

- * Expanded sidewalk network offering more connectivity, pilot "slow" streets, bike sharing and bus service to ease congestion.

- * New developments incorporate parks, plazas or community gardens.

Expanded connections to parks.

- * Improved physical and mental health; fostered greater resident interaction; decreased reliance on cars.

- * Rising overall housing costs will continue, walkable neighborhoods could boost the local economy.

Filters:

- * Improved pedestrian infrastructure provides safer and easier access for older adults and children. Some difficulties still exist for affordable housing.

- * Improvements to traffic congestion and air quality; more concentration could put a strain on resources.

- * Fosters a walkable mixed-use environment attracting innovative businesses. May encounter some resistance from residents who prefer traditional environments.

- Scenario 3 - Rochester Hills Reimagined

Components:

- * Diverse housing mix options; increase in number of housing options providing more affordable options for young families; seniors can downsize and find housing.

- * Robust public transportation; complete sidewalk network; reduced reliance on cars; abundant EV infrastructure.

- * Protected green spaces, sustainable design and connectivity, emphasis on designing with nature.

- * Increased physical activity, greater access to resources and amenities, higher population density to foster a vibrant community.

- * City remains a desirable place to do business.

Filters:

- * Diverse housing adapted for different mobility levels. Improved connectivity and social interaction.*
- * Increased focus on energy efficiency and renewable resources; reduced reliance on personal vehicles; residents willing to pay for renewal and green projects.*
- * Rochester Hills leads by example.*

Ms. Bahm reviewed current and historical building permit data, median sales prices and homeowner vacancy rates:

- Primarily single family residential with some multi-family.*
- Increase in one, two and four bedroom, decrease in five bedroom homes; household sizes may be shrinking.*

She noted housing wants and factors based on the data and from community feedback:

- Stable property values; stable neighborhoods, peace and quiet, access to parks and recreation, and safety.*
- Needs include addressing empty nesters, housing variety, affordability, young families and first time buyers, and welcoming newcomers.*
- Outside factors include Michigan tax laws and housing incentives, school enrollment, aging population and the population rate, economic conditions, public health and construction costs.*
- Internal factors include community pressure, available land, and zoning and land policy.*

She reviewed transportation data collected, noting that there is a significant increase in the number of people who are working from home. She noted transportation wants, needs and factors:

- Wants included walkability, reduced congestion and safety.*
- Needs included sidewalks, pedestrian crossings and alternatives to driving.*
- Outside factors include SMART, RCOC and MDOT.*
- Internal factors are based on financial resources.*

The group discussed the new transportation routes, and mentioned alternatives for biking or walking short errands. E-bikes were briefly discussed and their opportunity to start replacing car trips at some point. Connectivity was stressed in the discussions as some of the sidewalks are not complete. The prevalence of delivery trucks was mentioned. Those with health issues that can no longer drive were also mentioned.

Ms. Bahm reviewed data regarding natural features, noting statistics for open space, water, impervious coverage and the tree canopy. The data also included changes in precipitation and temperature in southeast lower Michigan over time.

She reviewed wants and needs:

- Wants include preservation of the area's natural features along with access for the public to enjoy.*
- Needs include improvements to infrastructure and open space, along with access to public spaces including sidewalks, paths and trails.*
- Outside factors include climate change, State and Federal laws.*
- Internal factors include financial resources and property rights.*

Discussion ensued regarding comments regarding the lack of investment in innovative stormwater infrastructure and struggles to handle the increase in the number and intensity of extreme weather events.

Ms. Bahm noted comments received from homeowner's association groups that they wanted to transfer ownership of stormwater facilities back to the City because they had issues maintaining them.

Mr. McLeod noted that the ponds are getting to the age where they need costly maintenance and are not functioning the way they should. He mentioned that the City has not really pushed to have innovative storm water management. He commented that the City has had standardized storm water improvements all over the board, but has not really gone and pushed a developer to do bioswales, rain gardens, and rain barrels. He added that the Master Plan can push to require or incentivize within the developments or even within the City's own practices.

Chairperson Brnabic commented that it is a developer's decision and a directive cannot be issued due to costs.

Mr. McLeod commented that when the tree canopy percentage was increased, there was pushback at first, but it was done because it was important and the right thing to do. He stated that anything that will require more cost from a developer will receive pushback, and it will become a policy decision.

Mr. Struzik commented that there are some neighborhoods that see significant flooding, and he mentioned that his is one of the neighborhoods looking for a solution. He mentioned that they do not have a functioning homeowner's association, and have a property owner's association that is dominated by the interests of the larger property owners and apartment complex owners; so they are stuck without a solution.

Mr. McLeod stated that this is where preventative maintenance helps as things are not put off until they become a large price tag item. He suggested that there are different levels of improvements that could be required, from rain barrels to handle flash storms to redesigning an entire storm system for a drainage district.

Chairperson Brnabic asked what the City's design requirement is currently as years ago it was only required to have a 25-year storm model.

Mr. McLeod responded that the technical term is a modified 100-year storm; and he explained that the region has adopted somewhat of a uniform stormwater code, which tries to bring together best practices in terms of how much water is being collected. He commented that Jason Boughton of DPS could weigh in on the requirements; and when consulted, Mr. Boughton said not much has changed with the City's standards. He noted that it is based on the size and coefficient of runoff for the site, and developers must show their calculations. He added that there is a quantity equation and a quality equation for treating the water. Mr. McLeod mentioned that the City's directive can be pushed in the

Master Plan if it is something that the Planning Commission wants to do.

It was noted that soil conditions vary across the city, from sand in some areas that can accommodate rain gardens to hard clay in other areas. It was mentioned that a blanket requirement would be very hard to come up with. The question was raised as to how to increase the minimum requirement and offer incentives for developers to do more.

Ms. Bahm moved on to Community Health statistics, and reviewed data on population age ranges. She noted the wants and needs relative to the topic:

- Wants include housing and transportation for older residents, and walkability.*
- Needs include housing and transportation for older residents, improved walkability, and access to community facilities, goods services and health care.*
- Outside factors included the aging population, Michigan's population rate, any economic downturn, and the public health pandemic.*
- Internal factors include financial resources.*

Economic impacts were reviewed, with data including household income, poverty levels, employment, daytime population rates, and vacancy rates for industrial, office and retail over the years. She reviewed wants and needs relative to the economy:

- Wants include housing for employees involved in local businesses; financial resources to maintain and improve community facilities and infrastructure; and maintaining property values.*
- Needs include housing and financial resources.*
- Outside factors include the economic conditions in the region, state and the US, State and Federal regulations, and technological changes.*
- Internal factors include local regulations, and the desirability of the city with its attractive, well-run community facilities.*

It was noted that time was up and the Commissioners would be taking a break before their regular meeting.

Final thoughts included a discussion of the events of the past weekend and a need to address the City's communication infrastructure relative to those who are homebound or are not on the internet or Facebook during another emergency, natural disaster, or health emergency. It was suggested that a City program match up vulnerable people with people who are nearby and can help provide support.

Discussed

DISCUSSION

2024-0164

Master Plan 2024

Present in addition to staff were representatives from Giffels Webster, the City's Planning Consultant, Jill Bahm, Julia Upfal and Ian Hogg.

Ms. Bahm noted that tonight she would review public engagement, and she explained that the approaches have been really robust. She stated that she would go through the summaries of the things that they have heard, and after that would break the Commission into a couple of groups to talk amongst themselves about some of the themes that they have heard. After the group discussion, the Commission will reconvene to discuss these items.

(Mr. Dettloff and Ms. Neubauer entered the meeting).

Ms. Bahm recalled that they had the Joint Meeting with City Council in January and had a visioning meeting with Staff. She noted that the first outreach was a question of the day, and the online platform was promoted for three weeks with different questions that were asked, answered, and promoted during that time, providing good feedback. She stated that they received 160 comments and 250 interactions, and noticed that sometimes people will visit a page to see what others are saying and not necessarily participate themselves.

She noted the various topics that were shared back at the March work session, and mentioned the following:

- Some people were supportive of public transportation; for some traffic and calming safety were important things.*
- For others, green space was important.*
- In terms of development, for some it was quality development, for others it was overdevelopment.*
- Relative to community amenities and administration, a lot of people are very supportive of the Administration and the community facilities in the city.*

After that engagement, a number of new activities and engagement opportunities were presented, including:

- Attended the Mayor's Business Council meeting on March 22, and asked a couple of questions.*
- Meeting toolkits were created.*
- A meeting of homeowner's association presidents was attended by about 40 to 50 people, and they were encouraged to take the toolkits with them to do the same things in their own neighborhoods. Seven took toolkits but only four came back. Questions included the City's strengths, opportunities, and weaknesses.*
- A similar meeting was held at the Older Persons' Center, and people talked about walkability.*
- Small group workshops were held, and staff met with local business leaders and LDFA members. They were hoping to get several representatives from places of worship, and only one Pastor attended from a church in the northern*

area of the city. Four members from nonprofits attended, one resident, and seven members of Boards and Commissions. Feedback varied by group, and it was a helpful way to dig deeper with some of those individuals who normally may not participate in this kind of process.

She noted that a link to a Master Plan website will hopefully be made public tomorrow. She explained that there will be a lot of information on the site and it is intended to have a life longer than just the planning process and can be referred to as a resource for all kinds of long-range planning going forward.

She mentioned that a quality of life survey closed two Fridays ago, which was broken out by neighborhoods, and mentioned some of the results:

- Most folks are happy with life here in the City and most respondents are fairly satisfied.
- Traffic and congestion is the top concern, followed by development pressures, and a tie between rising housing costs and increasing population, land use conflicts, aging infrastructure and lifestyle or cultural conflicts.
- There was dissatisfaction with Adams Road, M-59, and Auburn Road.
- Comments at the end of the survey were open-ended.
- The most responses were from the Rochester West planning neighborhood, which was the largest; while the fewest were from the Stoney Creek neighborhood, which was the smallest.
- Many respondents felt like the housing is just not affordable; there were a number of comments about people who wanted to downsize such as the older generation, who could not find anything to downsize into in their price range. People talked about wanting to see smaller condos and ranch-type units for one-floor living and not being able to find what they could afford. Many have lived in their homes a long time and their tax rates are low as they have been frozen. If they downsize they will upsize their mortgage. Housing is also more expensive; and while they may sell for a good price, they still have to pay.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that it has come up with developers that they do not feel it is financial feasible or there is not enough profit in building smaller. Developers can make more profit in building up. She commented that she did not know how to encourage developers to build smaller.

Ms. Bahm responded it might be a matter of trying to determine what factors of development the City has influence over to help reduce the cost, such as lowering site plan fees for preferred housing.

Mr. McLeod mentioned that density will become the concern, as the offset will be that if a developer builds a less profitable unit, he will want to build more of them. He commented that the market has not caught up to the demand.

Ms. Neubauer noted that density came up with respect to the Barnes and Noble development, as the developer wanted to put in 96 units on four floors.

Mr. McLeod stated that the sweet spot desired is generally in the low 2,000 square foot range, with zero maintenance and all the niceties for the active seniors.

Ms. Neubauer commented that for senior living facilities, costs are in the range of \$7,000 per month or more for one bedroom units; however, the need is there for the elderly community and it seems to be the only option right now.

Mr. Hooper commented that new subdivisions are market-driven for the larger single family with more than 2,000 square feet, and three-quarters are colonials.

Mr. McLeod noted that there is definitely a market for larger single family homes in Rochester Hills; however, there is a balance point where you can have both.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that she was not surprised by the survey comments as the Commission hears this all the time. She commented that people do not want to see highly-dense developments and there should be a balance. She mentioned walkability, and commented that it might be hard to turn subdivisions into totally walkable communities the way the city is set up.

Ms. Bahm stated that if the city can move more toward walkability, it may be able to alleviate some of the traffic. She commented that the conversation will continue when the Commission gets more into the planning part of the process.

Commissioners mentioned density for the affordable housing, mentioning detached single family ranches, smaller condos, duplexes, and triplexes.

Mr. McLeod stated that some markets provide these opportunities for alternative housing better than others. He commented that unfortunately the City cannot control what a person sells their property for, and a developer incorporates that purchase price into his or her costs.

Mr. Dettloff asked if the topic of tiny housing came up, and if there is one thing that a developer would focus on in looking for an incentive.

Mr. McLeod responded that the topic of tiny homes does not come up a lot. He noted that with respect to incentives, infrastructure costs have to be spread out across the properties. He commented that the simple answer is money; and they either purchase the property for less money or have more density to help spread infrastructure and development costs.

Ms. Bahm noted that it could be valuable to concentrate development in some areas to relieve pressure on other areas. She added that 10-12 units would be too dense designed in one way, but designed in another way that it would not make it appear more dense.

Chairperson Brnabic commented that individuals wanting to leave large square footage homes may be looking for a ranch, but they might want to go into a condo or another different form of development. She mentioned Redwood, and stated that apparently it has filled up.

Mr. McLeod commented that Redwood has been so successful they are looking for property to build the next phase. He added that there is a mixture of people in there, including a younger clientele as well as downsizers.

Ms. Bahm added that it provides a lifestyle people are looking for, and stated that people choose to rent for a variety of reasons.

Mr. Hooper mentioned a development on John R north of Auburn, noting that they had a number of ranches of 2,000-plus square feet on 0.2 acres; and he mentioned that these sold a few years ago for \$450,000 to \$500,000. He asked if this was filling a need or was not enough to be considered attainable.

Ms. Bahm responded that they can look at that as a case study. She went on to summarize the survey, noting that the Commission will see feedback from the Mayor's Business Council that included interactive participatory questions that were asked regarding workforce and things they needed as employers, what they felt their employees were looking for, and how the City could help support them and their businesses. She added that both residents and businesses expressed concerns regarding a real estate shortage; yet they expressed concerns regarding overdevelopment. She commented that it is another dilemma to figure out how to help business owners.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that there were quite a few comments about community events and organized recreational activities.

Ms. Bahm responded that this topic is really outside of the purview of the Master Plan other than thinking about where space could be created for these things to happen. She mentioned that there are plazas or open spaces in the Brooklands that may allow for shutting down part of a side street for a couple of hours for a temporary location for community events.

Mr. McLeod noted that they had a conversation with someone regarding a food truck park, and he noted that with the new food truck licensing, he believes that the Commission will see more trucks at the City's events along with private events.

Ms. Neubauer commented that she thinks the community is looking for ways to all come together. She mentioned the cultural fair last week, noted that people have always asked for a dog park, and there are desires for a pump track for biking. She stated that the City should do anything it can to bring people back together and outside as people had been separated for so long during the pandemic.

Ms. Bahm mentioned that there was strong feedback from some of the business owners at the small group workshop about building drive-throughs and shutting down inside services. She commented that it is sad that those two thoughts compete with each other, convenience versus people wanting to be together.

At this point, the Commission split into three groups of three and took 15 minutes to discuss the themes presented.

After the groups reconvened, some of the comments noted were:

- *Busing and the safety of schools.*
- *Pathways and connections. Walkability and connectivity challenges. Walking for exercise versus for a purpose or destination.*
- *Affordable attainable housing within the school districts.*
- *Lack of social opportunity in various districts.*
- *Overdevelopment in certain areas and where will it stop.*
- *One group noted that John R was a park corridor, with Spencer, Borden and Bloomer, and there are multiple pathway gaps adding danger.*
- *There are opposing views on public transportation. Difficulties on getting to the bus stop, and whether people could put a bike on a bus to get from the stop to home.*
- *Isolation of some neighborhoods with no sidewalks.*
- *The City is a good place to work and raise a family, but not necessarily the best place to retire and age in. The community is getting older so something needs to be done. Seniors can become isolated in their own space.*
- *Trolleys could provide transportation locally.*
- *The Brooklands can be seen as a model for how to look at existing subdivisions to be able to create walkability.*
- *Roundabouts were only mentioned as a part of different ways to have traffic calming and traffic management. Opinions were neither positive or negative; they just stressed a desire for better traffic management.*

Ms. Bahm summarized that the next step is how to plan for managing some of the conflict points regarding housing prices, isolation, preserving open space, and what happens in the next five to ten years. She mentioned that there were some survey comments that included responses from outside of the city, multiple responses from the same households, and one response that came from out of the country that will be weeded out. She commented that some people will say to stop doing everything, and it will still not fix the traffic problem. She stated that the next step is to determine how the City can do things differently and better.

Discussed

DISCUSSION

2024-0164

Master Plan 2024

Present in addition to staff were representatives from Giffels Webster, the City's Planning Consultant, Jill Bahm, Julia Upfal and Ian Hogg.

Ms. Roediger explained that this is the kickoff for the Planning Commission study sessions in advance of the Planning Commission meetings, and she stated that staff is excited to have the Giffels team a part of the plan update. She stated that there will be a very robust public involvement effort.

Ms. Bahm explained that for the past two months the team has been working hard to develop a community engagement plan that goes beyond public meetings and includes creative ways to get people involved who normally do not participate. She mentioned the following efforts:

- The first phase was undertaken through the online platform and focused on understanding what the community is feeling, thinking and wanting. This phase will continue through the end of March.*
- The next phase is envisioning, and will include small focus groups, including the Youth Council, the Older Persons' Commission, and Mayor's Business Council; and each group will have their own unique set of exercises and questions. A survey will be a part of this phase as well.*
- A community quality of life survey for all residents will gauge things they like, things they see and things they feel they need. Another survey will be a market study, and another is a consumer spending survey. The consumer spending survey will look to identify where dollars are spent here and what dollars are leaving the community that might stay here if certain things were offered.*
- Toolkits are intended to be opportunities for people to facilitate meetings on their own. It will allow efforts to blanket the city effectively with more people and more meetings than they could do as staff and consultants, and the community will be asked to help out. Youth Council will be involved, along with homeowners' association presidents; and hopefully planning commissioners might be interested in hosting a meeting at their house or with their neighbors.*
- Specialists at the Chesapeake Group will be helping with the market study that will be undertaken with business leaders and other community facility leaders in the school systems, hopefully Oakland University, Rochester Christian University, and different places that have a unique perspective on the status of the city and the trends they see.*
- Small group workshops that are subject-related will provide people focused in on the area that they have a lot of expertise in will get more people engaged.*
- A hands on workshop will include those from the middle school and high school group working together with representatives from the OPC on a project that is intended to be creative, visionary and very fun.*
- These efforts will run during April and part of May, and the Commission will be provided with a summary of what they are hearing hopefully in May and then get to work to build a plan from there.*

Ms. Bahm explained that these efforts will go on for at least another year or

more, after taking into account the public hearing requirements and other efforts that are currently in process. She noted that the plan will be an online product and will be accessed through the City's website and live on the City's GIS platform, and will allow people to drive around on their map to see different things and be linked to other opportunities to be aware of what is going on. She stated that after tonight the whole plan of community engagement will be shared with dates confirmed so far; and every time a new event is scheduled, they will let the Commission know. She pointed out that the City's PR team is involved in social media for these events, but there is nothing like a personal invitation from the Commissioners to friends and neighbors to get them to participate.

Mr. Dettloff asked how the response was to the initial survey sent out.

Ms. Bahm responded that even with the amount of press given to it, she was a little disappointed in the number of responses. She commented that it did provide some interesting feedback.

Ms. Roediger explained that it was posted on Facebook, NextDoor, postcards were passed out with a QR code link, and it was advertised on social media.

Ms. Bahm stated that she does not know that people really understand what a master plan is. She noted that this is why so many different things are planned, such as meetings, online activities, open houses, meeting toolkits and small group involvement.

Mr. Dettloff stated that master plans are typically cut and dried type of approaches, with public hearings and a handful of attendees; but he loves this approach. He asked if a staff person will be attending these meetings.

Ms. Bahm responded that they will, except for the meeting toolkits as those will be on their own.

Ms. Roediger stated that the Commissioners will be the guinea pigs for the meeting toolkits and the idea is that the Commissioners can go out and find neighbors and HOA presidents to use the toolkits among their own contacts.

Ms. Bahm added that they want to track who takes the kits as well. She noted that in the past the communities that identified the people who took the kits, followed up with them, suggested deadlines and offered help received the kits back. Those who did not know where they were released to were unable to follow up.

It was suggested to use a facilitator sign-in sheet.

Julia Upfal and Ian Hogg introduced themselves as a part of the Giffels team. Ms. Bahm added that Joe Tangari is also a part of the team, and was unable to attend this evening due to another meeting.

Mr. Hogg reviewed a breakdown of the results from the five questions that were posted on the community engagement pages, the City's website, and social media from March 1 to March 11. He noted that the responses were posted

online as anonymous sticky notes, and participants could upvote and downvote the responses. He reported that there were 163 total comments throughout the five questions and 248 interactions of upvotes and downvotes. He noted that the majority of the interactions were upvotes. He listed the following themes and responses:

- Does your independent access to work, school, healthcare services, housing and social opportunities depend on your age? What is missing? This question got 47 total comments and 52 total interactions including 49 upvotes and three downvotes.
- There are five major themes that can be taken from the responses. The first three are relative to connectivity and a lot of the respondents were talking about the lack of sidewalks between neighborhoods and commercial corridors throughout the city. Another group of responses highlighted safety, especially for seniors and young children on paths and streets versus walking on an actual sidewalk. Comments were received on transportation and improving the options. Overall public transportation was viewed favorably in the city.
- The next theme was focused on open space and green space throughout the city, and multiple individuals talked about a desire for more green space and ensuring efforts to preserve what is already there versus developing it.
- The next set of themes talked about development and specifically affordability when people are looking to downsize. There was some disagreement between people in favor of growth versus those who are concerned about overdevelopment in the city.
- Community amenities and City Administration was another prevalent theme. Overall there was a favorable view of the City and that the City provides adequate amenities, but sometimes it is difficult to find information regarding activities and programs. A few responses talked about establishing more or different community centers, such as a recreation center or pool outside of the OPC.
- Ten comments directly answered the question whether age affects independent access, and overall people did not think age was a factor and the City did a great job accommodating everyone.
- How cars impact the livability and accessibility of the neighborhood received 29 answers, and 59 interactions with the majority of interactions being upvotes.

Mr. Hogg noted that the themes were fairly similar throughout, and connectivity was a major concern especially regarding safety and accessibility for everyone. Orion Road was specifically called out in a few comments, sidewalks were another issue to be addressed. He stated that they visited the following topics:

- For transportation, the length of time to get across certain intersections was noted, and people wanted to make sure that proper planning and design for pedestrians was a priority. Preserving open spaces and creating more opportunity for parks and recreation was a similar theme. Overall, there was a favorable view of the City purchasing green spaces.
- There were concerns about multifamily housing at busy intersections, along with the overdevelopment theme. He added that there were some critiques on development and that the Ordinances cater to developers. One comment requested improving recycling and introducing a composting program.
- Question Three dealt with the topic of safe access to transportation options

other than driving automobiles and Rochester Hills could improve access to and encourage use of these different types of travel. Twenty-three answers were received with 41 interactions. Connectivity was mentioned, along with sidewalks, expanding and tying in with other sidewalks, and adding pathways for biking and walking. For transportation, there was some disagreement as there were people in favor of public transportation, and those with concerns about whether there would be enough activity and ridership. Some individuals offered ways to increase rideshare options.

- Question Four dealt with neighborhood walkability and bikeability, and how the City could make the physical health of its residents better through planning. Thirty-seven answers and 53 total interactions were received. Sidewalks and pathways were another key concern, and specific answers noted implementing pedestrian bridges or reworking pedestrian bridges over M-59 and the Paint Creek Trail at Tienken Road. Transportation comments highlighted safety for pedestrians, implementing traffic calming measures and improving signage throughout the city for pedestrians.

- Regarding open space, people had a positive view of the City's park system, and had concern about preserving more park land for residents. Comments included allowing for more accessible and walkable commercial spaces, and stricter enforcement of traffic laws to help people get to where they need to be in a safe and efficient manner.

- The last question asked where people connect with other people in the community and how the Rochester Hills planning environment makes it easy to connect with others. Seven comments were received, with 44 total interactions. Connectivity, safe and easy access, and the park system were listed. Sidewalks were mentioned again, including specific callouts for Orion and Dutton Roads. Preservation of green spaces along with mentions of the historical spaces in the city were listed. Changing the zoning ordinance to allow for outdoor seating was mentioned. A couple of the comments mentioned diversifying businesses, and one comment stated that there are only bars and gyms in the city. Improving and increasing the number of community events and programs was suggested, along with developing new community centers, having art fairs or summer concerts.

Ms. Bahm stated that she would send the complete results to the Commissioners. She noted that they did receive comments as expected about development being out of control, and saving trees; however, there were a lot of other things that people were really interested in, including transportation, connectivity, sidewalks, and places where people can age. She noted that this can help through the planning process to determine where the City will put roads and commercial activity, how these can be connected, and how the natural features add to lives.

Mr. Hetrick noted that he took the quiz and felt that one of the primary themes is connectivity, and he got to thinking how it will affect his neighborhood and how he can get to open spaces, green spaces, parks and travel safely.

Ms. Bahm stated that the quiz was trying to get people past the topic of traffic. She noted that in 2018 the big items were traffic, deer, and turnover housing and empty nesters in particular. She commented that she expected traffic and housing to continue to be raised as concerns; but it is also helpful to think

whether driving is the only way to get anywhere, as traffic will be a problem.

Ms. Neubauer stated that the community Facebook pages express concern over traffic issues that have a lot to do with the dismissal times of schools; and noted that the lack of sidewalks once children cross the roads leads to parents sitting in the car lines.

Mr. Struzik commented that many of the traffic issues result from the busing range of the schools. He noted that his children are not eligible to take the bus and would have to walk 1.4 miles and cross John R at Auburn, and would be doing so in the dark most of the year. He noted that children have been hit by cars in two of the last three years. He stated that he has tried to suggest to school administrators that the problem can be solved by busing more kids, and he suggested that he does not know what kind of influence the City might have. He mentioned transportation ridership, and stated that once transportation is available, habits will have to be built. He suggested that there will be opportunities to work with SMART, and offered that many of the over-provision parking lots are off Rochester Road and could offer park-and-ride opportunities. He noted that he works in downtown Detroit and would love to take a bus there, and suggested that the Meijer and Hampton Shopping Center might allow a partnership.

Ms. Neubauer stated that she approached the school about adding busing, and the answer is that they are already deficient in bus drivers and there aren't enough. She pointed out that there are already some staggered start times, or the problem would be even worse.

Ms. Denstaedt stated that the timing of the lights are an issue as well, as some of the lights along Rochester Road, Auburn and Hamlin are very short.

Mr. Hetrick noted that connectivity of sidewalks to the schools is important to parents.

Ms. Neubauer pointed out that there are no sidewalks in her subdivisions and kids have to cross Avon to walk home. She noted people walk in the street even when walking their dogs, and commented that kids are walking in the dark in the morning.

Mr. Dettloff asked if there will be outreach to schools, churches, and various other groups, and when it would happen.

Ms. Roediger noted that there will be invite-only small groups, and this will include a small group for the Youth Council, staff members, various boards and commissions; and places of worship will be considered. She commented that groups for local businesses and large property owners will generally be set for April or early May. She noted that there is no interfaith council; however, perhaps the Mayor's office connections could be helpful.

Chairperson Brnabic noted that at one point the schools district was trying to get rid of busing. Now they have gone with an outside company.

Ms. Roediger stated that she has not heard of any recent discussions about getting rid of the buses, but at this point a lot of the students will not use them because they are so inconsistent and unreliable.

Ms. Neubauer noted that kids are getting dropped off because the buses would show up an hour and a half late. She noted that Council receives correspondence regarding school busing even though City Council has nothing to do with it. She commented that busing is not a primary concern for the School Board as they have other issues.

Ms. Bahm noted that this ties back to what the city can do to improve pedestrian crossings and make subdivision streets safer.

Ms. Roediger noted that tomorrow the CIP Review Committee will meet and this will come before the Commission in April. She explained that two crossings will be presented that hopefully will be funded in the next five years, one per the Walton Oaks project that came forth on Walton from Firewood to Oakland University, and one presented by residents on Medinah for a mid-block crossing to get students to Van Hoosen and Adams.

Mr. Struzik commented that he hoped the mid-block one will be a Hawk signal which is safer than the rectangular rapid-flashing beacons, as cars technically by law do not have to stop for those. He asked what the Commissioners can do, noting that he would suggest some sort of program to help promote carpooling to and from school. He pointed out that if motorists obey the actual law and do not drive down the center turn lane on Auburn Road, the road would be unusable for 20 to 30 minutes every morning.

Ms. Neubauer stated that this is why school pick up and drop off time is a huge safety issue in Rochester Hills. She commented that this is why the Commission was so worried about the new Starbucks coming in, as it has a lot to do with the schools. She stated that she does not know if Rochester getting their own busing system back would help as contracting it out has not worked. She commented that there should be sidewalks where there is any school in the city. She stated that while it is a huge funding issue it is a safety issue.

Mr. Hetrick responded that if a master plan takes into account these issues, it will help to facilitate suggesting what a school can do. Whether they choose to do it is up to them.

Ms. Bahm stated that they will continue to talk about these things, as well as their conflicting themes of open space versus development and how they balance that.

She explained that for the next 20 minutes Ms. Upfal will walk through an accelerated version of the meeting toolkit, which typically takes one hour.

Ms. Upfal explained the toolkit, noting there was a number of tips and tricks the facilitator can read through prior to the meeting, along with directions, agendas, sign-in sheets, evaluation forms for feedback, comment cards, and a map for people to review their neighborhoods. She explained the toolkit process, and

took the Commission through the exercises:

- Exercises start with a welcome and introduction describing the master plan and the planning process.
- The first exercise is about strengths and weaknesses in Rochester Hills as far as planning and development, what is special about Rochester Hills and what can be improved. The Commission broke up into groups and strengths and weaknesses mentioned during the Commission's exercise included:

- * School quality was a strength, although school board management was a weakness.
- * Recreational opportunities were a strength, including the trail system, open spaces, and parks.
- * Strong youth representation and governance.
- * Quality shopping, variety, and restaurant variety.
- * The OPC was seen as a strength.
- * Diversity of the community. Inclusive and diverse quality housing.
- * Transportation and traffic congestion were a weakness; a need for more roundabouts was mentioned.
- * Freeway access was a plus.
- * Lack of a community center, pool, and activities for kids was a weakness.
- * Lack of affordable housing in general, along with homes on one floor for the aging population. There are some square miles that do not have a lot of family options.
- * Connectivity is lacking, along with a need for sidewalks and walkable neighborhoods. Gaps in the pathways.
- * Funding for infrastructure is needed; stormwater management is needed. Many HOAs do not know that it is their responsibility to maintain their drainage systems.
- * A desire to bring the neighborhoods back.
- * Good fire response and safety.

Ms. Upfal noted that if this had been a real meeting toolkit, they would go on to opportunities and threats, and look at the external factors and changes happening outside of the city that will affect it in the future. This would include national and state trends, changes in the surrounding area, and how to be proactive and not just reactive; and make sure these threats and opportunities are considered.

Ms. Roediger stated that they will be recruiting people to facilitate these toolkits and suggested that the Commissioners think of people from local clubs, groups, churches or wherever that might be good to hold one of these sessions. She stated that they will be back before the Commission in May for more discussion on the Master Plan.

Mr. McLeod noted that wetlands and woodlands are a part of the natural features. He explained that as a part of the process, the public will get noticed to any change to the recorded wetland boundaries noted in the survey. He stated that the wetlands touch about 3,600 properties but there will also be some new areas. He noted that an interactive map will show wetlands being removed and added.

Ms. Mungioli asked if the map was currently live.

Mr. McLeod responded that it will be ready when the notices will be sent out.

Ms. Roediger noted that this inventory is not intended to replace a professional wetland delineation.

Mr. McLeod stated that this is an indicator but still a wetland determination would have to be done on individual properties for development. He noted that this item will be targeted for the second meeting in March.

Ms. Mungioli asked if this includes private land, park space, and storm drains.

Mr. McLeod confirmed that this includes any property within the city.

Mr. Hetrick commented that this is terrific. He stated that he would hear consistently that Rochester Hills is being overdeveloped, even though this development has not disrupted the natural features.

Mr. McLeod noted that the City's Ordinance protects its natural features.

Discussed

2024-0041

Master Plan Kickoff

Present were Jill Bahm and Joe Tangari, representing Giffels Webster, the City's planning consultant.

Ms. Roediger introduced Ms. Bahm and Mr. Tangari, and explained that staff is kicking off the Master Plan Update this year in conjunction with Giffels Webster, and it will reflect the changing trends and desires of the City.

Ms. Bahm stated that she was delighted to be a part of the team and as an extension of staff, and noted that Giffels Webster was a part of the 2018 Master Plan as well. She commented that it is interesting to hear all the comments and questions about the other projects in the city and noted that it is a great background for what they are doing. She explained that in 2018 the theme was preserve-enhance-diversity. In working with staff and talking about the process for four to five months, this year's focus will be different. She stated that there is a real need for an educational focus in the community. She displayed the Mayor's introductory video highlighting the Master Plan process.

Ms. Bahm stated that this will be a new kind of Master Plan for the City and will focus on how the environment affects daily lives, how people will get around,

shop, and get to parks. She noted that there will be many opportunities for people to participate in smaller group discussions and provide different types of input. She explained that the city was reviewed and it was determined that it will be divided into focus areas consistent with the high school boundaries. She noted that the process will include envisioning, and then strategizing on what fits for the City to continue to be innovative. The Plan will focus on sustainability and placemaking and will be an online document. Each phase has a goal. Mobility, community health and economic health will be guiding themes.

Mr. Tangari commented that overdevelopment has been expressed as a concern, along with concerns about the aging population and how senior housing can be taxing on emergency services. He pointed out that Michigan's population is not growing at all. He stated that the City is well run, fiscally-responsible, and focused on customer service and community relations. He noted that there is a strong sense of community and a desire to preserve that. He explained that in 2017, there were concerns about drones and autonomous vehicles, and now EV infrastructure is of concern.

Ms. Mungioli asked how many people took the master plan survey that the City offered and if there was one thing that stood out.

Ms. Bahm responded that 24 City staff participated in the survey.

Mr. Tangari commented that traffic cut across every category as a concern, and they would be seeking solutions and looking into technology for traffic management.

Mr. Hetrick questioned as the Master Plan evolves how it would affect the Transportation Plan.

Ms. Roediger responded that the Transportation Plan recommended roundabouts and turn lanes, and that is different than looking at it from a land use lens. She commented that if more mixed uses and connectivity are provided, the idea would be that this would take some cars off the roads and reduce traffic rather than stopping development.

Mr. Hetrick commented that older neighborhoods have no walkability, and have no placemaking or a gathering place. A newer neighborhood can create those places.

Mr. Tangari stated that there is an opportunity here to create those spaces. He mentioned that older neighborhoods have a more connected street network and there are a lot of ways to get those spaces.

Mr. Dettloff stated that he is happy to hear that the approach will be strong community engagement as that is always the weakest link. He expressed kudos to Giffels Webster for being on the cutting edge with this approach.

President Deel asked if anything had come up with respect to the increase in working from home. He noted that he personally goes into the office once a

week. He noted the increased the usage of parks and asked how that may impact planning.

Mayor Barnett commented that while traffic is a concern, and Rochester Road traffic is so bad, there is a question as to how much people are willing to do to solve it, such as consideration whether to widen Adams Road. He noted that a push toward affordable housing means denser or taller homes. He mentioned that people dislike the solutions more than the problems. He stated that one interesting thing is that the changing transit to the community will be impactful moving forward, and he noted that this did not exist in 2018.

Ms. Roediger noted that there has not been an announcement of a public meeting date yet, and stated that she hoped that Council and the Commission will help to spread the word, as a multi-faceted approach to get the information out.

Ms. Bahm suggested that when Council and Commissioners receive emails regarding this from the project team, that they share these emails.

Discussed

2024-0051

Other Zoning Initiatives

Ms. Roediger commented that after the extensive zoning ordinance updates undertaken last year, there are still number of topics that the Planning Commission may wish to look at that have come up in working with Code Enforcement, including the raising and keeping of chickens, gateway and streetscape implementation, maximum size of houses on small lots, and accessory structures. She noted that even pizza vending machines have been mentioned.

President Deel asked what a review of accessory structures would entail.

Mr. McLeod responded that Code Enforcement has been dealing with lot coverage issues and what constitutes lot coverage. He noted that there are larger structures being built on smaller lots.

Chairperson Brnabic asked if the Zoning Ordinance can be changed administratively.

Mr. McLeod responded that it could not.

Chairperson Brnabic asked if the Commission would see any changes regarding the keeping of chickens before it is approved.

Ms. Roediger responded that there has not been a public hearing yet.

Mr. McLeod stated that any change will need to go through the formal process.

Chairperson Brnabic questioned how soon the Commission would see any proposed changes.

Ms. Roediger responded that they will try to get to them as there are gaps in the agenda.

Mr. McLeod stated that if there is not a significant amount of work to be done, that the various topics could possibly be grouped together as an agenda item. He commented that the short answer is perhaps they can come forward later in the spring or early summer. He noted that the Master Plan process is fairly aggressive at this point.

Chairperson Brnabic stated that her concern is with lot coverage, and she would consider that more urgent. She commented that she does not want to see it happen where two large homes are built side by side with little setback, and noted that it would be a fire issue. She stated that she is not as concerned with chickens.

Discussed

NEW BUSINESS

2024-0043

Planning and Economic Development Annual Report

(Memorandum to Planning Commission and City Council dated 1/29/24, PED Annual Report had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Ms. Roediger introduced the PED 2023 Annual Report and commented that from both a planning and economic standpoint it provides a good summary to look back on the year. She noted that Mr. McLeod provided a timeline tied to the map, and pointed out that a lot of the activity was along Rochester Road.

She stated that the Planning Commission would be asked to review and accept the report this evening.

Mr. Hetrick commented that it had come up in discussion previously the changing trends relative to office space versus commercial space, and he asked what the goals are toward changing office space.

Ms. Roediger responded that this will be discussed as a part of the Master Plan Update. She commented that Pam Valentik, Economic Development Manager, is always in the know for every vacancy as to how to fill those spaces and how to divide them for smaller tenant spaces. She stated that this goes along with the Economic Development Strategy.

Mr. Dettloff commented that the report deserves an award for the format and asked if it was being considered.

Ms. Roediger asked the Commission and Council Members if they had any other comments or changes.

Seeing none, it was moved by Neubauer, seconded by Denstaedt, that the

Planning Commission accept the 2023 PED Annual Report.

After a voice vote by Planning Commission members, it was announced that the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Neubauer, seconded by Denstaedt, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 8 - Neubauer, Brnabic, Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Hetrick, Struzik and Weaver

Abstain 5 - Carlock, Deel, Morlan, Mungioli and Walker

Excused 2 - Blair and Hooper

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby accepts the 2024 Planning and Economic Development Annual Report.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- City Council Regular Meeting February 12, 2024
- Planning Commission Regular Meeting February 20, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no business to come before the Planning Commission and City Council, and upon motion by Neubauer, seconded by Denstaedt, Chairperson Brnabic adjourned the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

*Deborah Brnabic, Chairperson
Rochester Hills Planning Commission*

*Ryan Deel, President
Rochester Hills City Council*

Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary