



# City of Rochester Hills 2025 Master Plan



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## Purpose of this Master Plan

Every great community begins with a vision. The purpose of this master plan is to chart a clear path forward—guiding decisions, shaping growth, and ensuring that our shared values and aspirations become a reality for years to come. A city’s Master Plan serves as a fundamental policy guide, establishing the long-range framework for how land should be used and developed. Consequently, this plan directly informs zoning decisions and other regulations that shape the physical character of the community. Michigan law requires us to review this vital document every five years.

The latest version of the Master Plan will serve as a long-term (10-20 year) guide for the City's continued physical development. This update reaffirms the direction set in the 2018 Master Plan, detailing the community's vision, goals, and strategies for land use, community development, and essential services. It recognizes the planning and zoning activities of the recent years between plans where efforts were made to refine the form-based districts, consolidate non-residential zoning districts, and create special standards for the Brooklands district. The plan will serve as a blueprint for land use, ensuring that future growth is intentional, coordinated and reflects the community's objectives. By establishing clear, long-range policies, the Master Plan informs decisions about public and private land use and the provision of public facilities, ultimately shaping our environment in a lasting way.

## Community Planning History

For over four decades, the City of Rochester Hills has been dedicated to thoughtful land use planning and policymaking. It all began in 1964 when the community, which existed as Avon Township, adopted its first Future Land Use plan. Since then, the City has proactively reviewed and updated the Master Plan in 1974, 1979, 1986, 1992, 1999, 2007, 2012, and 2018, planning for the next steps to innovatively guide the city's dynamic growth and transformation.

From its origins as a rural township, Rochester Hills has evolved through various stages: transitioning from its rural setting to a developing community on the suburban fringe, becoming a developed suburban township, and ultimately emerging as a full-service city. Today, Rochester Hills stands as a high-quality, stable suburban community, continually evolving to meet the needs of its residents while maintaining its commitment to excellence. In fact, in 2025, the City of Rochester Hills was ranked #9 by [US News & World Report](#) as one of its “Top 250 Best Places to Live” in the entire US and #1 in Michigan.

## Master Plan Update Process

The Master Plan Update process began in 2024 by broadening the engagement opportunities for residents and businesses. With a variety of forums and platforms to encourage dialog and discussion with 2,000+ participants (see the Community Engagement

page for a complete description of engagement opportunities and feedback), the Rochester Hills Master Plan focused on five main components of the community:

- **Housing:** The types and affordability of housing options available, impacting residents of all ages and income levels.
- **Transportation & Mobility:** The network of roads, public transportation, and pedestrian/cycling infrastructure that allows residents to access goods, services, jobs and community facilities.
- **Preservation and Sustainability :** The parks, waterways, green spaces, and environmental resources that contribute to the community's character and quality of life.
- **Community Amenities :** The places that provide residents access to healthcare facilities, ways to build a healthy lifestyle, a safe environment, and ways to connect socially.
- **Economic Development:** The structure and diversity of businesses and industries that provide jobs and generate revenue, impacting the community's overall prosperity.

## Plan Themes

Through the process, the following “filters,” or planning themes, were applied during each conversation and assessment relating to the Master Plan and its policies to ensure alignment with the feedback and values that emerged from public input and the discussion of staff and officials:

- **Age-friendly:** An age-friendly community is one that's designed to be welcoming and supportive of people of all ages, from children to older adults. It prioritizes the well-being and needs of all residents, fostering a sense of belonging and connection across generations.
- **Sustainable:** A sustainable community meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It strives to find a balance between environmental, economic, and social well-being.
- **Innovative:** An innovative community is one that fosters creativity, embraces new ideas, and actively seeks solutions to challenges. It provides an environment where residents and organizations can collaborate and experiment to drive progress.

## Community Vision

The community participated in scenario planning in the beginning of the process as a way of thinking about the long-range future of the City. This framework outlined a variety of outcomes that pulled into focus a “preferred” future or long-range vision for the community that illustrates the way in which community components are interconnected. Using demographic and economic data, community input, and Planning Commission direction, a

vision for the future emerged: **This vision aims to maintain stability and the suburban lifestyle in Rochester Hills, while strengthening pedestrian connectivity and preserving natural resources.**

*Vision: Timeless Tradition*

- The long-range focus for this 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 for 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 mobility 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 sidewalk and pathway network.
- Community facilities, parks, and preserved open spaces are some of the keys to the city's success; resources will be dedicated to sustainability and the ongoing maintenance of aging infrastructure and public services.

In the years following this plan's adoption, the City will focus on implementation activities that include additional study/exploration of ideas, zoning amendments, and advocacy/education. On a regular basis, the plan's measures of success will be reviewed to gauge how implementation is advancing the goals and objectives of the plan, and, using the planning filters (age-friendly, sustainable, innovative) where refinements may need to be made.

The Master Plan continues by exploring the influences of the [region](#), understanding [community input](#), and outlining the [land use plan](#). Following that are additional discussions on [housing](#), [economic development](#), [transportation and mobility](#), [preservation and sustainability](#), and [community amenities](#). The Plan ends with an [implementation plan](#) that charts the course for action strategies to move the City forward.

## Regional Setting

The City of Rochester Hills is not an island - the community is part of a larger region with unique opportunities and challenges. The City is situated in eastern Oakland County and covers 32.91 square miles. It is located approximately nine miles east of Pontiac and 28 miles north of Detroit. Surrounding communities include Oakland Township (north), City of Troy (south), City of Auburn Hills (west), and Shelby Township (east in Macomb County). The City of Rochester is located in the northeast corner of the city and is largely surrounded by the City of Rochester Hills. M-59, an east-west state trunkline highway, runs through the southern portion of the city. This highway affords nearly immediate access to I-75 to the west of the city and I-94, through Macomb County to the east.

### Southeast Michigan

The City of Rochester Hills is included in the Detroit Metropolitan Area. The central location and access of Rochester Hills provides people with the opportunity to live in Rochester Hills and commute to jobs in Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne counties. Similarly, businesses in Rochester Hills have a large population pool from which to draw employees as well as clients, patrons, and shoppers.

#### Economic Growth in the Region

According to SEMCOG, the seven-county regional planning agency that spans the Metropolitan Detroit area, the overall forecast from 2020 to 2050 shows the region with moderate growth in total households and jobs. Overall regional population growth will remain slow at 0.21% per year. Total employment in Southeast Michigan is estimated to grow, on average, only 0.28% per year between 2019 and 2050. (Source: 2023 Economic and Demographic Outlook for Southeast Michigan through 2050). Economic growth is not estimated at the local level, but the City of Rochester Hills is, and will continue to be, a desirable community for many prominent businesses and industries due to its talented workforce and proximity to major transportation routes in the region. More information on economic impacts are found in the [Economic Development](#) chapter.

#### Population in the Region

According to SEMCOG, in 2023, people aged 45 to 64 accounted for 26.5% of the SEMCOG region's population, compared with 25.1% nationally. In Rochester Hills, people aged 45 to 64 make up 26.6% of the City's total population, which is nearly identical to the percentage for the region. The share of the population 65 and older is similar in the region and the nation, 17.2% and 16.8%, respectively. People who are 65 and older in Rochester Hills account for 17.8% of the population and is slightly higher than the region and the nation.



In comparison, the younger age cohorts, that is, those under 45, constitute a smaller share in the region than in the nation. Those aged 25 to 44 account for only 25.9% of the region's population compared with 26.8% nationally (in the Rochester Hills, that figure is even lower at 24.3%); and those under 25 make up 30.4% of the region's population compared with 31.3% nationally (nearly identical to Rochester Hills at 31.2%). Locally, with the City of Rochester Hills being largely built out and constrained by protected natural features, significant population growth is unlikely.

***The map below illustrates the 2050 Regional Development Forecast by SEMCOG. This interactive map allows you to view the regional forecast as a whole, or zoom in to the City of Rochester Hills.***

[SEMCOG MAP HERE: [SEMCOG 2050 Regional Development Forecast](#)]

## **Oakland County**

Oakland County is located in Southeast Michigan and is among the wealthiest counties in the state with a median household income of \$95,296 in 2023, compared to \$78,538 for all U.S. households. The median household income in Rochester Hills is \$119,054, which is higher than the median household income for Oakland County and the nation. It is the second most populated county in the state, experiencing steady growth throughout the 20th century. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) predicts the population to remain fairly steady with a slight increase through 2040. Oakland County contains both highly developed urban areas, as well as open spaces and rural areas, with diverse topography, rivers, and lakes. According to Oakland County's Existing Land Use data for 2024, 40.4% of the county was made up of single-family residential areas, followed by recreation/conservation (14.7%), and road right-of-way (10.5%). Oakland County's top employment sectors are information and financial services, professional and technical services, and healthcare services.

## **Planning in Neighboring Communities**

In addition to the wider regional influences given above, planning and zoning efforts in neighboring communities can influence the city's growth and development.

**Oakland Township** borders the city to the north. The primary future land use designation along the adjacent border is single family residential, with one corner at Dutton and Adams Roads designated multiple-family residential. The township's 2024 Master Plan designates the southeastern corner of the township, adjacent to the northeast boundary of the city of Rochester Hills, as Recreation Conservation. This area includes Stoney Creek Metropark.

**Shelby Township** is located directly east of Rochester Hills. Future land use designations in the 2017 Master Plan near the common border include Public/Recreation (for Stoney Creek Metropark), Transportation Industrial, Manufactured Housing, Mixed Residential, Moderate

Density Residential, Community Commercial, and Regional Commercial. Commercial designations are assigned to areas around major intersections.

**The City of Troy** borders the City of Rochester Hills to the south. The majority of the future land use along this edge is single-family residential (with lots roughly an acre or more), followed by Neighborhood Nodes around busy intersections, and pockets of Recreation and Open Space. There is also a public/quasi-public designation located in the northeast corner of the city, as well as a small pocket along the northwestern border, as identified in the 2024 Master Plan.

**The City of Auburn Hills** is located to the west of Rochester Hills and has two land use plans that govern its east edge bordering Rochester Hills. The 2019 Master Land Use Plan for Auburn Hills designates the area along the shared border from South Boulevard north to Walton Boulevard as Residential 2.0, 4.5, 9.0, and 15.0 dwelling units per acre, Non-residential along Auburn Road and north of M-59, and Public (Oakland University). In 2016, Auburn Hills adopted the Northeast Corner Neighborhood Master Plan Update for the area between Walton Boulevard to the south and Dutton Road to the north. This Plan designates the shared border as Multiple Family just north of Walton Boulevard and Single Family Residential for the remainder of the border.

**The City of Rochester's** north, west, and south boundaries abut Rochester Hills. In Rochester, most of the future land uses designated in the city's 2025 Master Plan are residential, with some existing light industrial at the south boundary with Rochester Hills. Along the western boundary, there is some land designated Quasi-Public, which is Ascension Providence Rochester Hospital, which sits partially in Rochester Hills.





# Community Engagement





## Community Engagement

This plan belongs to everyone in the City of Rochester Hills. Through open dialogue, creative workshops, and thoughtful feedback, this plan reflects the voices that make the community special. Community input is the heart of what comes next. Over 2000 people participated in the community engagement process and shared their vision of the future of Rochester Hills in a variety of different ways. The community engagement process involved five different phases with each phase focusing on a different aspect of the planning process. Due to the number of community engagement opportunities, a short summary of each event will be provided below. Additional details and detailed summaries of the community engagement opportunities will be provided on the 2025 Master Plan Update website.

### Phase 1: Understand

The goal of this phase was to review and assess whether the 2018 Master Plan's Guiding Themes used as the “guard rails” that guide the master planning process need any refinement. These guiding themes included:

- **Improve community health:** Ensure access to health care and healthy food and promote active lifestyles for residents of all ages.
- **Support the needs of all age groups:** Improve walkability, mobility and availability of age-friendly activities. Ensure a variety of diverse housing choices are available.
- **Promote sustainability:** Support changing modes of transportation, protect natural resources, promote low-impact building techniques and preserve open spaces and natural features.
- **Improve non-motorized transportation facilities:** Make land use recommendations that limit impacts to the existing transportation network. Accommodate alternative transportation modes, including autonomous vehicles.

A summary of each event that occurred in Phase 1 can be found below.

**Leadership Visioning Survey** - A survey was provided for City Staff to provide feedback on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and emerging trends in Rochester Hills. A similar survey of City Staff occurred in 2017 before the 2018 Master Plan. Many of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats remained the same or very similar in 2024. The key topics that survey respondents focused on were development, open space, traffic, housing & population, sustainability, and community amenities/administration. The results were discussed at the January 29, 2024 Joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting.

**Joint Meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council** - A joint meeting between the City Council and the Planning Commission occurred on January 29, 2024. An overview of the Master Plan process as well as an overview of the 2018 Master Plan was provided for City Council and Planning Commission members. Additionally, the results of the Leadership Visioning exercise were provided.



**Master Plan 101** - In collaboration with the Mayor's office, a video that provided an overview of the master plan process was released on January 29, 2024. This video outlined what a master plan is and how it shapes the built environment. To date, over 460 people have viewed the video on the City's YouTube channel.

## Phase 2: Envision

The goal of this phase was to explore and understand what the community envisions for the future. Develop scenarios that reflect these visions.

A summary of each event that occurred during this phase can be found below.

**Planning Commission Study Session** - On March 19, 2024, a summary of the Phase 1 engagement process was provided to the Planning Commission. Additionally, a draft version of the Meeting Toolkits was shown to the Planning Commission members. Members were able to participate in the Meeting Toolkit process and see what types of questions were included in the Toolkit.

**Question of the Day** - The community was asked a "Question of the Day" five times over a two-week period using the Master Plan Social Pinpoint site and the City's social media pages. In total, there were over 160 comments and over 250 interactions on the Social Pinpoint Site. Five themes were prevalent in the responses from participants: **Connectivity, Transportation, Open Space, Development, Community Amenities/Administration.**

**Mayor's Business Council Meeting** - On March 22, 2024, City Staff met with the Mayor's Business Council and provided an update to the Business Council on the Master Plan process. An overview of the planning process was provided as well as an opportunity for business leaders to provide their input.

Generally, participants believed that Rochester Hills is a great place to conduct business

and appreciate the City's efforts to make Rochester Hills a viable place to have their organization located in. A more educated workforce and more available suitable real estate



were among the top needs for businesses. The majority of businesses see themselves growing with Rochester Hills or operating at their current level in the foreseeable future.

**Homeowner's Association Meeting** - On April 4, 2024, Homeowner's Association

Presidents from across the City were invited to participate in a facilitated discussion using the Meeting Toolkits. In total twenty-six (26) individuals participated in the discussion and were divided into the five (5) Neighborhood Planning Areas.

Comparable themes to the "Question of the Day" activity in Phase 1 were apparent from the HOA Presidents'

responses. These themes revolved around: **Connectivity, Traffic/Transportation, Parks and Open Space, Development, and Amenities and Community Assets.**



**Older Persons Center (OPC) Meeting** - On April 8, 2024, Giffels Webster and City Staff joined the Mondays with the Mayor meeting at the OPC to discuss the Master Plan process. In total, over fifteen (15) residents participated in the decision and provided their input on what they like about Rochester Hills.

Participants expressed a desire for more sidewalks and bike paths, which would improve walkability and access to commercial and recreational sites throughout the City. Additionally, residents shared that improvements in traffic management and infrastructure should be a priority, as well as maintaining a low-density feel.

**Small Group Workshops** - On April 22, 2024, small group workshops and discussions were held with a variety of key stakeholders in Rochester Hills. Questions for this engagement opportunity centered around what these groups envision as the future of the City, reflecting on what is working, and what needs work. The groups that were identified as key stakeholders were:

1. Local Business Leaders
2. LDFA Committee Members
3. Places of Worship
4. Key Staff
5. Nonprofits
6. Residents

## 7. Boards and Commissions

Each discussion provided insight into how each of these groups viewed their role in Rochester Hills. Overall, each stakeholder group had a slightly different take on what the future of Rochester Hills would like. However, each mentioned group highlighted that Rochester Hills is a great place to live and work, while also mentioning that innovation should remain a priority for the City.

**Meeting Toolkits** - The Meeting Toolkits provided members of the community with an opportunity to hold their own discussions on the long-range planning process for the City of Rochester Hills. Four completed Meeting Toolkits were returned to the City and similar themes were prevalent in each of the returned Toolkits. Participants were asked two questions:

1. What would you do to make your neighborhood better? More livable? Think about places you've visited and what you liked best about them?
2. What is special about your neighborhood area? What do you want to protect? On the map, identify resources (parks, goods/services, employment options and housing choices) that are currently accessible. How many of those are accessible by walking or biking?

Residents shared that they would like the City to make improvements to its non-motorized transportation network by adding more sidewalks and bike paths. Parks and preserving open space were a key priority, with many participants wishing to see development practices that put protecting greenspace and open space as a key concern. Improved traffic management and safety for pedestrians were key elements of the discussions that were held using the Meeting Toolkits.

**Community Quality of Life Survey** - The survey closed on May 10, 2024 and received over 500 responses from residents representing each of the five Planning Neighborhoods. Roughly 90% of residents stated that they viewed their quality of life as either excellent or above average. Traffic congestion, development pressures, and increasing population were viewed as challenges facing the City of Rochester Hills. Overall, residents had a positive view of the City, but were also able to provide insight into what issues and topics they were most concerned about.

**Planning Commission Study Session** - On May 21, 2024, a summary of the Phase 2 Community Engagement process was provided to the Planning Commission. This overview covered the results of the meetings with the Mayor's Business Council, Homeowner's Associations, Older Persons Center (OPC), Small Group Workshops, Meeting Toolkits, and the Community Quality of Life Survey. Members of the Planning Commission were able to discuss the results of Phase 2 and ask questions regarding the next steps for the Master Plan Update.

**Planning Commission Study Session** - On June 18, 2024, an overview of the Preferred Scenarios was presented to the Planning Commission. The three scenarios presented were: Tomorrow as Today, Enhancing Connections, and Rochester Hills Reimagined. Data supporting each of these scenarios was also presented and discussed with the Planning Commission.

## Phase 3: Strategize

The goal of this phase was to use the preferred future scenario as the basis for the Master Plan Update and explore what changes need to be made in this Master Plan.

A summary of each event that occurred during this phase can be found below.

**Economic Survey** - A consulting firm, The Chesapeake Group with and through Giffels Webster, conducted a consumer spending survey to receive data on current market conditions in Rochester Hills. Participants were asked to share information on their habits with regards to spending, housing, and other related activities and topics. A summary of the survey is included in the Economic Development section.

**Planning Commission Study Session** - On July 16, 2024, the Planning Commission participated in an exercise that covered the Preferred Scenarios from the previous meeting. Planning Commission members were asked to list the pros and cons of each scenario and decide which scenario would guide the next phase of the Master Plan Update. The result of the great discussion resulted in a decision to continue work on deciding on the best Preferred Scenario.

**Planning Commission Study Session** - On September 17, 2024, the Planning Commission met again to continue their discussion on which Scenario should guide the Master Plan process. Members of the Commission participated in an interactive work session where they were assigned roles based on different stakeholders in the community. These ranged from young families, senior citizens, and large businesses. The exercise led to a good discussion that resulted in a clearer consensus of which scenario should be used as a guide, but additional input is needed.

**Small Group Workshops** - On September 23rd, key stakeholders were once again invited to participate in a facilitated discussion on the future of Rochester Hills. The discussion centered on the three scenarios that were presented to the Planning Commission. Participants, many of whom were present for the Phase 1 small group discussions (April 2024), were asked to share their feedback on which scenario should influence the Master Plan process. In the following section a summary of the discussions for each of the groups is provided.

**“Thinking About the Future” Survey** - Three scenarios were created as a tool to help guide the Planning Commission in setting policy directions for the Master Plan. The Planning Commission has met several times to discuss the three potential scenarios, which are intended to illustrate outcomes based on needs and wants of the community. Additionally, the small groups that met in April were reconvened in September to discuss and share feedback on which scenario they believe should guide the Master Plan. A survey was also created and shared with the community to gauge values and goals for key community indicators.



**Youth Council Meeting** - On October 2, 2024, 14 members of the Youth Council were able to participate in the scenario discussion. They were able to share which scenario should be used as a guide for the Master Plan. Members deemed Scenario #2 to meet the City's motto and desire for innovation and that should be prioritized during the Master Plan process.



**Planning Commission Study Session** - On October 15, 2024, the Planning Commission discussed the resident survey and support for improving walkability, preserving open space, and strengthening neighborhoods. Redevelopment of existing commercial properties was discussed in terms of potential for mixed use development that could support limited housing while relieving development pressure in existing neighborhood areas.

**Joint Meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council** - On November 18, 2024, Planning Commissioners and City Council members discussed the planning efforts to date before breaking into groups to discuss development potential and areas of concern in the neighborhood planning areas. Common themes included noting recent development that fell short of expectations, identifying potential open space, opportunities to improve pedestrian safety, and highlighting existing affordable and attainable housing areas in the City. A few groups suggested considering development potential for school sites, should consolidation occur in the future.

**Planning Commission Meeting: Housing Study Session** - On November 19, 2024, The Planning Commission briefly revisited housing data and projections for the future before hearing from local developers about the challenges they see for housing in the City of Rochester Hills and in neighboring communities. Some developers identified requirements for building materials and landscaping as adding to the cost of development, raising the price for new homes. Additional factors include the expectations buyers have for the size of homes; Planning Commissioners noted the City is a place people “grow into,” rather than for first-time home buyers. Recommended strategies include redevelopment of formerly developed land and exploring the use of new financing tools (like the Brownfield Authority).

**Planning Commission Meeting: Transportation and Community Health Study Session** - On December 17, 2024, The Planning Commission reviewed the connections between transportation and community health:

- **Access to Health Resources:** Transportation systems connect residents to medical services, healthy food, and recreational facilities.
- **Active Living Opportunities:** Walkable and bike-friendly infrastructure encourages physical activity, reducing risks of chronic diseases.
- **Air Quality and Public Health:** Reducing car dependency lowers emissions, improving air quality and reducing respiratory issues.
- **Social Connectivity:** Public transportation and pedestrian-friendly areas foster social interaction, improving mental health and reducing isolation.
- **Safety Considerations:** Well-planned streets reduce traffic accidents, protecting pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

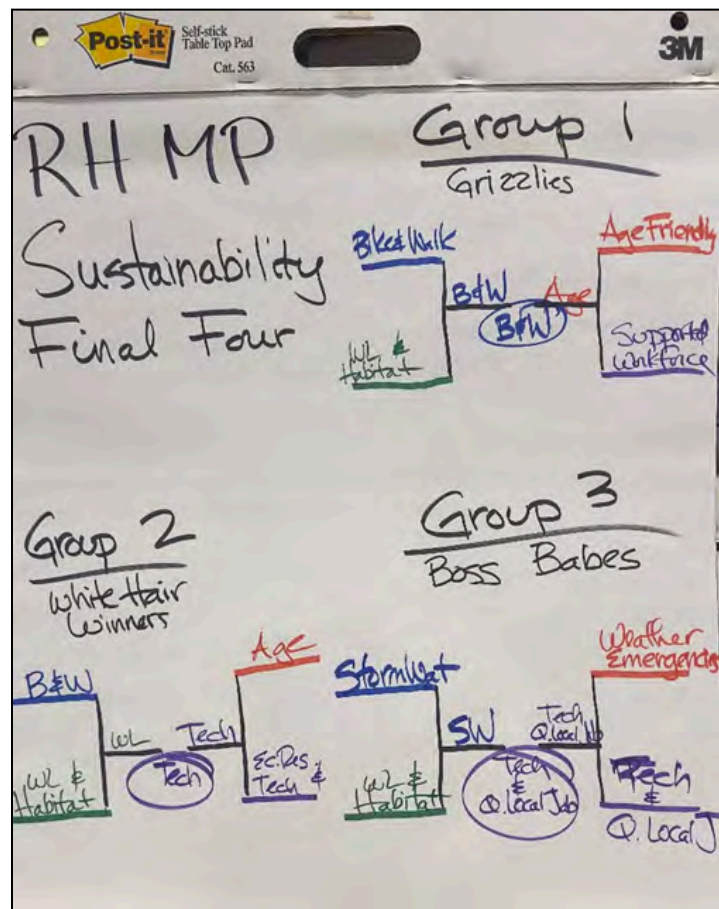
The 2021 Transportation Plan and 2018 Master Plan were reviewed and the aligning goals were discussed, along with the public input regarding transportation and community health themes. Many people noted the desire to create more walkable areas, improve road conditions and safety, reduce congestion, and improve public transportation. The Planning Commission discussed the importance of strengthening and supporting safety, connectivity, maintenance and physical improvements, accessibility, and efficiencies of the transportation system. These objectives help the City become more age-friendly for residents of all ages and abilities.

**Planning Commission Meeting: Sustainability Study Session** – On February 18, 2025 In this interactive session, the Planning Commissioners discussed issues surrounding sustainability within the format of a “bracket challenge.” The Planning Commissioners were divided into three groups and asked to fill out their “sustainability bracket” using the 16 sustainability topic cards. The bracket was divided into four different divisions, each based on one of the following categories: Infrastructure, Environment, Community, and Economy.

Each group was asked to compare and contrast each of the matchups and decide which sustainability factor they believed was strongest and that should be prioritized in the Master Plan. The “champions” for each of the groups were:

**Group 1:** Bikeability and Walkability

**Group 2:** Research Innovative Technologies



### **Group 3: Research Innovative Technologies & Quality Local Jobs**

Group 3 decided to have a tie for the Economic division because they believed Innovative Technologies and Quality Local Jobs go hand in hand.

Overall, the Planning Commissioners shared that they believed that these types of initiatives will require support from the Ordinance and have “teeth” to them in order to ensure compliance.

## **Phase 4: Plan**

The goal of this phase was to develop a Future Land Use Plan Map and supporting recommendations based on the existing conditions analysis, public input, and goals and objectives. A narrative of the intent of each land use category will be provided in tabular form. Graphics and implementation details illustrating specific proposals will be included as appropriate.

A summary of each event that occurred during this phase can be found below.

**Planning Commission Study Session** - On April 15, 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the Future Land Use changes and updated map and provided feedback. The 2018 Future Land Use categories were consolidated and simplified for the 2025 Master Plan Update. In addition, the Planning Commission reviewed the Master Plan website and shared their feedback on the overall design and content of the draft form of the website.

**Youth Council Meeting** - On May 7, 2025, the Youth Council reviewed and discussed the recent updates to the 2025 Master Plan Update website. Members shared that they liked the idea of the website and are excited to see when it's complete. Youth Council members also submitted photos of the city, one of which can be shown on the right (submitted by Sasha Joshi). Additionally, the Youth Council was asked to share their feedback on the different





components and sections of the Master Plan Update. They were asked if any information or topics were missing and how best to measure success.

**Small Group Workshops** - On May 19, 2025, small group workshops and discussions were held with a variety of key stakeholders in Rochester Hills. Participants were shown the format and outline of the 2025 Master Plan Update website and provided feedback on the layout and content of the website. In addition, each stakeholder group was asked to share feedback on the goals and objectives of each plan section and offer insight into how to measure success of the Master Plan Update.

**Older Persons Center (OPC) Meeting** - On June 9, 2025, Giffels Webster and City Staff joined the Mondays with the Mayor meeting at the OPC to provide an update on the Master Plan process. An overview of the Master Plan themes and sections were shown to attendees. Individuals shared feedback on the different plan sections and provided additional insight into the future of the City.

**Planning Commission Study Session** - On June 12, 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the draft Master Plan text and provided feedback on the content of the Master Plan. Based on the Commission's feedback, small changes needed to be made to the Master Plan text before a joint meeting between the Planning Commission and City Council occurs.

## **Phase 5: Act**

The goal of this phase is a completed Master Plan Update that will be presented in a Hubsite (ArcGIS) with a short document in PDF format that provides guidance and direction for short and mid-term action plans. Realization of the community's vision, as identified in the Master Plan will only come to fruition through decisive actions that result from an implementation strategy.

**Planning Commission Study Session** - On July 15, 2025, the Planning Commission will review revised Master Plan text and provide feedback and decide on a date for the joint meeting between the Planning Commission and City Council in August.

**Joint Meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council** - In August 2025, the Planning Commission and City Council will meet and discuss the content of the Master Plan. The Planning Commission will recommend that the City Council distribute the Master Plan text for the 63-day public review period.

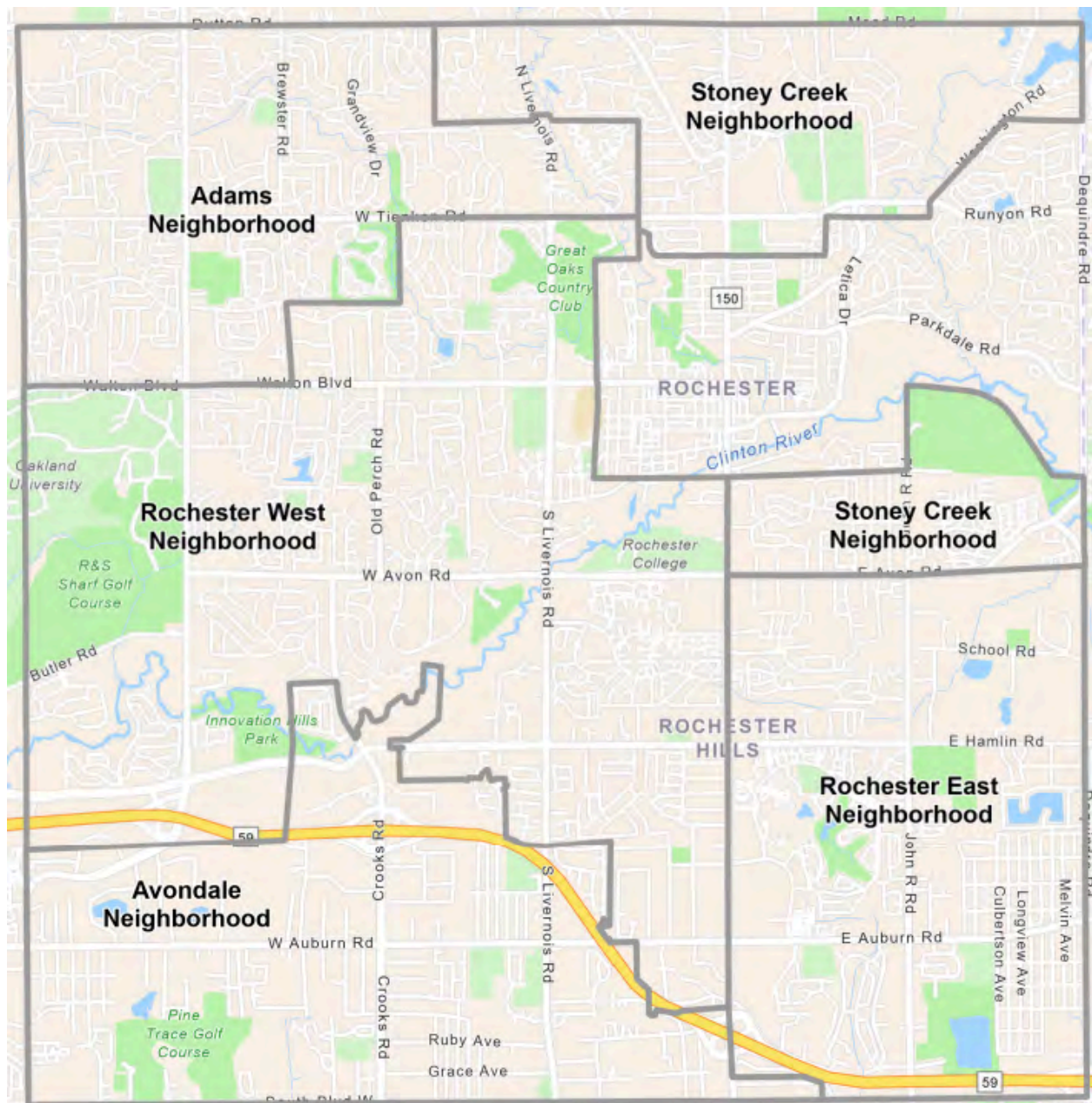


## Neighborhood Planning

This Master Plan Update supports the City's long history of forward-thinking land use planning. Unique to this planning process is the focusing on “planning neighborhoods” that help the community envision land use closer to where they work, live, and play. Each neighborhood aligns with the high school district boundaries.

More information on the neighborhood plans is found here:

<https://city-of-rochester-hills-master-plan-1-rochesterhills.hub.arcgis.com/pages/6ecc2766688047499503dd993e7a07e8>





# Land Use Plan



## Land Use Plan

During the planning process, people spoke about their favorite places—beautiful parks, tree-lined neighborhood streets, and special destinations. These places didn’t happen by accident. They are the result of careful land use planning, shaped by the choices the community has made over time. This chapter explores how the City can continue to create neighborhoods, businesses, and green spaces that make Rochester Hills a great place to live, work, and play.

As introduced in the [Purpose](#) section, the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map are tools to be used by the Planning Commission and City Council during land use decision-making, capital improvement planning, development review, and ongoing reevaluation and refinement of the city’s ordinances. Implementation of the general recommendations and specific action strategies will occur over time and will depend upon many factors, including the overall economic climate, changing development and demographic trends, availability of infrastructure, local budget constraints and political priorities.

## Why Land Use Matters

Even in a community that cherishes its current character, planning for the future remains essential. Balancing preservation with progress ensures that the qualities people love—neighborhood charm, open spaces, and a strong sense of community—are protected for generations to come. Thoughtful land use planning allows us to anticipate change, manage growth responsibly, and make room for new opportunities without losing what makes the City special. It’s about honoring the present while laying the groundwork for a resilient, thriving future.

## Community Input

Throughout the planning process, one message rings clear: people value where they live and work - they do not envision a future with large-scale development or dramatic change. This plan reflects that sentiment, prioritizing the preservation of neighborhoods, open spaces, and cherished character. While the plan recognizes that some change is inevitable, the approach is guided by careful stewardship, ensuring that any new growth or development harmonizes with the values and desires of those who call this place home. Supporting mindful development and redevelopment, and working together with property owners and the development community, the City will strive to protect what matters most while thoughtfully preparing for the future.

For example, the “Thinking about the Future” survey (751 responses) illustrates an understanding of both the challenges that may exist in the City, while expressing a desire to maintain the qualities that make the City special. While just over a quarter (26%) of respondents believed the City should focus on a variety of housing types and for housing for



all-income levels, nearly half (43%) shared that the City should have a balance between housing types, but still prioritize single-family homes. The remaining third (31.64%) of respondents think the City should only consider and plan for low-density, single-family homes. A similar pattern emerged for transportation, where nearly half (47%) support a variety of walking, biking, and public transit options in the city, about 38% said that the personal vehicle is their transportation mode of choice.

The community recognizes the challenges for aging residents and would like supportive housing and transportation options (50%), but just about a third (30%) said the existing infrastructure/housing stock should be sufficient.

These findings were expressed time and again throughout the process. One area in which people agree, however, is on the preservation of open spaces and natural features. There is strong interest in walkability as well. Support for these elements is strong across age and interest groups.

## **Land Use Goals and Objectives**

### **What do we want?**

- A proactive plan for the future that responds to a changing world
- A plan that is informed by the needs and wants of existing residents, business owners and visitors
- A plan that anticipates the needs and wants of future residents, business owners and visitors

### **Why?**

- To ensure the city enjoys predictable development and redevelopment that achieves the community's goals
- To help the city make responsible, transparent land use decisions
- To protect, support and encourage private and public investment
- To educate and inform citizens about planning and development in the city
- To encourage input from residents, business owners and visitors that helps the city understand the wants and needs of the community

### **Where?** Throughout the city

### **Potential obstacles/related considerations?**

- Communicate Master Plan goals in decision-making
- Keep open lines of communication with residents
- Ensure transparency

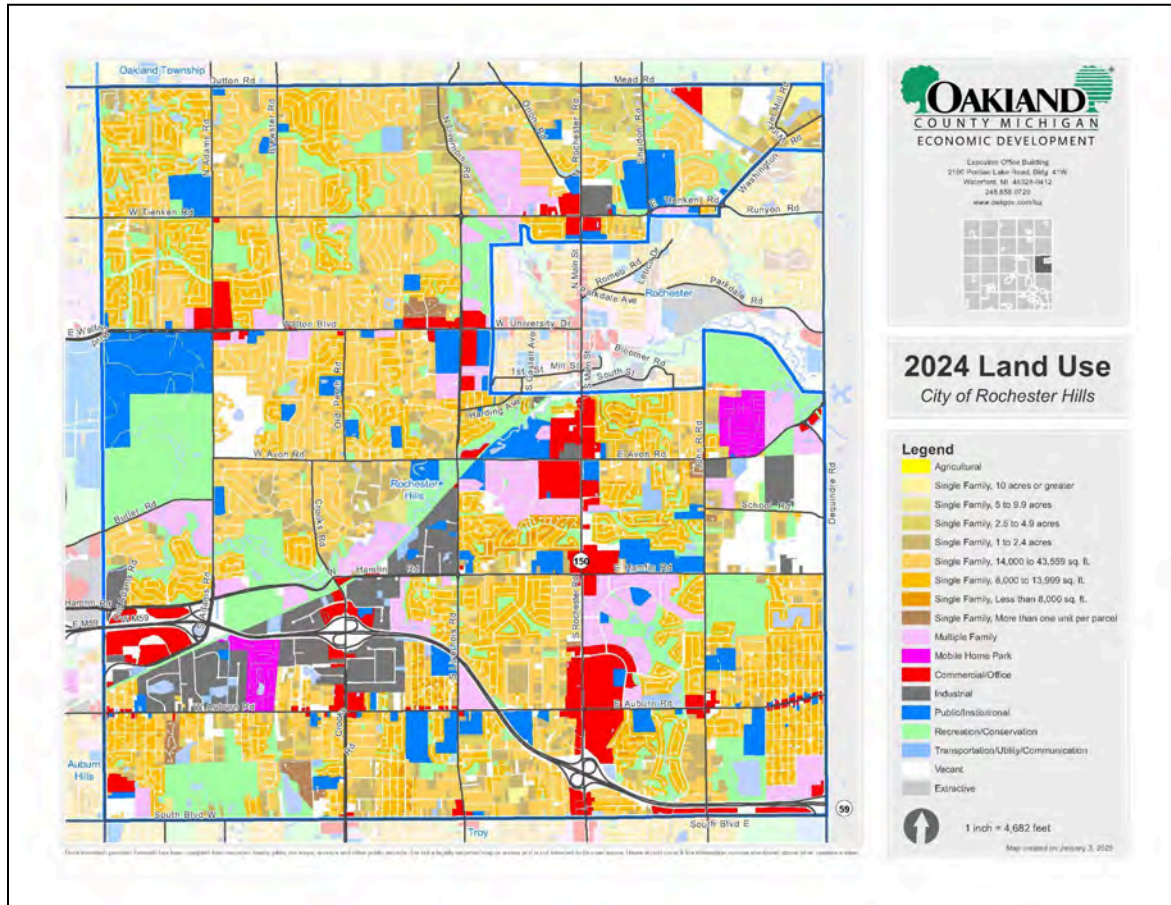
- Stay up to date with local, regional and national changes that impact current and future residents
- Monitor engagement and test new approaches as the way people participate in civic life changes

### **Land Use Planning Objectives**

- Protect established neighborhoods and business districts from the potentially negative impacts of development, including noise, traffic, waste, odor and other nuisances through effective and thoughtful site and building design.
- Provide connections between neighborhoods, to schools, parks and other civic uses, and to neighborhood goods and services to promote a feeling of community within the city as well as to reduce the amount of motorized traffic on local roads.
- Promote the use of quality building design and materials to enhance the appearance and long-term maintenance of new development.
- Review and update the Master Land Use Plan every five years to address changing conditions, redevelopment opportunities and the changing needs of the community.
- Cooperate with nearby communities through the exchange of information on development and redevelopment issues, and other shared interests, such as community facilities and services and development along shared boundaries.
- Continue to improve public notification of planned developments and projects.

## Existing Land Use: Where We Are Today

- Single family residential is the City's largest land use, with 8,900 acres and 42.4% of the land area. Multiple family residential comprises about 5% of the City's land area.
- Roads and rights-of-way are the next largest land use, with 3,319 acres and nearly 16% of the City's land area.
- Recreation/conservation rounds out the top three with 2,829 acres of land, or 13% of the land area.



## Future Land Use Strategies

Since the adoption of the 2018 Master Plan, the city has coordinated efforts to reform its existing zoning standards in a manner that promotes opportunities for economic development while ensuring necessary regulations are enforced. In addition to the inclusion of a new Form Based Code in the Brooklands District, and the consolidation of the FB Flex Business Overlay Districts, the City also recently consolidated zoning districts to expand flexibility and development opportunities for like-uses. To that end, the City consolidated existing business districts including the Office Research and Technology District (ORT) to simplify regulations and increase use-flexibility.



The B-1 and B-2 District consolidation resulted in the creation of a new NB Neighborhood Business District offering expanded opportunities for goods and services to be located closer to the neighborhoods they serve. Larger uses were changed to conditional uses to provide additional scrutiny and discretion over these types of uses that may have impacts to the residential areas.

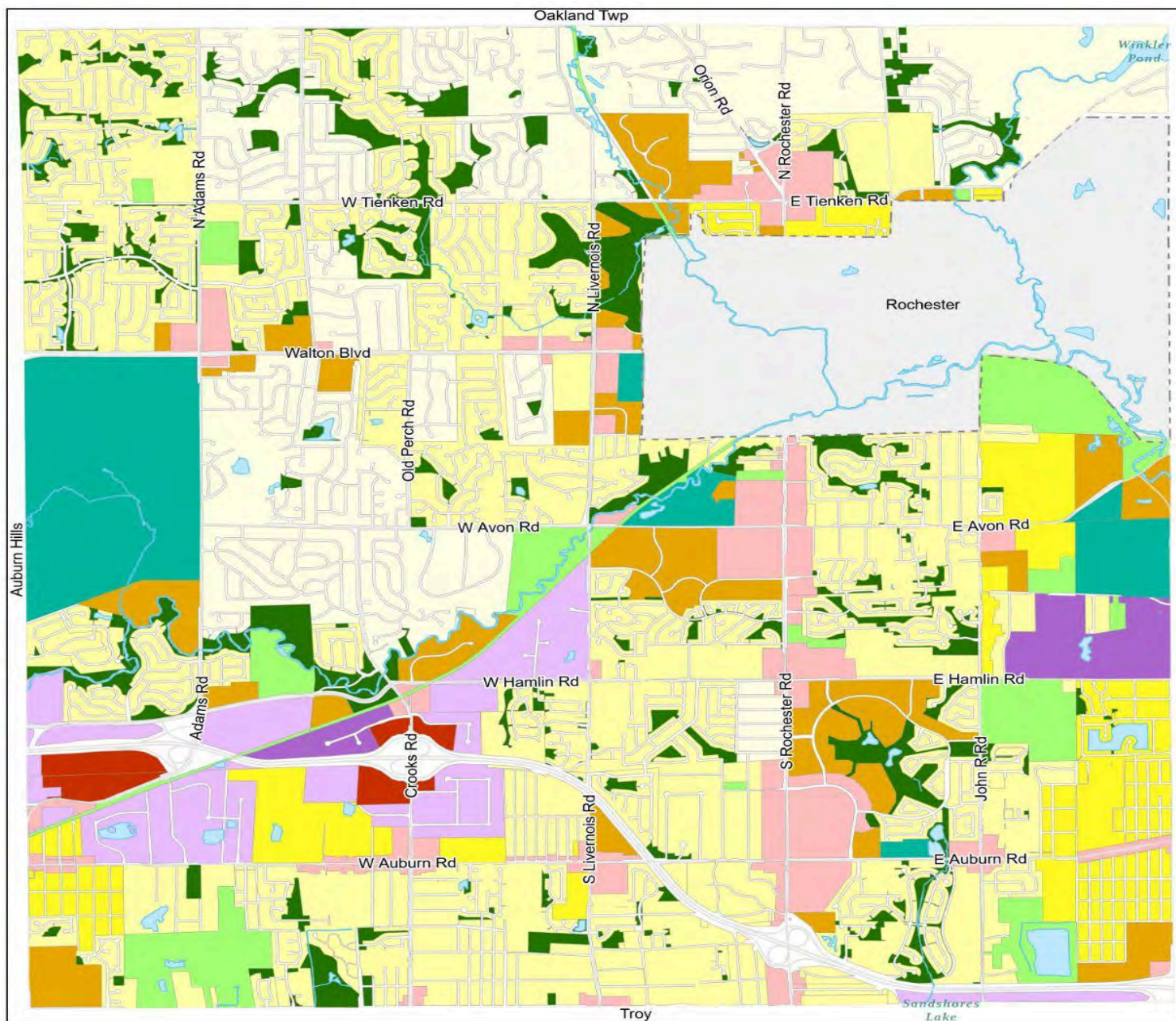
Other changes included the consolidation of the B-3 and B-5 Districts. The Planning Commission recognized that the uses within these districts were mostly the same and determined that consolidation would simplify zoning administration. Although this amendment could have expanded opportunities for gas stations and car washes, the amendment included locational restrictions on both uses, limiting gas stations to only the intersections of major thoroughfares and car washes to sites with frontage on a major road.

Finally, the overhaul included the renaming of REC Regional Employment Center Districts and the elimination of the ORT District for simplification and clarity. ORT parcels were reallocated into the O Office, EC Employment Center, and HB Highway Business Districts. Parcels that were changed from ORT to EC were granted new opportunities for light industrial and private recreational uses, but carefully designed use standards ensure compatibility with surrounding development.

While these amendments resulted in expanded development opportunities within the respective zoning districts, the City considered necessary standards to ensure that this flexibility was appropriately balanced to mitigate the potential for conflicting uses.

## **Future Land Use Map**

With the consolidation described above, this Future Land Use Map (below) is easier to read and understand, with fewer colors and categories representing the city's preferred long-range future land use arrangement. The map identifies general locations for various land uses envisioned by the Planning Commission. Following are descriptions of the future land use categories illustrated on the map.



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Open Space Residential      |  Lt. Ind/R&D                 |
|  Suburban Residential        |  Hybrid Industrial           |
|  Neighborhood Residential    |  Institutional/Campus        |
|  Multiple Family Residential |  Parks and Public Open Space |
|  Mixed Use                   |  Conservation Open Space     |
|  Regional Commercial         |   |



0 1 2 Miles

## **Future Land Use Descriptions**

The text below accompanies the map and describes the general locations, uses, and land use patterns associated with each land use category.

**Open Space Residential:** This designation reflects the natural feel of existing neighborhoods, mostly found in the northern part of the City – primarily north of the Clinton River. This category includes four areas zoned Rural Estates as well as areas zoned R1. These residential areas are predominantly  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 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.

**Suburban Residential:** This designation is based on the existing single-family development pattern and permits varying densities of detached single-family development based on the established character of the neighborhood. These areas typically align with the R-2 (found in the northwest quadrant of the city), R-3 (found in the central part of the city), and R-4 zoning districts (found in the southern part of the city, and includes residential neighborhoods built in a grid pattern of streets). Lot sizes range from three to four dwelling units per acre, based on existing development patterns. When located on an arterial road, new housing in this category could be attached, provided that the density is compatible with surrounding residential development.

**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 obtainable 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 dwellings per acre, consistent with surrounding residential development. Manufactured housing communities are also included in this category, although no new communities are planned.

The neighborhood residential designation is not intended to disrupt the existing development patterns within existing neighborhoods. This land use designation aligns with MR, 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 new development meets the density of adjacent neighborhoods.

**Multiple Family Residential:** This category accommodates a wide range of development types, including attached single-family dwelling units, senior housing, or apartment complexes. In general, the expected density range of development in the multiple family category is expected to be between eight and 12 dwelling units per acre, depending upon the type and design of the project.

**Mixed Use:** Most commercial corridors fall under this category. Development along Rochester Road will serve the broader community due to high traffic, whereas other corridors will serve the local neighborhoods. Housing may be part of a use mix, consistent



with local development patterns. The plan encourages comprehensive redevelopment of underutilized sites, especially at key nodes and intersections, to maximize land use efficiency, and support evolving transit. Incremental outlot development may be considered where it complements the primary mixed-use vision and contributes to walkability, but the focus is on transformative projects that create cohesive, complete places for living, working, and gathering. Mixed-use redevelopment should prioritize:

- Pedestrian-friendly design with uninterrupted connections between uses and public spaces.
- Active ground floors that host retail, services, or community spaces, with housing or offices above.
- Low- to mid-rise building forms (typically two to three stories), ensuring compatibility with nearby residential areas while allowing for a vibrant mix of uses.
- Flexible housing options as part of the use mix, consistent with local development patterns and needs.

**Regional Commercial:** This area includes the existing shopping center at Adams/M-59, with the addition of the area around the Crooks Road/M-59 interchange and is intended to serve the larger region.

**Light Industrial/Research and Development:** This designation includes workplace areas that serve light industrial and research/development users. Some areas, such those south of M-59 are expected to transition to more office and research park uses.

**Hybrid Industrial:** Areas planned for industrial use are suitable for light manufacturing that won't negatively impact nearby non-industrial areas. In the Hamlin/Avon Landfill area, light industrial development will focus on low-impact design and sustainability, energy generation, or recreation.

**Parks and Public Open Space:** The city's publicly owned parks and trail facilities are included in this land use category. There may be some privately-owned recreational facilities included when connections such as shared-use paths are provided to adjacent public recreation facilities.

**Institutional/Campus:** This land use category includes colleges and institutional uses such as Henry Ford Rochester Hospital, and Leader Dogs for the Blind as well as the City's DPS facility.

**Conservation Open Space:** This land use category includes protected open space that has been preserved in conjunction with development.

## Planning for Redevelopment Sites

As the City of Rochester Hills continues to evolve, thoughtful planning for redevelopment is essential to ensure that older sites are revitalized in ways that enhance neighborhood character, support economic vitality, and promote a more walkable, connected environment. While previous Master Plans have crafted bold redevelopment visions sites around the City, there are other opportunities to achieve Master Plan goals at smaller scales.

The Master Plan continues to envision mixed use developments that will increase property values, broaden the tax base, and generate new jobs both during construction and in ongoing operations. The presence of residents supports local businesses throughout the day and evening, making commercial districts more vibrant and resilient. Redeveloping underutilized or aging sites with low-rise, mixed-use projects can revitalize struggling areas, restore historic facades, and enhance the unique identity of neighborhoods. These projects create lively, attractive destinations that draw both residents and visitors.

This section explores opportunities for three tiers of redevelopment to guide the range of updates and development that may occur in the years ahead.

### **Tier 1: Facelift or Refresh**

The first tier focuses on the “facelift” or refresh of existing sites that were developed many years ago. These projects may include aesthetic and functional upgrades without significant changes to the underlying use or structure. The City supports improvements including updated façade treatments, fresh paint, modernized signage, improved lighting, and enhanced landscaping. These enhancements can breathe new life into aging properties, making them more attractive and inviting for residents, visitors, and businesses alike. Property owners should be encouraged to make even small improvements that contribute positively to adjacent sidewalks and streetscapes, such as adding pedestrian lighting, benches, or greenery. These updates can also support the appearance and vitality of the surrounding properties. With these efforts, guidelines and/or incentives could allow property owners some flexibility in how they achieve the desired enhancements. Some of the strategies associated with this type of development include:



- **Establish Design Guidelines:** Façade improvement, signage, landscaping, and lighting guidelines can help ensure visual consistency and quality across refreshed sites. Guidelines should emphasize improvements that enhance the existing character while allowing for creative updates. For example, encourage facade treatments, signage, and landscaping that respect the surrounding built environment but introduce fresh materials and colors.
- **Facilitate Incentive Programs:** Offer grants, low-interest loans, or tax incentives to property owners who undertake upgrades consistent with community standards.
- **Streamline Permitting:** Simplify the approval process for minor exterior improvements to encourage timely and widespread participation.
- **Promote Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between local government, business associations, and property owners to coordinate improvements and share resources.
- **Monitor and Maintain:** Implement regular inspections and maintenance standards for both public rights-of-way and private properties, ensuring ongoing upkeep after initial improvements.

## **Tier 2: Outlot Development**

The second tier involves the development of outlots—smaller parcels adjacent to or within existing commercial centers. Outlot development should introduce uses that complement and enhance the primary site, such as small-scale retail, cafes, or community spaces. To support walkability goals, uses that foster pedestrian activity and community gathering are encouraged. While drive-through establishments have traditionally been popular, the focus should evolve to uses that create a more vibrant, walkable environment. Thoughtful site design, including pedestrian connections and outdoor seating, will help ensure these developments contribute to a more engaging and accessible community fabric.

Another set of guidelines addressing Tier 2 type projects should ensure outlot buildings are sited and designed to foster walkability and integrate with the main site. This includes requiring pedestrian pathways, clear sightlines, and gathering spaces that connect outlots with the primary development and adjacent neighborhoods. Drive-throughs and large parking lots should be discouraged in favor of uses and layouts that activate the street edge and support pedestrian activity. Additional strategies include:

- **Pedestrian Connectivity:** Require new outlot developments to provide safe, direct pedestrian links to main buildings, sidewalks, and adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Site Design Standards:** Update standards for building placement, parking, landscaping, and outdoor seating that foster a walkable, community-oriented environment.
- **Review and Limit Auto-Oriented Uses:** Minimize new drive-through approvals and ensure any auto-oriented uses are carefully sited and designed to reduce traffic impacts.

## **Tier 3: Full-Scale Redevelopment**



The third tier envisions full-scale redevelopment of underutilized or obsolete sites. These projects present an opportunity to reimagine properties as mixed-use developments that combine residential, retail, and office uses in low-rise buildings—typically two to three stories. The design of these sites should prioritize walkability, with interconnected sidewalks, green spaces, and amenities that encourage people to walk, bike, and linger. While the City remains largely auto-oriented and residents are concerned about traffic congestion, new developments should incorporate strategies to balance vehicular access with pedestrian safety and comfort. This may include traffic calming measures, shared parking, and improved transit connections. For this tier, design guidelines should emphasize a strong relationship with the street and public spaces, avoiding both underdevelopment and excessive height. Generous sidewalks, plazas, and green spaces that encourage walking, social interaction, and community events are envisioned.

These redevelopment projects offer great opportunities to incorporate requirements for sustainable building practices, energy efficiency, and universal accessibility, ensuring developments are resilient and inclusive. Supporting phased redevelopment, even helping property owners move through the tiers, helps ensure each phase enhances connectivity and public amenities without compromising the long-term vision. Additional strategies may include:

- **Incentivize Mixed-Use Projects:** Provide reduced parking requirements, or expedited review for projects that deliver high-quality, mixed-use, walkable environments.
- **Public Infrastructure Investments:** Prioritize improvements to sidewalks, streetscapes, transit access, and public amenities in redevelopment areas to support walkability and reduce auto dependence.
- **Traffic and Parking Management:** Implement strategies such as shared parking, traffic calming, and enhanced transit service to address congestion and support a shift toward more sustainable transportation modes.

While face lifts and outlot developments are easier and quicker, they do not deliver the same level of walkability, community identity, or economic synergy as a well-planned, mixed-use redevelopment. Tier 3, low-rise, mixed-use redevelopment, should be encouraged to the extent possible. Replacing underutilized and outdated development offers greater returns on public and private investment by creating high-quality, sustainable properties with lasting value, as opposed to incremental, piecemeal outlot development. Holistic mixed-use redevelopment can create vibrant, walkable spaces with a mix of housing, retail, and services, which supports all of the City's businesses, increases housing options, and enhances quality of life. These developments foster economic resilience, reduce traffic by encouraging walking and biking, and make more efficient use of land.

By integrating residential, commercial, and office spaces within the same building (vertical mixed use) or in separate buildings near each other (horizontal mixed use), low-rise mixed-use redevelopment offers a way to meet daily needs—such as shops, services, and workplaces—within easy walking distance. This reduces reliance on cars, encourages walking and biking, and can help alleviate local traffic congestion. Adding in common areas such as gardens, small parks, and plazas provide spaces for neighbors to connect and for

community events, strengthening social ties. These benefits directly support community vitality at a human scale and approachable setting.





CUMBERLAND  
POINTE  
CRANBROOK

**Housing**





## Housing

A place to call home is at the heart of every thriving community. This section explores how to provide diverse, affordable, and high-quality housing options for everyone, ensuring that all residents can find their perfect fit. Housing is the largest land use category in the city (almost 49%), followed by road rights-of-way (nearly 16%) and recreation/conservation (about 13%). With over 42% of the City's land developed with single-family homes, it isn't surprising that housing for current and future residents has been a continuing discussion, including through the development of the 2018 Master Plan, the six (6) years after its adoption and again was a key focus of the community engagement opportunities held to develop the 2025 Master Plan.

At the heart of our city's development lies housing, which comprises nearly half of all land use at almost 49%—a significant lead over road rights-of-way (nearly 16%) and recreation/conservation (about 13%). With over 42% of our land dedicated to single-family homes, providing diverse and adequate housing for both current and future residents is, understandably, a continuous and critical conversation. This ongoing dialogue has been at the center of city planning, from the creation of the 2018 Master Plan, through the subsequent six years, and most recently, a primary driver of the community engagement opportunities that informed the 2025 Master Plan.

### Why Housing Matters

Housing isn't merely a place to live; it is the basis of our quality of life and the economic health of our city. The availability of diverse housing, alongside effective transportation options, dictates our choices about where we reside, work, and how we connect with our community. A robust housing market is often a direct reflection of a strong local economy and a desirable place to live.

In Rochester Hills, our housing landscape is dominated by single-family detached homes, comprising a substantial two-thirds of all housing. The majority of our housing stock, approximately 50%, was constructed between 1970 and 1989 (median year 1983). Critically, only 16% of homes were built prior to 1970. These older, typically smaller homes represent some of the most attainable housing options. This demographic reality is set against a national trend of increasing home sizes, from 1,400 square feet in 1970 to 2,700 in 2014, and currently averaging 2,205 square feet in 2024.

This combination of factors creates a significant challenge: residents looking to downsize or purchase their first home may struggle to find suitable and affordable options within the city. Although some variety exists in the rental and purchase markets, the overwhelming majority of Rochester Hills' housing consists of larger, higher-priced homes for sale. Furthermore, our aging population faces particular burdens as older homes often necessitate considerable financial and physical investment for repair and adaptation to meet their changing needs.

## Community Input

Throughout the planning process and engagement opportunities, the topic of housing was widely discussed. Many residents of Rochester Hills noted they moved here with their families specifically for the quality of the residential neighborhoods and the quality of the school district. Recently Realtor.com, listed Rochester Hills as the 4th best small city to live in the United States. In addition, Rochester Hills has been voted as the best place to live in Michigan and 9th best place to live in America per the U.S. News and World Report. Rochester Hills is nationally recognized as a great place to live, work, and play and current residents have expressed a desire to remain within the City. In addition, as residents age, they express wanting to remain in the community to remain close to family, friends, and the amenities the City of Rochester Hills offers its residents. The younger participants, primarily voiced through the Youth Council, agreed that Rochester Hills is a great place to raise a family, and hope they can live here in their adult and family-forming years ahead.

In one of the surveys available during the planning process, residents were asked, “What do you think about planning for future housing in the City of Rochester Hills,” over 40% agreed that “The City should focus on a balance of housing types, but mainly single-family homes.” Just over a quarter of those responding agreed with “the City should encourage a wider variety of housing types for all ages and income levels.”

Many people recognize that downsizing for seniors is difficult because even with the value of their homes increasing, new housing options have also increased in value. The same challenges face potential residents and younger families looking to live in the City. Housing may be difficult to find because of the increase in the median housing value. An individual’s current home may have gone up in value, but their next home has most likely also gone up in value. The Brooklands district and Avondale planning neighborhoods were frequently mentioned as offering opportunities for a variety of housing types in the future.

Limited development of new housing units may be necessary to accommodate the possible existing market gaps, the other significant concern raised during the community input sessions was the perception of over development within the City, including environmental degradation, increased traffic and the loss of the overall character that originally drew residents to the City. Residents' feedback indicates that future planning efforts focused on housing within the City will need to balance maintaining the existing residential character, environmental integrity, and addressing market needs.

## Housing Goals and Objectives

### What do we want?

- Attractive, safe, quiet and well-maintained neighborhoods
- Diversified range of housing options for all ages

## **Why?**

- To enable older residents to age in place
- To attract younger residents and families
- Provide attractive housing options and neighborhoods for the workforce of the City's tech and industry businesses

## **Potential obstacles/related considerations?**

- Zoning regulations should support housing types desired by current and future residents
- Infill residential development should be consistent with surrounding development
- Residential development should respect and enhance natural features within and adjacent to its boundaries

## **Housing Objectives:**

- Encourage maintenance of and reinvestment in existing neighborhoods.
- Preserve natural features and open spaces in and around residential areas to soften the impact of development, provide opportunities for passive and active recreation, and enhance property values.
- Ensure that infill and redeveloped residential properties are compatible with the surrounding area and adjacent parcels in terms of density, architectural style and building materials.
- Provide a diverse range of housing options that are obtainable and meet the maintenance and lifestyle needs of current and future residents.
- Promote the inclusion of neighborhood parks and gathering spaces within each residential development.

**Build-Out Analysis - Note this is from the 2018 MP** - Staff is working on the analysis and map to accompany this section.

## **Housing Strategies**

The Goals and Objectives outline the city's vision for attractive, safe, quiet and well-maintained neighborhoods that provide a diversified range of housing options for all ages. This variety of housing types, based on the existing development patterns around the city, are intended to provide additional housing options to allow residents as they age or their situation evolves to stay in the city while attracting younger residents and families to the City with the high quality of life amenities provided within the City at price points and housing types that are desirable.



## Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map is the way the City illustrates intended land uses. This map guides land use decisions, policies, and zoning. This is different from the zoning map (and related zoning ordinances), which provide the legal framework for how land can be used. Given the existing build-out of the community and character of existing neighborhoods, there are no significant changes to the planned residential densities on the Future Land Use Map from those identified on the 2018 Master Plan.

One simple change has been made to better describe the land use categories through renaming them and refining the text to highlight the context for the designated areas. The residential land use categories include the corresponding zoning districts and are as follows:

- **Open Space Residential:** This designation reflects the natural feel of existing neighborhoods, mostly found in the northern part of the City – primarily north of the Clinton River. This category includes four areas zoned Rural Estates as well as areas zoned R1. These residential areas are predominantly  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 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.
- **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. These areas typically align with the R-2 (found in the northwest quadrant of the city), R-3 (found in the central part of the city), and R-4 zoning districts (found in the southern part of the city, and include residential neighborhoods built in a grid pattern of streets). Lot sizes range from three to four dwelling units per acre, based on existing development patterns. When located on an **arterial road**, new housing in this category could be attached (like row houses and townhomes), provided that the density is compatible with surrounding residential development.
- **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 obtainable 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 dwellings per acre, consistent with surrounding residential development. Manufactured housing communities are also included in this category, although no new communities are planned.

The neighborhood residential designation is not intended to disrupt the existing development patterns within existing neighborhoods. This land use designation aligns with zoning districts Mixed Residential, R-3, R-4, R-5 and RMH (manufactured housing park) when located along major thoroughfares. Attached dwellings may be appropriate as a transition along major thoroughfares, or to preserve natural features, when new development meets the density of adjacent neighborhoods. When this Master Plan refers to the density of “surrounding development,” the intent is to assess residential areas adjacent or abutting a proposed development.

- **Multiple Family:** This category may accommodate a wide range of development types, including attached single-family dwelling units, senior housing, or apartment complexes. In general, the expected density range of development in the multiple family category is expected to be between eight and 12 dwelling units per acre, depending upon the type and design of the project. This category aligns with the City's RM-1 Multiple-Family zoning district.

## Housing Types

- **Single-Family Homes.** As was reiterated in this planning process, single-family homes are a staple of the community and should be encouraged in various sizes. Situated in neighborhoods that connect to each other and to surrounding commercial areas, single-family homes appeal to a wide segment of community residents, whether they be homeowners or renters.
- **Small-Scale Attached Homes.** This term refers to a range of small-scale multi-unit housing types that are compatible in size and form with single-family homes but offer more than one dwelling unit per building. Examples include duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and townhouses. The 2018 Master Plan referred to these housing types as “missing middle housing,” as they span the options between detached houses and large apartment buildings. However, the term “Missing Middle” suggests a gap in housing stock; the city's housing inventory does include examples of the forms included in the

term. This gap is not only a City issue, but also is an issue facing the region, state, and country as a whole. Duplex and attached single-family residential homes comprise about nine percent of the city's housing options. These housing types could be appropriate in the Neighborhood Residential or Multiple Family Residential areas, when consistent with surrounding development and along major corridors.



- **Multiple-Family Housing.** The city envisions multiple-family housing to include attached single-family dwelling units, senior housing, or apartment complexes at an approximate density of eight to 12 dwelling units per acre, depending upon the type and design of the project. There are several apartment complexes in the city but

limited areas in which to build housing at this density. However, there may be opportunities to include such housing within a mixed-use development. Any new development would include a traffic analysis, an assessment of available utilities, and an environmental impact study. Currently, there are no new planned multiple family housing areas within the City.

- **Mixed Use Housing.** Development that includes residential and non-residential uses (typically office, retail, and restaurant uses) is considered a “mixed use development.” Uses in these developments may be side-by-side (“horizontal mixed use”) or residential uses may be above non-residential uses (“vertical mixed use”). The latter is the type of housing that has been developed in several instances through the FB Flex Business Overlay District along with the Gerald mixed use development in the Brooklands. Allowing uses to mix within the city’s existing commercial corridors can improve walkability, offer additional housing types, provide flexibility for redevelopment, and support economic development. Allowing for the mixing of uses in a compact building form is efficient development and provides options for the redevelopment and enhancement of old shopping centers.

## Housing Plan

This plan continues the vision of the 2018 Master Plan by supporting and maintaining the diverse housing types that exist today. One of the city’s greatest strengths is its appeal for residents young and old. The City of Rochester Hills offers kids and older adults many opportunities to stay physically and socially active. It’s important to recognize, however, the growing number of older adults in the community. SEMCOG projects a 21.5% increase in households with seniors aged 65+ between 2020 and 2050; additionally, the number of households with children is expected to dip from 32% in 2020 to 29% by 2050. a variety of strategies to ensure older residents can stay in the community will be needed. To continue being an **age-friendly community**, these include:

- **Supporting Homeowners of All Ages**
  - Resource/Neighborhood Hubs: Creating a city/neighborhood resource hub that connects older adults with vetted local contractors for home repairs, potentially offering guidance on navigating permits and finding reliable help.
  - Tool Lending Programs: Building a toolkit can be expensive for new homeowners; older homeowners may have more tools than they’re able to use. A tool lending library within neighborhood areas or the city as a whole can be a good way to promote sharing.
  - Partnerships for Minor Repairs: Collaborating with local volunteer groups or organizations that could assist with minor home repairs for seniors who may have difficulty with these tasks.
  - Providing maintenance services though the City such as mows and plows, etc.
- **Neighborhood Preservation.** This plan recognizes that the preservation of existing neighborhoods and the way of life they provide is key to preserving the character of



Rochester Hills, even as the city sees the mixing of uses and new development. Through its Capital Improvement Plan, the City strives to be proactive with new infrastructure and large capital expenditures. However, private streets and neighborhood infrastructure may also need upgrades/repairs. As is mentioned in the preservation and sustainability section, homeowners associations may need support with making needed repairs to aging detention ponds, local streets, and sidewalks. Education for HOA's will help promote environmental stewardship in regards to tree removals and general open space maintenance and best practices.

In other areas of the city that don't have an HOA, such as many of those in the Avondale planning neighborhood, tend to include a higher concentration of older homes than elsewhere in the city. In these areas, the city should encourage the on-going maintenance of these neighborhoods that keeps home values stable as well as preserves the country-like atmosphere that makes them distinctive. A framework for this area should address maintaining existing housing stock, upgrading infrastructure where upgrades are desired, and providing for redevelopment that does not out-scale existing homes.

Some neighborhoods, particularly in the Brooklands area, have lot sizes that do not necessarily match those required by the zoning ordinance. This could be an area of study - to assess whether those lot sizes might be worth folding into the Zoning Ordinance in the R-4 district.

- **Promote Visitability.** As the population continues to age, demand for new homes that are safe and provide barrier-free access will continue to increase. Preservations , is a term coined for design strategies such as zero-step entries and wide passages that are intended to ensure homes are adaptable to meet the needs of all residents – and their visitors. Incentives or standards to make new homes visitable – and resources to help homeowners make existing homes visitable – may be needed. One example of encouraging age-friendly design comes from the City of Sarasota, FL, who [created an incentive program](#) that addresses important points of access to entries, bathrooms, kitchens, and other elements of homes. Additional strategies could include demonstration projects and educational workshops that address low-cost, high-impact projects.
- **Encourage Universal Design.** While many people are aware of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and laws around access in public spaces, not as many may be aware that these laws primarily address the bare minimum for access. Universal design involves designing products and built spaces so that they can be used by the widest range of people possible. As noted above, educational campaigns and workshops can help raise awareness of the ways in which housing, and non-residential public spaces, can better support residents.
- **Support housing in mixed use areas.** Particularly for infill development and commercial corridor redevelopment, housing at a density consistent with the surrounding neighborhoods can be a good way to offer housing variety in a walkable setting where there may be goods, services, and public amenities within a half-mile walking distance (about a 10-minute walk).

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**Economic  
Development**





## Economic Development

A strong economy means more than just jobs—it means opportunity, innovation, and resilience. This section highlights strategies to attract businesses, support entrepreneurs, and keep the local economy vibrant. Rochester Hills is well-established as a top location for business and innovation. With a combination of leading industries, top-tier talent, resources in higher education, and a strong tax base, the City's economic infrastructure is resilient and well-positioned for future growth and innovation. This economic prosperity is reinforced by the city's commitment to long-term planning and quality development. A delicate balance between the needs of industry and the city's residential character ensures a high quality of life for residents. This Master Plan seeks to guide future development in a manner that maintains this balance, supporting growth and investment in high value sectors of the economy, while ensuring that new development is compatible with the City's character and high community standards.

[In 2021, the City adopted an economic development strategy to guide sustainable growth and attract and retain new businesses, talent, and investment.](#) The document lays out the “Big 5” strategies that should be pursued by the City: Foster entrepreneurship, welcome talent/workforce, support property owners and developers, boost international development, and attract national movers and shakers. The City intends to begin working on an updated economic development strategy guide in 2025/2026.

Serving as a companion to the City's Economic Development Strategy, the Master Plan highlights strategies for integrating economic development considerations into the planning and development process, emphasizing the importance of business development, regional partnerships, and the City's competitive advantages, with thoughtful consideration of the built environment.



## Why Economic Development Matters

The local economy is shaped by the people, buildings, and businesses that make up the City, and a strategic approach to economic development helps to ensure the prosperity of all. Business attraction and retention efforts support job opportunities for residents and strengthen the local tax base to fund public services, infrastructure, and educational opportunities. Meanwhile, community development efforts through placemaking and public space enhancements, strengthen the city's sense of place and attract and retain visitors and residents.



## Community Input

While this economic development strategy is largely guided by market research, data, and trends, equally important are the findings gathered from community development efforts. Beyond statistics, conversations, surveys, and other qualitative research helped better understand the decisions and values that guide investments in the city.

Several key themes and important findings relevant to economic development were uncovered during the public input process.

**With quality schools, access to parks and open space, safe neighborhoods, and a vibrant and diverse local economy, Rochester Hills offers a high quality of life that is a draw for residents and businesses alike.** The city's broad range of commercial goods and services, particularly restaurants and retail, were emphasized during several conversations with the community from different stakeholder perspectives. While business owners recognized the value that quality-of-life amenities offer their employees, these sentiments were echoed by residents, who highlighted how access to safe and welcoming commercial destinations and public spaces contribute to their overall satisfaction with the City. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of survey respondents answered that the quality of life in Rochester Hills has improved since they moved to Rochester Hills.

*“People take pride in their homes and neighborhoods. Great shopping and excellent schools. Safe, friendly environment. Many parks close to downtown Rochester, which offers family focused fun seasonal events for all generations.”*

*“I am lucky that both of my children have recently bought houses in Rochester Hills. It was important for them to provide the same neighborhood for their children that they experienced growing up.”*

**Rochester Hills' location is a key advantage for many who choose to locate in the City.** For residents and businesses alike, Rochester Hills offers convenient access to major highways and regional job centers. While residents prefer the location due to its quiet residential setting and proximity to big-city amenities, discussions with businesses during the Mayor's Business Council and small group workshops highlighted the importance of transportation access, supply-chain networks, and the city's strong talent pipeline as locational advantages.

*“Rochester Hills, MI is a great place to invest and grow a business. It provides a great environment with efficient infrastructures, convenient accessibility to all automotive key players, and a very business-friendly local administration.”* Xavier Ovize, CEO AdduXi, Founder of French Corner (2021 Economic Development Strategy)

**While the range of goods and services is viewed as a key advantage, enhancements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure are needed to make it easier to visit destinations within the City.** Although respondents to the survey and in-person engagement

opportunities offered positive feedback with the range of goods and services in the City, many comments noted that traffic is a problem and there are limited alternatives to driving. Beyond enhancements to connectivity, more compact development and the mixing of uses will make it easier to conveniently access shops, dining, and entertainment. The recent investment and revitalization of the Brooklands neighborhood was frequently recognized by participants as a model for future pedestrian-friendly development elsewhere in the City.

*“While there are many trails and sidewalks around the city, you still really need to use a car. Retail and especially groceries are typically out of range for walking, and the sidewalks don’t always cover the whole route.”*

**Unique experiences and specialty goods and services are desired and will help strengthen Rochester Hills’ sense of place and identity.** During the public input process, many participants noted the abundance of national brands and franchises in Rochester Hills and expressed a desire for more “mom-and-pop” offerings and eclectic shopping and dining experiences. While participants highlighted the value of the City’s quality schools, parks, and medical facilities, they also emphasized the importance of cultivating more distinct and authentic ‘Rochester Hills’ experiences.

*“I would love to see more of this stuff that’s been getting pushed out of downtown Rochester like independent art stores and karate dojos and other businesses that don’t make a ton of money but give people a sense of community.”*

## **Economic Development Goals and Objectives**

### **What do we want?**

- Thriving businesses
- Employed workforce
- Convenient selection of goods and services
- Competitive marketplace
- Diverse tax base and resilient economy

### **Why?**

- To provide job opportunities for all levels of employment, including those at entry level positions and executive level roles
- To offer access to local goods and services for residents
- To ensure that Rochester Hills remains a leader in the tech industry

### **How will we do it?**

- Support entrepreneurship and business growth for a balanced economy through an ever changing economic environment.
- Offer incentives and flexible zoning to upgrade or develop commercial and industrial sites.

- Promote a mix of commercial, office, and industrial uses to foster collaboration and workforce appeal.
- Focus infill commercial development in nodes, not strips, for better land use and accessibility in a mixed use fashion, utilizing the city's FB district
- Strengthen Brooklands as a key retail hub through infill development and revitalization efforts
- Attract office and corporate headquarters to M-59 for visibility and economic impact

## Market Study Overview

In addition to the findings from community input, the City conducted a market study to understand trends in development relevant to this planning effort. A summary of the market study results can be found [HERE](#).

The market study includes four key economic development opportunities for Rochester Hills.

1. Market Penetration.
2. Synergy.
3. Niches and Clusters.
4. Mixed-Use Development.

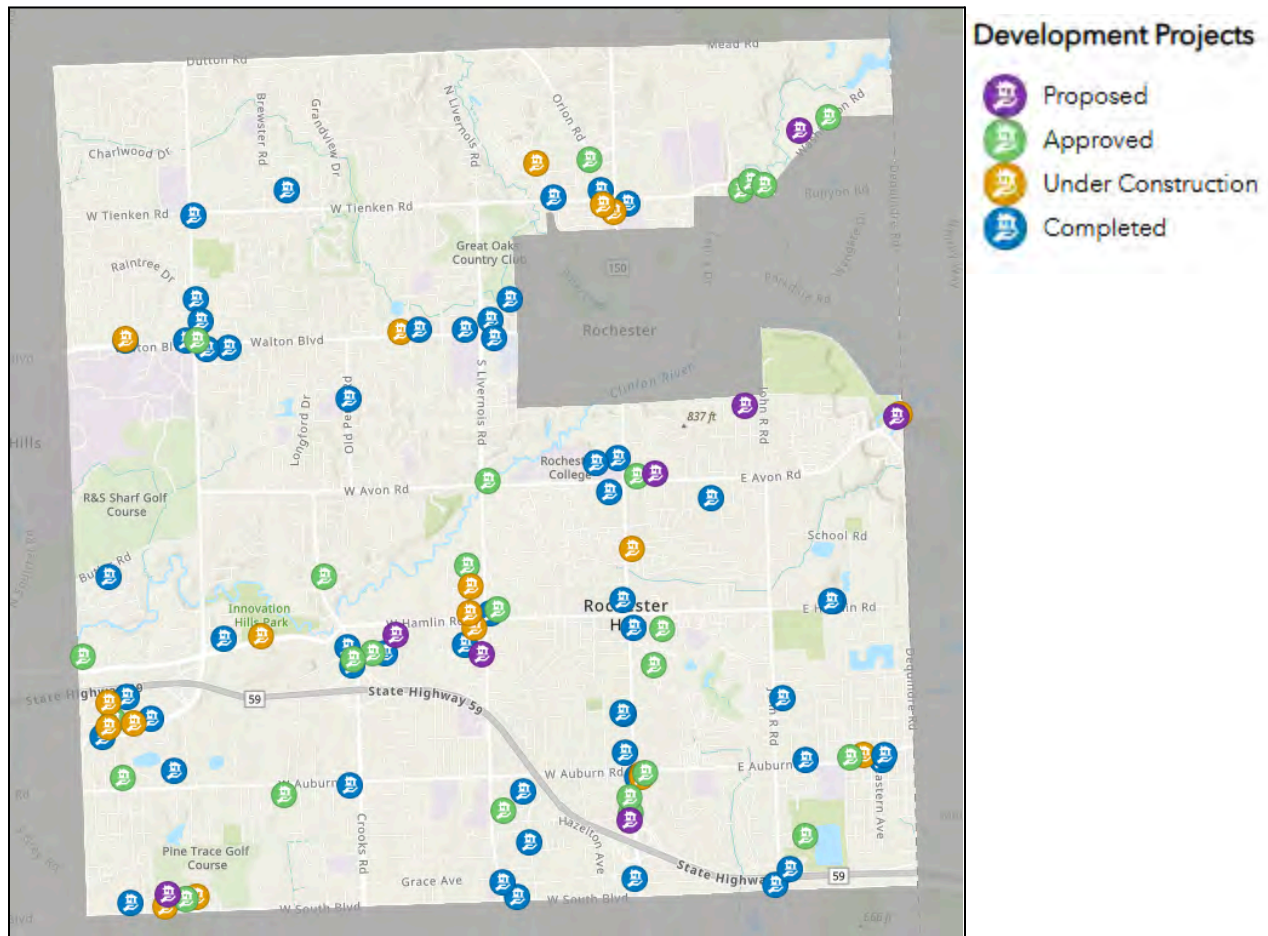
While housing trends are discussed in greater detail in the housing section of this plan ([LINK](#)), the market study provided key insights on commercial, office, and industrial markets.

**Commercial:** The Rochester Hills resident demand is sufficient to fill vacant spaces and support additional commercial space. There is potential for 485,000 square feet of retail goods and related services space. This includes an additional 50,000 square feet of food and beverage related businesses.

**Office:** Even with remote work becoming more common, Rochester Hills has a growing demand for office space to accommodate its expanding population and service needs. The growth in demand indicates that about 300,000 square feet of space will be marketable in the next ten years – both in home based or outside the home. The increase in demand can be used to fill vacant spaces or for new structures. The increases in demand are sufficient to potentially create about 100,000 square feet of new non-home-located office spaces in the foreseeable future.

**Industrial:** The flex-space market in Rochester Hills is currently the most robust of industrial-related development. Often used for industrial, warehousing, and office activities, this market is anticipated to remain strong, with demand for smaller structures (25,000 - 40,000 square feet) in demand for the next five to ten years.





## Economic Development Strategies

### Design Standards

In zoning, building form often has a greater impact on neighborhood compatibility than the types of land uses that may be permitted within a district. Building elements such as height, setbacks, orientation, and design shape the way that a building fits into the surrounding context and interacts with the public realm. While high-intensity and auto-oriented uses often require separation due to traffic, noise, and pedestrian safety, uses of lower-intensity are typically complementary and more compatible with each other. Mixed use, small-format retail, office, entertainment, personal service, dining facilities, lodging and multiple-family residential can be situated harmoniously within the same district when unified by design standards that promote thoughtful design, building placement and scale.

In accordance with the 2018 Master Plan, recent zoning changes in the Brooklands District included the implementation of a new form-based code to thoughtfully regulate the design and placement of new developments in a manner consistent with the surrounding area. The zoning changes have helped to support the evolution of the District by promoting a mix of complementary uses, while preserving the Brooklands' unique identity.

Similarly, the Flex Business Overlay District was also updated in 2022-2023 to reduce building intensity by reducing building height and increasing setbacks. This continues to encourage mixed-used development in appropriate areas. The overlay district allows applicants to opt between applying the conventional zoning regulations from the base zoning district or using a form-based code that is only applicable in the overlay. Unlike the base district, the overlay allows for a broader range of uses including mixed-use development. As a part of Master Plan implementation, the City may wish to consider whether this zoning treatment is appropriate in other areas designated as future “Mixed-Use.”

While a full form-based code may not be suitable for all parts of the City, the use of commercial design standards is a potential strategy to achieve high-quality, durable construction and ensure that new development is complementary to the surrounding environment. By crafting these regulations to be flexible and adaptable, the City can establish a consistent baseline for design quality without constraining the creative and functional needs of future development.

## **Encourage mixed-use and infill development**

Findings from the market study and public input indicated a need for additional mixed-use and infill development in appropriate locations. While a measured approach to new development is important, concentrations of complimentary mixes of land uses will enhance walkability and make it easier for residents to access the goods and services that they need. Mixed-use development, when appropriately designed, serves as a strategic approach to providing new housing options without disrupting the character of established single-family neighborhoods.

Infill development describes development within vacant and underutilized parcels in already-developed areas, commonly seen as an alternative to “greenfield” development, or the proliferation of sprawl. Infill can include building on empty lots, redeveloping existing buildings or parking lots, and repurposing obsolete land uses, while benefiting from the sustainable reuse of existing roads, utilities, and infrastructure. In addition, by concentrating shops and entertainment closer to where people already live and work, infill helps to reduce car dependency and increase walkability. Many of the older shopping centers in Rochester Hills are ideal locations for infill development.

In Rochester Hills, new infill and mixed-use development should only take place in locations where it will be of minimal disruption to the surrounding neighborhoods and suburban character. While traffic is a frequent complaint from the community, it's important to keep in mind that regional traffic will continue to increase until more widely available and utilized transportation options are available. Therefore, new development/redevelopment should focus on connectivity and mobility for those transportation options currently available within the City - providing more walkability and access from neighborhoods and to other nearby amenities to contribute to a more livable and well-connected environment. The new Future

Land Use map ([LINK](#)) indicates areas where mixed-use is proposed to strategically expand along key corridors and in locations with potential for infill development.

Recent investments in the Brooklands neighborhood serve as a frequently cited example of this pattern of development that residents appreciate and want to see elsewhere. New infill and a greater mixing of uses have helped make the Auburn Road corridor a more vibrant, walkable destination with amenities for residents living within the larger Brooklands neighborhood. Ongoing efforts to focus on redevelopment and infill opportunities within this corridor will help strengthen its unique identity, spur new investment, and promote growth that is consistent with the needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

## **Brownfield Redevelopment**

Brownfield redevelopment strategies seek to safely reuse previously developed sites that require environmental remediation. Often, this includes former industrial, commercial, or institutional properties, such as factories, gas stations, and warehouses, that have become challenging to redevelop because of environmental concerns and contamination.

Redeveloping these sites is important because it helps to eliminate “eyesores”, expand development opportunities, make use of existing infrastructure, and improve public health and safety, while creating alternatives to the development of undeveloped land and open space or “greenfield” sites.

In Michigan, the redevelopment of brownfields is supported through Act 381 of 1996, known as the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act. This law allows local governments to establish Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities and use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to provide reimbursements for eligible environmental and redevelopment costs. Rochester Hills has a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority that was established in 2002 to promote revitalization within the City. Beyond the TIF, the City’s Brownfield efforts have helped the City leverage additional resources to promote the safe remediation and redevelopment of these properties.

In the fall of 2023, the City was awarded a transformational [\\$75 million Restoration and Remediation grant](#) from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to help with the assessment, monitoring and remediation of brownfield properties in the City. The reimbursement grant is available to any property within the City that has contamination through 2031. With almost 700 acres of historically contaminated land from former landfills, the City is offering subgrants to land owners and parties with an interest in purchasing or developing properties to help incentivize and encourage the redevelopment of local brownfields, providing additional support for contaminated sites to overcome these complexities. A number of sites have begun assessments to determine what steps need to be taken to improve the properties and to allow for their development. Madison Park, the former Veterans and Cardinal Landfills, consist of nearly one hundred acres at the northeast corner of M-59 and Adams Road. The site has been approved for an office and retail development per a consent judgment (court order) in 1981. Because of changes in the



market since, the City will be considering an amended consent judgment as part of the remediation efforts associated with this site.

A number of other sites have been approved for assessments in the eastern part of the City between Hamlin and Avon and between Dequindre and John R. This area has a concentration of landfills and was inventoried in 2010 in the [Environmental Concerns Inventory for the Rochester Hills Landfill Planning Area](#) and has the most land area available for potential future development. Development in these areas offer a significant opportunity for the City to increase economic investment for industrial/tech and office uses. That investment, along with grant funds and other strategic funding may make such redevelopment feasible.

While the City recognizes the need for additional housing, brownfield sites are often difficult to restore to levels of contamination safe for residential uses and are most amenable to commercial and industrial redevelopment opportunities. But there are exceptions. The Legacy of Rochester Hills overcame the hurdles and developed over 300 luxury apartments on the former Christensen Dump. A brownfield plan was approved for this property which allowed for the over \$13 million dollars in remediation costs to be recouped over a period of twenty-four years through a TIF capture. This project was a win for the city as it substantially improved the environmental conditions of the area and brought a previously fallow property back into productive use. The City continues to support the redevelopment of its contaminated properties for the best use of the property as feasible and compatible with the surrounding area. (INSERT PICTURE OF LEGACY HERE)

## **Placemaking and Community Identity**

Effective economic development requires a multi-faceted approach. While support for business and industry is paramount to ensuring a consistent tax base, jobs, and investment flow, equally important is long-term planning and policies that shape place and community identity. Beyond the traditional economic drivers, enhancing the physical character of the City through placemaking, public art, and investments in public space help to foster civic pride and strengthen the overall economy.

Placemaking is a collaborative process that enhances public spaces by building upon existing assets to strengthen identity, character and connection to place. These efforts often include discretionary investments by the public and private sector, such as public art, landscaping, amenities, and design features that create memorable experiences and reflect local culture. While placemaking can take many forms, it should always be implemented in a manner that strengthens, rather than disrupts, the surrounding character of nearby development.

Recognizing the importance of placemaking and public space enhancements, the City adopted the Gateways and Streetscapes Master Plan in 2023 ([LINK](#)). This plan includes strategic guidance for gateway signage that highlights key entries into the city and streetscape design elements that define the public realm and enhance the pedestrian experience. In support of this vision, the City also embarked upon a new effort to establish

coordinated wayfinding signage in parks and civic spaces to strengthen navigation and overall sense of place.

The City should continue with efforts to implement the Gateways and Streetscapes Master Plan, prioritizing high-impact corridors and key entry points identified in the plan. As discussed earlier in this chapter, design standards will help to ensure that new commercial development offers complementary enhancements to the streetscape. While ordinance changes to support these types of private improvements may be necessary, additional public investments will be contingent on available funding. Identifying potential funding partners, grants, and technical assistance will help reduce the City's financial burden and effectuate faster implementation. Continued coordination with state and regional partners, business owners, and community stakeholders will help to identify resources and ensure that improvements are consistent with the City's long-term vision.

## **Supporting the Industrial Base**

Export base theory is an economic development concept that focuses on the idea that a region's growth is driven primarily by industries that export goods, or "basic industries." By bringing income into the local economy, dollars can be circulated through "non-basic" businesses, such as restaurants, retail, and local services. This cycle is often compared to a "leaky bucket," recognizing that as new income is generated, some of it inevitably "leaks" out through spending on imported goods and non-local services. A strong export base is paramount to continue "filling the bucket."

The strategic positioning of manufacturing operations has changed greatly over the decades. Technology, transportation and economic advancements have successful companies adopting global manufacturing/supply chain strategies. In Rochester Hills, the industrial base plays a fundamental role in the City's economy. The City boasts many high-performing manufacturing, robotics, automotive, and automation companies that serve national and global markets, making them essential basic industries. However, in 2025, a majority of these manufacturing companies reported that less than 30% of their company's global manufacturing operations take place in the U.S.

These businesses not only generate jobs and attract outside capital, but also help to sustain a local network of supplies, contractors, and service providers. Rochester Hills has also seen strong levels of foreign direct investment, with many international companies choosing to establish North American operations in the City due to its skilled workforce, strategic location, and business-friendly environment.

Nationally, the manufacturing sector is undergoing a transformation driven by increased automation, reshoring of supply chains, and a growing emphasis on advanced technologies like artificial intelligence. Rochester Hills' manufacturing base, highly skilled workforce, and focus on innovation positions the city to benefit from these shifts. This is reflected in the City's consistently low industrial vacancy and absorption rate, a demonstration of the strength and competitiveness of the local industrial market. In a survey conducted in May 2025 with Rochester Hills manufacturers about the impact of U.S. trade affairs, 40% of these companies shared their plans to explore bringing more manufacturing to the U.S. If federal

policies continue to impact global manufacturers' business and capital strategies for North America, this demand for industrial facilities may increase.

The City should continue its partnerships with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Oakland County Economic Development to support an ongoing business expansion, attraction, and retention effort that includes regular communication with leading industries about their needs for talent and growth. In addition, partnerships between the private sector and Oakland University to strengthen the local talent pipeline should be encouraged.

To support these economic development efforts, the City of Rochester Hills created a Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) . An LDFA is a public entity established under PA 281 of 1986, as amended by Public Act 57 of 2018. LDFA's are designed to promote economic growth and job creation by helping to facilitate infrastructure improvements and other incentives to support eligible industries. LDFA's may generate revenue in several ways, but primarily rely on Tax Increment Financing (TIF). This involves capturing the incremental change in property taxes resulting from new development within the LDFA district. The Rochester Hills LDFA's boundaries surround key technology parks within the southwest section of the city. In partnership with other local and regional taxing jurisdictions, the LDFA helps to financially support business development and infrastructure projects that attract new businesses such as the reconstruction of Austin, Devondale, Hamlin and Leach Roads.

Within the LDFA, the properties along Leach Road are ripe for investment. In 2024, the LDFA funded the paving of the road, water main and stormwater improvements, and installation of a sidewalk making this street the next logical area for redevelopment. The street that was once exclusively single family homes has transitioned primarily to non-residential uses including contractors yards, small businesses and offices. Because of the city's low vacancy rates and the challenge to find ample space for businesses to grow within Rochester Hills, the City encourages strategic land assembly to make this road an extension of the types of businesses found on Waterview and Technology Drives, located on either side of Leach.

The LDFA has also supported initiatives that retain businesses in the community and spur job creation such as targeted industry events, talent recruitment events and the RHISE Cup. Overall, the mission of the LDFA is to support the business community that represents the tax increment district and provides a public benefit to the community as a whole. The City's LDFA is set to expire at the end of 2025. Because of the success of the LDFA, the City will be requesting an extension of the LDFA as well as conducting a thorough analysis of the district to determine if amendments to the boundaries are desirable as well as potential future efforts the LDFA could fund.

## **Support Economic Resiliency in an Aging Population**

As Rochester Hills continues to evolve, the aging population presents challenges and opportunities for economic development. According to SEMCOG data, while seniors over 85 only make up 2.5% of the population in Rochester Hills, this segment is expected to double



by the year 2050, matching the broader national trend. This shift will influence demand for housing, healthcare, transportation, and supportive goods and services. Planning for this transition will ensure the City is well-positioned to adapt to the changing needs of residents while supporting businesses that serve this growing market.

To remain proactive, the City should encourage development that promotes accessibility. Beyond housing, this means ensuring that business development efforts target industries that cater to older adults, including health care and personal services. In addition, accessibility should remain a priority for new development, public facilities, and right-of-way improvements, providing the resources and infrastructure for seniors to maintain independence and participate in the local economy. By considering the needs of seniors the city will not only improve quality of life outcomes, but also create new job opportunities and strengthen the local economy.

As the City explores policy strategies to accommodate the aging population, they should consider the potential economic benefits of advancing age-friendly housing, amenities, and goods and services. The Future Land Use map considers the appropriate locations for expanding mixed-use opportunities, creating the potential for developments that incorporate housing with age-friendly goods and services that help to relieve the need for auto-dependency. Additional review of zoning for senior services and housing, including adult foster and group care, may be necessary as the city continues to experience the growth of this population segment.

Beyond accommodations for the local senior population, growth in healthcare technology and medical devices is expected as demands for these services continue to increase. The City should support its existing healthcare-related industries, while promoting opportunities to new businesses across the broader supply chain. The city's strategic location, transportation access, highly-skilled workforce, and existing suppliers make it a competitive market for companies in healthcare innovation and well-positioned to serve as a strategic hub for emerging technologies.

## **Engage Youth in Economic Development**

Future generations play a key role in the long-term sustainability of the local economy. To create a future-ready workforce, the City should continue to foster its culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. By connecting young people with local industries and educational opportunities, the City can build upon strategies to retain talent and ensure a steady pipeline of skilled workers. Involving youth in planning and economic development strategies will help to bring a fresh perspective and empowers the next generation to shape the future of their community.

The City actively engages with the youth population to ensure that long-term planning considers the impact that the next generation will have on future demand. The Rochester Hills Youth Council plays a key role in this collaboration, by providing high school students with the opportunity to learn about local government and share their perspectives on issues

facing the community. Not only do these discussions help to ensure that planning is aligned with the future needs of the community, they also help foster leadership skills and instill a stronger sense of belonging to those involved.





# Transportation & Mobility





## Transportation and Mobility

Getting people where they need to go should be safe, convenient, and sustainable. Whether by car, bike, or public transit, this section outlines how to connect people, places, and possibilities. A vibrant transportation system is the lifeblood of Rochester Hills, connecting residents to essential goods, services, jobs, and community facilities that enrich their daily lives. Rochester Hills maintains a dedicated Transportation Master Plan that details specific infrastructure projects and recommendations and this comprehensive Master Plan serves to integrate and elevate those goals. Crucially, it explores the profound link between our transportation network and overall community health, recognizing how accessible, efficient, and varied mobility options contribute to the well-being of all our residents.

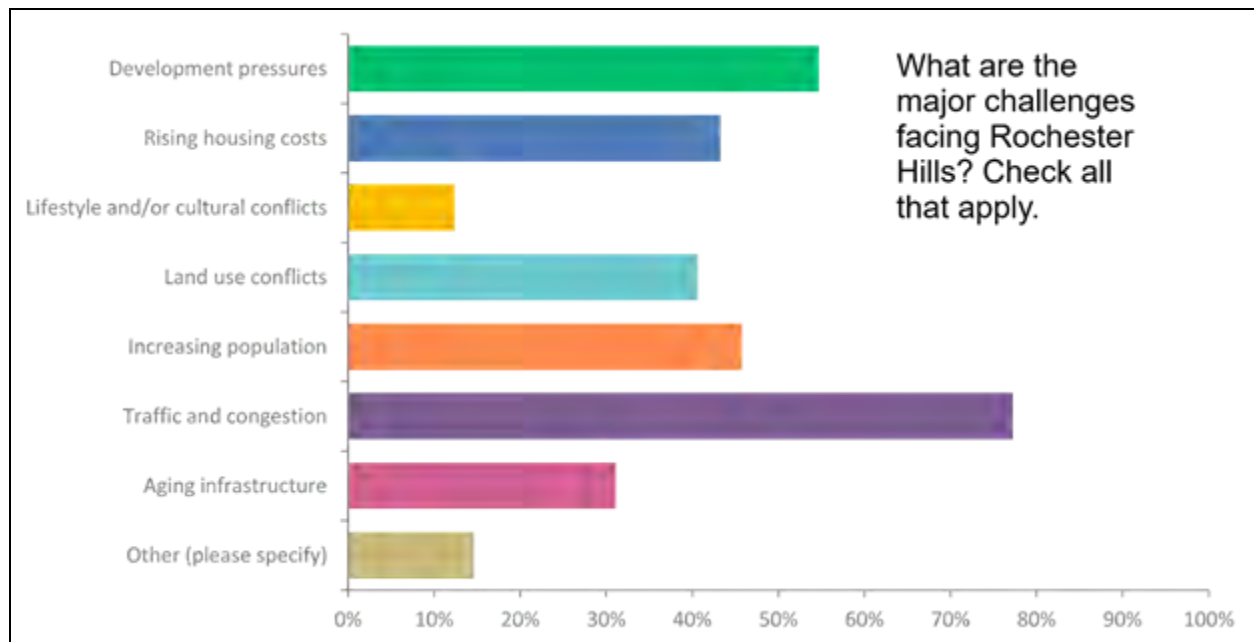
### Why Transportation and Mobility Matters

Transportation is a key aspect of community health; a system that supports physical activity, such as walking and biking, supports improved health outcomes, and alternatives to private vehicle travel improve air quality, with complementary health benefits. A well-balanced transportation system can provide:

- **Access to Health Resources:** Transportation systems connect residents to medical services, healthy food, and recreational facilities.
- **Active Living Opportunities:** Walkable and bike-friendly infrastructure encourages physical activity, reducing risks of chronic diseases.
- **Air Quality and Public Health:** Reducing car dependency lowers emissions, improving air quality and reducing respiratory issues.
- **Social Connectivity:** Public transportation and pedestrian-friendly areas foster social interaction, improving mental health and reducing isolation.
- **Enhanced Safety:** Well-planned streets reduce traffic accidents, protecting pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

The city's transportation system can also be designed to foster the city's age-friendliness objectives. As of 2023, approximately 9% of city residents had a disability; most of these individuals are not eligible to drive. A system that provides alternatives to driving, including support for walking, biking, transit, and micro-transit, will support the ability of all residents to navigate the community. For older residents, active transportation opportunities can reduce social isolation, promote health, while accessible design that accommodates people with mobility challenges benefits everyone. A complete network of sidewalks and pathways can also support greater independence for children.

Providing alternatives is also one of the most effective tools available to us for fighting traffic congestion, which has been one of the most-cited challenges to Rochester Hills by residents for many years, as seen in the chart below, taken from the master plan survey results.



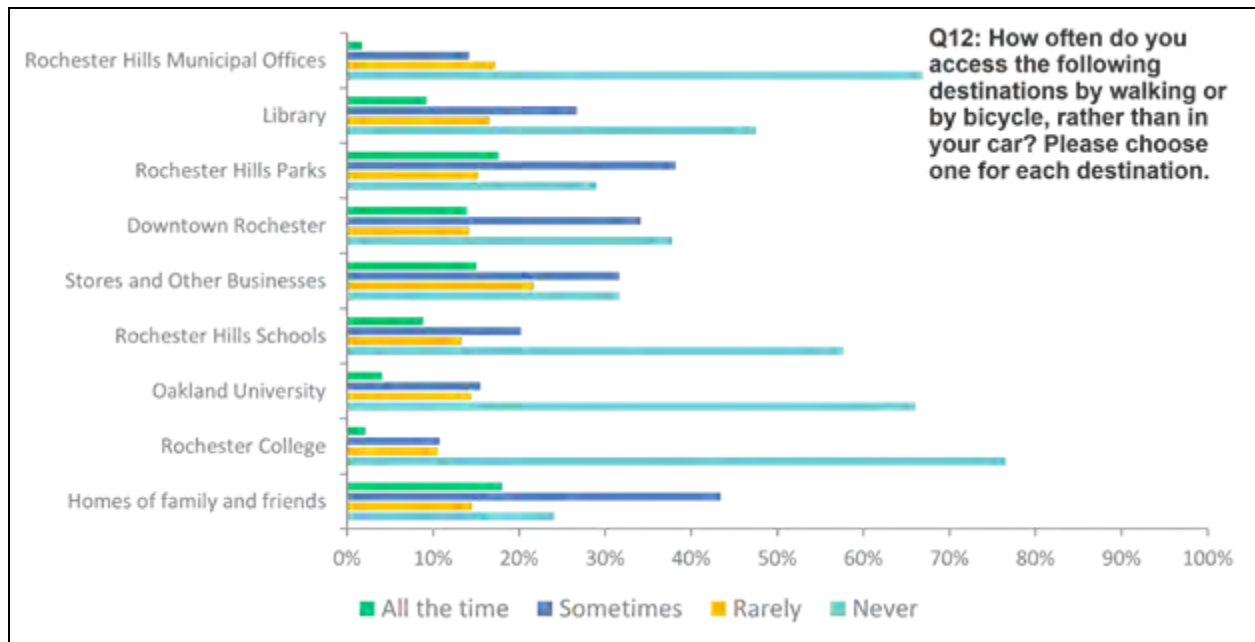
Finally, innovation in the transportation sector is something the city must tap into in the future. Even as it seeks to reduce dependency on cars, support for electric vehicles, increased reliance on deliveries and curbside pickup, and the potential for autonomous vehicles to arrive on our streets should all be considered as Rochester Hills looks to develop its ordinances and capital improvement plans.

## Community Input

When asked what would be the first thing they would change if they were in charge of Rochester Hills for a day, survey takers frequently highlighted traffic issues, specifically emphasizing the following:

- Reduce traffic congestion
- Improve road conditions
- Enforce speed limits
- Better traffic management (ex: install smart traffic lights)

Beyond vehicular concerns, community input also revealed a strong desire for enhanced walkability, improved access to parks and open spaces, and greater connectivity *between* neighborhoods. The existing utilization of the city's non-motorized transportation infrastructure, as depicted in the data below, clearly demonstrates residents' current engagement with these alternatives



## Transportation and Mobility Goals and Objectives

The transportation goals of this plan are intended to be complementary to the Transportation Master Plan.

### What do we want?

- An efficient and safe multi-modal transportation network

### Why?

- To improve traffic safety
- To reduce traffic congestion and increase traffic efficiency by considering modified roadway designs and offering non-motorized options for local travel
- To appeal to residents and businesses looking for a community with a variety of transportation options and a more walkable community
- To provide transportation choices that improve independence and convenience for residents of all ages and abilities
- To improve community health by encouraging non-motorized travel

### Where?

- Throughout the city

### Potential obstacles/related considerations?

- Current land use pattern dictates motorized travel
- Current road design supports motorized travel
- High volume of crashes city-wide.



- Not all roadways are under the jurisdiction of the City. Some roadways are under multiple jurisdictions depending on location
- Existing number of curbcuts
- Existing topography within some sections of the city may impact design solutions.
- Existing environmental features throughout the city may impact design solutions.
- Existing historical districts may impact design solutions.

**Transportation Objectives:**

- Promote the use of accepted traffic calming and access management techniques that make all travel safe and efficient while still allowing for appropriate emergency access.
- Provide a safe, efficient non-motorized pathway system that provides links to various land uses throughout the city that gives residents choices about their modes of travel.
- Promote public education about roadway planning and decision making to help residents and property owners understand the short- and long-term goals of transportation projects.
- Require transportation infrastructure decisions that support the land use recommendations of the Master Land Use Plan.
- Explore innovative traffic designs and flexible engineering standards to improve the safety and efficiency of travel for motorized and non-motorized travel.
- Explore opportunities for alternative transportation methods for those who don't have access to a car.
- Monitor and plan for future trends in transportation in terms of autonomous/connected vehicles.
- Implement the current CORH Transportation Master Plan
- Ensure that the City's Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan recommendations are developed in coordination
- Ensure that City Transportation projects are designed and implemented in conjunction with the City's Planning Department.
- Implement complete streets policy that was adopted in 2011 and likely update it based on transportation methods/needs today.
- Consider road diets in areas of city where appropriate
- Coordination with the Trails Groups
- Prioritize pathway gap completion in those areas of the City where school bus service is not provided.
- Prioritize pathway gap completion in those areas proximate to public transit routes.

- Evaluate the most effective and context sensitive means of providing pedestrian access along Tienken through Stony Creek Village.
- Implement additional, signalized pedestrian crosswalks, either at intersections or “mid-block” in those areas of the city proximate to universities, schools, public transit stops and workplace employment centers.
- Implement a unique color branded crosswalk system that is based on the master plan neighborhood in which it is located.
- Continue to assess and reduce long term parking requirements in zoning ordinance as transit options trend towards autonomous vehicles, ride share, etc.
- Continue to assess and increase short term drop off area requirements in the zoning ordinance and the impacts of such areas as transit options trend towards autonomous vehicles, ride share, etc.
- Develop strategies for repurposing those parking lot areas that are no longer essentially to provide either long term parking or short term drop off areas within parking lots with an emphasis on creating more pedestrian friendly environments.
- Develop a long term strategy for implementing an EV charging station plan across the City.
- Adopt and implement Ordinances requirements that require EV charging infrastructure to be integrated into the overall site design and construction.
- Further integrate sustainable/green Best Management Practices into parking lot design for all new (re)developments given the overall size of development and investment.
- Ensure a long term sustainable maintenance and enhancement program for City Gateway Signage.
- Adopt and implement Ordinance requirements for implementing City Streetscape requirements in new (re)developments within the City, including bicycle racks, benches, lighting, retaining walls, pedestrian area materials, etc.
- Ensure all new city, county and state road projects include the applicable CORH streetscape amenities as a part of their design
- Ensure all new city, county and state road projects include landscape enhancements and ensure such improvements are budgeted for appropriately
- Further integrate sustainable/green Best Management Practices into all new roadway projects as applicable.
- Re-evaluate City standards for clear vision, landscaping and required greenbelts along roadways/property frontages where clear vision requirements impact the ability to maintain existing trees and limit the ability to plant required landscaping

## Transportation and Mobility Strategies

Transportation and mobility strategies are integral to other land use policies and contribute to the success of housing, economic development, and community amenities. They also influence and are influenced by preservation and sustainability. At a high level, strategies include:

- Promote the use of accepted traffic calming and access management techniques that make all travel safe and efficient.
- Provide a safe, efficient non-motorized pathway system that provides links to various land uses throughout the city that gives residents choices about their modes of travel.
- Promote public education about roadway planning and decision making to help residents and property owners understand the short- and long-term goals of transportation projects.
- Require transportation infrastructure decisions that support the land use recommendations of the Master Land Use Plan.
- Explore innovative traffic designs and flexible engineering standards to improve the safety and efficiency of travel for motorized and non-motorized travel.
- Explore opportunities for alternative transportation methods for those who don't have access to a car.
- Monitor and plan for future trends in transportation in terms of autonomous/connected vehicles.

## Transportation Master Plan

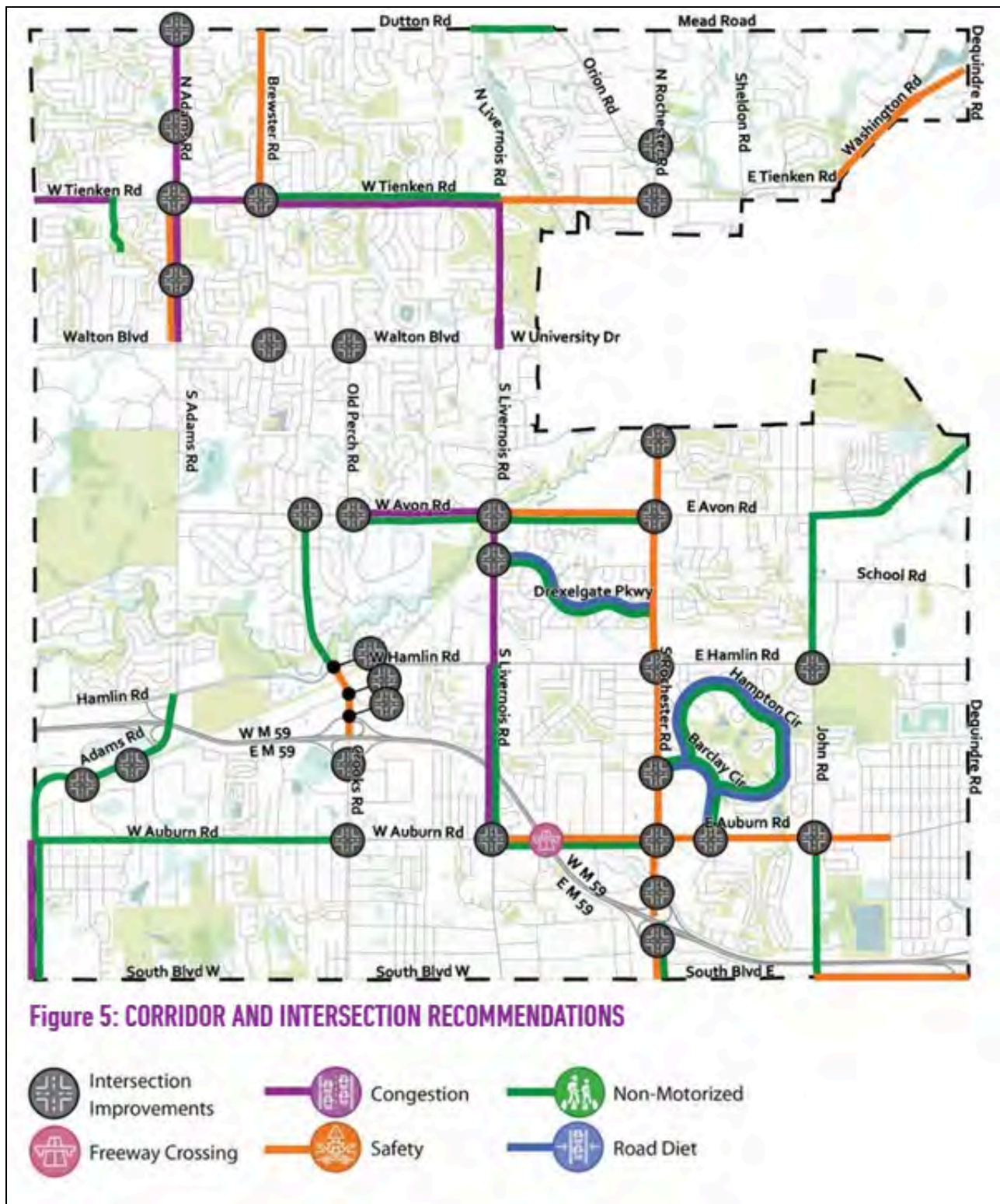
The [Rochester Hills Transportation Master Plan](#) presents a thorough, forward-looking framework to guide the city's transportation investments and policy decisions over the next 10 to 15 years. The Plan's vision statement is, "The transportation system of Rochester Hills will be a reliable network that provides travel options for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The transportation network will emphasize safe and efficient travel." It evaluates all major aspects of the current transportation network, including vehicle travel, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, public transit, safety, congestion, and emerging mobility trends. The plan identifies capacity and safety challenges on key corridors such as Adams, Livernois, and Rochester Roads and offers a multi-pronged strategy that integrates traditional infrastructure improvements with modern transportation technologies. It emphasizes system management, such as signal optimization and access control, while incorporating a "Complete Network" approach rooted in the City's 2011 Complete Streets policy to ensure roadways serve all users. The Transportation Master Plan serves as a guide for the recommendations and strategies found within the 2025 Master Plan.

The Transportation Master Plan includes specific capital improvements and policy reforms based on community needs, safety data, and feasibility. These actions include pedestrian



and bicycle facility enhancements, roundabout construction, non-motorized pathway gap closures, and corridor redesigns. The plan integrates performance metrics such as volume-to-capacity ratios, crash frequency and severity, pavement conditions, and federal aid eligibility. It also provides cost estimates, funding strategies, and phasing guidelines for implementation. Public and stakeholder engagement shaped the plan through surveys, public workshops, and joint sessions with the City Council and Planning Commission, revealing widespread support for improved walkability, safety, reduced congestion, and increased pathway connectivity.

The Rochester Hills Transportation Master Plan sets a comprehensive and adaptable vision for a safer, more efficient, and multimodal transportation network. It balances the needs of existing road users with future-oriented strategies that address technological change, demographic shifts, and environmental sustainability. The plan serves not only as a roadmap for transportation improvements, but also serves as a guide for the 2025 Master Plan Update. The goal of this Master Plan is to serve as a way to connect the Transportation Master Plan, Gateways and Streetscapes Master Plan, and additional plans. The goals and objectives found in this section are meant to directly tie into the Transportation Master Plan and continue the recommendations and strategies found in the Transportation Plan.



Source: 2021 Transportation Master Plan