

NEW BUSINESS

2025-0449

Public Hearing and Request for Adoption of the 2025 Master Land Use Plan

(McLeod memo dated 10-15-25, Giffels Webster memo dated 10-15-25, Resolution of Adoption, Public Hearing Notice, and combined Meeting Minutes had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

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

Mr. McLeod stated that this process has been ongoing for the Planning Commission for approximately 1-3/4 years. He noted that the steps now include the Public Hearing tonight and sending it on to City Council for their adoption at the first meeting in November should the Commission feel comfortable moving forward to adopt it this evening. Should that be successful, the process would start all over again in approximately four years for the next update.

Ms. Bahm stated that she was delighted to be here for the Public Hearing after working on it with the Commission for almost two years. She commented that the process included many steps and much engagement, with many meetings and much discussion. She stated that they believe that it is a really good Master Plan, and commented that going forward the next steps will be diving into implementation for the things that have been deemed important. She thanked the Commissioners and members of the public who attended the Open House. She stated that the 2025 Master Plan Update reaffirmed the direction set in the 2018 Master Plan. She reviewed the Master Plan process:

- It was decided that a good approach would be the development of five different planning neighborhoods based on the high school districts in the city. This was deemed a good approach to help people better visualize how land use impacts their daily lives, and the high school boundaries would be identifiable to them.*
- The Master Plan focuses on the five main components of the community: Housing, Economic Development, Transportation and Mobility Preservation, Sustainability, and Community Amenities.*
- The Master Plan was combined with the other long-range plans that the City has taken on over the past several years to cross-reference all of the action strategies and provide a document that is a one-stop shop for action items to take forward.*
- Themes used during the process were to be age-friendly, sustainable, and innovative. Those themes were used as filters during the process, to ensure that public input would be aligned through those lenses.*
- After discussion with staff and the Commission during the process the one theme that seemed to resonate the most centered on what was termed "Timeless Tradition".*

- The ideas are to maintain stability in a suburban lifestyle in Rochester Hills, that single family housing would remain the main housing type, and pedestrian connectivity would be strengthened. This was one of the most significant departures in public feedback from the 2018 Plan, where concerns had been raised regarding traffic congestion and deer.

- Another shift in the last five years was a focus on preserving natural resources.

- Community Engagement included over 2,000 participants in five different phases that began in 2024. Feedback focused on increasing walkability and safety, preserving natural features, focusing on single family housing and maintaining stability, and a high level of satisfaction for residents.

- The Future Land Use Map is included as a part of one of the required elements of the Master Plan by State Law that illustrates the way that it is intended for the city to be built. The Future Land Use Map is different than zoning and is more of a guiding tool as opposed to a Zoning Map, which coordinates with laws and regulations. There were no changes to the planned residential densities from the 2018 map, and it really does not have significant land use implications or changes. The new Future Land Use Map consolidates categories to make things simpler and easier to understand. Any changes were made primarily to reflect the built environment, and nothing was changed to generate additional density, particularly from a residential standpoint.

- When discussing zoning changes relative to business districts, the idea of design standards emphasized that people are interested in seeing higher quality materials and designs that are durable, long-lasting and timeless.

- Community identity was important, and the Brooklands was referenced as a type of development people want to see replicated in other parts of the community.

- Gateways and streetscapes were intended to tie in with the Master Plan.

- The Housing Plan is a new required element in the Planning and Enabling Act. Preserving the pattern of existing neighborhoods, the Plan allows a clustering or attaching of homes consistent with the existing residential density, resulting in more green space and giving more flexibility in the kind of housing that could be developed. This clustering would be primarily along major thoroughfares and not within existing neighborhoods.

- Historic preservation was consciously taken out of the 2018 Plan and has been added back in reflecting the importance of preservation for future generations of the historic structures that remain in the City.

- Three separate tiers of redevelopment include a tier one refresh or facelift, to determine what could be done to enhance a property perhaps in a maintenance phase. Tier two would reference outlot developments, perhaps parking lots that are underutilized or unused, and would continue ideas of pedestrian connectivity and design standards to ensure that they make a development or area more walkable. Tier three would be the full scale redevelopment of underutilized or obsolete sites, and may include public infrastructure, investment, traffic and parking management.

Ms. Bahm thanked those Commissioners who were able to attend the Open House and noted that they probably had 25 to 30 people. She stated that as tonight is the Public Hearing, after opening up comments to anyone in attendance, she would hope that the Commission would then consider taking action.

Mr. Dettloff asked what feedback was gained from the open house.

Ms. Bahm responded that some attendees had not previously been a part of the process and came to learn what it was all about. She added that they had a conversation with one person who questioned how the Plan would address housing, particularly with respect to the younger population.

Chairperson Hooper opened the Public Hearing at 7:17 p.m. After seeing that there were no speaker cards presented, and no one wished to address the Planning Commission on this item, he closed the Public Hearing.

Ms. Neubauer noted that the next Council Meeting would be on November 10, 2025, and that this would be the last meeting of the current City Council. She commented that this version of the Plan is much more conservative and much more reflective of what the residents and City Council were looking for.

Ms. Bahm responded that as professional planners, it is their job to bring all of the information including what people are doing across the country and what people are doing with the kind of data that they have in terms of affluence in the community. She stressed that at the end of the day, this is the City's community and this is their plan.

Ms. Neubauer commented that she knows that at the last City Council meeting it was difficult, and she wanted things to go much smoother and suggested stressing traditionalism and a shift to the idea that the residents have guided the plan. She made the motion in the packet to approve the plan and move it to Council for November 10, 2025. The motion was supported by Mr. Dettloff.

Mr. Hetrick stated that he believes the plan is really great and incorporates many of the things that were battled over to get the plan to something that would make sense for the residents along with making sense from a planning and long-term development standpoint. He added that he believes that a slide shown that depicted the different types of homes including the traditional home and how a cluster home would create opportunities for more green space was excellent. He commented that one of the things that the Commission grappled with was how this different style of home would allow for a tighter grouping of homes yet provide more opportunity for green space and recreation, which was also a high priority in the planning process; and he suggested that this would also be helpful for City Council to understand how the plan will enhance opportunities in Rochester Hills.

Mr. Dettloff stated that he was really impressed by all of the community engagement efforts. He commented that he hopes that this plan will get a lot of recognition statewide as an example of how to go about doing a master plan.

Ms. Bahm responded that she would like to give a shout out to Planning staff for coordinating such a tight timeline to keep the process rolling.

Chairperson Hooper commented that this is the sixth Master Plan that he has been associated with on the Commission and would echo the comments that Giffels Webster knocked it out of the park. He stated that probably the most intense thing that a Planning Commission works on is a master plan update. He noted that the process has evolved to the point where it is a very intensive look within the city, and he stated that he definitely supports and recognizes what efforts have been done on behalf of the city.

After calling for a roll call vote on Ms. Neubauer's motion, Chairperson Hooper announced that the motion passed unanimously.

Following the vote, Mr. McLeod commented that Giffels' efforts on this were monumental and they did a fantastic job for the City. He stated that he has been a part of a lot of these plans over the years and it takes a lot of effort to get a product like this. He commented that they should be acknowledged for their efforts.

A motion was made by Neubauer, seconded by Dettloff, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 9 - Brnabic, Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Hooper, Neubauer, Hetrick, Struzik and Weaver

WHEREAS, the City of Rochester Hills Planning Commission may prepare and adopt a Master Plan for the physical development of the City, as empowered by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rochester Hills contracted with a professional planning consultant to assist the Planning Commission with the technical assessments necessary to make the Master Plan for the City; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan process commenced with a kickoff meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council on January 29, 2024;

WHEREAS, throughout the planning process, 23 events and opportunities that resulted in more than 2,000 public interactions were made regarding the development of the Master Plan, including focus groups, surveys, open houses, etc.; and

WHEREAS, throughout the development of the Master Plan, three (3) main planning themes were applied to each decisionmaking process. These themes are being Age-Friendly, Sustainable, and Innovative; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the input received through the numerous public events and opportunities, a community vision emerged, Timeless Tradition, being a vision to maintain stability and the suburban lifestyle in Rochester Hills, while strengthening pedestrian connectivity and preserving natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the City's Master Plan has been presented as a series of neighborhoods, allowing residents, property owners, and business owners to review planned land uses, policies and implementation items within their specific area of the City more easily, while still maintaining the ability to review the plan as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the final format of the City's Master Plan is an interactive online experience, encouraging residents, property owners and business owners to learn more about the Master Plan through engaging online mapping; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public open house to present the draft Master Plan on October 7, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on its proposed 2025 Master Plan on October 21, 2025.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby adopts this Master Plan for the City, along with the text, maps, charts, graphs, and other descriptive materials contained in the Plan.