



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Planning Commission

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Chairperson Greg Hooper, Vice Chairperson Deborah Brnabic
Members: Sheila Denstaedt, Gerard Dettloff, Anthony Gallina, Dale Hetrick, Marvie Neubauer, Scott Struzik and Ben Weaver
Youth Representatives: Oliver Blakeley and Siddh Sheth

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Hooper called the April 21, 2026 Regular Planning Commission Meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., Michigan Time.

ROLL CALL

Present 9 - Deborah Brnabic, Sheila Denstaedt, Greg Hooper, Marvie Neubauer, Scott Struzik, Ben Weaver, Dale Hetrick, Gerard Dettloff and Anthony Gallina

Others Present:

Sara Roediger, Planning and Economic Development Director
Chris McLeod, Planning Manager
Debby Hoyle, Senior Financial Analyst
Tracey Balint, Interim DPS Director/City Engineer
Ken Elwert, Parks & Natural Resources Director
Tim Pollizzi, Water Resources Specialist
Mike Viazanko, Building/Ordinance/Facilities Director
Siddh Sheth, Youth Council Representative
Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2026-0180](#) March 17, 2026 Planning Commission Regular Minutes

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

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

COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson Hooper noted receipt of the current issue of Michigan Planner magazine.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Hooper noted that anyone wishing to address the Commission tonight should fill out a Speakers Card and provide it to the recording secretary prior to the start of the item they wish to comment on. He stated that comments will be taken all at one time and are limited to three minutes. He stated that anyone wishing to speak on an item not on the agenda will be taken up under the Public Comment section of the Agenda. Seeing no one wishing to speak, Chairperson Hooper closed public comment.

NEW BUSINESS

2026-0181

Public Hearing and Request for adoption of the 2026-3032 Capital Improvement Plan

(Roediger Memo dated 4/14/26, Hoyle Memo dated 4/21/26, 2027-2032 Capital Improvement Plans, and PC Minutes dated 3/17/26 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Chairperson Hooper introduced the item for the 2027 to 2032 Capital Improvement Plan and welcomed Ms. Hoyle to present the report. Ms. Hoyle addressed the Planning Commission and stated that the proposed plan covers the years 2027 through 2032. She highlighted that the plan includes 25 new projects with a total City funding portion of \$39.9 million. She clarified that this financial commitment is distributed over several years rather than being allocated within a single year. Ms. Hoyle began the project review with City Hall Architectural Improvements planned for 2027 and 2028 at a total cost of \$160,000, and she encouraged the Commissioners to interject with questions throughout the presentation of the various projects.

Chairperson Hooper suggested that the Commission address each project one at a time, inviting members to chime in with questions as they move through the list. Ms. Hoyle then introduced the City Hall Electrical Gear Replacement project for 2027, which is budgeted at \$400,000. Mr. Hetrick inquired about the aggregate ratings for these projects, noting that he had served as a rater but could not locate the final scores in the materials. Ms. Hoyle directed the Commission to page 207 in the back of the CIP report to find the aggregate spreadsheets. She provided specific ratings for the initial items, noting the City Hall Architectural Improvements received a 73 while the Electrical Gear Replacement scored significantly higher at 123. Continuing with facilities projects, Ms. Hoyle presented the dairy barn display upgrades, which received a rating of 59 and are intended to coincide with an upcoming park project. She also detailed a City-wide door replacement project scheduled for 2027 at a cost of \$258,000. This project involves the replacement of 40 doors across various City buildings, as indicated on the provided map, and received a rating of 115. Ms. Hoyle asked if there were any further questions regarding facilities before the presentation transitioned to park-related projects, but no additional comments were made.

Ms. Hoyle continued the presentation by detailing several new park projects. She introduced the Museum Big Barn construction, a project scheduled for 2032 with an estimated cost of \$7.5 million and an aggregate rating of 50. This was followed by the park's vehicle counter replacements project for 2027, which

includes both counters and software at a cost of \$160,000 and received a rating of 68. For 2028, Ms. Hoyle presented the Stony Creek stream bank stabilization at the Rochester Hills Museum, budgeted at \$200,000 with a rating of 108. She also described drainage improvements at Innovation Hills for 2027, also costing \$200,000, noting the specific location at the end of the parking lot. During this portion of the report, Ms. Brnabic inquired about the School Road paving project. Ms. Hoyle clarified that she intended to discuss all three School Road projects together at the end of her presentation. Ms. Hoyle then highlighted the former beekeeper property on Rochester Road, which involves a parking and trail head concept plan for 2027 at a cost of \$100,000 with a rating of 79. The final park-related item was the Auburn Green Space boardwalk, intended to connect the green space to Avondale Park in 2028 for \$600,000; this project received a rating score of 41. Chairperson Hooper confirmed that these items represented only the new projects within the Capital Improvement Plan.

Ms. Hoyle introduced the Clinton River Management Plan, which is scheduled for 2028 at a cost of \$100,000 to identify future stream bank stabilization needs. Shifting to pathway projects, she detailed the Hamlin Road at Clinton River Trail Hawk Signal, noting that engineering is occurring in the current year with construction set for the following year at a total cost of \$588,680. Chairperson Hooper inquired about the grant amount for this project. Ms. Hoyle and Ms. Balint explained that the project is part of a 90/10 split grant, meaning the City will be reimbursed for 90% of the construction costs.

Ms. Balint clarified that this specific funding covers two Hawk signals, one at the Clinton River Trail crossing at Hamlin Road and another at Hamlin Elementary, along with two rapid flashing beacons on Tienken Road west of Adams High School. Regarding the location, Chairperson Hooper asked for clarification on whether the signal was at Crooks Road or Hamlin. Ms. Balint confirmed it is located specifically where the Clinton River Trail crosses Hamlin Road. Chairperson Hooper noted that while pedestrians would have a signal to cross Hamlin, they would still face difficulties at the Crooks Road intersection. Ms. Balint acknowledged the challenges at Crooks Road due to it being under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission but stated it remains on the list for future consideration.

Mr. Struzik suggested that the City evaluate the speed limit transition in the area of the Hamlin Road crossing, noting that the change from 35 to 40 mph could distract drivers from the hawk signal or pedestrians. Ms. Balint agreed to look into the matter. Ms. Hoyle then presented the South Adams Hawk signal at the Clinton River Trail, a project shared with Auburn Hills. She corrected the budgeted amount to \$250,000, explaining that the City did not receive its initially sought grant. Ms. Roediger clarified that the total project cost is \$500,000, split equally between the two cities, though they continue to work with Auburn Hills to identify alternative grant options to offset these costs. Regarding pathway safety, Ms. Hoyle detailed the rapid flashing beacon and median island at Tienken Road and Falcon Drive. This project is part of a previously mentioned grant, leaving the city responsible for only 10% of the \$126,500 total. Additionally, she introduced the John R. crossing improvements, which involve three hawk signals located at Borden, Spencer, and the nearby Catholic school.

Ms. Balint reported that SEMCOG awarded the city a grant check of approximately \$700,000 for the John R. crossing improvements. Commissioner Struzik commended the staff's work on the project, noting that the locations were well-chosen and that securing significant grant funding was a major benefit for the area.

Following the discussion on pathways, Ms. Hoyle transitioned to stormwater projects, beginning with the Red Oak Lane Drainage Basin planned for 2027 at a cost of \$300,000. Chairperson Hooper confirmed that Red Oak is a public street and observed that the drainage issue likely stemmed from a lack of accounting for it during development decades ago. Ms. Balint noted that the City is currently limited in its options for addressing the site and confirmed that the City does not yet own the property proposed for the basin.

Ms. Hoyle then introduced a placeholder for stormwater asset management for operations and maintenance in 2030 and 2031, totaling \$8 million. When Chairperson Hooper questioned how this would be funded, Ms. Balint acknowledged that funding for the aging stormwater system has been a topic of discussion for over 20 years. She explained that the placeholder is intended to prompt necessary discussions on how to manage an aging infrastructure that is facing increased pressure from changing storm patterns and property developments.

Chairperson Hooper noted that a previous tax proposal through the State legislature regarding public safety infrastructure had not progressed and expressed doubt that there was any current political appetite for raising taxes. Ms. Balint confirmed she had no updates, noting that a conversation with Midwest approximately nine months prior indicated no movement regarding stormwater funding.

Ms. Hoyle then transitioned to water and sewer projects, beginning with the Spencer Park Sanitary Lead Replacement scheduled for 2027 at a cost of \$250,000. She detailed the Livernois Road Transmission Main rehabilitation from Auburn to Sierra Boulevard, planned for construction in 2030 at \$2.1 million, and the North Rockdale Drive and Rockdale Medical Plaza water main replacement set for 2029 at \$805,000. Further projects included the Adams Road transmission main replacement from Dutton to Tienken and a water main extension from Mohawk to Potomac, scheduled for 2029 at a cost of \$5.25 million.

Additionally, Ms. Hoyle presented the Rochester Road water main replacement from Hamlin to Avon, budgeted for \$4.5 million in 2027. She noted this work would be coordinated with an MDOT Rochester Road reconstruction project. Finally, she introduced a trio of concurrent projects for School Road scheduled for 2029: a paving project at \$3.3 million, a pathway project at \$380,000, and a sanitary sewer project at \$3 million.

Ms. Brnabic raised a question regarding the School Road paving project, recalling that the developer of the Harvard Place Apartments on John R. Road had previously agreed to fund the paving of the road from John R. to their entrance at Academy Drive. She noted that Mr. McLeod had verified through

minutes from 13 years ago that the developer had set a sum of money aside for this purpose.

Ms. Roediger and Ms. Balint clarified that the section of School Road from John R. to just past the Harvard Place Apartments has already been paved. Ms. Balint further noted that the paving limits identified on the current project map begin at that point rather than extending all the way back to John R. Road. Ms. Brnabic acknowledged the clarification, noting she had not realized the paving was already completed. She stated that she had not traveled that specific route in years and was under the impression that funds were simply being held in case the project moved forward, as there had been significant discussion but nothing previously listed in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Ms. Brnabic then questioned the project description for the Auburn Road pathway gaps, noting a discrepancy where the text referred to installing a pathway along Adams Road between Dequindre and John R. Road, which she felt did not make sense in the context of School Road. Ms. Balint and Ms. Hoyle acknowledged the error, with Ms. Hoyle noting that Chairperson Hooper had also pointed it out and that the description would be updated.

Chairperson Hooper inquired about the \$3 million sanitary sewer project, specifically asking how many homes or businesses it would service. Ms. Balint provided a broader context for the School Road paving, pathway, and sewer projects, explaining that while few properties currently require the service, there has been increased interest in the area due to an EGLE grant for property cleanup. She clarified that these projects serve as placeholders to establish the costs involved for potential future developments and that the numbers were refined by a consultant to provide accurate estimates for interested parties in the area.

Ms. Roediger emphasized that no single project is prompting the investment; rather, it is a response to overall interest in redeveloping and cleaning up the area, which is primarily zoned industrial. She noted that the current infrastructure is incapable of serving the potential high-traffic generators looking to move there and that the projects serve as placeholders in case grant opportunities arise. Chairperson Hooper inquired whether the City would recoup a major portion of the \$3 million sewer cost through lateral and tap fees if development occurs. Ms. Roediger and Ms. Balint confirmed that standard fees would apply, though Ms. Balint acknowledged that the high cost of servicing a small number of homes is why sewer has not been extended previously.

Ms. Balint reiterated that the EGLE grant and the possibilities for future development prompted the current study. Chairperson Hooper stated he understood the validity of including the projects if the cost-sharing were part of a development agreement. Ms. Roediger concluded by clarifying that the City does not intend to proceed with these improvements on its own, but rather when a specific project initiates the need.

Ms. Brnabic inquired about the M-59 sound barrier walls, which she noted had moved to the pending list. She observed that the walls appear unsightly and reflect poorly on the City, especially after 15 years. Recalling past discussions

with former staff member Paul Davis, she mentioned that maintenance is complicated by vegetation located both in front of and behind the walls.

Ms. Brnabic noted that while MDOT was originally responsible, upkeep has been a low priority for them, and she questioned if the city had previously agreed to maintain them. She suggested that the Planning Commission might consider splitting the project to address cleaning the walls separately from the vegetation management. Regarding the area behind the walls, Chairperson Hooper clarified that the land is private property.

Ms. Brnabic continued the discussion regarding the M-59 sound barrier walls, questioning why the project was moved to the pending list after previously being scheduled for 2026 and 2027. Ms. Hoyle explained that the project had been pushed back annually because the budget could not accommodate the combined costs of cleaning and vegetation management. She stated that the project was moved to pending until a viable funding source is identified, though it remains under regular review.

In response to Ms. Brnabic's inquiry about how CIP projects are typically funded, Ms. Hoyle noted that the walls had been associated with the major roads fund, despite this not being a primary use for Act 51 money. She clarified that other projects have unfortunately taken priority as the Capital Improvement Plan must balance competing funding needs for parks, stormwater, and other infrastructure. Ms. Hoyle concluded by stating that the project will move back into the active schedule as soon as a solid plan and sufficient funding are available.

Ms. Brnabic acknowledged that other projects may take higher priority but reiterated her concern regarding the unsightly appearance of the sound barrier walls, specifically noting that they have not been addressed for 15 years. She questioned the \$500,000 estimated cost and asked if it were possible to separate the cleaning of the walls from the larger vegetation project. Ms. Balint stated she would look into the matter further, including investigating the City's maintenance responsibilities for the back side of the walls. She noted that while maintenance is a low priority for MDOT, she would reach out to former staff member Paul Davis to determine where the previous discussions had left off. Regarding the feasibility of cleaning the walls independently, Ms. Balint recalled that the vegetation might need to be addressed first to provide access to the walls, but she committed to verifying this information and following up with Ms. Brnabic.

Chairperson Hooper recalled previous discussions regarding the installation of the sound walls, noting that the decision was made to keep them plain to avoid the ongoing costs of repainting and maintenance. He explained that while MDOT agreed to install the walls, they explicitly stated that all future upkeep would be the City's responsibility. He also expressed that addressing vegetation on the backside of the walls is a significant complication because it involves entering private property, which he described as a "can of worms" that is unlikely to happen. He compared the situation to other municipalities that have spent millions of dollars repainting walls only to find that the results do not last. Ms. Neubauer added that she recalled former staff member Paul Davis

explaining that the specific material and sealant of the walls prevented them from being simply power washed. She also reiterated that the vegetation would need to be addressed before any work could begin and noted that the side of the walls owned by the City is not the side requiring the most attention.

Ms. Hoyle concluded the presentation of the 25 new projects. Chairperson Hooper then inquired how the Commission should address existing projects, and Ms. Hoyle noted that while they are not usually discussed at this meeting, staff were available to answer questions. Mr. Struzik asked for an update on the Hampton Circle repaving project, specifically inquiring if the plan still included redoing lane markings to narrow the road, limiting left turn lanes, and adding bike lanes. Ms. Balint confirmed that this remains the plan. Mr. Struzik encouraged staff to reach out to the affected community for feedback before finalizing the design. He noted that while he would eventually like to see physical narrowing of the road, the current proposal of using lane markings is a remarkable improvement, similar to the success seen with Barclay Circle once its turn lanes were addressed. Ms. Balint agreed to follow up on these points.

Mr. Dettloff inquired about the typical percentage of funding provided by federal or State grants for these projects. Ms. Hoyle explained that the split varies depending on the specific project. She noted that the pathway projects on Hamlin and Tienken are federally funded at 90%. Additionally, the John R. project receives 80% federal funding through SEMCOG. When asked if any program changes might affect grants currently in the pipeline, Ms. Balint confirmed that no programs have been eliminated. She identified the two primary funding sources as the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant and the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grant. She noted that these are the same grants utilized for the Hawk signals on John R. and the Hamlin project, and the City plans to pursue these same sources for projects in 2028.

Chairperson Hooper opened the Public Hearing regarding the Capital Improvement Plan, and upon seeing no one come forward, he closed the hearing at 7:38 p.m.

Ms. Neubauer inquired about the sustainability and visibility of road markings. She recalled previous City Council discussions led by Council member Theresa Mungiolli regarding the reflectivity of road paint. She questioned if the City could utilize more permanent or highly reflective materials for road striping, noting that the current paint often requires annual reapplication due to winter weather and salt damage.

Ms. Balint explained that annual re-striping is standard, though the City continuously evaluates new products. She noted that while winters are particularly harsh on road markings, there is currently no product available that lasts five years compared to one. In response to Ms. Neubauer's observations about highly reflective highway markings, Ms. Balint stated she would investigate whether local road standards under the MUTCD allow for different materials.

Regarding school safety, Ms. Balint confirmed the installation of rapid flashing beacons and refuge islands on Tienken Road at Medina and Falcon Drive. She

explained that these are packaged with Hawk signals at Hamlin Elementary and the Clinton River Trail to improve the City's chances of securing grant funding, with construction scheduled for 2027.

Ms. Neubauer raised concerns about high accident rates at Rochester High School and West Middle School. Ms. Balint clarified that a traffic signal cannot be placed on Walton Boulevard near Rochester High School due to improper spacing between existing signals at Rochdale and Livernois. However, she committed to following up with the City's transportation engineer regarding potential safety studies for Old Perch Road.

Ms. Neubauer noted that during the approval process for the Starbucks development, a condition was established requiring the City and the developer to mitigate traffic dangers if accidents occurred. She reported that a collision had occurred at the Starbucks exit approximately three weeks prior, triggering the need to reexamine the location according to that specific condition.

Ms. Balint explained that the City reached out to the Road Commission following the incident, but current traffic counts, vehicle speeds, and the proximity of existing signals significantly limit the infrastructure changes that can be made at that site. When Ms. Balint inquired about traffic movements, she and Ms. Neubauer discussed the concern of drivers making left-hand turns out of the development.

Additionally, Ms. Neubauer described safety issues near West Middle School and Rochester High School, characterizing the area as dangerous due to inappropriate pedestrian crossings on major roads. She specifically detailed a problem with vehicle stacking caused by cars simultaneously attempting to make left and right turns into a parking lot that can only accommodate one vehicle at a time.

Ms. Neubauer explained that on Old Perch Road, traffic stacking to enter the school frequently forces other drivers into oncoming traffic to bypass the queue, creating dangerous blind spots for those exiting the school. Ms. Balint noted that the City recently launched a year-long "Safe Streets for All" study in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Hubbell, Roth & Clark (HRC) to identify pathway gaps and safety improvements around schools. She committed to making a special note of these locations for that study.

Ms. Neubauer added that Superintendent Robert Shaner has data regarding traffic studies and the recent deployment of officers to manage these areas. Regarding the Starbucks development, Ms. Roediger stated that the City would review police reports to determine the frequency of accidents, noting that they had not received complaints since the business opened. Ms. Neubauer reiterated that the developer is bound by a condition to work with the City if the original traffic mitigation measures, such as the "one way in, one way out" configuration, prove insufficient to prevent dangerous driving maneuvers and accidents.

Chairperson Hooper observed that the traffic issues at Starbucks are similar to

those experienced by Meijer over the years, where individuals often ignore prohibited left-turn signs despite multiple redesigns of the approaches. Continuing the discussion on road striping, he explained the technical differences between paint and thermoplastic, noting that while thermoplastic is a superior, longer-lasting plastic material with melted-in beads, it costs approximately eight times more than standard paint.

Ms. Balint noted that the City currently uses thermoplastic for "legends," such as crosswalks. Chairperson Hooper shared that the Borden Park parking lot was striped with thermoplastic, which can last 20 to 25 years in such environments. However, he clarified to Ms. Neubauer that while thermoplastic is more durable, it cannot withstand the heavy abuse of snowplows on active streets, which scrape off the reflective beads regardless of the material used. He concluded that Michigan's weather and snowplowing needs make it impossible to maintain striping as long as states like Florida. Ms. Balint added that the City typically gets three to five years of use from thermoplastic legends.

Chairperson Hooper discussed the cost-benefit analysis of road striping, noting that while thermoplastic is more durable, its high cost compared to annual painting - which historically costs approximately four cents per foot - makes the investment debatable given the abuse from snowplows. He then inquired about the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) program, confirming that the new system would transition the City from drive-by meter reading to a web-based system similar to that used by DTE. Ms. Balint clarified that the current infrastructure is technologically capable of converting to an AMI system over several years, potentially requiring additional cell towers for communication.

Regarding the Clinton River Access project at Eagle Landing, Chairperson Hooper questioned the \$2 million placeholder listed on page 109 of the plan. Mr. Elwert explained that the project, which is approximately five years out, is envisioned as a potential grant-funded initiative to improve river access. The concept involves beefing up the parking lot and potentially installing a floating dock, building on concepts developed with the Clinton River Watershed Council prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chairperson Hooper expressed concern regarding the \$2 million placeholder for the Clinton River access project at Eagle Landing, noting that the cost seemed high for the proposed 20 parking spots. Staff clarified that the project is a placeholder concept that has not been finalized. Commissioner Hetrick inquired if the \$2 million also covered stream bank rehabilitation. Staff explained that the stream bank work at that location is a separate, current project, while the CIP includes a new project for a comprehensive assessment of the Clinton River to identify future trouble spots before they impact infrastructure like roads or utility poles.

Regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, Chairperson Hooper observed that public sentiment on the technology appears to be shifting. Ms. Hoyle noted that while the project was originally scheduled for immediate implementation, it has been pushed back annually due to complications regarding standardized equipment and plug compatibility. She suggested that the project may be moved to the pending list in the future if a specific need

arises.

Chairperson Hooper inquired about the need to replace City copier machines, noting that the shift toward digitizing plan reviews and other documents should theoretically reduce the required number of units. Ms. Hoyle clarified that the machines are multi-purpose devices serving as printers, scanners, and copiers, and noted that the City has already eliminated individual printers in favor of shared department units. She explained that these devices have a five-to-seven-year lifespan and are replaced on a set schedule.

Ms. Roediger added that while the City is scaling back and has even removed nearly all fax machines, the units remain in regular use, particularly for scanning purposes. She confirmed that the Planning Department shares its unit with the Parks Department. Chairperson Hooper expressed his desire to ensure the city avoids unnecessary spending based on past habits, and Ms. Hoyle agreed that digital transitions are being considered in the City's long-term planning.

Chairperson Hooper asked for any final project-related questions from the Planning Commission. After seeing no further questions from the members, he called for a motion to move the matter forward.

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

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

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Planning Commission Approves the Capital Improvement Plan that has been proposed for the years 2027-2032. The Rochester Hills Planning Commission has determined the following:

Whereas, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33, of Public Acts of 2008, as amended, requires the Rochester Hills Planning Commission to annually accept a Capital Improvement Plan for the benefit of the health, safety and welfare of the community as those criteria relate to the physical development of Rochester Hills; and

Whereas, the Rochester Hills Fiscal Office has consulted with the City's professional staff who carry out the business of planning for and providing for the present and future needs and desires of the citizens of Rochester Hills; and

Whereas, the Capital Improvement Plan is meant to consider the immediate and future needs and goals of Rochester Hills, as identified by the public, City Boards and Commissions, and the Mayor's staff, in light of existing projects and plans and anticipated resources; and

Whereas, the Capital Improvement Plan is a flexible document, necessarily meant to be reevaluated and amended each year, to project into the six succeeding years, and further amended as needed to address practical realities as they relate to policies and philosophies of relevant Boards, the City Council and the Mayor's office; and

Whereas, the Capital Improvement Plan is a guide and forum to aid the Rochester Hills

Mayor's Office and the Rochester Hills City Council in making decisions regarding the physical development and infrastructure maintenance of the City and determining what, if any, resources can or should be available to carry out City Council's policies and budgetary decisions; and

Whereas, the components of the Capital Improvement Plan have been subject to a public hearing, public review, and committee reviews over the course of several years and a duly noticed full public hearing held on April 21, 2026 and

Whereas, the components of the Capital Improvement Plan were arrived at through a point system using variables that included, among other things, whether the project has begun, funds committed, sources of funds, prior City Council decisions, Planning Commission or administrative recommendations and decisions; and

Resolved, that the Capital Improvement Plan presented for review on April 21, 2026, is adopted by the Rochester Hills Planning Commission on April 21, 2026 and

Be It Further Resolved, that this Plan should be published and attested to according to law.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2026-0187

Request for Election of Officers - Chairperson - for a one-year term to expire the first meeting in April 2027

Chairperson Hooper introduced the request for the election of officers for a one-year term set to expire in April 2027. Commissioner Struzik made a motion to nominate Greg Hooper to continue as the Chairperson for the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brnabic. Chairperson Hooper called for discussion on the motion, and seeing none, conducted a voice vote. The motion carried unanimously, with all members in favor and none opposed. Commissioner Neubauer expressed the Commission's appreciation for Chairperson Hooper's leadership, and Chairperson Hooper thanked the members for their continued support.

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

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

Resolved, the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby appoints Greg Hooper to serve as its Chairperson for a one-year term to expire the first meeting in April 2027.

2026-0188

Request for Election of Officers - Vice Chairperson - for a one-year term to expire the first meeting in April 2027

Chairperson Hooper introduced the request for the election of a vice chairperson for a one-year term set to expire in April 2027. Commissioner Neubauer made a motion to nominate Deborah Brnabic to continue in her role as the Vice Chairperson of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dettloff.

Chairperson Hooper called for discussion on the motion. Seeing none, he conducted a voice vote, and the motion carried unanimously with all members

in favor.

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, Hooper, Neubauer, Struzik, Weaver, Hetrick, Dettloff and Gallina

Resolved, the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby appoints Deborah Brnabic to serve as its Vice Chairperson for a one-year term to expire the first meeting in April 2027.

2026-0189

Request for Election of Officers - Secretary - for a one year term to expire the first meeting in April 2027

Chairperson Hooper introduced the request for the election of a secretary for a one-year term set to expire in April 2027. Commissioner Neubauer made a motion to nominate Scott Struzik to continue as secretary for another term. The motion was supported by Commissioner Denstaedt. Chairperson Hooper called for discussion on the motion to appoint Mr. Struzik. Seeing no further discussion, a voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

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

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

Resolved, the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby appoints Scott Struzik to serve as its Secretary for a one-year term to expire the first meeting in April 2027.

DISCUSSION

2026-0199

Data Center Ordinance Discussion Draft

(McLeod Memo dated 4/15/26, Draft Ordinance 3/19/26, City Council Synopsis 3/9/26 and 2/23/26, Draft Joint PC-CC Minutes 2/2/26, and PC minutes 12/9/25 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Chairperson Hooper introduced the discussion on the draft data center ordinance. Mr. McLeod explained that while a preliminary ordinance provision regarding data centers was previously included in general industrial standards, staff is now bringing forward a more formal and comprehensive review. He noted that this working draft is not intended to be final but serves to illustrate staff's proposed structure for the ordinance.

Mr. McLeod provided an update on the regulatory environment, stating that the City Council is currently about one and a half months into a six-month moratorium on data centers. He added that the state is also contemplating a state-wide moratorium, which could significantly impact local planning if enacted.

Regarding the types of facilities being addressed, Mr. McLeod distinguished between different scales of development. He specifically identified "hyper centers" as the large-scale projects often featured in the news, which typically exceed 100 acres. He noted that these massive facilities are known for their

extreme consumption of electricity and water, often drawing enough energy to power an entire major city.

Mr. McLeod explained that while hyperscale data centers are highly land-consumptive and typically locate along major electrical corridors like I-94, Rochester Hills' limited land availability and grid access make such massive developments less likely. However, the draft ordinance still addresses them by requiring a conditional use permit within industrial districts and establishing a minimum lot size of 10 acres. The primary focus of the proposal shifted toward local data centers, which are smaller in size and often function as commercial spaces where businesses or internet providers can purchase server space. By breaking the ordinance into two distinct categories, staff aims to create standards more conducive to the city's specific land and infrastructure constraints while still providing a framework for these smaller-scale commercial facilities.

Mr. McLeod discussed the local nature of these smaller data centers, noting they are more compatible with the surrounding community. He proposed that such facilities be classified as a permissible use within the Industrial or Employment Center (EC) districts under two conditions. First, they could be permitted as an ancillary or accessory use to an existing industry. Second, standalone data centers would be permitted if their power capacity is less than two megawatts. Mr. McLeod acknowledged that while two megawatts is a common industry threshold for smaller facilities, it still represents a significant electrical load equivalent to the consumption of approximately 1,500 homes.

The intent of these provisions is to support the city's technologically advanced industrial base. Mr. McLeod emphasized the importance of accommodating high-end users, such as Fanuc, who may require dedicated data centers for their own internal processing needs. He cited the Henry Ford Health data center at 2571 Product Drive as a local example. This standalone facility occupies roughly 40,000 square feet and serves exclusively to manage the data requirements for the Henry Ford Health system.

Mr. McLeod explained that privately held data centers are often more secretive about their energy consumption compared to publicly operated ones, which frequently use their high electrical capacity as a sales pitch to attract clients. The draft ordinance addresses these facilities through two classifications: a conditional use for larger operations and a permissible use for ancillary or smaller-scale data centers.

A primary safety and comfort standard in the draft is a required 500-foot setback from residentially zoned property. However, this distance can be reduced if the applicant provides a 3D acoustical model proving they can meet the City's noise standards. Mr. McLeod noted that he is collaborating with MemTech, a local firm of acoustical professionals, to review these standards. He pointed out that the City's existing data center currently maintains a buffer of approximately 1,000 feet from the nearest residences, providing a significant distance between the industrial activity and the community.

Mr. McLeod detailed the screening requirements, explaining that the most

intensive buffer standard, Buffer E, would be mandated. This requires a combination of physical walls and green landscaping. Furthermore, if a 3D sound map indicates potential noise violations, additional acoustical landscape screening would be required. He noted that typical sound ordinances often fail to address the specific noise profile of data centers, which produce decibel levels on a "C-weighted" scale. This low-frequency sound acts much like a vibration and can pass through standard cement walls or general landscaping if the screening is not specifically designed for acoustical dampening.

To address these unique sound challenges, the draft ordinance requires that any noise-producing equipment, whether ground-mounted or on the roof, such as HVAC units or transformers, must utilize specific dampening materials and equipment designs. This dual approach ensures that screening addresses both the visual requirements of the City's normal standards and the specialized acoustical needs identified by the 3D modeling to mitigate sound and vibration.

Mr. McLeod explained that the decibel levels currently established in the draft represent the most stringent standards possible. He noted that staff intentionally set these strict requirements as a starting point, with the expectation that they may be adjusted following a professional review by MemTech to ensure they are realistic.

The proposal also distinguishes between different time frames to prevent developers from using higher daytime ambient noise levels to justify loud operations. Mr. McLeod emphasized that while daytime noise is often masked by general activity, nighttime requires a much lower threshold when background noise is minimal. To ensure community comfort, the ordinance will require sound studies to be conducted at appropriate times, ensuring that noise levels remain acceptable during the quietest hours of the night.

Mr. Hetrick questioned the rationale behind allowing six months for a facility to submit an as-built study and an additional six months to rectify any non-compliance. Mr. McLeod explained that the initial six-month period after a facility becomes operational is intended to verify that the sound systems are functioning as theoretically modeled, providing the city with an "as-built" record of acoustic performance. This ensures that the City is not merely relying on initial projections but has empirical data to address potential neighbor complaints.

Regarding the timeline for non-compliance, Mr. McLeod noted that because data center sound issues often require complex, large-scale engineering solutions rather than simple fixes, the six-month window was proposed to allow for significant structural or mechanical adjustments. Commissioner Hetrick expressed concern with this duration, noting that the combined periods could result in a full year of noise issues for the community, and indicated a preference for a shorter non-compliance timeline.

Chairperson Hooper suggested holding further questions until staff completed the overview, noting that several commissioners had questions lined up. Mr. McLeod then addressed water usage, stating that the ordinance would require a closed-loop internal system. He explained that since these systems require

periodic flushing and recharging, applicants must provide a plan for the proper disposal of the used water, which is often not clean upon discharge.

Regarding electrical consumption, Mr. McLeod noted that developers must demonstrate how they will secure service and show that DTE Energy has signed off on the process. Furthermore, the draft includes a requirement for a ratepayer protection agreement to ensure that the massive energy demands of a data center do not result in increased costs for local DTE customers. He emphasized that these measures are intended to proactively address the common public concerns often reported in the news regarding large-scale data facilities.

Mr. McLeod addressed the promotion of alternative energy, acknowledging the challenges of implementing such systems in Michigan while noting that developers are financially motivated to use free energy where feasible. He pointed out that large-scale facilities with significant roof areas offer substantial potential for solar panel installation, and the ordinance would require developers to demonstrate their efforts toward incorporating such energy-producing materials. Additionally, any proposed electrical substations must be integrated into the site plan and fully screened from view.

The draft ordinance also emphasizes energy efficiency, requiring that buildings are designed to minimize consumption and maximize system utility. This includes exploring ways to repurpose generated heat, such as using the warmth produced by servers to heat the facility during winter months rather than relying on supplemental systems.

Finally, Mr. McLeod touched on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), which are essential for the redundancies required by data centers. The ordinance would regulate the location and screening of these units and require a comprehensive safety plan to address risks such as thermal runaway. He stressed the importance of the City being an active participant in these safety and management plans to protect the surrounding area.

Mr. McLeod addressed the safety concerns regarding battery energy systems, noting that once a battery catches on fire, similar to a Tesla or other EV vehicle, it does not go out until it wants to go out. He emphasized the need for plans to be in place should a worst-case scenario like thermal runaway occur. Regarding a decommissioning fund, he explained the goal is to get the building back to a state where it can be utilized for normal industrial purposes, rather than requiring it be fully removed.

The draft requires that operations be conducted indoors. For any items that must be outdoors, the developer must show they cannot be indoors and ensure they are screened so as not to bring them to the outside world. Mr. McLeod noted that while these facilities are very secure and often use a multitude of levels of security and fencing, the City must take into account what that security fencing looks like.

Finally, he discussed the issue of building height. He explained that some ordinances allow data centers to build taller than normally allowed to create

efficiencies for cooling systems. This allows the cooling systems to be kept inside the building so nothing is exterior mounted, but the trade-off is that the building is taller and more visible. He asked the commission to consider if that is a trade-off the city wants to make. Mr. McLeod concluded his summary by posing a policy question regarding whether the City should allow taller buildings, provided they are set back from the surrounding environment. He explained that allowing extra height could facilitate housing all cooling systems inside the building, potentially making the facility quieter and more efficient, though the structure would be more visible.

Beyond the height considerations, he identified a necessary provision missing from the current draft regarding the Planning Commission's ability to modify parking requirements. He pointed out that a million-square-foot data center might only require parking for five cars, largely for contractors rather than regular employees. To address this, the next iteration of the ordinance will include a provision allowing the Planning Commission to consider a significant reduction in the total number of required parking spots. Following these points, he invited the commission to ask questions.

Chairperson Hooper suggested that the Planning Commission conduct a field visit or view a video montage of local facilities to get a "look, see, taste, feel" of what these buildings actually are. He noted that in his research, the facility on Butler Road looks like a standard office building where a passerby would "never know anything about it."

Mr. McLeod provided specific details for the Butler Road site, noting it sits on a little less than 10 acres with a 76,000-square-foot building, though only about 17,000 square feet are dedicated to data center usage. Chairperson Hooper then compared this to a 123.NET facility in Southfield listed on the staff-provided website, which is 40,000 square feet with three megawatts of power. He described it as looking like a typical industrial building with solid walls, reiterating that "you never know what's inside."

The discussion then turned to the regulatory history of such sites. Chairperson Hooper asked if the City had ever specifically approved the existing data centers. Ms. Roediger explained that they have been treated as an accessory use "as long as we've had computers," similar to a printer or a copier. Chairperson Hooper expressed concern that a developer could ostensibly build for a permitted industrial use and then later sell to a data center operator, leaving the City with no "recall" to prevent a transition that might not meet the new standards being discussed.

Ms. Roediger clarified that the Henry Ford Health data center on Product Drive was approved over a decade ago and was initially welcomed by Mayor Barnett as a positive office use. She noted that it only appeared as an administrative item recently when the facility added outside generators, which required a standard building permit but did not trigger a full site plan review. She explained that until recently, hyperscale data centers were not a factor in Michigan; instead, smaller accessory data centers have existed for years without causing public concern.

Mr. McLeod agreed, stating that he does not believe a true hyperscale center is currently operational within the state of Michigan, though several have been reported in the news as being in the construction or planning phases. He echoed Chairperson Hooper's observation that most existing data centers in the area are integrated into older office buildings and blend in seamlessly.

As an example, he pointed to a building near the north side of Somerset Mall, noting that a portion of it serves as a data center while other floors house standard professional offices, such as law firms. He emphasized that these facilities have "lived among us forever" without being noticed, specifically citing the Product Drive location as a facility that looks unremarkable from the road.

Chairperson Hooper observed that noise levels at existing facilities already appeared to exceed 40 decibels, noting the difficulty of legislating such strict limits. Ms. Roediger agreed, stating that the City must increase the proposed decibel levels to remain reasonable, as ambient noise in a typical industrial park already exceeds 40 decibels. Chairperson Hooper compared this to other local industrial operations, such as asphalt and concrete recycling plants, which easily reach 70 to 80 decibels, and expressed concern that setting overly restrictive limits for one use could create legal challenges regarding exclusionary zoning.

Ms. Roediger noted that staff is working with MemTech to vet the ordinance, emphasizing that the issue involves both decibel levels and the constant background vibration unique to data centers. She expressed confidence that the City will establish appropriate language, further noting that the likelihood of a truly disturbing facility is low due to the City's limited acreage. She suggested that any large-scale project would likely be located on landfill property, which has minimal proximity to residential areas.

The commission discussed the potential of using landfill sites for data centers, with Chairperson Hooper describing it as a potentially great use for such land. Mr. McLeod added that data center developers would have the financial resources to take on the challenges associated with developing landfill properties, given the significant capital typically behind these projects.

Ms. Neubauer asked for clarification regarding the requirement in section A3 for an "independent 3D acoustic model," questioning how the City could ensure a study is truly independent if the developer is the one paying for it. Mr. McLeod explained his vision for the process: the developer would provide their data, and the City would then hire its own firm, such as MemTech, to conduct a secondary review. He noted that the City would charge the developer for this independent verification since staff members are not acoustical engineers. Ms. Neubauer suggested adding explicit language to the ordinance to ensure developers understand they are responsible for funding the City's portion of the study to maintain true independence.

Ms. Neubauer also proposed revisions to the definition section of the ordinance. She observed that some facility types were currently defined by acreage while others were defined by megawatts or energy consumption. She recommended that both space and energy thresholds be included in the definition for every

category. Specifically, she pointed out that while hyperscale data centers were discussed as requiring at least 10 acres, that spatial requirement was missing from the definition section, which only referenced energy levels. She requested that the definitions be updated to consistently include both energy and space parameters.

Ms. Roediger explained that the 10-acre requirement is currently placed in the regulatory section of the ordinance rather than the definitions. She noted that, from a zoning standpoint, regulations like minimum acreage or setbacks are typically kept out of definitions so they do not get "buried," as applicants might not think to look there for specific requirements.

Ms. Neubauer countered that because the primary concerns surrounding data centers involve both size and energy consumption, she would prefer to see both components included in the definitions. She suggested that a hyperscale data center should be defined by a specific size and a micro data center by a different size, rather than relying solely on energy metrics. She emphasized that including these parameters in the definitions would make the City's limitations "in your face twice" and provide maximum clarity.

The discussion continued with Ms. Neubauer advocating for the City to establish its own specific definitions rather than relying on vague industry standards from other regions. She argued that precise, limiting definitions are necessary to protect the City from litigation and potential problems. Acknowledging that her preference for highly specific definitions has been viewed as too limiting in the past, she maintained that the current moratorium and the intent of the ordinance justify a more restrictive approach to ensure the City's regulations are clear and enforceable.

Mr. McLeod noted that the megawatt capacity of a data center will likely increase over time as facilities retrofit with newer technology, which significantly raises their energy draw. Ms. Neubauer responded that the City should implement a re-approval process for any such changes to prevent developers from "cheating" by increasing their power usage after initial approval. She emphasized that the City must close any potential loopholes that would allow operators to bypass the original intent of the ordinance.

Ms. Neubauer also inquired if the Fire Department had reviewed the draft, to which Mr. McLeod replied that this was the first public presentation of the language. Ms. Neubauer requested that the draft be sent to the Fire Department for their input.

Finally, she raised concerns about developers potentially accumulating non-contiguous parcels of empty space to meet the 10-acre requirement, noting that this could even occur within subdivisions. She requested that preventative language be included in the ordinance to ensure that the acreage requirements are met in a manner that aligns with the City's goals and prevents developers from piecing together land in unintended ways.

Ms. Roediger and Ms. Neubauer discussed the potential for developers to assemble smaller parcels of land into a single large site for data center use. Ms.

Neubauer expressed a desire to close any loopholes that might lead to litigation, specifically concerns that developers could combine properties to meet the 10-acre threshold in areas near residential neighborhoods. Ms. Roediger clarified that the City likely cannot constitutionally prohibit the assembly or merging of properties, as landowners generally have the right to combine adjacent parcels they own.

Ms. Roediger emphasized that zoning "goes with the land," meaning any assembled property must still adhere to the underlying industrial zoning and all applicable regulations. She noted that while theoretically any industrial pieces could be merged - citing Lifetime Fitness and the nearby Sanyo property as examples - the resulting site would still be subject to the strict setbacks and noise standards in the ordinance. Ms. Neubauer clarified that her goal is not to stop land assembly itself, but to ensure that the City's regulations are protective enough to prevent a large-scale facility from being established too close to homes, even on assembled land.

The discussion concluded with Chairperson Hooper and Ms. Roediger pointing out that existing protections, such as the proposed 1,000-foot or 500-foot setbacks from residential areas, would act as the primary defense. Ms. Neubauer reiterated that she wants to be certain these regulations are robust enough to account for even theoretical assembly scenarios, such as those near the apartments by Lifetime Fitness, to ensure residential areas remain fully protected.

Ms. Neubauer questioned how the City would effectively implement and monitor the proposed restrictions, specifically regarding technical aspects like wattage usage and energy contracts. She expressed concern over the feasibility of enforcement, asking if the City would need to hire specialized staff to ensure developers comply with their stated energy draws and to verify that agreements with DTE Energy actually protect residents from rate increases.

Mr. McLeod spoke regarding the challenges of legal enforcement, noting that while a developer might sign a ratepayer protection agreement, DTE Energy can still seek general rate increases through the Public Service Commission. He expressed skepticism that any local ordinance could legally prevent a statewide utility from raising prices, describing the effort to bind a specific development to local rate stability as a "very unique animal." He suggested that, in practice, much of the enforcement would likely rely on legal agreements and certified statements rather than constant manual monitoring by City staff.

Ms. Neubauer sought clarification on how the City would verify a developer's energy usage, questioning if the process would simply rely on an affidavit. Mr. McLeod explained that while a developer would provide a certified statement regarding their megawatt capacity, the actual utility rates remained a separate issue. Ms. Neubauer emphasized that if the City must hire specialists to verify these claims, the ordinance should include language shifting those costs to the developer.

The discussion moved to the long-term enforcement of these energy limits. Mr. McLeod noted that if the City suspected a facility was exceeding its approved

capacity a year after opening, the burden of proof would eventually shift to the City. If a violation of the certified statement were found, the City could then pursue legal action and penalties. Ms. Neubauer concluded by stating she wants clear language in the ordinance ensuring that the costs of monitoring, implementation, and verification of these statements are absorbed by the developer rather than the City.

Chairperson Hooper directed that the City Attorney review the research and provide input on the matter. Mr. McLeod agreed, stating that staff could consult with legal counsel to find "creative ways" to incorporate these requirements into the ordinance.

Mr. McLeod also expanded on the energy challenges, noting that the volume of data center usage already lined up across the State, even before the City begins these local discussions, is more than DTE could ever provide. He raised questions regarding how this demand would be met and who would pay for the necessary infrastructure. While he acknowledged that data center developers have "a lot of money behind them," he pointed out that the costs for substations, transmission lines, and potential contributions to main generators (such as wind, solar, or coal) represent a significant amount of money that is currently unaccounted for.

Chairperson Hooper agreed, stating that wind and solar are "not the answer for data centers" and that such an idea would "never pass the smell test." He noted that the City has not built a substation in a very long time and asked for clarification on their placement, pointing out that the substation on Rochester Road is located in a residential area. Mr. McLeod and Ms. Roediger confirmed this, with Ms. Roediger noting that many public utilities are located in residential zones and "can go anywhere."

Chairperson Hooper remarked that in his 38 years with the City, he had never reviewed a site plan for a substation. However, Ms. Roediger and Mr. McLeod informed him that one is supposed to be coming if for review.

Ms. Roediger explained that even prior to the data center discussion, DTE has acknowledged an energy shortage in the region, including Rochester Hills, Rochester, and Oakland Township. She noted that DTE has been searching for a site between Livernois and John R for years and has approached the City with several options. She concluded by mentioning that the City has finally helped them identify a suitable site.

Mr. Struzik shared that he has worked in technology for the last 25 years and expressed concerns regarding smaller data centers. He noted that while it is becoming less common due to the cloud, a building zoned as office, which might be a couple hundred thousand square feet, could contain a data center of approximately 10,000 square feet on the first floor. He emphasized that the City should not stop a company from building a data center that supports a larger operation and various office jobs. He pointed out that while the proposed language specifically allows for small data centers in the Employment Center

district, it does not explicitly call out the Office district, and he suggested that the Office district should be included.

Mr. Struzik observed that while the draft addresses battery backups and UPS systems, it does not mention flywheels. He described a flywheel as a large mass that spins to store energy kinetically, providing power while generators kick on during an outage. He suggested the City might need to consult the fire department to see if this "large spinning mass" presents extra dangers or fire hazards that should be included in the ordinance, though he was not certain it was necessary. He also emphasized that "not all data centers are scary," noting that his employer owns a 20,000-square-foot dedicated data center and a 10,000-square-foot one within an office building that goes unnoticed. While acknowledging they may not provide as many jobs per square foot as other uses, he noted they do generate tech jobs and enable other office jobs to remain in the area. Mr. Struzik expressed support for the proposed ordinance, particularly the protections regarding setbacks and acoustic limits, and stated that with proper designs, the City should allow these facilities to be built.

Chairperson Hooper questioned the height setback requirement in the draft, noting it was currently listed as one-to-one. He stated that he recalled the City having a two-to-one or three-to-one setback for increased building heights and requested that staff look into the existing standards, as he believed the requirement should be more than one-to-one.

Ms. Denstaedt then raised questions regarding section two of the draft concerning water usage and discharge. She suggested adding language that requires developers to provide a specific timeframe for when they plan to discharge water to allow the City time to plan. Additionally, she inquired about the "appropriate levels" of discharge mentioned in the draft, asking if there is a specific safety threshold or number that should be maintained. She recommended that if such a safety standard exists, it should be explicitly included in the ordinance language.

Mr. McLeod explained that the amount of water discharge allowed would be a function of the test results identifying what is in the water; the quality of the water would dictate the discharge limits. He confirmed that staff could work on developing that language.

Ms. Denstaedt asked where "bad water" would go if it contained harmful substances. Mr. McLeod replied that the test results would determine the destination, noting that much of what he has read indicates such water must be sent to a landfill capable of accepting toxic materials. Chairperson Hooper and Mr. McLeod confirmed that such facilities exist in the State, with Chairperson Hooper specifically mentioning the one near the airport.

Ms. Denstaedt then moved to the noise ordinance, specifically section two, to follow up on Ms. Neubauer's previous questions. She asked for clarification on who would be responsible for monitoring the web portal where the noise data is made accessible to the City.

Mr. McLeod explained that since the data would be available to the City, staff

and its consultants would ultimately be able to monitor it. He noted that while a simple system could be set up to flag when noise levels exceed a certain bar, that information would then be translated for enforcement purposes to a sound engineer professional. This professional would determine if the facility is in exceedance and for what duration or percentage of time. He emphasized that the City would bring a true professional on board to review those statistics and make an official determination.

Ms. Denstaedt expressed her support for section H, number two, stating that she "loved" the provision for funding for the fire department. She noted that it makes sense and will help the community.

Mr. Hetrick began by agreeing with Ms. Neubauer's previous statements regarding the definitions, noting the importance of making them as clear as possible due to the "squishiness" of how these situations may play out. He then questioned the third provision under water usage, which requires the site to include secondary containment for any piping containing non-potable coolants, designed to hold 100% of the system's capacity.

Mr. McLeod confirmed this, explaining that the system must be fully redundant. He stated that if the main cooling loop holding the water fails in any capacity, the surrounding collection system must be able to contain 100% of that water. Mr. Hetrick clarified that this water should then "never be seen in the public again." Mr. McLeod agreed, noting that if a failure occurs and the water enters the secondary system, it would eventually be discharged in an appropriate form once the system is fixed or recharged. He emphasized that the intent is to prevent a scenario where a broken pipe causes water that "shouldn't be seen in the light of day" to spurt out of the building.

Mr. Hetrick expressed concern regarding the possibility of non-potable coolants entering the secondary containment system. Mr. McLeod clarified that the secondary containment is a redundancy measure designed to collect fluids if the primary system breaks, allowing staff to dispose of the contents properly and fix the system. Mr. Hetrick compared the situation to his experience building nuclear power plants, where containment systems were designed to ensure hazardous materials "never, ever, ever, ever, ever would see the light of day."

Mr. McLeod explained that when water is deliberately switched out or if a failure occurs, the disposal method, whether it be a normal landfill, a specialized landfill, or a deep injection well, would be dictated by State regulations governing those specific materials.

Referencing Ms. Denstaedt's earlier points, Mr. Hetrick noted that if the water contains non-potable coolants, cleaning it to a safe level would be extremely difficult. Mr. McLeod clarified that "cleanup" in this context likely means discharging the fluid to a certified and approved location rather than treating it on-site to a drinkable standard. Mr. Hetrick concluded that if the coolants must be discharged, the ordinance must include explicit language requiring the use of

a State or federally approved method for disposal.

Mr. McLeod suggested that the language could be clarified to link back to provision number two. He explained that if an intentional system flush or discharge is required, that liquid must be tested and disposed of according to State or federal regulations. He reiterated that the secondary containment requirement in provision number three is specifically intended for emergency situations.

Mr. Weaver sought to clarify the operational impact of a failure, asking if the secondary containment is meant to keep the facility running or if the system must shut down once the primary loop drains into the secondary one. Mr. McLeod compared it to an above-ground storage tank for gasoline or diesel, which requires secondary containment to ensure that if the main tank fails, the fluid is collected on-site rather than spilling into the ground or a drainage pipe. Mr. Hetrick asked if such a failure would force the data center into a shutdown mode. Mr. McLeod confirmed that in this instance, it most likely would, as the facility would be unable to cool its systems without the primary loop functioning.

Mr. McLeod noted that if a cooling failure occurs, the facility would shut down "pretty quick" to protect millions of dollars in computer equipment from overheating. Mr. Hetrick then addressed the third provision under electrical consumption regarding infrastructure improvements. He emphasized that the ordinance must be clear that all such improvements are the sole financial responsibility of the data center owner. He stated that these costs must not be passed on to residents or the City, and it is up to the developer to determine how those expenses affect their cost structure.

Chairperson Hooper inquired about the next steps for the six-month moratorium, suggesting a public hearing. Ms. Roediger explained that staff could either bring back a revised draft first or proceed to a public hearing, noting that the ordinance could still be modified after a hearing before moving to City Council for its first and second readings. Mr. Weaver requested to see the updated draft, and Ms. Roediger agreed to bring it back in May.

The discussion touched on the possibility of a State-level moratorium. Ms. Roediger noted that the State is considering a one-year moratorium, with a hearing scheduled for the following day. Chairperson Hooper remarked that if the State acts, "all bets are off." He concluded by commenting on the massive energy requirements of proposed projects, such as the 1.4-gigawatt facility in Saline, pointing out that a nuclear power plant typically produces only 1.1 gigawatts. He described the idea of needing a nuclear power plant just to feed a single data center as "ridiculous."

Mr. McLeod noted that the volume of projects currently lined up requires a level of capacity that may simply be unavailable. He observed that while the Governor is welcoming these facilities to the State, and legislators are pushing back, the fundamental question is whether the power grid can even support them. He highlighted the massive financial scale of these projects, citing

examples where companies like Google or Amazon have recommissioned decommissioned nuclear power plants just to power a single data center.

Mr. Weaver referenced Ms. Neubauer's earlier point about litigation, suggesting that for companies of this size, legal fees and penalties might simply be viewed as another business expense they can easily absorb. Mr. McLeod agreed, adding that when these "big boys" target a community, they arrive with a team of attorneys. However, he clarified that 95% of data centers are not on that massive scale.

Mr. Weaver asked if there was potential for several smaller data centers to "piggyback" onto each other, even if located in different parts of town. Mr. McLeod confirmed that some communities welcome them freely; he mentioned a recent webinar featuring a community outside of Washington, D.C., that had already approved 67 facilities and continued to encourage more.

Ms. Roediger emphasized that research indicates data center developers prioritize two main factors: cheap land and access to major utility corridors, such as those along the I-94 highway. She stated that Rochester Hills is at a "very low threat" for hyperscale developments because the City lacks affordable land, noting that developers would not pay a premium to be there when they can find cheaper options in Macomb County or elsewhere. Mr. Weaver agreed, noting that they would prefer to pay around \$10 per square foot.

Ms. Roediger also shared an interesting case involving the University of Michigan, which proposed a data center in a township (possibly Ypsilanti or Pittsfield). Because the University is a State institution, it was exempt from local zoning; in response, the township denied the project water access, creating a "de facto moratorium" that is now headed for litigation.

She concluded by reiterating that the most likely data center projects for the City would be smaller facilities that "blend into the community," similar to the existing Henry Ford Health location. She dismissed the idea of developers buying up high-value properties like Lifetime Fitness, arguing it would be far more affordable for them to build elsewhere with better access to the specific infrastructure they require.

Chairperson Hooper noted that Oakland University could potentially build a data center, with Ms. Roediger pointing out that the University is already exploring a proposal for a small facility on a four-acre parcel in one of its parking lots. She observed that such a project would likely go unnoticed by the public. She emphasized the importance of distinguishing between hyperscale facilities and these smaller integrated uses, stating she does not want to "overregulate" a type of facility the City is unlikely to attract.

Mr. McLeod agreed, adding that the City must balance protections with the needs of local corporate users. He shared a concern from his office regarding world-class companies like FANUC America, which is headquartered in Rochester Hills and heavily focused on AI and robotics. He questioned whether

the City should restrict the "lifeblood" of such companies if they decide to build their own data infrastructure.

He concluded that while the City doesn't want massive hyperscale centers on its "front door," it must acknowledge that the world is evolving toward AI and advanced technology. Even if Rochester Hills does not see hundred-acre developments, Mr. McLeod stated that these facilities are coming "in some form or fashion" because they are simply "the way of the world."

Chairperson Hooper noted that the meeting provided a "good discussion" and asked if the Commission would see a revised draft in a couple of months. Ms. Roediger corrected the timeline, stating they would bring it back in one month.

Discussed.

NEXT MEETING DATE

May 19, 2026 - 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Planning Commission and upon motion by Neubauer, seconded by Denstaedt, Chairperson Hooper adjourned the Regular Meeting at 9:00 p.m.

*Greg Hooper, Chairperson
Rochester Hills Planning Commission*

Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary