

# Memorandum

**DATE:** May 16, 2024  
**TO:** Rochester Hills Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Jill Bahm, AICP, Partner, Joe Tangari, AICP, Principal Planner Julia Upfal, AICP, Senior Planner, Ian Hogg, Staff Planner, Giffels Webster  
**SUBJECT:** Rochester Hills Master Plan Survey and Community Engagement Results

---

## Introduction

The City of Rochester Hills's efforts towards a new Master Plan are well underway and will soon culminate in a framework and policy lens for land use and development in the City over the next 10-15 years. The plan is wrapping up **Phase 2: Envision** and is preparing to move into **Phase 3: Strategize**. This memo describes the results of the community engagement activities.

To date, the community engagement process has included:

## Snapshot of Engagement Points in Phase 1: Understand

**Leadership Visioning-** A survey was provided for City Staff to provide feedback on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and emerging trends in Rochester Hills. The results were discussed at the January 29, 2024 Joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting.

**Joint Meeting-** 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 350 people have viewed the video on the City's YouTube channel.

**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.

1. **Connectivity:** Participants voiced their desire for a more walkable and a more accessible City. Key concerns were over pedestrian safety, the lack of sidewalks, and access to City parks and retail shopping centers.
2. **Transportation:** There was tension between respondents who were in favor of public transportation and those who view public transit as a challenge or expressed concerns about ridership. Traffic calming measures and improving safety were other items that were mentioned.
3. **Open Space:** Individuals praised the City's park system and wanted to see the City make a push to better preserve existing open spaces throughout the City. Increasing access to nature was noted as an important component of the quality of life and community's health.

4. **Development:** Participants voiced their concerns that the City's development practices were leading the City to become overdeveloped. Additionally, there was some tension between those who were in favor of continuing growth and those who were concerned with overdevelopment.
5. **Community Amenities/Administration:** Many respondents believed the City services and amenities offered by the City were adequate and contributed to a healthy and happy life in Rochester Hills. A majority of responses would like to see more community events and programs aimed at bringing people together.

**Leadership 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.

## **Snapshot of Engagement Points in Phase 2: Envision**

**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.

**Meeting Toolkits-** The Meeting Toolkits are meant to provide members of the community with an opportunity to hold their own discussion on the long-range planning process for the City of Rochester Hills. The Toolkits provide residents an opportunity to share their thoughts on the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Two questions are asked in the Meeting Toolkits:

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?

Four completed Meeting Toolkits were returned to the City and the results will be discussed in the Meeting Section down below.

**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. Four (4) Meeting Toolkits were taken by participants.

**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. Attendees participated in a facilitated discussion using the first question from the Meeting Toolkit (see above). In total, over fifteen (15) residents participated in the decision and provided their input on what they like about Rochester Hills. A "Mayor for the Day" banner was left at the OPC and allowed for residents to share what they would improve in Rochester Hills if they were mayor for a day.

**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 works. The stakeholders that participated will be asked to participate in two future small group workshops in future phases of the Master Plan. The groups that were identified as key stakeholders for the small group discussion are listed below:

1. Local Business Leaders
2. LDFA Committee Members

3. Places of Worship
4. Key Staff
5. Nonprofits
6. Residents
7. Boards and Commissions

**Master Plan Website-** A new Master Plan Hubsite will be the home of the Master Plan throughout the planning process. This will serve as a living document that will enable users to interact with different aspects of the Master Plan.

**Consumer Spending Survey-** Howard Kohn of The Chesapeake Group will work with staff to set up one-on-one and/or focus group style remote (Zoom) interviews with business leaders, real estate professionals and school officials with an understanding of the state of the local market and the anticipated future as well as issues in the market causing stress or making things easier.

**Quality of Life Survey-** A community survey was launched on March 18, 2024 to collect feedback on different components of the master plan. This survey was posted on the City’s website and on the Master Plan website and is currently closed, with 537 responses. A summary of the results is provided below.

## Summaries of Engagement

### Respondent Profiles and Quality of Life

The survey closed on May 10, 2024 and dashboard summary is available at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/3tzdbj44>. We will have a breakdown by planning neighborhood for our discussion with the Planning Commission on May 21, 2024.

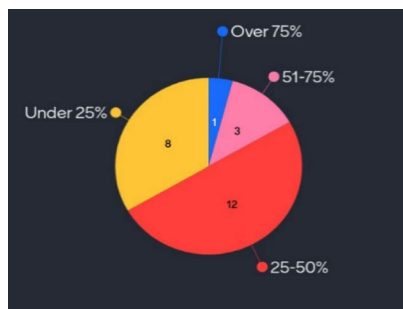
### Mayor’s Business Council Meeting Summary

Attendees were able to participate in the meeting and respond to the questions being asked via Mentimeter. In total there were nine (9) questions asked to members of the Mayor’s Business Council. The first set of questions revolved on the diversity of thought within the local business community. The second set of questions focused on why businesses decided to come to Rochester Hills and what their special needs are as an organization.

Generally, participants believed that Rochester Hills is a great place to conduct business and appreciate the City’s efforts to make Rochester 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. The results from the Mentimeter session are shown below:

**Question #1:** What percent of your workforce would say lives in the Rochester Hills? (24 respondents)

- Under 25%: 8
- 25-50%: 12
- 51-75%: 3
- Over 75%: 1



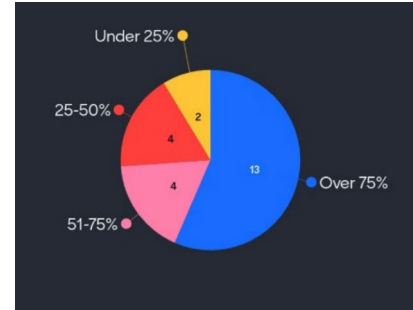
**Question #2:** What percent of your workforce would say comes to work in Rochester Hills 4+ days per week?

Under 25%: 2

25-50%: 4

51-75%: 4

Over 75%: 13



**Question #3:** In working to attract talent for your company from outside of Metro Detroit, what do applicants tend to ask about Rochester Hills?

Safety: 6

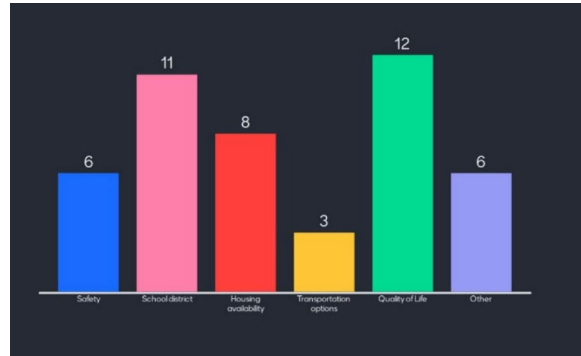
School districts: 11

Housing availability: 8

Transportation options: 3

Quality of life: 12

Other: 6



**Question #4:** What are the top 3 types of businesses would you say your employees tend to visit the most in Rochester Hills?

Dining: 20

Sports/Exercise: 4

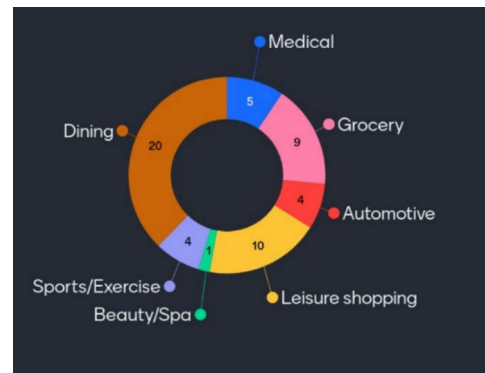
Beauty/Spa: 1

Leisure shopping: 10

Automotive: 4

Grocery: 9

Medical: 5



**Question #5:** Which of the following most accurately describes your company's personnel needs over the next five years?

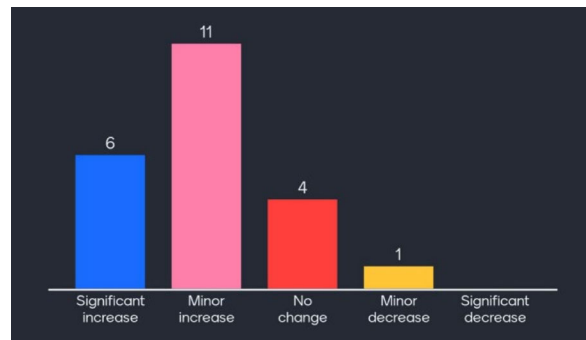
Significant increase: 6

Minor increase: 11

No change: 4

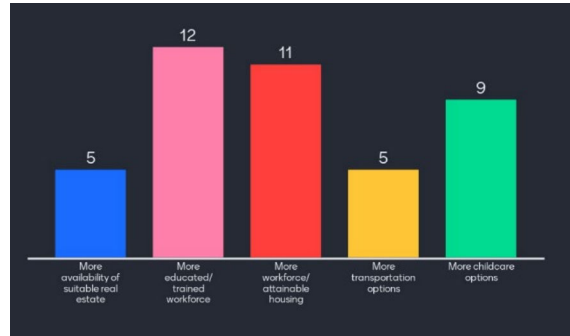
Minor decrease: 1

Significant decrease: 0



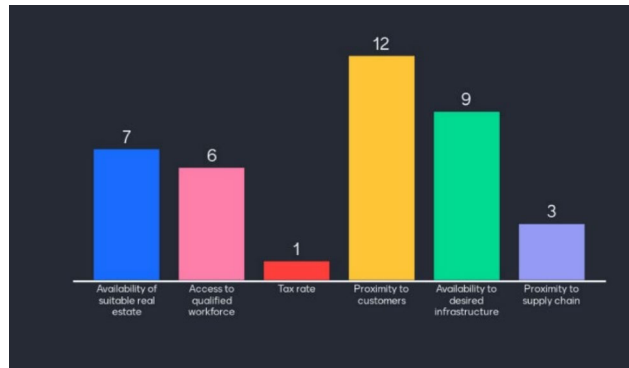
**Question #6:** What are the top 3 initiatives Rochester Hills could do to best support your company?

- More availability of suitable real estate: 5
- More educated/trained workforce: 12
- More workforce/affordable housing: 11
- More transportation options: 5
- More childcare options: 9



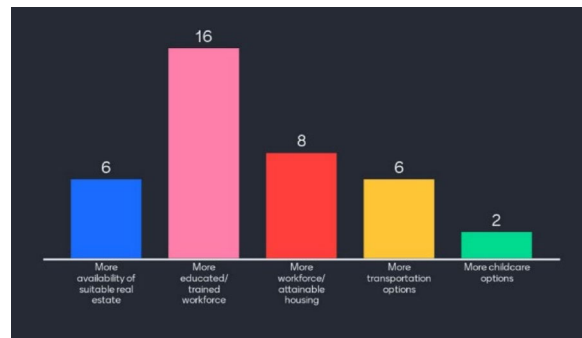
**Question #7:** What were the top 3 factors that influenced your organization's decisions to locate in the City of Rochester Hills?

- Availability of suitable real estate: 7
- Access to qualified workforce: 6
- Tax rate: 1
- Proximity to customers: 12
- Availability to desired infrastructure: 9
- Proximity to supply chain: 3



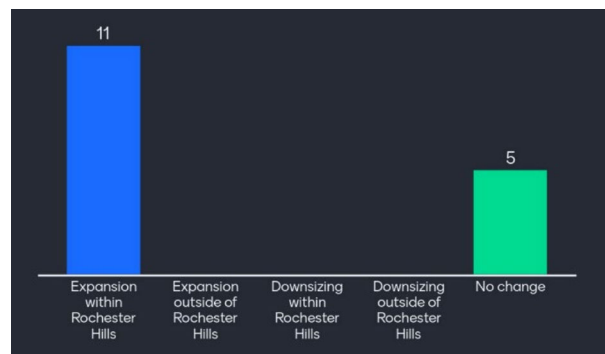
**Question #8:** Looking forward, what are the top 3 community priorities that would best support your organization?

- More availability of suitable real estate: 6
- More educated/trained workforce: 16
- More workforce/affordable housing: 8
- More transportation options: 6
- More childcare options: 2



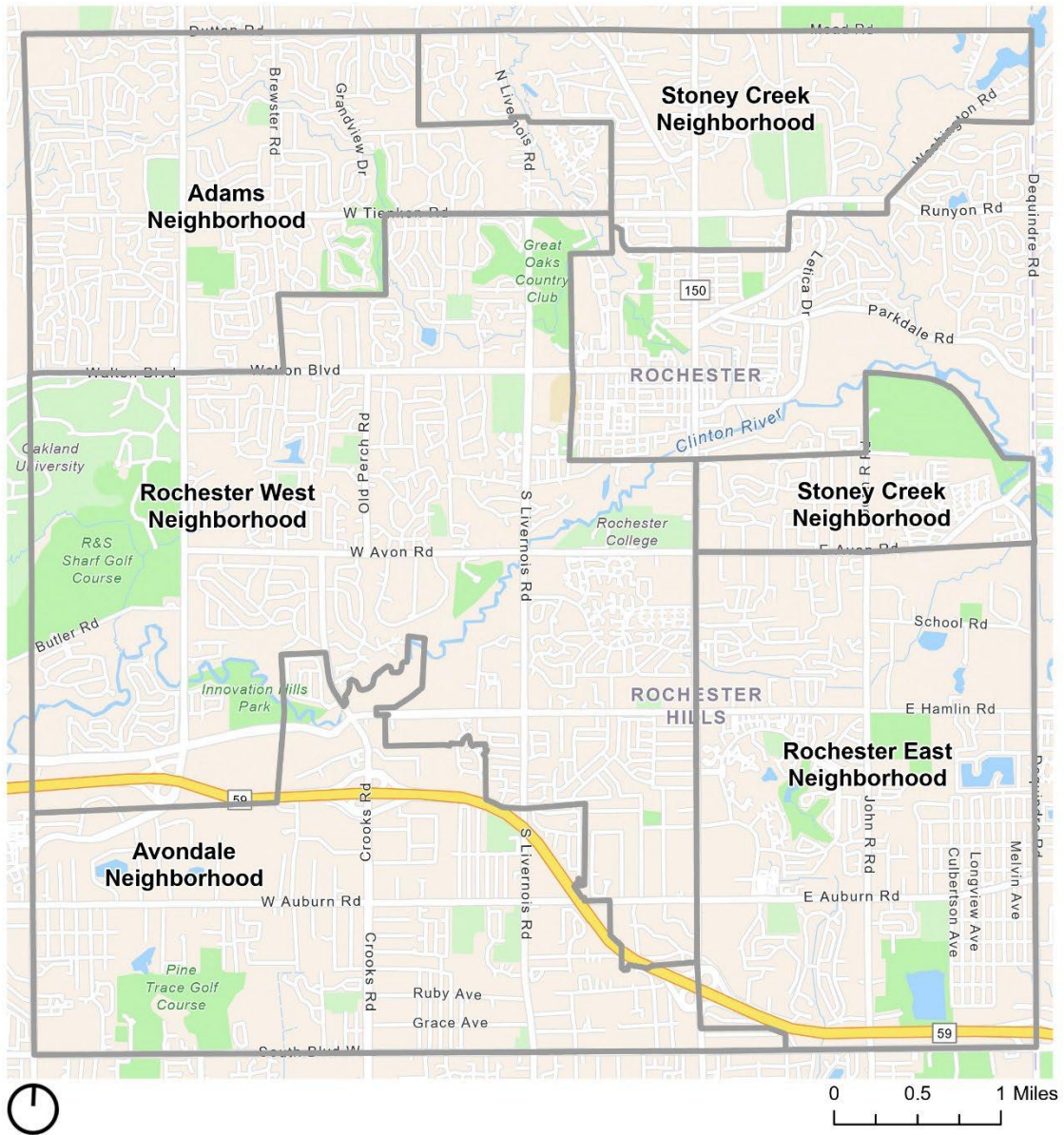
**Question #9:** Which of the following most accurately describes your organization's spacial needs over the next five years?

- Expansion within Rochester Hills: 11
- Expansion outside Rochester Hills: 0
- Downsizing within Rochester Hills: 0
- Downsizing outside Rochester Hills: 0
- No change: 5





# Planning Neighborhoods Map



## Homeowner's Association Meeting

At the April 4<sup>th</sup> Homeowner's Association meeting attendees participated in a facilitated discussion using the Meeting Toolkits questions. In total twenty-six (26) individuals attended the event. As participants checked into the meeting, they were asked to sit themselves at one of the tables that were sorted by Planning Neighborhoods.

As a reminder, the five Planning Neighborhoods are based on the high school districts: Adams, Avondale, Rochester West, Rochester East, Stoney Creek.

- Adams: 5 attendees
- Avondale: 4 attendees
- Rochester West: 12 attendees
- Rochester East: 4 attendees
- Stoney Creek: 1 attendee

Each table had similar responses to each of the questions. 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.**

### **More non-motorized connections between subdivisions, parks, and shopping centers are desired.**

Participants expressed a desire for more sidewalks and additional walking and biking paths. These improvements would provide better access and walkability among subdivisions, parks, and retail centers. Connecting disjointed segments of sidewalks throughout the City was a key concern among HOA Presidents. Additionally, pedestrian pathways across main roads (M-59, Livernois Road, Rochester Road, etc.) were included as another area where walkability and accessibility could be improved in Rochester Hills.

### **Safety of pedestrians, especially school children, and improving traffic management within Rochester Hills is a shared goal.**

Increased traffic at peak times was a major concern, especially with regards to school children walking to and from school. Participants would like to see innovative and improved ways of managing traffic, which prioritize safety and efficiency. Key thoroughfares like John R and Rochester Road were identified as areas where improved traffic solutions were needed.

### **Preservation of existing open spaces and continued upgrades and innovation in the City's parks system are a must for residents.**

The City's park system received high praise from participants. Innovation Hills, Paint Creek Trail, Nowicki Park, Bloomer Park, Spencer Park, etc. were listed by attendees as great community assets. There was a considerable amount of consensus on the need to continue to preserve existing open spaces throughout the City. Many participants want to see the City continue purchasing open spaces for preservation. Additionally, concerns over stormwater management were brought to light and participants expressed a desire for the City to take over stormwater management from the HOA's.

### **Managing growth and ensuring that the City does not become overdeveloped were viewed as a way for Rochester Hills to maintain its desirability.**

Individuals expressed their desire for the City to keep its residential feel and limit overdevelopment in the City. Protecting residential zoning and senior housing were listed as key priorities for residents. There was tension in continuing growth while maintaining the same character in Rochester Hills. The

Brooklands development was viewed as a positive development and as a model for continuing growth here in Rochester Hills.

**Proximity to high quality shopping centers, healthcare facilities, and schools was listed as a key reason for Rochester Hills' success as a City.**

A majority of participants from the HOA's expressed their happiness with the level of service and access to amenities in Rochester Hills. Participants believed they had adequate access to healthcare facilities, shopping centers, and quality school districts. Overall, the level of service and quality of amenities in Rochester Hills were viewed as a reason as to why Rochester Hills is a great place to live.

**Older Persons Center (OPC) Meeting**

At the April 8<sup>th</sup> Mondays with the Mayor meeting at the OPC, residents participated in a facilitated discussion on what they like most about where they live. Question #1 from the Meeting Toolkits was used as the basis for the conversation among residents. Over fifteen (15) residents participated in the discussion, and some indicated what Planning Neighborhood they lived in after the meeting was over. In total there were five tables that provided answers during the discussion.

- Adams: 1 attendee
- Avondale: 4 attendees
- Rochester West: 3 attendees
- Rochester East: 6 attendees
- Stoney Creek: 1 attendee

The discussion revolved around what residents loved about their neighborhood and what they thought was missing from where they lived.

**Walkability and access to various parts of the City could be improved by adding sidewalks and additional walking and biking paths.**

Increasing the number of sidewalks and connections between subdivisions was viewed a way for the City to improve neighborhoods. Additional biking and walking paths, especially over main roads, was desired by residents. Having the ability to safely walk to a store or restaurant was called out as an issue in Rochester Hills. Making improvements with seniors and children in mind was seen as a must for participants.

**Improvements in infrastructure and traffic management were a common desire from participants.**

Continued investment and innovation in road maintenance and traffic management was seen as an opportunity for Rochester Hills to improve. Redesigning of roads and improved traffic light timing was shared as potential options for the City to consider. Public transportation options were viewed favorably. The transportation options to and from the OPC was seen as a great example of public transportation in Rochester Hills.

**Different options for recreation and continued preservation of open space were a desirable outcome for residents.**

Participants expressed a desire for additional types of recreation facilities. These included a dog park or an amphitheater within Rochester Hills. To go alongside these suggested recreation options and the existing parks system, residents expressed a desire for more cultural and community events. They viewed these events as a way to connect to the community. The continued preservation of greenspace was seen as something that the City should prioritize. Concerns over interaction between people and wildlife (deer, Canadian geese, etc.) were also shared by participants.



**Maintaining a low-density feel within Rochester Hills and reducing the amount of development along major corridors was expressed by residents.**

Individuals felt that Rochester Hills should continue to maintain its low-density atmosphere and provide greater access to smaller housing options for seniors and young families. There were concerns shared about the City overdeveloping in certain areas within the City.

**Existing amenities are viewed favorably, but a desire for more unique places and types of businesses was shared by participants.**

When asked to consider what they thought was missing from their neighborhood, participants shared a desire for more unique shops, restaurants, and places for them to visit. Many attendees shared anecdotes of places they visited and how they wished that Rochester Hills had similar unique options. The existing amenities, such as schools, hospitals, and parks were seen as great assets to Rochester Hills.

### **Small Group Workshops**

On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, key stakeholders were invited to participate in a facilitated discussion on the future of Rochester Hills, what was working in the City and what could be improved. The discussion began with each group sharing what they viewed as their role within the City. Then they were asked how they measure success in their respective roles. Stakeholders were then asked about their relationship with the built environment and how that impacts their function and role within the community. Lastly, participants were asked to think outside the box and envision what their City would like in 2074 and what their role would be 50 years from now.

Seven different groups participated in the discussions.

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

Each small group had a different perspective on the questions during the discussion. Summaries of each group's responses are below.

#### **Local Business Leaders**

Seven local business leaders attended the facilitated discussion. There were a variety of different businesses that were represented. These ranged from local restaurants to insurance companies, and retail stores.

**Businesses provide Rochester Hills with the necessary goods and services and serves as an employment base.**

Local businesses provide residents with access to their everyday needs and act as a pillar that demonstrates the health of the local economy. Business leaders saw that their role was to fill the needs of their consumers while also serving as a way for the community to connect. Local businesses can spur innovation with what exists locally.

**Success looks different for each business and a healthy business community means a thriving Rochester Hills.**

Every business has a diverse set of needs and ways of measuring success. Participants shared a variety of different factors that they use to gauge the health of their business and the health of the local economy. These businesses leaders shared that Rochester Hills residents are very loyal and are proud to support their local businesses. When a business is successful they reinvest in their community and many of the participants were happy to share that they have found success in Rochester Hills and take pride in investing in the community.

**The pandemic impacted the way business was conducted and innovation is the key to success.**

The pandemic required businesses to change and adapt to new conditions and spending patterns. Examples were shared of consolidation in the amount of space needed by businesses and the change in spending patterns where consumers preferred less interaction and more convenience. These have direct impacts on the built environment and the demands that businesses put on the infrastructure.

**The future will be guided by younger generations tendencies with an increase in reliance on technology and automation.**

When envisioning the future, many businesses shared that younger generations are changing the way they conduct business. Future generations have shown a desire for instant gratification and preference for less interaction with people. Additionally, automation and the use of AI were seen as the trend of where things are headed.

**LDFA Committee Members**

Four members of the Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) participated in a discussion of the role of the LDFA and its future role. Overall, the LDFA was viewed as a strategic tool for the City and a way for the City to continue to grow and attract new investment.

**The LDFA serves as a key contributor to the local economic growth of Rochester Hills.**

The LDFA plays a critical role in the growth of the local economy and improving the quality of life of residents. It serves as a way to attract and retain new businesses and tap into the local community to keep Rochester Hills a viable place to live and work.

**The success of the LDFA can be hard to quantify, but its success is an important component of Rochester Hills' success as a City.**

The participants describe the LDFA as a hidden gem, whose benefits may be hard to quantify for residents. When new investment comes into the City, the LDFA is a strategic tool that can help with quantifying the impact of that new investment. It is seen as a catalyzing force that brings in new jobs and investment into the City.

**THE LDFA has a direct impact on developing infrastructure within the City.**

The LDFA has led to direct investments in new infrastructure projects within Rochester Hills. However, the impact of the pandemic has shifted the needs for local businesses. This can be reflected in the push and pull between getting employees back in the office while also accommodating for working from home policies. The LDFA can serve as a tool for businesses to navigate the post-pandemic economy.

### **Investing in innovation now will set Rochester Hills up for success in the future.**

The goal of the LDFA is to attract new businesses, especially those that are leaders in innovation and seeking out new ideas and technologies. By attracting new businesses and providing new jobs, the LDFA can help spur the innovation process in Rochester Hills. When looking to the future, participants shared a desire to keep investing in innovation as a way to ensure Rochester Hills continues to be a desired place for businesses and residents 50 years into the future.

### **Places of Worship**

There was only one representative from a place of worship within Rochester Hills. The pastor from First Baptist Church provided insight into the role of his church in Rochester Hills and shared ideas on the role of places of worship in a general sense as well.

#### **Places of worship act as a place for community members to come together and build relationships with like-minded people.**

Places of worship were viewed as key places for community members to come together and interact with people who share similar values. These places allow people to enrich their lives socially and spiritually, while enabling them to feel a sense of community in Rochester Hills. Places of worship were seen as positive contributors to the overall quality of life in the City.

#### **The success of a place of worship is not always measurable.**

There are many ways to measure a place of worship's level of success, but the pastor from First Baptist believed that measures of success cannot always be quantified. His view was that people develop a sense of community at church with individuals within Rochester Hills and outside the City.

#### **The relationship between the built environment and places of worship is not unique.**

Places of worship require similar needs like many other institutions and businesses in Rochester Hills. Parking was one example that was provided during the conversation. There was discussion on what it would look like for a place of worship to be used for other uses, as long as those uses do not conflict with one's faith.

#### **Individuals will still seek out opportunities for human interaction even in a future that heavily relies on technology.**

When looking to the future, it is clear that there will be an increased reliance on technology. However, the participant shared that in a world that relies on technology people will still want to attend services and support places of worship. The sense was that people will seek face-to-face interaction with other people and places of worship will accommodate this desire.

### **Key Staff**

Eleven City Staff members attended the facilitated discussion. Several different departments were represented, which led to a discussion on the role of City Staff and what the City administration may look like 50 years into the future.

#### **City Staff provide basic services for residents and a high quality of life for citizens.**

Participants shared a variety of basic functions that they provide for residents. These functions are designed to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. Whether it's financial responsibility or providing opportunities for residents to connect with nature, City Staff saw their role as essential to the continued success of Rochester Hills.

**When City Staff are successful in their role, it is reflected in the community.**

When asked how City Staff measure their success, many participants agreed that if there are minimal complaints and positive feedback from community members, they were providing adequate services to residents. The projects and solutions that Staff implement on a daily basis have a direct impact on the successfulness of residents and the City as whole.

**The built environment is directly impacted by the decisions that City Staff make each and every day.**

City administration is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of infrastructure within the City. Staff viewed their roles as key contributors and influencers on the built environment. Certain uses and issues can put a strain on City resources.

**The decisions being made today have future generations in mind.**

A majority of Staff expressed that residents 50 years from now will hopefully recognize the work that current Staff put in and view the work as successful. When speaking broadly about the future, Staff spoke to an increased reliance on technology and automation. New technologies and automated processes will provide residents with expected services and maintain satisfaction with City administration.

**Nonprofits**

Four leaders from local nonprofits attended the discussion on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The nonprofits represented were Gifts for All God's Children, Next Steps 4 Seniors, the OPC, and the Rochester Avon Recreation Authority (RARA). These leaders provided insight into the role nonprofits have in Rochester Hills and surrounding communities.

**Every nonprofit contributes in a different way.**

The nonprofits that were represented shared the different groups that they serve, demonstrating each nonprofit's unique role in the community. Nonprofits focused on improving the quality of life for seniors shared that older populations can be vulnerable to a lack of funding and investment in their livelihoods. Whereas, RARA focuses on providing recreational opportunities for children and youth throughout Rochester Hills. Each nonprofit provides a specific benefit to members of the community that need extra support.

**Success is measured by the number of people served.**

Each representative shared the way that they measure success is by the number of people that they serve. An even better indicator is whether or not there is a waitlist for the services they provide. If nonprofits are reaching their full potential, the community as whole will be better off for it.

**Each nonprofit has a different spatial need.**

The relationship between nonprofits and the built environment is dependent on the type of services provided. For example, the representative from Gifts for All God's Children shared that they have a need for extra warehouse space, which is different from the needs of the OPC. A key aspect that all the nonprofit participants shared was ensuring that their services were accessible to all people. This meant either through public transportation options or walkability throughout the City.

### **Nonprofits will still play an essential role in the future.**

When asked about the role of nonprofits 50 years into the future, many participants hoped that the issues that they are trying to combat will have gone away due to their work. However, they recognized that there will most certainly be a need for nonprofits within the community. The people they serve may change, but some problems are persistent.

### **Residents**

Residents were offered the opportunity to come and participate in these small group workshops. Only one resident was able to attend the facilitated discussion. They shared their input on the role of residents and what they envisioned the future of Rochester Hills will look like in 50 years.

### **Residents are the end users for all City services.**

The attendee shared that their view was that residents are main customers for City services and amenities. Their role is to provide support for the City, whether it's through property taxes or supporting local businesses, residents are what make Rochester Hills a great place to live. Additionally, they shared that people have chosen Rochester Hills for a reason and that they expect a level of excellence and service to be maintained, if not improved upon.

### **Success means that residents are happy and take pride in where they live.**

When residents take care of their property and invest in their community that can be viewed as a measure of success for a city. If there is a lack of a collective effort put into maintaining Rochester Hills as a great place to live, then there are changes that need to be made in order to get people to take pride in their City.

### **Improvements in connectivity and walkability will allow Rochester Hills to continue to flourish.**

When discussing the built environment, the resident provided their desire for improved walkability among neighborhoods and throughout the City as a whole. They shared they are an active biker and expressed a need for additional biking paths and improvements made to existing paths. In addition, efforts to preserve woodlands and wetlands within the City should be a priority for the City.

### **A more sustainable and community-focused Rochester Hills is where the City is headed.**

The resident shared their desired future of Rochester Hills, which consisted of a more sustainable and community-focused City. They envisioned the City would make a concentrated effort to preserve and expand greenspace within the City. Additionally, housing will have a more community-focused goal where all the amenities a resident would need are within walking distance from their home.

### **Boards and Commissions**

Five members from the Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic Districts Commission, and Green Space Advisory Board were able to attend the conversations and provide their perspective on the role of boards and commissions and what their role may look in the future.

### **Serve as the administrators of the City's Ordinance and serve as a way uphold the community's values.**

Many of the participants shared that their role was to uphold and administer the City's Ordinances and provide recommendations to City Council and City Administration on a variety of issues. When issues arise in the community boards and commission are meant to serve the public and ensure that the

community's character is upheld or provide insight into necessary changes that may enhance the livelihoods of residents.

**A successful Rochester Hills has boards and commissions filled with dedicated public servants.**

A measure of success for the boards and commissions is making sure that the public bodies are filled with citizens who are interested in improving the City they call home. They shared that it can be difficult to find people from younger generations with a sense of civic duty and desire to serve their community.

**The character of the community is preserved while managing new opportunities for growth and development.**

When new developments are proposed, boards and commission serve as an opportunity to ensure that the developments are adhering to the standards that Rochester Hills have implemented. When improvements in the process or Ordinance are needed, boards and commission serve as an opportunity for the public to participate in the process.

**Government may look different in the future, but the tradition of strong leadership in Rochester Hills will remain.**

When discussing the future of Rochester Hills, many of the participants shared that they envision the way the City government operates may change, but the strong tradition of impactful leadership will remain. While discussing the City broadly, many shared they see a future where household size decreases and there will be a shrinking population, which will affect City services and amenities.

## **Meeting Toolkits**

The Meeting Toolkits are meant to provide members of the community with an opportunity to hold their own discussion on the long-range planning process for the City of Rochester Hills. The Toolkits provide residents an opportunity to share their thoughts on the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Two questions are asked in the Meeting Toolkits:

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?

A summary of the four completed Meeting Toolkits can be found below.

### **Meeting Toolkit #1: Residents in Avondale + Rochester West and East**

The first Meeting Toolkit involved nine (9) attendees, eight (8) residents of Rochester Hills and one (1) resident of Troy. Those who participated in the meeting split themselves up according to their Planning Neighborhood.

- Avondale: 1 attendee
- Rochester West: 4 attendees
- Rochester East: 3 attendees

Each Planning Neighborhood discussion provided similar responses to the questions included in the Meeting Toolkit. A summary of their responses is listed below.



### **Sidewalks and improved non-motorized infrastructure are needed in Rochester Hills.**

The lack of sidewalks was considered detrimental to residents. Participants expressed a desire for more sidewalks and improved biking paths in order to improve accessibility and connectivity between subdivisions and through the City. The amenities that were walkable and bikeable were listed as great assets to their neighborhood, but the overall desire is for greater accessibility on a larger scale.

### **Improvements to road infrastructure and traffic management are required to improve the quality of life of residents.**

Attendees shared their concerns about the amount of traffic along major corridors, such as John and Rochester Road. In addition, the state of road infrastructure was described as needing investment and improvements, like road repaving and better landscape design along roads and developments.

### **The City's development practices should focus on aesthetics and limit the amount of dense development.**

Responses demonstrate a desire to protect the low-density residential feel in Rochester Hills by limiting high density developments. Aesthetics of developments and landscaping were additional concerns when participants discussed the City's development practices. There were concerns regarding developers and the design of their proposed developments not following the aesthetics of what already existing.

### **Parks and open spaces require improvements, but overall are key assets to community members.**

Several comments focused on improving park infrastructure and ensuring that open spaces are preserved as new developments are proposed. Many participants shared that the parks that were nearby and accessible were some of their favorite parts of where they lived. The proximity of quality amenities was a positive aspect of where they lived, but a continued effort by the City to maintain open spaces and provide more trees and landscaping were important to participants.

## **Meeting Toolkit #2: Residents in Avondale and Adams**

Six residents participated in the facilitated Meeting Toolkit discussion. Participants represented the Avondale and Adams Planning Neighborhoods but did not provide a breakdown of the number from each Planning Neighborhood.

### **More destinations within walking and biking distance would improve the neighborhood where people reside.**

Adding additional non-motorized infrastructure was requested as a way for residents to better connect to local businesses and other nearby amenities. Participants shared that they felt many restaurants and shops were accessible by walking or biking, but still saw a need for improved accessibility throughout the City.

### **A desire for less development was expressed, but if developments are proposed they should be mixed use.**

There was some tension between the responses of those in the Avondale and Adams Planning Neighborhoods. Avondale residents wished for less development, especially developers building subdivisions within existing subdivisions. Whereas, the responses from residents in the Adams Planning Neighborhood expressed that there is to be development, then an emphasis on mixed use should be a priority. Both groups saw that less development meant more access to greenspace and habitat for wildlife.

**Additional parks and open space were seen as a benefit.**

Many respondents expressed a desire for more parks within Rochester Hills. The existing parks received high praise, but a need for more open space was stated. Protecting wildlife and habitats were mentioned as something that the City should emphasize. Overall, the existing parks were seen as accessible, but as stated previously more sidewalks and improved walkability were suggestions shared by participants.

**Amenities that are accessible are key for everyday life, but more community events could added to improve the quality of the neighborhood.**

Many felt that shopping centers, schools, parks, and access to jobs were amenities that were accessible to them. However, some participants expressed a desire for more community events, like concerts and movies. Additionally, a community garden was shared as something that would improve the overall feel of the neighborhood.

**Meeting Toolkit #3: Rochester West**

Seven residents from the Meadowbrook subdivision, which is located in the Rochester West Planning Neighborhood. The participants broke down their discussions into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of their neighborhood.

**Proximity to Oakland University provides residents with a wide array of amenities and benefits.**

The subdivisions proximity to Oakland University is seen as a benefit for the residents. Many are connected to the University and see potential in collaborating with the school to improve Rochester Hills. For example, participants saw an opportunity for the City to collaborate with Oakland University on sustainability initiatives.

**Traffic, the state of road infrastructure, and the lack of public transportation are considered areas where improvements could be made.**

Participants believe that there are needed improvements in the road infrastructure and traffic management practices within the City. The lack of public transportation is seen as a detractor and negative side effect of the current system of roads. Recent development has led to increased traffic and a need to redesign roads and include solutions like roundabouts were seen as steps the City should be taking to improve the quality of life of Rochester Hills residents.

**Development that has occurred is located in areas that are already overcrowded and there is a need to ensure historical assets are protected.**

Participants felt that certain areas of the City have become overdeveloped, which has detrimental impacts on the environment and adds to the traffic problem. A prevalent concern was about historical resources and building within Rochester Hills and the potential to lose these key assets as the City continues to grow and develop. Residents believe they should make an effort to preserve these places in order preserve the past.

**Natural resources need to be protected and are threatened by a variety of factors.**

Residents were concerned over the impact of development and the threats posed to wildlife. Additionally, when development has occurred participants shared that efforts should be made to ensure that there is minimal impact to the natural resources. Concerns about the use of pesticides and herbicides and the runoff that occurs was mentioned in the responses provided.

## Meeting Toolkit #4: Avondale and Rochester East

Approximately 40 residents of the Streamwood Subdivision participated in the Meeting Toolkit discussion. The Streamwood Subdivision is in the Avondale and Rochester East Planning Neighborhoods. Overall, residents viewed the City as having a lot to offer in terms of access to parks and amenities.

### **Improved traffic safety measures and increased access to public transportation are desired.**

Traffic calming measures and improved signage for pedestrians and bikers were listed as improvements the City should implement. Key areas of concern are Hamlin Road and Streamwood Drive. Efforts to promote bike and scooter sharing as well as additional bus transportation are seen as a need for the community.

### **Incentivizing single-family housing is preferred over high-density apartment complex developments.**

Many participants expressed a desire to promote single-family development as opposed to higher density developments. Higher density development was seen to put a strain on local infrastructure, worsen traffic, and impact public safety. People expressed desire for smaller, single-family developments to allow for people to age in place as time goes on.

### **Recreational facilities need routine maintenance and improvements, which should be a priority for the City.**

Amenities in the city provide a whole range of benefits to residents. However, a need for better routine maintenance and scheduled improvements for recreational facilities would be beneficial. Maintenance on natural features should occur with greater frequency to reduce the potential for flooding and the negative side effects. The Clinton River was mentioned as a natural feature that should undergo routine maintenance to prevent any disasters detrimental impacts to nearby residents.