

Memorandum



Date: February 3, 2026

To: Planning Commission Members

From: Kristen Gundersen, Planning and Community Development Director

Subject: **Master Plan Update Discussion 2 – Survey Questions and Title**

Background

During the January 2026 meeting, Marcy Hamilton representative from the Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) attended the meeting and reviewed the timeframe for the creation of the update of the 2021 Master Plan.

The SWMPC continues to gather background information and Ms. Hamilton is scheduled to attend the March 10th meeting.

A master plan is a document and policy guide designed to help communities create a vision of what they want to look like in the future. It typically looks 10 – 20 years into the future and is reviewed every five-years to determine if any changes are needed. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act has a defined process for the adoption of the master plan along with key items that must be included such as a future land use map and housing component.

Project title

Discussions took place in January regarding an improved name for the document rather than Buchanan Master Plan. By naming the plan, the community and stakeholders can better understand the community's aspirations and work toward achieving the established goals and objectives.

Communities use titles such as Bridge to our Future Comprehensive Plan Grand Rapids; Plan Detroit; Imagine Kalamazoo in 2035; The Bigger Picture: In Focus East Lansing Comprehensive Plan Update; Grand Haven Master Plan A Fountain of Ideas!; Midland City Modern; and We are TR Imagine 2040 – Three Rivers.

Other examples staff found included using words that start with the first name of the town such as “Mighty Mount Sterling Strategic Plan”, words could include: brighter; brilliant; bold; bloom; beautiful; blissful; blazing; big-hearted; boundless; or balanced.

Survey Questions

As part of the project a survey will be conducted and available electronically and on paper. Attached is a copy of the survey that was completed as part of the current Master Plan adopted in 2021.

Staff have been working with the consultants to create new questions within the headings of 1) economic development; 2) housing and neighborhoods; 3) infrastructure and transportation; 4) environment, sustainability, resilience. Attached is the draft. More work is needed

Next Steps

The Commission should discuss a project title for the master plan document that will be used in all promotions and activities moving forward. The Commission should review the survey's draft questions and make recommendations for changes for additional or deleted questions.

The City of Buchanan is starting the process to update the Master Plan. A master plan serves as a guide for strategic community development and will provide direction for the future development of the City of Buchanan. It guides land use and ___ decisions and looks 20-years into the future. Our plan is being called _____

The survey is divided into five sections.

Demographic Information

1. Based on the map where do you live? INSERT MAP
Northwest ____ Northeast ____ West ____
Downtown ____ East ____ Southwest ____
South ____ Liberty Heights (southeast) ____ **CAN THIS AREA BE CALLED SOUTHEAST?**
2. What is your relationship to the City (can pick more than one)
Own a house in the city
Rent in the city
Own property in the city that I do not live at
Own a business in the city
Work in the city
Parent of student attending Buchanan schools
Other
3. How many years have you lived in the City of Buchanan?
Less than one year ____ 1-4 years ____ 5-10 years ____ 11- 25 years ____
More than 25 years ____ Don't live in City ____
4. What category identifies your age?
10- 21 ____ 22 – 38 ____ 39-53 ____ 54 -74 ____ 75 and older ____
5. Where do you find information about the city?
City website www.cityofbuchanan.com City of Buchanan Facebook page
Community Center/Library/Nonprofit Local radio station
Local television channel(s) Local newspaper
Direct mail Public schools
Word of mouth

1. Which of the following topics should be the highest priority for implementation (Rank 1-8?)
 - a. Increase Economic development efforts (retain existing and attract new businesses)
 - b. Improve neighborhoods
 - c. Increase housing options
 - d. Improve Sewer and Water Infrastructure
 - e. Improve roads and sidewalks
 - f. Protect/conservate natural resources (water quality, wetlands, trees, etc)
 - g. Improve parks and open space
 - h. Improve Public safety

Economic Development

1. Rate the availability of the following land uses in the city's downtown
(RESPONSES: not available at all to very available for each item)
 - a. Retail/shopping
 - b. Entertainment venues
 - c. Restaurants
 - d. Professional services (hair salons, repair)
 - e. Multiple family residential
 - f. Mixed use (commercial uses on the ground floor with dwelling units above)
 - g. Outdoor gathering areas/plazas
 - h. Businesses with outdoor seating
 - i. Parks/green space
 - j. Indoor multi-purpose event facility
 - k. Office
2. On average, how many times per week do you visit downtown?
(RESPONSE 0 1x 2x 3x 4x 5x 6x 7x)
3. What activities do you currently use in the city? (can pick more than one)
Dining shopping recreation business other
4. What time of day do you usually visit downtown (pick no more than 2)
Morning afternoon evening weekday weekends
5. How do you get downtown? (pick one)
Walk drive bicycle
6. Do you believe there is an adequate amount of well-placed public ? parking in the downtown
which allows people to parking within a reasonable distance to their destinations?
___ yes ___ no ___no opinion

7. When visiting downtown how difficult is it to find a place for vehicular parking?
(not difficult at all to extremely difficult for each statement)
- a. On the street
 - b. City parking lots north of Front Street
 - c. City parking lots south of Front Street
 - d. Private parking lots
8. How likely are you to spend time and gather with friends or family in the downtown within the next year? (Not likely to very likely)

Housing and neighborhoods

1. How important is it for more housing to be built in the City of Buchanan that meets the needs of the following groups? (Very Important to Not at all Important for each statement)
- a. Housing for seniors
 - b. Housing for young adults
 - c. Housing for young families
 - d. Housing for persons with disabilities
 - e. Housing for low to moderate income individuals and families
 - f. Housing for all income levels
2. How much do you support the following types of housing being built in the City of Buchanan?
(Fully Support to Do not support at all for each statement)
- a. Single-family houses
 - b. Accessory dwelling units (attached or detached small dwelling units where is an existing house)
 - c. Duplexes and triplexes
 - d. Townhouses
 - e. Multiple-family housing – either rental or owner occupied
3. What other comments do you have about housing in the City of Buchanan?
4. How important are blight (the accumulation of unwanted junk or deterioration of buildings) regulations for maintaining community image?
(Very Important ---- Not Important At All)
5. Is historic preservation important?
(Very Important ---- Not Important At All)
- a. In the downtown
 - b. in the residential neighborhoods

Infrastructure and Transportation

1. Please rate how you prioritize the following initiatives related to transportation and accessibility in the City of Buchanan (Highest Priority to Lowest Priority for each statement)
 - a. Reducing traffic congestion
 - b. Improving the quality of existing roads
 - c. Improving the quality of existing sidewalks
 - d. Adding safe and convenient bicycle routes
 - e. Adding safe and convenient pedestrian routes
 - f. Access to public transportation
2. What prevents you from walking in the City of Buchanan? (pick up to 3)
 - a. The places I go are too far away
 - b. Poor quality/damaged sidewalks
 - c. Lack of convenient sidewalks
 - d. Personal safety concerns
 - e. Traffic safety concerns
 - f. I am not interested in walking to get places
3. Rate the quality of infrastructure/services in the city (High Quality to Low Quality for each statement)
 - a. Roads
 - b. Sidewalks
 - c. Alleyways
 - d. Water quality
 - e. Stormwater
 - f. Lighting
 - g. Public tree maintenance
 - h. Snow removal
 - i. Public off-street parking lots
 - j. Bicycle access, safety and amenities

Environment, Sustainability, Resilience

1. Please rate how you prioritize the following natural resources and sustainability initiatives (high priority to low priority for each statement)
 - a. Increase tree canopy cover
 - b. Improve stormwater management/mitigate flooding
 - c. Expand and improve open space and natural areas
 - d. Protect water resources

2. Please rate how you prioritize adding more of the following amenities in the city of Buchanan (high priority to low priority for each statement) THIS QUESTION FOR PARKS/RECREATION or Combine surveys – Discuss at BARB?
 - a. Benches
 - b. Walkways and sidewalks
 - c. Bicycle facilities
 - d. Park recreation amenities
 - e. Water access for recreation activities

3. Please rate how you prioritize the following energy sustainability initiatives (high priority to low priority for each statement)
 - a. Encourage solar energy (solar) on individual buildings
 - b. Expand Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
 - c. Promote green building practices
 - d. Dark sky (regulations established to combat light pollution)
 - e. Maintain and expand public open spaces/parks
 - f. Increase recycling programs

4. Most of the land area in the City of Buchana has already been developed or preserved as parks or open space. However, there are areas in the city that may be redeveloped with new buildings and uses. In general, how much do you support more of the following land uses in the City of Buchanan? (fully support to no support at all for each statement)
 - a. Retail/shopping
 - b. Entertainment venues
 - c. Restaurants
 - d. Professional services (hair salons/repair)
 - e. Office
 - f. Multiple family residential either rental or owner occupied
 - g. Single-family residential
 - h. Mixed use (commercial uses on the ground floor with dwelling units above)
 - i. Industrial – warehousing, research, light manufacturing
 - j. Parks and open space

5. What is the city's greatest asset?

6. Three words that best describe how you believe the city is perceived

7. What are the top 5 community values you believe Buchanan embodies

Prosperous	Scenic	Small town character
Vibrant	Friendly	Creative
Responsible	Economical	Walkable
Affordable	Natural	Strong
Prideful	Organized	Equitable
Generous	Healthy	Accessible
Hard-working	Connected	Balanced
Active	Volunteering	History
Other _____		