Issues to Consider

CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS

July 2023

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Introduction

The Master Plan is intended to guide future decision-making processes related to land use and development in the City, as well as overall community quality of life.

A Master Plan addresses future land uses and community development, and other community features in a coordinated fashion. It portrays a clear statement of community goals and objectives, establishes a vision of the future, and includes plans to achieve the vision. If followed carefully, the Master Plan will have a lasting impact on the built and natural environment. Decisions made when the plan is developed will likely be implemented over short-term, medium-term, and long-term timelines as specified in the Implementation Plan.

The Master Plan is long-range in its view and is intended to guide development in the City over a period of 10 to 20 years, with reviews and any necessary updates occurring every five years to maintain consistency with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008. The information and concepts presented in the Master Plan are used to guide local decisions on public and private uses of land and the provision of public facilities and services. A sound Master Plan promotes a land use pattern that reflects a community's goals. It establishes long-range general policies in a coordinated and unified manner, which can be continually referred to in decision-making.

Lastly, the Master Plan aims to provide a complete picture of the historic and ongoing land use and development-related issues facing the City.

Based on the feedback from both surveys and discussions with the Planning Commission, City Council members, and staff in the early stages of the Master Plan process (outlined in the Visioning Summary of this report, several key challenges related to land use planning have been identified in the City. They are as follows:

- Lack of housing options (type, size, location, affordability, ability to age in place)
- Lack of business mix and development along Mack Avenue
- Lack of connectivity throughout the City
- Vehicle-centric design/Lack of walkability along Mack Avenue
- Lack of community identity and character
- Barriers to people of all ages and abilities living life to the fullest potential
- Climate change (severe weather and flooding, in particular); lack of sustainability and resiliency

This document is intended to provide the Planning Commission with highlights of the broader subject matters shaped by the challenges for the City to consider in conjunction with the long-range planning laid out in the Master Plan. They are not the only issues, but they are issues that are highly connected to the ongoing livability of the community and should be explored during this Master Plan Update.

Within each section, the following guides may be included: "Questions to Consider" and "Opportunities for an Update."

Questions to Consider

- Questions for the Planning Commission to consider during this update process.

Opportunities for an Update

At the end of each section are "Opportunities for an Update," which offer some suggestions to guide the Planning Commission during this update process.

Visioning Summary

Master Plan Joint Visioning Session

On June 19, the City Council and Planning Commission held a joint visioning session, discussed the city's strengths and weaknesses as identified by the participants, and prioritized foreseen opportunities and threats to the community (SWOT analysis). Below are the results of the SWOT analysis and discussion. The charts show the data that was collected through the survey prior to the visioning session which included four staff responses, two City Council member responses, and seven Planning Commissioner responses. Additional discussion during the session is summarized in the paragraphs following the charts.
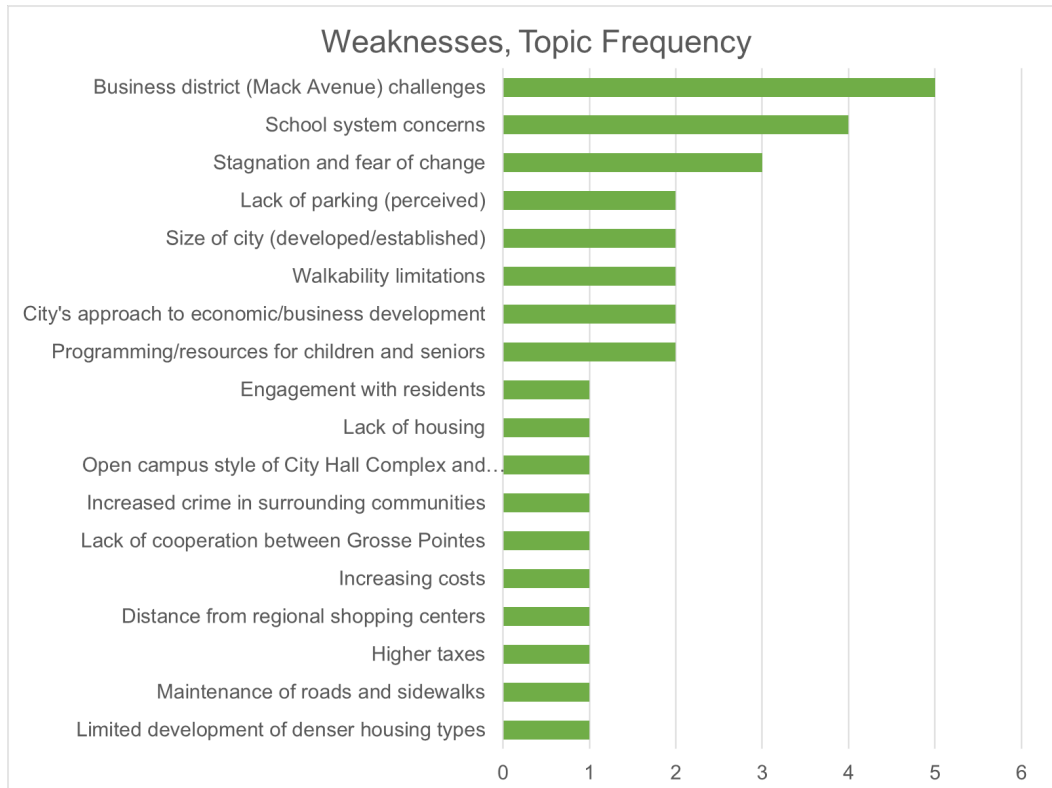
Strengths

Some participants noted that their survey responses focused on things that were within their sphere of influence, so some things such as schools, that are a strength of the community were not included in the response. When reviewing the survey results, three additional strengths surfaced: 1) "community", events, programming, and activities, 2) financial stability of the city, and 3) libraries.
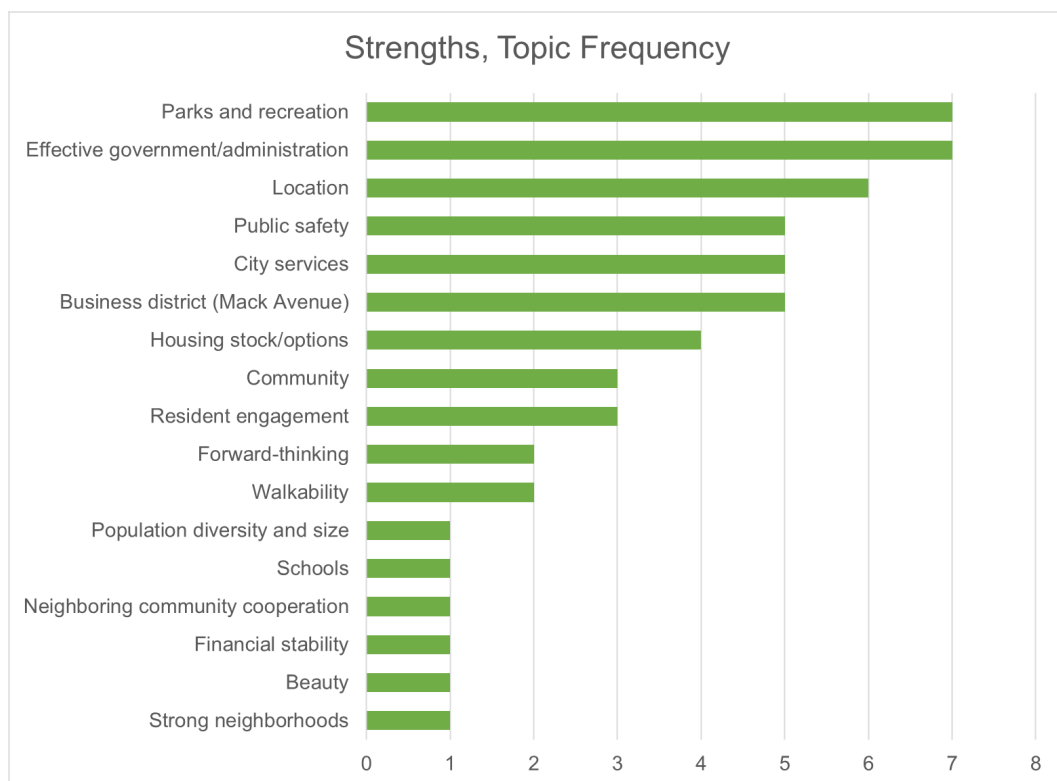
Weaknesses

In addition to the weaknesses noted in the survey responses, additional weaknesses discussed by the group include: limited redevelopment opportunities and opportunities for property tax revenue growth; difficulties/challenges with the development review and permitting process; redundancies that exist between the Grosse Pointes; lack of movie theaters and other entertainment within the city, and a lack of activities and things for teens to do; and real estate values.

Weaknesses, Topic Frequency

Topic	Frequency
Business district (Mack Avenue) challenges	5
School system concerns	4
Stagnation and fear of change	3
Lack of parking (perceived)	2
Size of city (developed/established)	2
Walkability limitations	2
City's approach to economic/business development	2
Programming/resources for children and seniors	2
Engagement with residents	1
Lack of housing	1
Open campus style of City Hall Complex and…	1
Increased crime in surrounding communities	1
Lack of cooperation between Grosse Pointes	1
Increasing costs	1
Distance from regional shopping centers	1
Higher taxes	1
Maintenance of roads and sidewalks	1
Limited development of denser housing types	1

Emerging Trends

The survey also asked respondents to identify any emerging trends in the nation, region, or community that could be influential on the master plan process. This list was added to during the visioning session. The complete list is below:

- Higher density, high-end living options
- Interest in aging in place and resulting lack of housing
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Micromobility options (ebikes, scooters, etc.)
- 15-minute neighborhoods
- Food trucks, pocket parks
- Higher electricity demand/needs
- New electricity infrastructure for EV charging
- Solar energy, small and large scale
- Short term rentals
- Working from home

- Email becoming less utilized
- Smart Cities, artificial intelligence
- Pedestrian safety strategies
- Drugs
- Challenges for empty nesters/downsizing (cost, availability)
- Allowing 3 stories on Mack Ave – impact for new development
- Liggett School development – could there be more developers interested in these types of projects?
- Options for new families, schools
- School properties?
- 15-minute neighborhoods, social districts, walkability, things to do

Opportunities

Survey responses were grouped by category and then given to small mixed groups of planning commissioners and city council members. The groups then prioritized the opportunities as either high, medium, or low. All of the items considered to be high priority opportunities were listed and each participant was able to vote for their top three opportunities. Actions focused on economic development, particularly around Mack Avenue and housing were the top priorities. The results of that activity are shown below, with the items listed from highest to lowest priority, followed by the number of votes for each item included in parentheses.

1. Enhance walkability with better crosswalks (10 votes)

2. Encourage mixed use development by rethinking ordinances, recruiting/encouraging new economic strategies and development that can create mixed uses (7 votes)

    » At least four of the five groups noted that this was a high priority item

3. Enhancements to Mack Ave to make Grosse Pointe Woods more of a destination for residents and non-residents, such as façade improvements and business support (4 votes)

4. Enact and enforce ordinances to maintain and improve the housing stock in the city, keeping housing values up, increasing the tax base, and maintaining typical income level of residents (4 votes)

    » This was listed as a high priority by at least two groups, and a medium priority by at least one group. Flags and block parties were noted as additional strategies.

5. Explore accessory dwelling units in neighborhoods (3 votes)

6. Explore streetscape improvements such as landscaping in medians and adopt a garden (3 votes)

    » At least one group felt this was only medium priority

7. Maintain/expand city social programming, art fairs, music, sidewalk sales, and other active lifestyle elements (2 votes)

8. Explore grants/funding (1 vote)

9. Improve schools (1 vote)

10. Better understand changing demographics and address those specific needs

    » At least one group felt this was a low priority

11. Long-range planning of recreational/community amenity development and maintenance (1 vote)

    » At least one group felt that this was only medium priority

12. Invest more in parks (0 votes)

13. Consider a business development role and/or commission to coordinate developers and commercial property owners to attract and retain targeted tenants (0 votes)

14. Once a master plan vision is created, benchmark "peer" cities to discern best practices toward obtaining the vision (0 votes)

    » At least one group noted this as high priority.

There were five items suggested from the survey that were not considered high priority by any group. Those considered to be a medium priority by at least one group include reviewing the status of issues identified in the recent 2020 Plan, trying to develop a key business district in the city, and continuing to engage in meetings with other city managers to encourage partnerships and enhance parks and community members. Partnering with neighboring communities and developing an official Facebook presence to collect feedback/input from residents and promote events were considered to be a low priority.

Threats

A similar process to that described for opportunities was undertaken to prioritize threats. The threats mirrored the opportunities, with concerns about housing and economic development along Mack Avenue being in the top three concerns. The results of that exercise are below, in the same fashion.

1. Lack of housing diversity/options (11 votes)

2. Challenges faced by aging populations (8 votes)

3. Lack of diversity in business mix along Mack Ave (7 votes)

   » At least one group viewed this as a medium threat

4. Complacency/not embracing change (7 votes)

5. Safety, crime, and drugs (3 votes)

   » At least one group viewed this as a medium threat

6. Lack of support for new technologies (EV chargers, solar panels, etc.) (1 vote)

   » At least one group viewed this as a high threat

7. Reduced quality of schools and resulting impacts (1 vote)

   » At least two groups viewed this as a medium threat

8. Property maintenance (0 votes)

9. Inadequate, aging, or improperly placed infrastructure (0 votes)

   » At least one group viewed this as a low threat

10. Reduced tax revenue (0 votes)

11. Increased costs (0 votes)

12. Change in character of Mack Ave (0 votes)

13. Flooding concerns (0 votes)

14. At least one group viewed this as a low threat

Post-Visioning Session Planning Commission Homework Survey

In advance of a July 31, 2023 Special Meeting scheduled to review input gathered in Phase 1 of the Master Plan process from the Planning Commission, City Council, and City staff, and prepare for a community Open House to gather input from the City residents and stakeholders, Planning Commission was asked to complete a survey in preparation.

Feedback from the survey responses provided by Planning Commissioners includes:

- Commissioners are generally open to a diverse array of housing types. However, some did not feel that triplexes, multiplexes, live-work options, cottage court homes, ADUs, and/or apartments would be appropriate anywhere in the city.

  » Some respondents noted that triplexes and multiplexes would be appropriate along Mack Avenue, Venier Road, and in existing low-density neighborhoods.
  » Live-work options are thought to be most appropriate along Mack Ave.
  » Apartments and senior living facilities are thought to be most appropriate along Mack Ave and Venier Road.
  » The Cook Road corridor was suggested as a possibility for non-single family housing types.

- Commissioners noted challenges of the existing transportation network, including being vehicle oriented and not pedestrian or bike friendly, difficulty in reaching community amenities without a vehicle, and the lack of routes and trips SMART buses take throughout the City.

- Commissioners felt that vehicles, bicycles, e-bikes, and walking would be the primary ways residents and visitors would want to access Mack Avenue. Scooters, the SMART bus, and a city-wide trolley were not desirable or deemed infeasible.

- Commissioners did not like the idea of having two ends of Mack Avenue focused on different types of amenities and felt that all amenity types should be available throughout the entire corridor. Additionally, it was suggested that the City take an active role in soliciting developers and businesses.

- Many City programs and services received a weighted score over 4, indicating that Commissioners felt they were either great or excellent. Cultural programs, support for new residents, and resources for seniors were rated to be average/okay. Commissioners were least satisfied with the City's support for developers and efforts in creating a sense of place.

- Most commissioners felt there were enough parks, but amenities such as a dog park, refrigerated ice rink, disc golf course, amphitheater, and additional picnic spaces were suggested.

- The ranking for the most concerning environmental issues was very mixed. Overall, the highest weighted score was for severe weather events, followed by flooding and water quality. Air pollution and extreme heat were ranked in the bottom half of options.

- The ranking for the most concerning social issues was also fairly mixed and close. Quality education ranked highest, followed by cost of living and crime. Food access, social isolation and loneliness, and drugs were ranked in the bottom half of options.

Key Takeaways

Based on the feedback from both surveys and discussions with the Planning Commission, City Council members, and staff, the following key challenges related to land use planning have been identified in the City and will be addressed by the topics established in the remainder of this report. The challenges are as follows:

- Lack of housing options (type, size, location, affordability, ability to age in place)
- Lack of business mix and development along Mack Avenue
- Lack of connectivity throughout the City
- Vehicle-centric design/Lack of walkability along Mack Avenue
- Lack of community identity and character
- Barriers to people of all ages and abilities living life to the fullest potential
- Climate change (severe weather and flooding, in particular); lack of sustainability and resiliency

The challenges will be discussed in relation to the following topics:

- Attainable Housing
- Neighborhoods
- Age-Friendly Communities
- Complete Streets/Non-Motorized Transportation
- Economic & Downtown/Main Street Development
- Arts, Culture, & Identity
- Sustainability & Resiliency

Attainable Housing

When communities have a wide spectrum of housing options to support residents, they can accomplish many goals. The availability of "attainable" housing helps accommodate everyone from young adults who are just beginning to live on their own, to families looking to grow, to older residents looking to downsize while staying in the community. It also provides for workforce housing. While there is no universal definition of "attainable housing," The term was recently defined by the Urban Land Institute as "nonsubsidized, for-sale housing that is affordable to households with incomes between 80 and 120 percent of the area median income (AMI)."

In many communities, young adults and the elderly have limited housing options due to a combination of their lower income levels along with the pricing and availability of housing. This kind of financial challenge can impact people of all ages.

The general rule of thumb based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is to spend a maximum of 30 percent of a household's income on housing costs, yet many people find themselves spending more on housing, leaving less of their income available for other household expenses. Finding attainable housing can be challenge and it can stress family finances.

Housing costs are on the rise. According to the National Association of Home Builders, the median price of a new-construction home was $375,000 in March 2020, up from $325,100 in October 2018. The median price for existing homes was $280,600, up from $257,500 in 2018. The cost of new construction is driving the overall cost of housing higher.

The supply of multifamily for-sale housing is decreasing. Multifamily for-sale housing has historically represented about 20 to 25 percent of total multifamily permits. This type of housing is often more attainable because of its lower cost. In the past 8 years, multifamily for-sale housing has represented 6 to 7 percent of total permits, reflecting a significant post-Great Recession decline.

The same ULI report notes that small housing, under 1,400 square feet, has historically represented about 16 percent of new construction, but in the last cycle, it has averaged closer to 7 percent. When combined with the next size category, 1,400 to 1,800 square feet, the overall distribution of "small homes" has declined from just under 40 percent to 22 percent.   Homes over 2,400 square feet have increased from 32 percent to 50 percent of new construction since 1999, according to the ULI.

In Grosse Pointe Woods, with a median income of $115,247 households should spend no more than $34,574 per year or $2,881 per month on all housing costs. For homeowners, this includes the mortgage payment, insurance and taxes. For renters, this includes rent and utility costs.

In addition to housing costs, transportation costs can also be a substantial economic burden. For the Southeast Michigan region (SEMCOG), 25 percent of income is spent on housing and 22 percent is spent on transportation. In Wayne County, 22 percent of income is spent on housing and 21 percent is spent on transportation. In Oakland County, where housing costs are higher, on average, than the region, 31 percent is spent on housing, and 23 percent on transportation). According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology, the total housing and transportation costs for the City of Grosse Pointe Woods are 58 percent (36 percent on housing, 22 percent on transportation) of income.

Questions to Consider

• What new housing types could fit the character of the community while also helping address other issues, such as helping people age in place and increasing housing affordability?

• Are Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) something that is compatible with Grosse Pointe Woods? If so, what areas would be most feasible and fitting to allow them?

• Do people who work in Grosse Pointe Woods have the financial means to also live in the City, or do limited housing options require the live outside the City and commute to work?

Opportunities for an Update

Housing is a key component of what makes a community a desirable place to live; therefore, it is a key component of the master plan. This update should include a review of possible housing types, such as ADUs, mixed-use buildings, or conversions of single-family homes to multi-unit buildings, and where they may fit best throughout the City.

The Master Plan should include strategies to ensure compatibility between existing housing types and new housing types and consider how transportation options effect housing options and vice versa.

Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the fundamental building blocks of a community. More than just the area in which people live, neighborhoods also include shops, restaurants, parks, places of worship and schools. They tend to be the places where we can attend to at least some of our daily needs within close proximity of where we live.

Often, neighborhoods draw together people of similar ethnicities, incomes and life circumstances. Sometimes they have defined boundaries based on streets or natural features. Regardless of their shape or composition, neighborhoods can serve as a needed link between the individual and the overall community.

Neighborhoods are connected by physical elements like streets and sidewalks as well as by loose or formal social connections, like a neighborhood watch program, neighborhood association, time bank or phone chain. Well-connected neighborhoods are better able to share information about the community at large, encourage civic participation in events and activities, and raise awareness of resources that may be available for people when they're needed. In disconnected neighborhoods, people may be less likely to feel they're part of the overall community and may miss out on opportunities to participate in civic life. This presents challenges for local governments as well as schools, businesses and service organizations. Strengthening neighborhood connections helps tie the community together and improve quality of life for all.

Planning at the neighborhood level can provide an opportunity to engage more people because the topics have more immediacy and relevance. It can take advantage of some built-in neighborhood networks, where they exist, that provide another avenue for communication and outreach. While often neighborhood groups get active when faced with a controversial development project (as evidenced by the common term NIMBY – Not in My Back Yard), proactive neighborhood engagement might better prepare a community for new development/redevelopment.

Neighborhood planning looks at issues specific to an area within a larger community. Some of the issues that could prompt long-range planning include:

- **Preservation and Conservation** - conserving the built and natural heritage of an area
- **Sustainability** - developing sustainability policies and initiatives
- **Access and Civic Engagement** - improving access to local democracy, social services, and government institutions
- **Housing and Community Development** - addressing sector-specific issues such as housing or economic development
- **Transportation and Connectivity** - enhancing opportunities for active transportation by changing the physical treatment of neighborhood streets and public spaces[1]

The American Planning Association developed a Policy Guide on Neighborhood Collaborative Planning in 1998. It finds that "neighborhoods are the strategic building blocks of overall community development. Neighborhood collaborative planning requires understanding of the economic, social and physical characteristics in order to maintain both the sense of place and the sense of community."[2] The APA recommends seven general policies about neighborhood planning:

Comprehensive plans provide the framework for neighborhood planning and should be done within the context of a community-wide plan.

Where there are identifiable neighborhoods, a jurisdiction's comprehensive plan should reflect neighborhood plans and neighborhood plans should support the broader needs of the community and region.

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[1] Neighborhood Planning for Resilient and Livable Cities, Part 1 of 3: Why Do Neighborhoods Matter and Where Are We Going Wrong? Jayne Engle, Montreal. Nik Luka, Montreal and Uppsala. 28 September 2014
[2] American Planning Association Policy Guide on Neighborhood Collaborative Planning, 1998.

Planning decisions should be directed to the most appropriate level. Planning decisions that have limited impact on the community as a whole should be made by, or on the basis of advice given by, those neighborhood groups primarily affected. On the other hand, planning decisions that affect the community as a whole should not be overly influenced by a single neighborhood's needs or interests.

Neighborhoods should be encouraged to seek the best organizational structure that is suited to achieve their goals and objectives such as, but not limited to neighborhood associations, co-ops, development corporations.

Neighborhood-based coalitions that assist in the development of individual neighborhood organizations, articulate neighborhood views on community wide issues, and facilitate coordination in the planning process should be encouraged and supported by local government.

Advocacy planning for neighborhoods should be accepted as a legitimate role for professional planners, both publicly and privately employed.

To be effective in many cases, neighborhood planning needs to go beyond addressing the physical conditions of the area and also examine issues of social equity. To that end, the APA at the national, chapter and division levels should work with social service, housing, economic development, public health, educational, recreational, judicial and other organizations to ensure that the issues social equity, children and families receive attention through the efforts of planners.

The challenge for communities is not letting the hyperlocal focus of neighborhood planning and involvement result in competition between neighborhoods or let the voice of the neighborhoods drown out strategies that are good for the overall community. Keeping a "glocal" perspective means that it is important to plan and act locally in neighborhoods while nurturing the relationships between neighborhoods and the community at large, highlighting neighborhood action strategies that result in resilient and livable communities.

Questions to Consider

- What parts of the community are distinguishable from other areas as a result of unique development patterns, boundaries/borders, or identity? Are priorities within these areas the same as the broader City?

- How can Grosse Pointe Woods encourage community building within and between neighborhoods?

Opportunities for an Update

The Planning Commission may wish to consider how particular neighborhoods in the City have evolved, both in terms of development patterns and boundaries, considering if any neighborhoods have priorities that may deviate from the overall goals of the City.

As demand for new and different housing types become more prevalent, regulations to ensure new development is compatible with existing neighborhood character may be needed. As Grosse Pointe Woods reviews strategies to incorporate additional housing, maintaining the historic and distinguishing characteristics of neighborhoods must also be a planning consideration.

Age-Friendly Communities

Since the early 2000s, it has been widely recognized that, as a whole, populations are aging. In fact, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 National Population Projections identified 2030 as a transformative year because, that is the year by which all baby boomers will be older than age 65. This will expand the size of the older population so that 1 in every 5 residents will be retirement age.[1] Further, that means that within about ten years, older people will outnumber children for the first time in U.S. history.

Across the United States, communities have been planning for their aging populations. As people get older, they have different housing, transportation, safety, health and social concerns. Fortunately for communities seeking to make strategic improvements that support older residents, many of those solutions and strategies also make a positive impact on other generations as well. Making that point clear, many communities now plan for "age-friendly communities," a term that reinforces benefits to all.

What is an age-friendly community? Simply, it is a community that is livable for people of all ages. That is the short definition of the AARP, a leading advocacy organization for the promotion of age-friendly communities. AARP is the United States affiliate of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, which began in 2006. Together, these organizations promote the idea that an age-friendly community encourages active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

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[1] "2030 Marks Important Demographic Milestones for U.S. Population," U.S. Census Bureau, March 13, 2018 (Note: Updated September 6, 2018 and October 8, 2019).

The WHO describes active aging as a lifelong process that includes the following community characteristics:

- Barrier-free buildings and streets that enhance the mobility and independence of people with disabilities, young as well as old
- Secure neighborhoods that allow children and older people to venture outside in confidence, to participate in physically active leisure and in social activities
- Families who experience less stress when older members have the community support and health services they need
- Engaged older people who participate in volunteer or paid work
- A local economy that profits from the patronage of older adult consumers
- Civic groups and others who benefit from the skills, talents, and experiences of older adults
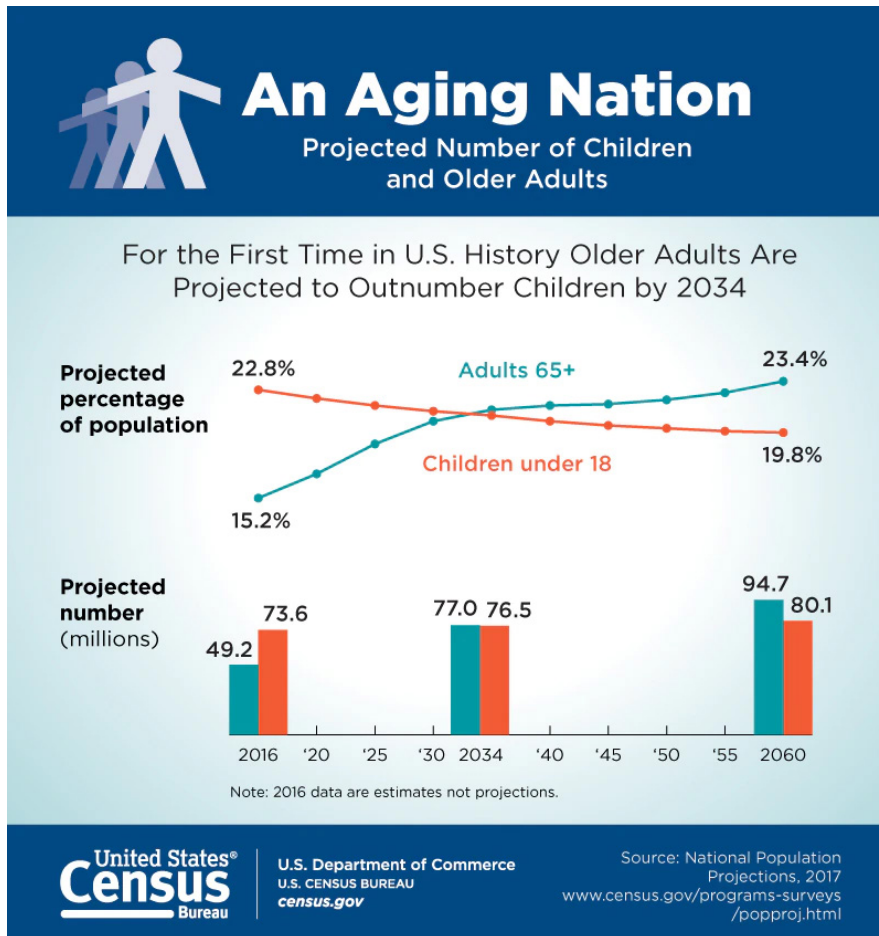
An infographic produced by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Questions to Consider

- What challenges to people with disabilities, those who are pregnant, those with small children, or the elderly, have when trying to meet daily needs? How can the built and social environment improve experiences in Grosse Pointe Woods for people of all abilities?

- How does the City's land use currently support older adults and children are not able, or choose not, to drive?

- Are there residential opportunities for individuals at all stages of life, particularly, young families and seniors?

- Are there cultural, entertainment, and social opportunities for individuals at all stages of life in Grosse Pointe Woods?

Opportunities for an Update

Consider how the goals, objectives, and actions will impact different age groups.

Often changes that are made to support people with disabilities are beneficial to everyone. For example, curb cuts that allow people in wheelchairs to cross the road are also helpful for people pushing strollers and those carrying heavy items. The Master Plan process update should explore ways to remove barriers to accessing places, resources, and programs throughout the City.

Housing to encourage multi-generational households and aging in place, such as granny flats or ADUs, through renovations and maintenance of historic homes may be desirable to explore.

Complete Streets/Non-Motorized Transportation

'Complete Streets' is a term used to describe a transportation network that includes facilities for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and other legal users of all ages and abilities. In 2010, Michigan passed the Complete Streets legislation to encourage and justify the development of Complete Streets in communities. At that time, Michigan's Planning Enabling Act was also amended to require master plans to address Complete Streets. Communities that adopt Complete Streets policies recognize that:

- Complete Streets provide transportation choices, allowing all people to move about their communities safely and easily.
- Complete Streets policies acknowledge the problems with current transportation facilities.
- Implementing Complete Streets strategies will make communities better places to live and work.

An important element of the Master Plan is a plan for the overall system of streets and roads in a community. This system provides for the movement of people and goods to and from places inside and outside the community. Road rights-of-way also provide places for utilities such as water lines, gas lines, sanitary and storm sewers, cable television lines, electrical power and telephone lines to co-locate, lowering the need for easements across private land. Because of these combined roads and utility function, the system of roads in a community can impact economic conditions, environmental quality, energy consumption, land development, and overall quality of life in a community.

Questions to Consider

- What are key places throughout the community that people want or need to get to on a regular basis?
- What areas, other than Mack Avenue, are essential to improve walkability?
- Where is it unsafe to travel on foot or by bicycle?
- How can accessibility to places be improved for everyone?
- Could updating and adding facilities and infrastructure, such as bike lanes and connecting sidewalks, assist in approving connectivity to key places throughout the community? What other changes would be needed to increase access?
- The last master plan had a large focus on vehicular movement and parking availability. Should this still be a priority for the City?

Other than ongoing maintenance to keep local streets and sidewalks in good repair, there may be opportunities to further enhance the City's transportation network to better serve all users. These may include the following:

Site Design

Minor improvements within a site can improve the usability of public non-motorized facilities such as requiring safe pedestrian connections from building entrances to street sidewalks, requiring parking facilities including bike racks and/or storage lockers along with parking for motorized vehicles and considering access management within the parking lot. All bike parking should meet the APBP guidelines (Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals).

Access Management

Typical driveway standards require alignment or minimum offsets, as well as separation from intersections and other driveways on the same side of the street to improve safety of motorists. Additional access management techniques include limiting the number of access drives on major roads, shared drives, encouraging joint access easements and maximizing corner clearance requirements especially for intersections that require special attention.

Collaboration

Collaboration with multiple stakeholders is another important tool for successful implementation. Indeed, with road facilities connecting with and shared by adjacent communities, it is critical to have shared visions of local transportation goals. Most of the time, the roadway jurisdiction determines the combination of outside agencies that are required to be part of the stakeholder team. Local residents, surrounding municipalities, the RCOC, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and other local non-profit agencies such as Michigan Trails and Greenways, or Rails to Trails conservancy are the potential members of a team.

Opportunities for an Update

The updated Master Plan should include a review of major thoroughfares and how they are used, and explore opportunities to support additional opportunities for connections, possibly for non-motorized forms of transportation. The update may also consider what barriers prevent connections from being made as well as where safety should be improved. An exploration of how improvements in the design of the built environment, education, and communication can encourage and support pedestrians may also be helpful.

Benefits of Complete Streets & Related Strategies

Safety

- Reduce pedestrian accidents by increasing the safety factor.
- Perceptions of the safety of non-motorized travel strongly influence decisions about alternative modes of travel for many.
- Reducing either the width or number of travel lanes (road diet) to make space for shoulder or bike paths will improve safety.

On average, a pedestrian was killed in the US every 88 minutes in traffic crashes in 2017.

Health

- Walking or biking to school may result in reduced child obesity rates.
- Sedentary lifestyles are associated with a host of long-term health problems.
- Sidewalks, bike paths and access to transit increases level of physical activity.

Between 1989 and 2018, child obesity rates have risen dramatically, while the percentage of walking or biking to school has dropped.

Access

- A variety of transportation options allows everyone – particularly people with disabilities and older adults – to get out and stay connected to the community.
- Designing a street to accommodate those with mobility challenges may reduce overall pedestrian risk.

54% of older American living in inhospitable neighborhoods say they would walk and ride more often if things improved.

Environment

- Our dependence on the automobile increases air and water pollution resulting from motor vehicles and the impervious surfaces of roads.
- Studies have shown that 5 to 10 percent of urban automobile trips can reasonably be shifted to non-motorized transport.

Carbon-dioxide emissions can be reduced by 20 pounds per day or more than 4,800 pounds in a year per each commuter by using transit instead of driving.

Economy

- Increase consumer activity by redesigning residential and local business districts with traffic calming measures.
- Implementing Complete Streets has proven to be an effective placemaking strategy for economic development and community revitalization.

Nearly 40 percent of merchants reported increase in sales, and 60 percent more area residents shopping locally due to reduced travel time and convenience associated with Complete Streets strategies.

Economic & Downtown/Main Street Development

Great communities need to put their best foot forward to attract the kind of economic development that maintains or improves their quality of life.

Studies have found that local spending helps the local economy more than spending that comes from outside the community. This is because spending at local businesses has a higher recirculation rate than spending outside of the community does. Money spent at local businesses is then spent on other local goods and services, creating a more significant impact than when money is spent in other communities. One study conducted in 2004 found that for every $100 spent at a local business, approximately $68 stayed in the local economy. When the same amount was spent at a big box store, only about $43 stayed in the local economy (The Andersonville Study of Retail Economics).

Next Steps: Tools for Economic Development

Master Plans create the vision; it is the "next steps" that make them relevant and successful. These next steps could include an up-to-date zoning ordinance, creative incentives, and an efficient and effective site plan review process that moves the community vision forward day-by-day. Specific strategies to enable these tools to be more effective for the community may be explored further during the development of the Implementation Plan of the Master Plan.

Zoning Ordinance. Create a zoning ordinance that is well-organized and easy to understand can help developers know what to expect and what is expected of them. This should help the development review process go more smoothly and quickly, saving developers time and money and encouraging them to consider Grosse Pointe Woods as a good place to do business.

Incentive Tools for Development. Assess where economic development is needed and develop incentive tools that encourage that development. Examples include brownfield redevelopment authorities, downtown development authorities, business improvement districts, etc.

Site Plan Review Process. Create a clear, concise, predictable review process. Similar to having a clear zoning ordinance, this helps developers feel supported and get help on their projects when needed.

Benefits of Local Economic Development

- **The Multiplier Effect**. The multiplier effect refers to the economic phenomenon of initial spending leading to increased consumer spending within a community, resulting in greater income for that community. It is estimated that for every $1 spent locally, your dollars circulate through the local economy two to four times more than money spent at a non-local company.

- **Local Jobs are Created and Sustained**. The multiplier effect, as well as your initial local spending, creates and keeps jobs in the area. This improves household finances, increases disposable income, and keeps money circulating.

- **Increased Tax Base**. More dollars spent and more people working in the community creates a larger tax base.

- **Greater Provision of High Quality Services and Infrastructure**. With more funds available to local governments, more and higher quality services and infrastructure can be provided. These things such as road improvements and repairs, water and sewer infrastructure, robust and reliable high speed internet, more recreational spaces and programming, and generally better governmental operations can greatly improve quality of life for many residents and decrease individual resident and homeowner costs.

- **Diversifies the Economy, Making it Less Susceptible to Downturns**. Just like in personal investing, diversifying the investments made in a community through the businesses that locate there can reduce the risk that the community will be greatly impacted if there is a change in the course for that business or industry.

- **Supports Community Identity and Pride**. Local commercial corridors can help define and mark a community, both for residents and visitors. Supporting local businesses and the entire business corridor can create a "third place" – semi public, semi-private spaces that are not home or work/school – where people can spend time with friends, get their needs met, and engage in the community.

Key Elements of a Successful Downtown or Main Street

- A pedestrian-friendly atmosphere
- Mixed uses that work together
- Being a recognizable center of community life
- Connectivity to other parts of the community
- Coordinated programs and events

Creating a continuous "streetwall" that engages pedestrians and entices them to continue to other destinations can make or break a downtown. Sidewalks buffered from vehicular traffic, awnings and trees protecting pedestrians from the elements, and storefront windows that showcase the establishment can be a pull for people frequenting the downtown. Bringing residents and ensuring connectivity on a day-to-day basis are vital to thriving downtowns.

Current trends such as a shift to remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, rising internet sales has led to a decline in commercial and office demand. Commercial developments which are anchored by residential uses have demonstrated success in maintaining occupancy. Mixed use developments often include greater density housing types with neighborhood-scale commercial goods and services to serve the residents therein and could be an appropriate option along Mack Avenue. Mixed-use developments are particularly amenable to the needs of seniors and children who often do not drive, by providing increased accessibility and opportunities for walkability that are not present in other areas of the City, further away from Mack Avenue. These developments could result in enhanced mobility outcomes and greater independence to meet other trends like an aging population and housing supply shortages.

Economic Indicators of Development

Economic development has the potential to change communities in various ways. Here are a few indicators that could arise with a strategic economic development action:

- More direct jobs
- More indirect (spinoff) jobs
- Higher paying jobs
- Higher quality jobs
- Expanded public infrastructure (roads, water, sewer)
- Expanded public services (fire, police, parks, library)
- Expanded "broadband" and technological connectivity
- Higher school enrollments
- Higher property values
- Greater tax revenues
- Greater diversity in people
- Greater restaurant, retail, and entertainment options
- Existing local small business growth (like grocery stores, hardware stores, etc.)
- Focused and planned residential and commercial development

Questions to Consider

- What businesses would be of interest to residents and visitors?
- How can these businesses be recruited and attracted to Grosse Pointe Woods? What infrastructure or programs, if any, would serve as an incentive to new business owners in the City?

Opportunities for an Update

Having a vibrant business corridor has been noted as one of the main areas for improvement in Grosse Pointe Woods. The master plan should focus on short and long-term strategies to attract and retain new businesses.

Arts, Culture, & Identity

The earliest human experiences include expressions of art and the creation of cultures that define a group of people. There is no one definition of art; expressions of art include the visual, such as painting, drawing, photography or sculpture, as well as the performed, such as music, theater, dance and film. Art includes the spectrum from the written word and storytelling to animation and textiles. It includes industrial design, architecture and graphic design industries. The definition of "culture" is "all that is fabricated, endowed, designed, articulated, conceived or directed by human beings, as opposed to what is given in nature. Culture includes both material elements (buildings, artifacts, etc.) and immaterial ones (ideology, value systems, languages)."[1]

According to the American Planning Association (APA), planners in the past have used art and culture as a "community revitalization tool," but today, there is recognition that arts and cultural opportunities have tremendous potential to contribute to broader social, economic, and environmental aspects of community life.[2] The APA states that arts and culture provide a medium to:

- Preserve, celebrate, challenge, and invent community identity;
- Engage participation in civic life;
- Inform, educate, and learn from diverse audiences; and
- Communicate across demographic and socioeconomic lines.

Arts & cultural activities – vast and innumerable – support individual health and wellbeing, promote community identity through placemaking and catalyze economic development.

The City of Fort Wayne's Art Master Plan, Art for All, notes that "public art provides the intersection between our past, present, and future, and also has the power to transform a city because neighborhoods gain social, economic, and cultural value through public art." The plan identifies the value art brings to a community:

- Economic Value: Enhancing the identity and character of (the community) through public art directly supports cultural tourism and economic development strategies, which can attract and retain residents.
- Social Value: When people see themselves reflected in their civic spaces, they have a sense of attachment that allows them to feel ownership and respect.
- Cultural Value: Public art has the power to create uniqueness through the reflection of the local history and culture, which gives communities a sense of place and identity. Public art provides a visual mechanism for understanding other cultures and perspectives, creating social cohesion and encouraging civic engagement. Through the reinforcement of culture, public art acts as a catalyst for unity and social engagement.

[1] United States Department of Art and Culture (2018). Art & Well-Being: Toward a Culture of Health: Arlene Goldbard.

[2] American Planning Association (2011).The Role of Arts and Culture in Planning Practice (Briefing Papers), p. 4.

Health and Wellbeing

Over the past several years, studies throughout the world have shown the value of arts and culture on individual and community health. In a 2018 report, the United States Department of Art and Culture (USDAC), a non-governmental grassroots action organization, cites several of these studies that include wide-ranging data to support the power of art on health and wellness. The report concludes, "we understand human connection, meaning-making, creativity, and purpose as key contributions to individual and collective well-being and therefore as powerful modes of prevention."[3] The report concludes with the following findings:

The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived.

The arts can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: aging, long-term conditions, loneliness and mental health.

The arts can help save money in the health service and social care.

[3] United States Department of Art and Culture (2018).

Economic Impact of Arts and Culture

The nonprofit organization Americans for the Art provides research data on the impact of arts and culture in communities. Their 2018 report on the economic impact of the arts (supported by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis) found that nonprofit arts and culture industries generated $166.3 billion in total economic activity and supported 4.6 million jobs in 2015. The report notes that findings show that the arts are an "industry that supports jobs, generates government revenue and is a cornerstone of tourism."

The economic impacts are substantial in Michigan. In 2017, the arts and culture industries added 2.8% or $13.9 billion to the state's economy and employed 121,330 workers (about 3% of Michigan's employment). These workers earned wages and benefits totaling over $7.6 billion.

Placemaking

Placemaking means intentionally creating quality places that people seek out to live, work and play. It is a process of creating and nurturing quality places that have a strong sense of place. As it becomes increasingly easier to live and work anywhere, people will choose quality places that are:

- Safe
- Connected
- Welcoming
- Conducive to authentic experiences
- Accessible; people can easily circulate within and to and from these locations
- Comfortable; they address cleanliness, character, and charm
- Sociable; they have a physical fabric that encourages people to connect with one another
- Able to promote and facilitate civic engagement.[4]

Because authenticity is a critical component of placemaking, arts and culture unique to a community are key ingredients in creating quality places. The Kresge Foundation is a strong advocate for placemaking in communities and focuses on the role that art and culture play. They establish the following guiding premises:[5] :

- Creativity, aesthetic expression and the impulse to create meaning are evidence of our humanity and serve as community assets from which to build.
- Participation in arts and culture takes many forms and occurs in a wide range of venues—parks, community centers, churches and public spaces. People attend art events and buy art. But they also make, teach, learn and support arts and culture in myriad ways, from the amateur to professional realms.
- Our societal tendency is to focus on art products, but it is also imperative to recognize and appreciate the creative process. Process can be as important as, or in some cases, more important than art product.
- Artists have many kinds of relationships with communities, often helping people find their voice and expression or lending a different perspective when framing or devising solutions to community issues.
- Arts-and-culture activity is intrinsically important and contributes to a wide range of community dynamics, conditions and issues.
- Arts-and-culture activity in communities relies on supports inside and outside of the cultural sector.

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[4] Steuteville, R. (2014) "Four Types of Placemaking," Congress for the New Urbanism https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/four-types-placemaking
[5] The Kresge Foundation (2018). Creative Placemaking and Expansion of Opportunities: Observations and Reflections: Jackson, Maria Rosario, Ph.D.

Community Identity

Community identity is an important element of a place. It helps people feel connected to the spatial and physical elements, as well as the other people there. The most evident factor in creating and maintaining a place's identity is appearance. The physical attributes of places may be the only impression people have of the community. Components of community identity, such as banners, particular sidewalk markings, or gateways can help people identify the boundaries of a specific area and connect that to specific events, experiences, or people. Other strategies for creating community identity include events (particularly if they are on a regular basis), activation of vacant and public spaces, pop-up events, and pop-up businesses. All of these could be useful strategies to employ along Mack Avenue. Collaboration with business owners would be helpful in creating this sense of identity and drawing people into the area to enjoy what the businesses have to offer. Below are some examples of communities that have used some of these strategies to bring people together and enhance a sense of place.

Banners placed on light posts are used in many communities to mark significant areas such as downtowns or special districts. Often these banners change throughout the year with the various seasons. The City features banners on some light posts along Mack Avenue.

Signage, including things like wayfinding signs, can also identify an area and help people orient to other amenities in the community. Wayfinding signs could help people navigate to the City Hall Complex.

Gateways which are more prominent and mark the boundaries of Grosse Pointe Woods could welcome and draw people to the area.

Sidewalk markings and art installations, similar to banners, can help identify the boundaries of a specific area, serve as landmarks for wayfinding, draw people's interest, and provide a sense of cohesion and identify in the area. Typical streetscape elements, such as crosswalks, can be tailored to the community, such as the city of Detroit's Paint the Street program, which allows community groups to paint street murals or crosswalks on residential (local) streets.

What are gateways?

- Gateways announce a point of arrival
- They can be located on public or private property (or combination)
- They can orient people arriving by vehicle or on foot/bicycle

Why are gateways important?

- Reinforce community identity
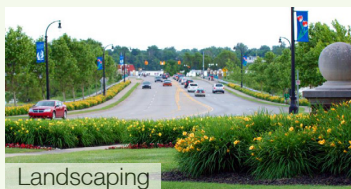- Create anticipation for what is ahead
- Provide a sense of place

Art

Buildings

Lighting

Banners

Landscaping

Streets/Pavement

Bridges

Sidewalk amenities make an area colorful, inviting, and active, encouraging people to stay longer along the path by providing things for them to do. Nine Mile Road in Oak Park has a well-maintained sidewalk that is lined with art, fit stations for exercise, children's play equipment, and bench swings. Adding similar amenities, even if they are small or few, could enhance Mack Avenue and encourage people to visit and stay.

Activation of vacant/public spaces can contribute to an engaging street. These spaces can be used for display of art, landscaping, passive and active areas for pedestrians, outdoor dining, and more. This strategy has been very successful within Detroit neighborhoods, with vacant lots hosting farmers markets and art fairs, pop-up events, movies in the park, fitness classes, live music, and more.

Events, especially those that occur on a weekly, annual or other regular basis, give community members something to look forward to. Simple events such as live music, a sidewalk sale by retailers, or an annual festival can draw new faces to a place and give previous visitors a reason to return. City Hall hosts events like Music on the Lawn that draw patrons to the area. Similar activities could also bring people to the area and encourage them to check out local businesses.

Pop-up events such as farmers markets or other local vendor fairs, can help local entrepreneurs test their products in the area without having to commit to a brick-and-mortar building full time. The Pop Up Shop on Livernois Avenue in Detroit hosts pop-up events and businesses. The building can be rented for personal events, or for those looking to sell goods or services for a short amount of time. Event tables, cabinets, chairs, high tops, and a prep kitchen are available to those using the space, making it versatile. Wallon Lake has incorporated pop-up shops in a space between permanent structures. These shops provide a seasonal location for shopping, and they can serve as an incubator to local entrepreneurs (see Chesterfield Master Plan, pg. 70). In Grosse Pointe Woods, pop up shops and events could be located in the space between permanent structures, or in one of the existing buildings as shared community space.

Civic Identity

Creating and nurturing civic identity is critical for effective and efficient local governance. Civic identity can instill pride in residents that encourages them to vote in local elections as well as participate as City board/commission members. A solid, recognizable civic identity works with community character to support economic development—both for business attraction and retention. It can also support local institutions who may rely on people from outside the community to understand where they operate.

Ways to develop and promote civic identity

- Strong downtowns/Downtown Development Associations/Local First campaigns
- Gathering places, civic squares
- Chamber of Commerce
- Public art
- Gateways
- Consistent signage, decoration, and wayfinding
- Community events such as Restaurant Week, Local Business week, holiday events, Art Hop, Womens' Night Out
- Neighborhood organizations
- Community volunteer organizations

Questions to Consider

- Where do Grosse Pointe Woods residents go to enjoy, experience, and learn about arts and culture? How can cultural assets and organizations like the Grosse Pointe Art Center and The Knotted Needle help to enhance the community experience?
- How does the City incorporate placemaking into its public and private spaces? What assets should be highlighted to help generate community pride and distinguish Grosse Pointe Woods from its neighbors?
- What makes Grosse Pointe Woods Grosse Pointe Woods? How can those things be accentuated or articulated (art, banners, etc.) and incorporated into City communications and programming?
- What spaces are used as community gathering spaces and how can they better foster community?

Opportunities for an Update

Efforts to strengthen the Mack Avenue corridor should consider the value that arts and culture can have. The City should review existing assets and identify strategies to enhance existing assets, and develop new opportunities for residents and visitors to experience arts and culture.

The Master Plan update process is an opportunity for communities to reimagine what they could be in 10-15 years. This reimagining can include intangible things such as community identity. Putting thought into how the community wants to portray itself and how it will go about doing so, both for its residents and visitors, is an important discussion that touches the other master plan goals and action items.

Sustainability & Resiliency

It is becoming critical to include concepts of resiliency and sustainability into land use plans. Though they are related, resiliency and sustainability are not the same. Sustainability is the well-established concept that focuses on decreasing or eliminating the detrimental future impacts of our current activity. Resiliency recognizes that our built environment will be subject to stresses and is the practice of designing that environment in a way that can endure those stresses. Some threats are ongoing, persistent stresses, while others are sudden shocks or single events that disrupt the day-to-day functioning of the community.

As we plan for the future, many of the challenges we will face are related either directly or indirectly to our place in larger systems, both natural and man made. We often have little direct local control over these systems, but adapting to change and discovering our role in contributing to the health of these systems is nonetheless essential to planning for a community that can survive and thrive even in the face of the most severe challenges.

Michigan is affected by our changing climate in many ways, some of which may seem counterintuitive. For instance, as average annual temperatures rise, the chance of prolonged deep freezes such as those experienced in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 winters may increase, as warming elsewhere on the planet destabilizes the jet stream, allowing Arctic air that would normally be trapped further north to descend into the Upper Midwest.

A changing climate has far-reaching implications for Michigan's agricultural and tourism economies, waterfront development, and communities with older stormwater management infrastructure. Within the last decade, the local area has experienced multiple heavy rain events that have led to property damage and decreased mobility and must anticipate that more flooding will occur in the future, damaging property, impairing access to parts of the City, and creating financial distress for local residents and businesses.

Resilient communities are not only preparing for weather and climate-related shocks, but are also preparing for economic and health shocks as well. In 2020, we saw the impacts of a global pandemic on local community health, education, recreation, commerce, technology and social connectivity. These impacts touched everyone's lives in big and small ways and may have lasting impacts in our communities.

Planning for resiliency must consider that some threats are ongoing, persistent stresses, while others are sudden shocks, single events that disrupt the day-to-day functioning of the community.

Effects of Climate Change

Climate change is not merely a future threat; changes in the local climate have already been recorded in places around the world, and Michigan is no exception. For instance, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, average temperatures in the Great Lakes region rose 2.3 degrees Fahrenheit from 1951 to 2017, extending the frost free season by 16 days, while total annual precipitation increased 14 percent and the number of heavy precipitation events rose 35 percent. By 2070, average temperatures in southern Michigan are expected to rise an additional 4 degrees, and the annual number of days above 95 degrees will correspondingly rise by between 5 and 10. Communities will experience between 25 and 35 fewer nights below freezing, and average annual ice cover on the lakes will continue to decline.

As the frequency and intensity of severe weather events continues to increase, communities will experience economic disruption. For instance, while the frost-free season has nominally increased, farmers in many of Michigan's agricultural communities have not benefited in recent years due to abnormally late frosts (such as those in mid-May, 2020) or heavy rain events, which have damaged early crops or delayed planting of late crops. Rising temperatures and more very hot days may effect the timing of summer festivals and tourism.

As part of long-range planning, communities should understand, anticipate and plan for the local effects of regional climate trends. These include:

Precipitation. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, average annual precipitation in the Great Lakes region is expected to increase over the next several decades. While the change may seem small, projections indicate that the average rise will be driven by an increase in heavy precipitation days, and that there will also be a modest in crease in the number of consecutive dry days each year. In other words, rainfall is expected to become more concentrated in heavy storms.

Temperature. Average temperatures in the Great Lakes region have increased and will continue to increase well into the future, even if greenhouse gas emission are sharply reduced soon; if emissions are not curbed, the increase will be greater. The region will likely see about a 4.5-degree rise in average temperatures over the next several decades, with more than 30 additional days over 90 degrees and more than 10 additional days over 95 degrees. The area is expected to see at least 30 fewer nights below 32 degrees by 2070.

Carbon dioxide is one of the most prevalent and damaging greenhouse gases that contributes to global warming. Trees naturally absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, intercepting that carbon dioxide before it enters the atmosphere. Trees can help mitigate against extreme temperatures and reduce energy needs by providing shade that can help reduce the energy needed to cool a building during the summer and can help reduce the heat island effect. Likewise, trees can buffer harsh winds, saving energy on heating buildings in the winter.

Addressing Resiliency & Identifying Vulnerable Populations

Resilient communities anticipate likely shocks, understand trends in stressors, and prepare for potential worst case scenarios. Understanding where a community is physically most vulnerable to specific events, and understanding which members of the community are likely to be most vulnerable in each case is key to effective planning. This section discusses in general terms what the community may expect in the future and what might be done to prepare for it; this plan recommends the development of a community resiliency plan.

Though an entire community will be affected by a major event such as a severe storm, flood, or long power outage, certain segments of the population are more vulnerable to the effects of such events, and in some cases are also more likely to live in locations that are more likely to be severely affected.

Public health emergencies. The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it unprecedented economic disruption, forced short-term changes in social habits, destroyed numerous small businesses, and led to a very large increase in unemployment in a very short time period. Planning for public health emergencies needs to consider the many dimensions of the social fabric that are heavily impacted, including the availability of medical services, government's ability to continue functioning under quarantines or stay-at-home orders, and the locations and numbers of vulnerable populations. Local police, fire, and ambulance services may be particularly taxed in a future public health emergency.

Though the most vulnerable populations will vary based on the specific event, certain population segments warrant special attention even in a general analysis:

- Low-income households
- Elderly
- Disabled
- Children

Low-income households may lack the financial resources to support quick recovery after a disaster or to prepare effectively for likely future events. The elderly and disabled may similarly lack financial resources and mobility, and may be more socially isolated than other groups. Especially in extreme heat events, the elderly and very young children are much more likely to be badly affected, including to the point of hospitalization, than the general population.

Planning Ahead

Sustainability and resiliency planning helps create a more equitable and inclusive community where people want to live, work, and play. Future planning should include: further refining sustainability and resiliency in the context of the City determining areas of focus and goals, gathering baseline data related to focus areas, and setting up systems to monitor, collect, record, and analyze data.

Moving forward, planning efforts should include a public outreach process in two basic parts: education and input. Education includes making community members aware of potential threats and the process of planning for them, with an emphasis on outreach to the most vulnerable members of the community. The input process should offer the opportunity for residents and other stakeholders such as City staff, commercial property owners and business owners to engage in detailed, focused conversations regarding resiliency planning issues.

Questions to Consider

- What potential future threats could impact the City?

- What places, based on structures or people that are there, are likely to be most negatively impacted by a severe weather, man-made disaster, health hazard, or other threat?

- How can Grosse Pointe Woods plan to protect and preserve community health and prosperity for future generations? Consider economic, public health, and environmental threats.

- What systems and resources are currently in place to support residents if a crisis were to occur? How can the resources and amenities currently existing in Grosse Pointe Woods contribute to resiliency in the face of a disaster?

Opportunities for an Update

The Master Plan update process is also an opportunity to think about events that could possibly impact the city negatively, and how to mitigate and prepare for such events.

Since most of the land within Grosse Pointe Woods is developed, specific recommendations for how the City can better prepare for severe weather events through green infrastructure and limitations on impervious cover may be important.

Since the 2006 Master Plan was adopted, a national focus on climate protection and carbon output reduction has leveraged new advancements in energy and transportation systems. As non-renewable energy sources and electric vehicle technologies become more prevalent, consider the effect these technologies may have on the built environment.

Conclusion

This report provided a summary of issues that were identified as being top priority in Grosse Pointe Woods by Planning Commissioners, City Council Members, and City staff. Fortunately, all of these issues can be addressed through thoughtful planning, which requires input from more than just the stakeholders that have already been engaged in the process.

Therefore, as the Planning Commission develops an updated Master Plan for the City, the next step will be to engage the entire community – residents, business owners, property holders – to get feedback on the proposed goals that work to address the issues described here. Input from stakeholders will help ensure that these goals are focused on the right elements and inform the recommendations in the Master Plan are appropriate to enable Grosse Pointe Woods to become the City they want it to be, now and for years to come. The resulting Master Plan will be informed by both the community input and the work of the Planning Commission included in this report.