



Memorandum

TO: City of Livonia Planning Commission

FROM: Donovan Smith, AICP

SUBJECT: Recommendation to Adopt the Draft Livonia Vision 21 Master Plan Amendment following the Required 45-Day Public Review Period

DATE: July 21, 2026

As part of the comprehensive update to the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission is requested to review Articles 4, 5, 6, 11, and 12. The purpose of this review is to identify provisions that should be retained, revised, expanded, reorganized, or removed to better reflect current community conditions, administrative practices, development patterns, and planning objectives.

REQUESTED PLANNING COMMISSION DIRECTION

Following its review, the Planning Commission is requested to provide direction regarding:

1. Regulations that should remain substantially unchanged;
2. Regulations requiring clarification or minor amendments;
3. Regulations requiring substantial revision;
4. New uses, definitions, and standards that should be added;
5. Approval processes that should be revised to reflect current practices;
6. Decisions that may be delegated to administrative staff;
7. Matters that should continue to require Planning Commission review; and
8. Additional topics that should be addressed in the revised Zoning Ordinance.



ARTICLE 4: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Fences

1. Are the existing fence regulations appropriate for current residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development patterns?
2. Are the permitted fence heights appropriate for front, side, and rear yards?
3. Should fence height, material, and design standards vary by zoning district or land use?
4. Are additional standards needed for fences located on corner lots, through lots, waterfront properties, or lots adjacent to public rights-of-way?
5. Should certain fence materials, including chain-link fencing, barbed wire, razor wire, temporary fencing, or unfinished materials, be prohibited or limited?
6. Should administrative approval be permitted for minor fence modifications or exceptions?
7. Are the existing fence permit, maintenance, visibility, and enforcement requirements adequate?

Accessory Structures and Buildings

1. Are the existing approval criteria for accessory structures and buildings clear and sufficient?
2. Should accessory structures require administrative approval, site plan review, or Planning Commission approval based on their size, height, location, or use?
3. Are the permitted size, height, lot coverage, and setback requirements compatible with existing lot sizes?
4. Should accessory buildings be permitted on a lot without a principal building or principal use?
5. Should different standards apply to detached garages, sheds, gazebos, carports, workshops, recreational structures, and similar buildings?
6. Are additional design or compatibility standards needed for larger accessory buildings?
7. Should the ordinance establish standards for the number of accessory structures permitted on a lot?
8. Are standards needed to address shipping containers, temporary storage structures, or other nontraditional accessory structures?



ARTICLE 5: ZONING DISTRICTS

Table of Permitted Uses

1. Does the Table of Permitted Uses accurately reflect the uses that should be permitted in each zoning district?
2. Are any uses currently permitted by right that should instead require special land use approval?
3. Are any special land uses appropriate to permit by right when specific standards are satisfied?
4. Are any uses no longer relevant and appropriate for removal?
5. Are there emerging or contemporary uses that should be added to the table?
6. Are similar uses classified consistently across the zoning districts?
7. Should the table distinguish between different sizes, intensities, or operational characteristics of a use?
8. Are residential and mixed-use districts sufficiently flexible to accommodate the housing types identified in the Comprehensive Plan?

Schedule of Regulations

1. Are the minimum lot area and lot width requirements compatible with existing platted lot sizes?
2. Do the current dimensional standards create a significant number of nonconforming lots or structures?
3. Are the front, side, and rear setback requirements appropriate for existing neighborhood development patterns?
4. Are maximum building height and lot coverage standards appropriate for each zoning district?
5. Should standards be revised to better accommodate infill development and redevelopment?
6. Should dimensional standards vary based on housing type, building form, street type, or development context?
7. Are parking, open-space, landscaping, and building-placement requirements coordinated with the Schedule of Regulations?
8. Should separate standards be established for corner lots, through lots, small lots, or legally nonconforming lots?

Definitions

1. Which existing land-use definitions are unclear, outdated, duplicative, or inconsistent with the Table of Permitted Uses?
2. Which definitions should be revised to distinguish between similar uses?
3. What new uses require definitions?



4. Are definitions needed for emerging uses such as short-term rentals, accessory dwelling units, shared commercial kitchens, micro-manufacturing, co-working spaces, and similar uses?
5. Should certain uses be defined based on size, floor area, occupancy, operating characteristics, or potential impacts?
6. Are terms used within the ordinance applied consistently throughout all articles?

ARTICLE 6: SPECIFIC USE STANDARDS

General Review

1. Which uses require new or expanded specific use standards?
2. Are the existing standards sufficient to address compatibility, traffic, parking, noise, lighting, hours of operation, outdoor activity, and property maintenance?
3. Are any standards duplicative of general district or site plan requirements?
4. Should additional standards be established for uses located near residential properties?
5. Can certain uses be approved administratively when all objective standards are satisfied?
6. Are the standards clear, measurable, and enforceable?

Short-Term Rentals

1. Should short-term rentals be permitted within the City?
2. In which zoning districts should short-term rentals be permitted?
3. Should short-term rentals be permitted by right, administratively approved, or reviewed as a special land use?
4. Should the ordinance distinguish between owner-occupied and non-owner-occupied short-term rentals?
5. Should limits be established for occupancy, number of rental days, number of guests, parking, signage, events, or hours of operation?
6. Should local registration, licensing, inspections, or emergency contact information be required?
7. Should short-term rentals be prohibited in accessory dwelling units or other accessory structures?
8. What standards are needed to protect neighboring properties and maintain residential neighborhood character?

Accessory Dwelling Units

1. In which residential or mixed-use districts should accessory dwelling units be permitted?



2. Should accessory dwelling units be permitted by right, administratively approved, or reviewed as a special land use?
3. Should both attached and detached accessory dwelling units be permitted?
4. Should owner occupancy be required for either the principal dwelling or accessory dwelling unit?
5. What maximum floor area, height, setback, and lot coverage standards should apply?
6. Should additional off-street parking be required?
7. Should accessory dwelling units be permitted on nonconforming lots?
8. Should the architectural design of an accessory dwelling unit be compatible with the principal dwelling?
9. Should short-term rental use of an accessory dwelling unit be prohibited or separately regulated?
10. What utility, addressing, access, and emergency service requirements should apply?

Home Occupations

1. Do the current home occupation standards accommodate modern home-based businesses?
2. Should the ordinance distinguish between minor home occupations and more intensive home-based businesses?
3. Should certain home occupations be permitted administratively while others require special land use approval?
4. How many nonresident employees, customers, clients, or deliveries should be permitted?
5. What limits should apply to floor area, outdoor storage, signage, equipment, noise, traffic, and hours of operation?
6. Should home occupations be permitted within accessory buildings?
7. Are additional standards needed for occupations involving food preparation, personal services, instructional services, repair activities, or online retail?
8. What standards are necessary to ensure that a home occupation remains secondary to the residential use of the property?



ARTICLE 11: SITE PLAN REVIEW

Process

1. Does the existing site plan review process reflect current administrative and Planning Commission practices?
2. Are the responsibilities of the Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, City Council, and other reviewing departments clearly defined?
3. Are the thresholds for administrative, preliminary, and full site plan review appropriate?
4. Are application requirements and review timelines clearly stated?
5. Does the process provide adequate opportunities for coordinated staff and agency review?
6. Should pre-application meetings or conceptual site plan reviews be required or encouraged?
7. Are public notice or public hearing requirements appropriate for the types of site plans reviewed?

Approval Criteria

1. Does the Planning Commission have sufficient and objective criteria to approve, approve with conditions, postpone, or deny a site plan?
2. Do the approval criteria adequately address:
 - Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance;
 - Compatibility with surrounding properties;
 - Vehicular and pedestrian circulation;
 - Emergency and service access;
 - Parking and loading;
 - Landscaping and screening;
 - Lighting;
 - Stormwater management;
 - Utilities and public infrastructure;
 - Natural features;
 - Building placement and design; and
 - Public health, safety, and welfare?
3. Should the ordinance provide clearer authority to impose reasonable conditions of approval?



4. Should findings of fact be required for approval or denial?
5. Are the criteria sufficiently measurable and enforceable?

Site Plan Modifications

1. Does the ordinance clearly allow approved site plans to be modified?
2. Should the ordinance distinguish between minor and major site plan modifications?
3. Which modifications may be approved administratively?
4. Which modifications should require Planning Commission review?
5. Should changes involving building area, use, access, parking, landscaping, drainage, or phasing be classified as major modifications?
6. Should the ordinance establish expiration periods and procedures for extensions?
7. How should deviations from an approved site plan be addressed during construction?
8. Should revised plans be required before a certificate of occupancy is issued?

ARTICLE 12: SPECIAL LAND USES

Process

1. Does the existing special land use process reflect current administrative and Planning Commission practices?
2. Are application, notification, public hearing, and decision-making procedures clearly stated?
3. Are the roles of the Planning Commission and City Council consistent with applicable state law and the intended local review process?
4. Should special land use review occur concurrently with site plan review?
5. Are review timelines and requirements for complete applications clearly established?
6. Should the ordinance address postponements, incomplete applications, withdrawals, and resubmittals?
7. Are expiration and extension procedures adequate?

Approval Criteria

1. Does the Planning Commission have sufficient and objective criteria to approve, approve with conditions, or deny a special land use?
2. Do the criteria adequately address:



- Compatibility with the zoning district;
 - Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan;
 - Compatibility with surrounding land uses;
 - Traffic and transportation impacts;
 - Public services and infrastructure;
 - Noise, lighting, odor, vibration, and other operational impacts;
 - Environmental and natural resource impacts;
 - Property values and neighborhood character; and
 - Public health, safety, and welfare?
3. Should the ordinance provide clearer authority for conditions related to hours of operation, screening, access, occupancy, parking, outdoor activity, and other operational characteristics?
 4. Should findings of fact be required to support the Planning Commission's decision?
 5. Are the general approval criteria coordinated with the specific use standards in Article 6?

Modifications to an Approved Special Land Use or Site Plan

1. Does the ordinance clearly allow modifications to an approved special land use and its associated site plan?
2. Should the ordinance distinguish between minor administrative changes and major amendments?
3. What types of changes should require a new public hearing?
4. Should a change in ownership or operator require additional review?
5. Should changes to the approved use, intensity, hours, floor area, site access, parking, or operational characteristics require Planning Commission approval?
6. Should the ordinance establish procedures for abandonment, expiration, revocation, or transfer of a special land use approval?
7. How should violations of special land use conditions be addressed?
8. Should the ordinance establish a process for periodic review of uses with significant operational impacts?