

Comprehensive Plan – March 2026 Council Questions

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How is resident participation to date being evaluated in terms of depth and representativeness, and how it will inform the next phase of planning?

Resident input is essential for the Master Plan to help set the long-range vision and goals for the city. This input, combined with existing conditions data and projections for the future, will be considered by the Planning Commission in their development of the plan.

The planning process, outlined in our 2025 scope of work, includes multiple opportunities for engagement and input. These opportunities include topical surveys (housing, transportation, economic development, and parks, recreation, and sustainability), discussions at Planning Commission study sessions, public comment at Planning Commission regular meetings, a community open house, and a public hearing. These online and in-person opportunities allow residents (and businesses) to participate at their convenience and at a level that is meaningful to them.

To raise awareness of these opportunities, our team supports City staff and officials through the creation of a project website, topical survey flyers, and business cards with the link to the website. Additionally, we offer staff some text that is helpful for social media promotion.

The use of “planning neighborhoods,” five geographic sections of the city based on the street network, allow the Planning Commission to gauge how representative engagement is throughout the city. Each of the topical surveys includes a question that asks respondents in which neighborhood they live. It appears that so far, at least with the housing topic, residents living in the neighborhoods south of I-696 are underrepresented in the survey responses. Knowing this, the Planning Commission may wish to consider how to increase participation in the southern neighborhoods. Strategies could include personal invitations to contribute to the surveys and attend meetings.

Following the topical surveys and discussions, the Planning Commission will consider the feedback and assess what more they need to know in order to update the Master Plan. These questions will be incorporated into the open house activity. Generally, the open house will feature stations by topic (housing, transportation, economic development, and parks, recreation, and sustainability), and we expect the Planning Commissioners to assist with staffing these stations and having a dialogue with participants. Similar information will be presented on the project website, allowing more opportunities to engage with residents should they be unable to join in person.

With all this information collected, the Planning Commission will revisit the goals, objectives, and action items from the 2021 Master Plan and consider refinements that may be necessary. The big picture is that the City is largely built out – with the existing single-family neighborhoods comprising a significant portion of the City – the primary areas that could change or be modified are along Southfield Road and the mile roads. Those non-single-family residential areas are restricted by their relatively small lot sizes and right-of-way constraints. The Planning Commission will be thinking creatively and responsively about redevelopment that stimulates economic development in ways that respect the City’s residential neighborhoods.

How are housing and land use discussions being calibrated to Lathrup Village’s existing development and realistic capacity (especially in the neighborhoods)?

As noted above, the City is largely built out. While there are opportunities for redevelopment in the commercial corridors, the Planning Commission, in the City’s 2009, 2015, and 2021 Master Plans, has been consistent about maintaining the charm and character of the historic single-family residential neighborhoods while also ensuring homes meet the needs of residents today and in the future. In the last

Master Plan, which guided a subsequent zoning amendment, housing units in the form of townhomes and/or apartments were added to the Southfield Road corridor. A small “cottage court” concept was also included for the “house in the woods” property. This concept envisioned smaller homes clustered around a common open space. While this opportunity no longer exists, the concept shows the Planning Commission (in 2021) identifying an opportunity to add to the housing stock in a way that was compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

In Lathrup Village, the housing stock, while charming and historic, is aging, and the Planning Commission has identified this as a concern for residents today and in the future. Strategies to support needed upgrades to homes, while maintaining the historic character of the neighborhoods, will be explored as the Planning Commission moves through the Master Plan process.

As in 2021, the Master Plan will likely look to Southfield Road and mile roads for both ways to encourage economic vitality as well as provide housing needs for Lathrup Village residents. Continuing to explore housing, goods, and services, while supporting local businesses, will be topics for upcoming discussions with the Planning Commission and the community.

How are peer city comparisons and regional data being used to frame issues, and how our specific local conditions are reflected in that analysis?

So far in the planning process, the Planning Commission has discussed demographic data in surrounding/local communities. The area comparison data is not intended to underscore differences or disparities between communities, but rather to illustrate and better understand how Lathrup Village fits into the broader regional context. While not necessarily “peer cities,” these are communities with which people are familiar with and that share a common geographical context as part of the larger southeast Michigan region. This is helpful in providing context and understanding to data, which can feel abstract. These communities share a transportation network and people travel into and out of them, often without realizing where one municipal boundary separates another. This means that Lathrup Village does not plan in a vacuum; and indeed, there are some things that residents find elsewhere – like the library, larger natural areas, and regional shopping. The Planning Commission will discuss the local needs of the City, based on both data and community input, which include residents as well as business owners, to strive for a long-range plan that is practical, realistic, and forward-thinking.

How will the housing, economic development, and transportation be integrated as recommendations begin to take form?

Through the City’s previous plans, and through the current planning process, the comprehensive nature of these community elements is reinforced. One cannot discuss housing without also talking about transportation as they are the two biggest expenses households face. Likewise, maintaining quality neighborhoods cannot be discussed without recognizing the importance of strengthening the City’s economic base. The latter half of the project will allow the Planning Commission to revisit each of the focus areas and better understand how they are woven together.

What structured checkpoints remain for Planning Commission and Council to help shape direction before draft recommendations are developed?

The development of the Master Plan is a Planning Commission responsibility, as provided in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Their expert knowledge as residents and understanding of development in the City helps them see how planning today results in future development. They have a number of meetings ahead in which to review and understand data and community input, assess goals and objectives, and

develop implementation strategies. While the scope was developed consistent with previous planning efforts (where City Council was engaged at the beginning to provide high level feedback), if an additional joint meeting is desired, that might fit well when the Planning Commission has a working draft prepared (likely Fall 2026).

What role does the theoretical Southfield BLVD still play in their planning, as sentiment from Council and others seems to be moving away from that as a long term goal?

The Planning Commission will be studying transportation at their March regular meeting and at their April study session. In April, a transportation planner with the Road Commission for Oakland County will be attending to respond to any transportation questions that arise in the March meeting. It will be important to understand the issues surrounding the boulevard concept, which has been in the planning phase for almost 20 years. From a Master Plan standpoint, the long-range plans for the City should support mobility into and out of all four quadrants of the City by multiple modes. Key elements of the previous plans have included strategies to reinforce safe pedestrian/bicycle travel, and support economic vitality in the corridor by providing flexibility with parking and permitted uses.

Without further direction from City Council, the Planning Commission will be moving forward with implementation strategies that respond to the planned boulevard. Changing the RCOC's plan for Southfield Road should be a conversation that City Council should have with the RCOC and the City of Southfield so as not to present unintended consequences to neighboring communities and the regional transportation corridor. If that is something that City Council intends to do, perhaps there should be an initial conversation at a high level (between the City Administrator and the RCOC transportation planner) to understand the best approach. It will be important for City Council to be clear on the purpose and need for the change so that all the stakeholders are able to respond in the most meaningful manner.