

memorandum

DATE: September 16, 2026

TO: Mayor Bruce Kantor and Lathrup Village City Council

FROM: Eric Pietsch and Jill Bahm, Giffels Webster

SUBJECT: Zoning Amendment – Artisan Manufacturing

At the September 15th, 2026 meeting, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider public comments regarding the proposed ordinance text amendment to add artisan manufacturing as a special land use in the Office and Mixed-Use zoning districts. No member of the public made comments to add to the record. The Planning Commission moved to recommend approval of the proposed text amendment and forward to City Council for adoption. Please refer to the current text amendment attached to this memo.

The remainder of this memo is provided as background.

Previous Discussion

August 18, 2026 meeting. The Planning Commission accepted the proposed definition of Artisan Manufacturing with additional emphasis on the minimal, low volume, small-scale, and low impact nature of the term. The Commission determined that the level of intensity, and not just the types of goods being produced, should guide the regulation of the impact on the surrounding community. The Commission decided to proceed with allowing Artisan Manufacturing to be a Special Land Use in the Office and Mixed-Use zoning districts only. As a result, the proposed definition of “Artisan Manufacturing, Limited” has been removed.

The updated draft (attached) includes a refined definition and standards to address the concerns noted above. We recommend keeping the production of alcoholic beverages (e.g., breweries, distilleries, and the like) separate to reflect their unique licensing requirements and other standards. These are not included at this time.

The approved draft language seeks to address the following:

- Clarify the ambiguity between light industrial and artisan manufacturing uses by further detailing the types of production methods, scale of distribution, and types of materials and products used.
- Adjust the use standards to encompass a broader array of artisan manufacturing operations.
- Update the parking requirements to align with parking standards for other retail uses in the proposed districts in addition to the previously required parking amount. This approach ensures that artisan manufacturing operations have enough parking to accommodate the amount of proposed retail in addition to the manufacturing use.

July 21, 2026 meeting. The Planning Commission reviewed the first draft language of the proposed ordinance amendment pertaining to the use of artisan manufacturing in the city. Among the topics discussed were the following:

1. The definition of Artisan Manufacturing. The Planning Commission expressed interest in listing exclusions (what we don't want), like heavy manufacturing for example. Should the definition include the production of alcoholic beverages?
2. Whether or not artisan manufacturing should be a by-right permitted use, subject to administrative review or designated as a Special Land Use, subject to review by the Planning Commission in conjunction with a public hearing.
3. Distinguish a more recognizable difference between artisan manufacturing and light manufacturing. Consider both terms when establishing the definition for each (light industrial is already defined).
4. Determine nuisance standards. Update Article 4, Section 4.22 (Use Standards) to designate the coffee roasting standards to apply generally to all uses.

Introduction

What prompted this amendment?

The Downtown Development Authority of Lathrup Village had been pursuing efforts to introduce small-scale production into the business corridors of the city. With the ongoing update of the Master Plan, the goal is to ensure there will not be any confusion between the work being done through the Master Plan update and the separate work being done with Recast City. The 2021 Master Plan speaks about considering flexibility in the commercial corridors. Given that spirit and the positive feedback communicated by the Planning Commission thus far, we are pursuing amendments to the zoning ordinance that would allow for artisan manufacturing uses in specific districts in Lathrup Village.

Current Ordinance

The ordinance does not define or address artisan manufacturing uses.

Considerations

What are the appropriate zoning districts that may allow artisan manufacturing uses?

Article 3. Zoning District. Initially, the Mixed-Use district was the focus for implementing artisan manufacturing. While the Office and Commercial Vehicular districts were also considered at the July 21st meeting, the Commission recommended removing CV-Commercial Vehicular from this list and keeping the Office and Mixed-Use districts as the zones where artisan manufacturing will be allowed.

- The Office district is designed to provide sites for professional office uses and commercial activities that support those users. These districts are located in areas which abut and have direct access to freeways and major thoroughfares so as to provide for off-street parking, somewhat more intense land use activity adjacent to residential areas. This district is designed to encourage innovation, variety, and quality design. Attractive landscaping is desired so as to be in harmony with such adjacent residential uses.
- The Mixed-Use district is intended to allow flexibility in the redevelopment of property along Southfield Road, where frontage lots limit the availability of parking and compliance with buildings setbacks. This district encourages pedestrian-oriented design and compliments the Village Center district.

Should artisan manufacturing uses be permitted by-right or by way of a Special Land Use?

At the July 21, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, discussion centered on the difference between light industrial and artisan manufacturing uses and whether artisan manufacturing should be permitted by right or require special land use approval. In response to that discussion, revisions have been made to the proposed language to further distinguish artisan manufacturing from light industrial uses. A key differentiating characteristic of artisan manufacturing is the requirement for a public-facing retail, educational, or collaborative component. This requirement reinforces the intended character of the use by ensuring that artisan manufacturing establishments contribute to the commercial vitality and public experience of Lathrup Village.

To encourage this public-oriented character while ensuring compatibility with surrounding uses, staff recommended the Planning Commission consider a tiered approach where artisan manufacturing establishments with a manufacturing floor area less than 50 percent of the gross floor area would be permitted by right and those with 50 percent or more floor area dedicated to manufacturing would require special land use approval. The Planning Commission ultimately felt requiring all artisan manufacturing uses go through the Special Land Use application process was the preferred procedure.

Summary / Recommendation

This proposed amendment to the Mixed-Use and Office districts of Lathrup Village takes the vision and intent of the Master Plan into strong consideration. The evolution of economic conditions in recent years has brought to light challenges when developing commercial and retail tenant lease spaces. Observed trends in commercial and office uses finds there to be a need for adaptive reuse of existing building stock, providing available sites for makerspaces and shared spaces for small vendors and businesses, a shift toward hybrid work and work-from-home resulting in an increase in office supply, and the desire for live-work space, co-working spaces, and business incubators. This amendment strives to continue to pursue a walkable sense of place for the commercial corridors that extend beyond the city's central core.

Amend Article 2, Definitions, to add Artisan Manufacturing as a defined term.

Section 2.2

Artisan Manufacturing. A small-scale, low-impact establishment for the design, production, fabrication, assembly, repair, finishing, and packaging of unique, custom, specialty, or limited-run products and component parts using limited or minimal production techniques and equipment. Such establishments integrate retail and/or education and are characterized by lower-volume production and a greater degree of craftsmanship, customization, design, or prototyping than light industry. Examples of artisan manufacturing products include, but are not limited to, furniture, textiles, clothing, jewelry, ceramics, wood products, metalwork, glass products, artworks, electronics, and specialty food and non-alcoholic beverage products.

Amend Article 3, Zoning Districts to add Artisan Manufacturing as a Special Land Use in the Office and Mixed-Use districts.

Section 3.1.5.C. vii Artisan Manufacturing

Section 3.1.8.C.xi Artisan Manufacturing.

Amend Article 4, Use Standards, to add a new standard:

Section 4.22 Artisan Manufacturing

Artisan manufacturing may be permitted in the Office and Mixed-Use districts subject to the following requirements:

1. The scale and impacts of the use shall be consistent with other uses in the district.
2. All production, fabrication, assembly, finishing, treatment, storage, and packaging activities shall occur entirely within an enclosed building.
3. No artisan manufacturing use or uses in a mixed-use building shall be permitted on a floor above a residential use.
4. All artisan manufacturing uses shall include a storefront for the sale of products produced on the premises and/or an educational or collaborative component, such as workshops, classes, demonstrations, or shared workspaces.
5. Any equipment or process generating smoke, fumes, dust, particulate matter, odors, heat, or other airborne emissions shall be equipped with filtration, ventilation, afterburners, collectors, scrubbers, or equivalent mitigation measures as necessary to prevent such emissions from being detectable at a level constituting a nuisance beyond the property boundaries.
6. Machinery and equipment shall be operated in a manner that does not create excessive noise, vibration, glare, smoke, dust, odor, heat, or other impacts greater than ambient conditions that are discernible beyond the property boundaries.
7. The City may require additional mitigation measures if a manufacturing process is determined by the City Administrator, or their designee, to create a nuisance or otherwise adversely impact surrounding properties.
8. Accessory storage and distribution activities shall remain subordinate to the on-site artisan manufacturing use.

Amend Article 5, Site Development Standards, to add a new off-street parking standard:

Section 5.13.14.C.xvi. Artisan Manufacturing: one space per 1,500 square feet of gross floor area or fraction thereof plus an additional one space per 300 sq ft of active retail area or fraction thereof.

Amend Article 5, Site Development Standards, as follows:

Section 5.14 – Nuisances Prohibited

The occupancy or use of any lot or premises in such fashion as to constitute an actionable nuisance in fact, as defined by the common law of this state, which is injurious to two or more persons, is prohibited. Standards of the city code, Chapter 46, also apply.