

July 8, 2021

Commissioner Gwen Markham, Chairperson
Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee
1200 North Telegraph Road
Pontiac, MI 48341

SUBJECT: County Code No. MP 21-04, Oakland County Department of Economic Development (OCED), Planning & Local Business Development (PLBD) Division's review of the draft City of Lathrup Village Comprehensive Plan Update.

Dear Chairperson Markham and Committee Members:

On May 26, 2021 Oakland County received a mailed letter informing our office of the proposed **City of Lathrup Village Draft Comprehensive Plan Update, (County Code Master Plan No. 21-01)**. The Lathrup Village Draft Comprehensive plan (also referenced as a "Master Plan") can be found at: [Lathrup Village Draft Comprehensive Plan](#). Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Oakland County, adjacent municipalities, and other jurisdictional authorities have 63 days to review the draft document and submit comments on the proposed Comprehensive Plan updates directly to the City of Lathrup Village.

This review of the draft Comprehensive Plan will go before the Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) on July 14, 2021. This date falls within the 63-day review and comment period. It is assumed the surrounding community (City of Southfield) was notified about the proposed draft Comprehensive Plan and review period by the City of Lathrup Village.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the review of the surrounding community's Comprehensive Plans, the City of Lathrup Village Draft Comprehensive Plan proposed update is **not inconsistent** with the plan of any city, village, or township that received notice of the draft plan. Oakland County has not prepared a countywide development plan, therefore, there is no countywide plan with which to compare the proposed draft plan.

Summary Analysis of Content

The focus of this report is to present a clear understanding of the proposed document and describe changes in border land use through an analysis of the proposed plan. Recommendations that may help make the document stronger are offered as a result of the analysis. The following is a summary of the City of Lathrup Village Draft Comprehensive Plan in its entirety. The City of Lathrup Village last submitted a Comprehensive Plan for review in September of 2014, which was ultimately adopted later that same year.

The proposed draft Comprehensive Plan is divided into 9 sections and the document has been completely updated from the 2014 plan format. This review will focus on relevant sections of the proposed draft Comprehensive Plan.

Introduction

The first 10 pages of the document have been rewritten to help the reader navigate the plan and includes, defining a comprehensive plan, the changes to the existing Comprehensive plan, and how those changes relate to the City's existing zoning ordinance.

Demographics

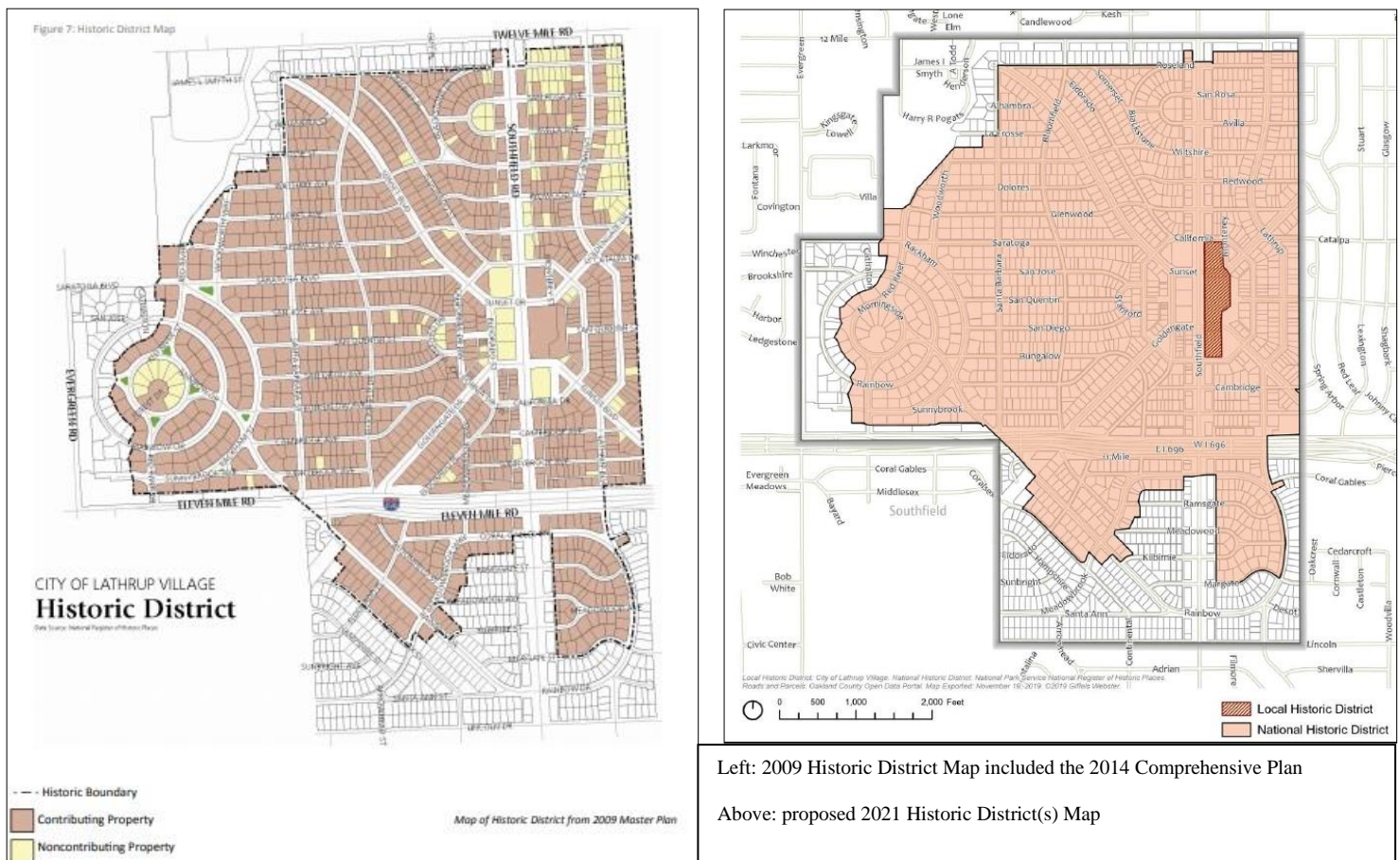
Demographic information that was originally part of the existing condition section in the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, has been separated into its own section. Projections of the community's population shows an 8% loss by 2045, as compared to the surrounding community of Southfield which is projected to have a 14% increase in population for that same time period. Population by age, race, household incomes, workforce, education, attainable and affordable housing, and other demographics are presented in this section.

The current draft Comprehensive Plan references 2018 data from SEMCOG and American Community Survey to illustrate their census information. Due to the timing of this document's proposed update, the use of 2020 census information was not employed as these resources were not yet available. The utilization of both the American Community Survey and SEMCOG data to support population estimates and demographics is acceptable, and both are trusted sources for such information.

Existing Land Use

The City of Lathrup Village's existing land use inventory was improved as compared to 2014 Comprehensive Plan. There was not an existing land use inventory map included in the 2014 plan. Most of the land uses in the city are residential with long linear corridors of commercial use along Southfield Road, 11 Mile Road, and 12 Mile Road. There are no industrial uses in the City making it quite unique given its urban location and connection to major freeway systems.

Another major focus of this section is the City's nationally recognized historic district. The boundaries of this district have not changed since its inception in 1998 which consisted of 1,081 properties. The *Historic District* map from 2009 that is included in the existing 2014 Comprehensive Plan showed "contributing" properties and "noncontributing" properties that made up the Historic District.



Some noncontributing properties were located within the district boundaries. The historic district(s) map contained in the proposed Comprehensive Plan does not distinguish between "contributing" and "noncontributing" properties but does recognize the "Local Historic District" consisting of a church, school, and city hall properties. A recommendation about this topic is included on page 6 of this review. Other items in this

section include the existing community facilities, parks, and transportation which includes major thoroughfares, trails, and pathways.

Vision, Goals & Objectives

The Visioning session, held in 2019, and Virtual Open House, held in 2020, drove the development of the goals and objectives presented in this section. The Visioning Session was made up of stakeholders and City Leaders that participated in an analysis of the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. Focus areas consisted of *Housing*, *Commercial Corridor*, *Recreation*, and *Village Center*. The Virtual Open House was held in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic from May 11 through May 25, 2020. During the two-week virtual event, 156 people attended, and participation averaged roughly 28 responses per question.

The majority of responses had to do with walkability/accessibility, identity, and safety encompassing all areas of the City which formed the goals and objectives. Overall, the following were identified as goals for the City and were divided into the following categories:

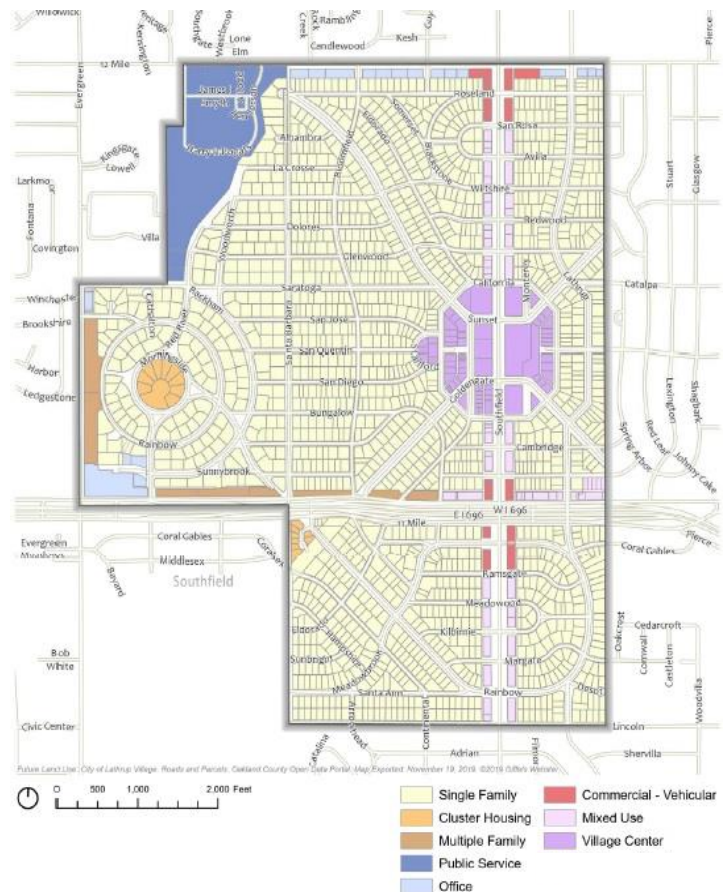
- Community Character: An authentic positive identity for the city that is reflected in residential neighborhoods as well as along commercial corridors that focuses on a mixed use, multiple-story, walkable downtown for the City.
- Housing: Attractive, safe, quiet, and well-maintained neighborhoods; a diversified range of housing for people of all ages and abilities; and active neighborhoods that promote community connectedness.
- Commercial & Industrial Development: Thriving local businesses and an employed workforce; a convenient selection of goods and services; and a diverse tax base with a resilient economy.
- Public Services & Facilities: Recreation facilities and programming that meet the needs of and are accessible to all residents; well-maintained infrastructure that meets the needs of current and future residents, businesses and visitors; and excellent public services that meet the health, safety and welfare needs of the community.
- Transportation: An efficient and safe multi-modal transportation network that offers mobility options to residents of all ages and abilities.

Future Land Use

There were few changes to the Future Land Use (FLU) plan and map within the comprehensive plan. This section contains fewer categories as the City has restructured their focus to more broad all-encompassing use categories. The range of existing categories includes: *Single Family*; *Cluster Housing*; *Multiple Family*; *Public Service*; *Office*; *Commercial – Vehicular*; *Mixed Use*; and *Village Center*. Noted categorical changes have been listed below:

1. The use categories of *Open Space* and *Parking* have been omitted and have been integrated into other use categories.
2. The *Cluster Housing* classification was added
3. Icons showing parks, schools, municipal and public service buildings have been removed.
4. The *Future Road Network* designation and historic district boundary have been removed.
5. Property lines were added to the map.
6. Two (2) FLU designations of properties within City and on the City's border have changed. The border change will be discussed on page 4 of this review.

The proposed FLU changes allow for flexibility in the current zoning by providing FLU classifications that



encompass broader but similar uses. A matrix showing the how the FLU classifications and zoning classifications relate to one another is made available in the *Implementation – Zoning Plan* portion of the document (see image below).

Future Land Uses	Existing Zoning Districts								Review/Amendment to District Recommended	New Zoning District
	R-1 Single Family	R-2 Multiple Family	R-3 Cluster	PS Public Service	O Office	CV Commercial Vehicular	MX Mixed Use	VC Village Center	GO Gateway Overlay	
Single Family Residential	⊗		⊗							
Multiple Family Residential		⊗								
Mixed Use							⊗		⊗	
Commercial Vehicular						⊗				
Office					⊗				⊗	
Village Center								⊗	⊗	
Institutional				⊗						
Open Space	N/A									

Coordination with Surrounding Community Boundaries

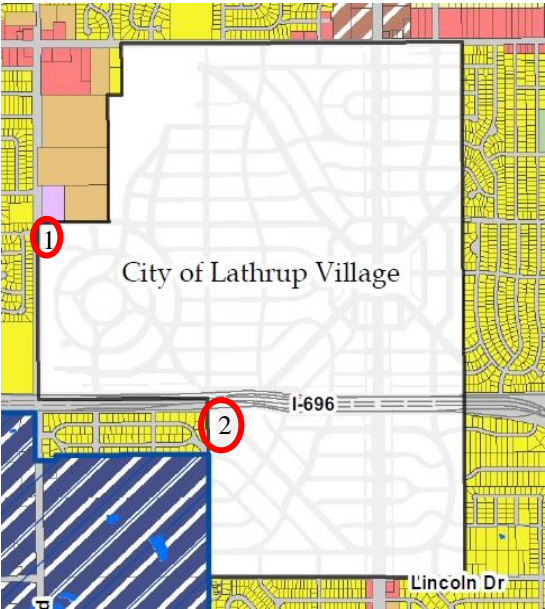
As part of our services to County communities, Planning staff prepares and regularly updates a Composite Comprehensive Plan for the entirety of the County. The Oakland County Composite Comprehensive Plan represents Comprehensive generalized future land use based on each community's Plan which is available on the [Composite Comprehensive Plans page](#) of the County's website. The overall

county Composite Comprehensive Plan will be used to analyze and review boundary coordination between Lathrup Village and the surrounding communities.

Under state law, the County's review is required to include a statement indicating whether the proposed plan is "inconsistent with the plan of any city, village, or township" that received notice of the draft plan. Any inconsistencies will be addressed for each individual boundary community in the following border analysis.

Surrounding Boundaries – City of Southfield: The City of Southfield encompasses the City of Lathrup Village. Along these boundaries only minor changes have been proposed in the FLU plan. Southfield updated their Comprehensive Master Plan in June of 2016 and is in the process of performing their 5-year review. An analysis of the changes along the borders is as follows:

North: 12 Mile Road is the border between the City of Southfield and the City of Lathrup Village. Southfield-Lathrup High School is situated on the south side of 12 Mile Road along with Office and Commercial uses which are consistent with the uses existing along this corridor. There have been no changes proposed along this corridor.



East and South: There are no changes along these boundaries. Both communities have residential adjacent to residential and commercial/office uses along the major corridors of 12 Mile Road and Southfield Road. Lathrup Village has two small properties of "Mixed use" classification along the 11 Mile Road/ west bound I-696 Service Drive.

West: Both Southfield and Lathrup Village have many different uses along the Evergreen Road corridor which serves as the border to the communities. While mostly classified as "Moderate Residential" in Southfield that is adjacent to "Single Family" residential in Lathrup, there are areas of "Multi-Family and Office that are compatible on both sides of the border. Southfield's "City Center District" interacts with the west-southwest portion of the Lathrup Village border, however, most of that adjacent property has remained wooded and unimproved.

The only border changes to the future land uses are proposed on the western border (note the red circles in the image above). #1: The property identified had a FLU classification of "Commercial-Vehicular" in the 2014 plan. The proposed FLU classification is now shown as a less intense "Office" classification. #2: A residential development that was built in the mid-1990's has fallen into the newly created classification of *Cluster Housing* due to its smaller lot sizes and

setbacks. This new classification offers no changes to this development but rather recategorize it for clarity and organizational purposes. Both these changes are **compatible borders**.

Resiliency & Sustainability

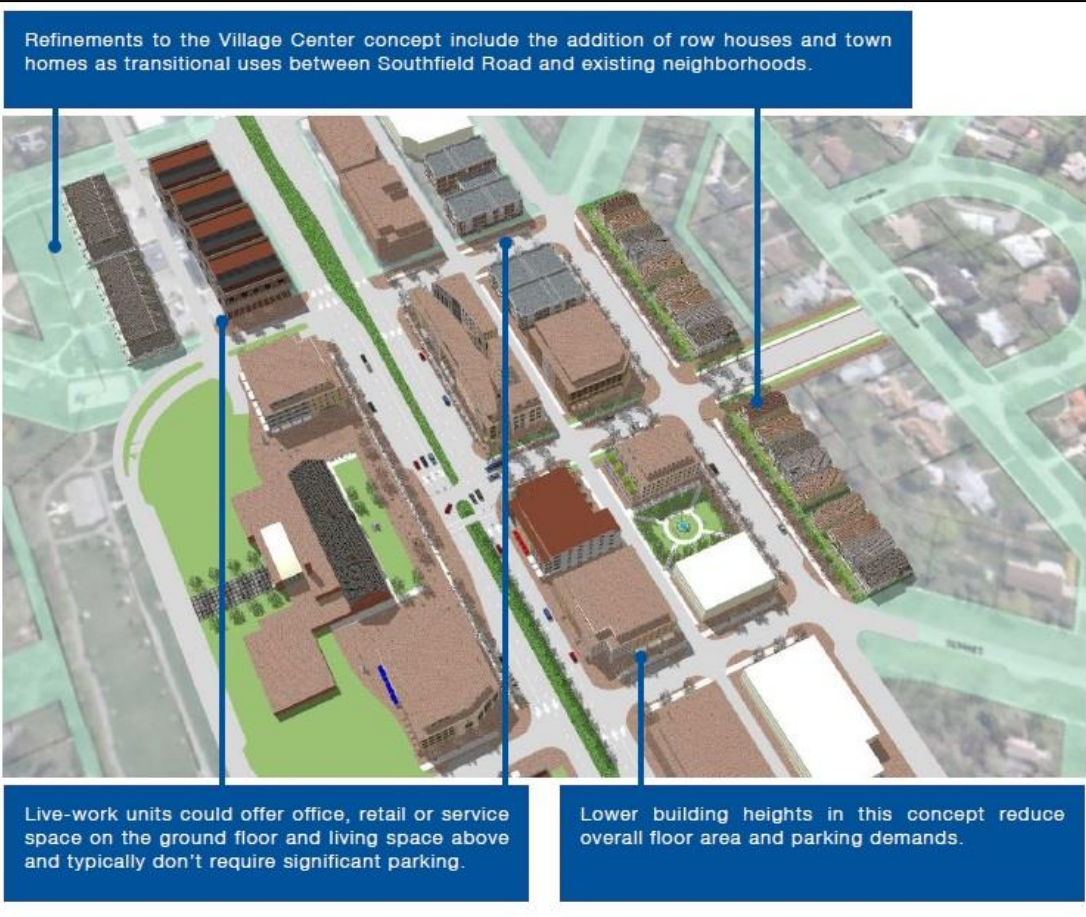
This section begins with focusing on environmental impacts, climate change as it relates to sustainability, followed by land values, contributing factors, and the use of census materials. Highlights include the vulnerability of certain populations groups as well as the mitigation, acknowledgement, and plan to reduce the risk of natural hazards.

Housing & Neighborhoods

As our communities change, age, and the topic of housing expands referencing the adaption of the “neighborhood” becomes ever more important. The Comprehensive Plan takes this topic seriously as approximately 90% of the parcels in the City are considered residential per Oakland County’s land use data. Referencing the *Goals & Objectives* from earlier in the process the “housing” portion of this section focuses on renter and homeowner burdens within the city as it pertains to cost. Attainable housing, aging in place, and transportation needs for the community are also discussed. The City of Lathrup Village is split into five (5) neighborhoods, named by their cardinal direction from the City’s center. Each neighborhood creates a desirable sense of place, the same yet different in their own right and location.

Commercial Corridors/Downtown Plan

This portion of the plan aligns itself with the Downtown Development Authority’s (DDA’s) current TIF and Development Plan. Planned improvements within the district are strengthened through the correlation of the DDA Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. The inclusion of a market study for the City also helps to form a well-rounded section pulling in housing and service recommendations from that study. The concepts for the “Redevelopment Sites” promoted within the draft Comprehensive Plan are located within the DDA, mostly along the Southfield Road corridor. This promotes architectural standards identified as “building Form” in the plan which, if implemented can be used as a tool and guide for future developments. Schematic concepts (see image at left) help to visualize what a future development of select properties could resemble.



along the Southfield Road corridor. This promotes architectural standards identified as “building Form” in the plan which, if implemented can be used as a tool and guide for future developments. Schematic concepts (see image at left) help to visualize what a future development of select properties could resemble.

Implementation

This portion of the document provides what needs to be done to make this plan work and useful for the City of Lathrup Village. A “Zoning Plan” is provided to show where and how proposed classifications in the FLU plan align

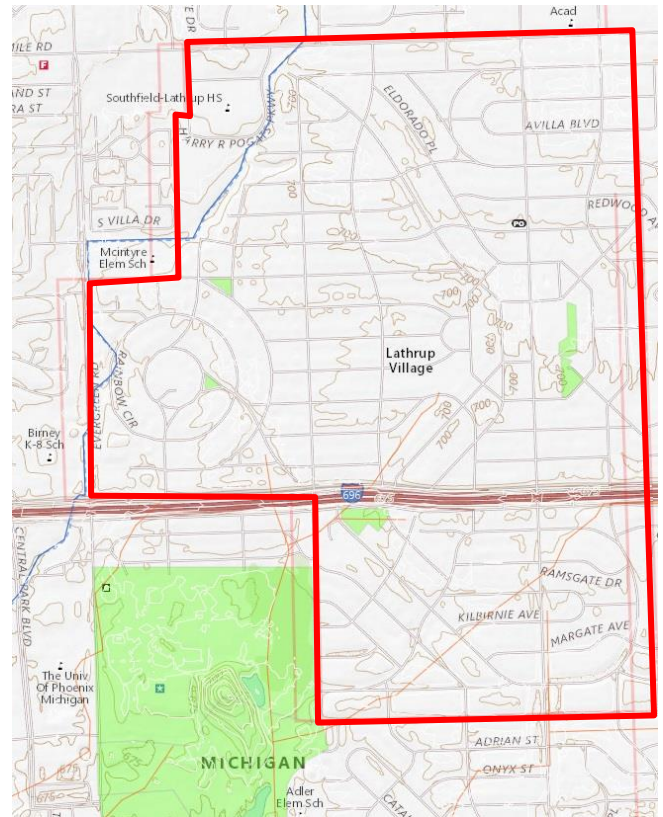
with the current zoning the city uses (as referenced on page 4 of this review). A categorical matrix allows users to navigate the “how to” portion of the document. This portion provides potential funding, advocacy, and capital improvement action items. The information is presented in tables that can be utilized as a check list as

each strategy is embarked upon. These topics include *Housing & Neighborhoods*, *Community Character*, *Commercial Development*, *Public Facilities & Services*, and *Transportation Network*.

Recommendations

The following are staff recommendations for the Draft Comprehensive Plan:

1. Add villages to the regional location map within the document (Map 1, page 12). The Villages of Beverly Hills and Bingham Farms are mentioned as other surrounding communities but do not show up on the map. The absence of all the "Villages" within the county is apparent. For those not familiar with the location, a map showing all surrounding jurisdictions could be more helpful.
2. Include properties that are "noncontributing" in the historic district map, as shown in the 2009-2014 version. Providing such information could help redevelopment efforts and architectural standards as presented in the plan.
3. Acknowledge and expand upon the community's existing brownfield opportunities which has not been fully recognized. The document only mentions "brownfield redevelopment" as a funding source through tax increment financing. The Comprehensive Plan heavily promotes redevelopment of select areas and corridors within the City. In many cases the redevelopment concepts and the implementation of such would involve brownfield protocols. It is unclear if Lathrup Village has or does not have their own Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA). However, the City can utilize the Oakland County BRA which allows access to USEPA grants for site assessment work; including but not limited to Phase I, Phase II BEA, Due Care Plan, Lead/Asbestos abatement, surveys, and other such processes. Please reference the Oakland County ED, PLBD services table at the end of this review which provides more information about technical services provided by our office and offers such opportunities.
4. Add Rouge River Watershed information and consider aligning goals and objectives to include those of the *Friends of the Rouge*. A creek/drain between Southfield-Lathrup High School and the single-family residential homes in the City flows into the main branch of the Rouge River. See the map at right and other information can be found at: <https://therouge.org/about-us/our-watershed/>
5. Consider making "Transportation" or "Mobility" its own section within the Master Plan. Transportation is a focus of the "Existing Land Use" section and identified as such. However, the subject of connectivity, walkability, roads, and sidewalks is prominent throughout the entire document. A recent history of collaboration with the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) is mentioned and conceptualized in renderings of the Southfield Road corridor many times. Complete streets from a connection initiative when pertaining to the surrounding City of Southfield could be highlighted more as it pertains to walkability. Every goal that is proposed in this plan seems to have a transportation/mobility/connectivity element to it and it is our interpretation that this topic is farther reaching and very important to community to become a stand-alone topic within the plan.



Oakland County Technical Assistance

A summary of programs offered by the PLBD Division within the OCED Department that are relevant to City of Lathrup Village have been included following the end of this review.

Oakland County Technical Resources

The OCED compiles existing and future land use statistics for Oakland County as a whole and for each community using generalized land use definitions. These documents are included as reference and provide a snapshot of the City's existing land use and development patterns.

Conclusion Summary

The City of Lathrup Village Draft Comprehensive Plan Update has strong strategies led by the information captured during the public input session process. The plan is well written, and the strategy and goals provided should be achievable in the future. It is promising that Lathrup Village is setting forth the tools to promote growth and give the City a better sense of place. The draft Plan is adapting to reflect strategies to combat forecasted population loss as well as introducing new trends. The plan remains sound and the information provided has quantifiable goals and implementation strategies that should prove effective as tools for opportunity and growth for the City of Lathrup Village.

While our review has suggested a couple items that we hope will strengthen the overall plan and help to implement the plan, at no point are our recommendations required. Oakland County does not have a Planning Commission or County Comprehensive/Master Plan to do a full comparison and contrast of the information submitted or review by the City. **Our staff review of the proposed draft Comprehensive Plan and a cursory review of adjacent communities' Comprehensive/Master Plans have found that the City of Lathrup Village Draft Comprehensive Plan Update is not inconsistent with the adjacent community.**

The City of Lathrup Village has received a copy of this review. There will be a motion made on the recommendations of this review by the CZC after which a copy of this review will be made available to the adjacent communities and any other surrounding jurisdictions that were sent the notification of the proposed plan by the City of Lathrup Village. If there are any questions or comments about this review and analysis, please do hesitate to contact me at (248)858-0389 or email me at krees@oakgov.com.

Respectfully,



Scott E. Kree
Senior Planner

CC:

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Yolanda Charles, Oakland County Commissioner, District 17

Gary McGillivray, Oakland County Commissioner, CZC Vice-Chair

Phil Weipert, Oakland County Commissioner, CZC Member

Oakland County Planning Resources

The Oakland County Department of Economic Development (OCED), Division of Planning & Local Business Development (PLBD) offers a variety of programs to support Oakland County communities with innovative programming and assistance to create attractive destinations in which to live, work and raise a family. The chart below details those programs offered by the PLBD (a division of the OCED). Current participation in these programs and opportunities for future involvement are noted on the right of the chart. Additional information on all OCED programs can be found at www.oakgov.com/advantageoakland.

Program	Mission	Lathrup Village Opportunities and Current Participation
Environmental Stewardship	Provide information, plans and options to promote conservation of the natural environment while supporting sustainable economic growth, development, and redevelopment.	Lathrup Village can support development that is cognizant of natural resource protection and management. County staff members are able to act in a supporting capacity with grant application identification, open space protection, and sustainable development practices.
Historic Preservation Assistance	Support local efforts to maintain and enhance architectural and heritage resources through sustainable practices to enrich the quality of life for all.	County staff is able to assist with potential design concepts for adaptive reuse of any historic structures within the community.
Land Use & Zoning Services	Prepare and provide land use, zoning, and Comprehensive Plan reviews for communities to enhance coordination of land use decision-making.	Lathrup Village continues to send Comprehensive Plan Updates and Amendments to the County for review fulfilling the legislative requirements. Other coordination services are available upon request.
Main Street Oakland County (MSOC)	Help local governments develop their downtowns as vibrant, successful districts that serve as the heart of their community.	Lathrup Village is currently a member of MSOC at the "Associate" level and is eligible to participate in training opportunities and staff support.
Trail, Water & Land Alliance (TWLA)	Become an informed, coordinated, collaborative body that supports initiatives related to the County's Green Infrastructure Network	The County fully supports the expansion of non-motorized facilities and can aid the community in non-motorized planning efforts through education and the identification of potential funding sources.
Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (OCBRA)	Provide assistance in the County's Brownfield initiative to clean-up and redevelop contaminated properties	The OCBRA can assist and coordinate with the State of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE, formally MDEQ) along with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), as needed, in an effort to prepare designated brownfields for redevelopment with the County's BRA. Additionally, Lathrup Village can utilize Oakland County's USEPA Grant of \$600,000 for site assessment activities through September of 2023.