



Planning Commission Minutes

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 7:00 PM
27400 Southfield Road, Lathrup Village, Michigan 48076

1. **Call to Order** by Chair Hillman at 7:07pm

2. **Roll Call**

Present: Hillman, Nordmoe, Grewer, Abraham, Robinson, Hammond

Absent: Clarke

Also Present: DDA Director Colson, CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy, City Clerk Emanuel,
Attorney Baker

Moved by Commissioner Robinson, seconded by Commissioner Nordmoe to excuse Commissioner
Clarke's absence.

Yes: Hillman, Nordmoe, Grewer, Robinson, Abraham, Hammond

No: n/a

Absent: Clarke

Motion Carried

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Commissioner Abraham, seconded by Commissioner Nordmoe to approve the agenda.

Yes: Hillman, Nordmoe, Grewer, Robinson, Abraham, Hammond

No: n/a

Absent: Clarke

Motion Carried

4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A. March 2026 - Meeting Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Robinson, seconded by Commissioner Hammond to approve the minutes
from the March 17, 2026 meeting.

Yes: Hillman, Nordmoe, Grewer, Robinson, Abraham, Hammond

No: n/a

Absent: Clarke

Motion Carried

5. **Public Comment**

Diane Anderson, commented in part: that she had questions to ask the Planning Commission about development and the role of Giffels Webster, referencing that documents for tonight's meeting show Lathrup Village associated with Oak Park and Royal Oak Township but not Birmingham, the City of Lathrup Village was called the "Grosse Pointe of the West", that the School was not a high school it was an elementary school, and did that mislead the Planning Commission, and have they been advised to work with Preservation Michigan.

John Sousanis, expressed in part: that he was thankful for the Study Session with the Road Commissioner representative, but was underwhelmed, sharing that there is an idea but the path there is not clear, Commission questions are not answered, shared the reasons for his no vote, when looking at the Master Plan they should not take the mythical Boulevard into consideration.

6. **Old Business and Tabled Items** None

7. **New Business**

A. Council Input – Master Plan Update

Councilmember Sousanis, expressed in part: there is no technical difference between a redo and an update of the Master Plan other than budget, the definition of complete redo or an update will be the result of what people say they want, he didn't understand that City Council had a spot on here and wished other Council members were here.

Councilmember Hammond, commented in part: The Master Plan from 2009 had a major concept of a Village Center District, to establish this vision and to encourage types of businesses that would create the idea, and the investment just has not been there, there were a lot of proposed plans like the Annie Lathrup School, and from public comments heard there needs to be an update to the Master Plan, with focus on the description of how it is described to be in line with public sentiment.

Commission Members, Hannah Prins and Eric Pietsch of Giffels Webster, DDA Director Colson, CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy and Attorney Baker discussed in part:

- That the Planning Commission is expected to take Community input around the Master Plan and integrate it into their discussions and come up with a draft review by the Community at large and there has been a lot of Community input that they will get in May
- In June there will be an Open House, to review the entire engagement process (to provide data from what they have heard from surveys and meetings), and then transition over from the engagement process to Plan drafting, the (Master) Plan will not be finalized and adopted until early next year
- There are over 200 comments
- The PC is not seeing the comments as they come in and they are held from the PC
- We are still early in the phase, In 2021, there was not much feedback

- After going over all 4 topics (Housing, Transportation, Economic Development, and Parks and Recreation), reviewing what has been received and the Public comment, they will share the information at the Open House, and then review the data/comments and see what direction the public wants to go in
- The June meeting is: this is what we have heard, did we get it right?
- The PC will not have had a meeting to discuss what the data is before that?
- In July the PC will discuss the data received
- In advance of this conversation, thought it (the Open House) would be a presentation of findings
- Not coming to see the Plan, a draft new Plan, it is how it is presented and promoted
- Kick off in October first part to gather information and see what the tone is, what Open house intended to do, as an end cap to that process that will allow public to come and see what was collected, and have an opportunity to have additional comments and discussions, an end cap of the data collection process from October to June of this year
- this discussion has given clarity
- At the March meeting Councilmember Sousanis floated the idea of a joint session City Council and Planning Commission and other bodies, would be a good idea
- When the Surveys were decided – what was expectation of the response rate
- We have had 250 responses, other Communities have had less responses, residents don't normally get involved with Master Plan reviews, although we want more input
- How to get more people involved, and not portray this to residents as their input, with the amount of input received
- Graphing responses – there are different response rates from different areas of the City and there are low numbers from the SE Quadrant
- How to get better, thinks numbers are significantly high this time with new Committee for Communication and Engagement and with different forms of communication
- The Tree Committee and Clerical staff have shared it, and it is on the Bulletin Boards
- Can the QR Code be put on the City Wide Garage Sale signs
- The schedule of the project timeline – Hannah Prins of Giffels Webster, Shared the timeline, and it has been shared at each meeting with Comprehensive Plan Spring Timeline, Visioning phase and Engagement + Data Phase, and then plan drafting
- That the dates are not on the timeline, having a Swimlane diagram with the dates and phases of the Review
- Some areas on the Website have no information or are not clear
- Next month's meeting: review a draft invitation for the Open House – what the nature of the event is and agree in the way the invite is presented

Councilmember Sousanis, commented in part: asking for a clearer schematic to be shared, of the entire process, misunderstanding of where we are at has been a problem and continued, and that will go a long way to help people.

B. Master Plan Update – Economic Development Discussion

Hannah Prins and Eric Pietsch of Giffels Webster reviewed the Master Plan topic of Economic Development:

- Showing the timeline and Engagement Update information
- Shared the number of surveys by category and how people visit the hub website,
- The existing Economic and Development conditions and our current Master Plan related to it
- Where do we go from here
- Data related to: Median housing income, Poverty Rate, Educational attainment, Employment status, Employment by Industry, Employment by Occupation
- Previous Planning Efforts (2020 market study, Village Center District Concept from 2009, Redevelopment Sites (Annie Lathrup School, 26026 Southfield (between Rainbow and Margate), House in the Woods)
- DDA TIF-Tax Increment Financing District
- Post Pandemic Shifts (hybrid work, downsizing office space needs), Goals and Objectives for Economic Development.

Commission Members, Hannah Prins and Eric Pietsch of Giffels Webster, DDA Director Colson, CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy and Attorney Baker discussed in part:

- Median income: does it consider Retired versus fully employed, can it be split out for retired versus working
- Why isn't Birmingham, Beverly Hills, or Bloomfield on this list of compared Cities
- Replacing Detroit or removing it as one of the comparison Cities we use for comparison
- Detroit is an anchoring City, using closest large City and how it differs from Lathrup Village, if on the West side of the State we would use Grand Rapids
- Looking at the data to give information, to the Planning Commission
- How looking at the data will help make decisions as a Planning Commission member
- The median income can help a developer make decisions
- Looking at the older Master Plans, helps give background, shows how the plans have evolved
- The Plans are for many people to use, not just for the Planning Commission, it helps the DDA, Developers, etc.
- Median Income for Michigan and Oakland County are on the chart to show how Lathrup Village is doing in comparison to those overall numbers
- Using Cities that are our closest neighbors only
- Looking at affordability
- Franklin and Bingham Farms
- The employment status is people 16 and over
- People that live here, mainly work elsewhere
- That we are a retail base, a place to visit
- Every piece of land developed and used to its highest value, increasing revenue/income flow
- Empty Office Spaces and business strips and how that fits with Southfield and Berkley
- Looking at Parking requirements and their impact
- Live/work space
- Having middle housing that is missing: Apartments, Townhouses, Row Housing, and Lofts
- Allowing the Public to have input on changes to the redevelopment site requirements
- Privately owned properties and the Planning Commission's role/abilities

DDA Director Colson, CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy shared information about the Recast City Cohort:

- Maker spaces, where small-scale production can fit in and utilize vacant spaces
- Major shift in business: Class A -Amenities, Modernized, up-to-date, well positioned in metro area
- Class B: Few amenities, surface parking, older structure (10-30+ years) office vacancies, wanting modernized, up-to-date spaces and amenities
- Older buildings and small sized buildings
- Post-mall urban retail restructuring trend
- DDA Corridor Map: The Design District, The Maker's Mile and Project's focus area is the Village Center
- Engineering and Drafting businesses, 3D Printing, utilizing CNC machinery
- Discussing with stakeholders and with the Small Business Administration Representative
- Embraces modern technology, promotes entrepreneurs, focus on targeted (re) development forms long-lasting partnerships with community and business focused groups/organizations
- Where these types of businesses are currently choosing to locate
- 20% Retail and 80% online sales for these types of businesses
- Inspired by the specificity of the thinking and these types of businesses
- There is intrigue and interest in these types of businesses
- Example Zoning Language: Artisan manufacturing/galleries, Noise, pollution and odors, light pollution, traffic and distribution/delivery needs, outdoor storage, vibration and movement, Aesthetics
- Making them principle permitted uses to streamline the process, when process is drawn out that has deterred prospective businesses in the past
- Example businesses: Bready by Crispelli's - Royal Oak, Ophema Farms + Juicery - Clawson, and Epiphany Glass – Pontiac
- Cities sometimes evolve quickly

8. Public Comment

John Sousanis, commented in part: He appreciated the conversation, and thought he was going to be part of it as a Council member, suggested Housing and Economic Development together as a single chapter, bringing more opportunities for housing like townhouses, Class A offices with empty spaces and the Economic model, that makes it better to have empty spaces than lowering prices for tax purposes and other reasons, and retail frontage in the Central part of the City.

Jonathan Tara, commented in part: that he is impressed with the Recast City Cohort work (by DDA Director Colson and CED/DDA Project Coordinator Kennedy), slides showing larger grandiose spaces and we only have one and the owner has another idea (if that fails bring him around), a bad link on a from the City newsletter, and about the QR code related to the Master Plan surveys that is free and ads pop up, and asked if we could upgrade to the paid tier with no ads.

Tracey Williams, Bungalow Drive, commented in part: that she is excited about the opportunity with Recast City, she talks with many people and when she mentions it people stop and listen and want to learn more, a Commercial building owner is interested, she thinks this opens up new opportunities for economic development, and spoke about the Survey response rate.

9. General Communication

A. Site Development Report

DDA Director Colson, gave a site development status update.

10. Commissioner Comments

Chair Hillman commented in part:

- That he would like to put on the radar for the June meeting to review our Sign Ordinances to make them more favorable to the businesses without losing the meaning of the ordinances, and that at a City Council Study Session a District manager of XL Big and Tall Retail store spoke of our sign ordinances that are negatively impacting their business, and he has heard from the Mayor about other Businesses expressing concern too
- Debris by the HAWK signal that Mayor Kantor has mentioned and reaching out to get help with that being cleaned up and reaching out to T.J. Connolly who spoke at the Study Session

11. Adjourn

Moved by Commissioner Hammond, seconded by Commissioner Robinson to adjourn at 9:48pm

Yes: Hillman, Nordmoe, Grewer, Robinson, Abraham, Hammond

No: n/a

Absent: Clarke

Motion Carried