

memorandum

DATE: August 14, 2026

TO: Lathrup Village Planning Commission

FROM: Eric Pietsch, Hannah Prins, & Jill Bahm, Giffels Webster

SUBJECT: Zoning Amendment – Artisan Manufacturing

Previous Discussion

At the 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 manufacturing 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.

The updated draft (attached) includes refined definitions 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 updated 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.
- Proposes a tiered approach to allowing artisan manufacturing as a permitted or special land use.
- 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.

We recommend that the Planning Commission consider the language in the provided draft amendment, direct our team to make any needed refinements, and consider setting a public hearing for a future Planning Commission meeting.

The remainder of this memo is provided as background and has not changed since the previous meeting.

Introduction

What prompted this amendment?

The Downtown Development Authority of Lathrup Village has 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 potential 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 Mixed-Use and Office districts as the zones where artisan manufacturing will be allowed.

- 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.
- 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.

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 recommends a tiered approach. Artisan manufacturing establishments in which manufacturing floor area comprises less than 50 percent of the gross floor area would be permitted by right. Establishments in which manufacturing floor area exceeds 50 percent of the gross floor area would require special land use approval. This approach recognizes that uses with a greater emphasis on manufacturing activities may warrant additional review to ensure compatibility with adjacent properties and the broader character of the district.

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.