

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING  
MASTER PLAN STUDY  
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD  
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN  
FEBRUARY 15, 2024 6:00 P.M.**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The Planning Commission Special Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Trafelet at 6:25pm.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners present:           Aspinall, Trafelet, Stimson, Varga, Ware

Commissioners Absent:           Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey

Others Present:                   City Planner Perdonik, Staff Planner Canty, City Attorney Schultz,  
Planning Consultants Tangari and Upfal

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION by Stimson, support by Aspinall, to approve the agenda as published.**

**Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**MASTER PLAN STUDY**

**A. Review Draft Master Plan**

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Farmington Hills Master Plan Study Session, February 15, 2024, The Next 50 Years*, and a distributed map printout and narrative entitled *2024 Future Land Use*, Planning Consultant Tangari led tonight's discussion.

Regarding the Master Plan review, Planning Consultant Tangari highlighted the following:

- Vision Statement:  
*Farmington Hills will be an innovative, attractive, livable, safe, and financially stable community that embraces the diversity of its people and provides housing and economic opportunity for all residents.*
- Nine Building Blocks of the Plan:
  1. Housing
  2. Transportation
  3. Making Places That Matter
  4. Innovation
  5. Sustainability and Resiliency
  6. Diversity\*
  7. Quality Redevelopment
  8. Economic Development
  9. Community Wellness

\*Diversity replaces "Special Study Areas," which has been folded into #7 Quality Redevelopment.

Diversity was a major theme of all the public input received, as one of the strengths of the city, and one of the things that will always have to be navigated as a city.

The Diversity paragraph reads:

*The people of Farmington Hills are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, creed, background, income, and thought. This diversity is a primary strength of the City, and Farmington Hills will work to ensure that all residents and businesses have equal access to opportunity and public resources, that all communities are heard, and that planning and capital improvements strive to meet the needs of all neighborhoods.*

Directing the Commission's attention to copies of the draft Future Land Use Map with narrative that had been distributed, Planning Consultant Tangari highlighted:

- The Future Land Use Map is one of the cornerstones of the Master Plan.
- The narrative emphasizes major changes from the 2009 Master Plan, along with a breakdown of acreage by land use category.
  - Changes are geographically limited because 50% of the City is planned and zoned for single family residential.
  - Community facilities and quasi-public uses are a new category shown on the Future Land Use Map. For at least some of these areas, future development needs to be visioned, as certain users tend to change over time (religious institutions move, or sell part of their land for development, for instance).
  - Special study areas were not included on the 2009 Future Land Use Map; they are included this time. Some are shown by a hatching pattern over a patchwork of underlying future land use categories. Others are shown as their own separate category.
  - Study areas highlighted during tonight's discussion include:
    - Special study areas shown by hatching might show a diversification of uses, but with an overall similar physical character. Architectural/material standards could upgrade those areas aesthetically and functionally.
    - Flex Overlay use is intended to provide the City with the ability to respond to the potential for future development at the east and west ends of Oakland Community College, specifically related to OCC uses (housing/small commercial). Flex Overlay is also applied to an institutional property on the west side of Farmington Road just south I-696, currently a religious use.
    - 14 Mile Mixed Use is a separate category that covers a 126-acre area east of Orchard Lake and north of 13 Mile Road. This category could have its own architectural standards, setting a baseline for quality materials and appearance.
    - 12 Mile Mixed Use is also its own separate category, covers 450 acres, and also could have its own architectural standards.
    - Grand River Corridor. Unifies the corridor as a mixed-use district, rather than a patchwork of districts to be overlaid. M-5 takes up a great deal of land, but does not have the traffic in this area to justify being a grade-separated freeway. The Future Land Use Map envisions a scenario where the freeway is replaced with a boulevard street, with development around it. While this may not be likely at present, presenting this scenario allows the City to put forth its vision for the area, and to push to have the area reimagined, building on the theme of neighborhood districts.
    - Flex Residential applies to several residential areas, and is designated as cluster development, which allows for some attached units up to a fourplex, with incentives for keeping a larger buffer to neighboring residential or preserving natural features.

- Flex Residential Office. Allows for a mix of uses in areas with development challenges, including the area on Orchard Lake Road south of 696, and the small triangle area at Shiawassee and 9 Mile Road. Flex Residential uses could include small office and/or townhome development, etc.
- All Future Land Use Category descriptions have been written from scratch – they are not a carryover from the previous Master Plan. Several categories mention design and/or material standards requirements, emphasizing form as a unifying characteristic of development. These standards will need to be part of the implementation phase, in terms of amendments to the zoning ordinance.

Of note:

- Prior overlay districts were put in place 14 years ago, with no interest ever expressed by a developer regarding taking advantage of what the overlay offers.
- I-275 Interchange is all MDOT right-of-way, and is one of the largest interchanges in the country.
- Currently the City has no design standards. The new Master Plan and Future Land Use Map address this issue by separating out areas into districts (14 Mile Mixed Use, 12 Mile Mixed Use, etc.) The areas, as noted above, might have their own architectural standards in terms of materials and elevations, and in terms of how buildings interact with each other from the street. Right now developers seem to feel that if they do the minimum to meet standards, they will be approved. This “bare minimum” culture needs to be changed.
- It was noted that the Citation Club (north of 13 Mile Road between Halsted and Haggerty) and Diamond Forest Apartments (Freedom Road and Halsted) were shown on the Future Land Use Map as single family residential.
- Infill projects along developed corridors, such as 12 Mile Road, should be encouraged, in order to over time change the personality of that corridor from large office buildings in a sea of parking to a district that offers landscaped walking paths, places to have lunch, etc.
- The current four office districts have been combined to two office districts. It makes sense to combine OS Districts 1, 2, and 3. The trend in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was to create many highly focused districts. The current trend was to go in another direction, providing more flexibility, allowing the market to drive uses more, and to get enough housing to meet demand.
- Regarding the cluster option, sometimes developers will offer unbuildable portions of the land as an open space benefit, but this is not a true benefit. The City needs to make sure the benefit offered by a developer is a meaningful one.
- The Commission remained concerned about the site at Drake and Grand River which has morphed into a quasi-permanent cement batch location.

In closing, Planning Consultant Tangari said that after the adoption of the Master Plan, the real work of implementation will begin. Zoning ordinances are developed in a specific time and place. 20 years later, the community is in a different time and place, and the ordinance needs to be adjusted to that new reality.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Stimson, support by Grant, to adjourn the Special Meeting at 7:15pm.**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marisa Varga  
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem