

October 30, 2006

Commissioner Sue Ann Douglas, Chairperson
Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee
1200 North Telegraph Road
Pontiac, MI 48341

SUBJECT: County Code No. MP 06-08, Planning & Economic Development Services' review of the draft City of Rochester Hills Master Land Use Plan 2006 (Dated May 26, 2006)

Dear Chairperson Douglas and Committee Members:

The City of Rochester Hills Planning Commission has prepared a new master plan to replace its 1999 plan. The following is a review and analysis of the draft master plan. The plan includes text, charts, guidelines, and maps that describe the existing and desired future development of the community.

Under the amendments to the Municipal Planning Act, which took effect January 9, 2003, the City of Rochester Hills is required to send a copy of the draft plan to Oakland County and neighboring communities for comment prior to adoption. Oakland County has between 75 and 95 days to submit comments on the plan. The November 14, 2006 Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) meeting falls within our 95-day comment period. Neighboring communities have 65 days to submit comments directly to Rochester Hills and are required to send a copy of any comments to the County as well. Once the County's 95-day comment period has expired, the Planning Commission can hold a public hearing and adopt the plan.

According to the Planning Commission, the Cities of Rochester, Auburn Hills, and Troy; Oakland, Orion, Bloomfield, Shelby, and Washington Townships; Oakland County Health Department, Treasurer, and Drain Commissioner; Road Commission for Oakland County; Macomb County Department of Planning & Economic Development; MDOT; Michigan Department of Treasury; and SEMCOG were sent a copy of the draft plan. In addition, the following utilities and agencies received a copy: Consumers Energy, Michcon, DTE Energy, Ameritech, Detroit Edison, Comcast Cablevision, Rochester and Avondale School Districts, Oakland Schools, Oakland Community College, Rochester Hills Public Library, Rochester Avon Recreation Authority, Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, and Older Persons Commission. All of these communities, utilities, and agencies have received notice of the CZC meeting. Comments have been received from an Orion Township official, Auburn Hills, City of Rochester, Shelby Township, the Oakland County Drain Commissioner, the Road Commission for Oakland County, Washington Township, and the City of Troy. Comments are attached.

Public Participation Process

The City of Rochester Hills provided several opportunities for public input during the planning process. Public workshops were held and an online public forum was made available for input. *“The public input sessions also identified characteristics, and development types or trends within the community that should be encouraged or discouraged.”* (Page 6.1) In addition, comments were used to help develop the community vision, goals, and objectives.

Plan Contents

The Plan is divided into the following eight chapters: Introduction; Demographics; Existing Conditions; Natural Features Inventory; Economic Development Analysis and Strategy; Community Vision, Goals and Objectives; Future Land Use; and Implementation. The finding that the City is no longer a growing community but one that is approaching build out influences many of the strategies identified in the plan. *“Infill development, redevelopment, and preservation of remaining open spaces will likely become more important.”* (Page 2.16)

Rochester Hills is a large city geographically located at the eastern edge of Oakland County. It is one of the most populous communities in Oakland County with a 2000 population of 68,825 people. This is an 11% increase from its 1990 population of 61,766. The City has grown significantly in the last 30 years, almost tripling its 1970 population of 24,516. The plan contains an in-depth analysis of the demographic composition of city residents with particular attention given to age and household characteristics. Two concerns emerge from this analysis. *“The analysis of the change in age structure from 1990 to 2000 suggests that the City may lack adequate housing opportunities for young adults when first moving out on their own, but that there are ample housing opportunities for those in the family forming and mature family age groups.”* (Page 2.7) The mature family group is also aging, causing the need for more senior services and the possibility of empty nesters selling their current homes. *“Maintaining property values if housing turn over increases and providing alternative housing opportunities for retiring residents should become important policy considerations for the City.”* (Page 2.17)

The City’s Planning Consultant prepared a parcel specific land use inventory in 2004. This inventory showed 43% of the City in a single family residential use. Multiple family residential, including attached single family townhomes, apartments, manufactured home parks, and senior housing, constitutes another 5%. The oldest housing is generally located either in the southeastern or southwestern corner of the City, while the newest housing is found in the northwestern corner. The part of the City called Old Town is located south of Hamlin between John R and Dequindre.

A detailed housing analysis is included in the plan that evaluates housing age, value, size, and new housing construction. One interesting finding is the correlation between housing value and housing age. Statistics show *“that the lowest value housing in the City is that which is 20 to 29 years old, at \$119.02 per sq. ft. Housing that is both older and newer tends to be higher in value.”* (Page 3.12) The plan indicates that houses built 20 to 29 years ago tended to be smaller in size and may require significant reinvestment to increase in value. Since 25% of the housing falls within this age range, the impact on revenues from property taxes is a concern. One of the goals articulated in the plan is to encourage reinvestment in and restoration of these older homes.

A Neighborhood Areas Analysis is also provided in the plan. The City is divided into 19 neighborhoods, each bounded by major roads. A map shows where within these neighborhoods there may be areas of potential change or reinvestment. Many of the potential change areas are due to the fact that existing lot sizes are larger than the minimum required size. This will allow for lot splits or even land assembly and redevelopment. One area that may experience significant new residential development is in the northeastern corner of the City, adjacent to Oakland Township, where water and sewer extensions are planned to occur between 2005 and 2009.

Various public and semi-public uses are shown separately on the land use map; however as a group they make up almost 17% of the City's land area. These uses include governmental buildings, parks, dedicated open space, schools, Crittenton Hospital, and utility sites. When Higher Education uses (Oakland University and Rochester College) are added to the public category, over 21% of the City is in a public use. This high percentage of land in public use also has tax base implications as essentially one out of every five acres in the City is exempt from real property tax.

Commercial uses make up only 3% of land area. The main commercial corridor is Rochester Road, mainly south of the City of Rochester to the M-59 Expressway. Walton Boulevard is a secondary commercial corridor. Industrial uses make up 3% of the City as well. Industrial uses are mainly concentrated in the southwestern corner of the City, from the Clinton River Trail south to Auburn Road and around the M-59 interchange at Crooks Road.

According to the 2004 land use inventory, about 9% of the City's land area is considered vacant, 1,945 acres. Approximately 23% of this vacant land or 442 acres are former landfill sites. These sites are located between John R and Dequindre, north of Hamlin at the eastern boundary with Shelby Township in Macomb County. Brownfield redevelopment is an important economic development tool identified in the plan.

As part of the master planning process, an environmental consultant was hired to prepare a Natural Features Inventory (NFI) report. This NFI report has been incorporated into the master plan and *"is designed to be a tool that can be used by City planning, engineering, and parks staff on a daily basis to evaluate projects and potential impacts to natural resources."* (Page 4.1) To prepare the NFI, the mapping done by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) staff, under contract to Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services, was used, in addition to other sources. The consultant then added to this information by doing comprehensive field evaluations with emphasis on steep slopes, wetlands, woodlands, and flood plains. The resulting map of Natural Areas shows that there are significant natural areas located throughout the City of Rochester Hills. The top five Priority One sites are Bloomer Park, Oakland University, Riverbend Park, Northeast Stoney Creek area in the northeastern corner of the City, and the Clinton River Corridor.

As part of the Existing Conditions chapter, transportation, sewer, water, and park facilities are inventoried. Roads are under the jurisdiction of either the City of Rochester Hills, the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC), or the Michigan Department of Transportation. The M-59 Expressway traverses the southern portion of the City in an east-west direction. Rochester

Road, Dequindre, and Adams are the main north-south routes. Planned road improvements are listed in the plan and include the widening of Crooks, Adams, John R, and Hamlin Roads.

An Economic Development Analysis was prepared to address fiscal and market conditions. One aspect of this analysis reviewed the tax base to evaluate future revenues and expenditures based on current trends. This analysis concludes that *“based on the assumptions and projections presented previously, if present trends continue, City expenditures will exceed revenues in 2012.”* (Page 5.9) If this occurs, four options are presented. They are to increase revenues through increased taxes, increase revenues by expanding the tax base, decrease expenditures by reducing the level of services provided, or reduce expenditures through cost saving measures. Ways to increase the tax base are explored. Two of the economic development strategies outlined in the plan are to develop M-59 as a “premier” office location and to facilitate the development of new medical offices to serve the aging population.

The plan concludes with a chapter on implementation. Several amendments will be needed to the zoning ordinance to implement the recommendations made in the plan. These amendments include creating new zoning districts for the Estate Residential, Mixed Residential, and Regional Employment Center classifications described below and adding design guidelines for mixed-use developments. Other needed actions are the adoption of a steep slope ordinance, development of a comprehensive storm water management program, and establishment of an economic development committee. All of the recommended actions are summarized in an implementation matrix that identifies the priority, time frame, and responsible party for each recommendation.

Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Preferred Alternative map (attached) is a visual representation of the City’s land use policies. Single Family Residential, which is divided into five categories by overall density, is the largest planned land use. Overall density is defined in terms of units per net buildable acre, rather than minimum lot size. The following are the single family land use classifications shown on the map:

1. Estate Residential (1 dwelling unit/acre)
2. Residential 2 (2 dwelling units/acre)
3. Residential 2.5 (2.5 dwelling units/acre)
4. Residential 3 (3 dwelling units/acre)
5. Residential 4 (4 dwelling units/acre)

Estate Residential has the most limited locations and is planned mainly in the northeast corner of the City. Generally, the lower density categories are located in the north and west parts of the City, while higher densities are to the south and east. Additionally, there are several areas of One Family Cluster scattered throughout Rochester Hills.

Multiple Family Residential (8 to 12 dwelling units/acre) is shown in several locations, with two large concentrations located in the Rochester Road corridor. Manufactured home parks and senior housing are included in this category. Mixed Residential, a new overlay category, is superimposed over several residential areas. This designation is intended to permit a variety of residential construction types (attached and detached units). *“Quality site design and amenities*

such as parks, nature preserves, or other types of open space must be provided in MR areas.” (Page 7.2) Senior housing may be considered in these Mixed Residential areas, which are located in the southern and eastern portions of the City.

The Office classification and three Business classifications, Business/Flexible Use 1, 2, and 3, are primarily located along the major arteries of Rochester, Walton, Auburn, and South Boulevard. The three Flexible Use business categories are designed *“to permit the introduction of additional land uses into commercial areas, but will prevent commercial land uses from encroaching beyond where they are currently located.”* (Page 7.4) Additional types of uses allowed are residential, public, institutional, business and personal services, office, and general office. These mixed-use areas are intended to encourage infill and redevelopment. Business/Flexible Use 1 allows for the least intensity (no retail), while Use 3 would have the most intensive uses. Rochester Road from the City of Rochester south to the M-59 Expressway has the largest concentration of Business, while the Office classification is primarily located in the southern portion of the City along Auburn Road and between South Boulevard and M-59.

The plan includes design guidelines for these Flexible Use areas, which are based on a new technique called form-based coding. This approach places greater emphasis on design and appearance than on use. Key elements of these guidelines are integration of uses, pedestrian orientation, and the relationship between building setback and the road. Specific language will need to be incorporated into the zoning ordinance after the plan is adopted to implement this concept.

The Regional Employment Area is located along the M-59 Expressway and is bounded generally by Adams, Auburn, Hamlin, and Livernois Roads. A wide range of business uses such as headquarters operations, research and development, and light manufacturing will be concentrated in this area. The plan calls for mid to high rise office buildings to be located along the expressway, allowing corporate office buildings to take advantage of the visibility afforded by the M-59 location. Low rise office buildings should be located along the perimeter to be more compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The Special Purpose category is used for a variety of public and quasi-public uses. Oakland University in the western part of the City, Crittenton Hospital, Rochester College, Leader Dogs for The Blind, and City Offices in the central part of the City, as well as Christian Memorial Cemetery and the City DPW yard in the southeast all have the Special Purpose designation.

Park/Public Open Space is a category used for city parks and a city owned golf course, while Private Recreation/Open Space is used to indicate dedicated open space within residential developments and a private golf course. The linear park features on the map are non-motorized, nature trails. The trail in the southwestern part of the City is the Clinton River Trail; the trail going to the north is the Paint Creek Trail.

Two other classifications shown on the map are Industrial and Landfill Planning Area. Both are planned in the far eastern portion of the city. The only area planned for Industrial is along the north side of Hamlin, between John R and Dequindre. The area bounded by Dequindre, Hamlin, John R, and Bloomer Roads has been designated as a Landfill Planning Area. This is an overlay

district that includes existing landfill sites as well as some non-landfill sites. *“It is anticipated that extensive study will be required to determine appropriate and feasible land uses for the landfill parcels if they are proposed to be redeveloped at a future date.”* (Page 7.6)

A separate Historic Districts Overlay map is included in the Future Land Use chapter, showing the 33 historic districts designated within the City of Rochester Hills. The majority of the districts are individual sites. The plan indicates this map should be referenced by the Planning Commission and City Council when evaluating rezonings or other changes.

Comparison of the draft 2006 Future Land Use Preferred Alternative map to the 1999 map

There are very few similarities between the two maps because the names of the planned land use categories have changed substantially. The only categories carried over from the old map to the new are Multiple Family, Cluster, and Special Purpose. All other categories are new or changed in some way on the new map.

While the area planned for single family homes has changed very little, the one category used for Single Family Residential on the 1999 map now has been divided into five categories - Estate Residential and Residential 2, 2.5, 3, and 4. Additionally, school sites, which were shown as Public on the 1999 map, are now classified as Residential, with the same density as the surrounding residential area. The categories of Senior Housing and Mobile Home Park on the old map are no longer used. In most cases, areas of Senior Housing on the 1999 map are now shown as Multiple Family or Business. The two areas of Mobile Home Park on the old map are now shown as Regional Employment area and Multiple Family.

The commercial categories of Retail Commercial and Automotive Service Oriented were used on the 1999 map. The categories of Business/Flexible Use 1, 2, and 3 are used on the new map. These categories are primarily located along Rochester, Walton, and Auburn Roads where commercial uses existed previously. One of the key goals expressed in the 2006 plan is to prohibit the expansion of commercial land.

The categories of Professional Office and Office Research Technology on the old map have been replaced by the one category of Office, with much of the Office Research Technology incorporated into the new Regional Employment Area. Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial were separate categories on the old map. A single category of Industrial is used on the new map and refers only to light industrial land use. Most of the land planned for industrial uses on the 1999 map are now also in the Regional Employment Area. Public and Quasi Public were categories used on the old map; the new map uses the categories of Park/Public Open Space and Private Recreation/Open Space for most of these same uses.

The areas of greatest change on the map are the establishment of the Regional Employment Area in the southwest portion of the City and the new Landfill Planning Area overlay. The Regional Employment Area had previously been planned for Office Research Technology, Light and Heavy Industrial, Mobile Home Park, and smaller areas of Quasi-Public and Single Family Residential. Design guidelines will be developed to address the Regional Employment Area so the area will function in a more integrated fashion. Additional planning will need to be done for the Landfill Planning Area as well. This part of the City was previously planned for Single

Family Residential, Quasi-Public, and Light Industrial. The new classification reflects the opportunities that might be available through brownfield redevelopment.

Coordination with Surrounding Community Boundaries

Under the new 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. Each of the adjacent communities has been encouraged to provide the City of Rochester Hills with comments if they have any concerns.

North Boundary–Oakland Township: The Oakland Charter Township, A Community Master Plan was adopted in January 2005. Rochester Hills shares its entire northern border with Oakland Township. The entire northern border of Rochester Hills is planned for residential with densities ranging from 1-3 dwelling units/acre. The southern border of Oakland Township to Sheldon Road is mainly planned for Suburban Residential (1/3 to 1 acre lots). This is a very compatible border as the subdivisions that have been developed in Oakland Township are similar to the residential developments in Rochester Hills. An area of High Density Conservation is planned in Oakland Township at Dutton and Adams Roads. This is intended for senior housing and should be compatible with the existing single family residential in the area. East of Sheldon in Oakland Township, the Natural Resource Conservation classification reflects the Stony Creek Metropark. The park is adjacent to the less densely developed residential area of Rochester Hills planned for Estate Residential.

East Boundary–Shelby Township: The Shelby Township Master Plan was adopted in November 2003. Rochester Hills shares its eastern border, north and south of the City of Rochester, with Shelby Township. North of the City of Rochester, Rochester Hills has planned for Estate Residential (1 dwelling unit/acre) and Residential 2.5 (2.5 dwelling units/acre), while Shelby Township has planned for Single Family Residential (Very Low Density, less than 2 dwelling units/acre), creating a very compatible border.

South of the City of Rochester along Dequindre Road, Rochester Hills has planned for Park/Public Open Space to Avon Road and then Residential 3 (3 dwelling units/acre) and Landfill Planning Area to Hamlin Road. In this area, Shelby Township has planned for Two Family & Multiple Family Residential (Average Density of 6-8 dwelling units/acre), a large area of Recreation & Open Space south to Juengel Street, and then Neighborhood Retail & Services to Hamlin Road. While this border area is compatible for now, potential future uses in the Landfill Planning Area should be considered for their impact on Shelby Township.

South of Hamlin is the Old Town area of Rochester Hills, where some of the oldest neighborhoods in the City are located. This area is planned for Residential 4 (4 dwelling units/acre) to Milton Avenue, interrupted only by a narrow strip of Business/Flexible Use 2 along Auburn Avenue. Shelby Township has planned this adjacent area for Mobile Home Residential (an existing mobile home park at 4-6 dwelling units/acre) and Single Family Residential (Moderate Density, 3-4 dwelling units/acre). An area of Mixed Use is planned at Auburn Avenue, which is consistent with the Business/Flexible Use 2 in Rochester Hills. South of Milton in Rochester Hills, Multiple Family (8-12 dwelling units/acre) and more Business/Flexible Use 2 extend to the M-59 Expressway. Between Auburn Avenue and the

expressway, Shelby Township has planned primarily for Two Family & Multiple Family Residential (Average Density of 6-8 dwelling units/acre), with an area of Community-Wide Commercial at the interchange. Uses are similar in the area south of Hamlin, and the border is compatible.

South Boundary–City of Troy: The City of Troy Future Land Use Plan was adopted in January 2002. Rochester Hills shares its entire southern border with the City of Troy. Low Density Residential is the dominant land use planned by the City of Troy along this border, with commercial and/or office uses clustered at major intersections. From the western edge to Crooks Road, Rochester Hills has planned for a large area of Business/Flexible Use 1 at Adams Road, and then alternating areas of Park/Public Open Space, Residential 4 (4 dwelling units/acre), and Private Recreation/Open Space, terminating at a small node of Business/Flexible Use 1 and 2 at Crooks Road. In this area, Troy has planned for Low Density Residential except for an area of City Park directly opposite land planned for Park/Public Open Space in Rochester Hills and an area of Commercial Community Service Area at Crooks Road. The Business/Flexible Use 1 at Adams Road in Rochester Hills is intended to be a mixed use area of low intensity. Flexible 1 uses of residential, public, institutional, and office should be compatible with the Low Density Residential in Troy. Currently, the residential land in Troy is occupied by a church and a subdivision, while the land in Rochester Hills consists of single family homes, an apartment complex, a church, vacant land, and a historic property. If the land is developed as a mixed use, care should be taken with site design elements to ensure compatibility with the residential land in Troy.

East of Crooks, the Rochester Hills plan shows Residential 4 extending to a node of Business/Flexible Use 1 at Livernois Road and then Residential 3 east to an area of Office at Rochester Road. In this area, Troy again has planned for Low Density Residential except for a small area of Community Service Area and Office at Livernois and an area of Non-Center Commercial bordered by Low Density Transition Residential at Rochester Road. East of Rochester Road, Rochester Hills has planned for a limited area of Residential 3 and then a narrow band of Office extending along the expressway to Dequindre Road. Troy again, has planned for Low Density Residential in this area except for a small area of Community Service Area and Office at John R Road, and a Water Station and City Park at Dequindre Road. This portion of the border is compatible.

West Boundary–City of Auburn Hills: The City of Auburn Hills Master Land Use Plan was adopted in November 2002. The Auburn Hills plan is unique in that it only has the following three land use classifications: Residential, Non-Residential, and Public. A variety of densities are proposed for the Residential classification. Rochester Hills shares its entire western border with the City of Auburn Hills. At the northern portion of this border, between Dutton Road and Walton Boulevard, Rochester Hills has planned entirely for Residential 3 (3 dwelling units/acre). Auburn Hills has also planned for residential in this area with densities ranging from 2-10 dwelling units/acre. Oakland University occupies the central portion of this border, with a designation of Special Purpose in Rochester Hills and Public in Auburn Hills. This portion of the border is very compatible.

South of the university, Rochester Hills has planned for an area of Residential 4 (4 dwelling units/acre) and then Regional Employment Area south to Auburn Avenue. In this area, Auburn Hills has planned for Non-Residential from Oakland University to the M-59 Expressway and then high density Residential (15 dwelling units/acre) south to the Clinton River Trail, with more Non-Residential planned from the trail south to Auburn Avenue. At Auburn Avenue, Rochester Hills has planned for a small area of Business/Flexible Use 2, with Residential 4 to the south and then a large area of Business/Flexible Use 1 extending to South Boulevard. The area between Auburn Avenue and South Boulevard in Auburn Hills is planned for a variety of Residential densities ranging from 2 to 9 dwelling units/acre. It is recommended that as non-residential uses are proposed along Adams Road, attention be paid to setbacks, buffering, and landscaping to mitigate any impacts on the residential uses in Auburn Hills.

Internal Boundary-City of Rochester: The City of Rochester Master Plan: 2000 was adopted in June 2000. The City of Rochester shares its north, west, and south borders with Rochester Hills. Along the City of Rochester's northern border between Dequindre Road and the Paint Creek Trail, Rochester Hills has primarily planned for single family residential (Estate Residential, Residential 2.5, and Residential 4). These uses are adjacent to areas planned for the compatible uses of Single and Two Family Residential, Recreation & Open Space, and Public & Quasi Public in Rochester. Rochester Hills has also planned for three areas of Multiple Family (8-12 dwelling units/acre) along this border. Two of the areas, one east of the trail and one on the west side of Rochester Road are adjacent to areas planned for Multiple Family or Recreation & Open Space in Rochester. The third area, between Sheldon Road and Van Hoosen is adjacent to Public & Quasi Public, Single Family, and Recreation & Open Space in the City of Rochester.

Along the western border of Rochester, north of Walton, Rochester Hills has planned for Private Recreation/Open Space and Multiple Family. The primary uses planned by Rochester in this area are Single Family and Multiple Family residential. South of Walton, Rochester Hills has planned for Special Purpose (Crittenton Hospital) and Business/Flexible Use 1, while Rochester has planned this entire portion for Public & Quasi Public. South of Walton, several of the uses straddle the border between the two communities, making this area very compatible.

Along the City of Rochester's southern border, Rochester Hills has planned primarily for Residential 3 and 4 (3-4 dwelling units/acre) to John R Road. Two exceptions are a small area of Business/Flexible Use 3 on the east side of Rochester Road and Private Recreation/Open Space farther to the east. In this area, the City of Rochester has planned for Single Family and a Special Projects area on either side of the Clinton River Trail extending to Rochester Road. On the east side of Rochester Road, there is a small area of Downtown Business that is directly opposite the Business/Flexible Use 3 in Rochester Hills. Farther to the east, Rochester has planned for a large area of Industrial and then Single Family east to John R Road. In Rochester Hills, Private Recreation/Open Space is generally opposite the Industrial and acts as a buffer. Residential 4 is adjacent to the Single Family in Rochester. East of John R, both communities have planned for Park/Recreation/Open space (Bloomer Park). The boundary between the Cities of Rochester Hills and Rochester is generally compatible throughout.

Analysis

The City of Rochester Hills Master Plan is extremely comprehensive. The most striking aspects of the plan are the amount of data collected and the depth of analysis given to this data. The housing analysis is a good example. In addition to the usual census data, the consultant also reviewed data from the City's Assessing Department to derive housing value on a square foot basis. This information was then cross-referenced with the year homes were built. Parcel specific maps then displayed findings that would not have been revealed without this analysis. Other analyses allowed housing affordability and potential areas of neighborhood change to be addressed. Considering that residential is the predominant land use in most communities, more attention should be paid to the housing stock in master plans. However, most plans do not analyze this important land use to this extent.

Non-residential land uses also received in-depth analysis. Examples of this include the tax base analysis, retail and office land demand analysis, and the industrial base analysis. Since the City of Rochester Hills is nearing build out, it is critical that remaining developable parcels be developed to maximize tax base while still being compatible with surrounding uses. At the same time, the environmental impacts of this development or potential redevelopment need to be monitored so that the quality of life is not diminished. This master plan looks at all of these issues and positions the City to evaluate future development proposals in light of these concerns.

The plan addresses a wide range of additional topics including historic preservation, storm water management, green building development, natural resources, transportation, and implementation. The size of the plan (almost 170 pages) makes it unlikely that all city staff will read it thoroughly; however it is important that staff understand the findings and policy implications identified in the plan. Therefore, it is recommended that the City include an action item to present the plan to the various city departments to orient them to these findings and policy recommendations. In addition, the plan includes a long list of implementation activities; the included implementation matrix is a good way to organize and keep track of progress.

Finally, the master plan was broadly distributed. The City certainly complied with the spirit of the law to enhance coordination with adjacent communities and interested agencies. Eight responses were received via letter or email. The City of Rochester supplied specific comments related to the planned land use categories and agreed with county staff findings that there were no conflicts at the border. The Oakland County Drain Commissioner acknowledged the City's goals for restoration of the Clinton River riverbank and the development of a storm water management program. The letter indicates the Oakland County Drain Commission supports these goals and is available to provide assistance as needed. The Road Commission for Oakland County provided comments related to the transportation information included in the plan and expressed interest in the City's possible creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority. Other comments were received from the Cities of Troy and Auburn Hills, and Orion, Shelby, and Washington Townships. Generally, respondents appreciated the opportunity to review the plan and better understand future planned activities in the City of Rochester Hills.

Conclusion

Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services staff commends the City of Rochester Hills on its proposed new master plan. City staff, Planning Commission, and their

Planning Consultant should be applauded for their effort and thoroughness. The City of Rochester Hills Master Plan not only provides a better understanding of planning in the City but serves as a model for a well-researched and well-written master plan.

Based on the review of the surrounding communities' master plans, the City of Rochester Hills, Master Land Use Plan 2006 is **not** inconsistent with the plan of any city, village, or township that received notice of the draft plan. Eight communities and agencies provided comments, and they are attached.

Oakland County has not prepared a countywide development plan, so there is no countywide plan to which to compare the City of Rochester Hills plan.

Sincerely,

Charlotte P. Burckhardt, AICP, PCP
Principal Planner

Enclosures