

March 14, 2007

Commissioner David Potts, Chairperson
Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee
1200 North Telegraph Road
Pontiac, MI 48341

SUBJECT: County Code No. MP 07-01, Planning & Economic Development Services' review of the City of Madison Heights Future Land Use Plan Amendment (dated December 19, 2006)

Dear Chairperson Potts and Committee Members:

The City of Madison Heights Planning Commission is proposing to amend its 1990 Madison Heights Master Plan: 1990, 2000, 2010 by making two changes to the Future Land Use Plan map. The following is a review and analysis of the amendment.

Under the recent amendments to the Municipal Planning Act, which took effect December 20, 2006, the City of Madison Heights is required to send a copy of the draft amendment to Oakland County and neighboring communities for comment prior to adoption. Oakland County has 40 days to submit comments on an amendment. The March 27, 2007 Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) meeting falls within our 40-day comment period. Neighboring communities also have 40 days to submit comments directly to Madison Heights and are asked to send a copy of any comments to the County as well. Once the comment period has expired, the Planning Commission can hold a public hearing on the amendment and take final action to amend the plan.

According to the Madison Heights Planning Department, the Cities of Clawson, Hazel Park, Royal Oak, Troy, Sterling Heights, and Warren; the Lamphere and Madison school districts; and SEMCOG were sent a copy of the draft changes. All of these communities and agencies have received notice of the CZC meeting. Comments have been received from the City of Troy and are attached.

Background

In 2006, the Madison Heights City Council adopted the Parks and Recreation Plan 2006-2010. Contained in the plan were several objectives, one of which was to redevelop Gravel Park in the northern portion of the City to a residential use. Another objective was to explore the possibility of a land exchange between Madison Schools and the City, involving the transfer of 3.1-acre Sunset Park to school district ownership in exchange for 3.1 acres of school district property. According to the City's master plan amendment, "*State law requires that a park cannot be sold or transferred unless it is released from the "Recreation" designation in the master plan.*" (Page 3) This amendment is proposed to satisfy that requirement.

Future Land Use Plan Map

The amendment consists of two changes to the Future Land Use Plan map (attached). The changes involve Gravel Park in the north central portion of the City between Twelve and

Thirteen Mile Roads, and Sunset Park in the southern portion of the City between Eleven Mile Road and I-696.

Gravel Park

Gravel Park is classified as a Neighborhood Park (Playground) in the Recreation Plan with a service area of 1/4 - 1/2 mile. The park occupies approximately .89 acres of land between Barrington and Palmer Streets in a predominantly residential area (see attached aerial). Gravel Park's character and usefulness have been significantly reduced in recent years by the loss of its ash trees due to the emerald ash borer infestation. Since the park's service area is also within the service area of Civic Center Park and partly within the service area of the new playground and soccer complex to the south (under construction), the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommends that the park be sold and redeveloped for residential use. The resulting proceeds would be used for improvements to other city parks. For this to take place, the classification on the Future Land Use Plan map for Gravel Park would need to be changed from Recreation to Single Family.

Sunset Park

Sunset Park shares the same city block with Halfman Elementary School in the southern portion of Madison Heights (see attached aerial). The 3.1-acre park contains play equipment, basketball courts, softball and soccer fields, and a parking lot. All of these facilities also serve the school, as there is no playground or parking on the school property. The Madison School District would like to construct a student drop off/pick up area at the school to correct ongoing morning and afternoon traffic congestion problems. There is no property available on the school site for this improvement, so a land exchange has been proposed. Sunset Park would become school district property in exchange for an equal 3.1-acre parcel of school property adjacent to the City's Rosie's Park, approximately one mile to the north. The exchange land adjacent to Rosie's Park is already planned for Recreation so the only change to the Future Land Use Plan map would be a change from Recreation to the Public and Schools classification for Sunset Park. The Sunset Park site would continue to provide recreational opportunities to area residents with maintenance performed by the school district.

Coordination with Surrounding Community Boundaries

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. The two parcels proposed for change are internal within the City of Madison Heights and do not impact its boundary with any of the surrounding communities.

Analysis

The initiation of this master plan change and its submittal to the Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee have been done to be in conformance with state planning law. While the master plan changes in this amendment are relatively minor, the rationale for the changes is sound as it will benefit both the City and the school district. The City would receive needed revenue from the sale of Gravel Park, and the new residential would be consistent with the surrounding land use. In terms of the land swap, the school district would be able to acquire much needed land at Halfman Elementary without a loss of recreational land to City residents.

Conclusion

Because these changes are internal to Madison Heights, the City of Madison Heights Future Land Use Plan Amendment 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, so there is no countywide plan to which to compare the amendment.

Sincerely,

Charlotte P. Burckhardt, AICP, PCP
Principal Planner

Enclosures