



MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
June 1, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.
Novi Civic Center – Activities Room
45175 W. Ten Mile, Novi, MI 48375
(248) 347-0475
MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Members Present: *Planning Commission:* Ramesh Verma
City Council: Dave Staudt
Staff: Lindsay Bell, Victor Cardenas (*acting chair*), Ben Croy, Barb McBeth, Rick Meader

Members Absent: *Planning Commission:* John Avdoulos, David Dismondy
Staff: Mike McCready

Support/As Needed: James Hill, Ben Peacock, Tom Schultz

Consultants: Michelle Bennett (Planner), Mrithula Shantha (Planner)

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of the May 4, 2022 Committee Meeting Minutes

The May 4, 2022 minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Discussion Items

A. Survey update

i. Master Plan Survey Announcement

Member McBeth thanked Member Cardenas for his diligent work transferring data into the virtual survey. She mentioned that the survey is live and has had some success so far – there were around 130 responses as of that morning. The survey is accessible through the QR code on the post card that was provided in front of each member along with the meeting packet. The survey went live during the city's Spring Palooza event. The survey was also sent to 20,000 email addresses.

Member Cardenas mentioned that the survey will be live until the end of June.

B. Demographics

Consulting Planner Bennett stated that most of the demographic data was pulled from the census, but some was also retrieved from SEMCOG and ESRI.

Member Staudt asked while the city is approving thousands of residential units why is the total population is projected to go down?

Member Cardenas said that SEMCOG believes since Novi has been growing at such a high rate that we will run out of land. However, he believes that SEMCOG hasn't taken into consideration what we have approved with The Bond, Main Street, and other multiple family developments.

Member Staudt thought that might limit the credibility of that portion of the data.

Consultant Bennett said removing that future population projection from the demographics section can be considered because it projects a little far into the future.

Member Cardenas suggested switching some of the communities on the population growth comparison chart to cities that are more like Novi, such as Troy. He also suggested looking at school enrollment to get an idea if enrollment growth points toward a growth in population; the Novi school district attracts many young families to the city.

Consultant Bennett mentioned that Novi's average family household size has increased. She thought that it could be due to the rising cost of housing; younger and older generations may choose to stay with family members.

Member Staudt said that the average income numbers for Novi would be much higher if they did not include the 5 manufactured home parks in Novi that represent around 2,000 homes. Surrounding communities, like Lyon Township, do not have that many parks. Member Staudt suggested that the household income in those parks is dramatically lower than the household income in surrounding areas. For example, we have two manufactured home parks directly beside one of the wealthiest areas in our city, and that was one of the wealthiest zip codes in the country including those two parks. We need to take this skew into account. The Committee discussed how this might be addressed in the next draft.

Member McBeth said that a summary of what will be discussed in each of the 5 items of the demographics section would be a good addition to the draft report.

C. Housing

Consultant Bennett briefly explained that the country as a whole is experiencing a housing shortage and what that means for the Novi community. The situation is compounded by labor shortages and supply chain issues, making it more difficult to produce and buy homes.

Members McBeth and Staudt mentioned that former Council Member Andrew Mutch has done some research suggesting that some of the housing data provided by outside sources is not accurate, and that the city may have better numbers that could be used. They suggested the Committee review that research, and further discussion could take place at an upcoming meeting.

Members McBeth and Cardenas were concerned about the housing supply numbers since they did not seem to incorporate many of the large-scale housing developments Novi is planning. They asked that those numbers be reaffirmed to be sure they are accurate in the next draft of the report.

The Committee members found it surprising that the census data showed about 28% of households with income less than \$15,000 entered the homeowner market in the last decade. This seems almost impossible given the cost of housing.

Member Staudt said he would like to see numbers on apartments and rentals built since 2010 because the average rental for a new apartment in Novi right now is in excess of \$2,000 per month. That is all that is being built right now. As the Committee talks about housing diversity, they should consider the lack of desire by developers to build anything different in the current market.

Member Bell again brought up the census data showed about 28% of households with income less than \$15,000 entered the homeowner market in the last decade. She thought perhaps if only a few families were under that income level, and one of them bought a house, that would explain this abnormal statistic.

Consulting Planner Shantha said the actual number of households under that income level was 475, and that has increased to 607.

The Committee discussed that it is difficult to achieve greater housing diversity in Novi because developers aren't typically interested in buying land to build homes under the \$400,000 price point. The Committee wondered if there were ways to attract developers that are interested in developing low income/workforce housing. Staff were aware of any developers interested in doing so in the city at this time.

Consultant Bennett suggested that the concept that missing middle housing could be removed since the Committee felt that land was too costly for that concept to be feasible. She asked if the Committee was interested in focusing on missing middle housing at all or if they were interested in focusing on current trends.

Attorney Schultz mentioned that even if missing middle housing were to be included in the Master Plan, the political will to change the zoning ordinance is not likely there. He was concerned that there might be upset residents that feel as though the city broke their promise if they cannot successfully follow through with the required Zoning Ordinance updates needed to implement what is presented in the Master Plan update.

Member McBeth thought that the survey might provide more data on this subject. There could be a decent portion of survey takers who answer they would like to live in Novi, but they cannot afford to.

D. Focus areas

Member McBeth presented the areas that were identified as potential focus areas for this master plan update. One area was the space surrounding the regional malls. Another was along Meadowbrook Road, south of Twelve Mile; the city could see development being proposed along either side of the road there. She mentioned that some of the areas previously suggested as focus areas were a bit small to be considered areas for in-depth workshops and may not provoke as much attention as some other areas. Member McBeth also suggested industrial areas along Grand River that are not already covered by an overlay district, or recently developed might also be worthy of being a focus area.

The Committee agreed that these would be beneficial focus areas to pursue.

5. Next Steps

Consultant Bennett briefly mentioned that these tasks would be accomplished in the near future:

- A. Keep promoting the survey
- B. Establish focus groups
- C. Finalize focus areas
- D. Organize engagement session dates
- E. Natural features and resiliency

6. Audience Participation and Correspondence

Mike Duchesneau discussed the growing family size in his neighborhood. He said that it is an older community, but now additions are being built onto homes – one home has three stories. 30 years ago, the homes were mostly small cottages. He felt that near Walled Lake, many more developers are

going to the ZBA for variances on the setbacks than originally did. He also stated that the missing middle housing in Novi is non-existent; the best chance the city has at achieving that was Pavilion Shore Village with smaller lots and homes, but those are at \$500,000. The only affordable housing options in Novi are the mobile homes.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 PM.