



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

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Urban Form Steering Committee

## MEMBERS

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## AGENDA

**January 27, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.**

Hannah Center, Executive Conference Room  
819 Abbot Road

### 1) OPENING

- A) Roll Call
- B) Approval of Agenda

### 2) DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 3) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### 3) ADJOURNMENT



# **PLANNING, BUILDING & DEVELOPMENT**

Quality Services for a Quality Community

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Steering Committee Members

**FROM:** Darcy C. Schmitt, Planning and Zoning Administrator  
Timothy R. Schmitt, AICP, Community Development Analyst  
Lori Mullins, Community Development Administrator

**DATE:** January 24, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Urban Form

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At the November Steering Committee meeting the Committee responded to a series of questions intended to stimulate the subconscious and assure full participation from each member. The responses to these questions are attached for your review and were used by staff to help identify existing goals, objectives, and actions that are still relative and highlight those that may be missing in the document.

The Steering Committees will continue to work on the goals, objectives and actions for at least the next two months using following definitions as a guide

**Goals** are the broadest expressions of a community's desires they give direction to the plan as a whole. They are concerned with the *long term*, and often describe *ideal situations* which would result if *all* plan purposes were fully realized. Since goals are value-based, their attainment is difficult to measure.

**Objectives** are broad statements that set preferred courses of action – choices made to carry out the goals in the *foreseeable future (mid- to long-term)*. They need to be specific enough to help determine whether a proposed project or program would advance community values expressed in the goals.

**Actions** are specific statements that carry out a plan in the *short term* which accomplish the broader statements expressed in the goals and objectives. Actions are generally implemented through the City Council's Strategic Priorities and are activities that can realistically be carried out within a two to five year period and guide the City's day-to-day operations.

The January meeting will begin by discussing how the existing goals, objectives and actions relate to the Steering Committees responses to the questions from the November meeting. The next step will be discussion of topics that are not covered in the current plan.

## **Steering Committee Responses the November Meeting Exercise**

### **QUESTION 1**

When you think of an Urban environment, what characteristics or elements of a space do you associate with a welcoming environment? The top responses for question 1 were generally:

- well defined gathering spaces with sun and shade
- buildings of varying height and architectural style with windows on the street
- wide sidewalks to accommodate plazas and outdoor seating for diners
- activities/entertainment that supports vibrancy and sense of place
- a balance of landscape and hardscape
- Congestion caused by narrow streets and slow traffic

The following goals, objectives and actions were developed from language in the current plan and continue to be relative based on the Steering Committees general responses to questions 1.

### **GOAL 2: To have a diversified and growing tax base and economy.**

**Objective 2-1:** Increase the attraction and vitality of the downtown.

***Action 2-1.1:*** Provide incentives to support commercial adaptive reuse or redevelopment of properties in the core downtown specifically where new sewer and water infrastructure has been constructed.

***Action 2-1.2:*** Create active streets through the promotion of art, plazas and outdoor seating in the core downtown.

***Action 2-1.3:*** Continue to improve the City’s “Wayfinding” system which includes uniform signage with clear directional information for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

***Action 2-1.4:*** Encourage alternative parking options.

***Action 2-1.5:*** Continue to collaborate with downtown property owners to recruit a broader diversity of retail including, but not limited to urban grocery, soft goods, and higher quality restaurants.

**Action 2-1.6:** Implement design guidelines for the downtown that include enhancements to both the public and private portions of the streetscape.

**Action 2-1.7:** Work with the Capital Area Transit Authority to maintain downtown access, greenspace, and median alignment during Bus Rapid Transit design and development.

**Objective 2-3:** Support the development of Mixed-Use Neighborhood Service Districts to provide basic retail services for the convenience of residents.

**Action 2-3.2:** Institute a minimum building height in commercial districts to prevent strip center development and encourage the redevelopment of existing commercial areas to include mixed-use, multiple-story buildings.

**GOAL 3: To have land use patterns with higher density providing better community self-sufficiency and quality of life.**

**Objective 3-1:** Develop land use policies which foster the integration rather than segregation of land use.

**Action 3-1.1:** Develop a hybrid form-based code to allow for mixed-use development with an emphasis on the design of the public realm.

**Action 3-1.2:** Develop land use policies that allow for redevelopment and revitalization within the existing neighborhood fabric.

**GOAL 4: To have quality community assets.**

**Objective 4-2:** Provide public access to the Red Cedar River.

**Action 4-2.1:** Seek resources to implement a riverfront park.

**Action 4-2.2:** Work with Michigan State University and other governmental jurisdictions to improve public access to the Red Cedar River.

**GOAL 5: To have a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.**

**Objective 5-2:** Improve nonmotorized transportation opportunities.

**Action 5-2.1:** Minimize pedestrian vs. vehicle conflict through innovative road designs.

## QUESTION 2

When you think of an Urban environment, what characteristics or elements do you associate with an undesirable environment? The top responses to question 2 were generally:

- is automobile dominated with large parking areas
- has unwelcoming windowless building facades
- lacks green space
- has uniform buildings
- has poorly maintained public spaces
- feels unsafe because it is dark or not pedestrian friendly

The following goals, objectives and actions were developed from language in the current plan and continue to be relative based on the Steering Committees general responses to questions 2.

***Action 2-1.2:*** Create active streets through the promotion of art, plazas and outdoor seating in the core downtown.

***Action 2-1.6:*** Implement design guidelines for the downtown that include enhancements to both the public and private portions of the streetscape.

***Action 3-1.1:*** Develop a hybrid form-based code to allow for mixed-use development with an emphasis on the design of the public realm.

***Action 1-5.1:*** Develop a streetscape improvement program targeted at major streets.

**Objective 2-1:** Increase the attraction and vitality of the downtown.

***Action 2-1.2:*** Create active streets through the promotion of art, plazas and outdoor seating in the core downtown.

***Action 2-1.3:*** Continue to improve the City’s “Wayfinding” system which includes uniform signage with clear directional information for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

***Action 2-1.6:*** Implement design guidelines for the downtown that include enhancements to both the public and private portions of the streetscape.

This is an area where the Steering Committees and public raised issues that need to be discussed further, to allow Staff the background to draft effective objectives and actions. We do not want the Steering Committees to get into the specifics of 'wordsmithing' the objectives and actions, Staff will work on that after the Steering Committees have talked further and will bring language back to address outstanding items.

### QUESTION 3

Are there specific areas of the City that should be focused on for redevelopment in the next five to ten years? The top responses to question 3 were generally:

- Trowbridge Road
- Downtown Core
- Michigan Avenue and Grand River Avenue underutilized sites between Harrison and Hagadorn

The following goals, objectives and actions were developed from language in the current plan and continue to be relative based on the Steering Committees general responses to questions 3.

#### **GOAL 2: To have a diversified and growing tax base and economy.**

**Objective 2-4:** Encourage continued growth where appropriate.

*Action 2-4.1:* Revise land use policies for the area along Lake Lansing Road to improve upon existing land uses patterns.

*Action 2-4.2:* Market opportunities for the redevelopment and revitalization of underutilized commercial properties.

*Action 2-4.3:* Promote the redevelopment of the commercial properties at the intersection of Harrison and Michigan Avenues into a new and more efficient neighborhood commercial area.

*Action 2-4.4:* Promote collaboration with the City of Lansing to improve properties along West Michigan Avenue with innovative redevelopment.

*Action 2-4.5:* Provide economic incentives to support the implementation of the East Village Master Plan.