



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT • 1140 Terex Road • Hudson, Ohio 44236 • (330) 342-1790

PLANNING COMMISSION

CASE NO. 2024-820 CITY OF HUDSON 2024 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the evidence and representations to the Commission by City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee representatives Rebecca Benson Leiter and Jessie Obert and City staff at a public hearing of the Planning Commission held at the special meeting of July 22, 2024 then continued to the regular meeting of August 12, 2024, the Planning Commission approves the 2024 City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan with the following recommendations to City Council taken from the attached letter dated August 6, 2024:

1. Remove all “intentionally blank” pages throughout the document.
2. Page 19: Under the section “Who Will Use This Plan”, remove the text “Used effectively, the plan will make the process of new development and growth in Hudson easier and more efficient”.
3. Page 20: Under the section “Development Approvals”, remove the text “Administrative and legislative approval of”.
4. Pages 23-54 – Community Insights: Include recent city-led study on availability of recreational/fitness facilities. Attach the full study in the Appendix.
5. Page 28: Incorporate an inventory of existing housing stock by type (single family, duplex, townhome, assisted living, special needs housing/group homes etc.).
6. Page 62: Include clarifying text “The Future Land Use map was developed through the public input process and Steering Committee considerations.”
7. Pages 66-71: Revise the descriptions of the land use categories to better align with descriptions in the Land Development Code.
8. Page 76: Under the section “Vision”, revise the text so the statement “The area should be maintained as passive open space with connections to adjoining parks and open spaces until a transformative business office park user is identified for the site” is made before the statement “The Steering Committee felt strongly the site should be developed for economic development purposes and generate revenue and jobs for the city.”

Dated: August 19, 2024

CITY OF HUDSON
PLANNING COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Nystrom", written over a horizontal line.

David Nystrom, Chair

To: Members of the Hudson Planning Commission

From: Rebecca Benson Leiter, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Chair

Jessie Obert, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Vice Chair

Date: August 6, 2024

Re: Responses to comments/questions from the July 22, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting

Dear Members of the City of Hudson Planning Commission,

We thank you for your comments and careful consideration of the Draft 2024 Comprehensive Plan. To help the discussion we have provided the following responses to questions/comments heard at the July 22, 2024 meeting. We are happy to continue the discussion on August 12th.

Questions/comments and responses:

p. 2 and throughout – I recommend eliminating all of the “artsy” or “intentionally blank” pages. To the extent that this will be printed and bound, it is a waste of paper. Contrarily, to the extent that this will be viewed primarily as an electronic document, these excess pages of no content are visually cluttering and unhelpful.

Response: We agree with the recommendation to remove “intentionally blank” pages.

p. 19 – the last paragraph under “Who Will Use This Plan?” indicates that effective use of this plan “will make the process of new development and growth in Hudson easier and more efficient.” While I would agree that the city has room for improvement in both of these areas, I question what our motivation is behind this aspiration? Who set this as a goal? What is this going to look like practically speaking? [The LDC defines the CP as...]

Response: This text was not reviewed/discussed in detail by the Steering Committee, and we recommend removing the last paragraph in its entirety as this does not properly articulate the collective goal of the effort.

p. 20 – the paragraph titled “Development Approvals” phrases a key step in the implementation of the CP as being through “administrative and legislative approvals.” What is meant, precisely, with this terminology? It seems that it could be open to interpretation. For example, during the LDC revision process of 2018, there was an effort to expand the power of the City Manager to approve developments without going through the notice/public hearing process. Perhaps what is meant is that we could have an enhanced Building Department to provide better enforcement?

Response: This text was not reviewed/discussed in detail by the Steering Committee, and we recommend revising to remove the lead-in text “Administrative and legislative approvals of”.

p. 28 – as I mentioned at the public hearing, it would be helpful for all of the boards and commissions to have an inventory of existing housing stock by type (single family detached, duplex, townhome, etc.) This inventory should include other housing types (dwelling units) like senior living, assisted living, and special needs housing/group homes.

Response: We agree with this recommendation and suggest city staff could develop such to be incorporated into the final draft of the plan.

p. 41 – inclusion of City Council’s recent study on availability of recreational/fitness facilities would be valuable for assessing the necessity of additional amenities. Our picture of Hudson’s needs is incomplete without that detailed information about the ready availability of public and private recreational opportunities.

Response: We agree with this recommendation. The study could be referenced in Section 2: Community Insights and attached in full in the Appendix.

p. 59 – the third element to “Hudson’s Vision” is to “protect and enhance the character and aesthetics of the downtown and neighborhoods.” This reads like an undue emphasis on the Village core, to the detriment of the rest of the city, which has been a key factor in maintaining an “us/them” division within our city. How did this limitation come about? Why aren’t we considering all of Hudson—a unified city—as equally worthy of this protection?

Response: Our understanding is this statement includes the community as a whole. While, the downtown area was specifically identified as something people value about the city in the survey, the Committee included the neighborhoods as an acknowledgement that this should be a vision for the entire community.

p. 62 – the section on “Future Land Use Changes” doesn’t feel like a detailed enough explanation of what is going on. Explain how and why we get to the change map on p. 63.\

Response: Recommend adding the text “the Future Land Use map was developed through the public input process and Steering Committee considerations.”

p. 66 through 71 – I have concerns with the content of the descriptive paragraphs related to land uses, sometimes because of what is included (copied sentences from one to another section) and sometimes for what is excluded (is Darrowville Commercial really a pedestrian friendly part of town? Was it ever after cars became commonplace?) These paragraphs may need to include the direct language from some of the definitions of the LDC to provide clarity.

Response: We agree and suggest city staff rework to better align with the Land Development Code definitions.

p. 68 – I question the validity of retaining an office park use district when, in the 25+ years since merger of the village and township, we have seen very little of this development at all. To a lesser extent, I also question the reasonableness of the industrial use district with the irregular boundaries on its eastern end; that resembles spot zoning.

Response: To provide some background on the Future Industrial Uses Map: These three classifications were discussed in detail and as seen as tiers of intensity of use.

1. Industrial Classification: This would be the highest intensity use located along a main corridor (Seasons Road), adjacent to the highway. It is also adjacent to high intensity uses in Stow on the south side of Darrow.
2. Light Industrial Flex: This classification would step-down the current heavy industrial character with less of an emphasis on large scale manufacturing and shipping.
3. Office Park: This is the lowest intensity use as these areas are closer to residential neighborhoods, while still providing highway access. The Steering Committee saw the benefit of

retaining these uses from a tax base perspective and has seen new builds including Fleet Response.

p. 80 – the “Main Corridor” section does not provide as much help to the Planning Commission for making decisions as it could. For example, in “maintaining and building the character of the corridor,” should new development key off of existing buildings or only historic buildings? Is a historic aesthetic the kind of character we are aspiring to? While streetscape enhancements would improve the visual character of the area, I question where the pedestrian traffic is actually coming from. Meanwhile, the illustrations provided appear to limit those improvements to plantings. Finally, while these improvements should “enhance the look and feel of the corridor,” the rest of that directive states that we should “extend the character of the downtown through the corridor and to the Southern Gateway.” Will this include the downtown’s architectural guidelines?

Response: While the statement regarding building design is vague, the intent was to have a high standard for design.

We acknowledge the recommendations were more weighted towards streetscape enhancements, but to clarify, there are multiple recommendations in addition to plantings such as:

1. Bury overhead wires
2. Consistent street lighting
3. Enhanced transit/waiting zones
4. Public art installations
5. Enhanced crosswalks pedestrian islands

The idea is that once these enhancements are made, the corridor would “extend the character of the downtown”. The Steering Committee also felt strongly about buildings being sited close to the street with parking predominantly in the side/rear as depicted in Figure 3-13. This could be added to the text to help guide future Planning Commission Decisions.

p. 81-82 – related to the Southern Gateway, I question whether all of the proposed amenities and landscaping enhancements are practical for the Darrowville area. How many of the existing businesses are open late? How many are primarily pedestrian-oriented? Darrowville was not a mini Hudson village; historically it was a rural crossroads. While the directives call for a reflection of “New England Western Reserve characteristics,” I question what is specifically “Hudson” or “New England” about the brick gateway enhancements pictured. We need to guard against “Disneyfying” our gateways.

Response: The general idea is to feel like you are entering Hudson when crossing the city border into Darrowville. The Steering Committee and public felt this is a key entryway that could benefit from enhancements to feel less like a drag strip and be more integrated with the rest of town. We agree with your statement to guard against “Disneyfying” our gateways. The character images are just examples, not final.

p. 87 – no mention of the Hudson Cemetery Board, Acme Plaza owners, or Summit County Land Bank.

Response: These topics were not specifically discussed by the Steering Committee or topics of note from public feedback; however, we understand the importance of the Cemeteries discussion and would not be opposed if the Planning Commission makes a recommendation to City Council.

p. 89 – Darrowville is not the only part of the city with historic structures. What is our vision related to historic architecture throughout Hudson? Will it continue to be acceptable to demolish 150+ year old buildings?

Response: Historic Preservation was a common topic by the Steering Committee. It was ultimately decided that the current text in the Land Development Code directing the AHBR to “recommend to the City Council the geographic boundaries of additions to or changes in the Historic District, and to recommend those buildings and structures which should be designated historic landmarks” remain the guiding text. The Committee also discussed including historic preservation issues when the Land Development Code is reviewed.

p. 95 – the parts of the implementation matrix where the goals are copied as the primary task should be cleaned up (e.g. Objectives 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4

Response: There was much discussion on the topic of objectives which could also be action items. The Steering Committee chose this formatting after a previous draft listed these objectives, but did not include the action item information for “Timeframe”, “Potential Project Partners”, and “Project Cost”. The Steering Committee felt the best way to format was to restate them as action items.

Appendix p. 1 – the results of the survey do not need to be full-page renderings.

Response: The purpose of the appendix is for the reader to be able to take a deep dive. Our intent was to ensure the information was clear and easy to read.

General question raised by the survey but unanswered in the CP itself: how do we effect a net zero growth in Hudson, given the desire for continued economic development?

Response: Our takeaway from the effort was to acknowledge limited growth with desires for new public services. The Steering Committee sees opportunities for industrial/commercial growth as identified in the land use plan.

Additional comments and responses from the meeting

p. 76 – Why does the YDC text lead in with the text “The Steering Committee felt strongly the site should be developed for economic development purposes and generate revenue for the city” and not “The area should be maintained as passive open space with connections....”

Response: We agree and suggest these statements be flipped so that the statement regarding maintaining as passive open space until a transformative user is identified would be in the first paragraph.

p.76 – Doesn’t the plan for YDC go against the survey results for open space and parkland?

Response: The plan for YDC includes substantial open space land under a conservation easement. The city’s purchase of YDC was through an agreement with Western Reserve Land Conservancy and Summit Metro Parks. Under the agreement, Summit Metro Parks would develop a passive park/trail along the northern acreage, WRLC would protect the areas under conservation easement highlighted in green, and the city would have the option to develop the area on the southern acreage in blue. Ultimately, The Steering Committee saw YDC is an opportunity to remain open space unless a transformative income generating opportunity presented itself.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Benson Leiter and Jessie Obert
City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee