

Summary Report

City of Houghton Master Plan Committee

October 2021

Creation of the Master Plan Committee

The Master Plan Committee (herein referred to as Committee) was established by the Planning Commission during the Commission's special meeting on March 2, 2021. Planning Commission members Michelle Jarvie-Eggart, Jennifer Julien, Kristine Bradof, and Bill Leder were appointed to the Committee. The Commission specified that all meetings be open to the public.

While Chapters 10 (Downtown) and 13 (Zoning and Future Land Use) were assigned as the primary focus, the Committee also has explored other topics included in this summary.

Summaries of meetings from March 9 through September 20 are provided below. More detailed information is available in the meeting minutes that may be found on the City Website in the Document Center.

March 9, 2021 Meeting

Bill Leder, Michelle Jarvie-Eggart, and Kristine Bradof were appointed Committee chair, vice-chair, and secretary, respectively.

The Committee discussed the proposal for a Charrette-Ready Workshop focused on Downtown and the Big Parking Deck as submitted to the City by the National Charrette Institute, Michigan State University.

May 3, 2021

The Committee reviewed Chapter 13 of the Master Plan. Topics of discussion were:

- Changing incentives and expanding the R-4 Redevelopment Ready District.
- Diversifying housing types, including increased density and use of vacant land.
- Considering changes that may allow elderly residents to stay in their single-family homes.
- Adding Houghton Housing Commission apartments for low income residents.
- Exploring urban farming.
- Adding height restrictions to the Downtown Overlay District.
- Identifying legacy mining sites within the City.
- Further promoting the history of Houghton and its historic buildings including homes.

The Committee also reviewed Chapter 10 of the Master Plan. Topics of discussion were:

- Finding better ways to accomplish trash and recycling collection and deliveries to businesses along Shelden Avenue.
- Parking and traffic flow.
- Placemaking.
- Diversity.
- Enhancing the art scene.
- Strengthening connections between Downtown and the Waterfront.
- Enhancing the connection between Montezuma Avenue and Downtown.
- Parking on the south side of Shelden Avenue that would enable more walking through downtown to the Waterfront.
- Designate Huron Street as a pedestrian mall.
- Improved pedestrian crossing of Montezuma Avenue.

July 19, 2021

The Committee discussed:

- A possible sub-area plan for Downtown. This was envisioned as a stand-alone document separate and apart from the Master Plan. The sub-area plan and the Master Plan would complement each other. The sub-area-plan could support enhancements to the existing Downtown Overlay District that might include form-based zoning.
- Housing possibilities that would meet the needs of current and future residents, including aging-in-place for seniors.
- Expansion of the R-4 Redevelopment Ready District in areas close to the Michigan Tech campus. Included was a discussion of densification in general and student parking. Members of the public participated in the conversation.
- A meeting that Michelle Jarvie-Eggart had with Carol MacLennan concerning identifying locations of legacy mining and mining residual materials sites.

August 23, 2021

The Committee engaged public participants in a general discussion of densification near the Michigan Tech campus, multiple family housing including students, and missing middle housing.

- The intent statements in the Zoning Ordinance for the R-2, R-3, and R-4 Districts were read as an introduction to the conversation.
- According to the 2020 census, the City gained 682 residents since 2010.
- Michigan Tech student enrollment and parking by students living off-campus had considerable attention, including much dialogue with members of the public in attendance.
- A map of vacant land within the City was reviewed.

September 20, 2021

This meeting focused exclusively on missing middle housing and how it applies to Houghton.

- The term “missing middle housing” was explained and examples were given.
- Possible opportunities for diversification of housing, including introducing new housing types such as duplexes and ancillary dwelling units, was discussed.
- The impact of short-term vacation rentals in residential neighborhoods was part of the conversation.
- A developer in the audience gave his perspective.