CITY OF WALLED LAKE
PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026

The Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Amin.

ROLL CALL: Amin, Bashi, Fernandes, Martin, Swiatek, Whitt

ABSENT: Schinzing

OTHERS PRESENT: Planning Consultant Ortega, City Attorney Vanerian, and City Clerk Stuart

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES: None

Commissioner Whitt explained the city received correspondence Chairman Schinzing would not be in attendance this evening and recommended a temporary chair be appointed for this evening.

PC 10-01-26 MOTION TO HAVE MITAL AMIN AS TEMPORARY CHAIR FOR TONIGHT'S MEETING

Motion by Bashi, seconded by Swiatek, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To have Mital Amin as temporary chair for tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Amin accepted.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

1. Planning Commission Minutes from September 8, 2026

PC 10-02-26 MOTION TO APPROVE SEPTEMBER 8, 2026 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion by Swiatek, seconded by Fernandes, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve September 8, 2026 Planning Commission minutes.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None

PRESENTATION

1. City of Walled Lake Master Plan – Scope of Work Project Initiation

City Planner Ortega under direction of City Council, the Planning Commission is to undertake a review of the master plan. Planner Ortega explained the general scope of work and that the master plan in general is under the authority of the commission. Planner Ortega discussed the tools used to implement the master plan. He explained there will be opportunities to go over existing conditions and every person to voice their vision of the city. He said McKenna Associates is here to offer tools, but it is the city who directs. Planner Ortega explained the state does require that a master plan be reviewed once every five years. Planner Ortega explained that the master lan helps to ensure the commission is heading in the right direction. Residential goals, public services, commercial goals to achieve in the next 20 years will be developed. He explained the Michigan Planning and Enabling Act, the master plan process has specific steps to make it a compliant master plan per state requirements.

Commissioner Swiatek asked if the zoning is such and someone wishes to develop differently than what the zoning allows.

Planner Ortega explained if identified in the zoning ordinance, if not specifically listed in zoning ordinance, they would need to go to the circuit court. It is an option such as a use variance. If someone wants to place a use in that district but it is not listed in zoning ordinance, request a variance before the ZBA because use is not listed in zoning ordinance.

Commissioner Swiatek said it is impossible to list every use down the road how do we protect ourselves.

Planner Ortega said either within the list of uses or other uses as interpreted by the zoning administrator or planning commission and that board makes the determination, the commission has to list the characteristics.

Commissioner Swiatek said if not listed it has to come before the planning commission.

Planner Ortega stated that the option discussed was one possibility. He explained that the city regularly receives questions regarding what is and is not permitted under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The City's role is to communicate the applicable regulations and assist applicants through the process. Planner
Ortega explained that the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Commission, City Council, and Zoning Board of Appeals are established by law. All boards and commissions must comply with applicable state laws and the Open Meetings Act. Discussions and decisions must take place in public meetings rather than through private, side discussions.

Planner Ortega explained that the Walled Lake Planning Commission is a seven-member board appointed by City Council. The Planning Commission develops the Master Plan and makes recommendations to City Council, which has final authority over its adoption. He described the

Master Plan as the foundation for guiding the City's future development and identifying the types of land uses the community would like to encourage. Although the plan must consider property owners' rights, it also provides an opportunity for the community to express its vision for how land should be used and developed. The Master Plan helps guide land-use regulations by identifying existing conditions and development trends, establishing goals with public input, evaluating alternatives, and providing recommendations for future development. Ortega noted that the plan can provide flexibility in guiding future land use, while zoning ordinances establish the regulations that govern development.

Planner Ortega outlined several components of the Master Plan update, including:

- Inventorying community assets and updating information on existing land uses and development trends.
- Evaluating public facility needs and utility infrastructure.
- Considering access to housing, goods, and services.
- Identifying opportunities for redevelopment, which he noted is particularly important for Walled Lake.
- Evaluating housing opportunities, including where different types of housing may be appropriate.
- Identifying what the community wishes to preserve, enhance, and target for redevelopment.

He explained that the planning process would present options for consideration, with the Planning Commission determining its preferred direction and making a recommendation to City Council. He explained stated that a community survey could be made available both online and in paper format if the Planning Commission wished to pursue that option. McKenna Associates would be present at the City's Marketplace on Wednesday, October 21, 2026, to provide an opportunity for community engagement.

The Master Plan update will be reviewed monthly by the Planning Commission. The process must meet applicable state requirements and public-notice deadlines, with the goal of completing the update and obtaining City Council adoption by the end of June 2027.

The importance of establishing a clear vision for Walled Lake as a mature community, particularly in determining which areas should be preserved, enhanced, or targeted for redevelopment. Planner Ortega explained 1is5 E. Walled Lake Drive as an example of why clear future land-use guidance is important. The property was envisioned for gateway-style, mixed-use development and has three street frontages. Over time, development proposals for the site have ranged from relatively modest projects to very high-density developments. He explained that, without clearly defined future land-use guidance for this area, the City has faced a wide range of development proposals. Fortunately, a development has now been proposed that aligns with the current zoning districts. He indicated that establishing a clear vision through the Master Plan would help guide future development decisions and provide greater direction for properties throughout the City.

Commissioner Martin asked about the categories for zoning. Ms. Martin explained there is a 3.52-acre lot, listed for sale, there is a house on it someone was renting it. She foresees another Forestbrook and asked what can be done to lessen that type of build.

Planner Ortega explained that the site is a legally non-conforming use. He explained under current designation O-1, idea, is for office use. The site has a home right now; they could not tear down a home and build a bigger one. They could request rezone. The first review is of the Future Land Use map. The master plan created the CPD, which is an overlay. He explained as a planned development option, the Planning Commission and City Council have the say. He explained that the 615 N Pontiac Trail is zoned as community service. Now when someone comes in with proposal, any proposal other than a school it is not keeping with master plan.

Commissioner Swiatek explained the first thing is getting everyone's opinion, the vision of what the Planning Commission wishes to see.

Planner Ortega agreed and explained the commission will have opportunities to review statistics before making decisions. Traffic study, population study, etc. This is the Planning Commission vision, then it is up to the property owner to engage this vision or not. Planner Ortega explained that it can be broad but also can be specific. He said roles of the Planning Commission require notifications being sent to adjacent communities, public input, draft documents and chapters to review, and make recommendations to council. There is a 63-day period the master plan is made available to the public. Public hearing at the end of 63 days and then recommend vision to City Council. Planner Ortega reiterated City Council is the legislative body, acting as residents of the city.

Discussion was held on the timeline and if it could be adjusted to coordinate with current ordinance amendments.

Planner Ortega explained zoning ordinances can be adopted if during course of master plan tweaking.

Discussion was held on obtaining the vision and expectations from the Planning Commission and public.

City Manager Whitt requested this be placed on presentation to website and emailed to city council, and city boards and commissions.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **C-377-26 Amendment to Chapter 51, Article 16 Planned Unit Development**

City Planner Ortega explained the commission directed staff to draft new ordinance, giving specific guidelines, what can and cannot be allowed.

Commissioner Amin said the draft provided does not address the Planning Commission motion from the August 11th meeting. She said she has provided an alternative draft for all of the reasons listed in her statement.

Commissioner Fernandes said this was just presented to her today just before the meeting and she has not had time to review, line by line as the commission did last month with Planner Ortegas document. Commissioner Fernandes explained the packets are posted with agendas for the public to review. She said she needs time to review what was provided by Commissioner Amin.

Commissioner Martin agreed and said the commission just received Commissioner Amin's document an hour before tonight's meeting, you missed the meeting last month has not had time to review to understand where Commissioner Amin is coming from.

Commissioner Amin said her statement outlined what was missing.

Discussion was held on proposed changes.

Commissioners Bashi and Swiatek requested time to compare both drafts before the November meeting so the commission can decide which draft to proceed with.

Commissioner Amin explained that all members, including those not in attendance, should have more time to review both drafts, and asked the commissioners to review both drafts and the additional information she provided ahead of the next meeting. It was stated that both drafts would be included in the November packet so the commission could decide at the November meeting which draft to take up.

PC 10-03-26 MOTION TO TABLE C-377-26 AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 51, ARTICLE 16 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

Motion by Whitt, seconded by Fernandes, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To table C-377-26 amendment to Chapter 51, Article 16 Planned Unit Development.

Discussion

Planner Ortega explained that the text for the zoning ordinance holds certain criteria, the commission needs to make sure it is the definitive direction they wish to hold. He explained the draft was intended to be broad and the document from Commissioner Amin is specific. What does the commission wish to see.

Commissioner Amin said her document has 90 percent of what the commission discussed and City Attorney Vanerian can review it. Commissioner Amin said what she added was what was missed and she is proposing maybe an overlay to be added to include corridor areas.

Planner Ortega said if that is what the commission wants.

City Attorney Vanerian said he will do a legal review, but will not go into substantive detail, that is the prerogative of the Planning Commission. City Attorney Vanerian said what the Planning Commission as a whole feels the ordinance should contain is what needs to be included.

COMMUNICATION: None

2. Commercial Design Standards

Commissioner Amin asked if we have any neighboring communities design standards.

Planner Ortega explained that the neighboring communities design standards were reviewed prior to the creation of this draft ordinance. Planner Ortega explained when the ordinance is sent to council, they may have changes they wish to have.

Discussion was held on specific façade building material requirements and design standards.

Commissioner Martin said she liked the chart in the draft proposed that includes 75% façade, accent is 25%, the builder the ability to choose other items besides just brick.

PC 10-04-26 MOTION TO EXCUSE CHAIRMAN SCHINZING FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING

Motion by Martin, seconded by Bashi, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To excuse Chairman Schinzing from tonight's meeting.

DISCUSSION: None

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS: None

PC 10-04-26 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Swiatek, seconded by Fernandes, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 9:41 PM

Jennifer A. Stuart
City Clerk

Approved with amendments 10-10-26

Mital Amin
Planning Commission Member