CITY OF IONIA

PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
4:30 PM, Wednesday, February 12, 2025
IONIA CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of Agenda

IV. Approval of Minutes

1. January 8, 2025 – Regular Meeting

V. Public Comments

VI. Public Hearings and Associated Action

1. RAVE – Rezoning Application for 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue
   Action Required – Recommendation to City Council on the approval or denial of the rezoning request for 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue.

VII. Old Business

VIII. New Business

1. Master Plan - Goals and Priorities

IX. Commissioner Comments

X. Adjournment

Next Meeting - March 12, 2025

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY: The City of Ionia Planning Commission encourages public comment on agenda and non-agenda items. Those desiring to speak should do so under Public Comments at the beginning of the meeting. After that point during the meeting public comments are not normally allowed. The Chairperson may limit the amount of time allowed for each person wishing to make comments during the meeting.

CITY OF IONIA
PLANNING COMMISSION

4:30 PM, Wednesday, January 8, 2025
IONIA CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. CALL TO ORDER
Assistant City Manager Bowman called the January 8, 2024, regular meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission to order at 4:30 PM.

II. OATH OF OFFICE
Assistant City Manager Bowman administered the oath of office to Commissioners Logan Bailey and Michael Donaldson for reappointed 3-year terms on the Planning Commission.

III. ROLL CALL
Roll call revealed a Quorum with Planning Commissioners Tim Lee, Logan Bailey, Keturah Kelley, Jason Perry (4:32), Michael Donaldson, Ryan Gregory, and Judy Swartz present.

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

(IV.1.) Chairperson
Planning Commissioner Gregory made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Kelley, to nominate and elect Logan Bailey as Chairperson.
MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(IV.2.) Vice-Chairperson
Planning Commissioner Swartz made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Gregory, to nominate and elect Tim Lee as Vice-Chairperson.
MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(IV.3.) Secretary
Planning Commissioner Kelley made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Gregory, to nominate and elect Judy Swartz as Secretary.
MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Chairperson Bailey introduced the agenda and asked if there were any requested changes. Planning Commissioner Lee made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Kelley, to approve the agenda as presented.
MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(VI.1.) December 11, 2024 – Regular Meeting

Minutes from the regular meeting of December 11, 2024, were reviewed. Planning Commissioner Kelley made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Swartz, to approve the December 11, 2024, meeting minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACTION

None.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

(X.1.) 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report

Assistant City Manager Bowman presented a draft 2024 Planning Commission Annual report and requested input. The report highlighted action taken by Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals over the previous year as well as data related to code enforcement, permits, and rental inspections.

Planning Commissioner Lee made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Kelley, to approve the 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report as presented and submit it to City Council at its next meeting on February 5, 2025.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(X.2.) Chapter 1278 - Nonconforming Lots, Structures and Uses

Assistant City Manager Bowman presented on the City's procedures for handling nonconforming lots, structures, and uses as identified in Chapter 1278 of the City's Codified Ordinances. He provided a summary of nine similar municipalities' ordinances as related to nonconformities. Seven of the nine comparisons had similar restrictions in place for prohibiting a nonconforming building or structure to be rebuilt in its nonconforming state if the replacement cost is between 50-60% of its value.

After robust discussion and questions from the Planning Commission, consensus was reached to leave Chapter 1278 of the City's Codified Ordinances as written.

(X.3.) City Board Portal

Assistant City Manager Bowman shared with the Commissioners how to utilize the new meeting agendas and minutes portal. He explained how the tool will provide easy access to meeting materials for all of the City's boards and commissions to both board members and the general public.

XI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None.

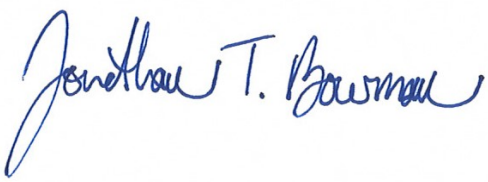
XII. ADJOURNMENT

Planning Commissioner Kelley made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Perry, to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jonathan T. Bowman, Recording Secretary
for Judy Swartz, Secretary

CITY OF IONIA

STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: VI.1

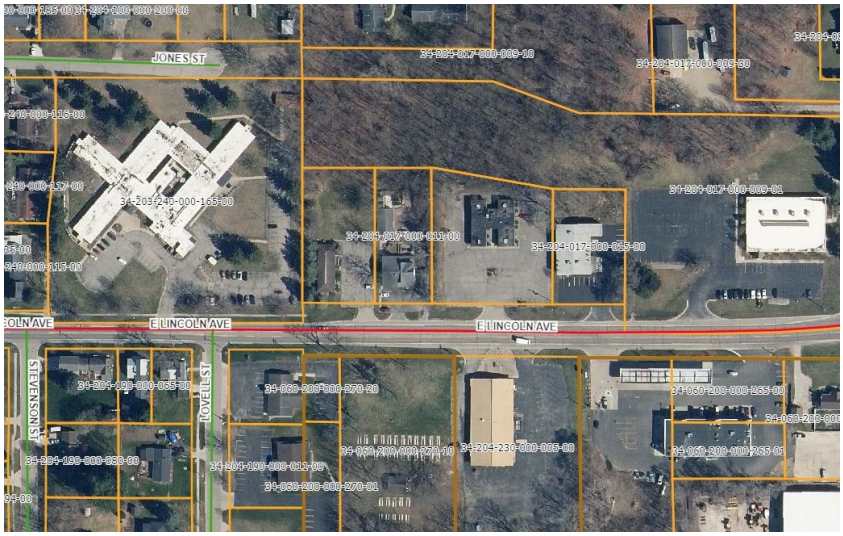
TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Jonathan Bowman, Assistant City Manager

DATE: February 12, 2025

RE: RAVE – Rezoning Application for 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue

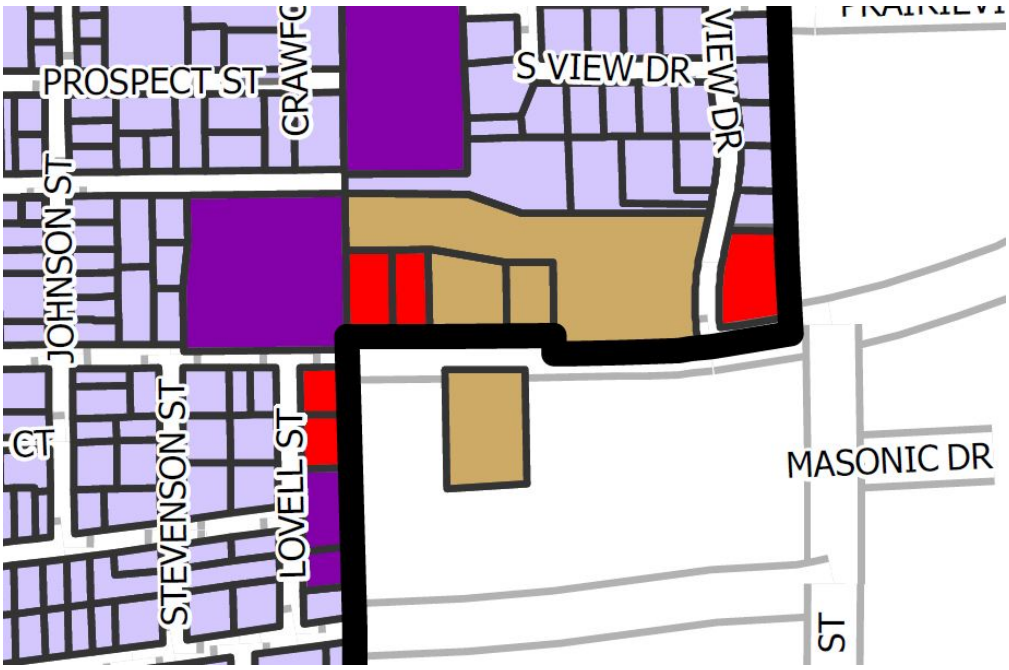
Background



Relief After Violent Encounter (RAVE) is a 501C (3) nonprofit agency that supports and advocates for the adult and child victims of domestic and sexual violence. Since 1979, RAVE has been serving Ionia and Montcalm counties with a variety of services including a crisis and support hotline, support groups, counseling, advocacy, and an emergency shelter to protect women and children from abusive living situations. For many years, RAVE has operated an emergency shelter at 850 E. Lincoln Avenue (PPN: 34-204-017-000-011-00) featuring 29 beds and office space in a converted garage on the north end of the property. Due to increasing demand and a full waitlist, RAVE recently purchased the adjacent office property at 848 E. Lincoln Avenue (PPN: 34-204-017-000-010-00) and moved its office operations to this new building.

RAVE desires to expand its shelter by converting the office space located in the converted garage to approximately 14 or 15 new beds. RAVE has grant funding available to make this project a reality. A review of the property's zoning discovered the current use to be a legal nonconformity, and a nonconforming use cannot be expanded in accordance with Section 1278.03 of the Zoning Code. Both 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue are zoned in the B-1 Neighborhood Business District. RAVE meets the definition for "Transitional Housing" as a facility that provides accommodations and possibly meals, counseling, and other services for periods of up to eighteen months. Transitional housing is not a permitted use in the B-1 District, but it is allowed as a special land use in the Low,

Medium, or High-Density Residential Districts. The excerpt from the City's Zoning Map provided below identifies the adjacent zoning districts.



In order to remedy the existing nonconforming status and provide opportunity to expand the use, RAVE is requesting that 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue be rezoned from B-1, Neighborhood Business District to HDR, High-Density Residential District. Upon recommendation from City staff, the applicant also submitted a Land Division application to combine the aforementioned properties and a Site Plan and Special Land Use Review permit application to facilitate the expansion and align the zoning with the existing use.

Property Descriptions

848 E. Lincoln Avenue - CITY OF IONIA PART OF SE 1/4 OF SEC 17 T7N R6W IONIA TWP IONIA CO MI DESC AS: COM AT S 1/4 POST TH S 88 DEG 50 MIN E ALG C.L.HWY M-21 A DIST OF 128.35 FT; TH N 290 FT; TH N 88 DEG 50 MIN W 128.35 FT; TH S 290 FT TO P.O.B. EXC S 50 FT FOR HWY PURPOSES.

850 E. Lincoln Avenue - CITY OF IONIA PART OF SE 1/4 OF SEC 17 T7N R6W IONIA TWP IONIA CO MI DESC AS: BEG ON C.L. HWY M-21 S 88 DEG 50 MIN E 128.35 FT FROM S 1/4 COR SD SEC 17; TH S 88 DEG 50 MIN E 101.65 FT ALG C.L. OF M-21; TH N 00 DEG 00 MIN W 290 FT; TH N 88 DEG 50 MIN W 101.65 FT; TH S 00 DEG 00 MIN E 290 FT TO P.O.B. EXC S 50FT FOR HWY PURPOSES.

Master Plan Recommendations

The 2019 City of Ionia Master Plan recommends General Commercial land uses for these two parcels and the parcels immediately to the north and east. The property to the direct south is not located

within the City's boundaries, however it is a commercial use. The Master Plan recommends the property west of this parcel to be multi-family high-density residential.

Relevant Zoning Regulations

Uses permitted under the present zoning of B-1 are found in Chapter 1256 of the City's Zoning Code, and Chapter 1252 contains the uses permitted in the HDR. B-1 is the most restrictive of the business districts as the intent described in Chapter 1256 states that the district is, "to meet the day-to-day convenience shopping and service needs of persons residing in adjacent nearby residential areas." HDR on the other hand is described as, "intended to concentrate dense areas of multi-unit residential land uses in the community. The district will create, maintain, and promote a wider variety of housing needs." As previously mentioned, transitional housing is not allowed in the B-1 District. B-1 only allows a maximum of one dwelling unit on the ground floor to preserve commercial space. Transitional Housing is allowed as a special land use in the HDR District.

If the rezoning is approved by City Council following Planning Commission's recommendation, a site plan and special land use review would still be required to allow the use. City staff recommended the applicant request to combine the parcels in order for the entire facility to be located on the same site and to prevent a potential "spot zoning" issue. If approval is recommended by Planning Commission to City Council on the rezoning, the site plan and special land use review would occur over the next two months at Planning Commission.

Analysis of Rezoning

The following Rezoning Evaluation Factors from the City of Ionia's Master Plan will assist the Planning Commission with reviewing the rezoning request and should be taken into consideration:

A. Does the proposed new classification meet the qualifications noted in the appropriate portion of the Future Land Use chapter?

   The 2019 City of Ionia Master Plan Future Land Use Map designates 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue as General Commercial, however the property to the west is designated as Multi-Family High-Density Residential. It is important that the result of the new classification would not result in a "spot zoning" situation where it is the sole property with the new classification in the area. The City must consider the anticipated future development of the area and how this rezoning aligns with this vision.

B. Are the uses allowed in the requested district appropriate for the proposed location or can the uses be designed to fit the proposed location without a negative impact on the nearby land uses?

   RAVE's existing use is nonconforming in the current zoning district even though it has been in place since the 90's. Staff do not see a negative impact on the nearby land uses because the uses are well established and tend to be more intense along the M-21 corridor. For example, the SKLD nursing home is located on the adjacent parcel.

C. Have any conditions changed in the area since the Plan was adopted which might justify this change?

The area has not changed since the Plan was adopted, however the rezoning will address the nonconforming use that has been present since the 2019 Master Plan was adopted.

D. Will there be any community impacts which should be considered, such as increased traffic, or others which might create a need for additional services or improvements?

As the use is existing, there will not be immediate changes or direct community impacts that result from the rezoning. Planning Commission and City Council must consider all potential uses that the new zoning classification could allow on the property in the future. The uses permitted by right and special land use in the HDR, High-Density Residential District should be reviewed. This is an important reason to avoid "spot zoning" because the uses will align with what is already permitted on adjacent properties.

E. Are there any potential environmental considerations which will be contrary to the intent of the existing or proposed classification of land use?

City staff are not aware of any potential environmental considerations contrary to the intent of the existing or proposed classification of land use for the respective parcels with the requested rezoning.

F. Will there be any adverse effects on adjacent properties as a result of the proposed land use change?

As mentioned, the property to the west is SKLD and to the east is a commercial property. The other properties to the south are commercial operations on the other side of M-21 which creates a natural buffer. Staff do not believe the adjacent properties will experience any adverse effects as a result of the proposed land use change. Public notice letters were mailed to all properties within 300 feet of the rezoning. No input was received from the public.

G. Will granting the rezoning request likely lead to significant changes contained in the Master Plan for the area where the rezoning is requested?

While the requested rezoning does not directly align with the zoning classification designated on the Future Land Use Map, it is not unreasonable to consider the rezoning because it will not result in a "spot zoning" issue. Staff do not believe the request would lead to significant changes contained in the Master Plan.

H. Could this use be accommodated in some other location or in the proposed location by some other zoning measure such as a special land use or a planned unit development?

The City has limited property within the HDR, High-Density Residential District. Reviewing the City's Zoning Map, it is evident that these properties are spaced out throughout the community in key areas. Taking a deeper look, the majority of these parcels have longstanding dense residential uses. Another factor to consider is the longevity of the existing nonconforming use. The proposed rezoning appears to be the best solution to remedy the

nonconforming issues and support the future plans for the property. After meeting with the property owner, all possible zoning options were reviewed by City staff prior to the request. Transitional housing is not allowed as a special land use in any of the business zoning districts, and a Planned Unit Development was not needed because the use is allowed as a special land use in another zoning district.

Supporting Information

Following this communication are documents associated with the request for review by the Planning Commission including: the rezoning application, Future Land Use Map, current Zoning Map, Chapter 1252: HDR High-Density Residential District, Chapter 1256: B-1 Neighborhood Business District, and Ordinance Number 593 that would enact the rezoning.

Requested Action

The Planning Commission must conduct a public hearing on the rezoning application proposed to be enacted through Ordinance No. 593. Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission should review the application from RAVE for rezoning 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue.

Once all materials are reviewed, it is requested that the Planning Commission make a recommendation to City Council on the approval or denial of the rezoning of 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue from the B-1, Neighborhood Business District to the HDR, High-Density Residential District through Ordinance No. 593.

Motion By: _____ Seconded By: _____

CITY OF IONIA

Rezoning Application

Submit Applications to City Hall
Street Address: 114 North Kidd Street Ionia, MI 48846
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 496 Ionia, MI 48846
Ph: (616) 527-4170 Website: www.ci.ionia.mi.us

Date of Application: 1/14/25 **Permit Fee:** $750

This application will require action by the Planning Commission and City Council consisting of a project site plan review and two Public Hearings. Applications must be submitted at least four weeks before the intended Planning Commission meeting.

A copy of a fully dimensioned map at a scale of not less than 1" = 100' should be submitted with the application. Such map should identify the land proposed for rezoning, the existing zoning classification, and use of all land within a three hundred (300) feet of the subject parcels. Further, such map shall indicate all public and private right-of-way easements bounding and intersecting the land in question. Also include with the application a completed rezoning questionnaire.

Applicant Information

Applicant's Name: Jennifer Butler Interest in Property: _____

Address: 850 E. Lincoln Ave. City, State, Zip: Ionia, MI 48846

Phone: 616-699-5441 Email: jenniferb@raveim.org

Owner's Name (If different from above): Relief After Violent Encounter-Ionia/Montcalm, Inc.

Project Information

1. Request (check all that apply):
   - ☐ Site Condominium ☐ Special Land Use ☐ Plat ☐ PUD
   - ☐ Site Plan Review ☑ Rezoning Other: _____
2. Address of Property: 850 E. Lincoln Ave., Ionia MI 48846
3. Parcel Number(s): 204-017-000-010-00, 204-017-000-011-00
4. Legal Description: City of Ionia Part of SE 1/4 of SEC 17T7N R6W Ionia twp. Ionia Co. MI desc.as: BEG on C.L HWY M-21 S 88 DEG 50 min. E. 128 35 FT from S 1/4 COR SD SEC 17; TH 588 DEG 50 min. E 101.65 ft. ALG C.L. of M-21: TH N 00 DEG 00 min W 290 ft. TH N 88 DEG 50 W 101.65 ft. TOP OB EXC. 50 for HWY purposes. / CITY OF IONIA PART OF SE 1/4 OF SEC 17 T7N R6W IONIA TWP IONIA CO MI DESC AS COM AT S 1/4 POST TH S 88 DEG 50 MIN E ALG C.L.HWY M-21 A DIST OF 128.35 FT; TH N 290 FT; TH N 88 D
5. Project Description: Rezone from B-1 to HDR to better reflect the nature of our business. Transition former admin outreach building into additional shelter space.
6. Current Zoning: B-1 Proposed Zoning: HDR
7. Size of Parcel: 229.65 frontage / 480 depth

Signatures

Applicant's Signature: Jennifer Butler Date: 1/14/25

Property Owner's Signature: Relief After Violent Encounter-Ionia/Montcalm, Inc. Date: 1/14/25

OFFICE USE ONLY **Application #:** _____

☐ Fees Paid: _____

Date(s) Advertised: _____ (PC) _____ (Council)

Date of Meeting: _____ (PC) _____ (Council)

Action Taken: _____ (PC) _____ (Council)

Comments: _____

_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Procedures for Rezoning of Property

I. Items to be Submitted

A request to rezone property must be submitted to the City Zoning Administrator. The following material is required.

- ☑ Application
- ☑ Fee
- ☑ Rezoning Questionnaire

The application fee covers the cost of advertising the rezoning, mailing notices to property owners and/or occupants of properties within 300 feet of the applicant's property, and holding a public hearing. The escrow fee covers the cost of the services provided by professional consultants retained by the City to assist in analyzing the rezoning request.

II. Meeting Dates

The City Planning Commission meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 4:30 P.M. The City Council meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. Both the Council and Planning Commission meet in the city council chambers at the City Hall.

III. Processing Period

A rezoning application usually takes about 90 to 120 days to process.

IV. Application Procedures

Whenever an application is filed to rezone a property the following steps are followed in processing the application.

1) An application for a rezoning is submitted to the City Zoning Administrator or his/her representative along with the required fee(s). The application must be signed by the owner(s) of the property for which the application has been submitted.
2) Upon receipt of the rezoning application and fee, the Zoning Administrator sets a public hearing date in conjunction with the chair of the Planning Commission.
3) Notice of this public hearing is then published in a newspaper of local circulation and notices are sent to occupants and property owners within 300 feet of the boundaries of the property to be rezoned in the following manner:

   Newspaper: This notice, required by State of Michigan law, must be published not less than 15 days before the hearing in a paper of general circulation within the City.

   Mailing Notice: A notice must be mailed to all property owners and occupants of dwellings within 300 feet of the boundaries of the property to be rezoned. This mailing list is taken from the most recent City assessment

roll. The owner of the property to be rezoned is also notified by mail of the hearing.

The notice is sent not less than 15 days before the public hearing date.

An affidavit of this mailing is made and kept in the City files. A notice is also sent to any utility or railroad that registers its name with the City for purposes of receiving such notice.

In cases where property within 300 feet of the site to be rezoned is within another municipality, the Zoning Administrator will obtain a list of those property owners and occupants in the adjoining municipality which are within 300 feet of the site to be rezoned and mail them a notice.

4) A report analyzing the rezoning may be prepared by the City Planner for the Planning Commission.
5) The public hearing is held by the Planning Commission. The applicant and others in attendance are provided an opportunity to speak on the rezoning. Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission will vote to approve or deny the rezoning. **This vote is a recommendation to the City Council.**
6) The recommendation of the City Planning Commission is considered by the Council at the next regular Council meeting along with the written record from the public hearing. **The Council makes the final decision on these requests and may vote to approve or deny the rezoning.**
7) The applicant is notified in writing of the final disposition of the rezoning.
8) If the rezoning request is approved, the ordinance or summary of the ordinance is published in a local newspaper within 15 days of adoption. The rezoning request is effective upon publication. Following a rezoning, the Zoning Administrator shall arrange to make the appropriate change to the Official Zoning Map.

Rezoning Questionnaire

The following rezoning questionnaire is required as part of the application. Please answer all questions and identify why the requested rezoning meets all necessary standards.

The reasons why the current zoning of this property should be changed.

We have operated an emergency shelter at 850 E. Lincoln Ave., since the late 1990's/early 2000's. Our current zone of B-1 does accurately reflect what we do, which is temporary house survivors fleeing abuse and violence. Although we do have an adminstrative office and outreach office that is aligned with B-1 activities, Chapter 1252/1252.03 HDR and Special Land Uses better reflect the nature of or business - Transitional Housing.

The changed zoning designation of the land remains with the land, and does not revert back to another zoning designation when the property sells. Therefore, once a parcel is zoned to a particular classification, the zoning is permanent unless changed by a subsequent rezoning action. Zoning cannot be conditional. That is, a parcel cannot be rezoned for one specific use, and to prohibit other certain uses. Any use permitted within the zoning district is permitted on the property, provided the other applicable regulations of the Zoning Ordinance (lot size, setbacks, etc.) are met. Please state how this rezoning request meets the following standards.

Standard 1

Consistency: *Is the proposed zoning and all of its permitted uses consistent with the recommendations of the City Master Plan?*

Yes. When reviewing the goals and action plans pertaining to residential and commercial land use detailed in the City Master Plan as well as the future land use and zoning plan, our proposed zoning change aligns well with the current City Master Plan.

Standard 2

Compatibility: *Is the proposed district and all of its allowed uses compatible with the surrounding area?*

Yes. We are currently surrounded by HDR and we have been operating as an emergency shelter since the late 1990's/Early 2000's.

Standard 3

Capability: *Is the property capable of being used for a use permitted within the existing zoning district?*

Yes. Our emergency shelter which is a temporary residence for survivors of domestic and sexual violence is currently located on the same property and is being used for the same purpose we are proposing the new building be used for.

Standard 4

Other Considerations: *Will the rezoning require an inordinate expenditure of public funds (road improvements, utility extensions, etc.) to make the development feasible?*

No expenditure of publics funds will be used or needed

What, if any, identifiable conditions related to the property have changed which justify approval of the rezoning request?

Survivors are currently being housed on the property. The only change is the building located behind the shelter was once used as our administrative and outreach office is now looking to house survivors as well.

Is there sufficient vacant land already zoned in the proposed zoning category?

Yes.

City of Ionia
114 N Kidd ST
IONIA, MI 48846-0076

PAID

JAN 15 2025

CITY OF IONIA

Print Date: 01/15/2025
PZE Number: RZ25-0001
PZE Type: Rezoning
Location: 848 E LINCOLN AVE

Pay by Account in Full

Total Balance Due: $750.00

RELIEF AFTER VIOLENT ENCOUNTER IONIA/MONTCALM
850 E LINCOLN AVE
IONIA, MI 48846-1314

Invoice	Number	Date	Due	Adjustments	Payments	Balance
	00000583	01/15/25	02/14/25	$0.00	$0.00	$750.00

Quantity	Category	Description	Billed
1.00	Planning/Zoning	Rezoning	$750.00

Total Balance Due: $750.00

1/1

CITY OF IONIA

IONIA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Ordinance No. 593

AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE PARCEL 34-204-017-000-010-00 (848 E. LINCOLN AVENUE) AND 34-204-017-000-011-00 (850 E. LINCOLN AVENUE) FROM THE B-1 NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT AS IDENTIFIED IN CHAPTER 1256 TO THE HDR HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AS IDENTIFIED IN CHAPTER 1252; AND THE INCLUSION OF THE PARCELS AS DEFINED ON THE ZONING MAP IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 1246.02 DISTRICTS GENERALLY AND ZONING MAP DISTRICT BOUNDARIES OF CHAPTER 1246 - TITLE SIX – ZONING OF PART TWELVE – PLANNING AND ZONING CODE OF SAID CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF IONIA

THE CITY OF IONIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section One: Rezoning of Property

That the following described parcels are hereby rezoned from the B-1, Neighborhood Business Zoning District, to the HDR, High-Density Residential Zoning District:

Address	Parcel ID Number
848 E. Lincoln Avenue	34-204-017-000-010-00
850 E. Lincoln Avenue	34-204-017-000-011-00

Section Two: Amendment of Zoning Map

That the official Zoning Map of the City of Ionia, Michigan, referenced in Part Twelve, Title Six, Section 1246.02 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ionia, shall be amended upon the effective date of this Ordinance to reflect the rezoning of the parcels set forth in Section 1, above.

Section Three: Publication and Effective Date

The City Clerk shall cause a notice of adoption of this ordinance to be published. This ordinance shall take effect seven (7) days after it, or a summary thereof as permitted by law, along with the date of its adoption, is published in the *Daily News*, a newspaper of general circulation in the City, unless otherwise provided by law.

Section Four: Repealer

All ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are repealed to the extent of any such conflict.

CITY OF IONIA

Dated: _____ _____

By: Jonathan T. Bowman, City Clerk

Introduction and First Reading:
Notice of Public Hearing:
Public Hearing, Second Reading, Adoption:
Effective (Seven Days After Publication):

DRAFT

CITY OF IONIA
FUTURE LAND USE MAP

ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF IONIA
PLANNING COMMISSION ON OCTOBER 9, 2019

BOOMER HOPPOUGH, CHAIR
CITY OF IONIA PLANNING COMMISSION

FUTURE LAND USE LEGEND

- STEELE STREET CORRIDOR PLAN — SS
- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — LDR
- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — MDR
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — HDR
- MULTI FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — MFL
- MULTI FAMILY HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — MFH
- OFFICE — O
- CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT — CBD
- GENERAL COMMERCIAL — GC
- EAST MAIN PRESERVATION — EM
- INDUSTRIAL — I
- LAFAYETTE/E. WASHINGTON SUB-AREA — L/EW
- PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL — P/I
- 100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) FP

- FRED THWAITES GRAND RIVER TRAIL
- FRED MEIJER GRAND RIVER VALLEY RAIL-TRAIL
- FUTURE TRAIL LINK
- TRAILHEAD

CITY OF IONIA

N
NO SCALE

progressive

Main Street

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CITY OF IONIA
FUTURE LAND USE MAP

ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF IONIA
PLANNING COMMISSION ON OCTOBER 9, 2019

BOOMER HOPPOUGH, CHAIR
CITY OF IONIA PLANNING COMMISSION

FUTURE LAND USE LEGEND

- STEELE STREET CORRIDOR PLAN — SS
- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — LDR
- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — MDR
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — HDR
- MULTI FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — MFL
- MULTI FAMILY HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL — MFH
- OFFICE — O
- CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT — CBD
- GENERAL COMMERCIAL — GC
- EAST MAIN PRESERVATION — EM
- INDUSTRIAL — I
- LAFAYETTE/E. WASHINGTON SUB-AREA — L/EW
- PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL — P/I
- 100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) FP

- FRED THWAITES GRAND RIVER TRAIL
- FRED MEIJER GRAND RIVER VALLEY RAIL-TRAIL
- FUTURE TRAIL LINK
- TRAILHEAD

CITY OF IONIA

N
NO SCALE

progressive

Main Street

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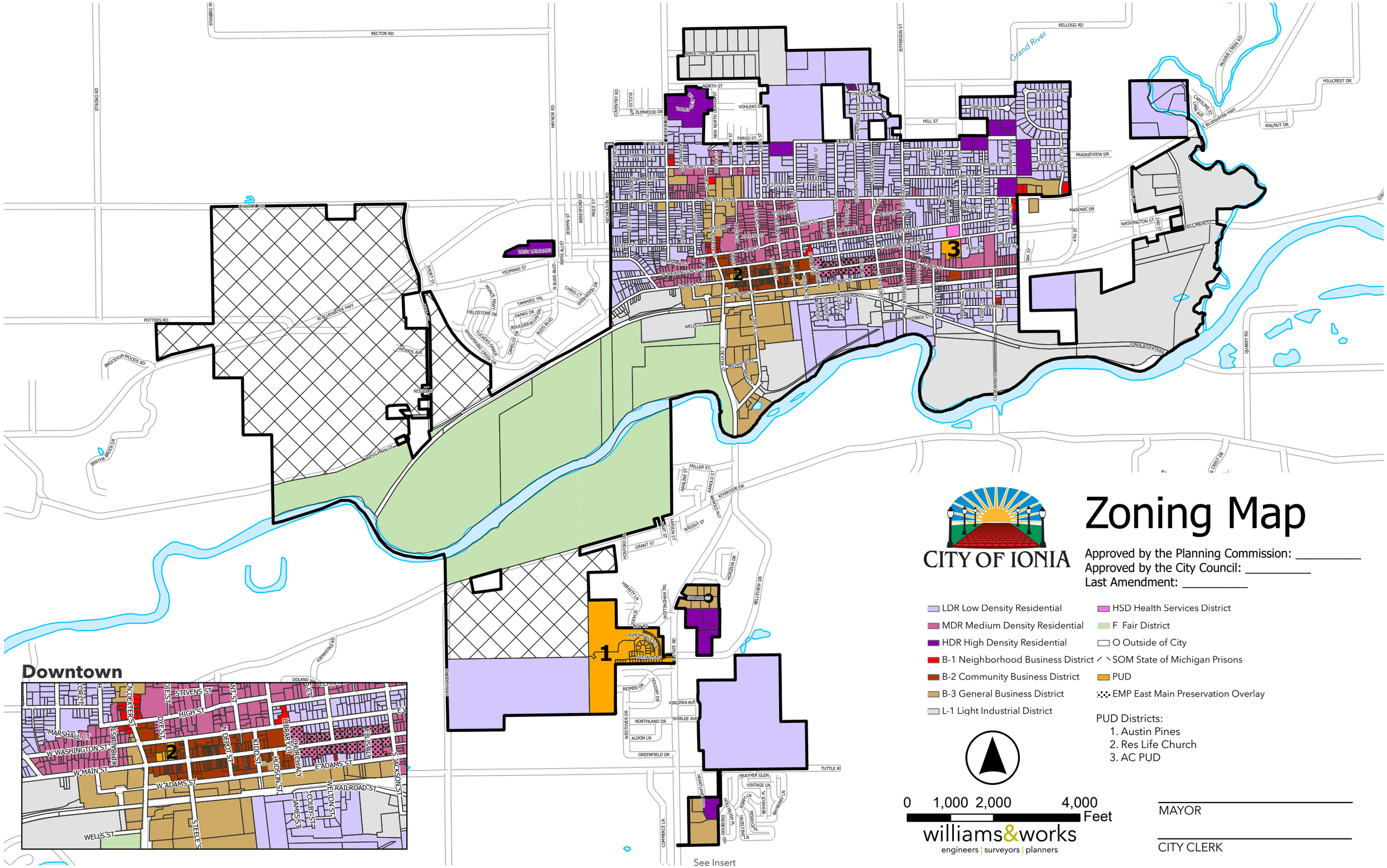

Zoning Map

CITY OF IONIA

Approved by the Planning Commission: _____
Approved by the City Council: _____
Last Amendment: _____

- LDR Low Density Residential
- MDR Medium Density Residential
- HDR High Density Residential
- B-1 Neighborhood Business District
- B-2 Community Business District
- B-3 General Business District
- L-1 Light Industrial District
- HSD Health Services District
- F Fair District
- O Outside of City
- SOM State of Michigan Prisons
- PUD
- EMP East Main Preservation Overlay

PUD Districts:
1. Austin Pines
2. Res Life Church
3. AC PUD

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

williams&works
engineers | surveyors | planners

_____
MAYOR

_____
CITY CLERK

CHAPTER 1252

HDR – HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

1252.01 Intent.
1252.02 Principal uses permitted.
1252.03 Special land uses.
1252.04 Area and bulk requirements.

1252.01 INTENT.

The HDR – High-Density Residential District is intended to concentrate dense areas of multi-unit residential land uses in the community. This district will create, maintain, and promote a wider variety of housing needs, providing opportunities for broader development by constructing or rehabilitating various building typologies. These typologies may include, but are not limited to, apartments, condominiums, and townhomes containing several dwelling units that would not be permissible in other areas of the City.

1252.02 PRINCIPAL USES PERMITTED.

In the HDR – High-Density Residential District, no building or land shall be used, and no building shall be erected, except for one or more of the following specified uses, unless otherwise provided in this Zoning Code.

(a) Multiple-unit dwellings consisting of at least four units per building. Only one family shall use each unit.

(b) Government parks and other publicly owned recreational facilities.

(c) Private pre-schools or elementary schools.

(d) Child Care Family Homes (defined by the State of Michigan and this Ordinance).

(e) State-licensed Adult Foster Care Family Homes (defined by the State of Michigan and this Ordinance).

(f) Government or nonprofit institutional cemeteries that lawfully existed before the adoption of this Zoning Ordinance.

(g) Utilities and Essential services.

(h) Accessory buildings, structures, and uses conforming with the regulations of Section 1286.01 customarily incidental and subordinate to any permitted uses in the HDR – High-Density Residential Ordinance.

1252.03 SPECIAL LAND USES.

The following land uses may be allowed as special land use in the HDR – High-Density Residential District subject to the procedures and standards of Chapter 1274 of this Ordinance.

(a) Places of public assembly.

(b) Private intermediate or high schools.

(c) Private development recreational facilities.

(d) Institutional recreation centers.

(e) Nursing Homes, Homes for the Aged, and Retirement Housing Communities (defined by the State of Michigan and this Ordinance).

(f) Bed and Breakfasts meeting requirements of Section 1274.09 (defined by the State of Michigan and this Ordinance).

(g) Child Care Group Homes (defined by the State of Michigan and this Ordinance).

(h) Adult Foster Care Group Homes (defined by the State of Michigan and this Ordinance).

(i) Communication towers (defined by the State of Michigan and this Ordinance).

(j) Transitional Housing.

(k) Funeral Homes.

1252.04 AREA AND BULK REQUIREMENTS.

(a) See Appendix I, Schedule of Regulations, which defines the permitted height and bulk of buildings, the minimum size of lots permitted, setbacks, and other requirements.

(b) All buildings hereafter constructed or enlarged in the High-Density Residential District shall comply with the requirements of Appendix I, Schedule of Regulations, applicable to property located in the High-Density Residential District.

Chapter 1256

B-1 NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT

1256.01 Intent.
1256.02 Principal uses permitted.
1256.03 Required conditions.
1256.04 Special land uses.
1256.05 Area and bulk requirements.

1256.01 INTENT.

As herein established, the B-1 Neighborhood Business District is intended to meet the day-to-day convenience shopping and service needs of persons residing in adjacent and nearby residential areas.

1256.02 PRINCIPAL USES PERMITTED.

In the Neighborhood Business District, no building or land shall be used, and no building shall be erected, altered, or created except for one or more of the following specified uses unless otherwise provided in this chapter:

(a) Banking and other financial institutions, excluding drive-through establishments.

(b) Dry cleaning establishments or pick-up stations. This does not include central dry-cleaning plants serving more than one retail outlet, which is prohibited.

(c) General offices.

(d) Governmental buildings.

(e) Institutional buildings.

(f) Medical or Dental Clinics and Laboratories.

(g) Mortuaries and Funeral Homes.

(h) Personal service businesses.

(i) Professional service businesses.

(j) Retail businesses.

(k) Small restaurants, cafes, and other establishments under 1,500 square feet in size, excluding drive-through establishments.

(l) Utilities and Essential Services.

(m) Accessory buildings, structures, and uses conforming with the regulations of Section 1286.01 customarily incidental and subordinate to permitted uses in B-1- Neighborhood Business District.

(n) Dwelling units may be permitted within a building subject to the following requirements:

(1) No more than one (1) dwelling unit may be located on the ground floor of the building.

(2) Each dwelling unit shall contain a minimum of 500 square feet of floor area.

(3) Any ground floor dwelling unit shall not exceed 40% of the total gross ground floor square footage.

(4) One (1) off-street parking space shall be provided for each dwelling. The space shall be either on the same site as the dwelling unit or within 300 feet of the building containing the dwelling as measured by a straight line. Proof of parking shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator before a permit is issued.

1256.03 REQUIRED CONDITIONS.

All business servicing or processing associated with the uses contained in this chapter, except off-street parking or loading, shall be conducted within a completely enclosed building.

1256.04 SPECIAL LAND USES.

The following uses may be allowed as a special land use by the Planning Commission, subject to the general and specific requirements of Chapter 1274.

(a) Nursing Homes, Homes for the Aged, and Assisted Care Facilities (defined by the State of Michigan and this Ordinance).

(b) Childcare Centers, also known as daycare centers.

1256.05 AREA AND BULK REQUIREMENTS.

See Appendix I, Schedule of Regulations, limiting the height and bulk of buildings, the minimum size of lots by permitted land use, providing minimum yard setback requirements, and other requirements.

CITY OF IONIA
PLANNING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

RAVE – 848 & 850 E. Lincoln Avenue
Request for a Rezoning at 848 & 850 E. Lincoln Avenue from B-1 Neighborhood Business District to HDR High-Density Residential District

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE: The City of Ionia Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at 4:30 PM, Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at City Hall, 114 N. Kidd Street, Ionia, MI 48846, to receive comments on rezoning 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue from B-1 Neighborhood Business District to HDR High-Density Residential District. The request for a rezoning is needed to bring the longtime nonconforming use of transitional housing into the correct zoning district to allow the potential for future expansion.

At the conclusion of the Public Hearing, the Planning Commission may take action on the request.

The proposed rezoning would be enacted through Ordinance No. 593 which may be reviewed at City Hall during regular business hours. Comments regarding the request may be offered at the Public Hearing or provided to the Assistant City Manager, Jonathan Bowman, at the City Hall address listed above or via e-mail at jbowman@ci.ionia.mi.us prior to the Public Hearing.

The City of Ionia complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If auxiliary aids or services are required at a public meeting for individuals with disabilities, please contact Mary Patrick, City Clerk, (616) 527-4170 at least three (3) days prior to any such meeting.

CITY OF IONIA

STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: VIII.1

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Jonathan Bowman, Assistant City Manager

DATE: February 12, 2025

RE: Master Plan - Goals and Priorities

Background:

Williams & Works has reviewed input from the community engagement activities as well as feedback provided by Planning Commissioners over the past few months to create draft goals and priorities for the Master Plan. The drafted goals follow this communication. Commissioners should review and discuss the drafted goals providing feedback as to what the main priorities to include in the Master Plan should be.

williams&works
engineers | surveyors | planners

MEMORANDUM

To:	City of Ionia Planning Commission
Date:	February 6, 2025
From:	Bradley S. Kotrba, AICP
RE:	**Draft Master Plan Goals**

The central purpose of a community master plan is to generate and create goals that provide a blueprint or guide map for future development. It should feature all the items that the Planning Commission, City leadership, community stakeholders, and general public value and consider worthwhile and would like to be planned for in the future. Here are some draft goals formulated around the central points on which the public engagement activities and Planning Commission work sessions were focused. During this meeting, the Planning Commission will work to review these goals utilizing the data and responses from the community open houses, online community surveys, workshops, and Planning Commission work sessions that have been summarized for you in each section. The main themes discussed in our exercise activities focused on the downtown, housing, neighborhoods, connectivity, parks, and recreation.

You may notice that there isn't a specific section dedicated to the Riverside-Deerfield Complex site in this memo; this was done intentionally. The Riverside-Deerfield Complex site is considered and will be featured as a subarea plan within the overarching Ionia Master Plan. Therefore, at the next meeting, we will discuss this subarea. Consequently, we are asking the Planning Commission today to read through all these draft goals, which cover several topics such as economic development, design, complete streets, sustainability, community and social involvement, partnership, and funding opportunities within each more significant theme. Take a moment to review and consider these draft items; we will discuss them in more detail. The Master Plan does not have to contain all these goals. However, this memo and draft list were written to provide the Planning Commission with a guide to hone further their discussions on the large topics over the last few months. The goals the Planning Commission chooses to move forward with will have objective tasks and assigned roles for each.

A. Goals for Downtown Ionia:

Downtown Ionia, specifically downtown redevelopment, was most often noted by the general public at engagement events and throughout the online survey. It was also a central topic of discussion with the Planning Commission during their workshops. It was desired to become one of the primary focal points of the Ionia Master Plan. Not surprisingly, many of the suggestions offered by these groups were similar and sought the same general outcomes. These themes focused on the development of downtown parks or gathering spaces, creating more public events for residents and visitors to attend, more places to eat and shop and the creation of a social district, less vacancy or blight, historic renovation, and placemaking opportunities, the addition of street trees, sidewalk amenity spaces, and sidewalk life, development of the alley spaces and creation of more residential options such as traditional downtown mixed-use, ground floor residential options, and live-work spaces. Therefore, we have used these notes to

create a series of draft plan goals focusing on Downtown Ionia. The goals are broken into classification sections for more orderly consideration.

Economic Development:

1. Recruit new and retain existing local businesses downtown by attracting unique, locally owned restaurants, boutiques, and specialty shops that align, creating a unique downtown experience.
2. Work with regional economic development organizations to garner grants and offer incentives through programs such as OPRA or brownfield redevelopment funding.
3. Facilitate and support façade improvement programs and similar programs to preserve the downtown character.
4. Facilitate and support a three-season farmers market or multi-purpose public market.
5. Include incubator spaces and facilitate and support the development of a downtown incubator program.
6. Include spaces for local artisans and pop-up shops to add variety and draw different crowds.
7. Leverage historic tourism by highlighting and promoting the area's landmark buildings through tours, walking trails, and festivals.
8. Encourage partnerships with state or national preservation organizations to fund restoration efforts.
9. Encourage maintaining the downtown's historic character.
10. Encourage and support the redevelopment of mixed-use residential buildings and the establishment of first-floor residential development downtown, stimulating economic growth through regular patronage of downtown businesses.
11. While not downtown, the Orchard View Industrial Park on Apple Tree Drive should continue to be supported for potential new business opportunities for the continued expansion of the City's economic goals.
12. Future planning and development of the key commercial transition corridors along M-66 and M-21. Encouraging more commercial and potentially residential development where appropriate.

Urban Design and Complete Streets:

1. Expand green spaces and street trees by continuing native and seasonal landscaping along sidewalks and intersections to provide shade and enhance curb appeal. Identify additional areas for plantings along the Main Street corridor or through greening alleyways behind the Main Street corridor businesses.
2. Create pocket parks or green corridors, especially along Steele Street and Washington Street, that connect the central downtown to surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Activate alleyways by transforming them into lively spaces with outdoor seating, murals, string lights, live music, street vendors, and new storefronts for small businesses.
4. Prioritize outdoor seating, planters, and pedestrian-friendly lighting, encouraging efficient utilization of the public sidewalk space.

5. Add creative seating options, art displays, and wayfinding signs to create a sense of place and encourage exploration of the downtown and other nearby trails and parks specifically for the Fred Meijer Grand River Trail.
6. Design a multipurpose gathering space with a stage for performances, open areas for events, and shaded seating areas.

Community and Social:

1. Further develop the plan of a Gateway Park that incorporates potential community features such as a fountain, outdoor fireplace/fire pit, historical highlights, or interactive art installations as a downtown focal point.
2. Encourage regular weekly, monthly, or annual events, such as “First Fridays,” block parties, seasonal festivals, or outdoor movie nights, to regularly draw local and regional visitors downtown.
3. Encourage the development of a community social district.
4. Encourage public art, placemaking, and community identity by establishing a public art initiative for murals, sculptures, and creative signage reflecting the town's history and culture. Collaborate with local artists to create temporary or rotating installations.
5. Support the promotion of Steele Street Park's development and the development of new features, such as a community performance pavilion.
6. Further sustain and expand community impact of the historic Ionia Theatre.

Transportation and Connectivity:

1. Develop non-motorized transportation networks by building a walking and biking trail system that connects downtown to surrounding neighborhoods, parks, and schools using both on- and off-street options.
2. Organize the redevelopment of off-street parking along the Washington Street corridor North of Main Street for a residential permit parking system.
3. Consider performing a comprehensive downtown parking study to quantify how much on-street and off-street parking is currently available and if it meets all the user/potential user needs of the downtown business/residences. Therefore, making a fact-based estimation of how much future parking will be needed.
4. Ensure bike racks and repair stations are available in key downtown locations.
5. Install wayfinding signage and kiosks at key locations along the regional trail network, such as the Fred Meijer Grand River Trail, to advertise nearby restaurants, bike shops, public restrooms, and other destinations for out-of-town trail riders.
6. Include destinations on downtown wayfinding signage that would also cater to pedestrians, bikers, and motorists.
7. Implement traffic-calming measures at appropriate locations by redesigning streets to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists, such as adding enhanced crosswalks, curb bulb-outs, and reduced speed zones. Consider shared streets or pedestrian-only areas in key parts of downtown, even if only during an established time, such as times of the day, certain days, or public events.

8. Enhance accessibility by ensuring all streets, sidewalks, and public spaces are ADA-compliant.
9. Add benches and rest areas at intervals to accommodate all ages and abilities.
10. Support the study of the potential for creating a regional transit authority.

Sustainability:

1. Where feasible, promote added greenspaces or other sustainable practices by installing permeable pavements to assist in stormwater management and enhance the natural environment.
2. Use rooftop gardens or green walls on buildings to increase green space and improve air quality.
3. Encourage energy-efficient solutions for downtown buildings, especially the historic ones. Facilitate assistance to the property owners of historic buildings with programs or initiatives that may assist them with the installation of energy-efficient windows, lighting, and insulation this effort.
4. Collaborate with local utilities to offer downtown renewable energy options for businesses and residents.

Partnership and Funding Opportunities:

1. Encourage the DDA, City officials, downtown stakeholders, and community residents to come together to prioritize and guide revitalization efforts.
2. Partner with regional economic development organizations such as the Right Place, Ionia County Economic Alliance, the Chamber of Commerce, state tourism boards, and preservation societies.
3. Promote the development of a downtown business owners association.
4. Secure grants and private funding by applying for state and federal grants focused on historic preservation, infrastructure improvement, and community development.
5. Collaborate with local sponsors and philanthropists to fund public art projects, events, schools, and green spaces.
6. Encourage the continued development of the M-66 and M-21 business corridors.
7. Encourage mixed use with available economic incentives such as the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority or the Obsolete Property Redevelopment Act (OPRA) by reusing the undeveloped upper levels of downtown buildings as additional housing or even live/work spaces.

B. <u>Goals for Neighborhood Development and Housing Needs:</u>

Neighborhood development and housing are other topics the general public voiced loudly. They stressed the need now and in the near future at engagement events and through the online survey. Neighborhoods and housing were significant discussion points at multiple work sessions with the Planning Commission. Therefore, it is one of the most essential focal points of the community master plan. The City of Ionia has been working on housing and residential needs for several years and has recently completed housing studies to garner more insight into the needs. The studies focused on what types and conditions the housing is currently in the local market and what typologies and socio-economic groups need to be targeted most. Not

surprisingly, many of the suggestions or desires offered by the public and the Planning Commission were once again very similar, seeking similar outcomes.

Themes that were gathered from the public, stakeholders, the City, and the Planning Commission centered around the concentration of infill redevelopment in the City's residential neighborhoods, smaller lot development options, accessory dwelling units, alternative typologies such as cottages, courtyard style developments, townhomes and rowhouses, smaller scale multifamily buildings, increased amounts of duplex options mixed into single-family neighborhoods, maintaining universal on-street parking options, creation of more senior housing and age-related housing options, and neighborhood complete street design. The development of the former Riverside-Deerfield Complex site into more neighborhood-oriented housing options was also probed. There is a need for interconnection with the downtown and neighborhood schools and parks via non-motorized networks, wayfinding signage where appropriate, and plenty of street trees and lights were also raised.

Infill and Neighborhood Redevelopment:

1. Promote infill development in residential areas by prioritizing vacant and underutilized lots for new housing developments that align with the character of the existing neighborhood
2. Encourage smaller-scale, context-sensitive developments such as duplexes, townhomes, and cottages to increase housing options.
3. Utilize the new zoning updates to facilitate smaller lot sizes, enabling more compact and affordable housing while preserving neighborhood charm.
4. Integrate accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by encouraging the construction of ADUs (e.g., backyard cottages or garage apartments) in single-family neighborhoods to increase housing diversity.
5. Streamline the permitting process and provide pre-approved ADU designs, also known as pattern books, to reduce costs and barriers for homeowners.

Diversification of Housing Typologies:

1. Expand alternative housing types by promoting the development of cottage and courtyard-style housing clusters that encourage neighborly interaction and efficient land use.
2. Encourage smaller-scale multifamily buildings, such as duplexes and triplexes, that blend seamlessly with single-family homes located in the neighborhoods around the downtown.
3. Integrate corner lot duplexes into single-family neighborhoods and townhouses into blocks immediately surrounding the downtown to offer a greater variety of housing options while maintaining cohesive streetscapes.
4. Encourage housing development for seniors, such as single-story, zero-step homes, assisted living facilities, and independent living communities.
5. Transform the former Riverside-Deerfield Complex site into a vibrant neighborhood by encouraging redevelopment into a mix of housing options, including townhomes, duplexes, senior living, cottage-courtyards, and affordable single-family homes.

6. Promote traditional neighborhood planning at the former Riverside-Deerfield Complex site by incorporating central green spaces, walking paths, and small neighborhood hubs to foster neighborly interaction.
7. Ensure neighborhood-oriented design principles by focusing on diverse, small-scale, traditional architecture reproducing historic Ionia residential neighborhoods. This includes front porches, private recreation space and amenities, and walkable streetscapes to create a welcoming and cohesive neighborhood.

Transportation and Connectivity:

1. Connect the future Riverside-Deerfield Complex site to the City's core neighborhoods by creating non-motorized paths linking the site to nearby parks, schools, and downtown. Consider utilizing the City-owned land between Riverside Drive and the south bank of the Grand River, which contains an existing pedestrian bridge that connects to the fairgrounds.
2. Create complete sidewalk networks by ensuring every residential neighborhood has a built-out, safe, well-maintained sidewalk network connecting homes to schools, parks, and the downtown, incorporating accessible curb ramps, high visibility crosswalks, and pedestrian-friendly signage.
3. Implement complete streets in neighborhoods by redesigning residential streets with traffic-calming measures, such as narrower lanes and street trees, to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Maintain universal on-street parking while balancing space for bike lanes and wider sidewalks.
4. Develop complete and uninterrupted non-motorized connections by building dedicated walking and biking paths connecting neighborhoods to downtown, parks, and schools along major city arterials that traverse all directions while keeping non-motorized on-street traffic off major state highway corridors such as Dexter Street (M-66) and Lincoln Street (M-21).

Neighborhood Safety, Sustainability, and Aesthetic Goals:

1. Plant and replace dead or dying street trees along all residential streets by promoting the street tree program.
2. Install pedestrian-scale lighting that enhances safety and creates a welcoming atmosphere at night.
3. Integrate small parks or community green spaces into housing developments and neighborhood infill.
4. Encourage the preservation of mature trees, add sustainable landscaping features, and continue the street tree request program.
5. Further encourage code enforcement to tackle the effects of neighborhood blight.

Livability Goals:

1. Encourage community-oriented design by including gathering spaces like pocket parks, playgrounds, and shared spaces in all neighborhoods.
2. Design neighborhoods to foster interaction with features like community gardens, picnic areas, and shared walking paths.
3. Encourage workshops on sustainable gardening and composting.

4. Foster housing affordability by partnering with developers to ensure that some new housing remains affordable for families, seniors, and first-time buyers.
5. Take advantage of existing zoning incentives, such as density bonuses or development policies that include affordable housing units.
6. Create guidelines encouraging high-quality architecture, sustainable materials, and neighborhood-compatible designs.
7. Apply for state and federal grants to fund sidewalk construction, street trees, and green infrastructure in residential neighborhoods.
8. Partner with private developers to finance housing projects and public infrastructure improvements.

C. Goals for Ionia's Parks, Recreation, and Environmental Sustainability:

Most of the community also wanted to expand further upon the City's existing parks and possibly develop new park opportunities. In 2023, the City of Ionia developed its most recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan, highlighting many goals for facility and programming development in the City's Parks and Recreation Department. That plan has identified many opportunities to renovate or update features at existing City parks. Items like playground equipment, bathroom facilities, community pavilions, and athletic installations are included. However, several of the goals in the 2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan have highlighted the need to coordinate future development with the City's comprehensive Master Plan. There are twelve parks in the City of Ionia presently, which is considerable considering the city's resident population is only around 7,500 people. Larger communities around Ionia do not have as many beautiful parks or recreation spaces that Ionia residents enjoy. So, it isn't surprising that many respondents from the public, when asked about future development opportunities, and many Planning Commissioners wanted to see either more parks developed or existing parks expanded.

Themes that were gathered from the public, stakeholders, the City, and the Planning Commission in these master planning exercises focused on creating more recreational opportunities at existing or new parks that provide both active recreation (i.e., athletic fields, playgrounds, etc.) or passive recreation (i.e., nature trails, picnic spaces, etc.). Others include connections to the Grand River, boat launches, kayak/canoe launches, accessible riverfront space for the public, and connection between the Fred Thwaites Trail to the Fred Meijer Grand River Trail network and the downtown. Cross-connection over the old pedestrian bridge at Riverside Park to the river's south bank and possibly to the new Riverside-Deerfield Complex site development. More connections to regional parks, such as Bertha Brock Park or the Ionia State Recreation Area, and the development of Steele Street Park to include athletic fields, community gathering spaces, and environmental exploration opportunities through a desire to feature the unique environment of the Grand River Valley.

Riverfront Redevelopment:

1. Revitalize riverfront areas for public use by creating more accessible public spaces along the Grand River with features like trails, picnic areas, benches, and open green spaces.
2. Redevelop and modernize water access points by constructing or renovating the public boat launch to accommodate motorized and non-motorized watercraft.

3. Develop a dedicated kayak and canoe launch area with staging zones, secure storage, and easy access to the water.
4. Encourage local environmental organizations to host events like birdwatching tours, river cleanups, and tree-planting drives.

Connections to Regional Parks:

1. Create bike and pedestrian-friendly routes linking neighborhoods to Bertha Brock Park, regional trails, and nearby natural areas.
2. Incorporate safe crossings, directional signage, and shaded rest areas along these connections.
3. Install wayfinding signage at trailheads and intersections to help users navigate the trails and access local attractions.
4. Promote the development of parks and trail maps for public distribution.

Park Expansion and Redevelopment:

1. Continue planning for Steele Street Park by introducing multipurpose spaces such as a community pavilion, performance stage, or event lawn to host local events.
2. Add recreational facilities like basketball courts, pickleball courts, soccer fields, etc., for active users to provide any additional space that is determined necessary for future Parks and recreation planning purposes.
3. Continue to promote the development of the Steele Street corridor, which will act as the significant north-south parkway-like corridor in the downtown for both motorized and non-motorized users.

Wayfinding and Accessibility:

1. Create and install purposely designed wayfinding signage and park maps for trails and parks by designing cohesive, visually appealing signage throughout the trail system, identifying distances, park locations, and nearby attractions.
2. Ensure that trails and park amenities are ADA-compliant, with wide, stable pathways, accessible seating, and inclusive play structures.
3. To support multi-modal access, add bike racks, charging stations for electric bikes, and parking options at key trailheads.

Sustainability and Resiliency:

1. Restore native vegetation along riverbanks to improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitats
2. Use drought-resistant native plants in park landscaping and develop shaded areas to counteract urban heat islands.
3. Incorporate renewable energy features into park facilities like solar-powered lighting.

Collaboration and Funding:

1. Collaborate with schools, local businesses, and nonprofits to promote shared use of recreational spaces and amenities.

2. Pursue state and federal grants for trail development, wetland restoration, and park improvements.
3. Partner with private sponsors and community foundations to support specific projects, such as nature trails or the kayak launch.
4. Continue to further the maintenance of the parks and promote collaboration efforts for park maintenance with local community members.