



MCKENNA

Memorandum

TO: City Commission, City of Benton Harbor
Planning Commission, City of Benton Harbor

FROM: Paul Lippens, AICP, NCI, Vice President, McKenna

SUBJECT: **Best Benton Harbor Community Plan:
Adoption Update Summary of 63-day Review Period Comments**

DATE: December 12, 2023

The following items are changes to the Best Benton Harbor Community Plan document and its corresponding maps that were made based on comments received during the 63-day public review period. On November 14, 2023, Planning Commission held the required public hearing and voted to recommend adoption of the Plan by City Commission. The edits that were made to the document since distributing the draft plan in June of 2023 are noted below.

BEST BENTON HARBOR COMMUNITY PLAN: EDITS INCORPATED INTO THE ADOPTION DOCUMENT

Title Page (i) – Document dates and footer.

Page ii – Planning Commissioner names.

Page 4 – Add DDA to Objective 1.2.

Page 6 – Elaborated on Action item 2.1.2, “...collaborate with BHAS on the existing Career and Technical Education program.”

Page 11 – Elaborated on Action item 6.1.3, “...by creating a design review process”.

Added text to Action item 6.2.2, “...and incorporate DDA Ordinance guidelines into the Zoning Ordinance”.

Page 12 – Replaced text under Action item 7.2.3 with, “Consider expanding the role to become community ambassadors who promote/ and recruit on all levels, including talent, businesses, new residents, etc. Consider providing stipends for participants.”

Page 19 – Grammatical and rewording, “The Board of Education maintains a headquarters in the City”.

Page 20 – Replaced “planners” with “planning commission”. The section now reads, “when developers approach the City for site plan approvals and permits the planning commission must review the proposed development against local zoning regulations as well as for alignment with this Community Plan. Through these reviews the planning commission can influence development through the physical shape and aesthetics as well as the location of certain land uses”.



Page 21 - Add new header: Broadband, Charging Stations, and Emerging Technology. Added text: The City is actively pursuing improvement to broadband technology, including working with the State to secure funding for fiber optic connections from Chicago to Benton Harbor. The City's continued efforts to establish Benton Harbor as a tech leader with supportive infrastructure and policy to embrace alternative energy, like wind, solar, and electric vehicle charging stations is an ongoing community facilities strategy.

Page 25 – Replaced “require” with “encourage” and “ensure” with “provide” under #5.

Page 28 – Changed formatting under #3 so the alphabetical bullets begin at “a”. Added letter e, “Create artists in residency housing opportunities as well as permanent housing incentives for artists.”

Page 36 – Added content, “Increasing the city's population and building new housing for all income levels increases the city's tax revenue while allowing for a lower millage rate, lowering the overall tax burden on individuals, and allowing them to remain in place. However, without intentional strategies, capacity alone isn't enough to prevent gentrification”.

Changed header to add “and former”. The resulting header is “New and Former Resident Outreach and Welcome Program”.

Elaborated onto the first sentence under New Resident Outreach and Welcome Program so the sentence reads, “New and former resident outreach is a crucial process aimed at welcoming and integrating newcomers into a community, as well as reaching out to former residents to encourage and support their efforts to return home.”

Page 37 – Added new content at the end of Music City and Artist Outreach section, “Creating and supporting programs that provide housing for residents, through fellowships or stipends, would help to attract new artists to Benton Harbor. The Paducah Renaissance Alliance, in Paducah Kentucky, could provide a model structure for program development in Benton Harbor.”

Removed “Sanctuary City” section.

Page 38 – Changed table 1 to discourage all housing in Industrial District and discourage *bungalow court: container homes* and *Duplex: Side by Side and Stacked* in regional center.

Page 41 – Changed 6th column of Single-Family House Building Type – Allowable Materials table to read, “Beveled cedar, Pine, and Composite Board Siding”.

Page 44 – Removed 4th column (“Sandstone”) under Duplex: Side-by-Side Building Type – Allowable Materials.

Changed 6th column of Duplex: Side-by-Side Building Type – Allowable Materials table to read, “Beveled cedar, Pine, and Composite Board Siding”.

Page 47 – Removed 4th column (“Sandstone”) under Duplex Stacked Building Type – Allowable Materials.

Changed 6th column of Duplex Stacked Building Type – Allowable Materials table to read, “Beveled cedar, Pine, and Composite Board Siding”.

Page 49 – Under the Numerical Parameters table, the acceptable height was changed to allow for 15' to 45' instead of 15' to 30'.

Changed 6th column of Villa Building Type – Allowable Materials table to read, “Beveled cedar, Pine, and Composite Board Siding”.

Page 54 - Removed 4th column (“Sandstone”) under Fourplex Building Type – Allowable Materials.



Changed 6th column of Fourplex Building Type – Allowable Materials table to read, “Beveled cedar, Pine, and Composite Board Siding”.

Page 57 - Removed 4th column (“Sandstone”) under Carriage House Building Type – Allowable Materials.

Changed 6th column of Carriage House Building Type – Allowable Materials table to read, “Beveled cedar, Pine, and Composite Board Siding”.

Page 60 - Changed 6th column of Bungalow Court Building Type – Allowable Materials table to read, “Beveled cedar, Pine, and Composite Board Siding”.

Page 63 - Changed 6th column of Rowhouse - Neighborhood Building Type – Allowable Materials table to read, “Beveled cedar, Pine, and Composite Board Siding”.

Page 64 - Changed 6th column of Small Apartment Building Type – Allowable Materials table to read, “Beveled cedar, Pine, and Composite Board Siding”.

Page 73 – Inserted text into the first paragraph under Building Home Equity through Local Partnerships, “The exhibit on the next page describes a “Home Equity Ladder” that illustrates a strategy for local involvement in housing development.

Included text into the second paragraph under Building Home Equity through Local Partnerships, “Before the first deal happens, local partners should be in place to ensure success. The home equity ladder calls this ‘Deal Zero.’”

Page 75 – Changed the last sentence of the second paragraph to say, “The inventory could be further expanded to include properties owned by boards of the Benton Harbor Area Schools and the Benton Harbor Housing Commission.”

Page 76 – Replaced text under “Side Lot Program” to read, “Adjacent neighbors should have right of first refusal for side lots if they are willing to commit to utilizing them for adding capacity for more housing units or otherwise add significant value to the property. The side lot program is intended to activate side lots for more productive uses, not only to grant property owners additional yard space. Single-family homeowners living next to a side lot could use it to construct an ADU or duplex addition, while a small multi-family building or apartment might add a unit or provide more resident amenities.”

Page 96 – In the paragraph above Table 10, the first sentence was expanded upon to read, “We note that the plan for the Riverview area from the 2011 Master Plan and the recommendations from the Twin Cities Harbor Study were validated during the public engagement process.”

Page 104 – Added sections and descriptions for Art’s Park and Thayer Park.

Page 105 – Changed title for Pipestone Park to read “The Children’s Park”.

Added text to the beginning of the description under Pipestone Park, ““The Children’s Park” sometimes referred to as Pipestone Park...”

Page 126 – Added text to the paragraph under Appropriate Land Uses, “An effort should be made to partner with State agencies to remove encumbrances from land that would be more suitably used for business and housing”.

Page 127 – Added sentence under Building Design, “At least 60% of ground floor storefront facades should include non-reflective, tinted glass windows.”

Page 128 – Add text under Appropriate Land Uses, “The results of the City’s high-water study should be considered in determining appropriate public uses and programming uses for properties near waterfront areas.”



Page 132 – Added text under Appropriate Land Uses, “An effort should be made to partner with State agencies to remove encumbrances from land that would be more suitably used for business and housing. The results of the City’s high-water study should be considered in determining appropriate land uses for properties in the Riverfront / Harbor classification. Best practices for flood mitigation and resiliency are critical to redevelopment within waterfront areas”.

Page 133 – Added text under Building Location, “The Benton Harbor High-Water Study should be considered when determining building locations and capacity”.

Inserted a sentence at the beginning of the paragraph under Building Design, “Best practices for flood mitigation and resiliency are especially critical to redevelopment within waterfront areas”.

Page 134 – Added text under Appropriate Land Uses, “An effort should be made to partner with State agencies to remove encumbrances from land that would be more suitably used for business and housing”.

Page 154 – Under Media and Public Information, made sure “two appearances” was corrected to “three appearances”.

Page 158 – Added text within the last paragraph, “...along Pipestone Street, Territorial Road, and Colfax Avenue corridors...”.

Page 159 – Added “..., Italians, and Greeks” at the end of the last sentence of the first paragraph.

Inserted text into the first paragraph under The Transformation of Benton Harbor, “Flats was a Jewish and Black neighborhood that was demolished. Little Italy was demolished for the industrial park north of downtown. Defining what deterioration during that time - the percentage of non-white citizens.”

Page 161 – Replaced the last two sentences of the first paragraph with, “The Flats Neighborhood and Little Brooklyn were mostly home to Black and Jewish residents and were destroyed by Urban Renewal projects. The industrial park north of downtown Benton Harbor was at one point the City’s own ‘Little Italy.’ At that time, a significant influx of non-white or immigrant residents was enough for an area to be considered ‘blighted’ or ‘deteriorating’.”

Page 168 – Added to paragraph one, “The City of St. Joseph and the Census designated urbanized areas of Fair Plan and Benton Heights were used for the purpose of geographical scale comparison to the City of Benton Harbor. Benton Heights is located in Benton Charter Township and Fair Plain is located in both Benton Charter Township and St. Joseph Charter Township.”

MAP EDITS

Parks and Boulevards System with Roadway Classification (Pages 108-109) – Added Thayer Park and Art’s Park.

Middle Housing Opportunities Map (Pages 50-51) – Deed restricted properties shown to distinguish city-owned property for parks and open space is not included with properties that can be used for construction of middle housing.

Neighborhood Middle Housing Concept Plans Map (Pages 82-83) – Layer added to the map to show flood hazard areas.

Future Land Use Map (Pages 130-131) – Color for Neighborhood Future Land Use category change to a darker tan color to be easier to see.