

As circulated
March 11, 2026
February 2, 2026
Strategic Planning Meeting
Elyria City Council

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The strategic planning meeting of Elyria City Council was called to order on Monday February 2, 2026 at 7:36 p.m. immediately following the Regular Council Meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cerra, VanWormer, Armstrong, Rothgery, Davis, Tollett, Oswald, Lipian, Doehne, Schneider, Mitchell

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Brubaker, SSD Pyanowski, Asst. Fin. Dir. Farrell, Law Director Deery, Police Chief Welsh, Asst. Fire Chief Vargo, Building Official Farkas, Engineer McKillips

2. The matter of review of the proposed zoning code: The proposed zoning code will result in the rezoning of all parcels within the City of Elyria

Referred By: City Planner Schoenig

President Mitchell called the meeting to order and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review the proposed planning and zoning code. The proposed zoning code will result in the rezoning of all parcels within the City of Elyria. President Mitchell called City Planner Christopher Schoenig to come before council with a presentation.

CP Schoenig shared that he would go over a brief presentation highlighting the work that had been done over the past few years regarding the proposed zoning code. The zoning code aligns with the city of Elyria Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 2024. The comprehensive plan began under the previous administration in 2022. Throughout the document objectives and goals are highlighted of the community based on public feedback and engagement that took place in 2023 and 2024. The purpose of the zoning code update is to modernize the city's zoning trends. The last update to the zoning code was in 1998, many things have changed in the world since that time. A lot of the language in the code needs to change in an effort to either permit or prohibit some of the current uses, to include residents with chickens on their property to breweries within the city to vape stores and smoke shops. Overall the goal is to improve clarity and support for vibrant neighborhoods. CP Schoenig shared the proposed zoning map and shared with council the recommendation from the consultation to simplify zoning codes, as complex zoning codes have been proven to curtail development and growth within communities.

Introduction of new districts, corridor and downtown residential. Boundary adjustments have been made to highlight areas of the city that greater density would be utilized, such as Cleveland Street and East Broad Street. Economic vitality is a focus preserving community character through the zoning as well as adding flexibility to the code. CP Schoenig provided an update that the current districts of seventeen would be reduced to nine districts. Some of the districts are outdated and some redundancy exists in the language. Seven of the districts will pertain only to residential zoning. Simplified tables and graphics were utilized throughout the project to help with language. Sign regulations have been updated, as well as parking and fence regulations. CP Schoenig shared the overall benefits to include alignment with the comprehensive plan, goals and objectives attributed to the comprehensive plan, mixed use and walkability as an attractive feature and modernized regulations and transparency. Engagement of residents, businesses, neighborhoods, civic groups, visitors, employees, local officials and the steering committee that

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represented the comprehensive plan all provided feedback. Engagement and notices were submitted to the Chronicle Telegram newspaper, downtown businesses, utility bills and town hall meetings were publicly noticed. In 2024 and 2025 meetings were held with local developers as well. CP Schoenig shared that residential properties will most likely retain the character of the residential classification. CP Schoenig stated that he couldn't stress enough, that the document is a living document, once approved, it wouldn't be the end of it. The document is amendable, and can be amended as needed. CP Schoenig concluded his overview.

President Mitchell expressed her appreciation for a thorough overview and opened the floor for questions from council members.

Council member Schneider expressed his appreciation to CP Schoenig for all the work placed in the update of the zoning code. Council member Schneider ask if some clarification could be provided to some of the codes that are superseded by state law or legislation. CP Schoenig stated that review of various state laws of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) from everything with medical and recreational marijuana requirements as well as requirements of daycare facilities and requirements for residential care housing for veteran's homes. Many of those requirements are called out by the ORC. CP Schoenig shared that the city has to ensure that we abide by those requirements. A lot of the current language does not mention the ORC and we want to ensure compliancy and speaking to those requirements.

Council member Doehne expressed his appreciation to CP Schoenig for meeting with him on a few occasions. He stated he was still having a hard time understanding the corridor district. He asked if more information could be provided regarding where the corridor district "came from" and what is the city looking to accomplish. CP Schoenig explained the consultant provided a definition of what corridor means; any major thoroughfare within the city will have a corridor designation. From an engineering point of view that would be the minor and major arterial roadways, traditionally the major four-lane roads that you want to attract businesses to those major thoroughfares. The corridor district permits a wider range of uses to allow for flexibility and greater opportunity for economic development. Consideration for residential properties that exist in those areas was provided to ensure that buffering distances existed. CP Schoenig gave the examples of drive-through establishments and food trucks that is listed as an accessory use. Research of peer communities with similar populations was conducted or communities within Northeast Ohio area that have updated their zoning code. Council member Doehne stated his concern by looking at the map and that it is pretty substantial, he stated that Abbe Rd. from Cleveland Street to Lorain County Community College has all primarily single- family homes, although there may be some buffering.... President Mitchell shared that she did not think so, along that route are churches and other businesses, she asked for clarification of the route.

Council member Doehne shared his concern was that the corridor district allows brew pubs, food trucks, liquor stores, hotels, micro breweries, he shared if he purchased a house in a single-family area, he would be concerned about that. CP Schoenig explained that the areas that would have the designation of corridor district already currently have mixed-use in existence. CP Schoenig provided the example of Middle Ave., twenty -six businesses exist from 4th Street to 16th Street interspersed along that corridor area. He shared mixed-use is how the city was initially developed. He explained the update provides consideration for the areas that would be deemed incompatible. For example, smoke or vape stores would be prohibited in corridor and

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downtown districts. They would be permitted in commercial districts conditionally. The process would require planning commission and council approval.

Council member Oswald expressed his appreciation for all the hard work that was put into the updated code. He asked if any updates were made to developments? CP Schoenig stated that parking was reviewed as a recommendation from the comprehensive plan to adjust the parking standards. The square footage requirements were increased. Council member Oswald inquired about sidewalks. Cp Schoenig, explained that sidewalks are outside of the purview of the zoning code, street requirements are included in subdivision regulations and remained the same.

President Mitchell stated that the one thing this council has grappled with the most has been home daycares and asked if he could please provide an update to how the changes would impact home daycare establishments, what changes would make it easier for residents to open daycare establishments. CP Schoenig reflected back to the ORC. The standards for daycares per the ORC are, Type B are permitted by rights in any zoning district. Type A requires 300 square footage of frontage, an exorbitant amount of property and other requirements. Type A will be conditional usage, requirements have been implemented that are common sensical and with a safety focus. Requirements such as a fence, buffering distance to ensure the facility isn't open near a smoke, vape, recreational marijuana facility or liquor store. Applicants would still be required to go through planning commission and council, however it would be less of a hardship.

Council member Schneider shared that the daycare issue was number one on his list that are issues brought before council along with smoke shops, chickens and corner lots with setbacks, if more information could be shared in regards to how the zoning code update would impact those subjects. CP Schoenig provided an example of the city of Cleveland that initiated legislation into their zoning code to not allow vape stores to exist within a mile of each other. The city of Elyria settled on a thousand -foot requirement across the board, a smoke or vape store cannot be 1000 feet of another store, a recreational or medical marijuana facility, liquor stores, schools, parks, daycares. Public health and safety led the initiative. Chickens are permitted through a permitted use request that requires planning commission and council approval. A list of requirements must be met to include, a fenced in yard, ten to eleven feet from the property line due to noise and odor concerns, the quantity of chickens is based on the acreage of property. The current status of corner lots is defined as two front yards. Changes will be based on the address street that the property is located on, that will be considered the front yard. The side yard requirements were doubled to ensue the line of sight requirement is met.

Council member Rothgery expressed her appreciation for all of the hard work put into the update of the document. She expressed that she believes these updates will be great for the City of Elyria. She likes that CP Schoenig stated that the document is a living document and can be changed.

Council member Armstrong echoed council member Rothgery. He added that he appreciated the numerous times CP Schoenig met with him. He asked what the status would be of the existing smoke and vape shops. CP Schoenig explained the current smoke and vape shops would be non-conforming use and would be grandfathered in.

Council member VanWormer asked for further clarification of in-home daycare facilities. CP Schoenig reiterated the in-home daycare would be conditionally permitted, they would need to meet the eight to nine criteria requirements and have the approval of planning commission and council, current restrictions have been alleviated.

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Council member Oswald asked for specifics on the requirements of Airbnb's in the city? CP Schoenig responded Airbnb's will operate under conditionally permitted use and not be within one thousand feet of each other. Council member Oswald stated he was further concerned that owners of Airbnb's don't live locally and if issues arise can't be contacted. CP Schoenig explained the request in the zoning code is for a zoning confirmation letter, a similar letter of what is requested with the building code certificate of occupancy. A point of contact would exist with this process.

Council member Schneider inquired about the increased density of the planned unit developments, would the common area percentages remain the same? CP Schoenig responded, density was increased to eight, to mirror peer communities, the code speaks to a landminium, similar to cluster developments, however planning communities are moving away from PUDs. President Mitchell thanked CP Schoenig for thoroughly answering all of the questions of council members. CP Schoenig made himself available prior to the meeting and stated he would be available after the meeting as well should any additional questions come up.

Law Director Deery reminded council that if and when this matter should move out of committee, it would go like any other request for a rezone with three readings before council and a public hearing. Council would need to wait on the public hearing before voting. A committee report would need to be drafted, three readings would be needed, a public hearing, legislation drafted.

President Mitchell read the committee report:

We have considered the matter of the proposed zoning code: the proposed zoning code will result in the rezoning of all parcels within the city of Elyria, an ordinance authorizing the 'said' zoning code changes for all parcels within the city of Elyria.

Davis moved, Armstrong seconded to accept the committee report.

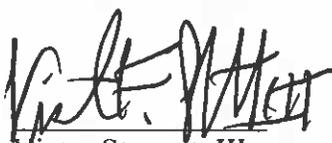
Council member Doehne asked if the public would get a chance to speak. President Mitchell explained public speaking would take place during the public hearing.

MOTION CARRIED

3. ADJOURNMENT:

Mitchell moved, Cerra seconded to adjourn the Strategic Planning Meeting at 8:18 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED



Victor Stewart, III
Clerk of Council



Donna Mitchell
President of Council

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d88SgCVz0k8>

Rlp /

Revisions to Zoning Code (January 23, 2026)

1. **Section 1112.02 Performance Guarantee (Page 65):** Partial Rrelease of a any Performance Guarantee may ~~shall~~ be made with only by the approval of the City Engineer and the City Law Director, ~~pursuant to the following: No amount from the Performance Guarantee shall be released until Council accepts ownership of improvements in accordance with § 1110.14 FINAL PLAT.~~
2. **Section 1112.03 Street Construction (Pages 65-66):** All concrete pavements shall have an overall minimum width of 28 feet (back of curb to back of curb) and a minimum thickness of 8 inches. The concrete pavement shall be placed on a granular stone base of not less than 4 inches in thickness. The integral rolling curb shall have a depth of 4 inches. The entire right-of-way of all streets, including side streets, shall be graded the full width. Refer to City design standards. Private streets shall be a minimum 22 feet wide and constructed the same as public streets. No parking will be allowed on streets ~~less~~ 26 feet or less (back of curb to back of curb). Streets may be constructed with a concrete curb with an asphalt center as determined by the City Engineer.
3. **Section 1112.07 Street Lighting (Page 71):** The Developer shall be responsible for the purchase and installation of street lighting on all new streets within the subdivision. Developer shall coordinate with the local electric company as to installations requirements. Street lighting shall be included at all intersections, cul-de-sacs, crosswalks, common parking areas, and cluster mailboxes. Street lighting shall not exceed 350 feet apart. Developer shall submit a plan for approval to the City Engineer prior to starting construction on the street lights. The City shall be responsible for cost of operating street lighting on public streets as soon as they meet the approval of the local electric company and are placed into service. Operating costs for street lighting constructed on private streets will become the responsibility of the Homeowners Association.
4. **Section 1117.02 Definitions of General Terms (Page 91):** Site Plan. A plan, prepared to scale, showing accurately and with complete dimensioning the boundaries of a site and the location of all buildings, structures, uses and principal site development features proposed for a specific parcel of land.
5. **Section 1117.06 Definitions of Principal Uses and Use-Specific Standards (Page 101):** Condominium. In this ownership model, the housing units themselves are condominiums and are individually owned. ~~However, all of the land, including the land under the condominiums, is communally owned by a condominium association.~~ The owners of the individual condominiums are members of the condominium association and make decisions according to their bylaws. In this case, any code violations for building maintenance of individual units can be directed to the unit's owner, and any code violations for landscaping or other land-related regulations can be directed to the condominium association.

Revisions to Zoning Code (January 23, 2026)

6. Section 1121.02.06 Drive-Through Service Accessory Use (Page 175-176)

ii. Accessory Use-Specific Standards. No drive-through services accessory use shall be conducted except where all of the following conditions are satisfied:

1. A zoning permit is required;
2. No drive-through services use shall cause the blocking of a fire lane;
3. No drive-through services use shall amplify sound to a volume audible by the users of adjacent lots.
4. Drive-through services shall provide a minimum of a 10-foot bypass lane whereby vehicles may exit the lot at any point from the drive-through.
5. Located not closer than three (3) feet from any lot line, six (6) feet from any alley;
6. Abutting residential uses. The following use-specific standards shall apply only to drive-through accessory uses that abut a lot that contains a residential use.
 - a. The operation of drive-throughs that abut a lot with a residential use shall be prohibited from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. daily.
 - b. Drive-throughs shall be screened from adjacent lots that contain residential uses by a continuous six-foot-high landscaping buffer or fencing.
 - c. **No drive-through window or menu board shall be located within 50 feet of a dwelling unit.**