



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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November 4, 2021

Dianne Massa, City of Northville Clerk  
City of Northville  
215 W. Main Street  
Northville, MI 48167

Dear Ms. Massa:

On Thursday, November 4, 2021 the Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) held a meeting and considered the following Master Plan Update:

**The City of Northville Master Plan Amendment  
(County Code MP# 21-07)**

The Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee, by a 3-0 vote, endorses the Oakland County Department of Economic Development (OCED), Planning & Local Business Development (PLBD) Division's staff review and recommendations of the amendments to the Master Plan. The staff review finds the proposed Master Plan Amendments to be **not inconsistent** with the Master Plans of any of the adjacent communities that received notification of the proposed update. A copy of the staff review is enclosed.

A copy of the proposed draft Master Plan for the City of Northville can be accessed at the following web link: [City of Northville Master Plan Update 2022](#). Adjacent communities and other reviewing jurisdictions are asked to contact the City of Northville regarding the final adoption process for the proposed Master Plan Amendments.

If further documentation is necessary regarding the CZC meeting, the official minutes of the November 4, 2021 meeting will be available following the next CZC meeting. If you have any questions regarding the review, please do not hesitate to contact me at (248)858-0389 or email me at [krees@oakgov.com](mailto:krees@oakgov.com).

Sincerely,

Scott E. Kree  
Senior Planner

cc: CZC Board Members  
Sally Elmiger, City of Northville Planning Consultant, Principle Planner at Carlisle | Wortman  
Barbara McBeth, City of Novi Planning Manager

October 29, 2021

Commissioner Gwen Markham, Chairperson  
Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee  
1200 North Telegraph Road  
Pontiac, MI 48341

SUBJECT: County Code No. MP 21-07, Oakland County Economic Development Department, Planning & Local Business Development's staff review of the draft City of Northville Master Plan Amendment.

Dear Chairperson Markham and Committee Members:

On October 5, 2021, Oakland County received an emailed letter and document, informing our office of the proposed **City of Northville Draft Master Plan Amendment, (County Code Master Plan No. 21-07)**. Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Oakland County, adjacent municipalities, and other jurisdictional authorities have 42 days to review the draft document and submit comments on the proposed Master Plan Amendments directly to the City of Northville. The following website link can be accessed to review the proposed Master Plan Amendment: [City of Northville Master Plan Update 2022](#)

This review of the draft Master Plan will go before the Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) on November 4, 2021. This date falls within the 42-day review and comment period.

It is assumed that the adjacent Oakland County community of the City of Novi was notified about the proposed draft Master Plan amendment and review period by the City of Northville.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Based on the review of the surrounding communities' Master Plans, the City of Northville Draft Master Plan proposed amendments are **not inconsistent** with the plan of any city, village, or township that received notice of the draft plan. Oakland County has not prepared a countywide development plan, therefore, there is no countywide plan with which to compare the draft amendment.

### **Summary Analysis of Content**

The focus of this report is to present a clear understanding of the proposed document and describe changes in border land use through an analysis of the proposed plan. Recommendations that may help make the document stronger are offered as a result of the analysis. The following is a summary of the City of Northville Draft Master Plan Amendment in its entirety. The City of Northville last updated their Master Plan in 2018.

The proposed draft Master Plan Amendment has a concentration on a focused "subarea" or "sub area" as referenced in the 2018 Master Plan. The *Sub Areas* proposed to be amended consist of the following:

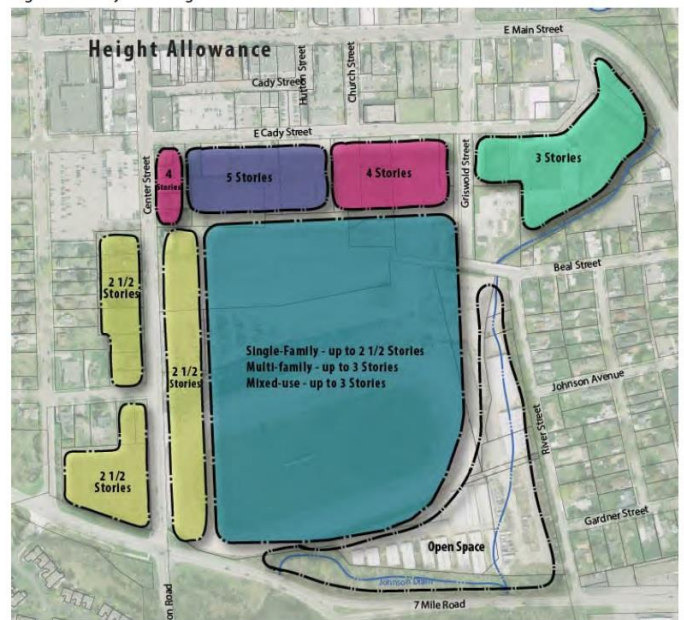
- #3 *Cady Town*, properties along the south side of Cady Street from Center Street (west) to Main Street (east).
- #4 *South Center*, consisting of properties north of 7 Mile Road and south of public parking structure at Cady St.
- #5 *Racetrack*, currently most of the Northville Downs property, a horse track entertainment/gaming facility.

While many schematic models were used in conjunction with and/or as an outcome of the public participation conducted, this review will be focused on the *subarea* and changes to the Future Land Use (FLU) plan and map. The proposed changes within the *subareas* are not adjacent to the City of Novi but may have effects on surrounding communities.

## Future Land Use Plan

The existing Future Land Use (FLU) section of the 2018 Master Plan has designated areas classified as *Sub Areas*. The proposed changes and expansion in criteria will affect the areas referenced as *Cady Town*, *South Center Street*, and the *Racetrack Subarea*. The criteria for these spaces is included in the existing Master Plan (pages 68 to 70) providing guiding information focused on *opportunities/constraints*, *Land Use*, *Form Based Policies*, and *Site Design*. This proposed amendment is an expansion on those areas.

The proposed amendment merges all three (3) districts to be studied into one *subarea*. Each of the topic areas have been expanded upon, providing more information and structure to the FLU plan for the *subareas*.



Focus on height allowance and density of the site is considered very important within the amendment in order to integrate any new development of proper intensity within the *subarea* which would impact the existing downtown area to the north, Hines Park to the south, and existing residential to the east and west.

Highlights of the plan include:

- Higher level of control/regulating the future density and development of the *subarea*.
- Daylighting the Walled Lake Branch of the Middle Rouge River between Beal Avenue and the Johnson Drain at 7 Mile Road.
- Including public open space at the east-southeastern portion of the *subarea*.
- Continued emphasis on the City's non-motorized plan, including connections to surrounding municipalities, points of interest and the mobility within the *subarea*.
- Confined parking facilities to be placed behind buildings or underground.
- Historical character protection and complimentary/form-based architecture acknowledgement.

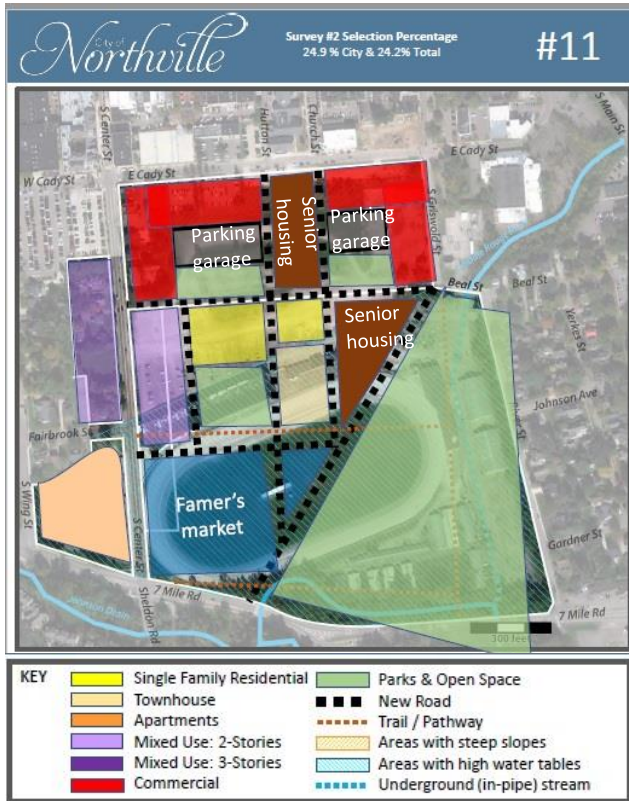
A public survey offered in this process was held between June 4 through August 10, 2020 resulted in 1,000 individuals participating. Supporting objectives and the utilization of such through the public survey portion of the plan explains concerns and expectations of the residence for the *subarea*.

Following the public survey, fifteen (15) schematic design boards were presented at a series of three (3) virtual "Open House Sessions" held in September/October of 2020. The boards were created using information gathered from the public surveys and the following guiding principle categories:

1. Design blends seamlessly
2. Walkability/Connections/Traffic/Parking – Circulation/ Mobility
3. Public Spaces/Open Space/Daylight River & Johnson Creek/Farmer's Market/Natural Resources
4. Land Uses (Commercial, Residential, Civic)
5. Density/Form/Massing/Concentration/Height/ Architecture/Character



6. Historical Reference/Acknowledgment of existing land uses (Racetrack, buildings, log cabin, open space)



Scheme #11 had the most support by city/total followed with boards #13 and #14. Information about the top three (3) schematic designs has been reviewed as follows:

Board #11 was the only one to include large areas designated for senior housing development and offered an array of uses when compared to other schemes. This scheme had one of the largest areas dedicated to public park area.

Design schemes #13 and #14 are similar in design and use palette. The *Commercial* designation was not utilized in either, but a more intense *Mixed Use* (3-story) designation was proposed. Scheme #13 pays homage to the Main Street area (1 block north of the site) with the continuation of park/street designs found in the downtown core. In contrast, scheme #14 pays homage to the racetrack that it is repurposing as a “commons” which plays host to the farmers market and utilizes the track footprint as a ring-road encompassing the commons.

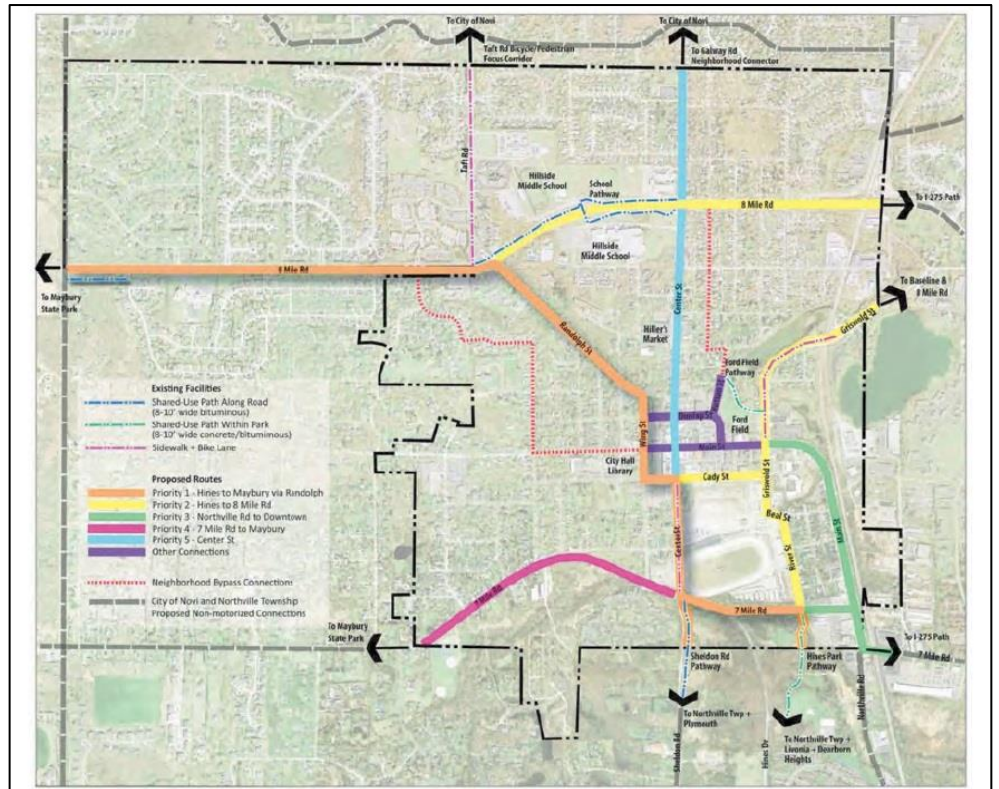
All three (3) schemes continue a portion of the existing street grid and incorporating trails/pathways through proposed park areas. Development density remains higher in the northwest of the subarea with less dense development in the southeast where there could be a higher risk of flooding.



In all fifteen (15) proposed schemes, a portion of the Cady Street Subarea between Griswold Street and Main Street was not included in the future site designs. Earlier in the amendment document, the study area found this area to be suitable for 3-story “creative” mixed use development, a village workshop, and/or public/open space. Currently, the property has what appears to be an abandoned equipment foundry that has been vacant for over a decade.

Architectural styles and the promotion of “high-quality” architecture for this area are noted throughout the document led by public comments recorded in the surveys and open house sessions. The City’s zoning ordinance has architectural standards for the *Cady Street Overlay (CSO)* district which encompasses the #3 *Cady Town – Cady Street Sub Area* in the Master Plan but architectural design standards that echo the survey/open house comments areas are not currently available. A recommendation on this topic has been provided below.

Transportation has remained an important topic in the proposed Master Plan Amendment. Within the existing Master Plan and the proposed amendment, with an emphasis on the future uses in the highlighted *subarea*, traffic, in general, has remained an important concern of the public per the survey results. An updated version/map of the Complete Streets/Non-motorized plan was included within the amendment. Streets have been recategorized to include the priority of the street/road. The *subareas* (#3,#4, and #5) of focus in this Master Plan Amendment are encompassed by Center Street (Priority 1 &5), Cady/Griswold/Beal/River Street (Priority 2), and 7 Mile Road (Priority 1,3 &4) which are all main corridors to adjacent communities. Plans to connect to the non-motorized network of the City of Novi's and Northville Township's existing routes are provided in the plan.



### **Recommendations**

The following are staff recommendations for the Draft Master Plan:

1. Update the Future Land Use Map to show proposed changes of use in places within the *subareas*. There are multiple properties owned by different entities and for future development(s) to follow the Master Plan Amendment’s proposals for the *subarea*, a rezoning of properties (or a Planned Unit Development - PUD) will be required. Currently, the Northville Downs properties have a very specific zoning designation of *Racetrack District (RTD)* zoning which does not permit the property to match the development(s) proposed within the Master Plan. An issue could arise if a rezoning was to be pursued for one of these properties which may result in an outcome that is inconsistent with the concepts or desires of the FLU plan.
2. Include the importance of traffic impact studies to be conducted in conjunction with the adoption of the schemes and as the *subareas* are developed. Per the zoning ordinance, a traffic impact study is only required or can be requested if the development is a “special use” or a PUD. The reason for including this recommendation is the topic of an “increase in traffic” was a concern ranking #1 with 72% of those that participated in the community survey. The traffic impacts city-wide and throughout the neighborhoods (survey question 12 & 13) were brought up. The term “traffic” is touched on many times throughout the document and in the existing Master Plan, however, the topic is not fully addressed with goals, objectives or implementation in either document. It is recommended this topic is expanded upon in the plan.
3. Elaborate on design/architectural standards specifically for the three redevelopment *subareas*. A vision for these areas has been narrowed down and the topic of architectural design/character is referenced many times within the document, but few examples have been given. To preserve the concept the city



would like to see at such locations in the future, the adoption of specific architectural design standards or a form-based code as a possible overlay is recommended as a way to regulate the desired “look and feel” of these spaces in order to address the keeping of the “small-town atmosphere”. This topic was a priority concern that ranked #2, 50% (questions #12 & 13) in the community survey.

4. Provide information pertaining to these sites being potentially existing brownfields to help with the proposed development initiative. Brownfield enabling legislation (P.A. 381 of 1996) is noted on page 77 of the existing Master Plan but has not been referenced anywhere else throughout the document or the proposed amendment. The Master Plan Amendment heavily promotes the redevelopment and revitalization of the *subareas* which is assumed to be eligible for brownfield financing and would involve brownfield protocols. Oakland County and Wayne County both have Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities (BRA). A county’s BRA can help with access to grants for site assessment work; including but not limited to Phase I, Phase II BEA, Due Care Plan, Lead/Asbestos abatement, surveys, and other such processes/tools.

### **Conclusion Summary**

The City of Northville’s Master Plan Amendment has improved the existing document in the *subarea*, as identified, which has been led by information gathered from multiple public input sessions. The plan contains achievable goals for future development and strategies that should prove effective as tools for opportunity and growth in the City of Northville.

While our review has suggested items that we feel will strengthen the overall plan and help to implement this portion of the plan, at no point are our recommendations required. The City of Northville is roughly 2.054 square miles and is predominantly in Wayne County. Approximately 1 square mile of the city is inside the borders of Oakland County, and therefore, we have an interest in the growth and planning within the city limits of Northville. Oakland County does not have a Planning Commission or County Master Plan to do a full comparison and contrast of the information submitted to review by the City of Northville. **Our staff review of the proposed Master Plan Amendments have found that the City of Northville Master Plan Amendment is not inconsistent with any of the adjacent communities.**

The City of Northville has received a copy of this review. There will be a motion made on the recommendations of this review by the CZC after which a copy of this review will be made available to the adjacent communities and any other surrounding jurisdictions that were sent the notification of the proposed plan by the City of Northville. If there are any questions or comments about this review and analysis, please do hesitate to contact me at (248)858-0389 or email me at [krees@oakgov.com](mailto:krees@oakgov.com).

Respectfully,



Scott E. Kree  
Senior Planner

CC: Dianne Massa, City of Northville Clerk  
Sally Elmiger, City of Northville Planning Consultant, Principle Planner at Carlisle | Wortman  
Barbara McBeth, City of Novi Planning Manager  
Gary McGillivray, Oakland County Commissioner, CZC Vice-Chair  
Phil Weipert, Oakland County Commissioner, CZC Member