

October 16, 2007

Commissioner David Potts, Chairperson  
Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee  
1200 North Telegraph Road  
Pontiac, MI 48341

SUBJECT: County Code No. MP 07-03, Planning & Economic Development Services' review of the City of Northville Master Plan Update, Addendum to the 2000 City of Northville Master Plan (dated August 13, 2007)

Dear Chairperson Potts and Committee Members:

The City of Northville Planning Commission is proposing to amend its 2000 City of Northville Master Plan by adding a handful of pages and sub-area plans for five areas within the city. The following is a review and analysis of the amendment.

Under the recent amendments to the Municipal Planning Act, which took effect December 20, 2006, the City of Northville is required to send a copy of the draft amendment to Oakland County, Wayne County, and neighboring communities for comment prior to adoption. Oakland County has 40 days to submit comments on an amendment. The October 23, 2007 Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) meeting falls within our 40-day comment period. Neighboring communities also have 40 days to submit comments directly to Northville and are asked to send a copy of any comments to the County as well. Once the comment period has expired, the Planning Commission can hold a public hearing on the amendment and take final action to amend the plan.

According to the Northville Planning Consultant, the City of Novi, Northville Township, and Wayne County Economic and Neighborhood Development were sent a copy of the draft plan. All of these communities and agencies have received notice of the CZC meeting. Comments have been received from the City of Novi and Northville Township, and are attached.

### **Public Participation Process**

No public participation process is documented in the amendment. However, the preferred land uses for each of the five sub-areas were discussed at planning commission meetings, which were open to the public.

### **Amendment Contents**

The focus of the amendment is two-fold. The first part of the amendment modifies pages 61 through 63 of the 2000 master plan by adding to the future land use designations' descriptions. The second part of the amendment summarizes the findings of five sub-area plans for various locations within the city.

The City of Northville is uniquely located; half of the city is in Oakland County and the other half is in Wayne County. The portion of the city north of Eight Mile/Baseline Road is in Oakland County and is mainly residential and institutional. The southern portion of the city is in

Wayne County and contains more intensive uses like the downtown, located along Center and Main Streets, and the Northville Downs Racetrack. Since Northville is mainly built-out, there is an emphasis on redevelopment opportunities in the sub-area plans, allowing for a mixture of uses. Changes to the Land Use Designations' descriptions reflect this emphasis on mixed use. A new future land use classification called Residential/Planned Development is proposed that would allow a mixture of housing types, both single and multiple family with a density not to exceed 8-10 units per acre. In addition, the Planned Development classification has been renamed Mixed Use/Planned Development. The Planned Development classification had previously only been applied to the Racetrack. In the addendum, the Mixed Use/Planned Development classification now extends to North Center Street, Cady Town, Cady Street, and Seven Mile/South Main.

Each of the sub-area plans have a one-page description that includes opportunities/constraints, preferred land use, form-based policies (building height and setbacks), and site design and pedestrian policies. High quality architecture in new construction is a requirement for all the areas with attention to natural resource preservation and environmental protection of the Rouge River floodplain. Compatibility with surrounding residential neighborhoods must be a component of any redevelopment proposals. The following summarizes some of the key recommendations related to each sub-area. Please refer to the attached map for the location of each sub-area.

***Cider Mill Area:*** The Cider Mill Area on the eastern edge of the City, just south of Eight Mile Road, is the only sub-area located in Oakland County. This area previously was more industrial in nature; Normac Industries, Northville Lumber, Northville Cider Mill, and the railroad tracks are still within the sub-area. However, with the construction of the River Park Village Condominiums, the area has begun to transform to a more residential character. Therefore, the Planning Commission feels the new classification of Residential/Planned Development would be more appropriate as a future land use classification for the Cider Mill Area. This classification allows for a mixture of housing types, both single and multiple family, and a density not to exceed 8 to 10 units per acre. A portion of the Middle Rouge River floodplain is in this sub-area and provides opportunities for open space and walking trails. Riverfront open space and amenities will need to be incorporated into new residential development proposals.

***North Center Street:*** This area along Center Street is the northern entrance into the downtown. The Mixed Use/Planned Development classification is proposed for this area to allow for a combination of neighborhood commercial, office, and residential uses. New commercial and offices uses need to be compatible with the residential neighborhoods both east and west of North Center Street. Parking is to be located to the rear of buildings; shared parking and shared driveways are favored. A pedestrian orientation is desired through the addition of more trees, greater depth to the curb lawn, and possibly bump outs at mid-block for pedestrian crossings. An overlay zoning district is recommended for this portion of Center Street to accomplish the objectives listed in the sub-area plan.

***Cady Town:*** Cady Town is a small area to the northeast of Northville Downs Racetrack that contains former industrial sites and underused properties. The City sees opportunities for redevelopment and is proposing the Mixed Use/Planned Development classification to allow for

a mixture of residential, retail, restaurant, office, and other similar uses. In addition, the possibility of having parks, a farmer's market, theaters, or other civic uses is mentioned for this sub-area. As with the North Center Street area, parking is to be located in the rear and shared parking is encouraged. The plan suggests the intersection of Main and Cady Streets should be redone to increase traffic safety and provide a plaza with pedestrian amenities.

***Seven Mile/South Main:*** This sub-area is located at the far southeastern corner of the city. With the implementation of the recommendations made for this sub-area, it can be redeveloped as a gateway entrance into the City of Northville. The former McDonald Ford site is located here and provides for redevelopment possibilities. Therefore, the Mixed Use/Planned Development classification is proposed for this sub-area to allow for a new single use or mixed use development of the site. Other opportunities included connections to the Middle Rouge River and Hines Park that will allow for more pedestrian activity in this area. New sidewalks, benches, and landscaping will add to the gateway character.

***Cady Street, Racetrack, South Center Street:*** The largest sub-area is located in the southern part of the city. The redevelopment possibilities of this area were noted in the 2000 master plan since the racetrack is a large site under single ownership. The addendum makes clear that the racetrack *“is encouraged to continue until the property owners wish to consider redevelopment alternatives.”* The Cady Street area and the Racetrack are shown as Mixed Use/Planned Development with the west side of South Center Street planned for Residential Planned Development. While specific future uses are not identified, a key component of the redevelopment of this area is suggested in the sub-area plan. The Middle Rouge River currently flows beneath part of the racetrack, and exposing or “daylighting” the river would provide for a riverwalk or linear park that would add a unique amenity to this sub-area redevelopment.

### **Coordination with Surrounding Community Boundaries**

Under state law, the county's review is required to include a statement indicating whether the proposed plan is “inconsistent with the plan of any city, village, or township” that received notice of the draft plan. Two of the sub-area plans are adjacent to surrounding communities.

**East Boundary – City of Novi:** The City of Novi Master Plan for Land Use 2004 was adopted in December 2004. Cider Mill is the only sub-area adjacent to the City of Novi. At this location, Novi has planned for Single Family Residential (0.8 units/acre). The City of Northville is proposing their new Residential/Planned Development classification for this area, replacing the current Light Industrial and Multi-Family Townhouse/Apartment classifications. Residential/Planned Development will allow for a mixture of housing types, and this classification is more compatible with the City of Novi's master plan than the previous Light Industrial classification.

The Chairman of the Novi Planning Commission sent a letter indicating the proposed amendments are *“compatible with the existing and future land uses found in the City of Novi's Master Plan for Land Use.”*

**East Boundary – Northville Township:** Northville Township just adopted the Northville Township Land Use Master Plan on August 16, 2007. Two of the sub-areas are adjacent to Northville Township; they are Cider Mill Area and Seven Mile/South Main. Adjacent to the Cider Mill area of Residential/Planned Development, Northville Township has planned for Industrial, which reflects an existing industrial use. Adjacent to the Seven Mile/South Main area of Mixed Use/Planned Development, Northville Township has planned for Consumer Trade and Office east of the sub-area and Public Park to the south. The Consumer Trade designation allows for light industrial uses with a retail component. In this location, the City of Northville is looking to redevelop the former McDonald Ford site and make this area a gateway into the city. Appropriate buffering and landscaping in this location should allow for compatible redevelopment. The Northville Township Director of Community Development sent a letter indicating the addendum is “complementary” to the policies and recommended future land uses in the Township.

### **Analysis**

When the Municipal Planning Act was amended in 2001, the law required cities to review their plans every five years to see if updates were needed. The City of Northville has complied with the law by preparing this update. In revisiting their 2000 master plan, the Northville Planning Commission identified five areas that deserved more attention and prepared sub-area plans for small areas within the city. The resulting one-page descriptions of each sub-area are very reader friendly. The format is the same for each plan and includes a listing of opportunities and constraints, preferred land use, form based policies, and site design and pedestrian policies. Photos are included to further convey the character desired for each area. The City of Northville should be commended for undertaking this update and communicating the results of its sub-area planning in such an understandable fashion. By reading this addendum, developers wishing to invest in these areas or current residents should have a good idea of the direction the City wishes to take in each location.

### **Conclusion**

Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services staff commends the City of Northville for preparing this addendum to its 2000 master plan.

Based on the review of the surrounding communities’ master plans, the City of Northville’s Master Plan Update, Addendum to the 2000 City of Northville Master Plan (Preliminary Draft August 13, 2007) is **not** inconsistent with the plan of any city, village, or township that received notice of the draft plan. Comments were received from the City of Novi and Northville Township, and are attached.

Oakland County has not prepared a countywide development plan, so there is no countywide plan to which to compare the amendment.

Sincerely,

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Principal Planner