

March 19, 2008

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

SUBJECT: County Code No. MP 08-02, Planning & Economic Development Services' review of Proposed City of Novi Master Plan for Land Use Amendments (dated February 14, 2008)

Dear Chairperson Potts and Committee Members:

The City of Novi Planning Commission is proposing to amend its Master Plan for Land Use 2004 after reviewing three geographic areas within the City. The following is a review and analysis of the proposed amendments.

Under the recent amendments to the Municipal Planning Act, which took effect December 20, 2006, the City of Novi is required to send a copy of the draft plan to Oakland County and neighboring communities for comment prior to adoption. Oakland County has 40 days to submit comments on amendments. The April 1, 2008 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 Novi 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 and take final action to amend the plan.

According to the City of Novi Planner, Commerce, Lyon, Novi, West Bloomfield, Northville, and Salem Townships; the Cities of Farmington Hills, Walled Lake, Wixom, Livonia, and Northville; SEMCOG; as well as school districts and utilities were sent a copy of the draft amendments. All of the adjacent communities above and SEMCOG have received notice of the CZC meeting. No comments were received as of March 19.

### **Public Participation Process**

Last spring, the Master Plan and Zoning Committee, a subcommittee of the Novi Planning Commission, initiated revisiting the master plan. The full Planning Commission agreed that certain areas should be reviewed for possible changes. *“Over several months, the Committee and Planning Commission with the assistance of the Community Development Department Planning Staff and the City’s Planning Consultants, reviewed and evaluated in detail each Study Area. Public comments regarding the future land uses in the study areas were solicited and hundreds of people provided input through surveys, written comments and in person at City Hall and public open houses.”* (Page v)

### **Amendment Contents**

The Planning Commission identified three geographic areas in the community where they felt revisions might be in order. The three areas are the southwest quadrant; Twelve Mile, Napier, and Wixom Roads area; and the I-96/Novi Road interchange area. The amendments consist of changes to both the Future Land Use map and the text of the master plan. Text amendments are mainly to the goals and objectives with some new implementation strategies added. The following is a review of each area studied including an analysis of any impacts at community boundaries. Maps of each study area are attached.

## **Southwest Quadrant**

**Location:** This approximately four square mile area in the southwestern corner of the city is the largest area studied. The study area is roughly from Ten Mile Road to Eight Mile Road between Beck and Napier Roads.

**Current Master Plan Classifications:** The majority of the land is planned for Single Family Residential with a density of .8 dwelling units per acre. There is a large area of Public Park located off Ten Mile Road and another large parcel of Public Park at Eight Mile and Napier Roads. Parcels of Private Park land are associated with some of the residential subdivisions in the eastern half of this study area. A large area planned for Public off Garfield Road is currently vacant and owned by the City of Novi. A large vacant parcel planned for Educational Facility at Eight Mile and Garfield Roads is owned by Northville Public Schools. The final land use classification in this quadrant is Utility, which follows a utility corridor that bisects the southwest quadrant.

**Proposed Master Plan Classifications:** No changes are proposed to the Future Land Use map.

**Proposed Text Changes:** A new objective has been added to “*maintain the existing low density residential development and natural features preservation patterns.*” Additional Implementation Strategies are in keeping with this objective to limit uses to the low density pattern, preserve open space, preserve views of natural features, and keep Nine Mile Road, west of Beck, as a Scenic Drive Road with the possibility of designating it a Natural Beauty Road. Implementation Strategies also encourage the use of flexible development options like the One Family Cluster Option that allows for residential development and the preservation of natural areas.

**Boundary Coordination with Surrounding Communities:** Since no changes are proposed to the master plan classifications, there are no impacts to surrounding communities from this amendment. Keeping this area for low density residential and recreational uses maintains the boundary coordination that currently exists. Lyon Township, immediately to the west of the Southwest Quadrant, has planned for Rural Residential (1 acre lots) for the area along Napier Road. Northville Township, immediately to the south of the Southwest Quadrant, has planned mostly for Public Park (Maybury State Park) with a small area of Rural Single Family Residential (lot sizes larger than one acre) off Eight Mile Road. Planned residential densities are consistent with surrounding communities.

**Analysis:** The text changes proposed in the amendment reinforce the City of Novi’s desire to maintain this part of the city in a semi-rural, low density character. Novi has had a long held goal to keep part of the western half of the city in a more rural development pattern. The new objective for the southwest quadrant and the new Implementation Strategies strengthen the goal of protecting the semi-rural and open space character of the southwest quadrant where the majority of vacant land still exists.

## **Twelve Mile, Napier, and Wixom Roads Area**

**Location:** The study area consists of six parcels plus part of a seventh parcel. They are located on the south side of Twelve Mile Road, west of Wixom Road.

**Current Master Plan Classification:** Special Planning Project Area 2, an area that requires further study to determine future land uses.

**Proposed Master Plan Classifications:** Three western parcels are planned for Single Family Residential with a density of 3.3 dwelling units per acre. The eastern two parcels plus the partial

parcel are planned for Educational Facility. The remaining small parcel fronting on Wixom Road is planned for Community Commercial.

***Proposed Text Changes:*** The Special Planning Project Area 2 is proposed to be removed as a future land use designation. One new goal and several objectives and implementation strategies are proposed. The goal aims for a mixture of residential, educational, and commercial uses within this study area that are developed in a high quality manner and that are compatible with surrounding uses. Residential appearance standards are suggested to ensure that garages do not dominate the façade; pedestrian connections between uses are encouraged.

***Boundary Coordination with Surrounding Communities:*** The study area is adjacent to the City of Wixom to the north. In this location, on the north side of Twelve Mile Road, Wixom has planned for Multi-Family (approximately 9 units per acre) and Community Business. The proposed uses are compatible with the City of Wixom Master Plan.

***Analysis:*** Just south of the eastern part of the study area is the fairly new Catholic Central High School. Single Family Residential with a density of 4.76 units per acre is planned to the west to Napier Road, and Mobile Home Park is planned south of the western part of the study area. At the time the Master Plan was adopted in 2004, the City was unsure of what direction the land uses in this area should take. After deliberating through this amendment process, the Novi Planning Commission has decided that uses should reflect the surrounding land uses. Therefore, residential is planned in the western part of this small study area, and educational uses are planned for the eastern half.

## **I-96/Novi Road Area**

***Location:*** West side of Novi Road, both north and south of I-96.

***Current Master Plan Classifications:*** PD2 for the northwest corner of the I-96/Novi Road interchange and Downtown West and Town Center Commercial for the rest of the study area south of I-96. The Downtown West District is intended for further study to create a commercial, entertainment, and cultural connection to the core shopping area.

***Proposed Master Plan Classifications:*** No changes are proposed to the PD2 and Town Center Commercial areas. The Downtown West will be eliminated and in its place Office will be planned for the area next to the Town Center Commercial, and Light Industrial will be shown to the west of the Office.

***Proposed Text Changes:*** A significant number of text changes are proposed for this study area. First, the Downtown West District is proposed to be removed as a future land use designation. Additional language proposed for the PD2 District indicates this is a Regional Commercial designation with the intention that the Planned Development Option provided in the Zoning Ordinance will be used to allow for greater site design flexibility.

A new goal is added that identifies this I-96/Novi Road area as an important entryway or gateway into the City of Novi. To make the areas both north and south of I-96 function better, access and road improvements are proposed for both areas. New streets are proposed in the area north of I-96 to help circulation in the Conference Center District. A new ring road is proposed for the Town Center Commercial area south of I-96, and improvements are proposed along Novi Road to enhance traffic movement and provide pedestrian access. Increased landscaping with

rows of trees along Novi Road and the new Ring Road will further communicate the importance of this part of the city.

The former Novi Expo Center on the south side of I-96 is recommended for OST, Office Service Technology District zoning. This classification would allow for redeveloping the site for office use with increased building height to capitalize on its prime location right off the expressway. Industrial uses to the west are encouraged to be updated with higher quality building materials and landscaping.

***Boundary Coordination with Surrounding Communities:*** The study area is internal to the City and therefore has no impact on adjacent community boundaries.

***Analysis:*** The City of Novi sees the I-96/Novi Road interchange as an important access point into the city. Therefore, recommendations are made to improve the appearance and function of this busy interchange. In the study area, the portion north of I-96 is proposed as a Conference District. A new street behind the existing West Oaks shopping center will provide better access and circulation to the existing hotel site. A new ring road in the southern part of the study area off Novi Road will allow for better access to the Town Center commercial area and redeveloped office use intended for the former Novi Expo site. These road and landscaping improvements are intended to encourage a walkable area where pedestrians will take advantage of the Middle Rouge River amenity that is present but currently underutilized in this quadrant. The improvements proposed will elevate this part of the City of Novi for shoppers, employees, residents, and guests.

### **Conclusion**

Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services staff commends the City of Novi for reviewing its plan and identifying areas that needed to be updated.

Based on the review of the surrounding communities' master plans, the Proposed City of Novi Master Plan for Land Use 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, so there is no countywide plan to which to compare the plan.

Sincerely,

Charlotte P. Burckhardt, AICP, PCP  
Principal Planner

Enclosure