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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** City of Northville Planning Commission

**FROM:** Sally M. Elmiger, AICP

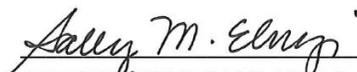
**DATE:** April 14, 2021

**RE:** Master Plan Update – Draft Informational Session Summaries and Sub-Area Plans (Partial)

Attached is draft language for the following sections of the Master Plan Update:

- Informational Session summaries. The Informational Presentations helped to lay the groundwork and provide a common level of understanding for the Master Plan surveys. This information should be included after or as a part of the Introduction to the Update.
- Portion of the Sub-Area Plans, including a description of the physical opportunities and constraints, and detailed public input for each sub-area. This information represents the beginning portion of each sub-area plan.

I look forward to discussing this with you at the upcoming meeting.



CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.

Sally M. Elmiger, AICP, LEED AP

Principal

Cc: Patrick Sullivan  
Dianne Massa

# Master Plan Update – Informational Session Summaries

City of Northville

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## INFORMATIONAL SESSION SUMMARIES

As described in the introduction, an important component of the public input process is to share basic information about key topics related to land development. The purpose was so everyone offering suggestions and ideas for redevelopment did so with a clear understanding of how development projects are planned, designed, approved, implemented, and financed. The informational sessions are on the City's website on the "Master Plan Update" page, and contain a wealth of knowledge about each topic. However, key messages of these presentations are listed here as background to the sub-area plans that follow.

### Topic: Demographics & Schools

#### Key Messages:

- Northville's population is aging.
- 65% of Northville's housing stock are single-family homes; fewer multi-family opportunities than in Plymouth.
- Households with seniors (65+) is expected to increase from 30% to 47% by 2045.
- Seniors prefer to remain in their homes and communities as they age<sup>1</sup>.
- The current number of smaller, multi-family units in Northville may not accommodate all seniors who want to downsize and stay in the City.
- The School District can accommodate the projected increase in student enrollment from the development of The Downs (assuming 530 new dwelling units that was previously proposed).

### Topic: Planning/Zoning & Financials

#### Key Messages:

- The Planning Enabling Act and Zoning Enabling Act allows local governments to oversee land development within their jurisdictions.
- The Planning Enabling Act defines a Master Plan: A Master Plan is a statement of policy, written and adopted by the planning commission\*, describing the desired physical development of the community. A "Vision."
- A Zoning Ordinance is the main tool used to implement the vision articulated in a Master Plan. The "Rules," compared to the Master Plan "Vision."
- Ordinances are written to achieve the Planning Commission's main purpose: To protect the health, safety and welfare of the community.
- Cost of new development is born by the developer. Maintenance of private facilities are born by the property owner; public facilities born by the City.

### Topic: Traffic & Parking

#### Key Messages:

- Existing traffic patterns have identified issues with some intersections. Analysis of these conditions have also identified potential improvements that could both address current issues and accommodated additional traffic generated by land use changes.
- Techniques to improve walkability include:
  - Buildings should interact with the sidewalks
  - Implement mixed-use developments
  - Consolidate and share parking facilities amongst various uses
  - Keep streets narrow to slow traffic speeds

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- Design for people by prioritizing pedestrians
- Include a variety of architectural styles
- Use grid street patterns to increase connectivity
- Northville’s parking requirements are fairly consistent with “like” communities, except in the Central Business District, where they are higher; many “like” communities don’t require any parking for new downtown uses.

Topic: Future Land Use Plan

Key Messages:

- The Master Plan includes a Land Use Plan (map). This shows the “future” land uses for each lot or parcel in the City.
- When the Planning Commission determines future land use designations, they must ensure designations will be...
  - **Reasonable.** Does the designation allow the property owner to make use of the property in a way that generate a reasonable return on their investment?
  - **Realistic.** Does the designation acknowledge the existing physical limitations and opportunities on the site, and the site’s relationship to other existing land uses?
  - **Factual.** Is the designation based on facts and information known at the time?

## SUB-AREA PLANS

This next section of the Update describes the detailed sub-area plans for Cady Town/Cady Street, the Racetrack, and S. Center Street.

Each sub-area plan starts out with a description of background information particular to that sub-area. Background information includes physical opportunities and constraints, and sub-area specific comments from residents, including a description of where there is agreement and disagreement among responses, and how survey participants addressed the “challenging choices” questions in the survey.

The sub-area plans then describe the preferred land uses; the form-based policies such as density, setbacks, and height; and finally, the design considerations, including architecture, street patterns, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, streetscape improvements, and public spaces.

### Cady Town/Cady Street Sub-Area

Location: (Show map)

#### Physical Opportunities and Constraints:

1. **Strategic Location:** The Cady Town/Cady Street sub-area is directly next to downtown Northville, and offers a strategic location to expand on the downtown’s retail, restaurant, and entertainment opportunities. This location also offers an opportunity to bring residential users closer to downtown – and patrons to downtown businesses – in the form of smaller-scale, multi-family residential options that aren’t readily available in other parts of the City. (BIRDS-EYE VIEW IMAGE OF ADJACENCY)
2. **Pedestrian Pathway to Downtown:** A pedestrian pathway and staircase exists on the east side of the existing parking structure (north side of Cady St.). This pathway allows pedestrians to walk from the core of Downtown Northville (Town Square) south to Cady Street mid-block. It provides opportunities to extend a pedestrian pathway or civic green space into the Cady Town/Cady Street sub-area and further south. (PHOTO OF PATHWAY)
2. **Historic Building – the Belanger Building:** The Belanger Building (which was recently known as the Village Workshop) provides Cady Street with historic character. The building’s architectural design from 1887, and its relationship to the street are uniquely Northville. This building’s character has guided many redevelopment projects on Cady Street, and should continue to do so. (PHOTO OF BELANGER BUILDING ADJACENT TO CADY ST.)
3. **Significant topographic change:** The land abutting Cady Street creates a narrow platform for approximately 50-120 feet in depth, until the land slopes down toward the Racetrack. These slopes are fairly steep (between 22% and 45% slope), providing an opportunity to create “walk-out” building forms, or locate parking underneath buildings that front onto Cady Street. (PHOTO OF ELEVATION CHANGE)

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- 3. Development on North side of East Cady Street:** The north side of E. Cady St., between Griswold and S. Center St., is a mix of new buildings and parking facilities. The City’s parking structure is an attractive facility, but does not add any activity to the streetscape. The surface parking lots, some paved in gravel, give a “gap-toothed” character to the corridor, as the building facades are placed far away from the street. This side of the street is not in the Cady Town/Cady Street sub-area boundaries, but it provides challenges in creating the desired vision for the feel and function of the street. (BIRDS-EYE VIEW IMAGE OF CORRIDOR)

## Detailed Public Input Results for Cady Town/Cady Street Sub-Area:

### **Uses:**

- Expand the footprint of downtown by offering opportunities for unique dining, entertainment venues, and shopping that’s consistent with desired vibrancy.
- Provide diverse housing formats that offer alternatives for various stages of life.
- Provide mixed-use buildings with commercial/retail on the ground floor and residential or office above. Commercial uses at each corner.

### **Height/Stories:**

- Three stories (mixed-use) directly abutting Cady Street; however, height should not exceed that of the tallest structures currently on the north side of Cady Street.
- Avoid long walls of same height – break up heights so as not to create a “canyon” affect.
- Don’t block views of downtown with development along Cady Street.

### **Density:**

- Limit density to minimize traffic impacts.
- Maintain the “small-town” atmosphere by limiting residential density.

### **Architecture:**

- Use high-quality architectural design that is consistent with or complimentary to existing architecture along Cady Street and downtown Northville to maintain the “small-town,” historic character.
- Mass, scale, and architectural features of buildings should honor the existing downtown character. Victorian features similar to the historic district should be emulated; modern architecture was *not* preferred.
- Architecture should be unique to Northville, and not cookie-cutter.
- Take advantage of sloping topography for “walk outs.”
- Views of the rear of buildings abutting Cady Street should be as attractive as the front facades.

### **Parking:**

- Locate parking behind buildings, and out of view of roadways; locating parking spaces in a structure is preferred over surface parking lots.
- Parking lots should be landscaped and made of permeable surfaces.
- Moderate existing parking requirements so they are not so high.

## **Vehicular Amenities:**

- Extend Hutton Street and Church Street south of Cady Street into the sub-area.
- Create traffic flow that will not exacerbate existing traffic issues, or have a negative effect on nearby residential neighborhoods.
- Implement traffic calming techniques to prioritize pedestrian movements along Cady Street.
- Enable parts of Cady Street to be closed for events.
- All streets should have bike lanes.

## **Streetscape/Pedestrian Amenities**

- Create ample, inviting sidewalk connections that create free and safe movement of pedestrians to Cady Street from downtown, neighborhoods, parks, and the regional pathway system.

## **Public spaces:**

- Create public gathering spaces among buildings to enhance opportunities for informal meetings and scheduled activities that enhance Northville’s sense of community and vibrancy in a family-friendly way.
- Offer green spaces, linear parkways, street trees, and landscaping throughout that provide places for outdoor dining and events, such as open air performances, live music, sculpture, and art.

## **Differing Opinions**

While there is some consistency among survey respondent opinions, one issue in particular received differing opinions where no clear preference could be discerned:

### *Location of the Farmer’s Market*

Some respondents thought the Farmer’s Market should be as close as possible to the downtown, and identified the Cady Street sub-area as a potential location. However, this was not shared by a majority of people, who also suggested the Farmer’s Market current location, the Racetrack sub-area, or other locations outside of the planning area.

## **Challenging Choices**

Limiting density is seen as important to survey respondents, but there was no consistency among public amenities they were willing to give up in exchange for less density. In the Cady Street area, respondents were willing to give up a parking structure in exchange for less density. However, over 20% didn’t answer this question. Also, there was support for the City to pay for public amenities, or offer tax incentives, obtain grants, or provide other schemes that could achieve both lower density and desirable public amenities.

In addition, respondents were unwilling to compromise on the height of a building (to 4-5 stories) if the additional stories were needed to achieve ground-floor commercial uses that could generate pedestrian activity and a more dynamic “downtown” environment.

***[REMAINDER OF CADY TOWN/CADY STREET SUB-AREA PLAN TO COME IN FUTURE DRAFTS]***

# Master Plan Update – Sub-Area Plans

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## Racetrack Sub-Area

Location: (Show map)

### Physical Opportunities and Constraints:

1. **Underground River and Johnson Creek:** The Rouge River traverses an underground pipe from Beal Street (north) to 7-Mile Road to the south. Johnson Creek meets up with the underground river as it leaves the pipe (daylighted) before going under 7-Mile Road. These two features of the site provide a unique opportunity to create a significant outdoor amenity and improve the environmental quality of the river and surroundings. (IMAGE OF UNDERGROUND RIVER)
2. **Large Area Potentially Available for Redevelopment:** The size of the racetrack property (24-acres) offers a significant, and unique, redevelopment opportunity in the City of Northville. Coupled with the desirability of Northville, a project this size offers significant benefits to a developer, making the project very desirable. However, the large size of the area could also be a deterrent to certain segments of the development community. (BIRDS-EYE IMAGE OF RACETRACK PROPERTY)
3. **Access from Multiple Streets.** The Racetrack site can be connected to multiple existing streets, offering users a diverse circulation system. (GRAPHIC IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL CONNECTIONS)
4. **Strategically Located Next to Downtown Northville and Regional Recreation Facilities.** The racetrack site is located close to downtown Northville, allowing future users to easily walk to dinner or shopping. The site is also close to the walkway system along Sheldon Road, and the Wayne County parks along Hines Drive. The location creates easy access to both walking and biking facilities, as well as the amenities the park has to offer. (ADJACENCY GRAPHIC)
5. **Located Adjacent to Established Single-Family Neighborhoods.** The character and stability of the single-family neighborhoods to the east and west of the Racetrack site offer a desirable setting for redevelopment. (ADJACENCY GRAPHIC)

### Detailed Public Input Results for Racetrack Sub-Area:

#### **Uses:**

- Detached single-family homes, parks and public spaces, and arts and entertainment venues.
- Senior independent living cottages or senior independent multi-family buildings with decoratively paved courtyards/pocket parks
- Townhomes
- Some commercial uses such as corner stores/coffee shops in primarily residential areas.
- In the high water table area, open space as an alternative to single-family residential, restaurants/entertainment uses, or mixed-uses with residential.
- Housing should appeal to a diverse group of potential residents – age, income, family size, ability/disability, etc.

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## Density:

- Limit density to minimize traffic impacts.
- Maintain the “small-town” atmosphere by limiting residential density. Make Racetrack density the same as other Northville neighborhoods.

## Architecture:

- Use high-quality architectural design that is consistent with or complimentary to existing architecture.
- Architecture should be unique to Northville, and not cookie-cutter. Single-family homes should be built by different builders to create a variety of housing styles that characterize other Northville neighborhoods. Don’t want a “subdivision.”
- Architecture should support a “small-town” feel.

## Parking:

- Locate parking behind buildings, and out of view of roadways.
- Detached garages for single-family homes accessed from alley.

## Vehicular Amenities:

- Extend Beal to S. Center street through the Racetrack sub-area.
- Extend Fairbrook into the site.
- Extend Hutton Street and Church Street through the site.
- Create traffic flow that will not exacerbate existing traffic issues, or have a negative effect on nearby residential neighborhoods.
- Implement traffic calming techniques, such as curvilinear streets, or “T” intersections, to discourage cut-through traffic.
- All streets should have sidewalks on both sides. All streets should have bike lanes.
- Plant streets with street trees and landscaping, and install “Northville” pedestrian-scale street lights.
- Create “event” street on extension of S. Griswold near daylighted river park.

## Streetscape/Pedestrian Amenities

- Create ample, inviting sidewalk connections that create free and safe movement of pedestrians to downtown, neighborhoods, parks, and the regional pathway system.
- Create a linear pedestrian greenway connecting downtown and Hines Drive, that includes walking and bike facilities.
- Create safe pedestrian/bicycle crossings at all intersections, but particularly at 7-Mile/Sheldon, and 7-Mile/River Street.
- Create pedestrian pathway system along 7-Mile road, and within the daylighted river park/Johnson Creek open space.

## Public spaces:

- Daylight the Rouge River and surround with parkland. Connect river parkland with preserved open space adjacent to Johnson Creek. Develop park with pathways, benches, lighting, trees and landscaping, and a bridge to Johnson Street. Maintain environmental sustainability of river corridor and Johnson Creek corridor.
- Create pocket parks and green spaces throughout the Racetrack sub-area to enhance opportunities for informal meetings, passive recreation, playgrounds, and community

- gatherings or events. Consider including fountains, art, splash-pad, animal-friendly park space, outdoor skating rink, or other amenities that increase the vibrancy of the area.
- Open spaces should be within a 10-minute walk of residential uses in the Racetrack sub-area.

## Differing Opinions

Regarding redevelopment of the Racetrack sub-area, a number of issues received differing opinions:

### *Location of the Farmer’s Market*

Some respondents thought the Farmer’s Market should be located in the daylighted river park. However, others thought it should stay in its current location, be moved close to downtown on Cady Street, or in other parts of town. Consistently, respondents called for pavilions or other coverings for the Farmer’s Market, adequate parking, and whatever space the Farmer’s Market occupied, the space be multi-purpose and available for other community events and gatherings.

### *Round-About at 7-Mile and S. Center St.*

Concerns over adding a round-about at 7-Mile and S. Center Street were voiced by some respondents. However, the survey results as a whole did not completely dismiss a round-about.

### *Street Design*

Respondents did not agree on their preferred street design used within the Racetrack site. The Open House gameboards showed both curvilinear street designs and designs with some type of grid pattern. There was not a clear preference for either design; however, the desire to control traffic speeds, preserve pedestrian safety, and discourage cut-through traffic were voiced by both camps.

### *Housing Types*

Some survey respondents thought the Racetrack sub-area should only contain single-family homes, similar to the neighborhoods to the east and west of the site. But other respondents (particularly during the Open House event) envisioned a mix of single-family homes with townhomes, and possibly mixed-use buildings that have commercial on the ground-floor with access to the daylighted river park, and residential units above. Various opinions about housing types often cited concerns over density.

### *Housing Styles*

Respondents had different feelings about building character and architectural style. Some respondents wanted to maintain a Victorian theme. Many asked that modern-looking buildings be prohibited, and that specific historical designs be mandated. However, a number of other respondents expressed that a variety of building styles should be allowed and disagreed with a need for all buildings to be Victorian style.

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### Challenging Choices

As in the other sub-areas, limiting density is seen as important to survey respondents in the Racetrack sub-area. While there was not one amenity most were willing to give up to achieve lower density, a town square, open space, and parks were named most as a compromise in the Racetrack sub-area. This is curious because respondents chose specific Open House gameboards as their favorites because of the green space in the Racetrack sub-area that the design illustrated. Note that daylighting the river was not chosen as something people would be willing to part with to limit density. Instead, there was support for the City to pay for the public amenities, or offer tax incentives, obtain grants, or provide other schemes that could achieve both lower density and desirable public amenities.

***[REMAINDER OF RACETRACK SUB-AREA PLAN TO COME IN FUTURE DRAFTS]***

## S. Center St. Sub-Area

Location: (Show map)

### Physical Opportunities and Constraints:

1. **Main Entryway and Corridor into Northville from the South.** The S. Center St. sub-area represents the main vehicular corridor into Northville from the south. This street has both opportunities and constraints. The street leads to downtown Northville, and brings residents and visitor alike to the town’s businesses. The street pavement is also wide enough to accommodate bicycle lanes on both sides. Redevelopment could enhance this corridor and provide significant improvements to pedestrian facilities into and out of town.

On the other hand, this vehicular corridor is heavily used by Northville residents, visitors, and commuters passing through. Traffic congestion at peak rush hour has become a problem for some residents, and residents are worried that redevelopment of the sub-areas could add to this issue. Traffic congestion is one of the top concerns of Northville residents regarding redevelopment of the sub-areas. Traffic congestion at the 7-Mile/S. Center St. intersection is also a concern for residents. (PHOTO OF CORRIDOR)

2. **“Front Door” Entryway into the City.** S. Center Street is a major entryway into the City of Northville. (PHOTO OF INTERSECTION)
3. **Existing Farmer’s Market Location.** The S. Center St. sub-area contains the existing Farmer’s Market site. This site provides the vendors with space to sell their products, and allows patrons to drive to the site and park their cars nearby. The extensive parking lot at the Racetrack allows Vendors to park their trailers and trucks relatively close after setting up their stalls. The site also functions well with vehicles entering and existing S. Center Street. Lastly, the site provides significant visibility from many motorists drive along 7-Mile and S. Center/Sheldon. Of course, improvements to the site could be made to improve its appearance and functionality. (PHOTO)
4. **Significant Topography on the North Property Line of the Farmer’s Market Site.** The north property line of the current Farmer’s Market Site is held back by very tall retaining walls. This places the site at least 10-feet below the residential properties fronting onto Fairbrook Street. The retaining walls create a buffer between the adjacent residential properties, and help to mitigate noise or activity on the Farmer’s Market site.

Wing street, which forms the western boundary of the Farmer’s Market site, slopes steeply up from north to south. This condition may make it difficult to have an access drive from Wing into the Farmer’s Market site if redeveloped.

5. **Existing Buildings and Uses along S. Center St. Corridor.** Redevelopment of the areas adjacent to S. Center Street will mostly be accomplished by “infill” development, as there are a number of existing buildings that are being used for single-family or multi-family residential uses. Closer to E. Cady Street, a number of historic homes have been repurposed for business offices and services. The historic buildings lend character to the street, and provide design guidance for new construction. The existing uses also help guide the uses of any new uses, in either existing buildings or new buildings. (CORRIDOR PHOTO)

# Master Plan Update – Sub-Area Plans

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## Detailed Public Input Results for S. Center Street Sub-Area:

### **Uses:**

- Along both sides, attached or detached single-family homes or townhomes, or retail/commercial with restaurants.
- On east side only, two-story mixed-use buildings with commercial on the ground floor, and residential above between 7-Mile Road and where the “future” Beal Street extension through the Racetrack meets up with S. Center St. North of this, respondents proposed three-story mixed-use buildings with commercial on the ground floor and residential above.
- Commercial use at the southeast corner of S. Center and Cady Street.
- Arts and entertainment venues

### **Density:**

- Limit density to minimize traffic impacts.
- Maintain the “small-town” atmosphere by limiting residential density. Make S. Center Street density consistent with the existing uses along the street.

### **Height/Stories:**

- Two to three stories, or buildings of various heights.
- Avoid a “canyon” effect with tall (three-story) buildings close to the street.

### **Architecture:**

- Use high-quality architectural design that is consistent with or complimentary to existing architecture.
- Architecture should be unique to Northville, and not cookie-cutter. Single-family homes should be built by different builders to create a variety of housing styles that characterize other Northville neighborhoods. Don’t want a “subdivision.”
- Architecture should support a “small-town” feel.

### **Parking:**

- Locate parking behind buildings, and out of view of roadways.
- Detached garages for single-family homes accessed from alley.

### **Vehicular Amenities:**

- Create traffic flow that will not exacerbate existing traffic issues, or have a negative effect on nearby residential neighborhoods.

### **Streetscape/Pedestrian Amenities**

- Create ample, inviting sidewalk connections that create free and safe movement of pedestrians to downtown, neighborhoods, parks, and particularly to the Hines Park pathways and the regional pathway system.
- Improve sidewalks by moving them away from the travel lanes, adding green parkway between the travel lane and sidewalk, and plant street trees. Maintain the bike lanes.
- Plant street with street trees and landscaping, and install “Northville” pedestrian-scale street lights.
- Create safe pedestrian/bicycle crossings at 7-Mile/Sheldon.
- Connect pedestrian pathway system from S. Center St. to new pathway along 7-Mile Road, and extend the new pathway along 7-Mile Road to the west (to Wing St.).

## Public spaces:

- Locate green space in front of buildings (in addition to parkway with street trees on street side of sidewalk).
- The Farmer’s Market should be an attractive multi-purpose space, with pavilions, landscaping, and adequate parking.
- Incorporate green space and avoid over-building.
- Create a City gateway at 7-Mile/S. Center St. Gateway should include landscaping and signs. Also suggested a boulevard or statue.

## Differing Opinions

Regarding redevelopment of the S. Center Street sub-area, several issues received differing opinions:

### *Land Use*

There was no consensus of the preferred land use on either side of S. Center Street, except for the properties on the east side closer to E. Cady Street intersection. The suggestions for residential uses (single-family homes and townhomes) implied just one or the other, but not both together. A third option (mixed-use two-stories) was suggested for the east side of the street between 7-Mile Road and the “future” extension of Beal Street through the racetrack property. This mixed use building would have commercial on the lower level and residential above. However, respondents did agree that a three-story mixed use building would be appropriate north of the Beal Street extension, and that the corner of S. Center and Cady should be occupied by commercial uses. Arts and entertainment venues, or restaurants were identified as potential commercial land uses. Improvements to the green space along the street, in front of buildings, was suggested for both sides, similar to the existing front lawns. One consistent message was to *avoid* creating a “canyon” feel by placing tall buildings close to the street on both sides.

### *Location of the Farmer’s Market*

There were a number of survey respondents who thought the existing Farmer’s Market site should be maintained, and improved upon. However, others thought it should be moved to the daylighted river park, closer to downtown on Cady Street, or in other parts of town. Consistently, respondents called for pavilions or other coverings for the Farmer’s Market, adequate parking, and whatever space the Farmer’s Market occupied, the space be multi-purpose and available for other community events and gatherings.

### *Round-About at 7-Mile and S. Center St.*

Concerns over adding a round-about at 7-Mile and S. Center Street were voiced by some respondents. However, the survey results as a whole did not completely dismiss a round-about. People expressed concerns over how a round-about would make traffic congestion worse, and decrease pedestrian and bicycle safety. However, others described studies of the improved vehicular and pedestrian safety at round-about, and that accidents that happen at round-about are the “fender-bender” type, versus accidents at intersections involve more personal injury.

## **Master Plan Update – Sub-Area Plans**

*City of Northville*

*April 14, 2021*

### **Challenging Choices**

When asked the five items that should be included in the Master Plan, the Farmer’s Market was among the most selected; however, the preferred location is not clear. Safe pedestrian connections to downtown, 7-Mile, and Hines Park were also a high priority.

***[REMAINDER OF S. CENTER STREET SUB-AREA PLAN TO COME IN FUTURE DRAFTS]***