

# Northville Matters

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City of Northville • 215 West Main Street • Northville, Michigan 48167

## Master Plan update accepted

Two years in the making, the Master Plan update of three subareas was accepted by City Council at its Dec. 20 meeting. City Planner Sally Elmiger reviewed the components of the process, which began with educational sessions for the public on topics such as infrastructure, traffic and finances.

These sessions were followed by nearly one year of focused public participation through an initial, broad-based survey; an open house that illustrated participants' ideas for the design of the subareas; and a second, in-depth, survey.

In April 2021, planning commissioners developed "guiding principles" for the Master Plan update. They began drafting the document language in May and worked in stages for the subareas, completing the document in September. Public comments were part of that process.

When the final draft was ready, the document was circulated for comment to area communities, SEMCOG and other agencies. A statement on environmental impact was added based on feedback from Oakland County. After a public hearing on Nov. 16, the commissioners adopted the document at that same PC meeting.

When it was brought before City Council, members reflected that it was a long but thoughtful process and are proud of the outcome. Council members thanked Elmiger and

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## Farmers' Market report

Members of the Farmers' Market Task Force provided an update to the Planning Commission on Dec. 7 on the most feasible site for the market when the Downs property is redeveloped. The site is the former Macdonald Ford location on 7 Mile near S. Main and meets all the criteria established by the task force.

Two concept plans were presented. The first kept the Farmers' Market within the original Macdonald Ford site, and the second plan incorporated vacant land to the south. Both contain space for a 12,000ft<sup>2</sup> building, ample parking, and accessible pathways. View the report on the city website.



## Task Force has multi-faceted plans for Riverwalk, daylighting river

The Northville River Restoration Task Force (NRRTF) has made great strides in documenting the environmental status of the narrow waterway that winds through the heart of Northville while envisioning a recreational/pedestrian corridor that parallels the river and serves as a regional hub for non-motorized transportation.

There are approximately 27 people on the task force headed by Nancy Darga, a former City Council member and former mayor pro tem. The task force presented an update to City Council on Dec. 20 and will deliver a framework report – similar to a Master Plan – for the river early in 2022. That is being developed by Jennifer Maude, Kathy Spillane and Don Webb.

A subcommittee of the task force joined with a subset of the Sustainability Team to present a Mobility Network Study to City Council on Dec. 6. The comprehensive report pointed to areas of concern at five major intersections in the city and called for an engineering study to confirm those findings and provide solutions for traffic flow and boosting safety. Both council and members of the community were impressed by the thorough report. (View it on the city website, task force page.)

Darga said of the NRRTF, "The first thing we did was create a map of the water courses." Since the city had no GIS maps of the river, the task force's John Roby took on that challenge and shared his photos, maps and experience with the group. He also drew maps for the Mobility Network Study and History Trail Team. "We are currently photo documenting and mapping points along the river with severe erosion, and failing heads, walls and storm outlets," Darga noted.

"Our mission is to improve the quality of the river and all of its tributaries," Darga said. "Our second mission is to develop the Riverwalk along the main part of the river."

A subcommittee marked the historic points of interest along the proposed Riverwalk/trail. Even MSU got involved as seniors in landscape architect developed a class project around daylighting the river and provided creative solutions on how to absorb rainwater along the riverbank.

The Riverwalk/trail is intended for both pedestrians and bicyclists, taking into account the needs of those in wheelchairs or with limited mobility. The long-term vision of the plan is to open the river and build a riverwalk that follows the Middle Rouge River from the intersection of the Rouge River and Johnson Creek northward. It would traverse up through the proposed River Park on the Downs property to the Foundry Flask site, cross Main Street and connect to Ford Field East (adjacent to the Ford Valve Plant). From there, it would join the existing trail in Ford Field through Mill Race Village north to eight Mile.

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# NOTICES

See COVID-19 updates on city website

## Upcoming tax and assessing deadlines

View your tax, assessing, utility and permit property information on the city website (Online Property Information and Payments). You can sign up for automatic payment of taxes and utilities, request to receive your utility bill via email, make payments by credit card or e-check, and view your payment status.

### General property tax dates

**Feb. 14** – Last day to pay winter 2021 taxes without penalty or interest. On Feb. 15, a 3% penalty will apply.

**Feb. 28** – Last day to pay summer and winter 2021 property taxes at the City. On March 1, delinquent amounts will be turned over to the county for collection.

**March 1** – Assessment notices are mailed in mid-February. If you have not received a notice by March 1, please contact the city assessor. at 248-449-9901.

**March** – Board of Review public hearings and deliberations. Dates appear on the assessment notice.

### Business owners

**January** – Personal property statements were mailed the first week in January. If you filed a Small Business Affidavit in 2019, 2020 or 2021 on time and it was accepted, you will not receive a personal property statement due to recent changes in property tax laws. Any changes in business status or personal property values need to be reported to the assessor.

**Feb. 21** – Personal property statements or exemption affidavits are due to the city assessor.

## Dog licenses must be renewed in February

Annual dog licenses expire on Feb. 28, 2022. All dogs four months and older must be licensed. The annual license fee is \$13 (\$10 with documented spay/neuter). On March 1, a \$5 late fee will be applied to the license fee. A current rabies vaccination certificate is required with the application – this helps keep dogs safe as well as those they come in contact with. Renewal applications have been mailed to current license holders. Applications also can be downloaded from the city website (Services/City Clerk/Permits and Licenses). Completed applications can be mailed, placed in the City Hall drop box, or renewed in person at City Hall.

## Snow plows ready to clear the streets

When it snows, you'll find the city of Northville snow plows and trucks out to clear local streets. Major streets such as Center, Main and Taft are plowed first, followed by streets with steep hills and sharp curves.

Wayne County plows snow from the streets of Griswold, 7 Mile, Northville Road, and 8 Mile, east of Taft. Oakland County is responsible for clearing snow on 8 Mile, west of Taft, and Novi Road.

Neighborhood streets, parking lots, alleys and cemetery roads are plowed after main streets are completed. To help the snow plow access neighborhood streets from curb to curb, please keep vehicles off the streets until the snow has been cleared.

Property owners (residents and businesses) must clear sidewalks within 24 hours of a snow or ice event by ordinance. When clearing snow, it is against the law to blow or shovel snow into any roadway.

The DPW only clears sidewalks that are on city-owned or operated properties, such as those at City Hall, the Fire Station and cemeteries. If you see a neighbor who needs assistance keeping their sidewalk clear, please offer to help.

Prompt removal of snow reduces the need for salt. That means less salt travels to storm drains, which discharge into the Middle Rouge River. The city uses salt sparingly but it may be applied at slippery spots and intersections when needed.



## Report water main breaks

Each year the city of Northville has between 10 and 20 water main breaks. If you see water bubbling out of the ground on city property, contact the Public Works Department at 248-449-9930 or 248-349-1234 after hours and report its location.



## Officer of the Year Award bestowed

Sgt. Thomas Barber was presented with the 2020 Officer of the Year Award at the Dec. 6 City Council meeting (held online due to COVID-19). Chief Maciag presented a plaque to Barber in person at City Hall and spoke of his exemplary service for the honor, which is awarded by fellow officers.

Maciag said Barber is a "selfless, hardworking, professional who really cares about the community." He served as a role model for other officers, especially when battling cancer, which is now resolved. "When someone is facing adversity and to see what he's done is truly remarkable."

Wayne County Commissioner Terry Marecki, State Rep. Matt Koleszar and Mayor Brian Turnbull also congratulated Barber effusively, noting the important role of community policing in keeping people safe and preventing crime. Barber was presented with resolutions from the Wayne County Commissioners and the State of Michigan.

Barber was nominated by his peers for several reasons. Captain Greg Hannewald noted, "He has a drive to better himself, which in turn will benefit the department. He has attended various training classes – even taking some classes at his own personal expense and on his personal time."

Barber supervises the midnight shift, and also serves as a firearms instructor, chemical spray instructor, field training officer and evidence technician. Of the award, he said, "I really don't do this job to seek attention. I truly do it for the community I serve and to make it a better place."

A 2009 graduate of Eastern Michigan University's Criminology Program and a veteran of the Baltimore Police Academy, Barber joined the force in December 2017 and was promoted to sergeant in August 2020.

He and his wife, Laura, have two children and live in Waterford.

## Task Force...continued from page 1

At Upper Mill Pond, the task force will explore ways to extend the trail (a bike path at that point) along 8 Mile to Rotary Park in Novi. At the Johnson Creek intersection of the Riverwalk, the trail will branch into a regional hub that connects to existing and new trails. It will link to Hines Drive to the east, extend further east along 7 Mile to the new Legacy Park, and, on the west side, connect to Fish Hatchery Park, then onto Maybury State Park's planned new bicycle/pedestrian entrance on 7 Mile. The regional connections were requested by municipal leaders in neighboring communities and SEMCOG.

Among the reasons for establishing three task forces (others are Farmers' Market and Ford Field) were to create a unified vision for the future developments along the river and identify potential funding sources for proposed projects. The NRRTF has applied for funding through the Alliance for Rouge Communities (ARC), the American Rescue Plan, and is ready to apply for a federal infrastructure grant. Once City Council

prioritizes projects and funding is in place, the NRRTF plans to conduct a feasibility study of daylighting the river currently enclosed in a pipe under the Downs property.

A direct benefit of daylighting the river at the Downs property is taming the flow from the underground pipe, which draws runoff from Bealtown and downtown Northville. What occurs upstream – in Northville – for better or worse also impacts the watershed that leads to downriver communities. Reducing excess runoff will reduce the risk of flooding along Hines Park and in downriver communities.

Of her colleagues on the task force, Darga noted, "I'm amazed by how much we've gotten done. And the talent: there are people who work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, economists, architects, city planners and directors of economic development. And me."

She's not bragging; she has deep experience in developing parks, working on Wayne County infrastructure, and fundraising. "People will come

and go from the task force. The game plan is to have it (Riverwalk/trail) done by 2027."

This task force has absorbed the work of the Ford Field task force, which presented its framework plan to City Council in June 2021. It will coordinate the master list of fundraising for all community-focused volunteer groups in the city.

Read City News and view the city website for updates from this task force, including its presentation to City Council in December.

## Master Plan...continued from page 1

Chair Donna Tinberg for their leadership and the entire commission for their commitment and hard work.

While it won't serve as the official document for the Downs development since it was adopted after the preliminary site plan was submitted, the builder was engaged and incorporated many of the new elements in the site plan.

View the Master Plan update on the city website: home page, Notices, Stay Connected.



Architect's concept of Foundry Flask mixed-use building (Image by O/X Studio.)

## Development Update

**Downs project** – The developer submitted site plans to the city on Dec. 15, 2021 and the Planning Commission is prepared to review and confer on those plans in early 2022. View the development page of the city website for site plans and read City News for updates.

**Foundry Flask** – Final site plans were approved by the Planning Commission at its Dec. 21 meeting. Prior to demolition, the Historic District Commission required the developer to document the buildings on site and provide that information to the city of Northville and the Northville Historical Society.

**North 320 condos** – The city holds a surety bond to complete work on moving the sidewalk back from Center St. and closer to the building to provide a traffic buffer for pedestrians if the developer doesn't comply by May 2022. This was one of the conditions set by the Planning Commission when it approved the final site plan. In exchange for the bond, several certificates of occupancy were issued to the developer, allowing condo owners to begin moving into the 8-unit building.

**150-156 N. Center** – Some parking spaces in the city parking lot at Center and Dunlap are being used for staging as construction gets underway at the new mixed-use building with a first floor restaurant and luxury condo units.

**Prescott Professional Services** – A new façade has been added to the office building at 103 and 105 E. Main St., which houses the law firm Salvatore Prescott Porter & Porter, a nail salon, a psychologist office, a CPA firm and a travel agency. Building co-owner Sarah Prescott says the façade is designed to be contextual with the historic image of downtown. Robert Miller, of M Architects handled the project.

## John Carter joins City Council

John Carter is a newcomer to City Council yet has been actively involved in the community for years. He handily won one of two open seats at the Nov. 2, 2021

election. The second seat was retained by Andrew Krenz, who served as a council member for seven months following Sam Ekong's resignation last March. (Krenz was profiled in the summer issue of Northville Matters.)

Carter believes that incremental changes and improvements – an iterative process – will result in a better outcome for Northville. "How we manage the traffic, the infrastructure – all of the inputs – from redevelopment and task force projects will be critical success factors."

As a financial professional with expertise in strategy, business process, and technology consulting, he has been an active volunteer on the Northville Economic Development Committee, the Ford Field Task Force, the Northville River Restoration Task Force, and the Sustainability Team. He also has attended DDA meetings. He now also serves as the City Council liaison to the Housing Commission and Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. Carter has stepped down from some of his committee work to focus on council.

In 2022, City Council will prioritize and act on task force recommendations. All council members encourage proactive community engagement and attendance at their meetings. Carter notes that "leaders need to set priorities and objectives and bring people together to act on them."

John and his wife, Liz, have three children who attend Northville District Schools.



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## 2021 highlights

**January** – The city introduces a new logo with modern typography in earth tones, replacing an interim “nameplate” and an older burgundy logo with swirling typography. // Council approves new LED lighting for parking lots and other public areas.

**February** – Water flow rates are reset following negotiations with GLWA, providing a cost savings to the city and residents. // Council approves tree inventory, to be plotted into the GIS system as an overlay.

**March** – A vaccination clinic at Schoolcraft College successfully delivers 3,100 vaccines to Northville city and township residents. // A local state of emergency is extended, which allows public meetings to continue online.

**April** – Council adopts Historic District Study Report with the 11th-hour inclusion of Ford Field. // The police dashboard launches on the city website, with data including crime rates, arrests, and officer use-of-force. // Northville designated “Official Tree City.” // Andrew Krenz is chosen by council (from five candidates) to take the seat of Sam Ekong, who resigned in March.

**May** – DPW plants more than 100 trees throughout the city. // Work begins to replace water mains on five streets: Wing Ct., Fairbrook St., Fairbrook Ct., High St. and Maplewood St.

**June** – City Council votes to remove the deadline only from the emergency ordinance to “opt out” of having marijuana establishments within the city limits. It can be updated at any time.

**July** – A downsized version of the Independence Day parade returns to downtown Northville after safety concerns about COVID-19 canceled the parade a year earlier.

**August** – Wing Court receives a change order to use pervious pavement in the street replacement, serving as a pilot project to test function, durability and value. // The developer of the Downs property presents a revised concept plan to the Planning Commission that features parks, a daylighted river, and fewer housing units than the original site plan.

**September** – Parks and Recreation moves into new office space at Hillside Middle School, with a newly finished gym floor, spacious offices, and new bathrooms. // The Code of Ordinances for construction site operations is updated to keep sites cleaner and safer, with stiff penalties for violations. It is paired with a set of standards that can be revised by council.

**October** – The Planning Commission approves the special land use (following a public hearing) and preliminary site plan, with conditions, for 456 E. Cady (Foundry Flask site). Plans include a 3-story, mixed-use building with residential units, commercial space and a grocery/market.

**November** – Voters elect John Carter and Andrew Krenz to two open seats. Barbara Moroski-Browne is selected by fellow council members as mayor pro tem. // The DDA contracts with a Detroit firm to bring 10 new EV charging stations to the city at three locations, greatly increasing capacity.

**December** – Downtown streets that are part of the social district will remain closed to traffic until Nov. 7, 2022 to study the second-year impact on businesses, residents and others as COVID-19 waxes and wanes. // The Master Plan (with updates to three subareas) is accepted by City Council, after two years of work by the Planning Commission and extensive public input.

## City Directory

Allen Terrace.....	248-349-8030
Assessor.....	248-305-2704
Building Department.....	248-449-9902
Cemetery.....	248-305-2702
City Manager.....	248-449-9905
City Clerk.....	248-349-1300
Communications (print, online).....	248-305-2703
Community Center.....	248-349-4140
DDA.....	248-349-0345
Finance Department.....	248-449-9907
Fire Department.....	248-449-9920
Parks and Recreation.....	248-349-0203
Police Dispatch (non-emergency).....	248-349-1234
Police.....	248-349-5100
Public Works.....	248-449-9930
Tax Department/Treasurer.....	248-449-9901
Youth Assistance.....	248-344-1618

### Frequently Called Numbers

Art House.....	248-344-0497
Chamber of Commerce.....	248-349-7640
Civic Concern.....	248-344-1033
Historical Society.....	248-348-1845
Library.....	248-349-3020
Mill Race Village.....	248-348-1845
Post Office.....	248-349-2062
Waste Management.....	800-796-9696

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# City News

of Northville

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