

CITY OF NEW BALTIMORE  
VISIONS AND STRATEGIES

## SECTION 6.0

### INTRODUCTION

In the broadest sense, the Master Plan is a set of policies. Presumably, the Plan contains several policies, each supported by a group of objectives designed to serve as a guide to consistent and rational public and private decisions in the use and development of land and public improvements as well as public administration.

#### - VISION -

*The City of New Baltimore is committed to citizen satisfaction, enhancement of the waterfront, quality residential neighborhoods, preservation of the natural environment, good government and economic vitality.*

The Master Plan itself is:

- ✓ The result of an orderly process of investigation and analysis of physical, demographic and economic characteristics of the City
- ✓ A guide for the current and future decision making process.
- ✓ A map of future land use patterns with supporting documentation.
- ✓ A long range, comprehensive guide for the development and redevelopment of the City based on present goals and objectives determined by the City and its residents.

The purposes of the Master Plan are:

- ✓ To improve the physical environment of the City as a setting for human activities
- ✓ To promote the general health, safety and welfare by making the City more functional, beautiful, decent, healthful, interesting and efficient.
- ✓ To promote the public interest of the City at large, rather than the interests of individuals or special groups within the City.
- ✓ To facilitate the democratic determination and implementation of City policies and physical development. *The Plan is primarily a policy instrument. The Plan constitutes a declaration of long-range goals and objectives and provides the basis to accomplish the goals and objectives stated within.*
- ✓ To inject long-range considerations into the determination of short-range actions.
- ✓ To bring professional and technical knowledge to bear on the making of political decisions concerning the physical development of the City.
- ✓ As an expression of desirable physical development, the Master Plan is an affirmation of goals and objectives.

## **POLICY BASIS**

Only through careful analysis of existing conditions and the forces which have brought them about, can the City understand their interrelationship, identify their underlying purpose, anticipate future problems, and devise solutions. Accordingly, the City identifies its goals and objectives by relating them to current problems and issues and to tangible alternative solutions; at the same time, the City must attempt to anticipate future problems, scenarios and issues and recommend the steps necessary to prevent their development and/or reduce their severity or to promote their aspects for the City's good.

No statement of policy or set of objectives, however carefully and analytically developed, will be equally relevant at all times. Movements of people and the stimulation of activities relieve one set of issues and leave others in their wake. For example, when the automobile replaced the horse, the streets became cleaner but the air dirtier. As our production rises, distribution, rather than production of consumer goods, becomes the problem. As urbanization continues, flooding becomes a problem in previously well-drained areas because of increased water run off. Increases in population and income affect recreation demand and create weekend traffic congestion in areas usually free of such conditions.

While policy formation in practice is not as tidy and logical as it is in theory, it is important to note that policy decisions tend to move in sequence from the general to the specific. In this chapter, less emphasis is being placed on the very general goals because it is presumed that they reflect universally accepted values (i.e., create a community of the highest quality in which to work, live and recreate, ensuring optimum protection of health, safety, welfare, etc.).

This section attempts to reflect the community structure and quality of community life which the City desires. Decisions cited in this chapter and the resulting objectives are translated into a Master Plan that reflects New Baltimore's key decisions in selecting future development patterns.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The City of New Baltimore is dedicated to providing a high quality living environment through good government, effective planning, public involvement and strong leadership.

In pursuit of this mission, the City will:

- Provide quality public services, i.e., water, sewer, storm drainage, sidewalks, streets, recreation, police and fire protection.
- Protect and enhance the natural environment to the fullest extent possible.
- Seek the involvement, interaction and understanding of its citizens in all decision making processes.
- Encourage beauty and quality throughout all segments of the community.

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### GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Goals and typically very general statements about the quality and character of the community that are not easily quantified or measured. Therefore, goals must be translated into statements which can be measured or quantified. These statements are categorized as objectives. Objectives, are typically prioritized and then pursued. Once the goals, objectives and recommendations have been identified, implementation strategies are then developed. These strategies give direction on how each of the objectives, and ultimately goals, can be realized. Goals, Objectives and Policies have been established for the following sections of the City:

- *Residential*
- *Historic Preservation*
- *Downtown*
- *Commercial*
- *Industrial*
- *Parks and Recreation*
- *Natural Environment*
- *Thoroughfare System*

The goals, objectives, and policies contained within this section were derived from the City's previous Master Plan which provided the planning basis for eight (8) years, the City's Planning Commission input, and several small visioning sessions which allowed a more specific, focused view of different planning issues.

#### RESIDENTIAL

**Rationale:** The City of New Baltimore is largely made up of residential development. This predominance of residential development provides the foundation from which perceptions of the City are made. It is important to provide strong goals objectives and policies regarding residential development to ensure that existing residential development is maintained at its current standard and that all future residential development is held to this same high standard.

**Goal:** Provide for a variety of housing types which include single family residential, multiple family residential, including duplexes condominiums and apartments, as well as senior housing.

- ✓ Establish a variety of zoning districts and densities which allow for the construction of a variety of different housing types.
- ✓ Plan logical locations for each specific land use which provides for the necessary amenities, services, and functions required by each land use.

**Goal:** Maintain a predominantly homeowner-oriented community.

- ✓ Promote residential neighborhoods that provide quality living, education and public services within the natural environment which support home ownership.
- ✓ Pursue a program to assure that owner-occupied residences meet City codes when they are sold to ensure homes are of the necessary quality.
- ✓ Promote neighborhood enhancement programs and strategies such as preservation of mature trees, street tree plantings, enhanced landscape buffers between incompatible uses, and sidewalk improvements.

**Goal:** Encourage the preservation of historical residential structures.

- ✓ Renovate and rehabilitate existing housing to protect health and safety and maintain an attractive environment.
- ✓ Support educational efforts to publicize historic structures and their importance to the fabric of the community.
- ✓ Where there are concentrations of historic structures, ensure that new development is compatible with the existing historic character of the area. Encourage an architectural theme which complements existing historic structures.
- ✓ Make known to all residents the current historic district limits and any buildings within such limits which are regulated by the historic district.

**Goal:** Encourage visually attractive, high quality residential developments regardless of unit type.

- ✓ Pursue landlord licenses or rental inspections to assure maintenance of rental units.
- ✓ Establish guidelines and standards for both single-family and multi-family developments which assure adequacy of parking, open space and proper screening from incompatible uses.
- ✓ Provide code enforcement of all residential properties.
- ✓ Examine, analyze and upgrade zoning provisions with additional standards to promote and assure quality development.

**Goal:** Maintain the natural environment while permitting the development of residential dwellings

- ✓ Encourage the use of innovative planning concepts to preserve areas of woodlands, wetlands and open areas.
- ✓ Utilize the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance to establish a "no net loss of trees" policy for the City.
- ✓ Require the involvement of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) regarding residential developments within known or suspected wetland or floodplain areas.

**Goal:** Ensure the proper land use relationships are maintained between different land use types and intensities throughout the City.

- ✓ Multi-family development in the downtown will be permitted either as apartments over stores or lofts or as multi-story buildings utilizing the ground floor as non-residential.
- ✓ Residential neighborhoods shall be protected from the encroachment of incompatible land uses through the use of zoning and the Master Plan.
- ✓ Provide and maintain continuous sidewalks linking neighborhoods, schools, community facilities, and the downtown area.

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### DOWNTOWN / COMMERCIAL

**Rationale:** The City of New Baltimore is unique in that the City is divided into two main commercial areas; the first being the Downtown and the second being M-29. The Downtown has the potential of providing a unique, niche market for either residents or tourists. The M-29 corridor provides the residents of the City and outlying areas with typical highway commercial development.

The historic downtown of New Baltimore has the opportunity for redevelopment and revitalization. As incomes within the area continue to rise, the viability of a unique, hometown shopping area also continues to rise. However, the Downtown is impacted, both physically and economically by the M-29 Corridor.

The M-29 corridor consists mainly of existing highway orientated commercial development on both sides of the street. This corridor provides for the majority of the commercial development within the City. Further, since M-29 is so highly traveled, this corridor is the main vision or impression of the City for many travelers. Therefore, the City must set goals and objectives for the enhancement and continued redevelopment of these areas to provide, the necessary commercial amenities for residents as well as provide a positive entry into the City. The following provide the goals and strategies for the two distinctly different commercial areas within the City.



**Goal:** To restore and enhance the Central Business District within the City of New Baltimore.

- ✓ Work closely with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to coordinate planning efforts, infrastructure improvements and land use allocations to better the downtown.
- ✓ Minimize rezonings and/or commercial development near the downtown which would adversely effect the downtown environment.
- ✓ Continue to improve public and private signage, infrastructure, lighting, etc. downtown.
- ✓ Re-evaluate the existing Tax Increment Finance Plan (TIFA) and DDA Plan to reestablish goals, priorities, funding options, as well as projects.

**Goal:** To promote a wide mixture of healthy uses within the Downtown such as retail, office, entertainment, municipal, and residential to strengthen the Downtown’s image as an “active place.”

- ✓ Encourage an expanded retail environment in the core of downtown that includes mixed-use retail combined with office and upper level residential uses.
- ✓ Encourage the relocation of uses not dependent on a downtown location and allow for the conversion to uses which are complementary to and compatible with a downtown environment.
- ✓ Encourage the conversion of historic homes to bed and breakfast or other appropriate facilities.
- ✓ Discourage uses that are a detriment to pedestrian oriented environment such as drive-thrus and uses, which require multiple curb cuts.

**Goal:** Provide a distinct physical connection between the Downtown and Green Street and the Waterfront Park.

- ✓ Allocate monies for further downtown beautification projects especially those along Washington Street which lead to the waterfront.
- ✓ Develop unique and clearly identifiable signage that indicates the boundaries and location of the Downtown area.
- ✓ Ensure compatibility in design of all buildings proposed along the Washington Street frontage.

**Goal:** Establish public parking lots proximate to the downtown area to provide convenience to local shoppers.

- ✓ Provide ample parking areas to the rear or proximate to the businesses within downtown, these may include current lots used for other purposes.
- ✓ Develop a signage system that clearly indicates the location or direction of public parking.

**Goal:** Create a marketing strategy to sell downtown to residents, consumers, investors and developers.

- ✓ Develop further tourism orientated activities located within the Downtown such as the Fish Fly Festival to provide a continuous flow of people within the Downtown area.
- ✓ Work to promote uniformity for businesses within the Downtown. This includes hours of operations, sales, etc.

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**Goal:** Allow for the redevelopment of “non-downtown” commercial uses along 23 Mile Road and M-29 Corridor to the west and east of the City in a limited capacity.

- ✓ Provide sufficient setback as well as attractive physical barriers between residential and non-residential uses as necessary to minimize disruptive light, noise, odor, dust, unsightly appearances and intrusive activity relative to the residential environment.
- ✓ Continue the facade/building line east and west of downtown along Main Street to better integrate with the downtown and to create an entryway into the City.
- ✓ Utilize streetscape elements such as lighting, landscaping, furniture and signage to help visually unify areas and improve the vehicular and pedestrian environment along the corridor.

**Goal:** Encourage high quality commercial development in terms of design, layout and appearance.

- ✓ Develop design guidelines for commercial development in both the downtown and non-downtown settings.
- ✓ Provide consistent screening of more intensive uses (i.e. multiple family, commercial/office uses) from residential neighborhoods through the use of walls, fences and/or landscaping.
- ✓ Encourage creative parking design, utilizing landscaped islands and setbacks and innovative landscape design.

**Goal:** Improve the aesthetics and safety of the M-29 corridor by reducing the total number and size of signs for commercial developments.

- ✓ Implement and enforce the provisions of the City of New Baltimore Sign Ordinance which requires smaller, architecturally compatible monument signs.
- ✓ Remove signage which creates hazards and/or blocks clear views along public roadways as a matter of public safety.

**Goal:** Discourage the Master Planning or rezoning of commercial activities not located along M-29, or which are not located at major intersections within the community.

- ✓ Minimize rezonings which are not located along M-29 to prevent commercial development from encroaching into the inner residential areas.
- ✓ Transition commercial zonings along M-29 with office zoning to provide a logical transition between commercial and residential land uses where appropriate.

## INDUSTRIAL

**Rationale:** The City itself sits in proximity to a major industrial corridor along Gratiot Avenue in Chesterfield Township. The City must utilize its assets to attract industries from around the area to establish a solid industrial tax base.

**Goal:** Encourage the attraction and expansion of industries to fill the industrial park and to provide a broader tax base.

- ✓ Assure that all industries shall not intrude on other uses, either physically, visually or through other negative external effects.
- ✓ Assure that sufficient infrastructure and other public facilities exist to support industrial uses, including utilities, roads, communication facilities, police and fire protection, and other necessary support facilities.
- ✓ Eliminate or minimize potential nuisances and damaging environmental impacts that may be associated with industrial uses, including air and water pollution, noise and vibration.
- ✓ Buffer industrial uses from less intensive land uses through the use of appropriate setback standards, landscaping, and by locating industrial uses adjacent to other intensive land uses.
- ✓ Promote a high standard of City beautification for new developments and encourage revitalization of existing business structures.
- ✓ Work with the Macomb County Planning Commission's Economic Development Division to market the industrial assets of the City of New Baltimore.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The City has a diverse inventory of environmental assets, ranging from the Bay, to extensive shoreline, inland wetlands, tree stands, drainageways, etc. As the City continues to develop, the land planning process must take these assets into account and develop in harmony with them.

**Goal:** To the maximum extent possible, preserve existing wetlands and the hydrological systems that support them so that these can continue to perform their vital functions.

- ✓ The natural proximity to Lake St. Clair and the Great Lakes requires special attention to water quality and runoff from the City. The preservation of systems such as wetlands and natural drains will help prevent negative water quality issues.

**Goal:** Develop a means of promoting the conservation or replacement of wetlands within the community, essentially creating a no net loss of wetlands policy for the City.

- ✓ Require Michigan Department of Environmental Quality review of all site plans, special land uses, subdivisions, site condominiums, etc. where wetlands are known, mapped, or suspected based on existing mapping or soils.
- ✓ Encourage constructed wetlands to be utilized as filtration systems for treating storm water runoff.

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**Goal:** Recognize the relationship between development in the City and the impacts of such development on the Anchor Bay Watershed.

- ✓ Adopt the standards within the Anchor Bay Watershed Plan as a part of the City's Master Plan
- ✓ Ensure through the Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Site Plan review that water runoff, sediment, or other form of contaminants are controlled onsite.
- ✓ Continue to upgrade the engineering requirements to ensure that site run-off generated by new development is filtered and clean before such enters the natural drainageways.
- ✓ To the extent reasonable, require all existing developed sites in the Community to meet newly developed environmental requirements.
- ✓ Develop Ordinance regulations which require undisturbed buffer areas along natural waterways, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive lands.

### THOROUGHFARE SYSTEM

**Rationale:** An efficient and safe transportation system is vital to the quality of life in the City of New Baltimore for both residents and businesses.

**Goal:** Establish a priority system of street improvements, which improve traffic flow and safety, relieve congestion and are coordinated with commercial corridor improvements.

- ✓ Obtain right-of-way dedications and reservations consistent with local, county and State standards.
- ✓ Improve Green Street so that it can carry present and future traffic projections.

**Goal:** Limit the numbers of egress/ingress access and service drives and encourage shared drives along major corridors.

- ✓ Work with the Road Commission of Macomb County to develop standards for driveway spacing and offsets.
- ✓ Develop a revitalization plan of access management along M-29 and other major roadways within the City.

**Goal:** To encourage the use of shared access drives and shared parking facilities along all M-29 commercial or office frontages.

- ✓ Develop access management standards which regulate driveway spacing, number, alignments, etc.
- ✓ Encourage the development of joint parking agreements between commercial uses, especially where peak times do not overlap.

**Goal:** Develop standards for all local residential streets within the City that provide for a safe and efficient traffic flow but also provide amenities to the residents and pedestrians.

- ✓ Local neighborhood streets shall be designed for and restricted to neighborhood destined passenger and service vehicles.

## PARKS & RECREATION

**Rationale:** The desirability of New Baltimore as a residential community can be enhanced by a system of excellent parks and recreational facilities. Parks and recreation services contribute to the economic and social well being of the community. Increased demands will be placed on parks and recreation services as population and resident expectations increase.

**Goal:** Provide recreation land in the form of community parks, neighborhood parks and mini-parks, which is convenient and accessible to all residents.

- ✓ Continue to develop the City's existing neighborhood parks as defined in the City's Recreation Plan.
- ✓ Develop the proposed new parks which are defined within the City's Recreation Plan.

**Goal:** Continue to pursue the development of a new parks and recreation facility within the City.

- ✓ Conduct a needs assessment of the City's current and projected needs for an indoor recreation center.
- ✓ Review the potential of leaving the parks and recreation building downtown to help maintain a draw.

**Goal:** Continue the development and beautification of the current City parks.

- ✓ Develop and implement a realistic capitol improvement plan for the development of parks and recreation facilities.

**Goal:** Maximize to the extent possible, the City's proximity to the water as a recreational amenity.

- ✓ Purchase waterfront realty as it becomes available to the City through the use of parks and recreation grants.
- ✓ Develop the potential for boat launch facilities at each waterfront park location.

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