

# **CITY OF NORTHVILLE**



## ***ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL STUDY OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT***

***March 2009***



**REHMANN ROBSON**

*Certified Public Accountants*



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A member of THE REHMANN GROUP



March 5, 2009

Mr. Patrick Sullivan  
City Manager  
City of Northville  
215 W. Main St.  
Northville, MI 48167-1599

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

We have completed the organization and operational study of the City of Northville's municipal operations. This review has included an evaluation of organization and staffing, workload assignments, procedural and financial practices and other elements of administration, management and service provision. This final report contains the findings and conclusions resulting from this analysis and recommendations for future operations.

We appreciate the cooperation extended to us by the various departments and the staff of the City of Northville. All have given valuable assistance by providing data and information, and facilitating our understanding of operational practices and related options.

We have sincerely enjoyed this opportunity to work with the City of Northville on this important study. Should you have questions concerning this report, please do not hesitate to contact me at 517.841.4912.

Very truly yours,

**REHMANN ROBSON**

Mark W. Nottley, Principal  
Governmental Consulting Division

**CITY OF NORTHVILLE**  
**ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL STUDY OF THE CITY**  
**GOVERNMENT**

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## **SECTION I**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## SECTION I

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### *Background of the Study*

The City of Northville is a full-service city of approximately 6,100 residents. The City is considered one of the Detroit metro area's most desirable locales, featuring a mix of housing styles, a vibrant downtown area and a high level of community involvement. In every respect, the City of Northville is a community with a significant level of civic pride, and, in turn, high service expectations.

The City has traditionally met, or exceeded these service expectations in a relatively cost effective manner. In several areas, joint operating agreements have been negotiated with Northville Township to realize an economy-of-scale. The fire service, a source of cost concern in many cities, has been maintained as a volunteer/paid-on-call operation in Northville. These and other prudent approaches to service provision have allowed the City to maintain a relatively high service standard within an affordable expenditure base.

However, as is the case in most communities in Michigan, the City of Northville is now facing some significant financial challenges. These are resulting from:

- Reductions in State-shared revenues
- The ongoing impact of the Headlee Amendment and Proposal A
- Reductions in property values resulting from the housing recession
- Rising employee benefit and operating costs.

The impact of these fiscal pressures has been estimated in the City's five year budget forecast. This model, prepared on an ongoing basis, predicts a \$2.7 million budgetary shortfall during the period FY 2009-2012.

Faced with this challenge, it is essential that the City take pre-emptive action to assure ongoing financial health. Recognizing this, the City retained our firm to conduct an organizational and operational study of the City government. More specifically:

- To assess the operational processes and staffing levels across the full range of operating departments
- To identify areas in which cost efficiencies can be realized
- To develop a "road map" to guide the City in realizing necessary reductions, service consolidations or other necessary outcomes.

#### *The Scope of the Analysis*

Unfortunately, significant cost reductions cannot be realized without some sacrifice. Most notably, like other cities, the bulk of the City of Northville's operating costs are focused on

personnel. In FY 2008-2009, direct personnel costs (i.e. wages and benefits) account for roughly 64% of General Fund expenditures. With this percentage of resources devoted to staffing, it is difficult to envision significant cost savings without the loss of some personnel.

Thus, in conducting the study, we have had to face the reality that (barring new taxes or other revenues) some staff reductions will be required if the City is to remain fiscally solvent. However, we have also had to recognize that the loss of any significant number of staff could have profoundly negative impacts on service quality – a situation to be avoided.

To reconcile these positions we have explored various methods for cost savings and productivity improvement. This has included opportunities to realign duties and responsibilities, outsource services, reduce costs related to equipment or materials, increase revenue generation, employ part-time help to greater advantage and certainly, to reduce staffing levels. In regard to the latter, it is our hope that the majority of recommended staff reductions can be achieved through attrition and voluntary separation.

In regard to project scope, we have tried to be thorough in our assessment and assure that all issues and options were properly evaluated. The amount of on-site work has been substantial, spanning a six month period. It has included many project interviews and the review of volumes of data from the operating departments. Additionally, it has involved the collection and presentation of comparative data from benchmark communities where applicable. The benchmark grouping used for the study is summarized in Table A.

**Table A  
Northville City-Wide Management Audit  
Benchmark Survey Participants**

<b>City or Village</b>	<b>2007 Population</b>
<b>Northville</b>	<b>6,096</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	7,184
<b>Farmington</b>	9,890
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	7,663
<b>Grosse Pointe</b>	5,161
<b>Grosse Pointe Farms</b>	8,879
<b>Farmington</b>	9,890
<b>Milford</b>	6,272
<b>Plymouth</b>	8,732
<b>Saline</b>	8,034
<b>Walled Lake</b>	6,929
<b>AVERAGE OF COMPARABLES</b>	<b>7,863</b>

Source: U.S Census Bureau

### *Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations*

The information collected during the study provided the basis for this final report document. In regard to the report, the findings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from the analysis are presented in the following Section II on a department-by-department basis. Recommendations are then further summarized in matrix form in Section III.

Taken in total we estimate that the recommended actions could yield as much as \$500,000 in annual cost savings or more if the City wished to aggressively pursue all recommended options. In many cases, these are reoccurring cost savings that would provide ongoing, annual savings. (NOTE: in reviewing the cost savings, please be mindful that positional costs and hourly wages that are presented include both wages and employee benefits). Some can be implemented at the City's discretion while others will require contractual accommodation. Taken in total, the recommended actions are intended to provide the City with a "road map" for assuring future financial health and the continuation of high-quality services.

In reviewing the report the reader should remain mindful of the fact that an operational evaluation, by its nature, emphasizes the identification of areas for improvement. In this sense, the report underemphasizes the many fine qualities and solid contributions of employees and operating departments. From an overall perspective we were highly impressed with the City of Northville's organization and service delivery systems. In effect, our recommendations are intended to improve on an already productive and well managed local government operation.

## **SECTION II**

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**



## SECTION II

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this section of the report, we summarize the findings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from our review of the City of Northville’s organization and operations. To facilitate review, the evaluation is presented in the following subsections:

*A. Overall Management*

*B. City Clerk’s Office*

*C. Finance, Treasury and Assessing*

*D. Public Works Department and Building Division*

*E. Parks and Recreation Department*

*F. Fire Department*

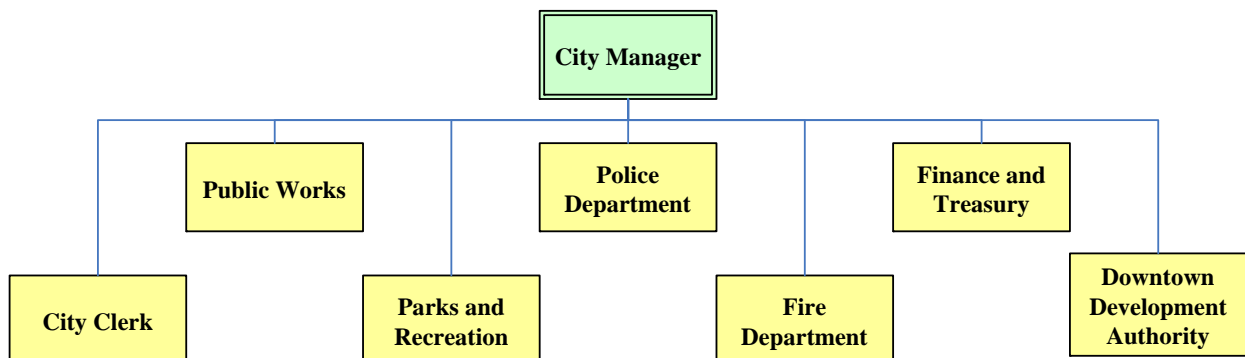
*G. Police Department*

*H. Downtown Development Authority.*

#### *A. Overall Management*

By charter, the City of Northville employs a manager/council form of government to administer municipal operations. As seen in the following Exhibit 1, the City Manager is responsible for oversight and direction of seven operating departments in addition to the City Manager’s Office.

**Exhibit 1  
City of Northville’s Functional Operating Departments**

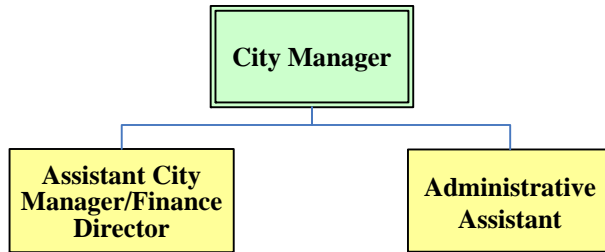


Our findings and conclusions, presented below, focus on this work scope as well as other management issues.

**1. THE CITY APPEARS TO BE WELL-MANAGED. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED WITH A RELATIVELY SMALL ADMINISTRATIVE/MANAGEMENT TEAM.**

As illustrated in Exhibit 2, the City Manager’s Office operates with minimal staff, including the City Manager, Administrative Assistant and a portion of the Assistant City Manager/Finance Director’s time.

**Exhibit 2  
City of Northville  
Organization of City Manager’s Office**



The City of Northville is characterized by a constituency that is very involved in municipal government as well as an “open-door” policy and expectation. In this environment, the City Manager must balance work time between internal management duties, citizen interactions, and committee and other public meeting responsibilities. The City Manager appears to manage this workload successfully, moving from situation to situation throughout the workday.

As in most cities, informational and time demands require additional professional input in the areas of human resource administration and workforce management. However, in a city of Northville’s size, it is typically not efficient to employ a full-time human resources director to address these and other personnel-related needs. Instead, Northville meets this need by devoting a portion of the time of the Assistant City Manager/Finance Director to human resources responsibilities. As seen in Exhibit 3, several of our benchmark communities also have assistant city manager positions.

**Exhibit 3  
Overview of City Administration**

City or Village	Population	Do you have an Assistant City Manager?	Do you have a Personnel Director?	If yes, primary areas of responsibility
<b>Northville</b>	<b>6,096</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Finance, IT and Personnel</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	7,184	No	No	-
<b>Farmington</b>	9,890	No	-	-
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	7,663	Yes	Yes	Finance and DDA
<b>Grosse Pointe</b>	5,161	Yes	No	Personnel and CDBG
<b>Grosse Pointe Farms</b>	8,879	Yes	No	City Clerk, Planning & Personnel
<b>Milford</b>	6,272	No	No	-
<b>Plymouth</b>	8,732	Yes	No	Public Safety
<b>Saline</b>	8,034	No	No	-
<b>Walled Lake</b>	6,929	No	No	-

Note: Dash indicates no comparable condition or service

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

As seen in Exhibit 3, several of the communities (like Northville) designate a department head as Assistant City Manager, creating a situation in which the individual has both line supervision and administrative responsibility. This is an efficient method of reducing costs and using assigned personnel to the best advantage. Depending on the assigned workload, this can result in a challenging, highly effective scope of duties and responsibilities.

This appears to be the case in Northville. The Assistant City Manager/Finance Director is highly motivated and has assumed a scope of responsibilities that spans finance, treasury, information systems, assessment oversight, special projects and personnel management. The result is a highly productive administrative function combining the work input and particular talents of the City Manager and Assistant City Manager/Finance Director.

As an additional management asset, the Administrative Assistant, relatively new to the position, appears to be adapting well to the multi-tasking and short timelines required of the job. The position is still evolving and assumed responsibility for web-site updates during the course of the study. The position also provides back-up to the City Clerk and can potentially be utilized for additional back-up work as examined later in the report.

**2. SOME ASPECTS OF THE PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM NEED UPDATE AND ATTENTION.**

As mentioned, it is unusual for a city the size of Northville to have a dedicated Human Resources professional – the cost benefit of this approach is not sufficiently high. In

Northville, the Assistant City Manager/Finance Director has responsibility for maintaining confidential personnel records, complying with Federal and State laws regarding notifications and reporting, administering recruitment and hiring process, maintaining insurance coverages and assisting in labor negotiations. These duties appear to be performed in a competent and timely fashion.

However, some aspects of personnel documentation appear to be in need of update. More specifically:

- Many personnel policies are aged – a new comprehensive personnel policies manual is needed. During the project interviews, some department heads cited this as a pressing need, and basis to provide guidance in situations of employee conduct and potential discipline.
- Some job descriptions are also aged. Job descriptions appear to have been revised and updated as the need arises. Ideally, all job descriptions would be current and include language intended to minimize the likelihood of unfairly discriminating against handicapped and special-needs job applicants.
- The City does not have a formal pay plan for non-union employees. Since many full-time employees are unionized, this is a less significant issue. However, the City would still benefit from a formal market-driven pay structure for the non-union group. Done properly, it would provide a more rational basis for pay decisions and the possible inclusion of merit-based pay practices.

Summarily, the City is well managed and the administrative team appears to be highly professional and competent. As resources are stretched, it is inevitable that some needs receive lower priority. The personnel practices deficiencies noted above would appear to fall into this category.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERALL MANAGEMENT**

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, our recommendations for improvement are as follows.

### ***1. THE CITY SHOULD DEVELOP A NEW PERSONNEL POLICIES MANUAL.***

- As a means of articulating the City's expectation regarding work conditions and employee conduct.
- The personnel policies manual should be comprehensive. A sample outline is included in Exhibit 4.

### ***2. THE CITY SHOULD DEVELOP A CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION SYSTEM.***

- Job classification and job descriptions should be updated and standardized for all employees – union and non-union.
- A pay grade structure, possibly tied to performance evaluation, should be considered for full-time, non-union employees

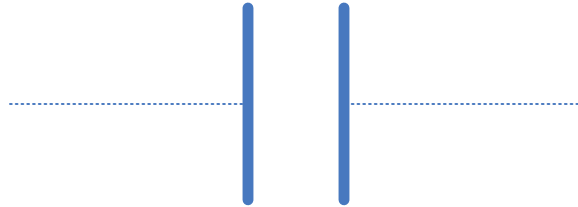
**Exhibit 4**  
**CITY OF NORTHVILLE**  
**SUGGESTED FORMAT AND CONTENT FOR THE**  
**PERSONNEL POLICIES MANUAL**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>I. Introduction to the Manual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose of the Manual</li> <li>Organizational Chart</li> <li>Application of Policies</li> <li>At-Will/Just Cause Employment</li> <li>Distribution</li> <li>Severability</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overtime for FLSA Exempt Employees</li> <li>Pay for Emergency Call-in</li> <li>Performance Evaluation</li> <li>Transfers</li> <li>Promotions</li> <li>Demotions</li> <li>Personnel Files</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>II. Employee Selection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equal Employment Opportunity</li> <li>Accommodation of Handicaps</li> <li>Recruitment and Job Postings</li> <li>Application for Position Opening</li> <li>Rejection of Applications</li> <li>Internal Promotions and New Appointments</li> <li>Background and Reference Checks</li> <li>Physical Examination and Drug Screening</li> <li>Orientation Period</li> <li>Nepotism</li> <li>Job Descriptions</li> <li>Full-time Employees</li> <li>Part-time Employees</li> <li>Temporary Employees</li> <li>Volunteer Employees</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p><b>V. Termination of Employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voluntary Termination</li> <li>Involuntary Termination</li> <li>Layoffs/Reductions in Force and Recall</li> <li>Exit Interview</li> <li>Return of Property</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>III. General Operating Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work Day and Work Week</li> <li>Attendance</li> <li>Pay Periods and Timecards</li> <li>Break Periods</li> <li>Courtesy</li> <li>Personal Appearance and Hygiene</li> <li>Drug-Free Workplace</li> <li>Use of Employer's Resources and Workforce</li> <li>Use of Technology</li> <li>Care of Equipment</li> <li>Expense Reimbursement</li> <li>Political Activity</li> <li>Harassment</li> <li>Workplace Violence</li> <li>Smoking and Other Tobacco Products</li> <li>Safety</li> <li>Right-To-Know</li> <li>Gifts and Gratuities</li> <li>Outside Employment</li> <li>Personal Articles in the Workplace</li> <li>Uniforms and Safety Attire</li> <li>Workers' Compensation</li> <li>Unemployment Compensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational Assistance</li> </ul> </li> <li>Professional and Trade Associations</li> <li>Employee Assistance Program</li> </ul> | <p><b>VI. Employee Discipline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rules of Conduct</li> <li>Disciplinary Actions</li> <li>Employee Grievance Procedure</li> <li>Appeal of Discharge</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>IV. Classification and Compensation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensation Philosophy</li> <li>Classification and Compensation Structure</li> <li>Compensation Adjustments</li> <li>Overtime for FLSA Non-Exempt Employees</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p><b>VII. Paid and Unpaid Leave Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holidays</li> <li>Vacation</li> <li>Personal Leave</li> <li>Sick Leave</li> <li>Bereavement Leave</li> <li>Jury Duty Leave</li> <li>Extended Leave</li> </ul> <p><b>VII. Paid and Unpaid Leave Time (cont'd)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Military Leave</li> <li>Family and Medical Leave</li> <li>Unapproved Leave</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p><b>VIII. Health and Welfare Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Insurance</li> <li>Life Insurance</li> <li>Coverage and Eligibility</li> <li>Disability Insurance</li> <li>Retirement Plan</li> <li>Merit/Longevity Bonus</li> <li>Social Security</li> <li>Continuation of Benefits</li> </ul> <p><b>APPENDICES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drug Free Workplace Policy</li> <li>Harassment Policy</li> <li>Policy of Technology Use</li> <li>Travel Policy</li> <li>Family and Medical Leave Act</li> </ul> |

## ***B. City Clerk's Office***

The City of Northville's front office area is staffed by four clerical personnel, each with distinct duties and responsibilities. As illustrated in Exhibit 5, the positions are physically aligned on both sides of the front entrance hallway in the City Hall.

### **Exhibit 5 City of Northville Clerical Staffing**



In this section of the report we consider the duties and responsibilities of the two positions currently assigned to the Clerk's Office as well as the Clerk's Office function more generally. The duties of the other two positions are examined later in the report and ultimately all four positions are considered as a group. Key findings and conclusions regarding the Clerk's Office operation include the following:

#### **1. THE TWO CLERKS ASSIGNED TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE HAVE BOTH UNIQUE AND SHARED DUTIES. WORKLOAD DOES NOT APPEAR HEAVY.**

In regard to duties, the two Clerks assigned to the City Clerk can generally be described as having the following duties:

- Clerk # 1 is responsible for:
  - Telephone and office reception
  - Cash receipting and bank deposit preparation
  - Parking ticket data entry
  - Dog licensing
  - Passport processing (rotated with others)
  - Other various periodic clerical tasks (many related to parking tickets).
  
- Clerk #2 is responsible for:
  - Cash receipting
  - Back-up for telephone and office reception
  - Election clerk duties such as voter registration input and periodic absentee ballot processing
  - Business licensing
  - Passport processing (rotated with others)
  - Recording secretary (primarily performed on an overtime basis).

In regard to the above duties, some such as dog licensing and business licensing are primarily seasonal annual events. The most significant areas of ongoing workload are office reception and phone, parking tickets (approximately six per day), cash receipting and changes to the voter registration database. The latter is a typical duty for a Clerk's office, though, as seen in Exhibit 6, our survey would indicate that parking tickets and cash receipting are not typical duties.

**Exhibit 6**  
**Responsibility for Various Functions Assigned to City Clerk's Office**

City or Village	Responsible for business licensing?	Passport registration?	Cemetery lot sales?	Dog licenses?	Parking ticket data entry?	Cash receipting?
Northville	Clerk	Clerk	-	Clerk	Clerk	Clerk
Brighton	-	-	Clerk	-	-	-
Farmington	Clerk	-	Clerk	-	-	-
Grand Blanc	-	-	-	Clerk	-	Clerk
Grosse Pointe	Clerk	-	-	-	-	-
Grosse Pointe Farms	-	-	-	-	-	-
Milford	-	-	-	-	-	-
Plymouth	-	Clerk	-	-	-	-
Saline	Clerk	Clerk	Clerk	-	-	-
Walled Lake	-	Clerk	Clerk	Clerk	-	Clerk

Notes: Dash indicates no comparable duty

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

In regard to actual workload, the reception and phone duties appear to consume a large portion of employee time. Related to these duties, during our field visits we noted extensive periods of time devoted to socializing; be it walk-in or by phone. This is not a criticism of the employees, simple a statement of fact. The City Hall front area exudes a pleasant atmosphere, conducive to visiting and socializing.

The current state of affairs can be viewed from two perspectives. On one hand, the City values its open, community-oriented approach to government – exemplified by the City Hall reception area. On the other hand, it is an expensive, unproductive way of running a business, particularly in an economic recession. In actuality, the core duties performed by the two Clerks should not require the current staffing levels – particularly if duties were modified and reorganized. This issue is discussed in the following finding.

**2. IF THE CLERK'S OFFICE CLERICAL DUTIES WERE REDEFINED, ONE OF TWO POSITIONS COULD BE ELIMINATED.**

As discussed above, the two Clerks assigned to the Clerk's Office have a number of duties that are not common to a Clerk's office. If these duties were assigned elsewhere,



and/or other duties modified, the Clerk’s Office could function with one full-time clerical position at a cost savings of \$71,485 in total compensation. More specifically, the following changes could facilitate this reduction:

- A. The responsibility for parking ticket data entry could be reassigned to the Police Department. As seen in Exhibit 7, this is a common police duty, and in Northville could be assigned to the Police Clerk.

**Exhibit 7  
Responsibility for Parking Ticket Data Entry**

City or Village	Who has responsibility for Parking ticket data entry?
Northville	Clerk
Brighton	Finance
Farmington	Public Safety
Grand Blanc	Police
Grosse Pointe	Court
Grosse Pointe Farms	Court
Milford	Police - Code Officer
Plymouth	Police
Saline	Treasurer
Walled Lake	Police

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

- B. The City could relieve the Clerk’s Office of phone reception responsibility and use an automated phone system. In fact, each department currently has a direct dial number, some of which are reportedly used extensively.

One concern expressed regarding an automated phone system is that callers could (potentially on a frequent basis) be directed into voicemail, rather than receiving a “live” response. In fact, this appears to be an issue with the current system as well. During the course of the study we have made numerous phone calls to the City and requested transfer to particular individuals and departments. In doing so, we have often been transferred into voice mail – a situation that is not unlikely to change under any system. Also, we have been transferred into a voice mail menu through the switchboard that is not overly user-friendly.

In fact, an automated phone system can be programmed and designed to be responsive and pleasant. More specifically:

- Menu choices can be cumbersome in a poorly designed system. To avoid this, attention could be given to designing a menu that is easy to follow and provides a relatively positive experience.

- Initially callers could be informed that they have reached the City of Northville, not the Township, thereby eliminating a reportedly, large portion of the call volume.
- The City could also have a strict requirement for daily callbacks to citizens or other legitimate inquiries.
- The City could also require a daily recorded message from each employee assigned a personal line, stating availability.
- A default operator could also be integrated into the menu options – with responsibility assigned to front office staff.

Summarily, the automated attendant would further reduce the Clerk’s Office workload and related staffing requirements. The key to successful adaptation would be preplanning and continued follow-up and refinement.

- C. As needed, the City Clerk could assume responsibility for qualified voter file (QVF) input and other periodic duties such as absentee ballot processing. In regard to the latter or other “peak period” duties, part-time help could also be retained.
- D. Receptionist duties could be refocused into a more business-like professional approach with less socializing. As noted, socializing is time-consuming and comprises a fair portion of both Clerks’ workload. Under the current system this could be difficult to accomplish without offending citizens and other guests. However, with the elimination of one Clerk position, the remaining Clerk would have a more substantial workload. Presuming that the Clerk was held accountable for this workload, there would be a built-in incentive to limit social interaction to a more moderate level, consistent with that of a courteous, yet busy organization.
- E. If the Building Clerk was located on the same side of the reception area, one Clerk’s Office Clerk and the Building Clerk could be cross-trained and provide both absentee and peak work-time support to each other.
- F. Some modifications to the front office area may be required to make option operational. While it may initially costly to make these changes, lower staff costs would quickly recoup the outlay.

**3. THE CITY MAY ALSO BENEFIT FROM OUTSOURCING THE TASKS OF MEETING ATTENDANCE AND TRANSCRIPTION.**

At present, one Clerk is also responsible for attending meetings of the Planning Commission, Historic District Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). The Clerk is compensated at an overtime hourly rate of \$28.80 for the meetings (two hours of

pay) and transcription time. We have asked for a detailed breakdown on time consumed for these activities and have been provided with some cost and time estimates from the City Clerk. The Clerk estimates that in addition to the two hour attendance pay, the Clerk requires, on average, four hours of overtime pay to complete transcription. Based on the number of annual meetings this should result in the following cost:

Planning Commission:	24 meetings at \$172.80	=	\$4,147.20
Historic District:	12 meetings at \$172.80	=	2,073.60
Board of Zoning Appeals:	12 meetings at \$172.80	=	<u>2,073.60</u>
	Total Estimated Costs		<u>\$8,294.40</u>

The above is an estimate for a full workload over the course of a year. However, in 2008, the three commissions/boards met only 23 times in total. Total costs were \$4,507, or an average of \$196 per meeting.

In 2007, the City used a contractor, on at least one occasion, to perform this duty. The charge for a Planning Commission meeting totaled \$275 – a significantly greater amount than that paid to the Clerk. One difference may be that the Clerk performs some of the transcription during work hours. However, the actual amount of work-time transcription is not closely monitored and cannot be separately calculated.

Based on the above, there is not sufficient documentation to determine the relative merits of outsourcing (or in-house retention) of this activity. The City Clerk does not appear to have established time standards for transcription and noted in our conversations that she has authorized time card submittals as high as eleven hours for a meeting. It is likely that the City could outsource the function at a fee lower than the \$275 noted above. However, work quality and familiarity are other factors to consider. Related, the City Clerk should be assigned the task of monitoring the function in regard to both cost and quality. Outsource options can then be properly evaluated.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE**

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, our recommendations for improvement are as follows:

**1. *SOME DUTIES NOW ASSIGNED TO THE TWO CLERKS LOCATED IN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHERS OR ELIMINATED.***

- All responsibility for parking ticket database administration should be transferred to the Police Clerk.
- The City should use an automated phone system for initial call response for the general number. As part of conversion to this process, the City should establish an administrative committee to:
  - Design and implement a user friendly automated menu.
  - Develop and document voice mail procedures for timely call back and daily message setting.
  - Determine a default operation system – most likely a system that uses front office area employees in the Clerk's Office.

**2. *ONE FULL-TIME CLERK POSITION IN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE SHOULD BE ELIMINATED.***

- This will result in a cost savings of \$71,485. The reduced workload should be assigned to the remaining employee.
- As discussed later in the report, the Building Clerk should be relocated to the Clerk's Office and placed under the Clerk's supervision. The two Clerks should be cross-trained and support all functions.
- Some modifications should be considered for the front office area to support the change. Renovation costs will be recouped through personnel savings.
- Absences which require additional coverage should be handled by the Finance Department staff or the City's Manager's Administrative Assistant.

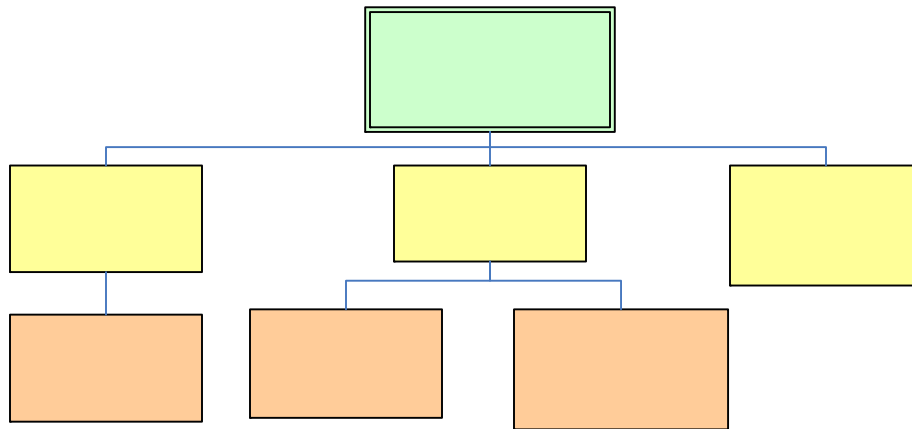
**3. *THE OPTION OF OUTSOURCING MEETING TRANSCRIPTION DUTIES SHOULD BE EVALUATED ON AN ONGOING BASIS.***

- Actual needs and inputs should be monitored more closely by the City Clerk.
- Other options, such as contract work, should then be costed and compared.

### *C. Finance, Treasury and Assessing*

The City of Northville’s Finance Department is comprised of three major operating areas, including finance and accounting, treasury and assessing services. The organization of the Finance Department is illustrated in Exhibit 8.

**Exhibit 8  
City of Northville  
Organization of Finance Department**



The duties of some positions are integrated into several of the operational areas. From an overview perspective, the duties of each position can be described as follows:

- **Assistant City Manager/Finance Director:** The administrative and management duties of the position have been previously discussed. As Finance Director, the position is responsible for overall financial administration and supervision, budget development (with the City Manager) and treasury.
- **Assistant Finance Director:** The position is responsible for day-to-day supervision of Finance staff, bank and other reconciliations, coordination of the annual audit and budget, budget adjustments, “help desk” for information technology support and document imaging contract administration.
- **Financial Analyst (Part-time):** A 20-hour per week position providing high-level financial support, including accounting for investment transactions and monthly reconciliations, water, refuse and recycling reconciliations, State reporting, including the annual F-65 and Act 51 roads report and budget and audit support.
- **General Ledger and Payroll Clerk:** Primarily responsible for payroll preparation, maintenance of employee benefits files, year-end reporting, ongoing general ledger entries and “help desk” assistance for computer users.

- **Accounts Payable and Utility Billing Clerk:** Responsible for bi-monthly utility billing and customer database managements. Also processes accounts payable and miscellaneous accounts receivable.
- **Deputy Treasurer/Assessor:** Responsible for field assessment and preparation and maintenance of the assessment role. As Deputy Treasurer, prepares and maintains the tax roll. Both functions are complicated by the “two-county” locational status of the City of Northville.
- **Tax Clerk:** Performs the clerical and office duties pertaining to assessment such as property transfers, homesteads and inquires. Performs clerical tasks associated with tax billing and collections, personal property collections, tax distributions and other tasks.

Our findings and conclusions related to the Finance Department including the following:

**1. NORTHVILLE’S FINANCIAL OPERATIONS APPEAR TO BE HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL.**

The Finance Department is extremely well-credentialed with two of its seven employees having achieved Certified Public Accountant status. Operationally, the department functions at a very sophisticated level, as evidenced by:

- Well documented financial procedures for most financial tasks.
- An emphasis on management accounting and financial planning as opposed to simple bookkeeping. Most notably, the City’s five-year financial forecast model is a management tool that many similar-sized cities have not developed, or have done so only in a rudimentary sense.
- Selection as a recipient of the Government Finance Officer’s Association’s distinguished budget award.
- The scope and complexity of in-house management-level financial tasks, including the in-house preparation of the financial statements (a task often outsourced to the external auditors for a professional fee), ongoing research to assure compliance with Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) technical requirements and other initiations designed to achieve a high level of financial excellence.

Summarily, the City of Northville’s Finance Department is among the higher quality of small-city finance operations in Southeast Michigan – a management advantage in a time of fiscal challenge. We have attempted to remain conscious of this fact in evaluating staffing levels and other potential cost saving areas.

**2. DEPARTMENTAL DUTIES ARE INTEGRATED AMONG THE VARIOUS FUNCTIONS. IF CONSIDERED SEPARATELY, ASSESSING AND TREASURY APPEAR TO BE THE LEAST COST-EFFECTIVE.**

Prior to 2005, the City outsourced the assessing function, contracting with a firm that provides these services to several Wayne County-based local governments. The City apparently experienced some dissatisfaction with the service provider and opted for an in-house assessing operation. It should be noted that this was at the pinnacle of the “housing boom” a period in which building and assessing services had a much higher workload than at present.

The assigned staff, comprised of a Deputy Treasurer/Assessor and Tax Clerk that assists in assessing administration, have had some positive impacts during the past four years. It is estimated that 60% of the parcels have been visited since 2007 and field sheet, Apex drawings and photos have been updated. During this time, the contract assessor’s role has been incrementally reduced to where it may be totally eliminated in the next fiscal year.

However, this has not been accomplished without cost. Specifically:

- Total cost of the assessing/treasury operation is estimated at \$214,781.
- The assessing portion of the total budget is estimated to be \$113,516 per annum.

In addition to the above, the marked decline in home sales has impacted workload negatively. Assessing, like building services, is dependent on property turnover to generate field-related workload. As sales have declined, this portion of the assessment workload has declined correspondingly. In this situation, the in-house service creates fixed costs and workload capacity that was not initially envisioned.

As seen in Exhibit 9, some of the benchmark communities utilized for the study also have in-house assessing services. In these cases, including Northville, the cost is much higher than assessing service costs for those communities that contract for this service. In the case of contracted services, most of the communities expend roughly \$50,000 on this service – much less than the \$113,516 estimated by Northville.

**Exhibit 9**  
**Comparison of Assessing Operations**

City or Village	Is Assessing contracted?	Real parcel count?	Personal parcel count?	Estimated FY 2009 assessing cost
<b>Northville</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>2,740</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>\$113,516</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	No	5,184	836	\$173,509
<b>Farmington</b>	No	3,611	729	\$117,516
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	Yes	2,691	414	\$50,875
<b>Grosse Pointe</b>	Yes	2,266	285	\$45,660
<b>Grosse Pointe Farms</b>	Yes	4,247	219	\$15,000
<b>Milford</b>	Village: no assessing	2,734	485	-
<b>Plymouth</b>	Yes	4,127	1061	\$55,000
<b>Saline</b>	No	3,237	592	\$196,112
<b>Walled Lake</b>	Yes	3,132	468	\$49,651

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

One qualifier that must be considered in the cost comparison is that (unlike other communities) the City of Northville is incorporated in two different counties. In the case of assessing services, this creates some level of necessary redundancy that adds to the workload. Essentially two assessing roles must be maintained and each role must be balanced with separate reports submitted to the respective equalization departments.

Despite the added complexity of the City's assessing role, it is likely that a high-quality contract assessment service could be procured for significantly less than the current in-house expenditure. To test this premise, we contacted and interviewed three different assessing service providers – two Level IV Assessors (the highest designation) operating in Southeast Michigan and one Level III (the City's required level) currently operating in Livingston and Genesee Counties.

In regard to feedback received, all stated that the estimation of an exact contract cost estimate would be dependent on several factors including:

- The current condition of the property cards
- The number of building permits
- The number and type of Tax Tribunal cases
- The present (or lack of) in-house clerical support.

As a benchmark, two of the three sources noted \$12-\$15 per parcel as the industry standard for an assessing contract. This would include two or three days weekly of on-site time as well as Board of Review input and some level of Tax Tribunal work. Based on Northville's parcel count, estimated cost (on the high end) would be \$50,535. Using



the high end of the estimate is probably a more realistic “ballpark” in consideration of the City’s unique reporting requirements.

The third source estimated assessing contract costs at \$35,000 annually. This source also provided a quotation of \$110,000 to complete a complete reappraisal of the City’s properties – a task that would correct assessing inequities and provide a firm footing for future assessment administration.

Lastly, we inquired if the City of Novi would be interested in discussing the potential for extending assessing services to the City of Northville. The City of Novi is apparently open to discussing this option. We did not pursue the issue further, but consider it another viable option for the City to consider.

In summary, the adoption of an in-house assessing function in 2005 has had positive benefits. The City had failed its 14-point State audit for assessing services, and the shift to an in-house service model provided the resources necessary to upgrade appraisal practices, files and records management. However, at this point in-time, the service could be provided more efficiently with a service contract. In this event, at least a portion of the combined assessing/treasury operations could be eliminated. This is discussed in the following finding.

**3. IF ASSESSING WAS OUTSOURCED, ONE OF THE TWO ASSESSING/TREASURY POSITIONS COULD BE ELIMINATED.**

As previously discussed, there are currently two full-time employees assigned to Assessing/Treasury. In the event of a contract arrangement for assessing, the Deputy Treasurer/Assessor position could be eliminated. The contract assessor would assume responsibilities related to field appraisal, market analysis and preparation of the assessment role and related reports and treasury duties could be assigned elsewhere.

In regard to treasury duties performed by the Deputy Treasurer/Assessor, the Assistant City Manager/Finance Director is currently performing or delegating to others finance tasks related to cash management, cash forecasting and investments. In this sense the most complex treasury functions would not be impacted by the elimination of the Deputy Treasurer/Assessor position. What would be affected are the cyclical and ongoing duties pertaining to tax billing, collections, distributions and settlements.

At present, the Assistant Treasurer (i.e. Clerk) assists in virtually all aspects of tax administration. If the Deputy Treasurer/Assessor position was eliminated, this individual would be required to maintain a larger and more independent portion of this workload. The position would also be required to continue to perform the clerical duties related to assessing services. In this situation it would be necessary for the Assistant City Manager/Finance Director or a designee to assume a greater administrative role in treasury operations.

Under this scenario, the City could anticipate some potentially sizable employee cost savings. More specifically:

- Deputy Treasurer/Assessor total compensation: \$85,603
- Estimated assessing contract cost: 50,535
- Estimated annual net savings: \$35,068

**4. THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT WORKLOAD AND WORK SCOPE IS FAIRLY BROAD. HOWEVER, IF THE ASSESSMENT FUNCTION IS NOT CONTRACTED, THE PART-TIME FINANCIAL ANALYST POSITION SHOULD BE ELIMINATED.**

In conducting the benchmark comparison, we have collected comparative staffing information for finance and other municipal departments. In the case of finance operations, this information is not easy to compare. By way of explanation, in some benchmark cities, financial personnel share responsibilities with treasury, the Clerk’s Office or the City Manager’s Office, while others stand alone. Moreover, as seen in the following Exhibit 10, Northville’s Finance Department is more involved in technology issues than many of the other finance departments – an addition to work scope that affects the workload of at least three of Northville’s positions (i.e. Assistant City Manager/Finance Director, Assistant Finance Director and General Ledger/Payroll Clerk).

**Exhibit 10  
Department Responsibility for Various Information Technology Functions**

City or Village	Website development & maintenance	Computer network administration	GIS project management	Desktop/user support
Northville	Finance	Finance	Finance	Finance
Brighton	Contractor	Contractor	Contractor	Contractor
Farmington	City Manager	City Manager	Assessor	Contractor
Grand Blanc	Administration	Admin/Police	DPW	Clerk-Treasurer
Grosse Pointe	Finance	Finance	DPW	Finance
Grosse Pointe Farms	Asst. City Manager/Clerk	Contractor	Asst. City Manager/Clerk	Contractor
Milford	Finance	Finance	DPW	Finance
Plymouth	Information Technology	Information Technology	Information Technology	Information Technology
Saline	Information Technology	Information Technology	Engineering	Information Technology
Walled Lake	Finance	Finance	Finance	Finance

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

As seen in Exhibit 11, other measures also indicate that Northville’s Finance Department has a higher average workload in fundamental areas such as water billing frequency, payroll processing and accounts payable. Workload for the two latter areas is bolstered in large part by the presence of a large parks and recreation operation.

**Exhibit 11  
Comparison of Finance Workload Measures**

City or Village	Number of annual vendor checks?	Average monthly payroll checks?	Number of annual W-2s issued?	Frequency of water billing?	Utility bills processed in a full cycle?	Does Finance handle IT?	IT users/locations/servers
<b>Northville</b>	<b>5,601</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>bi-monthly</b>	<b>2,600</b>	Yes	<b>60/4/4</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	2,815	145	104	monthly	3,400	No	60/3/5
<b>Farmington</b>	6,437	259	171	quarterly	3,200	No	40/2/4
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	2,042	90	130	bi-monthly	2,476	No	22/22/2
<b>Grosse Pointe</b>	1,953	243	157	quarterly	2,060	Yes	15/15/1
<b>Grosse Pointe Farms</b>	3,502	536	237	quarterly	4,100	No	14/1/1
<b>Milford</b>	5,257	140	102	quarterly	2,100	Yes	40/2/4
<b>Plymouth</b>	4,470	120	132	quarterly	3,800	No	-
<b>Saline</b>	4,438	288	250	quarterly	3,000	No	130/5/3
<b>Walled Lake</b>	5,417	90	125	monthly	2,404	Yes	25/3/1
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>4,037</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,949</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

Summarily, benchmark comparisons of staffing levels have limited value for our analysis. Workload varies between the benchmark Finance Departments, and as previously discussed, the level of professional sophistication and accomplishment is also very high in Northville’s operation.

In reviewing duties and work quality/scope issues, it is our opinion that a reduction in full-time Finance personnel (other than Assessing/Treasury) would be counter productive, particularly at a point-in-time at which pre-emptive financial decision making and transparency are so critical.

However, the Finance Department, like other departments, must consider means of doing more with less. One option would be a lessened dependency on professional part-time input. Presently, the Department has a 20 hour per week Financial Analyst. This is a highly skilled CPA position with responsibility for investment accounts and related transactions, a broad scope of monthly reconciliations, F-65 report preparation for annual submittal to Treasury, Act 51 report preparation for annual submittal to the Department of Transportation, input in annual budget narrative development, a key role in audit support and other high level tasks.

Most finance departments simply do not have this type of support. These duties would be performed by the assistant finance director, or if need be, the finance director. In the case of Northville, the information technology responsibilities of the Assistant Finance Director are cited as the need for this additional input, a factor that must be considered. Further, as discussed, the Assistant City Manager/Finance Director has many other duties that limit her time to address these tasks. However, other finance departments also have this challenge with less professional support.

The current pay level for the part-time Financial Analyst is \$40.57 per hour including FICA cost. The incumbent reportedly works more than 20 hours per week during peak times such as audit preparation. However, for this discussion, if we assume a 20 hour work week yearlong, the annual total compensation can be estimated at \$42,193. This is a fairly significant outlay for part-time support.

If the assessing function is outsourced with a reduction of one position, it will be necessary for others, including the Financial Analyst to assume some new duties to offset the loss. However, if assessing is not outsourced, Finance should effect some downsizing. The Financial Analyst would appear to be the most logical place with related duties assumed by the Assistant Finance Director and Assistant City Manager/Finance Director.

**5. THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER MEANS FOR COLLECTING PAST DUE PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES AS WELL AS OTHER MEANS FOR IMPROVING TAX EQUITY.**

Historically, the City of Northville, like other municipalities has found it difficult to collect all personal property taxes owed the City. In Northville, at December 31, 2008, the outstanding balance of delinquent taxes owed was approximately \$100,000.

In regard to delinquencies, the treasury staff sends monthly notices, but there is no enforcement mechanism – unpaid taxes are then removed from the balance sheet after five years. While some accounts may be uncollectible due to business failure or other reason, many are simply businesses that have ignored their tax obligations.

In this situation, what is needed is an enforcement mechanism – ideally a third-party that would pursue collection uniformly, with no exceptions. One option that the City could consider is a negotiated contract with a private collection firm.

As an example, the City of Monroe uses an Ohio-based collection agency. The collection procedure is as follows:

- Delinquent taxpayers receive three monthly notices after the tax payment deadline.
- Accounts are then turned over to the collection agency. The agency pursues all legal options for collection.

- The agency receives \$50 for each account – performance standards are included in the contract.

There are many variations to the above approach and arrangements – all with the objective of increasing tax compliance. The City should consider all, and ultimately decide on one.

A second issue of tax equity focuses on administrative charges for tax collection. The State’s General Property Tax Act authorizes an administrative fee of 1% of tax value to “offset costs incurred by a collection unit in assessing property values, in collecting the property tax levies and in the review and appeal processes”. For municipalities adopting the charge, it is included in the tax bill.

The City of Northville charges this administrative fee on its winter tax bills – but not summer. Presumably, this distinction harkens back to a time when the summer tax bill was largely city-based. Possibly, City policymakers saw the institution of a summer change as a potential case of “double taxation”.

However, the situation has now changed. The County assessments have now been moved from the winter tax bill to summer, costing the City nearly \$13,000 in lost fee revenue. Moreover, the State Tax Commission is actively encouraging municipalities to adopt the fee as a means of fairly distributing the costs incurred in assessing, tax administration and tax appeal (a growing cost center).

In light of the City’s financial needs, it would appear reasonable to broaden the 1% administrative fee to cover the entire tax cycle. Extending the 1% administrative fee to the summer tax bill would generate an estimated \$137,000 in additional revenue for the City.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINANCE, TREASURY AND ASSESSING OPERATIONS**

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, our recommendations for improvement are as follows:

### ***1. THE ASSESSING FUNCTION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR OUTSOURCING.***

- One of two Assessing/Treasury positions could be limited at an estimated cost savings of \$35,000 per annum.
- The remaining clerical position should retain responsibility for the assessment clerical function and assume more responsibility for tax and treasury administration, as determined by the Assistant City Manager/Finance Director.

### ***2. IF ASSESSING IS NOT OUTSOURCED, THE PART-TIME FINANCIAL ANALYST POSITION SHOULD BE ELIMINATED***

- This is not a typical position in similar-sized finance departments.
- Elimination of the position would result in an annual estimated cost savings of \$42,193.
- If the position is eliminated, primary duties will shift to the Assistant Finance Director and the Assistant City Manager/Finance Director

### ***3. THE CITY SHOULD CONTRACT WITH A COLLECTION AGENCY FOR DELINQUENT PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION.***

- Several firms should be contracted for service quotations.
- The collection process should be uniformly applied with no exceptions.

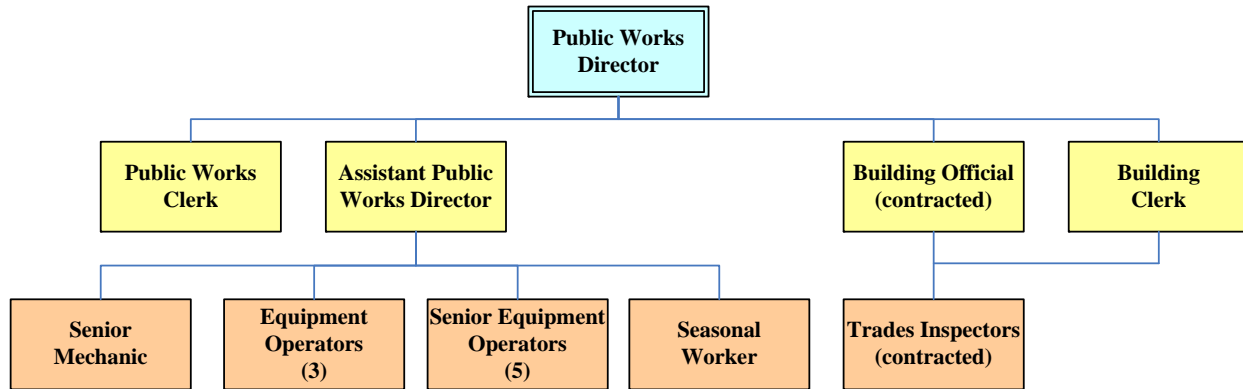
### ***4. THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER EXTENDING THE 1% ADMINISTRATIVE FEE TO SUMMER TAX COLLECTIONS.***

- This action will generate an estimated \$137,000 per annum in additional revenue.
- It will more fairly distribute the costs associated with assessing, tax administration and tax appeal.

### *D. Public Works Department and Building Division*

The City of Northville’s Public Works Department (DPW) is organizationally responsible for both public works and building inspection services. The organization of the department is illustrated in Exhibit 12.

**Exhibit 12  
City of Northville  
Public Works Organization**



Key findings and conclusions include the following:

**1. THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT APPEARS TO BE SERVICE-ORIENTED BUT LACKS SOME MODERN FEATURES.**

As previously noted, the City of Northville is very focused on the community’s quality of life. In turn, service expectations are at a very high level, including the provision of public works services. The department has responded with some fairly impressive workload standards and results. As examples, all streets are typically plowed within 12 hours of a major storm, sidewalks are consistently maintained through a replacement program, fall leaves are picked up at curbside and downtown streets are swept weekly. As seen in Exhibit 13, these service levels compare favorably to those in the benchmark communities.

**Exhibit 13**  
**Overview of Public Works Services**

City or Village	Annual curb-side leaf pick-up?	Replace sidewalks at no charge?	Street sweep frequency - downtown	Street sweep frequency - local streets
<b>Northville</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>monthly</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	Yes	Yes	2 x weekly	As needed
<b>Farmington</b>	Yes	Yes	weekly	monthly
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	Yes	Yes	3-4 annual	1-2 annual
<b>Grosse Pointe</b>	Yes	Yes	3 x weekly	1 x weekly
<b>Grosse Pointe Farms</b>	Yes	No	weekly	weekly
<b>Milford</b>	No	No	2 x weekly	As needed
<b>Plymouth</b>	Yes	No	weekly	As needed
<b>Saline</b>	Yes	No	bi-weekly	monthly
<b>Walled Lake</b>	No	No	2-3 annual	As needed

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

To facilitate customer service, the Public Works Director is housed in City Hall. At this location, residents with service issues can easily access the Director and he is readily available for committee meetings or consultation with the City Manager. The Director begins his day at the Public Works facility, checking on workload issues and conveying work priorities to the Assistant Director. The Director then proceeds to City Hall and is typically in his office prior to 8am. With the exception of random visits to the Public Works facility during the day, the Director then appears to be mostly absent from the day-to-day activities of the Department. Oversight of the workforce is mostly delegated to the Assistant Director.

From an operational perspective, the Department lacks many of the management tools that characterize modern public works departments. More specifically:

- The Director, by his admission, is not overly computer literate. The Director uses the computer sparingly and has none of the engineering-related software packages (such as computer-aided design) that a civil engineer typically employs. Engineering and management tasks are mostly completed by manual means.
- The department's infrastructure maps are hard copy and aged with as-builts sometimes inaccurate or incomplete. The Department has not completed any automated GIS mapping, which is unusual for a progressive community like Northville. The Assistant City Manager/Finance Director has attempted to fill this void by taking GIS responsibility, but little has been accomplished to date. As seen in Exhibit 14, this places Northville well behind the benchmark communities in this emerging area of geo-based information technology.



**Exhibit 14**  
**Comparison of GIS status**

City or Village	Director a degreed engineer?	Any other engineering staff?	DPW responsible for GIS?	Percentage of storm drains GIS mapped	Percentage of water system GIS mapped	Percentage of sanitary sewers GIS mapped
<b>Northville</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	No	No	Contract	30%	0%	0%
<b>Farmington</b>	No	No	No	100%	100%	100%
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	No	No	Yes	95%	100%	100%
<b>Grosse Pointe</b>	No	No	Yes	100%	100%	100%
<b>Grosse Pointe Farms</b>	No	No	Yes	50%	100%	100%
<b>Milford</b>	No	No	No: Oakland Co.	No response	No response	No response
<b>Plymouth</b>	No	No	Partly	75%	100%	100%
<b>Saline</b>	No	Yes - 2	Engineering	85%	100%	100%
<b>Walled Lake</b>	No	No	No: Oakland Co.	0%	0%	100%

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

In many respects, the Department is a public works operation that is more representative of a past time. The workload is accomplished, but little technological innovation has been introduced.

Even lacking GIS, much could be done to improve management information. As an example, many public works departments inventory infrastructure such as catch basins, hydrants, water valves and others. This can be accomplished with a simple spreadsheet (or more elaborate maintenance management system) and organized to target work priorities and/or guide preventive maintenance activities. As an example, data can be organized in columns as follows:

- Type of asset
- Location
- Dimensions and/or brand
- Date of last service
- Condition.

Lacking information of this type, DPW cannot precisely quantify infrastructure needs or direct resources to best advantage. At present, there are ongoing work programs for sanitary sewer cleaning, tree trimming, water leak detection and hydrant flushing, but documentation is sparse and workload proceeds from established cycles of activity rather than rigorous evaluation of ongoing need.

In addition to asset inventories, there are software packages that would allow the department to collect information regarding work activities, employee output, job costs and productivity – feedback that is currently either non-existent or unorganized. What is required is a proprietary software program (\$5,000 and up) and the procedural system to collect and record the applicable workload data.

While this might seem to be a large effort, it can be easily introduced into the work routine. Moreover, it would be of great benefit to account for the hours employees work and what costs are incurred in what areas performing what functions. This data can be used to justify staffing levels or show the ability, or inability, to take on additional tasks. It can also be used to evaluate the cost benefit of outsourcing as opposed to in-house provision of services – an issue discussed in following findings.

**2. THE PUBLIC WORKS CLERK PROVIDES TRADITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES. THE POSITION APPEARS TO HAVE WORK CAPACITY THAT COULD BE USED TO IMPROVE INFORMATION FLOW. THE POSITION COULD ALSO BE REDUCED TO PART-TIME STATUS.**

The Public Works Clerk is a longstanding employee nearing retirement. The employee is also housed at the City Hall and plays an important role in the administration of the Public Works Department. Primary duties include:

- Receiving calls for Public Works service and complaints
- Coordinating service issues with the Assistant Director
- Acting as customer service representative for water customers
- Preparing departmental payroll for submission to Finance
- Preparing various reports related to fuel and materials usage and maintaining Department records.
- Providing back-up for the Building Clerk.

As a communication point for the department, the Clerk's workload is ongoing throughout the day. In regard to service requests, these are handled manually without the aid of an automated work order program – another area of automation that would be desirable for documenting service calls, response and status.

The actual volume of workload of the position does not appear to be particularly heavy in relation to other similar positions that we have studied. The duties of the Northville position (with the exception of Building Department back-up) are not as broad. By way of explanation, like most clerical positions, the workload of public works clerks has shifted over the years. With the introduction of word processing software and internet communications there is a lessened dependence on “secretarial” support. Increasingly in

public works operations, the resulting work void has been filled with the assignment of additional duties related to the capture and administration of management information. As mentioned in the previous discussion, this typically includes:

- Ongoing compilation of information related to infrastructure inventories and work priorities
- Compilation of data related to employee output and job costs
- The use of an automated work order system to document service requests and provide customer feedback
- Other initiatives and processes related to the collection and processing of management information.

In summary, the duties of the position could be expanded to support the adoption and implementation of improved management information systems – a necessary departmental upgrade. This would create a fuller, more balanced positional workload and provide the Director with the administrative support necessary to support the upgrades we have previously discussed.

It is our understanding that the Clerk is eligible for and considering retirement. In recruiting for a replacement, the City should require experience and expertise in database management, and identify a person that is adaptive and highly computer literate. It behooves the City to view Public Works as a business enterprise model. Skilled clerical support is a necessary element in this vision.

The City could also consider reducing this position to part-time status. As discussed above, the ideal situation would be to maintain the position in a full-time capacity and assign the duties noted above. However, in the current economic environment, cost savings may be more important than systems upgrade. With a part-time position, Public Works could still have half-day dedicated clerical support and gradually introduce new management systems support duties to the position. Presuming that the part-time clerk was paid at \$14 per hour (current Police Clerk part-time rate) for 20 hours per week, the City would save \$56,925 in annual personnel costs.

**3. ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF SERVICE PROVISION MAY PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO REDUCE FULL-TIME STAFFING COSTS. ADDITIONAL OUTSOURCING SHOULD BE STRONGLY CONSIDERED.**

In the absence of management information regarding work output it can be difficult to determine the impact of staff reductions on service levels. However, there are means of reducing Public Works staff levels while assuring service continuation, and possibly achieve a more balanced year-round staffing level.

By way of explanation, public works departments (including Northville) are busier in summer. If a department can find a means of satisfying a portion of the summer workload with resources other than full-time staff, a smaller full-time contingent can be more fully utilized on a year-round basis. In this situation, improved cost effectiveness in operations can then be achieved.

The most common alternative methods for satisfying summer workload need are the use of seasonal or part-time workers or the contracting of services. In regard to the latter, the City currently maintains contracts for tree removal service, some road striping, chemical root control, backflow prevention and engineering services for water, sewer and roads. In regard to the former, the City does not have part-time workers and employs only one seasonal worker for the downtown area. As seen in Exhibit 15, the use of seasonal and part-time staff is much more prevalent in the benchmark communities. One reason for this discrepancy is that much of the grass cutting in Northville is performed by a contractor working through the Parks and Recreations Department. There is simply not a large grass cutting workload to assign to seasonal workers.

**Exhibit 15**  
**Comparison of Seasonal and Part-time Staffing**

<b>City or Village</b>	<b>Average seasonal staff</b>	<b>Any part-time staff?</b>
<b>Northville</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	10-12	0
<b>Farmington</b>	6	0
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	6	1
<b>Grosse Pointe</b>	5	2
<b>Grosse Pointe Farms</b>	7-8	0
<b>Milford</b>	0	0
<b>Plymouth</b>	3	3
<b>Saline</b>	6	0
<b>Walled Lake</b>	2	0

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

However, Public Works does have responsibility for cemeteries, the City Hall lawn, right-of ways and other small parcels. In regard to the primary cemetery, one full-time Senior Equipment Operator is assigned to cemetery maintenance for eight months of the year with few other duties (also a portion of meter readings). With the cost of this full-time Senior Equipment Operator estimated at \$57,660 (wages and benefits) for an eight month period, it would behoove the City to determine if a more cost effective approach is possible.

Related to this, we do not have data regarding the amount of time spent by other Public Works personnel on grass cutting, but we do know the following:

- The lowest full estimated hourly rate for a Public Works Field Worker is \$40.52 (including employee benefits).
- The Department must also maintain necessary equipment, including two zero-turn ratio mowers with a cost of approximately \$7,000 each, as well as a back-up mower.
- The contracted cost of mowing the City's parks is \$31.02 per acre, per cut, including trimming.

The Director estimates that the City has approximately 10 acres of cemetery lawn as well as four miles of right-of-ways. If we presume 10 acres of lawn cutting at twice the contract price (to account for the more difficult terrain), we can estimate the potential contract cost as follows:

- Cost of one weekly cut: \$610
- Cost of 32 annual cuts (April 15- Nov. 15): \$19,520.

While this is just a rough estimate, it would appear that the cost of contracting the grass cutting equates to the cost of equipment and materials (i.e. mowers alone have a \$14,000 cost). In this situation, any personnel savings simply "drop to the bottom line". If we assume one day of staff time per week for grass cutting other than the cemeteries, the estimated total savings could be conservatively estimated at \$50,000 - \$60,000 per annum.

In addition to grass cutting, there are other services that could be contracted. Since we do not know the amount of employee time devoted to each task, we cannot estimate cost savings. However, as noted, we do know that the lowest hourly rate at which the City can provide the service is \$40.52. Additionally, the City must incur in-house materials and equipment costs.

With the high cost of in-house provision, it behooves the department to identify means of shedding summer duties and reducing full-time staffing to a level commensurate with winter workload, thus achieving a more balanced production workforce.

With this factor in mind, the department should consider all available additional means for increasing subcontracting and reducing summer staffing needs. These might include:

- **Street sweeping:** Many contractors compete for this work. In addition to the direct cost advantage, outsourcings has the additional benefit of eliminating the need to store, transport and dispose of the sweepings which are considered to be hazardous materials. The City would also avoid a vehicle cost of \$175,000 - \$200,000. Depending on the number of sweeps and amount of debris and disposal, agreement bids from \$200 to \$400 per curb mile can be expected.

- **Line Painting:** The majority of the lines are already outsourced so the parking spaces, crosswalks and school symbols are a logical extension of what is already being done. The crosswalks and symbols should be added to the street lining bid but the City should look elsewhere for the parking spaces. This work is normally done more cheaply by companies that specialize in this type of work. The City could expect the cost to be in the area of \$1.25 per line for single lines and \$2.25 per line for double lines. Small H/C symbols and arrows are about \$5.00 each and curbs are painted for \$.25 per lineal foot.
- **Downtown Plant Maintenance:** This is currently being performed by one seasonal employee. It was noted by more than one full-time employee that the department had to supplement this employee because the work was substandard. It could easily be subcontracted. There are many companies that do this type of work. Contracts can be obtained for any portion, or all, of the watering. Since this is funded by the DDA, subcontracting it would eliminate the need for any tracking of costs since DDA would simply pay the contractor. It would also remove the need to provide a vehicle and equipment.
- **Parking Lot Snow Plowing:** Additionally, the winter task of parking lot snow plowing could be subcontracted as a way of reducing workload peaks associated with heavy snow removal and overtime occurrence.

As seen in Exhibit 16, most of the benchmark cities, like Northville, perform most public works functions in-house.

**Exhibit 16  
Comparison of Outsourced Services**

City or Village	Street sweeping	Line striping	Grass cutting	Snow removal - streets	Snow removal - lots	Snow removal - sidewalks and paths	Snow removal - in total	Water main repair	New water connection	Cemetery maintenance
Northville	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Brighton	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Farmington	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Grand Blanc	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	-
Grosse Pointe	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	-
Grosse Pte. Farms	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	-
Milford	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	-
Plymouth	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Saline	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Walled Lake	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

Dash indicates no comparable condition or service

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

However, with the ongoing pressures to reduce municipal expenditures it is likely that the use of subcontractors, as well as part-time and seasonal personnel will increase. As seen in Exhibit 16, the two Grosse Pointe communities also outsource water main repairs and report very good results with this approach. Northville's Public Works Director cites water main repair as one primary reason for retaining in-house staff near current levels. Perhaps a similar contract arrangement in Northville could alleviate these concerns.

Summarily, the City could reduce summer staffing needs by outsourcing select services. In turn, full-time staff levels could be reduced. In the absence of good workload data it is not possible to determine the extent to which staffing can be reduced. In this situation, we would suggest the following course of action:

- Solicit bids for the services noted above.
- Using the baseline data presented above (particularly lawn maintenance), establish cost benefit and subcontract, as warranted.
- Reduce full-time staffing – by one position (note: a minimum of one position incumbent is eligible for retirement),
- Eliminate a second position if several of the functions noted above are contracted.
- As vacancies occur, assure a strong justification for replacement. Improved workload data would facilitate this analysis. If new hires are to be made, consider permanent part-time (specified option in the AFSCME contract) as opposed to full-time.
- If staffing for utility emergencies is needed, consider outsourcing all, or a portion, of water main repair.

**4. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED, INCLUDING THE OFFICE LOCATION OF THE DIRECTOR.**

As discussed, the Director's office is at City Hall. This has apparently been the case since the City Hall renovation, roughly a decade ago. The Director begins his work day at the Public Works facility, meets with the Assistant Director and then proceeds to City Hall. The Assistant Director is then responsible for work assignments and oversight; the Director appears to have very little input into the daily work routine. This is left to the Assistant Director, and in his absence, the Senior Mechanic.

Some problems with this arrangement have been expressed by employees or observed during our field review. Specifically:

- Some employees complain of problems of supervision. They note that work is not being consistently scheduled, and/or that the Assistant Director is not always easily located for questions or direction. The Senior Mechanic, a union position, is apparently acting in a quasi-supervisory capacity in many instances – a situation that could be avoided with more supervisory input.
- The DPW yards and buildings are poorly kept. The yard is strewn with trash and old vehicles. Essentially, more oversight is needed with a concerted effort to clean things up. With so few employees and equipment, the yard should be sectioned off and certain areas placed off limits. This would make for a smaller area to be maintained and discourage just dumping things in areas where they are out of the way. Old unused equipment should be disposed of. Any equipment or vehicles that are not cost effective should be sold while they have a value. This will also lower insurance costs since fleet size will be reduced.
- Worker productivity could also be increased through better oversight and procedural approach to lunch breaks. By way of explanation, the contract gives the Union employees two 15 minute breaks, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. There is an agreement between the employees and management that the afternoon break will be forfeited in favor of a 45 minute lunch. When combined with the 10 minute wash up time, an employee can actually take a 55 minute lunch. In addition, the employees return to the DPW yard for lunch. At a minimum this is another 10 minutes of lost productivity (pick up tools, secure work site, drive to yard) each way. The practice is that some stay in the yard and eat lunch while others leave the site. In both instances, punching out and back in are not required and there is little oversight of employee movement. This type of situation can lend itself to abuse. Ideally employees should be required to take an on-site lunch unless weather or circumstances prohibit it. Minimally, the employee should be required to punch out for lunch if he/she is going to leave the premises. The contract does not speak to the issue so it is well within management rights to establish reasonable policies.
- Operational practices could also be improved through better supervision. As an example, it was noted that the spreading of salt was done using operator judgment. In this day of environmental awareness and high cost this practice is unwise. Each salt truck should be calibrated and a calibration sheet placed in each cab. There is a simple method of mechanical calibration that should be used. With the truck loaded and the box up, the spinner should be removed. The auger or belt should be marked and the salt that is dumped after one complete revolution should be weighed. Then the revolutions of the auger or belt should be counted at various engine speeds. Using this information it is a simple extrapolation to determine how much salt is being distributed at what truck speed. Spinners should be adjusted to give the desired distribution pattern. Using this procedure would assure that all drivers in all trucks are



using the proper amounts of salt. Reducing over-salting is a cost saving measure in several respects. Less salt is used and fewer trips are required back to the storage site to refill.

In summary, there are an abundance of reasons why it would be desirable to locate the Director at the Public Works facility. The Director appears to be liked, and well-respected by the workforce, however, there also appears to be a disconnect in the supervisory chain.

Conversely, the Director is heavily utilized at City Hall. The City Manager cites the frequent meetings, design review sessions and customer service responsibilities of the Director and appears to favor keeping the Director at his present office location (albeit with better oversight of the workforce).

While we recognize the advantages of locating the Director at City Hall, it is our feeling that the effective oversight of public works operations is a pressing need. Consequently, we favor the option of moving the Director to the Public Works facility.

## **5. VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT PRACTICES SHOULD BE MODIFIED.**

At present, the Public Works Director receives a \$300 per month car allowance. The Assistant Director is allowed to take a pick-up truck home, presumably justified by his on-call status (two weeks in every month).

In regard to the Assistant Director's assigned vehicle, the practice is to assign a new truck annually. After a year's use, the truck is assigned into the fleet as a working truck. There appear to be several negative cost issues related to this practice. Specifically:

- The current pick-up truck assigned to the Assistant Director is an F-150, with an extended cab and six and one-half foot bed. This is not an ideal vehicle for snow plowing and other public works tasks. It is too light with a bed that is too short. The standard for a pick-up truck should be an F-250 with an eight foot bed. This will not be the case when the Assistant Director's truck is later assigned to working truck status.
- There appears to be no stated limit on usage. The truck is fueled at the City facility and has amassed significantly more mileage than comparable work trucks. The mileage on the truck, a 2008 GMC, was approximately 8,500 miles on 12-15-08. This mileage was accumulated from 8-7-08, the day the truck was introduced into service. A review of past vehicle assignments for 2005-2007 show similar levels of mileage accumulation by the Assistant Director's assigned vehicle.

In summary, both the selection of the truck model, as well as usage patterns are not in the interest of the City. The City should eliminate the drive home privilege and limit the use of its vehicles to on-duty time. In the event of call-in, the employee can be paid mileage

at the prevailing IRS rate. As seen in Exhibit 17, car allowance or take home privilege is generally limited to one individual in the benchmark communities. Northville should implement a similar policy.

**Exhibit 17  
Comparison of Vehicle Privileges**

City or Village	Director gets a car allowance or takes a car home?	If car, is use limited?	Any other employees take a vehicle home?
<b>Northville</b>	<b>\$300 mo.</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	\$275 mo.	-	No
<b>Farmington</b>	Car	No	Yes
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	Car	No	No
<b>Grosse Pointe</b>	Car	Yes	No
<b>Grosse Pointe Farms</b>	\$133 mo.	-	No
<b>Milford</b>	Car	Yes	No
<b>Plymouth</b>	No	-	No
<b>Saline</b>	Car	Yes	No
<b>Walled Lake</b>	Car	Yes	No

Dash indicates no comparable condition or service

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

**6. THE CITY NOW CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING INSPECTION AND CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES. THIS ARRANGEMENT APPEARS TO PROVIDE BOTH COST BENEFIT AND ENHANCED SERVICE QUALITY.**

With a vacancy in the Building Official position, the City has opted to contract for building services with the City of Plymouth. Similarly, the City has contracted with Northville Township for property maintenance code enforcement. In each instance, the City is paying an hourly rate for services. In the case of building inspection, the hourly rate is the wage and benefit cost of the assigned Building Official. For code enforcement services, the cost is \$22.23 per hour. In addition to these services, the City has retained the City’s planning firm to assist with the agenda for BZA and Historic District Committee meetings, assure that applications are properly prepared and attend the meetings. The cost for these services is \$75 per hour.

The above contract arrangements are advantageous in several ways, specifically:

- In a time of economic stagnation, most building departments are not busy. By limiting in-house staff and contracting for these services, the City is paying only for productive time.

- The quality of service provision is apparently very high. We have interviewed all of the contractors and found each to be knowledgeable and service oriented.
- With only a contractual commitment related to hourly wage, the City is not bound to retain these service providers. Should a change be desired, the City will have much more flexibility than would be the case with full-time in-house employees.

The relative cost advantage of contracting for these services (as opposed to in-house provision) cannot be quantified until an actual service level is established. The City may opt for some level of dedicated office time for the Building Official, and the amount and duration of planning consultant input will depend on the number of submittals and future meetings. The former Building Official's estimated total compensation (wages and benefits cost) was \$96,579 prior to his retirement. This number should serve as the metric to compare to costs incurred following an extended period of operation under the new system.

**7. THE BUILDING CLERK HAS WORK CAPACITY AS A RESULT OF THE ECONOMIC SLUMP. THIS POSITION COULD BE USED TO BETTER ADVANTAGE IN A COMBINED CLERICAL OPERATION.**

The Building Clerk position is key to a successful building services operation. Under the new arrangement, with all services contracted out, the Clerk is the one stable element of inspection services office administration. At present the Building Clerk's job duties include:

- Phone and counter inquires regarding building procedures and applications
- Data input into the building software system pertaining to inspections, permits and report generation
- Packets and agenda preparation for planning, BZA and Historic District Committee meetings
- General coordination of Building Division activities and records management.

Additionally, the Clerk performs Fire Department clerical duties, including:

- Assisting the Fire Chief with payroll, newsletters, coordination of tours and administration of the Fire Explorer program.
- Assisting in cemetery administration, including grave sales (in the Fire Chief's absence) and the clerical aspects of the grave sales, genealogy, deeds and burials.

The Clerk's workload has diminished with the economic slump. As previously discussed, the number of board and committee meetings has declined significantly as developmental activity has decreased. Planning, BZA and Historic District meetings combined typically total 48 per annum. In contrast, the three boards met only 23 times in 2008. As a result, the Clerk has had a lessened workload related to meeting packets. Building activity is also down significantly, reducing both phone and counter activity and traffic.

With the economic malaise expected to continue, the City should move to redefine the role of this position. Most notably, the position should be moved to the Clerk's office area to provide a coordinated front office team comprised of one Clerk's Office/Clerk position (see subsection B for related discussion) and the Building Clerk. Both positions should be cross-trained for purposes of relief coverage, including breaks, lunch periods and absences; and formally report to the City Clerk.

The duties of the position should also be expanded and monitored to assure work quality and the assimilation of new duties into the work routine. In regard to the performance of current duties, several issues may require management attention, specifically:

- As part of the study process, it was noted that the Equalizer software database is not used to its full advantage. However, we have noted that permits, inspections and results appear to be properly entered. There are other data elements such as inspector's notes that must be consistently entered for ideal workload coordination. The contracted Building Official appears very Equalizer-literate and should instruct the Clerk on his data preferences. The City Clerk should then monitor the Clerk's progress in effecting these changes.
- There have apparently been complaints regarding the processing of applications – specifically, that incomplete information has been submitted to the boards and commissions. The use of the planning consultant to check documentation prior to board submission should eliminate this problem, but at a cost. At some point this may be an area where the Clerk can assist in improving documentation. Again, ongoing work performance should be monitored by the City Clerk.

In regard to the above, it should be recognized that the illnesses experienced by the prior Building Official dramatically affected workload continuity and the supervisory structure. With a new arrangement, additional duties and proper supervision, the Building Division clerical function may prove to be highly productive.

In regard to the above, additional duties should also be assigned. Specifically:

- Code enforcement activities should be more clearly documented. At present, the Building Clerk forwards complaints to the contracted Code Enforcement Officer. The violations are resolved by the Code Enforcement Officer with a

good success rate, but little ongoing interaction with the Building Division. Ideally, the code enforcement activities (i.e. conditions, abatement actions, dispositions) should all be entered into the Equalizer system for later analysis and summary reports. This would facilitate more pro-active enforcement as types of compliance issues, problem properties and other factors could be more readily identified.

- Cemetery records, including burial information and lot ownership, should be automated. The records are currently maintained by the Fire Chief, who acts as the City's Sexton. The records would ideally be maintained by the Clerk's Office and posted on the web-site – thereby reducing the number of inquiries that must be personally addressed. Due to her involvement in this area, the Building Clerk would be the ideal candidate to effect the changeover to an automated database, and later records management. There are a number of companies that have cemetery software; one choice to investigate could be Fund Balance's Sexton Program at a cost of approximately \$2,000.
- The Building Clerk could also proceed to upgrade the Fire Department records management systems. At present, the Department uses its Firehouse software package only for incident reporting. Utilization of the staff reporting module would be useful as a time-saving tool for payroll reporting.

Additionally, in April 2009, the State of Michigan will implement new requirements for the national reporting of emergency medical responses. Eighty-three pieces of data will be required in the new reporting system. Firehouse has adapted their software to meet the State's requirements and has assisted some fire departments in converting to the new system.

In both cases, the use of the Building Clerk (in her role as Fire Clerk) to upgrade these areas would seem appropriate.

Summarily, the Building Clerk's productivity can be improved in several ways, including:

- A move to a consolidated front-office operation
- More consistent supervisory oversight
- The assignment of additional duties.

Placing the position under the direct supervision of the City Clerk will also provide much needed supervisory oversight and provide the City Clerk with the opportunity to use two assigned clerical positions in a productive and cost-efficient manner. In addition to the Building Clerk, the City Clerk could also assume responsibility for the Building Division contractors including the Building Official, Code Enforcement Officer and planning consultant. This is largely a case of contract administration – an area in which the City Clerk would excel.

**8. ESCROW ACCOUNTS FOR SITE PLAN REVIEW WOULD BE BENEFICIAL.**

At present, the City of Northville does not require an escrow account for site plan review; applicants are billed following the Planning Commission meeting(s). It appears that under this system some professional time pertaining to site plan review may be overlooked and is not being billed. In this situation, the City absorbs a cost that should rightfully be assigned as a user fee. In regard to the specific amount, that information is not compiled.

Many building departments avoid this issue by requiring a front-end escrow account. All application – related fees are then assigned to this account and assessed accordingly. As an example, the City of Plymouth requires a \$1,000 applicant fee before the plans are approved, prior to the Planning Commission meeting. There is also a \$300 charge to meet with the Building Official and Planner before the applicant applies for a review (recommended but not mandatory).

In the case of Northville, an escrow fee of at least \$1,200 should be required. It is our understanding that the Planning Commission often requests changes; each would have an accompanying expense. Requiring an adequate escrow account could provide the basis for a more exacting system of cost assignment that results in fewer costs being absorbed by the City.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT AND BUILDING DIVISION**

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, our recommendations for improvement are as follows:

### ***1. THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT SHOULD IMPROVE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS.***

- The Director should be actively involved in the development of GIS.
  - Working with the Finance Director and contracted resources, a strategic plan and timeline should be established for the completion of base maps for storm drains, sanitary sewers and the water system.
- Inventory databases should be established for each asset class, to include:
  - Type of asset
  - Location
  - Dimensions and/or brand
  - Date of last service
  - Condition.

The inventories should then be used to guide preventive maintenance activities and management reporting.

- A maintenance management software program should be acquired and used to track the time, materials and costs associated with the Public Works operation.
  - A simple program can be acquired for \$5,000.
  - A good overview of a more elaborate maintenance management system can be found at [cititech.com](http://cititech.com)

### ***2. THE PUBLIC WORKS CLERK SHOULD BE ASSIGNED ADDITIONAL DUTIES AND POSSIBLY REDUCED TO PART-TIME STATUS.***

- The Clerk should assume a number of new duties that involve compilation of information using automated systems, including:
  - Infrastructure inventories and related work activities
  - Employee output and job costs
  - Service requests and work orders, as recorded on an automated system.

- Duties should be expanded to support the adoption and implementation of improved management information systems.
- The position could also be reduced to part-time status (20 hours per week) at an annual savings of approximately \$56,925.

3. ***ADDITIONAL WORK ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE OUTSOURCED AS A MEANS OF REDUCING NECESSARY WARM WEATHER STAFFING LEVELS.***

- Grass cutting should be outsourced, at an estimated cost savings of \$50,000 - \$60,000 in employee time.
- Street sweeping, line painting and downtown plant maintenance should all be considered for outsourcing. Winter snowplowing of parking lots should also be considered for outsourcing.
- The Senior Equipment Operator position assigned to the cemeteries should be eliminated.
- Outsourcing of the above activities will likely reduce workload sufficiently to eliminate one or more additional positions. However, workload data is not available to estimate actual staffing needs following the removal of these duties. A process of attribution is recommended to evaluate the impact of staff reduction and determine when ideal staff levels have been reached.
- Any new hires to the Public Works Department in the foreseeable future should be limited to permanent part-time in accordance with the labor agreement.

4. ***THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS' OFFICE SHOULD BE LOCATED AT THE PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY.***

- To enhance supervisory presence, job planning and worker oversight.
- To address several noted deficiencies, including:
  - Facility and grounds maintenance
  - Break and lunch practices
  - Work procedures such as salt use ( and others that likely exist)
- The Public Works Clerk should also relocate.
- It will be necessary for the City to establish network connections to provide automated access.



**5. *THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SHOULD BE PROVIDED MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT AS OPPOSED TO TAKE-HOME TRUCK ASSIGNMENT.***

- The Assistant Director's truck use should be limited to work hours.
- Reimbursement for emergency call-in should be at the current IRS mileage rate.

**6. *THE BUILDING CLERK SHOULD BE MOVED TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE RECEPTION AREA AND ASSIGNED ADDITIONAL DUTIES UNDER THE CITY CLERK'S SUPERVISION. THE CITY CLERK COULD ALSO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR BUILDING CONTRACTORS.***

- The Building Clerk and one remaining Clerk assigned to the City Clerk's Office should be cross-trained and both report to the City Clerk. Both should be located in the City Clerk's reception area with the City Clerk having full supervisory responsibility.
- The Building Clerk's duties should be expanded to include responsibility for:
  - Cemetery database development
  - Increased Equalizer use as directed
  - Code enforcement automated documentation
  - Automation of fire payroll and State reporting records.
- The City could also consider transferring responsibility for Building Division contact administration to the City Clerk.

**7. *AN ESCROW ACCOUNT SYSTEM SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR SITE PLAN REVIEW.***

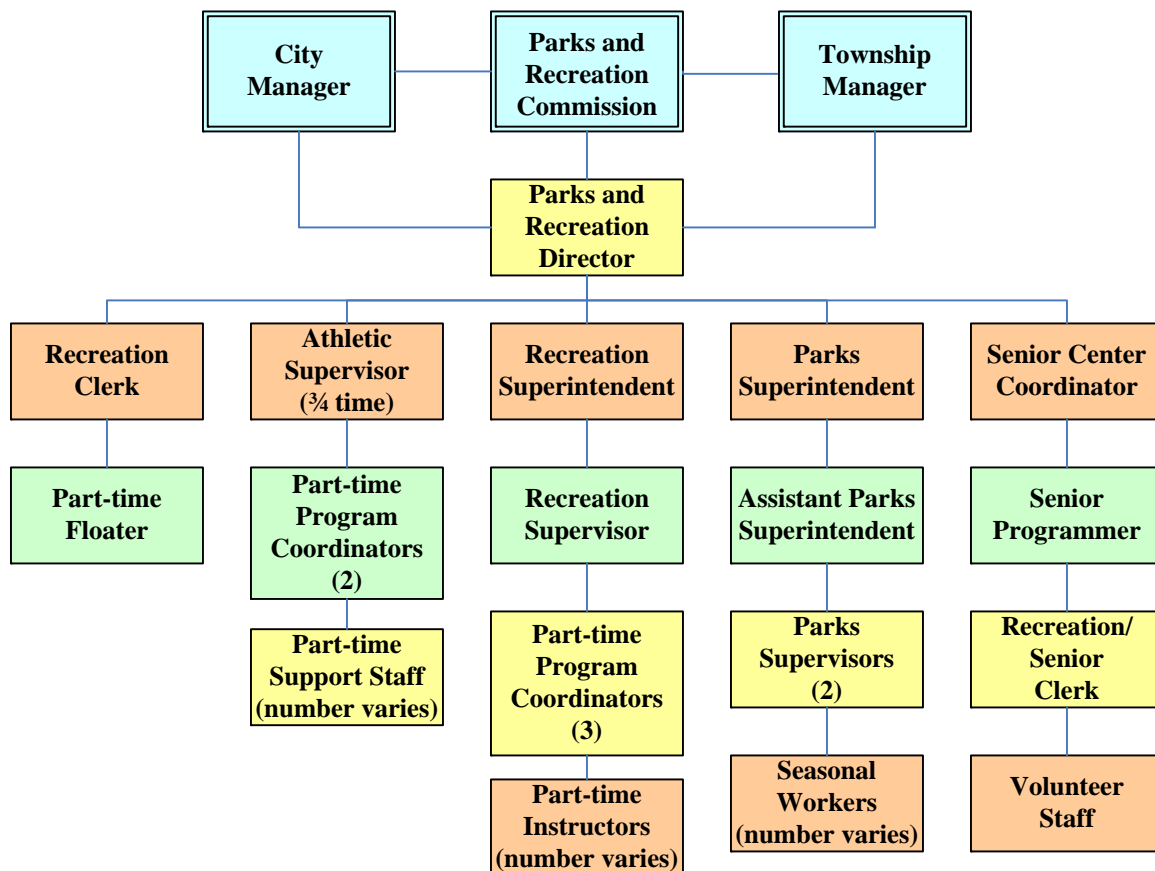
- To assure that all costs are captured and reimbursed.
- The City of Plymouth's system, as presented, should serve as a model.

### *E. Parks and Recreation Department*

The City of Northville provides recreation, senior services and youth assistance services in collaboration with Northville Township. A shared-services formula is used to calculate the percentage of operating expenditures borne by each entity – the City’s portion for FY 2008-09 is \$306,248 or 19.1% of the total cost for the three service areas mentioned above. The department has a service population estimated at 31,471 for 2007 as well as many non-resident participants and facility users. As such it can be seen as a relatively major recreational service provider.

The organization of the Parks and Recreation Department is illustrated in Exhibit 18. As seen in the exhibit, the Department operates with a mix of full-time, part-time and seasonal employees as well as volunteers. For FY 2008-09 the Department employs approximately 33.8 full-time equivalent employees – a larger employee count than that of any other City department.

**Exhibit 18  
City of Northville  
Organization of Parks and Recreation Department**



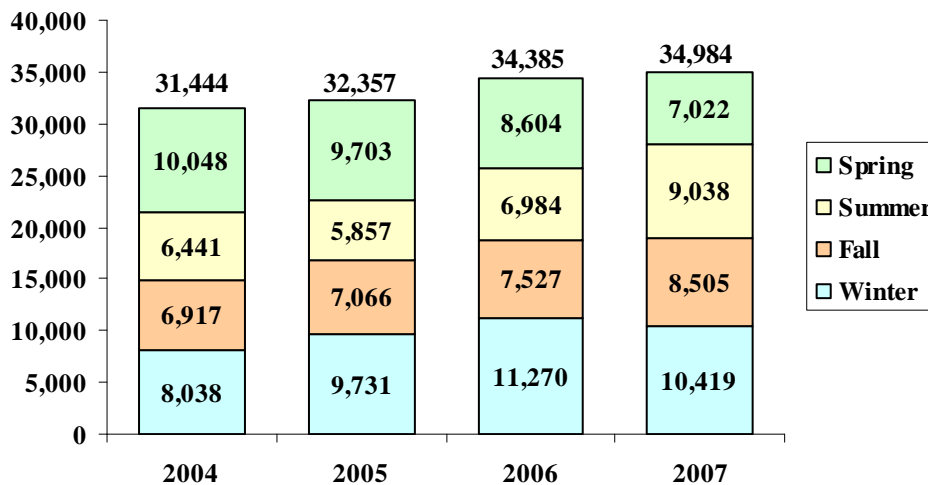
Note: FY 2008-09 total of 33.8 full-time equivalent employees.

Key findings and conclusions regarding the Parks and Recreation Department include the following:

**1. THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD IS LARGE AND VARIED. THE DEPARTMENT IS WELL-MANAGED; HOWEVER, THE DIRECTOR APPEARS SOMEWHAT OVEREXTENDED.**

As mentioned, the Northville Parks and Recreation Department is a relatively large organization with a scope of responsibility spanning recreation programming, parks maintenance and Senior Services. As seen in Exhibit 19, if just the recreational component (not Senior Services) is considered, the number of participants has shown steady growth – increasing by more than 11% for the four year period ending in winter 2008.

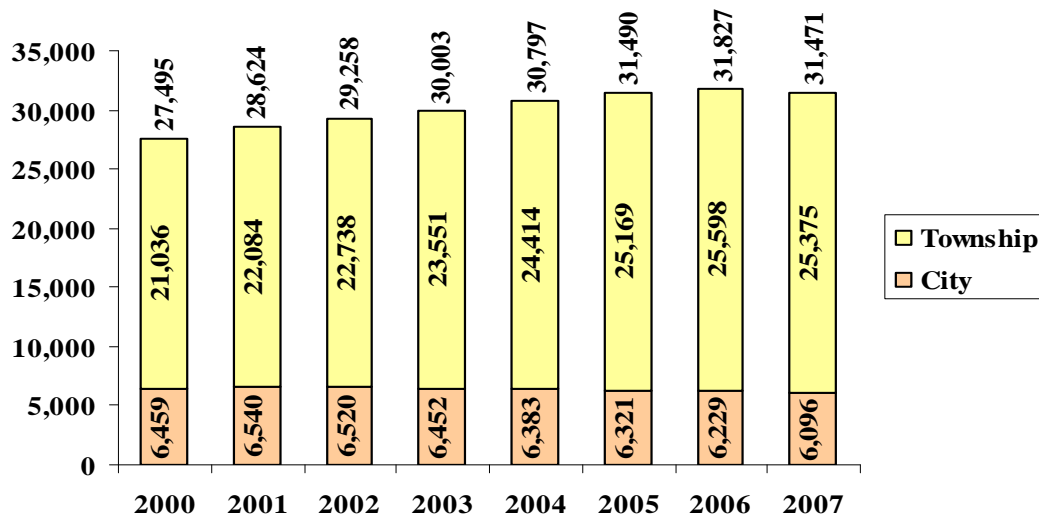
**Exhibit 19  
City of Northville Parks and Recreation  
Historic Participants by Season**



Note: Winter season is following year (i.e. 2007 = Winter 2008)  
Source: Northville Parks and Recreation Department

In administering this workload and other services, the Director must address the unique recreational visions and needs of two distinct communities. On the one hand, the Township has been a rapidly growing entity where several major parks and facilities have been developed over the prior decade. In contrast, the City, mostly developed, has been more focused on the maintenance and preservation of existing facilities and parkland. Population trends in the two communities illustrate this demographic divergence as seen in Exhibit 20.

**Exhibit 20  
Northville Community Population Estimates**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As head of recreational services, the Director must be sensitive to, and responsive to, the directives and needs of both entities in regard to policy, programming, service and maintenance issues. The reality of this can be seen in the reporting requirements of the position. Effectively, the Director must report independently to both the City and Township Managers as well as an involved Parks and Recreation Commission.

Additionally, Parks and Recreation facilities are housed at three different locations – including:

- Hillside (administration and recreation facilities)
- Senior Center (Senior Services and recreation facilities)
- Public Works facility (parks maintenance services)

To properly monitor operations the Director must spend considerable time driving to various locations throughout the City and Township.

Despite the above challenges, the Director appears to do a more than acceptable job of promoting the Department, managing a diverse workforce and meeting policy objectives and directives. However, by her admission, communications and service coordination could be further improved. Most notably, this would involve lessening the individuality of the operational divisions and improving service coordination through better integration of recreational and senior programming and related resources.

To accomplish this upgrade as well as improve current workload management, the Director will need to free up time. One way to accomplish this would be to provide additional administrative support. Ideally, this would be an administrative position, such

as a high level administrative assistant. This issue is further discussed in the following findings.

**2. THE DEPARTMENT HAS TWO FULL-TIME CLERKS. ONE CLERK IS CURRENTLY UNDERUTILIZED AND COULD BE RECLASSIFIED TO PART-TIME DUTY OR ELIMINATED.**

Until recently the Department had two full-time Clerks assigned to the front-desk area of Hillside Center. One has since been assigned to the Senior Center – ostensibly to assume many of the duties of the former Business Manager; a thirty-hour per week position that has not been filled.

Prior to the transfer, the two Clerks worked together at the Hillside reception/registration counter. One Clerk was responsible for program registration, phone inquiries, accounts payable processing, billing, payroll monitoring (employees enter their own data in system) and other clerical duties. The second Clerk, now transferred to Senior Services, was also responsible for phone and facility reception and program registration. Additionally, the Clerk was (and still is) responsible for the ongoing reservations for fourteen rooms and three gymnasiums in the Hillside and Senior Centers.

The rationale and need for two Clerks at Hillside was no longer present at the time of the transfer. In the past, the Clerks had done registration for baseball and soccer – a task that has not been required for more than five years. In light of the diminished workload, the Director saw an opportunity to use one Clerk more productively at the Senior Center.

Following the transfer of her coworker, the Recreation Clerk remaining at Hillside appears to have absorbed the remaining workload without issue. Other recreation staff provide lunch and relief coverage and a part-time clerk is available for fill-in. With the implementation of on-line registration, the duties of this position will continue to shrink; most likely offering the opportunity for additional task assignment.

As noted, the Clerk assigned to the Senior Center was expected to retain responsibility for facility reservations as well as assume duties formerly performed by the Business Manager. These duties included front-desk coverage, newsletter preparation and data entry for programming. Instead, these duties have been assumed by volunteer workers or, in the case of desk coverage, an exchange student fulfilling military duty obligations through volunteer work.

In this situation, the duties of the Clerk are mostly limited to the reservation of fourteen rooms and three gymnasiums. The Clerk contends that this is a full workload due to the many change in room use and assignments. Apparently, multiple Recreation employees have access to the reservation database and submit frequent changes. In turn, the availability of some facilities remains in flux. This complicates the Clerk's task of renting unused facilities as conditions change. Additionally, maintenance set-up crews can be inconvenienced by the changes. The Clerk has assumed responsibility for keeping their schedule current and cites this as a major portion of her job.

In fact, the reservations responsibility should not be a full-time assignment. It is limited in scope (pool, athletic fields and other outdoor facilities are scheduled by others) and relatively straight forward. What is needed is to revamp procedures for facility use, establishing more consistent methods for Recreation staff to follow in placing their reservations. Further, it should not be the responsibility of the Clerk to reschedule room maintenance. The maintenance crew, and/or their supervisor (the Parks Superintendent) should be able to access the facility reservations data base, print schedules, and adjust their schedule accordingly.

The Clerk's workload, already very manageable, could be further reduced by the above improvements to the reservation system. The position could then be reduced to part-time status or possibly eliminated at a savings estimated at \$56,925 (transition to 20-hour position) to \$71,485. In regard to position elimination, as the scheduling becomes a more routine, less time-consuming duty, it may be possible to assign the duty to the Recreation Clerk or other department staff. As noted, the Recreation Clerk's workload will further diminish with the growing use of automated program registration.

**3. RECREATION AND SENIOR PROGRAMMING SHOULD BE INTEGRATED AND PLACED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT.**

As mentioned, the Recreation Department and Senior Services are housed in two different facilities. Recreation services has been developed to encompass a wide swath of programs and events for all ages, including athletic programming, special events, health and wellness, aquatics and a wide assortment of enrichment programs.

Senior Services markets, and designs its services for a more elderly population, following the traditional "Senior Center" model. As an example, the senior newsletter states that it is for "ages 50+." However, a recent program that we reviewed advertised "Music of the 30s to 50s" as well as a theatre trip for "Say Goodnight Gracie" – programming clearly targeted to an audience well beyond the age of 50.

In fact, as the baby boomers enter their senior years, a new definition of "senior" is emerging. This is particularly apparent in upscale communities like Northville where exercise, nutrition patterns and mindset lend themselves to a more expansive view of senior status and activities. While it is still very important to maintain the "traditional" senior programs, Senior Services could better serve the community if it was to broaden its view of "seniors" to assure that the entire demographic group is afforded appropriate leisure services and activities.

This can best be accomplished by administrative integration of recreation and senior programming. Under an integrated program, needs assessments could be undertaken with programs designed to attract and satisfy the full spectrum of users. As importantly, service redundancies between recreation and senior programming could be eliminated and/or avoided.

In regard to the latter, the lack of program integration can currently be seen in a number of program areas such as:

- Various fitness offerings
- Strength training
- Yoga, Tai Chi, etc.
- Oxicise/weight loss
- Golf leagues
- Sign language.

Each division offers these programs with little or no overall program coordination. As a result, resources are wasted and decision making regarding programming fails to achieve central focus.

Summarily, without meaning to be critical of Senior Services, it is apparent that the Parks and Recreation Department faces several challenges in regard to this service area. They include:

- The need to better define the recreational preferences of its entire senior population and expand program offerings accordingly.
- The need to integrate Recreation and Senior Services in a coordinated fashion – and in the process eliminate service redundancies.

To accomplish this, it will be necessary for the Director to spearhead the effort of program integration. As previously discussed, the assignment of administrative support can help to free-up the needed time for this effort. Additionally, organizational reporting should be modified to support the premise of an integrated program. As one step in this direction, Senior Services should be organizationally placed under the Recreation Superintendent, with the Senior Coordinator continuing to direct day-to-day Senior Center operations and reporting directly to the Superintendent. This will provide for a coordinated approach toward program development and the oversight that is needed for expansion and integration.

As an initial step, a community survey should be considered as a means of determining the leisure service preferences of the over-50 population – and to provide a basis for new, better-integrated program development.

#### **4. THE MAINTENANCE DIVISION IS OVERSTAFFED FOR WINTER WORKLOAD. ACTUAL WORKLOAD IS DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH.**

As seen in Exhibit 18, the Parks Maintenance Division is comprised of four full-time employees and approximately six seasonal workers. Individual duties include:

- **Parks Superintendent:** Management and oversight of operations.

- **Assistant Parks Superintendent:** Responsible for athletic field maintenance, including directing grass cutting (contracted) and field preparation. Oversees most seasonal workers and coordinates with associations and facility users
- **Parks Supervisor/Forestry:** Responsible for park landscaping, flowers, trees and shrubs, trash and general upkeep.
- **Parks Supervisor:** responsible for irrigation and sprinkler systems and maintenance/contractor liaison for Senior Center building.

In regard to workload, the Parks Division apparently keeps no activity data that would indicate the amount of work performed. In response to our request for workload data, the Superintendent stated that it is “all in his head”. Time slips are filled out but provide no detail on what was accomplished.

In regard to warm weather workload we would presume that the Parks Division is busy. The Superintendent estimates that 80% of summer maintenance work is consumed by the two large Township parks due to the high usage by the sports associations (12 baseball, 16 soccer). Credible individuals interviewed during the study expressed favorable opinions regarding the quality and frequency of parks maintenance.

However, it is likely that winter workload is not as demanding. More specifically:

- The Superintendent notes that winter workload is limited to parking lot and sidewalk plowing, “limited” vehicle maintenance and Senior Center painting and repairs. Crew members also cite trash can painting as a winter task. It is also likely that there is some repair work to other park equipment though this was not noted.
- Regarding the above workload:
  - Any vehicle maintenance would be limited due to the lack of an inside facility.
  - Total snow responsibility is estimated by the work crew to require only 6-8 hours per occurrence.
  - A list of Senior Center repair tasks completed was not available. However, this duty is apparently assigned to only one crew member. When queried, Senior Center staff could only recall seeing maintenance crew staff working in the facility on an infrequent basis.



It is undoubtedly true the maintenance crew have a greater workload than is indicated above. However, due to the lack of activity reporting the amount of work performed cannot be quantified.

Maintaining an adequate winter workload for parks maintenance employees is a common municipal problem. Many municipalities solve this problem by making parks maintenance an operating division of the public works department. Parks workers are then assigned into the public works work crew for the winter months. In Northville, this would not be a viable option due to the “shared” nature of the Parks and Recreation Department as well as our findings regarding Public Works winter staffing needs (presented in the preceding subsection).

Ideally, a minimum of two of the four Parks Maintenance Division positions would be seasonal employees, with the remaining two performing necessary winter duties. If two workers were reduced to nine month status as an example, it would result in an estimated cost savings of \$32,010 (if the reduction involved the two Parks Supervisors). As another option, the Parks and Recreation Department could contract with the City’s Public Works Department to perform winter tasks or outsource the snow removal function. In this event, the Parks Division’s winter staffing could be reduced to just the Parks Superintendent. In this case, estimated cost savings of reducing three positions to nine month status would be \$50,276, less the cost of the contract.

Summarily, either option would create a more productive year-round staffing level. Any new hires could also be limited to part-time status.

**5. THE PARKS DIVISION NEEDS STORAGE SPACE. TECHNOLOGY IS ALSO NEEDED FOR INFORMATION AND PRODUCTIVITY UPGRADE.**

At present, Parks Division equipment is stored in an open outdoor area at the City’s Public Works yard, including trucks and expensive maintenance equipment. The Superintendent estimates the cost of a pole barn to house equipment at \$100,000. The City and Township have considered this capital expenditure but it is on hold due to funding issues.

The lack of an indoor facility has several negative impacts including:

- Limited ability to perform equipment maintenance during the winter months.
- Accelerated depreciation of equipment due to weather aging.
- Loss of opportunity for bulk purchase and storage of materials (i.e. ball diamond chalk, infield drying materials, etc.)

In light of the above, it behooves the Township and City to find a working alternative to the current situation. One option may be to rent covered space from the Public Works

Department, if, following facility clean-up, it is found that space is available. If this proves not to be a working option, others should be investigated including pole barn construction.

Other current deficiencies focus on technology. At present, the division has no automated system capable of supporting activity-based software. Similar to DPW, this is a necessary upgrade for tracking worker utilization and job cost. If, as recommended, the Public Work Director is relocated to the Public Works facility, automated systems will be upgraded at the facility. As a cost-saving measure, the Parks Division could potentially use the same activity-based software as Public Work, thus avoiding a duplicative purchase.

Additionally, the Parks Division has no internet connection. To get this access for work orders and other communications, the entire crew travels from their Public Works yard location to Hillside each morning. In this situation, a fairly significant block of potential work time is wasted each day in travel to the remote site. This issue could be easily remedied since the Public Works facility is wired for service.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, our recommendations for improvement are as follows:

**1. *ONE FULL-TIME CLERK POSITION SHOULD BE RECLASSIFIED TO PART-TIME OR ELIMINATED.***

- The Clerk is currently underutilized in her Senior Center assignment.
- The positional duties focus almost exclusively on facility reservations; this duty does not constitute a full-time assignment.
- Changes to procedures could further reduce the workload. In this situation, a part-time assignment would be more than adequate
- (or) Responsibility for room reservations could be transferred to the other Recreation Clerk after procedural changes are made to improve the system. In this event, one full-time position could be eliminated.

**2. *AN ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION SHOULD BE ADDED TO ASSIST THE RECREATION DIRECTOR***

- A portion of the Director's time would be freed-up for more macro issues such as service integration and program oversight and refinement.
- If a Clerk's position was eliminated, it could offset some, or most of the cost of adding a new administrative position.

**3. *RECREATION AND SENIOR PROGRAMMING SHOULD BE INTEGRATED AND PLACED UNDER THE RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT.***

- There are currently many program redundancies that should be eliminated.
- An integrated program approach will facilitate a more comprehensive, cost effective menu of leisure services.
- The Senior Services Coordinator should report directly to the Recreation Superintendent
- The definition of "senior" should be expanded. A needs survey should be conducted to ascertain the service preferences of different segments of the "over 50" population.

4. ***AT MINIMUM, TWO PARK MAINTENANCE DIVISION POSITIONS SHOULD BE REDUCED TO SEASONAL WORK SCHEDULES.***

- Winter workload is not sufficient to support four employees.
- Estimated cost savings would be \$32,010 if winter staffing was reduced to two positions and two positions assumed a nine month assignment.
- Another option may be to contract with DPW to perform winter tasks or outsource snow removal. In this event, three workers could be put on a reduced work schedule. If for example, the employees were reduced to nine month assignments, the estimated cost savings would be \$50,276, less the cost of the contract.
- All future hires should be limited to seasonal employee status.

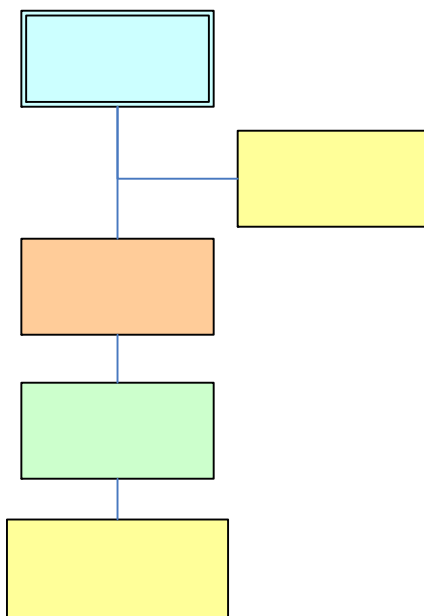
5. ***COVERED STORAGE SPACE SHOULD BE SECURED FOR PARKS EQUIPMENTS. AUTOMATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS SHOULD ALSO BE UPGRADED.***

- Outdoor storage increases deterioration and limits productivity related to equipment maintenance.
- Possibly a rental agreement can be agreed-upon to utilize available Public Works facility space. If not, other options should be explored including pole barn construction.
- Activity-based reporting systems should be implemented to track employee use and job cost. The Parks Division may be able to “piggy back” on similar upgrades recommended for Public Works.
- Internet/e-mail access should be made available to the Parks Division to eliminate unproductive trips to the Hillside offices.

## *F. Fire Department*

The City of Northville's Fire Department is a paid-on-call operation directed by a full-time Fire Chief. The organization of the Fire Department is illustrated in Exhibit 21.

**Exhibit 21**  
**City of Northville**  
**Fire Department Organization**



Key findings and conclusions regarding the Fire Department are as follows:

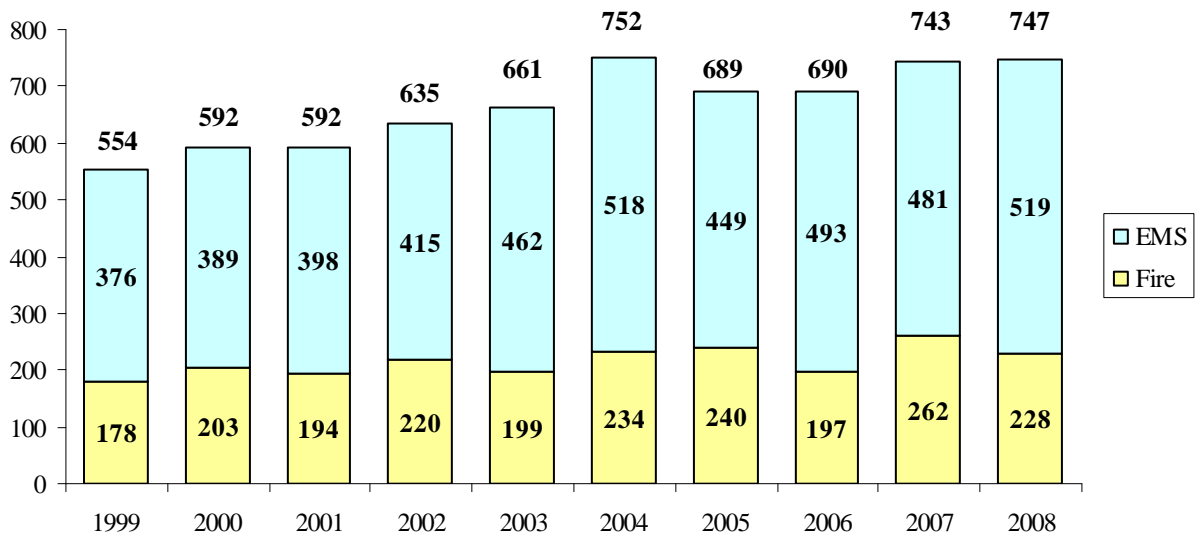
**1. THE NORTHVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT IS A WELL-MANAGED, PROFESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES AGENCY.**

As a paid-on-call operation, the Northville Fire Department operates at a relatively high level of cost efficiency. Unlike many area cities, Northville has avoided the significant cost associated with full-time “career” firefighters.

The volunteer status of the Department does not appear to have compromised professional standards or performance. The Firefighters are required to achieve FF II certification (the higher designation) within a year of hire and all but seven members have achieved EMT or Paramedic certification (the seven are certified Medical First Responders). Unlike some volunteer fire operations, neither Firefighter retention nor call-out strength appear to be issues. The firefighting cadre is comprised of professional and career individuals who have an ambition to serve the community and a younger segment that are pursuing a future in firefighting. The Department also has an active Explorer post (Post #1717) which may have 5-15 members in any given year and provides fertile ground for ongoing recruitment.

The Department appears to be an organization that people want to be associated with. This reflects favorably on the Fire Chief and command staff, and translates into sound performance. The Department regularly turns out 10-12 call responders to both fire and ambulance calls and reports a strong day-time turnout – a frequent problem area with volunteer fire departments. As seen in Exhibit 22, call volume has increased by 40% from 1999 to 2008. The Department has apparently internalized this added workload without negative impact on response strength or service consistency.

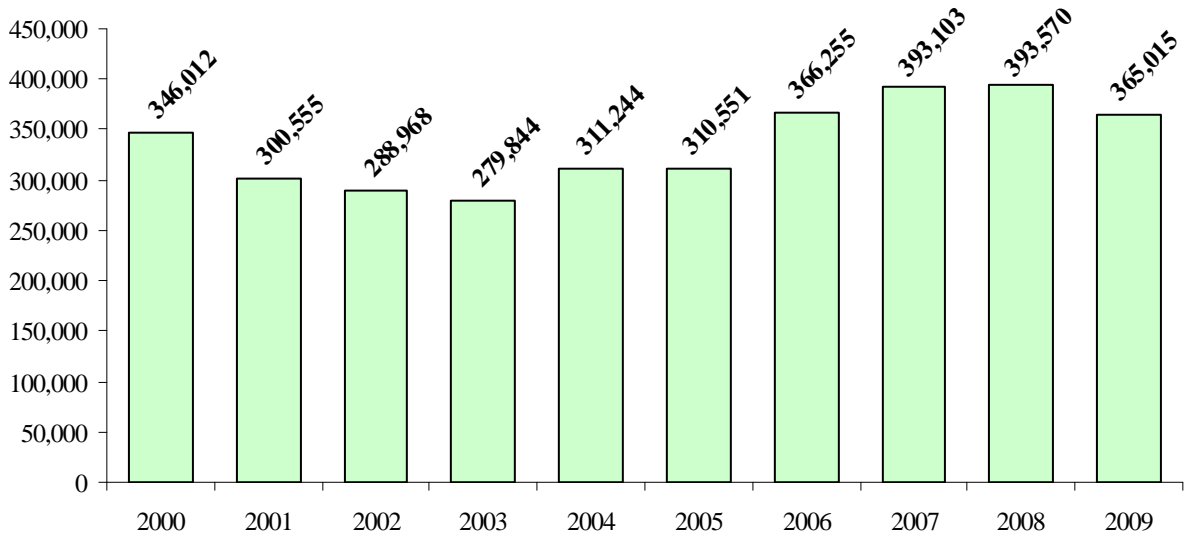
**Exhibit 22**  
**Historic Calls for Service**



Source: Northville Fire Department

In regard to cost, annual expenditures rise and fall from year-to-year mostly depending on the nature and time commitment of calls for service. As seen in Exhibit 23, the annual budget has fluctuated from a low of \$279,894 in 2003 to \$393,570 in 2008. Average expenditures for the 10 year period were \$355,517.

**Exhibit 23**  
**Historic Fire Department Expenditures**



Source: City of Northville Fire Department

The level of expenditures devoted to fire service is relatively modest in comparison to some communities. The City of Plymouth, as an example, expends more than \$1,000,000 per annum as its share of the costs associated with the Plymouth Community Fire Department.

Summarily, the Northville Fire Department appears well managed from both cost and service perspectives. Our analysis has focused on further improving the cost effectiveness of what appears to be a very successful operation.

**2. EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT IS AN EXPENSIVE ISSUE THAT MUST BE RESOLVED.**

The Northville Fire Department operates with five major equipment pieces, including:

- Two pumpers
- One mini-pumper
- One pumper/ladder truck
- One mini-pumper.

Equipment appears well maintained and is scheduled for replacement at life expectancies of 20-30 years. To fund ongoing replacement, the City reserves approximately \$75,000 per year in a replacement account. The current balance in the replacement account is approximately \$457,000. Debt might also be issued for equipment purchase, depending on the balance available.

In regard to equipment replacement, the Department has two vehicles that are nearing the end of the depreciation cycle. This can be seen in the following Exhibit 24, an overview of assumed vehicle life and replacement costs for all five vehicles.

**Exhibit 24  
Fire Equipment Depreciation Schedule**

<b>Apparatus Description</b>	<b>Assumed Vehicle Life in Years</b>	<b>Replacement Year</b>	<b>2009 Assumed Cost</b>	<b>Projected Future Cost*</b>
<b>1980 American LaFrance Ladder</b>	30	2010	\$750,000	\$802,500
<b>1988 Pierce Dash Pumper</b>	25	2013	\$300,000	\$393,238
<b>1988 Ford/Pierce Mini-pumper</b>	25	2013	\$175,000	\$229,389
<b>2001 Freightliner Medium Duty Rescue</b>	20	2021	\$175,000	\$280,181
<b>2002 American LaFrance Pumper</b>	25	2027	\$300,000	\$1,013,981
<b>TOTAL OUTLAY</b>				<b>\$2,719,289</b>

Assumed 7% annual inflation rate for all but rescue - rescue assumed 4%

As seen in Exhibit 24, there are two fiscal challenges that the City will face regarding fire equipment replacement. Specifically:

- Several expensive equipment pieces, including the ladder truck are scheduled for replacement in the short-term. The ladder truck, with an estimated current replacement cost of \$750,000, is due for replacement in 2010. Assuming a 7% increase in cost, the replacement cost of this vehicle in 2010 is estimated at \$802,500.
- The inflationary cost of major fire equipment has been rising at an annual rate of nearly 10%. This is due in large part to more stringent emissions standards and requirements for added safety equipment. This trend is expected to continue and to account for it, we have assumed a 7% annual increase in cost for four of the five equipment pieces. As seen in the exhibit, this serves to boost the future cost of equipment to significant levels.

Faced with both short- and long-term cost pressures, the City may be hard-pressed to finance future capital requirements. To illustrate this point, Exhibit 25 estimates the cash contributions that would be needed to fund one cycle of vehicle replacement. Certainly financing options could be used – Exhibit 25 simply provides the starting point to assess available options.



**Exhibit 25**  
**Vehicle Replacement Schedule**  
**Funding Requirements**  
**Full Cash Basis**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Beginning Balance</b>	<b>Contributions</b>	<b>Interest Earnings*</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>Ending Balance</b>
2009	\$457,000	\$0	\$0		\$457,000
2010	\$457,000	\$350,000	\$18,280	\$802,500	\$22,780
2011	\$22,780	\$200,000	\$911		\$223,691
2012	\$223,691	\$200,000	\$8,948		\$432,639
2013	\$432,639	\$200,000	\$17,306	\$622,627	\$27,317
2014	\$27,317	\$75,000	\$1,093		\$103,410
2015	\$103,410	\$75,000	\$4,136		\$182,547
2016	\$182,547	\$75,000	\$7,302		\$264,848
2017	\$264,848	\$75,000	\$10,594		\$350,442
2018	\$350,442	\$75,000	\$14,018		\$439,460
2019	\$439,460	\$75,000	\$17,578		\$532,038
2020	\$532,038	\$75,000	\$21,282		\$628,320
2021	\$628,320	\$75,000	\$25,133	\$280,181	\$448,272
2022	\$448,272	\$75,000	\$17,931		\$541,203
2023	\$541,203	\$75,000	\$21,648		\$637,851
2024	\$637,851	\$75,000	\$25,514		\$738,365
2025	\$738,365	\$75,000	\$29,535		\$842,899
2026	\$842,899	\$75,000	\$33,716		\$951,615
2027	\$951,615	\$75,000	\$38,065	\$1,013,981	\$50,699

\*Interest Earnings assumed at 4%

In light of the above, the City should consider options for deferring or lessening the costs associated with fire equipment replacement. Two possible approaches are discussed below.

**1. Deferral of Equipment Purchase**

The most immediate equipment issue is the replacement of the 75' ladder truck. This apparatus is important for structural firefighting, particularly in a concentrated area such as the downtown. At present it responds to all structural fire calls for service, though it is used infrequently. The ladder portion of the truck was refurbished in 2000 following a minor accident and the truck is in excellent running condition. In light of this, either refurbishment or the deferral of replacement without refurbishment are viable options. In weighting these options the City should also consider the potential impact on the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating. ISO's fire suppression rating schedule measures the major elements of a community's fire suppression system and assigns a rating of 1 (ideal) to 10. The rating, in turn, is used by many (though

not all) insurance companies as a rate determinate for business and residential property owners. The analysis of risk falls into three categories including:

- Fire Alarm (10%)
- Engine Companies (50%)
- Water Supply (40%)

By having a ladder truck, the City has increased its point total in the second category. Conversely, ISO has parameters for acceptable age, condition and maintenance/test history.

Summarily, the City could lose ISO points by deferral of a new truck purchase. If the loss was sufficient to drop the City from an ISO 6 to an ISO 7 rating, insurance premiums (particularly commercial premiums) would likely be affected. To better understand the potential impacts, the City could request a limited-scope assessment by ISO as part of the equipment decision-making process.

In regard to the choice between refurbishment and simple new purchase deferral for the ladder truck, we cannot estimate the cost of refurbishment without a technical assessment. However, it should be noted that the LaFrance line of fire trucks are no longer in production. The Fire Chief notes that he has had problems locating simple replacement parts – a problem that will likely worsen. In this situation, the City may not be wise to invest in a refurbishment that will lengthen the stay of the vehicle. With the vehicle still in top running condition, the best option may be to “stay the course” until the vehicle begins to age perceptively. Periodic pump and ladder testing should be performed and the department should stay abreast of emerging safety standards pertaining to operation and design.

As a future option, the City might also consider approaching Northville Township regarding ladder truck contract options. While there are pros and cons to this approach it could be a workable alternative. Specifically:

- It would require careful preplan information and exact dispatch protocol to alert Northville Township when the truck was needed.
- Unfortunately, it would increase response time for the truck, though in some instances this would not be a negative since some set-up tasks would need initial completion before the ladder truck could be positioned and engaged.
- It would likely have a negative impact on the ISO rating as discussed.

## **2. Consider A Wider Choice Of Manufactures.**

With the exception of the rescue vehicle, the City’s fire fleet is comprised of LaFrance and Pierce fire apparatus. As mentioned, LaFrance is no longer in the

business of manufacturing fire trucks – Pierce is still prominent in the industry. In the past, LaFrance was considered a premier option for a fire truck; Pierce continues to hold that distinction.

In discussing apparatus replacement with the Fire Chief, we were of the impression that Pierce brand trucks would likely receive the strongest consideration. The Fire Chief mentioned that other manufacturers could be considered, but vendor contact appears to be almost exclusively with the Pierce representative.

This is fairly typical in Southeast Michigan. Pierce does make a fine product and many fire chiefs favor the brand. However, there are many smaller competitors turning out high quality fire trucks at lower cost. As an example, in response to our inquiry, Spencer manufacturing in South Haven noted that they had delivered a similar ladder truck two years ago for less than \$500,000.

In summary, the Fire Department should consider a wider range of potential vendors for fire truck purchase. There are many manufacturers whose vehicles meet all applicable National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and have acceptable track records for durability. Northville’s fire workload is not high and could be serviced quite adequately by lesser cost vehicles.

**3. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT SHOULD PURSUE FEMA GRANTS AGGRESSIVELY.**

The Fire Department has apparently pursued Assistance to Firefighter Grants (AFG) without success. These grant monies, available through Homeland Security, are provided for equipment purchases ranging from smaller technical items, such as cameras and sensors, to large items such as fire trucks.

In discussing the issue with the Fire Chief, it is his impression that the grant applications are ignored due to the strong financial and economic health of the community. In fact, however, many generally well-off communities have received grants. This includes several of our benchmark communities, including:

- Brighton: \$289,000
- Farmington: \$60,000
- Gross Point Farms \$14,363
- Saline: \$142,500

In Northville, the responsibility for grant writing has been delegated to one command officer; an individual with significant professional training. The applications are being done in a professional and articulate manner. That being said, there are ways to increase the Department’s chances of securing a grant. Specifically:

- Grant reviewers are reading numerous applications at a single sitting. Successful applications are those that are memorable. Applications should be succinct and clearly specify the need for, and proposed use of the equipment.
- The application should be explicit regarding financial need. The budgetary problems the City is experiencing should be cited as well as how this will impact the Fire Department.
- The application should note how the requested item(s) will enhance the health and safety of the firefighters (one purpose of the grant program).
- The application should note how the requested item(s) will help the Department to meet NFPA and OSHA standards.
- The department should review successful grants. They are on the web – available from manufacturers. Also, the Fire Chief or a command officer could apply to become a FEMA Peer Reviewer. Reading other grant applications could be very helpful.
- AFG representatives have scheduled eight workshops in Michigan beginning February 16, 2009. Representatives of the department could attend. The contact number is 866.274.0960.

Some medium-priced items that are common for grant requests are hose, turnout gear and SCBA. The department's equipment is more than adequate in all of these areas. However, we have also seen cases where FEMA monies were provided for vehicle purchase. With several vehicles approaching depreciable obsolescence, the department would certainly be justified in the request. While a smaller goal is probably more realistic for initial grant approval, a vehicle could be a longer term objective.

#### **4. FOLLOWING THE FIRE CHIEF'S RETIREMENT THE CITY COULD CONSIDER A PART-TIME CHIEF POSITION.**

As discussed, the Fire Department is well administered and an example of how a paid-on-call fire operation can operate successfully in an urban area. Most of this success can be attributed to the leadership of the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief has held his position since 1978 and has served in a full-time capacity since 1995.

Unlike Northville, many paid-on-call fire departments still operate with a part-time fire chief. However, the general trend is toward full-time administration. Increased State and Federal reporting requirements, a greater emphasis on time-consuming fire prevention activities and the need to coordinate emergency response plans on a larger scale have all added to the time commitments of the position. In this situation, many communities have gone to full-time administration.

In Northville, the Fire Chief also responds to most service calls. His presence at the fire house facilitates a rapid response and adds some level of response certainty to the volunteer system. He fulfills most of the administrative functions of the Department and oversees and works with a part-time command officer on commercial fire inspections. He also serves as the City's Sexton.

In summary, the position is well-rounded and generally productive. Ideally, it would be retained in a full-time capacity. However, if financial needs dictate cost reduction, the position (following the Chief's retirement) could be changed to part-time status. The cost savings would be approximately \$56,331 if the switch were to a 20 hour position (not considering any new call-in compensation).

In this event, some immediate response capability and inspection time would be lost, since one-half of the Chief's on-duty time would also be eliminated. To rectify this deficiency, some additional on-duty staffing could be authorized (current cost \$12.95 per hour) with on-call firefighting personnel used more freely in an on-duty capacity for both inspections and stand-by duty (if desired). It would also be necessary to reassign Sexton duties – a duty that could be assumed by the Public Works Director and City Clerk, as previously discussed.

The part-time duties of the new Fire Chief would be similar to present duties, including:

- Budget preparation and administration
- Overall management
- Emergency response
- Training schedule
- Records and report management
- State reporting
- Representative to fire and emergency organizations
- Personnel management.

As previously discussed, the Building Secretary (under any circumstances) should assist with records system automated upgrade and management. This input would be particularly desirable with a part-time Fire Chief.

In summary, the switch to a part-time Fire Chief is a viable alternative; however, it would require careful planning and forethought. It would represent a significant change to a department that has performed well and is staffed by individuals largely driven by community commitment. If a change is undertaken, the firefighting cadre should be involved in all facets of planning the transition and deciding the specific adjustments to command duties and response.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, our recommendations for improvement are as follows:

### ***1. THE PURCHASE OF A NEW LADDER TRUCK SHOULD BE DEFERRED.***

- Usage is low and the current condition of the vehicle is good.
- Refurbishment is not a good option. The brand is no longer sold and safety and operating specifications are rapidly changing.
- The condition of the truck will ultimately determine the timing of replacement.
- A contract-for-services with Northville Township may also be an option for the future.

### ***2. WHEN EQUIPMENT IS PURCHASED, THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER A GREATER NUMBER OF MANUFACTURERS.***

- The current preference is for Pierce products.
- Smaller manufactures could offer greater value and should be consulted.

### ***3. THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE FEMA GRANTS.***

- Past efforts have not been successful.
- Some approaches are presented for increasing the success rate.
- Ultimately, the City should apply for vehicle funding.

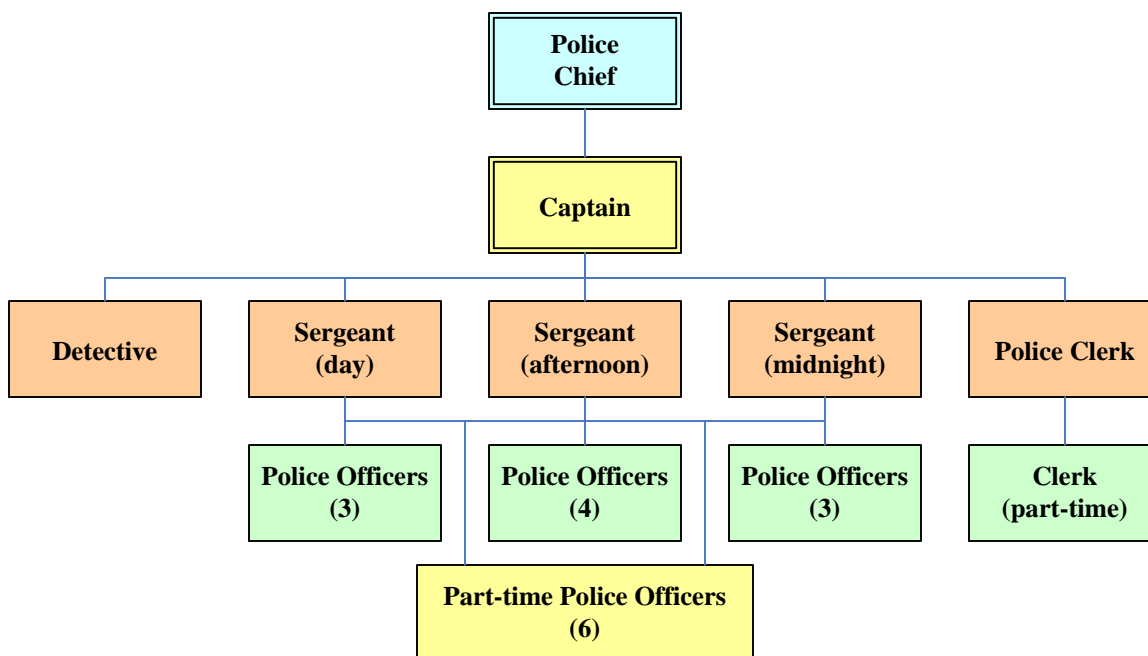
### ***4. THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER THE COST-BENEFIT OF CHANGING THE FIRE CHIEF POSITION TO PART-TIME, FOLLOWING THE RETIREMENT OF THE CURRENT CHIEF.***

- The Fire Chief position is currently very productive.
- There are pros and cons associated with changing the position to part-time.
- Estimated cost savings are approximately \$56,000.
- The fire cadre should be involved in any decision making regarding this change.

## ***G. Police Department***

The Northville Police Department (NPD) provides 24-hour patrol and crime prevention, criminal investigation and other public safety services. NPD is staffed by 16 full-time police professionals, full-time and part-time clerical assistants and a cadre of certified part-time Police Officers. The organization of NPD is illustrated in Exhibit 26.

**Exhibit 26  
City of Northville  
Police Department Organization**



Key findings and conclusions regarding NPD include the following:

**1. NPD IS A WELL-RUN POLICE AGENCY WITH A FAIRLY CONSISTENT WORKLOAD.**

NPD's Police Chief is a well-seasoned police professional that has led several other small agencies, including neighboring Farmington. From all appearances the Chief has been proactive in upgrading a number of operating areas during his brief tenure. They include:

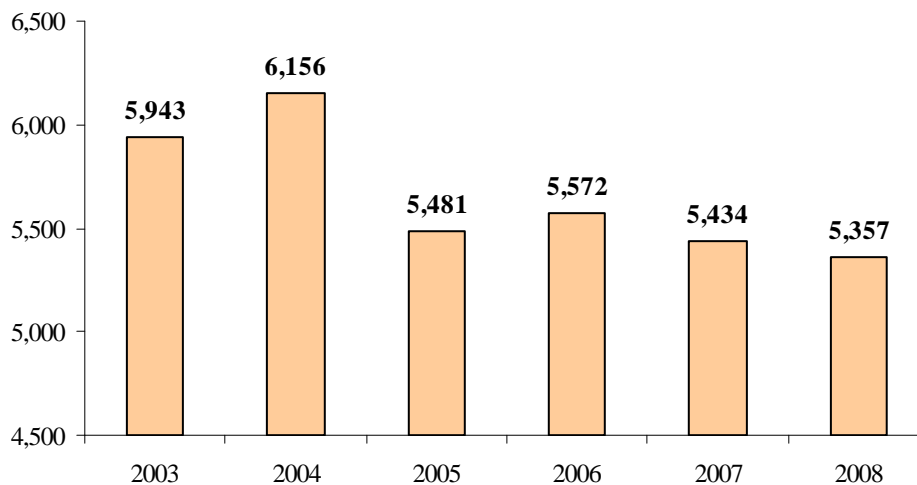
- The establishment of a clear mission and values for the Department.
- Training in customer service techniques such as verbal judo – “The Gentle Art of Persuasion.”
- The development of concise job descriptions for all classifications, as well as an acceptable “first pass” at personnel policies development.

- Transition to the CLEMIS data management system – a progressive, regional system for informational reporting.
- The ongoing upgrade of standard operating guidelines (SOG) – a procedural deficiency that could put the City at risk of litigation regarding Officer conduct or other procedural actions.
- The recently negotiated reduction in required race track staffing – a change that will reduce a total overtime budget of roughly \$86,000 to an even lower level.

From all indications NPD is a well functioning police agency focused on community service and high quality standards. Average call response time was slightly more than two minutes in 2008 and has been at or near this level through all of the current decade. Unlike some departments, command officers are actively included in patrol, averaging nearly 1,400 patrol hours in 2008.

The workload of the Department is fairly steady with minor fluctuations during the prior four years. Call volume appears to have been higher in 2003 and 2004, but this may be due to differences in reporting methods. Call volume is illustrated in Exhibit 27, a summary of calls for service from 2003-2008.

**Exhibit 27**  
**City of Northville**  
**Historic Police Calls-for-Service**

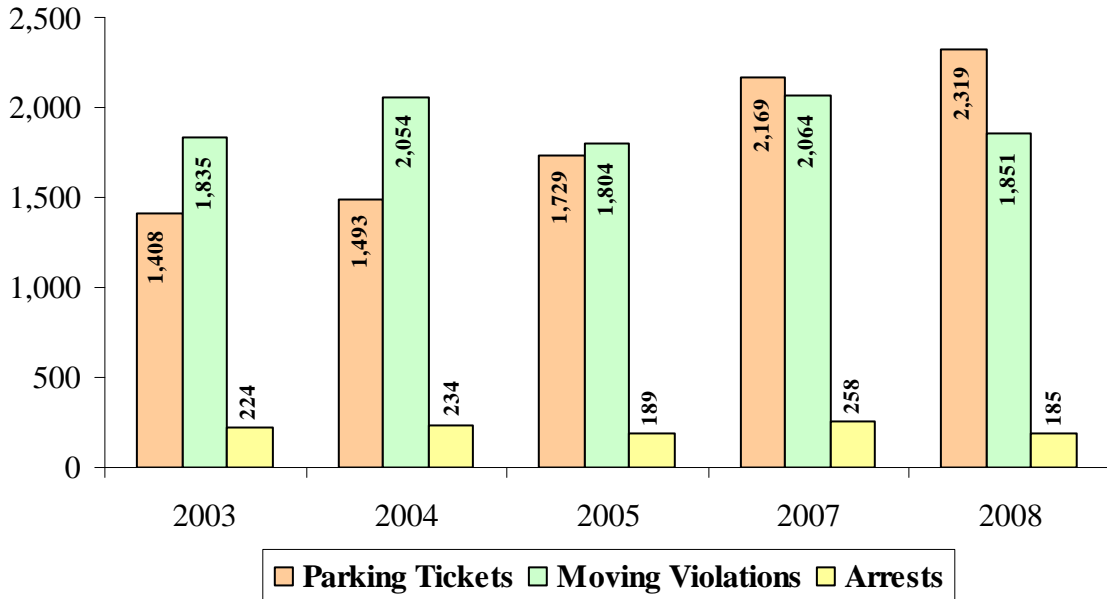


Source: City of Northville Police Department



As seen in the following Exhibit 28, enforcement workload, including arrests and moving violations, have also been fairly steady during this period; though parking ticket issuance has risen significantly under the current Police Chief.

**Exhibit 28**  
**City of Northville**  
**Historic Police Operating Statistics**



Note: 2006 data not available  
Source: City of Northville Police Department

In summary, NPD appears to be responsive in meeting community needs. Serious crime occurrence is infrequent with the vast majority of Part 1 (serious) crimes falling in the categories of assaults, larcenies and property damage in 2007 (69% of total). The community had only one robbery and no murders or forcible sexual offenses.

The low volume of serious crime incidence has allowed the department to address emerging needs rather than operate in a reactive manner. NPD has successfully tailored its operations to meet the needs of a relatively affluent service population focused on high quality-of-life and rapid response to all calls-for-service. The Police Chief has spent the majority of his professional career in a similar operating venue and appears well-suited to meet Northville’s public safety needs.

**2. NPD’S OPERATING COSTS ARE HIGH IN COMPARISON TO THE BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES.**

The benchmark communities that we have used for this study include some with combined police and fire operations (i.e. public safety) or contracts to provide service to other municipalities (i.e. Milford). We do not consider these to be fair benchmarks for

NPD. However, five of the ten have separate police departments with measurable police budgets. In Exhibit 29, we have compared the 2008 budgetary costs of these agencies to that of NPD.

**Exhibit 29  
Comparison of Police Department Operating Costs**

City	2007 Estimated Population	2008-09 Budget	Cost per Capita	2008 Estimated Overtime Budget
<b>Northville</b>	<b>6,096</b>	<b>\$2,497,286</b>	<b>\$409.65</b>	<b>\$86,000</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	7,184	\$2,453,045	\$341.46	\$250,000
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	7,663	\$2,065,030	\$269.48	\$100,000
<b>Plymouth</b>	8,732	\$2,915,900	\$333.93	\$96,220
<b>Saline</b>	8,034	\$2,149,678	\$267.57	\$110,000
<b>Walled Lake*</b>	6,929	\$2,105,132	\$303.81	\$30,000
<b>AVERAGES</b>	<b>7,708</b>	<b>\$2,337,757</b>	<b>\$303.25</b>	<b>\$117,244</b>

\* Prior to operating merger with Wolverine Lake

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

As seen in Exhibit 29, NPD’s operating cost, measured on a per capita basis, is roughly 39% higher than the average of the benchmark communities. It should be noted that we have used the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2007 estimated population for all the communities. The City of Northville’s estimated population of 6,096 is significantly lower than the 2000 census count of 6,459. However, even if the 2000 count is used to compare costs, NPD is still 27% higher than the average.

In regard to the cost differential, the bulk of it can be attributed to personnel-related expenses. By way of explanation, police departments, characterized by 24-hour staffing, are highly labor-intensive. In turn, departmental budgets are overwhelmingly dedicated to employee costs. For NPD, personnel-related costs account for more than 85% of the total budget in FY 2008-09.

In this situation, any meaningful cost reductions must inevitably involve personnel-related decisions. As seen in Exhibit 30, NPD does appear to be more highly staffed than the benchmark communities – though not significantly. Consequently, reducing the staffing level to a comparable number would not correct a 25% - 40% per capita budgetary differential. To accomplish this, NPD will also need to reduce the individual Police Officer cost – or reduce staffing and service levels; a situation to be avoided.

**Exhibit 30  
Comparison of Police Department Staffing**

<b>City</b>	<b>2007 Estimated Population</b>	<b>Total Full- time Police Officers</b>	<b>Sworn Officers per 1000 Population</b>	<b>Number of Command Officers</b>
<b>Northville</b>	<b>6,096</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	7,184	17	2.37	6
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	7,663	17	2.22	5
<b>Plymouth</b>	8,732	15	1.72	4
<b>Saline</b>	8,034	14	1.74	4
<b>Walled Lake*</b>	6,929	16	2.31	4
<b>AVERAGES</b>	<b>7,708</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2.08</b>	<b>5</b>

\* Prior to operating merger with Wolverine Lake

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

**3. THE USE OF PART-TIME POLICE OFFICERS FOR PATROL DUTY COULD BE A COST-EFFECTIVE OPTION FOR NPD.**

As mentioned, NPD has a cadre of six part-time Police Officers. The six are certified as Police Officers in the State of Michigan and, as such, could be legally used for patrol duty and other related police activities. However, the current bargaining agreement places some limits on the use of the part-time Police Officers to replace regular full-time employees. In recognition of this, the Police Chief utilizes the part-time Police Officers only for race track coverage, civic events and parking enforcement.

The bargaining agreement appears to leave the City some additional latitude in using the part-time personnel on a scheduled basis (Article 12.9 H). However, if they were to be used for routine patrol duty, it is likely that some contractual accommodation would be needed. Achieving this accommodation could be very valuable to the City from a cost-benefit perspective.

By way of explanation, a number of cities utilize part-time police officers as a regular fixture in the patrol contingent. They are slotted into the patrol rotation as fully functioning police officers and/or are used for relief coverage to avoid overtime occurrence. In either case, personnel costs can be reduced significantly.

Similarly, the use of part-time Police Officers in Northville could dramatically lower operating costs. At present, a five-year Police Officer has a base wage of \$59,072. When the estimated cost of employee benefits is added, the hourly compensable rate of the Police Officer is \$50.84. In contrast, a part-time Police Officer (including FICA

contribution) is compensated at a rate of \$16.31 – or roughly one-third of the full-time rate.

To illustrate the potential for part-time usage we have created several patrol schedules. These schedules, contained in Appendix A, illustrate the following:

- Appendix A-1 is a representation of the current Police Department schedule. As seen in Appendix A-1, the patrol operation is divided into three shifts of eight hour durations. Day and midnight shifts are staffed with four officers and afternoon shift has five. The total number of officers scheduled on a particular day is summarized under the staffing line included in the schedule. However, due to planned and unplanned absences the actual number of working officers is frequently lower. The minimum allowable number is two for any shift.
- Appendix A-2 presents a scenario in which one full-time position is eliminated and replaced with part-time Police Officers assigned to the afternoon shift. In the example, the part-time officers are scheduled on a 365 day basis (i.e. 2920 annual hours) – thus providing a much fuller patrol presence than could be achieved with one full-time patrol officer working a 2080 hour schedule with leave time and other time off. The cost savings associated with this “enhanced” patrol option would be \$58,122. If the full-time position was simply replaced on a 2080 hour basis, the cost savings would be \$71,822.
- Appendix A-3 contemplates eliminating two full-time positions and replacing them with part-time officers assigned to the day and afternoon shifts. The cost savings associated with this option can be estimated at \$116,244 for “enhanced” patrol or \$143,644 for an “hour for hour” part-time replacement.

The part-time option, if enacted, must be done with preplanning and care. Some Police Departments using this option experience frequent turnover as part-time officers move on to full-time positions. In this situation, training requirements increase and operating continuity can suffer. The key is to identify some potentially longer-term employees such as relatively young retirees from other agencies. These individuals can be blended with some younger officers to create a cadre that will experience a manageable level of turnover and operating consistency.

As seen in Exhibit 31, two of the five benchmark police agencies use part-time officers in the patrol rotation with one other (Brighton) using reserve officers in a supporting role on patrol. Many other agencies in Michigan also use this approach, a trend that will likely increase as finances worsen.

**Exhibit 31  
Overview of Police Part-Time and Reserve Officers**

<b>City or Village</b>	<b>Part-time police officers?</b>	<b>Reserve police officers?</b>
<b>Northville</b>	<b>Yes - no patrol</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Brighton</b>	No- reserves assist in patrol	Yes
<b>Grand Blanc</b>	No	No
<b>Plymouth</b>	No	No
<b>Saline</b>	Yes - patrol	Yes
<b>Walled Lake</b>	Yes - patrol	Yes

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

At present, NPD has at least two officers that are nearing retirement eligibility. The replacement of these Police Officers with part-time officers would allow the City to retain (or enhance) current patrol strength at a much reduced cost.

**4. ONE CLERICAL POSITION SHOULD BE ADEQUATE FOR THE DEPARTMENT WITH BUSINESS HOURS REDUCED TO 8AM-4PM.**

At present, NPD has a full-time Police Clerk with responsibility for accounts payable and payroll preparation, maintenance of activity logs, records management, court scheduling, FOIA and other photocopying tasks, and assisting customers at the police counter. The Police Clerk is still relatively new to the position and apparently still learning to coordinate and manage the various tasks and clerical requirements. The Police Clerk receives some support from a part-time clerical that totaled approximately 441 hours in 2008. The part-time clerical also staffs the police counter from 4:00pm -9pm, Tuesday-Thursday. Part-time Police Officers staff the counter on Monday and Friday evenings.

As the Police Clerk learns her position it can be expected that she will be able to function without clerical support. The CLEMIS system, as an example, eliminates many of the records management and reporting tasks performed by some police clerks, and will likely provide the basis for a predictable and routine records management and reporting function. Other tasks should become more routine and more easily scheduled and performed. As previously discussed, it would also be logical for the Police Clerk to assume responsibility for parking ticket database management, a task now performed by a Clerk's Office Clerk.

If the Clerk is able to function independent of part-time support, the City would realize a reduction of 285 part-time hours (based on 2008 usage) for a savings of \$3,990.

Additional cost savings could also be achieved by reducing the number of operating hours for the police counter. In regard to office hours, the Police Department is currently open for walk-in service between the hours of 8am-9pm, Monday-Friday. From 4pm-

9pm, the office area is staffed by either the part-time clerical or a part-time Police Officer. Estimated annual cost is as follows:

- Monday and Friday (if p/t Officer): \$ 8,476
- Tuesday-Thursday (if Clerk): 10,920
- Total Estimated Cost: \$15,570

One primary reason for keeping the office area open is to provide a presence in the building. Various public meetings are held in the lower level or council chambers and the presence of a clerk or part-time Police Officer allows for some oversight as well as lock-up following the meeting. Additionally, it provides for a greater level of customer service, as accident reports or other informational items can be obtained from the Police Department during these evening hours.

In many respects, the extended office hours are beneficial, but as seen above, also costly. As seen in Exhibit 32, two of the benchmark communities also provide service beyond normal business hours, though one of the two, Walled Lake, has in-house dispatch personnel on-duty to provide counter service.

**Exhibit 32  
Overview of Police Services**

City or Village	Hours in which Police Dept. is open to the public
Northville	8am-9pm
Brighton	8am-5pm
Grand Blanc	7am-8pm, M-F
Plymouth	8:30am-5pm
Saline	8am-4pm
Walled Lake	24/7

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

Similar to Plymouth, Brighton and Saline, many communities limit police-related customer services to normal business hours. These communities also face the issue of building lock-up, but address this by assigning responsibility to meeting attendees, on-duty police officers, or others. Northville could explore similar options, including simply closing off areas of the building in the evening if security is an issue.

Summarily, in light of the potential cost savings of limiting police desk service hours, the City should consider closing the Police Department desk area at 4:00pm. Like other departments, service needs can be met during the day, and alternative means can be devised for building oversight and lock-up.

**5. THE VEHICLE REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE COULD BE MODIFIED TO EXTEND VEHICLE USE AND REDUCE COST.**

At present, NPD has nine police vehicles. They include:

- Five assigned to patrol
- Three assigned to an administrative pool
- One donated vehicle assigned to the DARE Officer.

The Department typically receives two new cars per year. These are introduced into the patrol cycle, with most older vehicles retiring at 70,000-90,000 miles. The lower mileage or better performing vehicles are retained for administrative use. Exhibit 33 illustrates NPD’s current vehicle inventory as well as the likely replacement schedule through 2014.

**Exhibit 33  
Northville Police Department  
Current Vehicle Replacement Schedule**

Vehicle Number	Brand	Model	Year	Assignment	Mileage	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
61	Ford	Crn Vic	2006	Patrol	57,974	X			X		
62	Ford	Crn Vic	2006	Admin	60,197			X			X
71	Ford	Crn Vic	2007	Patrol	36,459		X			X	
72	Ford	Crn Vic	2007	Patrol	41,320		X			X	
81	Ford	Crn Vic	2008	Patrol	10,311			X			X
82	Ford	Crn Vic	2008	Patrol	10,493				X		
83	Ford	Edge	2008	DARE*	3353						
34	Ford	Crn Vic	2003	DB	85,656	O			O		
99-3	Ford	SUV	1999	Admin	32,673			O			O
						1	2	2	2	2	2

\* DARE vehicle is donated

X= New replacement vehicle

O=Recycled from patrol fleet

Source: City of Northville Department of Public Works

As seen in the exhibit, only one new car purchase is planned for 2009 – a result of the City’s efforts to curtail budgetary costs. With this exception, it can be seen that each of the five patrol vehicles are on a three year replacement schedule. If NPD reverts to the two cars per year purchase cycle in coming years, ten vehicles will be purchased over the period 2010-2014. At a cost of approximately \$25,000 (with conversion) total capital cost can be estimated at \$250,000.

With limited financial wherewithal, it would be to the City’s advantage to explore methods for extending vehicle life and reducing the number of automobiles purchased. In Exhibit 34, below, we have developed one such option.

**Exhibit 34  
Northville Police Department  
Alternative Vehicle Replacement Schedule**

Vehicle:			Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
61	Patrol	Crn Vic	2009	X				X	
62	Admin	Crn Vic	2006				X		
71	Patrol	Crn Vic	2007		X				X
72	Patrol	Crn Vic	2007		X				X
81	Patrol	Crn Vic	2008			X			
82	Patrol	Crn Vic	2008				X		
83	DARE	Edge	2008	Donated Vehicle					
34	DB	Crn Vic	2003		O		O		O
99-3	Admin	SUV	1999						O
Recycled	Patrol	Crn Vic	2006	O		O		O	
<b>Purchase each year</b>				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Vehicles purchased over 6 year period</b>									<b>9</b>

**Assumptions:**

X=New Vehicle

O=Recycled from Patrol Fleet utilizing a low mileage patrol vehicle

2009 assumption of purchase of only one patrol vehicles

Maintain lowest mileage 2006 patrol vehicle in fleet to increase fleet size

Option to replace utility vehicle in 2011 with lowest mileage patrol vehicle 81 or 82

Increase the fleet by one patrol vehicle to six by using a low mileage older fleet vehicle

Patrol vehicles replaced every four years and lowest mileage vehicle kept in the patrol fleet

Low mileage patrol vehicles recycled into fleet as administrative vehicle

Assign officers to specific vehicles to reduce excessive wear.

Exhibit 34 envisions extending the life of the patrol cars to four years (from the current turnover at three years). Under this scenario, the number of patrol vehicles would be increased from five cars to six. The sixth car would come from deferring the retirement of one existing vehicle and retaining it in the patrol group. With this number of cars, the objective would be to further equalize the use of the vehicles. At present there is some variability in both usage and retirement mileage; equalizing vehicle use could produce a more standard turnover rate and overall higher mileage total. This could serve to reduce the number of new vehicle purchases while still maintaining an acceptable mileage standard of 80,000-90,000.

To implement this system, NPD could consider assigning particular vehicles to particular Police Officers. An example schedule is illustrated in Exhibit 35.



**Exhibit 35**  
**Northville Police Department**  
**Example of Vehicle Assignments**

Vehicle	Shifts			Admin	DB	Utility
	1	2	3			
61			X			
71	X		X			
72	X	X				
81		X	X			
82	X	X				
Sgt. Vehicle	X	X	X			
62				X		
34					X	
99-3						X
83	DARE					X

**Assumptions:**

Minimize the number of drivers per vehicle

Three Sergeants assigned one vehicle

Patrol Officers are assigned a fleet vehicle

Typically two Officers assigned to drive one vehicle

Vehicles assigned to alternate shifts

As seen in Exhibit 35, Police Officers on each shift would be assigned to dedicated vehicles. The Sergeants would be assigned to one car. In this situation, minor maintenance problems could be more readily identified and each car would be subjected to fewer drivers and driving “styles.” These factors could promote better vehicle performance, up to the 80,000-90,000 turnover level.

The schedule introduced in Exhibit 33 envisions nine car purchases over the period 2010-2014; as opposed to the traditional twelve (currently eleven due to the 2009 purchase deferral). Under this scenario, the City would be required to insure and maintain a sixth patrol car, reducing associated cost savings. However, with an estimated savings of \$75,000 in vehicle purchase, the net savings would still be substantial.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, our recommendations for improvement are as follows:

**1. *ELIMINATE TWO POLICE OFFICER POSITIONS AND UTILIZE PART-TIME OFFICERS TO FILL THE PATROL ROTATION.***

- This option will likely require some contractual negotiations and accommodation.
- Two Police Officer positions should be eliminated, ideally through attrition, following retirements or other personnel loss.

Note: By labor contract, reductions-in-force require that all part-time and clerical employees be released prior to any layoffs of full-time uniformed personnel.

- Cost savings associated with replacing two full-time positions with part-time Officers/assignments are estimated at \$116,244 - \$143,644.

**2. *THE PART-TIME CLERICAL POSITION SHOULD BE ELIMINATED AND THE POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICE HOURS REDUCED TO 8:00AM-5:00PM.***

- The full-time Clerk should be adequate to handle administrative workload as she becomes more oriented to positional duties. The elimination of the part-time clerk position from this duty would save \$3,990 per annum.
- Maintaining evening office hours with a part-time Clerk and part-time Police Officers at an estimated cost of \$19,396 per annum may be a luxury that the City cannot afford.
- Should the police desk close at 4:00pm it will be necessary to determine methods and assignments for building lock-up and oversight.
- Total estimated personnel-related cost savings associated with elimination of the part-time Clerk position and reduction of office hours to 8:00am-4:00pm are \$23,286.

**3. *THE POLICE DEPARTMENT SHOULD ADOPT A NEW VEHICLE REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE.***

- The current practice is to replace two cars per year – or twelve over a six year period.

- A new schedule is proposed that would limit new vehicle purchase to nine autos over a six year period.
- The new schedule would seek to increase the uniformity of vehicle use, thereby increasing average depreciable life.
- Estimated cost savings for the six year period are \$75,000 minus some insurance and maintenance costs associated with retention of one additional vehicle.

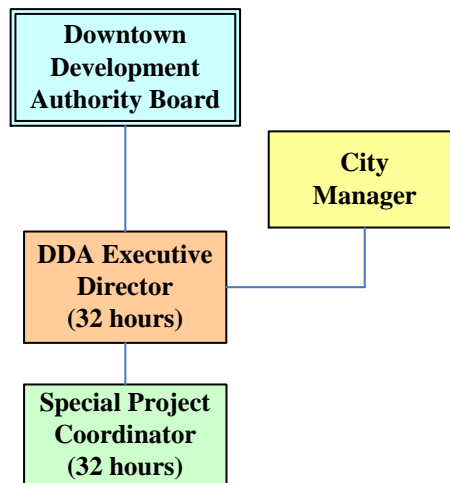
## *H. Downtown Development Authority*

The City of Northville's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was created in 1978 as the City undertook its first Mainstreet project. This was later followed by a second Mainstreet project in 1993 and subsequent upgrades and projects that have continually enhanced and defined the character of the downtown district.

In addition to capital upgrades, DDA, over time, has become increasingly involved in pro-actively marketing the downtown business district and strategically planning for business retention and attraction. In FY 1999-00 a part-time DDA Executive Director position was added to assist in the coordination of these efforts as well as administration of the capital improvement plan.

Over the course of time, the administrative component has grown to encompass two part-time DDA positions – the DDA Director and a Special Project Coordinator. Both are employed on a 32 hours per week basis, with the DDA Director receiving a pro-rated portion of the City's administrative employee benefits package in addition to base wage. The organization of the DDA is illustrated in Exhibit 36.

**Exhibit 36**  
**City of Northville**  
**Organization of Downtown Development Authority**



Key findings regarding the DDA administrative component include the following:

**1. AN ISSUE THAT HAS SURFACED IS THE REPORTING STRUCTURE FOR THE DDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.**

As seen in Exhibit 36, the DDA Executive Director reports to both the Downtown Development Authority Board and the City Manager. This has apparently raised some questions regarding lines of authority in cases of potentially conflicting directives on

policy issues, administrative matters and oversight of the position’s work activities and output.

From the DDA Director’s perspective, the DDA is a legal entity that is separate from the general government. Related to this, PA 197 of 1975 states that the DDA Director “shall serve at the pleasure of the Board”. Conversely, the DDA Executive Director’s employment agreement indicates that for day-to-day activities, the Director works under the direction of the City Manager.

From the City Manager’s perspective, the DDA Executive Director is simply one more department head in the city management group. He has been charged with the responsibility for oversight, and, in some cases, following City Council’s directives on operating matters.

In actuality, both positions are correct. The DDA is an autonomous agency, however, the DDA Board members are appointed by the City Council. In this sense, any decisions made by the DDA may be indirectly dependent on City Council concurrence. In regard to the City Manager’s oversight of the position, this was apparently the preference of the City and DDA in formulating conditions of employment.

In regard to other communities, we have surveyed the benchmark cities concerning the issue of reporting structure. Since several of the communities do not have downtown development employees we have included several other communities with prominent downtown development initiatives. The results are summarized in Exhibit 37.

**Exhibit 37  
Comparison of DDA Organizational Reporting**

<b>City</b>	<b>DDA Director Reports To:</b>
<b>Northville</b>	<b>DDA Board/City Manager</b>
<b>Ann Arbor</b>	DDA Board
<b>Brighton</b>	DDA Board
<b>Farmington</b>	DDA Board
<b>Frankenmuth</b>	DDA Board/City Manager
<b>Marshall</b>	DDA Board
<b>Milford</b>	DDA Board
<b>Plymouth</b>	DDA Board/City Manager
<b>Saline</b>	DDA Board/City Manager
<b>Walled Lake</b>	DDA Board
<b>Ypsilanti</b>	DDA Board

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

As seen in Exhibit 37, the majority of the cities responded that the DDA Director reports directly to the Board. However, in follow-up, almost every Director remarked that some

level of cooperative relationship existed with the City Manager – be it an informal reporting relationship, or simply a cooperative work arrangement on projects.

In summary, there does not appear to be a clear-cut answer regarding reporting relationships. From a practical perspective, both positions have merit. Fortunately, the City Manager and DDA Executive Director have pursued a cooperative course for satisfying political and administrative needs, and defining their respective roles and relationships. This is ultimately where the solution lies.

**2. THE DDA DIRECTOR’S ROLE APPEARS WELL DEFINED. HOWEVER, PERFORMANCE MEASURES WOULD BE USEFUL AS A MEANS OF EVALUATING ONGOING WORKLOAD AND JOB PERFORMANCE.**

The DDA Director has a broad range of responsibilities pertaining to business retention and recruitment, management of the capital improvement plan and coordination of planning and programming efforts with other agencies, such as the Chamber and Central Business Association. The Special Project Coordinator, a contracted position, assists with contract administration for the various projects as well as other records management duties.

The DDA utilizes the Mainstreet model comprised of five categories of developmental concern, including organization, design, marketing, business mix and parking. Each is supported by a standing committee. The meetings of these committees and the DDA Board totaled 42 in 2007, a substantial amount of community activity and DDA workload.

The workload level of the DDA Executive Director cannot be easily measured. The position requires significant amounts of Board and committee attendance and preparation, professional interaction, project oversight, event planning, promotion and marketing. The implementation of the strategic plan will be an ongoing priority as the City continues to implement its vision for the downtown area.

If only staffing levels are considered, Exhibit 38, contained below, indicates that Northville’s DDA staffing is not excessive when compared to other active DDAs.

**Exhibit 38  
Comparison of DDA Staffing**

<b>City</b>	<b>Full or Part-time Director</b>	<b>Other Staff</b>
<b>Northville</b>	<b>32 hours</b>	<b>One part-time</b>
<b>Ann Arbor</b>	40 hours	Two full-time, one part-time
<b>Brighton</b>	Contracted	-
<b>Farmington</b>	40 hours	One part-time
<b>Frankenmuth</b>	40 hours	-
<b>Marshall</b>	40 hours	One part-time
<b>Milford</b>	40 hours	-
<b>Plymouth</b>	40 hours	One full-time
<b>Saline</b>	20 hours	-
<b>Walled Lake</b>	40 hours	One part-time
<b>Ypsilanti</b>	40 hours	Two part-time

Dash indicate no comparable condition or service

Source: Benchmark survey of each entity

However, the data contained in Exhibit 38 does not speak to work quality or output. As mentioned, for a position like the DDA Executive Director, this can be difficult to establish.

To rectify this situation, business metrics should be used to establish annual objectives and measure output. At present, the City uses a performance-based budget model. Related to this, performance measures are included in the budget for every operating area, including DDA. Like most cities, Northville’s performance system is still new and not used to track output in any formal sense.

However, some measures that are currently used for DDA, such as “number of one-on-one business interviews” could be used to set annual objectives in support of DDA policy goals (e.g. in this case, business retention). Others could be formulated by the DDA Board and the City Manager with the input and concurrence of the DDA Executive Director. Taken in total, they could provide the basis for establishing annual goals, monitoring ongoing workload and determining success in meeting stated workload goals.

This type of performance-based evaluation system is common for professional positions in the not-for-profit arena. In developing the list of metrics, some of these organizations could be contacted for input. Also, many larger cities have extensive performance measurement systems for economic development with detail contained in budget documents that can be accessed on-line. In both cases, ideas can be gleaned for establishing the performance measures that are most appropriate for Northville's DDA.

Lacking this type of measurement tool, the Board and City Manager are left with few tools for evaluating the success of the position in furthering DDA goals or maintaining a consistent and productive workload. As a contractual position working with a high degree of independence, the DDA should be receiving consistent data on activities and workload. A performance measurement system could provide the foundation to receive this management information on an ongoing basis.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, our recommendations for improvement are as follows:

### ***1. THE DDA SHOULD DEVELOP PERFORMANCE METRICS TO MEASURE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OUTPUT AND PERFORMANCE.***

- The performance measures currently contained in the City's budget documents can provide a starting point.
- A full listing of workload and performance measures should be established and reviewed annually. Measures should support particular objectives of the DDA.
- The results of this process will provide feedback on actual workload accomplishment. The data can serve as one basis for annual performance review.

## **SECTION III**

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

## SECTION III

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section of the report, we provide an overview and discussion of the recommendations contained in Section II.

***1. TAKEN IN TOTAL, THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTEMPLATE A MUCH LEANER AND MORE STREAMLINED ORGANIZATION. A SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWS.***

The recommendations contained in Section II envision staff reductions and a greater reliance on outsourcing and service contracts. In many cases, the recommendations also contemplate the increased use of automation and improved data management. Considered in their entirety, the recommendations contemplate a more cost efficient operation that builds on current strengths and emphasizes the continuation of high quality services.

A summary of recommended actions is included in the following pages.

Department	Recommended Actions	Cost Impact (If Applicable or Quantifiable)
City Manager's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a personnel policies manual.</li><li>• Develop a new classification/compensation system for administrative employees.</li></ul>	
Clerk's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eliminate one Clerk position.</li><li>• Transfer parking ticket data management to Police Department.</li><li>• Implement an automated phone system.</li><li>• Consider outsourcing meeting attendance and minutes.</li></ul>	\$71,485

<b>Department</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Cost Impact (If Applicable or Quantifiable)</b>
<b>Finance Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outsource assessing function (or) eliminate Financial Analyst position.</li> </ul>	\$35,000-\$42,193
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract for collection of delinquent personal property taxes.</li> </ul>	\$0-\$100,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt 1% administrative fee for summer tax collections.</li> </ul>	\$137,000
<b>Public Works Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procure activity-based reporting software, develop asset inventories, begin GIS development in earnest.</li> </ul>	(\$5,000)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign new duties to Public Works Clerk in support of technology upgrade. Consider changing the position to part-time status.</li> </ul>	\$56,925
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outsource grass cutting and other functions and eliminate two Equipment Operator positions (one senior).</li> </ul>	\$167,113
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocate Director of Public Works to DPW facility.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean up DPW yard.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revoke vehicle take-home privilege for Assistant Director.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Possibly) transfer field Sexton duties to Director when Fire Chief retires.</li> </ul>	

<b>Department</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Cost Impact (If Applicable or Quantifiable)</b>
<b>Public Works Department (cont'd)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit future hires to part-time workers for the foreseeable future.</li> </ul>	
<b>Building Division</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer Building Clerk to City Clerk's office area, under City Clerk's supervision.</li> <li>• Cross-train both Clerks operating from City Clerk's office.</li> <li>• Increase Building Clerk's responsibilities, including cemetery automation, fire automation and code enforcement records management.</li> <li>• Establish escrow account policy for site plan review.</li> <li>• Transfer responsibility for cemetery data management to City Clerk's Office.</li> </ul>	
<b>Parks and Recreation Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassign one Clerk's position to part-time or eliminate the position.</li> <li>• Create a new administrative position to report to the Recreation Director</li> <li>• Coordinate and integrate senior and recreation programming under the Recreation Superintendent.</li> <li>• Change two or three Parks Maintenance employees to seasonal employee status. Nine month employee savings</li> </ul>	<p>\$56,925-\$71,485</p> <p>Cost could offset Clerk savings noted above.</p> <p>\$32,010-\$50,276</p>

Department	Recommended Actions	Cost Impact (If Applicable or Quantifiable)
<b>Parks and Recreation Department (cont'd)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement activity-based reporting system, preferably in conjunction with DPW.</li> <li>• Provide internet/e-mail access at DPW/Parks office.</li> <li>• Secure indoor housing for parks equipment, preferably through contract with DPW.</li> </ul>	
<b>Fire Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defer new purchase of ladder truck.</li> <li>• Investigate future ladder truck contract option with Northville Township.</li> <li>• Expand prospective fire equipment vendor list.</li> <li>• Pursue FEMA grants aggressively.</li> <li>• Consider change to a part-time Fire Chief, following the current Chief's retirement.</li> <li>• Transfer Sexton responsibility to Director of Public Services after Fire Chief's retirement.</li> </ul>	\$56,331
<b>Police Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate two full-time Police Officers and replace with part-time Officers.</li> <li>• Eliminate part-time clerical support hours.</li> <li>• Reduce Police Department office hours to 8am-5pm.</li> <li>• Modify patrol car replacement schedule.</li> </ul>	<p>\$116,244-\$143,644</p> <p>\$6,174</p> <p>\$15,570</p> <p>\$75,000</p>

<b>Downtown Development Authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute performance measures system and utilize for annual performance evaluation.</li> </ul>	
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***2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL REQUIRE A CONCERTED EFFORT.***

The recommendations contained in this report contemplate some major changes to the organization. The recommended staff reductions affect all bargaining units, and different levels of employees in the organizational hierarchy. While some reductions can be achieved unilaterally, others will require negotiation. Moreover, “bumping” rights stipulated in the labor agreements assure that some level of unintended employee displacement will occur. Recommended changes in operating systems will also provide challenges as employees take on new and unfamiliar duties, technologies or operating procedures.

As the City reviews this report and recommendations, policymakers should remain mindful of the fact that many changes will require contractual conciliation. In light of the pending financial issues, it is in the City’s interest to move quickly to realize cost reductions. To achieve this short term objective, City Administration should segregate those recommendations that can be implemented immediately and proceed to implement the suggested changes. Other changes can then follow in later years, creating an ongoing cycle of fiscal reduction. City Administration can plan for, and track the impact of these changes utilizing the five year financial forecast that has been developed.

In this way, the City can methodically confront the somewhat painful process of downsizing. As discussed, it is an unavoidable process, dictated by financial wherewithal and the City’s desire to handle the financial challenge in a preemptive fashion. To achieve the desired outcome it will be necessary for all affected parties to act collaboratively to achieve the best outcome. Foremost, union/management dialogue must be constructive and results-based. Political leaders must be supportive and remain focused, despite the inevitable pressures to act otherwise. Lastly, employees must be empowered to a common objective – the continuation of the high-quality municipal services that have historically characterized the City of Northville.

**APPENDIX A**  
**POLICE SCHEDULES**



### Appendix A-1 Northville Police Department Current Schedule

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
		F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH
Chief	8A-4P		\	\						\	\						\	\						\	\				
Captain	8A-4P		\	\						\	\						\	\						\	\				
Detective	8A-4P		\	\						\	\						\	\						\	\				
Police Clerk	8A-4P		\	\						\	\						\	\						\	\				
Part-time Clerical	4P-9P		\	\						\	\						\	\						\	\				
Sergeant	8A-4P							\	\						\	\						\	\						\
Police Officer		\	\	\	\								\	\									\	\	\	\			
Police Officer						\	\								\	\	\	\									\	\	
Police Officer								\	\	\	\								\	\							\	\	
<b>Total Staffing</b>		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sergeant	4P-Mid					\	\									\	\	\	\								\	\	
Police Officer						\	\								\	\	\	\									\	\	
Police Officer								\	\	\	\								\	\							\	\	
Police Officer		\	\	\	\								\	\						\	\			\	\	\	\		
<b>Total Staffing</b>		4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	4
Sergeant	Mid-8A	\	\	\	\								\	\									\	\	\	\			
Police Officer						\	\								\	\	\	\									\	\	
Police Officer						\	\								\	\	\	\									\	\	
Police Officer								\	\	\	\								\	\							\	\	
<b>Total Staffing</b>		3	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	4
Part-time P.O.	As needed for race track, parking or festivals																												
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Part-time P.O.	As needed for race track, parking or festivals																												

**Appendix A-1 (cont'd)**  
**Northville Police Department Current Schedule**

**Northville Police Department Current Schedule**

Sixteen (16) sworn officers

Leave day schedule rotates forward

Combination 8 on 4 off, 7 on 2 off, or a 8 on 2 off, 7 on 4 off cycle

Every 3rd weekend off, either F/S/S/M off or Th/ F/S/S

Administration and Detective work M-F with S/S off

Three platoon system

Select shifts every 3 months by seniority (contractual, Art. 11.1)

Limited to selecting the same shift to 3 consecutive times (contractual, Art. 11.1, B)

Minimum staffing is two officers

Captain and Detective can be utilized to fill in on Day shift to maintain minimum staffing

Sergeants utilized toward minimum staffing

Part-time officers utilized for desk duty, race track assignments, parking enforcement and festival duty.

**Appendix A-2  
Eliminate One Full-time Position and Replace With Part-time**

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
		F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH
Chief	8A-4P		\	\						\	\					\	\						\	\					
Captain	8A-4P		\	\						\	\					\	\						\	\					
Detective	8A-4P		\	\						\	\					\	\						\	\					
Police Clerk	8A-4P		\	\						\	\					\	\						\	\					
Sergeant	8A-4P							\	\	\	\									\	\								\
Police Officer		\	\	\	\							\	\										\	\	\	\			
Police Officer						\	\							\	\	\	\									\	\		
Police Officer								\	\	\	\	\							\	\						\	\		
<b>Total Staffing</b>		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sergeant	4P-Mid					\	\								\	\	\	\									\	\	
Police Officer									\	\	\	\								\	\					\	\		
Police Officer		\	\	\	\							\	\										\	\	\	\			
Police Officer						\	\							\	\	\	\									\	\		
<b>Full-time Total</b>		3	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	4
<b>Part-time P.O.</b>		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total Staffing</b>		4	4	4	4	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	5
Sergeant	Mid-8A	\	\	\	\							\	\										\	\	\	\			
Police Officer						\	\							\	\	\	\									\	\		
Police Officer						\	\							\	\	\	\									\	\		
Police Officer								\	\	\	\								\	\						\	\		
<b>Total Staffing</b>		3	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	4
Part-time P.O.	As needed for race track, parking or festivals																												
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Part-time P.O.	As needed for race track, parking or festivals																												

**Appendix A-2 (cont'd)**  
**Eliminate One Full-time Position and Replace With Part-time**

**Appendix A-1 Assumptions:**

**Reduce staff by one (1) full-time officer and add one (1) Part-time Officer:**

Fifteen (15) full-time staff (reduce staff from 16 to 15 sworn Officers)

Maintain current shift schedule and cycle

Combination 8 on 4 off, 7 on 2 off, or a 8 on 2 off, 7 on 4 off cycle

Every 3rd weekend off, either F/S/S/M off or Th/ F/S/S

Three (3) platoon system,

Steady shifts, days, afternoons, midnights

28 day cycle

Captain and Detective continue to fill in on day shift complement as needed

Day shift made up of one (1) Sergeant, and three (3) Patrol Officers

Afternoon shift made up of one (1) Sergeant, three (3) Patrol Officers and one (1) part-time Officer

Midnight shift made up of one (1) Sergeant and three (3) Patrol Officers

One (1) part-time position filled 4P - MD. 365 days per year, could also be limited to 2080 hours annually

Addresses minimum staffing on live racing dates barring any vacation, sick or personal leave days

Part-time staff can be manipulated to work peak hours or fill in for shift vacancies, i.e. vacations, sick leave, training, or fill in as shift complement on any of the three shifts

Part-time officers can work 4 or 8 hour shifts as determined by the Chief

Part-time officers are utilized to satisfy minimum staffing levels

Several issues will require negotiations with the respective bargaining units

Chief to determine appropriate shift start and end times for platoons

**Appendix A-3  
Eliminate Two Full-time Positions and Replace With Part-time**

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
		F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH
Chief	8A-4P		\	\						\	\						\	\						\	\				
Captain	8A-4P		\	\						\	\						\	\						\	\				
Detective	8A-4P		\	\						\	\						\	\						\	\				
Police Clerk	8A-4P		\	\						\	\						\	\						\	\				
Sergeant	<b>8A-4P</b>								\	\	\	\								\	\								
Police Officer		\	\	\	\							\	\										\	\	\	\			
Police Officer						\	\						\	\		\	\	\						\	\	\	\		
<b>Full-time Total</b>		2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
<b>Part-time P.O.</b>		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total Staffing</b>		3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
Sergeant	<b>4P-Mid</b>					\	\							\	\	\	\										\	\	
Police Officer									\	\	\	\								\	\						\	\	
Police Officer		\	\	\	\							\	\										\	\	\	\			
Police Officer						\	\								\	\	\	\								\	\		
<b>Full-time Total</b>		3	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	4
<b>Part-time P.O.</b>		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total Staffing</b>		4	4	4	4	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	5
Sergeant	<b>Mid-8A</b>	\	\	\	\							\	\										\	\	\	\			
Police Officer						\	\									\	\	\	\							\	\		
Police Officer						\	\							\	\	\	\									\	\		
Police Officer								\	\	\	\									\	\						\	\	
<b>Total Staffing</b>		3	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	4
Part-time P.O.	As needed for race track, parking or festivals																												
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Part-time P.O.	As needed for race track, parking or festivals																												
Part-time P.O.	As needed for race track, parking or festivals																												

**Appendix A-3 (cont'd)**  
**Eliminate Two Full-time Positions and Replace With Part-time**

**Appendix A-2 Assumptions:**

**Reduce staff by two (2) full-time officers add two (2) Part-time Officers:**

Fourteen (14) full-time staff (reduce staff from 16 to 14 sworn Officers)

Maintain current shift schedule and cycle

Combination 8 on 4 off, 7 on 2 off, or a 8 on 2 off, 7 on 4 off cycle

Every 3rd weekend off, either F/S/S/M off or Th/ F/S/S

Three (3) platoon system,

Steady shifts, days, afternoons, midnights

28 day cycle

Captain and Detective continue to fill in on day shift complement as needed

Day shift made up of one (1) Sergeant, two (2) Patrol Officers and one (1) part-time Officer

Afternoon shift made up of one (1) Sergeant, three (3) Patrol Officers and one (1) part-time Officer

Midnight shift made up of one (1) Sergeant, and three (3) Patrol Officers

One (1) part-time position filled 8A - 4P 365 days per year, could also be limited to 2080 hours annually

One (1) part-time position filled 4P - MD. 365 days per year, could also be limited to 2080 hours annually

Addresses minimum staffing on live racing dates barring any vacation, sick or personal leave days

Part-time staff can be manipulated to work peak hours or fill in for shift vacancies, i.e. vacations, sick leave, training, or fill in as shift complement on any of the three shifts

Part-time officers can work 4 or 8 hour shifts as determined by the Chief

Part-time officers are utilized to satisfy minimum staffing levels

Several issues will require negotiations with the respective bargaining units

Chief to determine appropriate shift start and end times for platoons