



CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL
DECEMBER 15, 2025

SUBJECT: Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) related to the Nine Mile Pathway Phase II Feasibility Report as recommended by the Mobility Committee.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: Community Development Department - Planning

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between the Phase II Pathway Communities (Novi, Northville, South Lyon, Lyon Township and Oakland County).
- The MOU is non-binding and voluntary, but signifies the intent to work together to plan, design, construct and promote the "9 Line" pathway.
- No funding is committed.
- The Mobility Committee reviewed the Phase II Nine Line Plan at its meeting on November 20, 2025, and recommended approval to the City Council of the MOU.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Nine Mile Corridor project started a couple of years ago as Oakland County Parks (OCP) was having discussions with some of the communities in southeastern Oakland County. The concept of an interconnected pathway along Nine Mile kept coming up as something that people were very interested in -- as a recreational corridor, as a transportation corridor, and just a nice east-west connection in the southern portion of the county. OCP applied for and received a SEMCOG planning grant and OCP provided the matching funds to do a feasibility study project on the eastern portion, the eastern six communities of Nine Mile (Phase I – Hazel Park, Ferndale, Oak Park, Southfield, Farmington Hills and Farmington).

The Phase I Nine Mile Corridor Feasibility Study, released in July 2023, looked at the corridor through those six communities to try to determine what type of pathway treatment might make sense in each area. It also looks at the community amenities that people might want to connect to, such as community centers, parks, libraries, civic centers, commercial districts, etc. The study provides a framework for future

coordination of building out that pathway over the over the long term, and to help direct future funding opportunities to that effort.

Phase I of the plan received media attention in 2022: [Multiple Oakland County communities explore connection via nonmotorized pathway](#). Since the initiation of Phase I, several projects have been planned or implemented in communities to the east of Novi and along Nine Mile Road, and have been awarded grants and awards for certain improvements:

- Oak Park received MML Community Excellence Awards as a result of the investments: [City of Oak Park Nine Mile Redesign Project – Community Excellence Awards](#)
- Southfield received a SEMCOG grant to implement the plans for a 1 mile project: [Southfield Gets \\$1M Grant for Nine Mile Road Trail Project - 94.7 WCSX](#)

Phase II of the project continued the study to the west, incorporating Novi, Northville (via desired linkages through Novi), Lyon Township and South Lyon, to extend the feasibility study all the way to the western boundary of Oakland County. The final report for Phase II has been released – see attached. For the Novi portion of the trail, the pathway recommendations, depending on location and current conditions, include 8- to 10-foot shared use paths, enhanced 6-foot sidewalks, 5-foot advisory shoulders, boardwalk, or signed bike routes. The study also details segment characteristics, challenges, and implementation details for each segment.

The studies note the following:

The project study area predominantly focuses on the horizontal ~12 mile stretch along with the mile north and south of Nine Mile Road. In addition, it also considers the assets located outside of this mile buffer zone in Novi, Northville, Lyon Township, and South Lyon. As Nine Mile Road passes through different communities, the landscape changes significantly — from commercial shopping centers with big box retailers to downtown districts, to predominantly residential areas, and agricultural and natural areas.

Naming the Pathway

Concurrent with the Phase 2 portion of the study, OCP contracted with Crimson Group to come up with a name and brand to create a unified identity for the pathway/trail. Examples of other “branded” trails include the High Line in New York City, The 606 in Chicago, the Monon Trail in the Indianapolis area, the BeltLine in Atlanta, and the Joe Louis Greenway in Detroit. Each of these examples adopted cohesive brands and style guides that help users recognize when they are on the trail and establish placemaking with signage. In the case of the 9 Mile corridor, a clear connection was needed to be consistent across 10 separate communities. The branding will provide a unifying theme to the trail that can be incorporated into wayfinding signage, a website, printed materials, etc.

Ultimately, after several meetings with representatives of each of the communities, the final name of the project is "9 Line," with the logo design shown below:



The most recent publication of the Michigan Municipal League Review Magazine included an article titled "The 9Line: A Community Corridor Collaboration." A copy of that article is included in this packet.

City Council Action

Oakland County Parks would like each of the Phase II communities to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU will serve as a non-binding agreement between the Nine Mile Communities that indicates that they intend to continue to work together on implementing the vision for Nine Mile outlined in the Feasibility Study. It was modeled after the Clinton River Trail MOU between those communities. As noted in the MOU, it acknowledges a voluntary, cooperative association between the communities and the county – it outlines our intent to work together to plan, design, construct and promote the 9Line. By signing the MOU no funds are committed.

The City Attorney's office has reviewed the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sharing that the document's intent is to confirm *whether the listed communities intend to participate to plan, coordinate and develop the trail through each one's community as proposed in the Nine Mile Pathway Phase II Feasibility Study. The MOU is not binding on the communities, and there is no set timeline to complete the tasks identified in the MOU and the corresponding Feasibility Study.*

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) related to the Nine Mile Pathway Phase II Feasibility Report as recommended by the Mobility Committee.