

NOVI, MI

Berkshire eSupply

Modern industrial distribution and headquarters campus, predictable approvals, wetland stewardship, and a competitive incentive stack

Why Berkshire eSupply and why Novi? This project is a useful example for communities that want industrial investment without losing control of design, infrastructure, and environmental outcomes. Berkshire eSupply is not a traditional factory. It is an industrial distribution and fulfillment operation that supports manufacturing and maintenance supply chains at scale, with a professional headquarters presence and a campus feel.

According to the public record, Novi's value proposition was straightforward: a strong freeway location, a review pathway that could handle a complex site, and a municipal culture that treats permitting, infrastructure, and environmental standards as part of the same decision.

The project also shows what modern site selection looks like in practice. The project team evaluated dozens of potential sites and ultimately chose Novi because it could meet both operational requirements and the softer requirements that keep a workforce stable, including proximity to hotels and a setting that feels like a long-term home for the business.

Asset Class: logistics and e-commerce distribution warehouse. A two-part industrial campus, including a headquarters office building paired with the fulfillment center and warehouse.

Tools Used:

-  **9. Site Design** ●○○
-   **10. The Development Review Process** ●○○
-  **13. Brownfields and Incentives** ●○○

Site Context and Facility Details

The site is an approximately 57-acre parcel at the southeast corner of M-5 and West Fourteen Mile Road, with frontage on Fourteen Mile Road and Haggerty Road. In 2017, the property was zoned Office Service Technology and the future land use designation was Office Research Development and Technology. Residential areas were located across M-5, which is why buffering, circulation, and environmental standards mattered in the review record.

The approval pathway ran through planning commission public hearings and a coordinated technical review process with City staff. The project required wetland and woodland approvals, stormwater management plan approval, and a structured response to traffic and access details.

By the Numbers

- Site:** 57 acres
- Office:** 18,000 square feet
- Warehouse:** 193,230 square feet
- Total capital investment:** \$69,737,750
- Incentives:** Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate estimated at \$5,000,000 in developer savings
- Grant:** \$1,000,000 Michigan Business Development Program performance-based grant
- Jobs:** 240 total new jobs

Site Location: 40333 W 14 Mile Road, Novi, MI 48377.



What Came Up During Approvals that Other Communities Can Learn From?

Wetlands and mitigation were treated as core site design issues. The planning commission record identifies regulated wetlands and woodlands on site with wetland impacts and mitigation requirements that had to be resolved through the site plan process.

Parking and circulation were not glossed over. Early proposals reserve parking areas, a practice which keeps green space undeveloped until additional parking demand is warranted. The commission ultimately approved this approach while applying specific conditions.

Traffic control was a negotiated deliverable. The commission's approval was tied to a revised entry design that included a proposed traffic signal at the entry drive and Fourteen Mile intersection.

Infrastructure alignment required real decisions. The record shows the project intersected with an existing water main easement and a future road extension concept in the City's future land use plan, which required coordination between engineering, administration, and the applicant to reach a workable alignment.

Public process was straightforward. Records for the planning commission meeting show no public comment for the project, signaling that proactive planning, zoning, and a strong application from Berkshire eSupply aligned with community sentiment.

Challenges and Adaptive Processes

This project demonstrates a common pattern in high-stakes industrial development: the early concept is rarely the final plan. There was ongoing refinement on parking, circulation, wetland impacts and mitigation, and utility alignment.

It also shows a practical way to prevent conflict. The City used normal public processes and clear conditions rather than improvising special rules. Where the project required flexibility, it was paired with requirements that were visible in the public record, including the traffic signal condition and the later conservation easement.

Photo by Albert Kahn Associates, Inc.



Planning Policies and Local Partnerships

Novi's proactive, holistic approach helped secure the right site plan and the right user for the site.

The approval process not only focused on whether the use was acceptable. Additionally, the City of Novi emphasized a site plan that responded to existing conditions and provided reasonable plans for on-site parking and the mitigation of the nearby natural systems.

A few examples from the public record illustrate that approach.

- Environmental stewardship was formalized. In 2020, City Council accepted a wetland conservation easement offered as part of the development, explicitly intended to protect remaining wetlands and mitigation areas from future disturbance.
- Infrastructure was coordinated, not assumed. The project required water system decisions, easement coordination, and later a formal action to terminate a portion of an existing water main easement after the water main alignment was adjusted to serve the development.
- Operational realities were taken seriously. The planning commission record reflects concerns about driveways, parking layout, and internal site function, not just off-site traffic volumes.

This is the core lesson for municipalities: modern industrial compatibility is not the absence of impacts. It is the management of impacts through clear site standards, predictable review, and documented commitments.



Photos by Berkshire eSupply (top left) and Albert Kahn Associates, Inc.



What lessons can others take from Berkshire eSupply?

Modern industrial is often supply chain infrastructure.

Berkshire eSupply is a large-scale distribution and fulfillment operation supporting industrial tools and maintenance supply chains, and the City's own communications frame it as part of Industry 4.0 evolution.

Predictable approvals are an economic development tool.

Novi's record shows a standard, thorough process with conditions and follow-through, rather than an ad hoc pathway. For example, the City shares that the average permit approval time is seven months, an estimate that varies by project type, complexity, and zoning. Dozens of

checklists on the Community Development Department's website ensure that applicants are prepared to work with the City, in addition to a crystal-clear protocol that begins first with a concept meeting then moves to a pre-application meeting. This clarity and transparency of process and requirements positions the City and potential developers for mutual understanding.

Environmental commitments are often a main feature of industrial development.

A conservation easement is a durable mechanism that turns mitigation and preservation into long-term stewardship rather than a one-time promise.

Infrastructure details belong in the entitlement conversation early.

Water main easements, future road concepts, and access design were not afterthoughts. They were part of the review process and the later implementation record.

Incentives work best when paired with clear commitments.

The local abatement agreement ties benefits to continued operation, and state support was structured as performance-based.