It was an empty field in a suburb yet to be developed when ground was broken for Northland Shopping Center on May 7, 1952. Upon its completion two years later, Life Magazine labeled Northland *a 2010 century Bazzaar.*

Bulli at a cent of \$25 million by the J.L. Hudson Co., Northland was the first shopping center in the U.S. of the Cars — nearly 11,000 today.

Northland Center was both a cause and an effect of the changing nature of American life. Cars were more available, served by expressways that riboned through once-rural land. Fields became subdivisions. Befroom communities became lively towns.

Such was the case with Southfield. A township prior to its incorporation in 1958, Southfield's emergence into a city was brought about to a degree because of Northland Center. Many communities in Detroit's northern suburbs talked about incorporating to latch onto the shopping center's tax dollars, but Southfield was first to a ct.

FROM THE START, It was a mutually supportive relationship. In the early days of the city, Northland paid its taxes in advance to help Southfield

taxes in advance to neip Southield meet its payroll.
With cittes like Southfield sprouting everywhere, regional shopping centers like Northland became increasingly important. Weekend shoppers no longer wanted to drive downtown and be forced to fight traffic, congestion and other commuters for limited parking

spaces.

Northland was more than a place to shop. It was a cultural and environmental center for specially commissioned art, fountains and gardens. For

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many years, Northland's summer the-ater attracted top performers acting in outstanding plays. Its auditoriums and halls were the site of many civic, phi-lanthropic and community group meet-

Northland became a regional land-mark. As the northern suburbs grew, visitors were given directions that told them to watch for the water tower, lo-cated at Northland Center.

In 1968, Hudson's merged with Day-ton's of Minneapolis to form the Day-ton's of Minneapolis to form the Day-ton Hudson Corp. A separate real es-tate company, Dayton Hudson Proper-ties, was formed to manage the shop-ping center. Nearly a decade later, Dayton Hudson sold Northand to The Equitable Life Assurance society of the United States, the company that held the original morigage on the property.

Northland has grown from 70 stores in 1954 to 185 currently, from 897,000 square feet to 1.6 million square feet of gross leasable area. Nearly 50,000 shoppers pass through the center on weekdays, double that on weekends. Total business was \$200 million in retail sales as of 1980, making it the third largest shopping mall in sales per square foot in the nation.





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