The Charter is the “Constitution” for the City of Novi. Just as the United States Constitution serves as the “supreme law of the land” for our country, the Charter serves as the basic set of rules for City of Novi government.

The City Charter was originally approved at a special election held on February 18, 1969, shortly after the proposal to incorporate was approved at a special election held on May 20, 1968. The City Charter became effective on February 24, 1969. A Charter revision was approved by the voters on November 8, 1977. The revision did not affect the millage or tax rate, but streamlined City government.

In March 2013, an ad hoc committee comprised of Council Members, City staff, and community members met to review the current City Charter, as requested by City Council. The committee evaluated language to identify revisions to make outdated and restrictive language more flexible, modern and streamlined and to incorporate with statutory changes at the state-level. Novi’s current Charter, first adopted in 1969, had not formally been reviewed since a revision more than 35 years ago in 1977. Below are five proposed amendments to the City Charter included on the November 5, 2013 ballot. None of these proposed amendments will impact current millage rates or increase taxes.

1

Proposed Amendment 1

Question: Shall the Novi Charter be amended to restate the entire Charter in gender neutral terms?

The current Charter references "he," "him," and "his" when describing duties and responsibilities of various legislative and administrative in the City. This comprehensive change, throughout the Charter, is similar to that undertaken by other communities and restates the Charter in gender-neutral language.
Proposed Amendments 2 & 3

Shall Section 15.2 of the Novi Charter, which currently requires publication of notices, ordinances, and proceedings to be either by newspaper publication or, alternatively, by posting in the office of the Clerk and five other places in the City if the form of publication is not prescribed by Charter or law, be amended to allow publication through one or more of the following: posting in a newspaper, posting on the City’s website, or publishing by any other means or methods appropriate to properly inform the general public?

Proposed Amendment 4

Question:
Shall Section 3.12 of the Novi Charter, relating to notices of election, Section 6.1, relating to Council meetings, Section 7.5, relating to publication of ordinances, Section 8.7, relating to emergency appropriations, Section 8.11, relating to annual audits, Section 9.15, relating to notification of the due date of taxes, and Section 14.1, relating to public utility franchises, be amended to delete references to publication being required by newspaper or posting in certain public places and replace such language with the requirement that publication shall be “as required by law or this Charter”?

Methods of communication and State law requirements for notification have changed significantly since the Charter was last revised more than 35 years ago. The City of Novi utilizes various means for providing open and transparent government functions, including the annual calendar and Engage! distributed to all homes and businesses, the comprehensive City website with more than 14 years of archives, electronic newsletters, social media, government television & video, and more.

The City will still be required to publish notifications in accordance with state law.

Proposed Amendment 5

Question:
Shall Section 8.10 of the Charter, which requires that all funds withdrawn from the City’s treasury be drawn pursuant to the authority and appropriation of Council and upon “checks” signed by two different officers of the City, be deleted?

When first adopted nearly 44 years ago, utilizing checks as forms of payment with two signatures provided the only means of “checks and balances” in accounting procedure. Today, stringent purchasing policies and modern technology provide streamlined accounting practices. Novi prides itself on providing open, transparent government on all levels, including financial practices. Records of payments of all public funds in Novi are and will continue to be available online at cityofnovi.org.

For more information, visit cityofnovi.org/charter or contact:

Victor Cardenas  
Assistant City Manager  
248.347.0450  
vecardenas@cityofnovi.org

Sheryl Walsh  
Director of Communications  
248.735.5638  
swalsh@cityofnovi.org