



CITY OF NOVI
Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
April 14, 2025, 5:30 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER: 5:39 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Pro Tem Casey, Council Members Gurumurthy, Staudt

PRESENT: Mayor Pro Tem Casey, Council Members Gurumurthy, Staudt

STAFF LIAISON: Victor Cardenas, City Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager
Rebecca Ryan, APF, FRSA, Futurist
Yas Arian, Director of Futures Research

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Gurumurthy; Seconded: Staudt; Approved 3:0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 5, 2025 Minutes

Mayor Pro Tem Casey, Council Members Gurumurthy, Staudt

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. Report Out from March Futurist Session

Mayor Pro Tem Casey opened the meeting stating that it's purpose is for a report out from Rebecca and her team from the recent "Big Sort" Workshop session. She gave them the floor to proceed.

Ms. Ryan and Ms. Arian went through introductions with the Commission. Ms. Ryan shared that they have a lot in store today and that to start with they have some slides to go through and asked if the Committee had any questions to start out, having reviewed the briefing book. Mayor Pro Tem Casey stated that the Committee would like to go through the results/presentation first and then would ask any questions following.

Ms. Ryan then proceeded to go through the presentation. She started with the groundwork of their foresight process. There are two parts of the foresight process that makes their's different from other strategic planning process. Most strategic plans start with the defining phase, asking "who do we want to be/who does nobody want to be by 2050? What's it going to take to get there"? It is her opinion that, while that's a fine way to start, it doesn't make sense to face the past if you're trying to walk towards the future. The two phases of sensing and imagining are the two huge contributions that foresight makes for cities who are trying to do strategic plans as far

out as 2050 so the “big sort” game Council and leadership played on March 14th was designed to help sense the forces and trends that would be impacting Novi. These aren't things that you can necessarily control or influence but should be considered like:

- How are we getting older?
- How are we becoming more diverse?
- How are our household configurations changing?
- Technology changes
- Economic shifts
- Environmental changes
- [State/Federal] Politics and regulatory frameworks changing

These matters are not something that the city is making happen, but rather something that's happening to the City. All of those are outside forces, and if they are things that the city ready or not to deal with. In this sensing phase, we are asking what's happening out there, there that will impact us right now. We didn't measure those things that the City can control such as Public Safety or Park expansion/planning, because those are things the City can control. The City might need to respond to growing or changing demographics or growing/changing and resident sentiment, but the things we were looking at were long term trends that we could measure through 2050 that would have certain outside in impact on the city.

Ms. Ryan then went through the basic dynamics and setup of the “Big Sort” that had been played and how the trend cards were ultimately sorted (High Certainty/Low Certainty/High Impact/Low Impact) with special attention to those which the majority of the groups selected as “High Certainty/High Impact.” She did note that things not in that category aren't necessarily important but were not those that had a consensus of interest/concern from the wider group. That said, she emphasized that anything the majority of groups did select as “High Certainty/High Impact” must be taken into consideration for our next Strategic Plan that “if she was an angel on your shoulder”, she would be saying “Please, please, please, make sure these get folded into the strategic planning process.” These top trends were, in approximate order:

- Increasing Population & Households
- Increasing (Conversions to) Mixed-Use Developments
- Increasing Housing Demand
- Increasing Demand for Healthcare Professionals
- Increasing Racial & Ethnic Diversity
- Increasing Cyber Threats & Impacts
- Increasing Next-Gen Impact on Policies & Priorities
- Increasing Automation & AI Integration in Business & Industry
- Increasing Heat & Extreme Weather
- Increasing Share of Older Adults & Decreasing Share of Working-Age Residents
- Decreasing Talent Attraction
- Increasing Foreign Investment
- Rising Incomes
- Growing School Enrollment
- Increasing Employment, Especially in Service & Tech

She also spoke briefly about how even things with low probability, can be a devastating “black swan” event if it were to occur such as cyber-attacks. They are the sort of things where you think you're ready, but to maybe be a little more careful while planning.

Overall, she emphasized that it will be important for the organization to determine the truth of our readiness for various trends/events, not just the projected readiness is and to have the important conversations about that when there is the opportunity in the planning process. Suggesting that when there is discrepancy with what city leaders (IE Council and staff) feel the city is ready for, there's usually an opportunity for a conversation. A “to-do list” for this group would be to kind of talk those things through, including subject matter experts where needed. She then asked the Committee what questions they might have.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey thanked Ms. Ryan and asked, for clarity, if while the “Big Sort” data and trend cards were customized to be specific to Novi, these are trends are ones Ms. Ryan uses frequently with other clients. Ms. Ryan replied that some are, but they try to customize as much as possible. If they can't get City-specific data, they go to the county and state. Generic/general cards are their last resort. Mayor Pro Tem appreciated that they scanned Novi's environment to get the trends but hypothesized that these trends are likely existent in other communities as well, or even national trends. Ms. Ran agreed that it was true that some things are affecting everywhere. Some matters like housing affordability and childcare costs are really clobbering Gen Z, and they do, in most of their communities, look at something along those two lines in the economy section. Mayor Pro Tem Casey said she thinks there is a story in those overlapping trends common in different communities. She wonders if there is more to how we understand some of these trends and topics. Ms. Ryan said that, in her 27 years of experience, trends popping up above the line are often the things that are most influenced by availability bias, they tend to be the things that are on people's minds. If she wants to use the reverse hypothesis, because the entire City Council was present for the “Big Sort”, and they are the ones set policy, that they are probably more dialed in on things with the legislature. It would be Ms. Ryan's hypothesis that because Council has more visibility into such matters it might not feel like it rises above the line. Ms. Arian agreed that what feels most top of mind or most controllable/influenceable tend to rise more in these rankings. Mayor Pro Tem Casey appreciated their responses and turned the conversation over to Councilmembers Gurumurthy and Staudt.

Councilmember Staudt noted that certain things, such as cyber security, are a bit outside what he feels is the purview of City Council to be deeply involved in. elaborating that, while it is a threat that any entity or business, he doesn't perceive it as a trend to prioritize but just as a day-to-day operations task that is already largely being handled internally by administration. As a public official, he is going to spend much more time thinking about and responding to the budget, population change, housing demands, healthcare professionals, ethnic diversity, etc.

Councilmember Gurumurthy say that, as a member of the Environmental Sustainability Committee, she is very interested in seeing what comes of the future and how those things align with their goals since most environmental trends came in

below the line (IE ranked lower in terms of impact/certainty compared to the trends previously noted). Do we ignore them or still take it to the next step? Councilmember Staudt noted that they, as a group can consider anything they like, it is just a matter of prioritization. Mayor Pro Tem Casey agreed that they are going to have to determine how to navigate that space too. Assistant City Manager Mahoney said that, in trying to square how some of these trends fell below, maybe they're not as top of mind. She thinks that some of this simply speaks to the need for strategic thinking and fully connecting the dots between things. She gave the example of the increasing demand for healthcare professionals and the various questions that leads to - Do we have the housing, do we have the infrastructure, do healthcare professionals want to move here, Is our quality of life going to stay at what it is, are we going to track businesses, Are people going to want to raise their kids here? To her, the big "a-ha moment" is that we need to do this type of strategic thinking more and really understand the ripple effects of these trends. The trends themselves are outside of our control, and we normally don't think of things outside of our control. Ms. Ryan agreed and, to Councilmember Gurumurthy's original question regarding items that fell "below the line", that she thinks even some of these things that are beneath the line are going to show up in the strategic plan. She suggested, for things below the line, focusing on the things that Council and leadership feels less ready for, as Councilmember Staudt said, Council can do whatever they want with the trends and report. Some things will be ones that a Strategic Plan and City policy can directly affect, some things will fall under more soft power and influence. Asking private sector leaders and businesses how we help them, what they are working on, etc. It creates an opportunity for partnerships and a more resilient, networked, and more future facing city. Don't lose sight of the things that you could help influence and control. Ms. Ryan also noted that in Olathe, Kansas they are proactive with the private sector, meeting with their largest employers for their staff meeting once a quarter. It's just another way to open that private sector communication and problem-solving channel.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey thanked Ms. Ryan and Ms. Arian, noting that she has loved every moment of the process. She is excited to talk more about the trends and tying them together towards a Strategic Plan very soon.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT: 6:40 p.m.