



CITY OF NOVI
Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
May 27, 2025, 5:30 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER: 5:33 p.m.

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

STAFF LIAISON: Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Katherine Oppermann, Recording Secretary
Michelle Kennedy, BerryDunn
Bailey Dickinson, BerryDunn

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 14, 2025 Minutes

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

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. Strategic Plan Kickoff with BerryDunn

Assistant City Manager Mahoney introduced Michelle Kennedy as the City's new Project Lead on the BerryDunn side. Ms. Kennedy has been provided with background on the project as well as recent feedback. She also shared that city staff recently had their own internal project team kickoff and that this meeting will be a bit of a mini kickoff on the project for the Committee. Mayor Pro Tem Casey thanked Ms. Kennedy for coming and introduced herself and the other councilmembers present. Ms. Kennedy stated that she loves this work and is excited to get started with Novi. Mr. Dickinson also introduced himself and noted that he has enjoyed looking at the materials provided so far, seeing where the City is, and looking forward to where it can go.

Ms. Kennedy then proceeded to go through the [Strategic Planning Kickoff slide deck](#) she and BerryDunn had prepared. Following the presentation, she asked the Committee if they had any questions on the slides, or any other clarification, or if they should move forward with the first discussion point regarding the steering committee.

Following brief discussion of the August and November elections Mayor Pro Tem Casey said that they'll need to talk about how comfortable they are talking about and promoting the Strategic Plan while the Public Safety Building Bond issue is in focus. Councilmember Staudt stated that the Bond issue will be essentially completed by the end of July so he doesn't think we need to worry too much. Mayor

Pro Tem Casey further noted that, given BerryDunn's current expectation to be out in the community in August they can simply adjust the timeline to be in September should there be any concern. Councilmember Staudt reiterated that he doesn't think it makes much a difference, with the only exception being if the bond doesn't pass, in which case that matter will be their top priority. Ms. Kennedy pointed out that the social pinpoint website can be turned on whenever we like once the development is finalized. It can even be left on beyond the point that the community input component is completed so that people can continue to track any updates and development. It could even be repurposed as an avenue for getting public input on the draft plan.

Councilmember Gurumurthy wanted to know what the individual items that are expected to be completed and deliverables for the end of each phase (the approach and the project itself). Ms. Kennedy said that the deliverables are all laid out in the draft and includes: the social pinpoint website, project timeline, stakeholder list, design for community forum, and design for the questions/interviews. The outcome of the project will of course be the Strategic Plan itself, it will first go to City Council in draft form, then following any Council revisions the next draft will go to the community for a public comment period, and then finally the final draft will go to Council for formal adoption. Councilmember Gurumurthy said she appreciated the explanation and that, looking at the current workplan draft, it is more what she expected beyond a few details. Ms. Kennedy said that yes, the workplan draft was created prior to meeting with the city or committee and that any necessary details, especially anything pertaining to timing, can be finessed to meet what the city needs. Councilmember Gurumurthy stated that she is looking forward to reviewing the more detailed plan when it is ready.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey suggested moving on to the discussion of the steering committee roles, responsibilities, and composition. Ms. Kennedy said that it is important to make the committee's rules clear to ensure proper flow. She noted that sometimes when a committee is not properly chartered it can slow down progress. Councilmember Staudt asked what the method is used by Cities who don't have a steering committee. Ms. Kennedy said that they are then primarily run administratively, typically from the City Manager's office alongside a project team. Often said team involves directors of finance, community development, communications, etc. Typically, such a composition does not include community or council members.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said that the angle they are taking is to have an internal project team made up of staff, this committee [the long-range strategic planning committee] as the decision-making entity, and an advisory committee with community members made up of residents and business owners. She then asked Ms. Mahoney to go over the internal project team. Ms. Mahoney said that the project team is working behind the scenes to provide BerryDunn with the information and data the need. There are eight staff members on the internal team, representing several departments. Councilmember Staudt asked to be provided with a list of the team members.

Mayor Pro Tem then asked Ms. Kennedy if she had previously seen a makeup like the one they are proposing. Ms. Kennedy replied yes, on two occasions and continued that on one the process was somewhat hijacked, which is why clear rules and charter are so important. On the other it was a group with a lot of influence over vision though not as a voting body. The value of a mixed-member committee is the guidance they can provide. While we might not give them input on the timeline, they can give review/input on other things like the environmental scan and draft plan. She also noted that if we don't plan on giving them a meaningful role then we shouldn't have an advisory committee at all. Mayor Pro Tem Casey agreed with the point and asked what Ms. Kennedy thought the right number of members for an advisory committee would be. Ms. Kennedy replied that 8 – 12 members would be the sweet spot, you don't want anything much larger than that because it can become unwieldy and difficult to reach a consensus.

Mayor Pro Tem asked what a realistic timeline would be for the Strategic Plan. Ms. Kennedy said that she believes that, unless there is an especially challenging dynamic, the process should be completed within a year. If you go beyond that you risk losing buy-in and engagement with the community. Mayor Pro Tem noted the need for a schedule for the advisory committee so that they have clear expectations of when they need to do things. Councilmember Gurumurthy also suggested that they be provided with a monthly update. Ms. Kennedy agreed and pointed out that said update could be made in various formats such as a brief meeting, an email, slide deck, etc.

The conversation then turned to the stakeholders and community engagement approach. Councilmember Gurumurthy suggested that we should target engagement at a specific percentage of the City's population. Ms. Kennedy agreed that yes, a target can be set but cautioned that we may not meet it. With strategic planning we want to engage the community and invite them in but there is no guarantee as to what the actual engagement level will be. Importantly, we should use all channels of engagement and look at those for recurring themes across different groups. Aligning themes means we know that we are accessing the broad environment. Councilmember Staudt asked what some examples of groups would be. Ms. Kennedy noted that a sheet with examples has already been supplied to city staff and included such groups as youth, seniors, parent and community-based organizations, foundations, businesses, boards/commissions, faith-based organizations, etc. Councilmember Staudt pointed out that Novi's population is approximately 30% Asian (Japanese, Indian, Chinese, etc.). Ms. Kennedy said yes, and that they should be reachable through a combination of interviews and community forums. Councilmember Staudt asked how you reach groups that are apathetic to public forums. Ms. Kennedy suggested that the social pinpoint website can be a great avenue since people can access it and give input without having to show up in person. The group then briefly discussed the sequence of community involvement initiatives (1:1 interviews to focus groups, and finally to community forums) with Ms. Kennedy assuring that they can be taken in any order the committee prefers.

Councilmember Staudt brought up the fact that the Strategic Plan process will be ongoing throughout a November election where, while we know at least 4

Councilmembers will be retained, there is the possibility of three new Councilmembers being elected. Ms. Kennedy assured him that BerryDunn has experience navigating changes of that nature. From her experience it is best to have the bulk of work completed under the current council but to be sure to give 1st draft input access to any new councilmembers and to be sure to properly onboard them on the process. Though another option would be to put off the full plan development until after the election and to only do visioning with the current council.

Councilmember Staudt asked if BerryDunn was familiar with the past community surveys. Ms. Kennedy said that yes, the staff project team had provided them with the 2022 survey results. Mayor Pro Tem noted that she does not expect there to be a big difference in responses with a new survey. She also liked the idea of working on the plan with the current council and giving any new council members elected in November the option to weigh in at a draft stage.

Mayor Pro Tem asked if anything else needed to be covered in this meeting. Ms. Kennedy said that she thinks the BerryDunn team has everything they need to build out a timeline and workplan. Mayor Pro Tem said yes, and that there will be things that we can weave in as we go such as the trends Council discussed at their futurist session. Ms. Kennedy agreed that they will build things like the futurist trends as well as the most recent community survey into their environmental scan. She then thanked the Committee and said that she looks forward to continuing working with them and the project team moving forward.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT: 7:00p.m.

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