



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI
Regular Meeting

June 25, 2025 7:00 PM

Council Chambers | Novi Civic Center
45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 (248) 347-0475

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Pehrson, Member Avdoulos, Member Lynch, Member Becker, Member Roney, Member Verma

Absent Excused: Member Dismondy

Staff: Barbara McBeth, City Planner; Thomas Schultz, City Attorney; Diana Shanahan, Staff Planner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Member Lynch led the meeting attendees in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney to approve the June 25, 2025 Planning Commission Agenda.

VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 25, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *Motion carried 6-0.*

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chair Pehrson invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the first audience participation to come forward. Seeing no one, Chair Pehrson closed the first public audience participation.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was not any correspondence.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee reports.

CITY PLANNER REPORT

City Planner Babara McBeth congratulated Member Becker, Member Avdoulos, and Member Roney on their reappointment to the Planning Commission.

CONSENT AGENDA - REMOVALS AND APPROVALS

There were no consent agenda removals or approvals.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 2025 MASTER PLAN FOR LAND USE

Public Hearing for Planning Commission's consideration for adoption of the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use in order to fulfill the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and to provide a plan for the future development in the City of Novi.

City Planner Babara McBeth stated starting in 2022, The Master Plan Steering Committee has been in the process of drafting, reviewing and updating the Master Plan for Land Use. The Committee consists of 3 members of the Planning Commission and one alternate Commission member who served as needed, one member of the City Council and a number of staff members from various departments. A total of 16 meetings of the committee were held, during which the Committee members discussed and reviewed draft documents, provided feedback and direction, asked questions, and heard comments from the members of the public who were in attendance during the meetings and those who had provided written comments. I'd like to thank the Members of the Committee, other staff members that provided assistance and information to the Committee, as well as members of the community that participated during the process.

Public comment was received at two open house events that included opportunities for interaction with members of the committee, and through an online survey of the community. Staff shared components of the draft plan at various City events to seek additional comment. Dedicated spots on the City's Webpage provided links to documents as they were drafted and reviewed by the Committee. A video was prepared by Community Relations to provide highlights of the Master Plan efforts and encouraging public review and comment on the plan.

At the February Steering Committee meeting, the latest version draft plan was reviewed. The Committee made a motion to forward the Draft Master Plan to the Planning Commission for the next step in the process.

At the February 26th Planning Commission meeting, the Commission as a whole reviewed the Draft Master Plan for Land Use and made a recommendation to the City Council for approval to distribute the Draft Master Plan to surrounding communities and other public agencies for comment. The City Council considered the draft plan and approved the plan for distribution, leaving the final approval of the plan to the Planning Commission. State law requires a sixty-three-day review period to allow time for public comment on the draft plan.

That timeframe concluded two weeks ago, and the comments received prior to last Friday are included in the Master Plan's appendix near the end of the Planning Commission's packet. A few additional comments have been received and are provided at the table for the Planning Commission's consideration. Tonight, a public hearing will be held to allow for additional community input before the plan is considered and potentially adopted.

The Planning Commission has a memo at the table that shares some additional insight into one of the comments received. Additionally, Oakland County's coordinating zoning committee met to review the plan and the planner's report and voted unanimously to endorse the County planner's review of the Master Plan and found that the Plan is not inconsistent with the Plan of any of the surrounding communities.

The City's Consultant, John Iocoangeli from Beckett and Raeder is here tonight to share a brief presentation on the draft plan and provide highlights of some of the background of the development of the plan and some key recommendations.

Traffic engineering Consultant Lia Michaels from Hubble Roth & Clark is also present this evening.

Chair Pehrson thanked City Planner Barbara McBeth.

Mr. John locoangeli from Beckett and Raeder addressed the Planning Commission and introduced Lia Michaels from Hubble Roth & Clark who was a partner in the planning process and performed the review of the traffic and transportation system.

Mr. locoangeli stated the planning process began about three years ago at an initial kick off meeting with City administration. Over that time, the team worked with both the Master Plan Steering Committee and administration on putting together the Draft Master Plan which is part of the Public Hearing this evening.

Mr. locoangeli presented an overview that summarized the master plan process, community engagement highlights, guiding principles, content of the plan, and the future land use framework.

Mr. locoangeli expressed that the planning process was separated into two components. The first component was an analysis of existing conditions, characteristics, the real estate market, economic development, and land use. It was noted that City Planner Barbara McBeth and her team coordinated sessions with several real estate developers that operate in and around the City of Novi. Mr. locoangeli stated they had a really good conversation with each of them, relative to where they see the real estate market going in the next five to ten years. The second component involved looking at the existing transportation network and forecasting for the future. The transportation network is very important to the framework for land use and the community. Novi has a population of 60,000, is located next to the I-96 corridor, and is a regional hub for retail which makes the transportation system very important.

Mr. locoangeli noted the master plan process is broken up into eight steps. The first step, which is the kickoff, started about three years ago. Currently we are at step seven, which is the Planning Commission holding the public hearing after a sixty-three-day review period. During the sixty-three-day review period various agencies, communities, and residents had the opportunity to submit comments. The eighth step in the process would be Planning Commission adoption of the plan.

The community engagement process began with a community survey, which received 842 responses. The survey was mailed to voters of record in the community. Additionally, open houses were held in February and March with the Master Plan Steering Committee members in attendance. Additionally, the communication team prepared an educational video explaining the master plan process which aired on a local television channel. Mr. locoangeli stated at the conclusion of the open houses the basic parts of the draft plan were assembled. The Draft Master Plan for Land Use was then presented to the Planning Commission and the City Council after which the sixty-three-day review period began.

The chapters of the plan include community demographics, natural features and resiliency, housing, transportation framework, connectivity, neighborhood density, future land use, and the action plan. Mr. locoangeli noted the housing market analysis was done using the implant model to look at economic development impacts in and around Novi. The transportation framework was based on regional modeling done by Hubbel Roth & Clark. Transportation recommendations related to adding capacity are included in the transportation section of the plan. Regarding connectivity, it was stated that the recommendations of the Active Mobility Plan were looped into the Master Plan; with the Active Mobility Plan and the Master Plan being done in parallel.

Next, Mr. locoangeli summarized the future land use framework. He stated the previous plan in 2016 had 22 land use categories that were consolidated into 17 categories. More emphasis was given to mixed-use districts, providing landowners and large developments with more flexibility in how they can develop their properties. The proposed mixed-use categories are in response to market trends, information that was heard locally, and regional/national trends regarding mixed use projects that favor a variety of land uses, walkability, high density, and greater building mass.

Mr. locoangeli stated as part of the zoning component, the use of the planned unit development overly option is proposed to accommodate some of the mixed-use land uses being proposed in the plan. He noted the future land use map is comprised of the following six major categories: residential, commercial,

recreation, office, industrial, and other. Each category was broken out in terms of its purpose, what regulated uses would be included in the district, and a general description of what the built form would be for the various land uses. The subcategories include single family, multiple family, manufactured homes, public park, public and quasi-public land uses, private park, office service commercial, neighborhood commercial, community commercial, community office, suburban low rise, light industrial office, and general industrial. In terms of the mixed-use districts, the commercial mixed-use district encourages general, regional, and national retail, professional offices, hotels, open space plazas, and parking structures. The town center mixed-use district allows large retail commercial developments to start integrating redevelopment options such as upper story apartments, attached single and multifamily, as well as continuing their retail, restaurant, and professional offices. The general mixed-use category allows for healthcare facilities, scientific and technical services, research and development, general retail, and multi-family in upper story apartments and lofts. Lastly, office service technology mixed-use is primarily along the M-14 corridor and allows for scientific and technical healthcare information technology, and automotive related research.

Mr. locoangeli stated as part of the master plan process the state statute requires a zoning plan. The zoning plan is the bridge between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance has been reviewed against the Future Land Use Plan and the recommendations are found to be consistent with existing zoning districts with the exception that the City would need to add a Planned Unit Development Ordinance to accommodate some of the mixed-use districts that have been proposed in the Future Land Use Plan. Mr. locoangeli noted there is a high level of consistency.

Finally, it was stated that the Action Plan has five major categories and themes. In conjunction with City administrative staff the decision was made to carry over some of the 2016 goals and objectives that have not yet been completed. Thirty specific action items are sprinkled throughout the five different goal categories.

Mr. locoangeli stated he would be happy to answer any questions that anyone might have.

Chair Pehrson opened the public hearing and invited members of the audience who wished to speak to approach the podium.

Mr. Jordon Sasson addressed the Planning Commission on behalf of his family and himself, who have been actively involved in the community for almost fifty years primarily developing multi-family throughout the City. He noted they have had the pleasure of working with staff members and City officials throughout the years and continue to enjoy their place in the City. Mr. Sasson thanked everyone for all the effort that has gone into the Master Plan. He stated the City of Novi has been a beacon of economic development across southeast Michigan for many decades and will continue to do so. The massive effort of advancing a Master Plan is critically important and something that is not a small task.

Mr. Sasson stated in a recent memo to staff they requested the consideration of one minor change that was not discussed in the plan that was just presented. This request specially relates to the PUD Ordinance, as mentioned it is primarily used in the draft plan to address the utility of the four overlay districts. Staff along with the consultant's feedback have included the large parcel option, which is defined as parcels 10 acres in size or larger. It specifically references the ability to use the PUD if the parcel is 10 acres or larger and if it is consistent with the future land use map for the parcel. Mr. Sasson expressed they have encouraged staff to consider slight tweaks to the language that would allow the ability for large parcels to propose a mix of uses that are consistent with the future land use map but also look at the general principles of the plan and may propose alternative uses so long as they are consistent with the plan and adjacent uses. He stated this tweak may provide the City and the development community with the ability to come up with more creative options for large parcels that may or may not be so easy to identify today.

Mr. Sasson thanked the Planning Commission for their consideration of the request.

Chair Perhson once again invited members of the audience who wished to speak approach the podium. Seeing no one, Chair Pehrson requested Member Lynch to read into the record the correspondence received. Member Lynch stated a comment was received from Mr. Andrew Davenport and noted it will be added to the record. Chair Pehrson closed the public hearing and turned the matter over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Lynch inquired if the new PUD Ordinance will be addressed in a separate meeting.

City Planner Barabara McBeth stated the PUD Ordinance would be a separate process. This evening's consideration is for the Master Plan and its potential adoption. She stated once the plan is adopted, we would go about implementing the plan.

City Attorney Schultz stated creating a PUD ordinance will be a very large separate process. He expressed what the speaker referenced was the possibility of the language in the Draft Master Plan being too narrow. An expansion of the language in the Draft Master Plan that is being acted on tonight is being proposed. The memo from Ms. McBeth proposes an additional sentence into the Master Plan that might help when the PUD ordinance is created down the road.

Member Lynch stated he will rely on the attorneys to adjust the language, so we have an opportunity in redevelopment. He stated overall everyone has done a great job with the Master Plan. He inquired how much of the City remains to be developed.

Ms. McBeth referred Member Lynch's inquiry to Mr. locoangeli.

Mr. locoangeli noted there is a calculation in the future land use chapter. He stated off hand he does not recall the exact calculation, but the City is approximately 93 to 95 percent developed.

Member Becker stated whenever he reads a document like this, he tends to wonder what is being sold. He noted he has a skepticism perspective to test what is read to determine if it is factual or if there is a point of view at play. He stated he found a few things in the proposed Master Plan that caused him to pause and categorize them as limited validity items.

Member Becker referenced the example of when developments in states such as Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina are offered as something that Novi might consider, the relevance of that to a city like Novi in a Michigan climate should be considered especially when it comes to encouraging residents to walk or bike. He stated recommendations like this have little validity. In the case of Fishers Indiana, where Member Becker stated he lived for six months on the north side of Indianapolis in the early eighties. He stated he saw what Fishers looked like forty years ago. At that time Fishers was a clean slate consisting of mostly farmland. Novi today and in our future is not in the same situation as Fishers Indiana.

Member Becker noted there are several places in the Master Plan that discuss developing infrastructure to support walking or biking to shop or dine. In the past year or so since this has become a topic, he noted he has made some observations that residents are not biking to shop or dine. When reading about the suggestion that we should develop walking and biking continuous networks to promote shopping and dining, his limited validity alarm goes off. He stated he rather we promote such networks for functions that seem to be much more valid such as recreation, exercise, dog walking, and having kids be able to walk to their friend's house.

Member Becker stated regarding the survey that was offered to find out what our residents would like to see; it is important to factor in the number of responses received was approximately 1.3% of the total resident population. He noted the survey responses are an indication of something but are proof of very little. When reading the survey analysis on question twenty-five which asks for three factors that influence a person's decision to walk or bike around Novi, he noted concern regarding the list of possible answers to this question. Two considerations were not listed which are, what the weather is like and what time of day is it? He stated the first thing he would think about when deciding whether to take a bike and go do

something would be, what the weather is like or what it will be like when I am out. The second consideration would be the time of day; how dark it is going to be while I am out and is it safe to walk or bike. This relevant because Novi is not the weather climate of Georgia, Florida, or North Carolina. Inclement weather and unsafe conditions on sidewalks will always mitigate the utility and rationale for walking or biking around Novi especially when that trip could be done in a car.

Member Becker stated he read with interest the vehicle crash analysis and assumes this is to guide us in what we can physically do to reduce accidents, especially accidents that result in physical injury or death. In other words, what we can do regarding signage, speed limits, crosswalks, traffic lights, left turn lanes, speed bumps, etc., a physical solution related to some potential contributing cause of accidents. Member Becker expressed he couldn't help but wonder if we should also consider an unstated cause that would never be impacted by making physical changes, and whether we may be misled regarding our prioritization of what accident sites to address first. This unstated cause is when impaired driving is logged by the police report as root or contributing cause. None of the physical changes mentioned would do anything to reduce accidents when driver impairment is involved. The suggestion was offered that perhaps we can take the crash data and conduct one or two more pieces of analysis that would remove accidents where impaired driving was a contributing cause. This may improve our focus on physical things where we could do specific things to improve safety.

Finally, Member Becker stated he would like to offer one more suggestion that is relevant at a macro level to the process of planning and managing the development of Novi. Whether it is during the public comment portion of Planning Commission, City Council, and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings or from the public survey for the Master Plan we frequently learn of concerns from residents such as; Novi is being overdeveloped, more building means more traffic problems, more residences result in more traffic and school system problems, more building means more cutting down trees and destroying habitats, and the City is only interested in increasing tax revenue through more building. Even on occasion, the thought that developers control the City government with kickbacks and campaign contributions. Member Becker expressed he believes the overarching issue is many residents do not know about the framework of the state and federal regulations that determine what our City government can and cannot do regarding property development. He stated that was him when he joined the Planning Commission five years ago and even being a Novi homeowner for almost forty-five years at that point was not aware of this controlling framework which involves the Master Plan for Land Use, Future Land Use Map, and ordinance designations for property use. Member Becker recommended that our City government uses the outstanding Studio NoVI team and the Community Relations Department to develop a series of educational videos regarding the legal framework for land use and development to explain how all this works together and dig into what the City of Novi can and cannot do regarding land use and why.

Member Verma inquired if the PUD amendment would apply to commercial or mixed-use.

City Attorney Schultz stated the suggestion the property owner has made this evening is to broaden the language for parcels that would potentially qualify for PUD application status by making the language more flexible than it is in the current draft of the Master Plan. It could be mixed-use but also could be a more flexible development proposal. Mr. Schultz noted that the property owner has taken the time to come out and make a suggestion on the language which we do not have a problem with because it adds flexibility.

Member Roney confirmed that a PUD ordinance will need to be created. He noted that adding additional language as suggested by the property owner would help us a little bit in that process. He stated he did not see anything unreasonable and thought the PUD had already given discretion.

City Attorney Schultz stated the additional language is not strictly necessary but is unobjectionable. The PUD will be a process. The framework will be similar to the PRO but will be a little bit different in terms of the language.

Member Roney inquired if the Planning Commission would like to add the additional language to the

Master Plan how they go about doing so this evening.

City Attorney Schultz stated if the Planning Commission wishes to pass it tonight, a motion could be made to approve the Master Plan with the amendment from Ms. McBeth.

Member Roney stated he finds the wording quite reasonable and would like to make a motion to add the amendment to the Master Plan.

Motion to add the amendment to the Master Plan made by Member Roney and seconded by Member Becker.

Member Avdoulos stated he had the motion to add the language included in his overall motion.

Member Roney withdrew his motion.

Member Avdoulos stated he has been working with Mr. locoangeli and his team along with the City for the last three years and it has been a great experience. He noted the process may feel drawn out, but time is needed to collect and go through information. He expressed appreciation of Member Becker's thorough review and noted some of the comments were applicable. Regarding the topic of walkability and climate, Member Avdoulos stated he has a dog and therefore walks 365 days out of the year. If there is a place to go, that is how he was thinking of it. It has been nice to see that we are looking at how we connect neighborhoods as the City grows.

Member Avdoulos stated regarding Member Becker's indication that many residents may not understand the process; educating the public can be helpful in residents understanding that it is not the City doing these projects, rather it is the developers and applicants. There is a framework to help guide the process. He noted when you look at what Mr. locoangeli and his team presented along with the images in the Master Plan; you can see how many woodlands and wetlands we have in Novi along with all the development. It is phenomenal that we have kept that.

Member Avdoulos stated it has been a great process and all the work that has been done is appreciated. Each iteration of the Master Plan is getting better, and it is wonderful that we are looking at it, following it, and allowing that flexibility.

Motion to adopt the resolution for the Master Plan for Land Use as recommend by the Master Plan Steering Committee and subject to the changes in the memorandum that was presented dated June 25, 2025 to be incorporated in the final adopted Master Plan made my Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Roney.

In the matter of the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use, motion to adopt the following Resolution Adopting the City of Novi's 2025 Master Plan for Land Use:

Subject to modifications presented at the meeting to item 3, Planned Unit Development (General), on page 123 of the Draft Plan, to add the following sentence to be incorporated into the final adopted plan:

Where appropriate, the City may consider such PUD requests allowing a complementary mix of land uses and mixed-use development consistent with the general objectives and principles of the Master Plan, and consistent with the planned and built conditions of adjacent parcels,

WHEREAS, in January 2022, the City of Novi engaged Beckett & Raeder (BRI) in order to assist with an update to the City's Master Plan for Land Use, adopted in 2017, with a subsequent amendment adopted in 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission notified each municipality located within or contiguous to the City, the County Commission, each public utility company and railroad company owning or operating a public utility or railroad within the City, the Road Commission for Oakland County, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and every governmental entity that had registered its name and mailing address with the City for purposes of notification of its intent to discuss the Master Plan for Land Use; and

WHEREAS, a Master Plan Steering Committee, made up of members of the City Council and Planning Commission, and a number of Novi staff, were assembled in order to provide guidance for the development of the update to the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, on February 25 and March 2, 2023, Members of the Steering Committee and the consultant hosted Open House events for the purpose of engaging the public in dynamic conversations regarding the future land uses in Novi, and separately, a survey was developed and received a total of 842 responses, together forming the foundation for community expectations and priorities in the plan; and

WHEREAS, relying upon public input, the Master Plan Steering Committee, and the Planning consultant, BRI, developed the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use; and

WHEREAS, on April 7, 2025, the proposed 2025 Master Plan for Land Use was submitted to the City Council, which authorized distribution of the proposed Master Plan for Land Use; and

WHEREAS, the proposed 2025 Master Plan for Land Use was distributed to each municipality located within or contiguous to the City, the County Commission, each public utility company and railroad company owning or operating a public utility or railroad within the City, the Road Commission for Oakland County, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and every governmental entity that had registered its name and mailing address with the City for purposes of notification, for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission received comments in reference to the proposed 2025 Master Plan for Land Use from some of these entities; and

WHEREAS, on June 4, 2025 the Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee voted to endorse the proposed 2025 Master Plan for Land Use, finding that the proposed document was not inconsistent with the Plan of any surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, on June 25, 2025, after proper public notice, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use, during which members of the public were given the opportunity to comment on the proposed document; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has determined that the proposed 2025 Master Plan for Land Use, with the accompanying maps, charts, and descriptive matter accurately reflects the Planning Commission's recommendations for the development of the areas of the City affected by the proposed document.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that the City of Novi Planning Commission hereby adopts the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use, dated June 19, 2025.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission shall direct staff to submit a copy of the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use to each municipality located within or contiguous to the City, the County Commission, each public utility company and railroad company owning or operating a public utility or railroad within the City, the Road Commission for Oakland County, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and every governmental entity that had registered its name and mailing address with the City for purposes of notification.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE MASTER PLAN FOR LAND USE AS RECOMMENDED BY THE MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE AND SUBJECT TO MODIFICATIONS PRESENTED AT THE MEETING TO ITEM 3, PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL), ON PAGE 123 OF THE DRAFT PLAN, TO ADD THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE “WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE CITY MAY CONSIDER SUCH PUD REQUESTS ALLOWING A COMPLEMENTARY MIX OF LAND USES AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT CONSISTENT WITH THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE MASTER PLAN, AND CONSISTENT WITH THE PLANNED AND BUILT CONDITIONS OF ADJACENT PARCELS” TO BE INCORPORATED IN THE FINAL ADOPTED MASTER PLAN, MOTION MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *Motion carried 6-0.*

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 21, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Motion to approve the May 21, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE MAY 21, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER AVDOULOS. *Motion carried 6-0.*

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION

There were no consent agenda items.

SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES/TRAINING UPDATES

There were no supplemental issues or training updates.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chair Pehrson invited member of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the final audience participation to come forward. Seeing no one, Chair Pehrson closed the final audience participation.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the June 25, 2025 meeting made by Member Lynch and all in favor said aye.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.