

MEMORANDUM



TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: VICTOR CARDENAS, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL GOAL SETTING PREPARATION
DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2025

On January 10, 2026, we'll have the annual City Council Goal Setting session. This meeting has traditionally been extra, in addition to the two "normal" meetings held each month. However, this year it was decided to combine the two, so the meeting on the 10th will be a "normal" council meeting, taking place in the Council Chambers, with a consent agenda likely containing only the warrant. At this point, the only action item will be the 2026 goal-setting process. The goal for this correspondence, after consultation with Mayor Fischer, is to outline a revised framework for the goal-setting process. **The framework now centers on two core categories of City focus and a single citywide goal target.** The intent is to maintain strategic focus, ensure Council ownership of goal development, and produce a concise, high-impact set of priorities for the organization.

January 10, 2026 Goal Setting Meeting

- Location: Council Chambers
- Breakfast: Available beginning at 8:30 a.m.
- Meeting Start: 9:30 a.m.
- Attire: Casual dress is welcome

Goal Categories

Category 1: City Services & Community Experience

- Resident Experience
 - All resident-facing departments/divisions
 - Code Compliance
 - Clerk
 - Assessing
 - Treasury
 - Library
 - Community Relations (Transparency)
- Public Safety
- Parks & Recreation

Category 2: Infrastructure, Economic/Community Development & Financial Stewardship

- Mobility
 - Roads
 - Non-Motorized
- Stormwater, Wetlands, and Woodlands
- Facilities and Utilities (Water and Sewer)
- Capital Planning
- Corridor Redevelopment
- Economic Development
- Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Citywide Goal Target

Council will adopt a total of 6–10 goals citywide, with a target of 3–5 goals within each category.

What Constitutes a Council Goal

A goal should meet the following criteria:

- Strategic (not operational)
- Cross-departmental in nature
- Measurable or able to be tracked over time
- Requires policy direction, budget consideration, or formal Council action

Suggested Framework for a Goal

As a starting point, goals should generally follow a SMART-style structure such as:

“Advance/Improve/Develop [initiative] to achieve [outcome] by [timeframe].”

Not all goals will fit perfectly into this format, and flexibility is expected. However, using this framework promotes clarity and accountability. In addition, adding brief context to clarify the intent or the ‘why’ behind a goal may be helpful in guiding staff understanding and implementation.

Goal Setting Tool

Once again, we’ll use the GroupMap tool (a real-time online collaborative platform designed to facilitate group brainstorming, decision-making, and action planning through structured activities) to facilitate and capture the Council’s goals. Council Members will need to click on each link (below) individually and type in your email address to enter each “map.”

Category 1 City Services & Community Experience

<https://join.groupmap.com/AC2-CD7-511>

Category 2 Infrastructure, Economic/Community Development & Financial Stewardship

<https://join.groupmap.com/ABC-D15-6B9>

Step 1 — Council Goal Submissions

Each Councilmember may submit up to five (5) proposed goals per category:

- Category 1: City Services & Community Experience
- Category 2: Infrastructure, Economic/Community Development & Financial Stewardship

Members may submit fewer than five proposals if desired.

Step 2 — Council Discussion and Refinement

All proposed goals will be reviewed collectively during a Council discussion. As part of this process, Council will:

- Identify and remove duplicates
- Combine closely related proposals
- Request clarification or additional context as needed

This refinement occurs in open Council discussion rather than through staff consolidation.

Step 3 — Council Voting

Each Councilmember receives a number of votes based on the total number of refined goal proposals within a category:

- 6–9 proposed goals → 3 votes per member
- 10–13 proposed goals → 4 votes per member
- 14–17 proposed goals → 5 votes per member
- 18–21 proposed goals → 6 votes per member

Councilmembers are not required to use all their allotted votes.

Step 4 — Advancement Threshold

A proposed goal must receive at least four (4) Councilmember votes to advance for final consideration.

Step 5 — Final Selection and Category Balancing

Council will seek to adopt 3–5 goals per category for a total of 6–10 citywide goals. If more than five goals in a category meet the four-vote threshold, Council may conduct an additional round of voting among only those qualifying proposals to narrow the list to the final 3–5 goals for that category.

EXAMPLE DRAFT GOALS (ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY)

These examples reflect past Novi priorities and demonstrate how goals may be framed within the revised categories and suggested goal framework:

- Advance revisions to the Woodlands and Wetlands Ordinance to improve clarity and predictability for residents and developers by FY26.
- Develop and implement a prioritized sidewalk and sidepath gap-closure program to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity by June 2026.

- Create a Grand River Avenue / Novi Road Four-Corner Area Plan to guide redevelopment, mobility, and placemaking by FY28.
- Develop Pocket Parks and Small Greenspaces Concept Plan to expand neighborhood-scale recreational access by FY28.

Runoff Voting Rules

If more proposals advance than the target range of 3–5 goals within a category, Council will conduct a runoff vote limited only to those proposals that met the four-vote advancement threshold. For the runoff round, each Councilmember will receive a reduced number of votes (typically 2–3 per member). The proposals receiving the highest runoff vote totals will be selected until the category reaches its final 3–5 adopted goals.