



CITY OF NOVI
Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting
May 13, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, and Smith

PRESENT: Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, and Smith

ABSENT EXCUSED: Councilmember Gurumurthy

STAFF LIAISON: Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Rebecca Runkel, Project Engineer
Katherine Oppermann, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Heintz; Seconded: Smith; Approved: 2:0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 23, 2026 Minutes

Motion: Smith; Seconded: Heintz; Approved: 2:0

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Smith stated that Julie, the Oakland County Sustainability Officer, will be coming later in the meeting and that hearing from them of their knowledge and resources, alongside that from the State, will be a good opportunity for the Committee. We can use such resources to our advantage, so we are not "re-inventing the wheel".

MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. University of Michigan Catalyst Leadership Circle (CLC) Fellow Project

Ms. Runkel provided a draft of the CLC Fellowship Mentor Work Plan Guide including the main deliverables as well as "wish list" extra items to be approached if there is sufficient time. Chairperson Smith asked how long the program is and Ms. Runkle said that the fellow will be with us for 10-weeks but that designing an 8-week plan was recommended so that there is sufficient time to both settle in at the beginning and wrap up at the end. Ms. Runkle asked if there was anything further that the Committee wanted to see and Chair Smith affirmed that if they can accomplish the five main things in the Work Plan that would be great. Councilmember Heintz suggested that they might also be encourage to be present at events for public education, if viable.

2. My Green Michigan Food Waste Recycling Pilot Launch Update

Ms. Runkel shared that she had met with MSU Tollgate Farm and that they are onboard to help host on of the compost bin sites. Because of their unique layout the bins will be in two different locations on their property. It was suggested that if we set up the bins early enough, they can plan to have their summer campers take part by composting their lunch leftovers and other related compostable materials. She also shared that Mr. Talbot from the Department of Public Works Sign Shop is working on getting the signs for the pilot compost sites designed and fabricated so they can be installed ahead of the bins.

Ms. Mahoney said that the service agreement from My Green Michigan has been received by the City Manager's office and that City Manager Cardenas plans to sign shortly. Once that has taken place we can arrange for the compost bins to be delivered to the sites at Ella Mae Power Park and MSU Tollgate Farm. She also briefly shared the <https://cityofnovi.org/sustainability/> webpage that was now live as a resident resource. She asked Ms. Runkel how long we plan to run the pilot and Ms. Runkel replied that we can run it as long as we want.

The group also briefly discussed options for website and media promotion for the pilot program.

3. Further Programming and Regional Partnership Discussion

Chair Smith invited Ms. Siddhani Singh, a Novi Highschool student, to speak about her electronic waste (e-waste) project. Ms. Singh gave a general description of the project, its process and progress in the local area, as well as feedback she had received at the recent Arbor Day Celebration event that she tabled at. She said that it, in her information gathering, most people would prefer a set collection bin for e-waste that is available for use 24/7. She had also spoken to Mike Csapo, the General Manager of RRRASOC, about potential negative impacts to an e-waste program involving drop-off bins like scavengers, weather damage, etc. She also noted that, while currently successful, the current active collection model she and her fellow students are running would be difficult to staff and keep collections timely if it were expanded beyond the neighborhoods they operate in. Having considered various options she thinks that the best solution would be an indoor bin limited to smaller electronic items and scheduled collection for larger items.

Chairperson Smith asked how many individuals are currently working on the program, Ms. Singh said it was primarily her father and herself, alongside a few others from the neighborhood. She would hope that they can expand and advertise to get more volunteers involved. Chair Smith asked that if the City was to install e-waste bins would an entity, like RRRASOC, come collect or would it be reliant on the city or volunteers to drop them off at the appropriate site. It was also noted that it would need to be made clear what kind and size of electronic waste would be accepted as some people have contacted them wanting to drop off larger household appliances which they cannot handle. Councilmember Heintz said that it would be great to be able to have a viable e-waste program that makes it easier for people to

regularly, responsibly dispose of such items, "reducing friction" to recycle. He also spoke positively of a recent electronic waste event at the zoo where if a certain amount of e-waste was brought then you could receive zoo passes in kind.

It was briefly, casually discussed where a potential drop-off location site in the City could be. Fire Stations came up as a potential option, given their various locations throughout the city and especially with the potential of fires from items like batteries which could be better and more immediately handled by the emergency staff in the event it were to occur.

Ms. Oppermann asked Ms. Singh if she had done any kind of survey of other area resources, such as electronic stores or other businesses, that collect e-waste. Ms. Singh said she had looked into the matter informally but that she found there were often limitations in place regarding how much would be accepted. Councilmember Heintz also noted that in his experience some locations do not accept or will charge to accept some e-waste items.

Chairperson Smith reiterated that they would need to see what sort of options for drop-off or pick-up RRRASOC could offer or if there would be other businesses that would partner to sponsor/recycle/help in other ways with such a program. It was agreed that both Ms. Singh and her father, as well as City staff have more research to do in order to put together a proposal.

Both Councilmembers commended Ms. Singh for her interest and hard work on the topic.

4. Oakland County Sustainability Plan
with Julie Lyons Bricker, Oakland County Chief Sustainability Officer

Chairperson Smith thanked Ms. Bricker for joining the Committee and said that we are interested in amplifying sustainability efforts that the County is making and in how the County can help Novi with our own efforts. He also noted that in reviewing the Oakland County Sustainability Plan that we are more focused on the environmental elements as some other parts of their plan are more specific to the County, beyond the purview of this Committee.

Ms. Bricker said that Chair Smith had noted the difficulty in narrowing the scope of the Committee and agreed that it can be very difficult to do so, she stressed that they should determine their priorities and not allow scope creep for greatest success. She asked if the main focuses of the Committee were solar, composting, and community engagement, with a potential Community Sustainability Plan. Councilmember Smith agreed yes, to all, though noted that we now have a composting pilot program underway.

Councilmember Heintz noted that the Committee is interested in what is already going on in Oakland County, and what partnership opportunities there might be for new programs with the County or other area communities. Ms. Bricker said that they are currently working on an opportunity for Oakland County Cities, Villages, and Townships (CVT) to build relationships that could facilitate lesson sharing, buy-in, etc.

She said there are already four cities that have expressed interest and wondered if Novi would also be one, both Councilmembers agreed yes, we would be interested. They have a similar program for sharing among County governments that has been successfully running for over a year and that they think expanding the program to the CVTs would allow for more progress. The Councilmembers noted that the makeup of the County group sounded similar to SEMCOG, and Ms. Bricker agreed. She said it has been very valuable to hear successes and share resources; it could be great for the CVTs to be able to do so as well. Councilmember Smith said he was particularly interested in the potential of aligning group purchases opportunities for sustainability efforts on RFPs, a green gas inventory, etc.

It was briefly discussed if the City would have access to ClearPath through the county or if we would have to make our own purchase, Ms. Bricker said she was unsure and would need to check. Ms. Bricker further shared that when she was with Royal Oak they did a greenhouse gas inventory in-house using ClearPath and then again at the County level. She said it is an undertaking but doable, recommending that the City do it in-house as well, if we have the capacity. She also said that there are options when doing the inventory, either a community-wide inventory or a city operations only inventory. In Royal Oak they did both, and at the County they have used SEMCOG for community wide. Chair Smith said that this could be a good initiative to bring interested residents into. Ms. Becker said that when they did the government operations study in Royal Oak it was notable how low their operations came to, only a few percentage points, compared to the whole city. This illustrated to her that, yes, the City can do things at an operations level but the massive impact was at residential electricity and gas use. If they could find a way to "crack those two nuts" they could really reduce the greenhouse gases in Royal Oak. She does still encourage that anything the local government can do personally is still a good, impactful effort. Chair Smith agreed, also noting that it can set a positive example and provide education through example to the wider community. Ms. Bricker said that she also really likes having the government inventory because it allows for easier benchmarking and goal setting that can then be incorporated in future budgets/CIP.

Ms. Bricker spoke briefly about the Oakland County Sustainability Plan and the 2018 greenhouse gas study by AECOM and how both inform their currently policy setting. Councilmember Smith noted that he really wants to see environmental design included in the new Public Safety and Fire Station buildings. He thinks it would be a good idea to proceed with a greenhouse gas inventory as soon as possible so they can measure the existing buildings and then be able to compare the new buildings, once completed.

There was brief discussion of solid waste hauling and Ms. Bricker talked about the County interest in doing an audit of waste so they can use it towards Statewide efforts of boosting recycling, ensuring as little goes into landfills as possible, and increasing food waste programs. The measurement of this can be difficult, each of the Counties are obligated to put together a materials management plan, Oakland County is in the process of doing so alongside a consultant. Councilmember Heintz asked what the timeline for the plan was, Ms. Bricker said that the County was given a three year timeline and that they are currently one year in.

Chair Smith asked about the tree planting goal for the County. Ms. Bricker said that their Chief Grounds Officer had a goal of planting 2,027 trees before 2027 (when he retired) and the goal was met ahead of schedule, this Spring. She noted that the County has a lot of space that they are able to plant trees on. She also shared that there are some good grants available through DTE, the Michigan DNR, and the non-profit ReLeaf Michigan for tree planting.

Chair Smith said he is interested in public-private partnerships and hearing about successes other communities have had. Councilmember Heintz agreed and appreciated the information provided today.

Chair Smith asked for follow-up on ICLE licensing and what volunteers would need in order to help with an inventory.

Chairperson Heintz reiterated the Committee's interest in having the City build relationships with other Oakland County CVTs and Ms. Bricker said that she would be happy to "play matchmaker" based on the interests/goals/programs Novi has. She also encouraged that we sign up for Michigan Green Communities emails as they provide information about a lot of valuable opportunities and meetings. She also noted the upcoming late fall Cities, Villages, and Townships Conference, that a survey would be going out soon that the responses would help determine the topics discussed and speakers at the conference.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT: 6:45 p.m.

Motion: Smith; Seconded: Heintz; Approved: 2:0