

MEMORANDUM



TO: MAYOR FISCHER AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: DANIELLE MAHONEY, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: NOVI 2050 FUTURIST SESSION – TOP TRENDS AND INSIGHTS
DATE: APRIL 24, 2025

As part of the City's long-range strategic planning process, the Novi 2050 Plan aims to proactively prepare for the social, technological, economic, environmental, and political/regulatory (STEER/R) shifts that will shape the community over the next 25 years. In March 2025, the City held a strategic foresight workshop known as *The Big Sort* with Futurist Rebecca Ryan, City Council members, and department directors. This hands-on, scenario-based exercise encouraged participants to evaluate a range of future trends, foster cross-sector dialogue, and lay the foundation for forward-thinking policies and investments that will ultimately inform the Novi 2050 Plan. The workshop represents the completion of the "Sensing" phase of strategic foresight and is designed to help Novi move from reacting to trends toward shaping them intentionally through collaborative planning.

At its April 14th meeting, the Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee received the *Novi 2050 Top Trends Briefing Book* (attached) and a debrief from Rebecca and her team detailing the top trends shaping Novi by 2050, including insights and next steps, as summarized below.

Key Trends Identified

Participants assessed nearly 30 trends using three criteria: (1) how certain the trend is to occur by 2050, (2) how much impact it would have on Novi, and (3) how ready the community is to respond. Trends with both **high certainty and high impact** were prioritized for further attention. Six emerged as top-tier concerns (at least three of the four teams selecting the trend as "high impact" and "high certainty"):

- **Increasing population and households:** All teams agreed this trend is highly likely and will have significant implications for housing, infrastructure, and public services. It received the lowest average readiness score, signaling an urgent need for planning.
- **Growth in mixed-use developments:** The shift toward walkable, integrated land uses was seen as both inevitable and impactful, particularly as preferences evolve among younger residents and aging adults.
- **Rising housing demand:** While closely tied to population growth, housing supply challenges - including affordability and density - were highlighted as distinct areas needing attention.
- **Increased demand for healthcare professionals:** Participants flagged this trend as critical, though readiness varied widely, suggesting differing perspectives on

the City's role and capacity to support the health-related workforce and infrastructure.

- **Greater racial and ethnic diversity:** Seen as a defining demographic shift, this trend's impact is expected to influence everything from service delivery to civic engagement and representation.
- **Growing cyber threats:** With expanding reliance on digital systems, participants acknowledged the need for strong cybersecurity and data resilience in both public and private sectors.

These trends reflect broad forces likely to affect Novi's trajectory and underscore the importance of integrated, long-term planning.

Readiness Insights

In the context of strategic foresight, readiness refers to how prepared a community, organization, or system is to respond effectively to a specific trend, challenge, or opportunity in the future. In foresight exercises like Novi's *Big Sort*, participants assess readiness by considering whether the community is *positioned today* to manage a trend that is likely and impactful *tomorrow*. Low readiness might indicate the need for new investments, partnerships, or strategic shifts; high readiness suggests existing strengths that can be leveraged.

- **Low Readiness:** Novi is least prepared for population and household growth (avg. readiness score: 3.5/10).
- **Moderate Readiness:** The City shows moderate preparedness for cyber threats (avg. score: 6.3/10), though ongoing investment is encouraged.
- **Divergent Views:** Readiness scores varied widely across teams for several trends, suggesting a need for deeper dialogue on shared priorities, especially around diversity, healthcare, and housing.

Emerging and Participant-Identified Trends

- **Automation & AI Integration:** Though not rated highly by all teams, those who prioritized it noted a low readiness score and potential for major workforce disruption.
- **Write-in Trends:** Participants added additional topics such as expanded public safety staffing and increased technological infrastructure (e.g., connectivity and data speeds) as issues deserving future exploration.

Next Steps

The *Novi 2050 Top Trends Briefing Book* provides a foundation for aligning the City's long-range strategic plan with the most likely and impactful future forces. By prioritizing trends like population growth, housing demand, and cyber threats (especially where readiness is low), the City can proactively direct resources, policies, and partnerships to close gaps and build resilience. The findings also highlight the need for broader stakeholder alignment and flexible, adaptive planning. Integrating this foresight ensures Novi's strategic plan is not only responsive to current needs but positioned to lead through change in the decades ahead.