

MEMORANDUM



TO: MAYOR FISCHER AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: KIT KIESER, OLDER ADULT SERVICES MANAGER
DANIELLE MAHONEY, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: NOVI DRIVE (HPO) JULY 2026 UPDATE
DATE: JULY 16, 2026

Key Highlights

- On July 8, the City hosted its first **Novi Drive Reconnect** session, bringing together approximately 40 graduates of the various High-Performance Organization (HPO) programs for the next phase of Team Novi's HPO journey. This session builds directly upon the [update shared with Council in April](#).
- The session marked an important shift from leadership **development** to leadership **in action**, challenging participants to help embed Team Novi's culture and values throughout the organization.
- Rather than relying on additional outside facilitation, the session was designed and led entirely by City staff, reflecting our continued focus on **building internal leadership capacity and sustaining this work in a cost-effective manner**.

From Leadership Development to Leadership in Action

Over the past several years, Novi has made a deliberate investment in developing leaders throughout the organization. Through programs such as LEAD, Leading EDGE, and the Senior Executive Institute, employees have gained a shared understanding of what it means to be a high-performing organization and the role each person plays in creating one. As shared with Council in April, our focus has now shifted from learning these concepts to embedding them into the way we work every day.

The purpose of the Reconnect session was to bring these employees back together, not for another training session, but to reaffirm their role in shaping the future of Team Novi. Rather than viewing culture as something driven by leadership alone, participants were challenged to see themselves as active stewards of our organization: modeling our values, strengthening their teams, and helping create an environment where innovation, accountability, trust, and collaboration can continue to thrive.

Highlights from the Session

The two-and-a-half-hour working session emphasized discussion, reflection, and commitment over presentation. Participants spent time:

- Reflecting on how Team Novi has evolved since their original leadership training, where meaningful progress has been made, and where opportunities still exist.
- Discussing the barriers that prevent positive change and challenging themselves to distinguish between true organizational constraints and long-standing habits.
- Receiving the first introduction to the Novi Drive Toolkit, a living resource designed to provide practical tools for coaching, feedback, recognition, onboarding, decision-making, and team development.
- Identifying one of six Novi Drive Ambassador roles (Coach, Facilitator, Storyteller, Connector, Builder, or Recruiter) as a personal commitment for helping carry this work forward.
- Leaving with a specific 90-day commitment to apply one concept with their team and invite another employee to the work. These commitments align with the presentation's emphasis on reconnecting, reflecting, equipping, stepping up, and committing to action.



Perhaps the most important takeaway from the session was a simple reminder shared with participants: Culture work is not separate from our "real" jobs. In many ways, it determines how well the rest of our work gets done.

The group will reconvene this fall to share successes, lessons learned, and opportunities for continued growth. This follow-up reinforces that Novi Drive is not intended to be a one-time initiative, but an ongoing practice of learning, accountability,

and continuous improvement.

What Comes Next

The July session represents the beginning of this next phase of Novi Drive. Over the coming months we will continue to:

- Refine the Novi Drive Toolkit as departments begin using it and employees provide feedback.
- Reconvene participants this fall to share successes, challenges, and lessons learned from applying the toolkit in their daily work.
- Launch **Novi Drive 101**, providing every employee with a consistent introduction to our leadership philosophy and organizational culture.
- Continue integrating Novi Drive into onboarding, employee recognition, leadership development, and other existing organizational processes rather than treating it as a standalone initiative. This aligns with the roadmap introduced in April, including Mile One onboarding and department-level integration.



Closing

The July 8th reconnect session demonstrated an important evolution in our HPO journey. Novi Drive has always been about more than training; it is about creating an organization where leadership exists at every level. The Reconnect session marked another meaningful step in that journey, bringing together employees who have invested in this work over the past several years, equipping them with practical tools, and challenging them to become ambassadors for the culture we are building together.

As we learned through our experience with the City of McKinney and other high-performing organizations, fully embedding this culture into an organization is a long-term commitment that unfolds over years, not months. Lasting cultural change happens through consistent reinforcement, shared ownership, and continued investment in people rather than one-time training events.

By continuing to invest in our people, develop our own internal leaders, and embed these principles into everyday operations, we are strengthening Team Novi from within and ensuring our commitment to innovation, continuous improvement, and exceptional public service remains sustainable for years to come.

We look forward to continuing this work and updating Council as Novi Drive continues to evolve and mature.