

# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Novi Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services







*Thank you for your interest in Novi Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services. We're proud to share achievements that enhanced the experiences of our 2024 program participants, park visitors, volunteers, partners and sponsors.*

*Our accomplishments and customer service priorities are reflected in our core values of Team, Innovation, Commitment, and Trust.*

*This report is a quick look at the department's successes. As always, we encourage you to reach out with any questions, comments, or suggestions by emailing [noviparks@cityofnovi.org](mailto:noviparks@cityofnovi.org) or calling 248.347.0400.*

*Jeff Muck,  
Director, Novi Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services*

# team

## A CAN-DO ATTITUDE

The "We Can Improve Our Parks" project, spearheaded by Village Oaks Elementary teacher Nick Weigel-Hubler, is an innovative way to bring life science education beyond the classroom and into the community. Students researched environmental topics connected to the natural features of Brookfarm Park and created detailed reports. To share their findings, they decorated park trash cans with QR codes linking to their projects, allowing park visitors to learn more about the environment while exploring the park. More decorated cans and projects will be added this spring!



*Village Oaks students and staff at the November Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Commission meeting.*

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Novi Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director Jeff Muck was inducted into the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. The Academy is a national organization of distinguished practitioners and educators who are leaders in the parks and recreation profession. To be elected to the Academy, individuals must have served for at least 15 years in a high level of administration in a park and recreation agency or as a recognized educator in parks and recreation administration. They also must have demonstrated outstanding leadership in professional organizations through service, writing or speaking and have displayed a deep interest in advancing public parks and recreation. The Academy is limited to 137 active members.

Jeff has served as director in Novi since 2014. During his tenure, more than 160 acres have been added to the parks system, the department achieved CAPRA national accreditation, the Novi dog park and R/C raceway opened, Lakeshore Park renovations were completed, key amenities were added to Pavilion Shore Park, the ITC Trail was completed and Jessica's Splashpad was constructed. Additionally, he has served mParks (Michigan Recreation and Park Association) as president and in other leadership roles.







# innovation



## NOVI PARKS SOCCER CLUB – A 3-5-2 FORMATION

The Novi Parks Soccer Club consists of **three** “leagues” – Tiny Tikes, Thunder Recreational, and Lightning Select, competing in the Western Suburban Soccer League and Michigan State Premier Soccer Program. The program puts emphasis on developing skills in a relaxed and affordable environment, with the opportunity to play additional sports. Coaches are all volunteer, required uniforms are reasonably priced, and select teams can decide to add tournaments to their schedule. Over the past **five** years of play, the program has grown by more than 35%, with the Lightning Select players doubling in the last four years, culminating in nearly 1,000 soccer players in spring 2024. The Novi Parks Soccer Club has highly successful teams that win tournaments and league divisions every year. In Spring 2024, the boys 2009 Lightning Gold team played in the state cup championship game. The soccer program is led by **two** members of the Novi Parks staff, with numerous part-time site supervisors who are on site each weekend.



## NOW OPEN

Novi now has 12 dedicated pickleball courts and four convertible courts. Eight new courts were completed this summer, four at Wildlife Woods Park and four at the Meadowbrook Activity Center.

Northwest Park officially opened in August, featuring a quarter-mile walking path and a custom nature-based playground crafted primarily from boulders and logs.

Swimsuits and sunscreen were en vogue this summer at Jessica’s Splashpad, which opened Memorial Day weekend. The splashpad was visited by more than 19,000 people before closing for the season on Labor Day.







# commitment



## THREE LITTLE WORDS WITH A BIG IMPACT: NATURE. NURTURE. NOVI

Each year, residents are invited to participate in a variety of interactive and educational programs under the N3 initiative. These include birdwatching, owl prowls, hiking events, invasive species removal, perennial exchanges, Arbor Day celebrations, and more.

Have you noticed the “No Mow Zones” in our parks? These designated areas support wildlife habitats, including pollinators, and help reduce the community’s carbon footprint.

We’re dedicated to expanding N3 programs and events, with details available in future editions of the Engage guide and online at [cityofnovi.org](http://cityofnovi.org).

## TRANSPORTATION TRANSITION

Since July 1, 2024, People’s Express (PEX) has operated curb-to-curb public transportation in the City of Novi, replacing the former Novi Senior Transportation service. The City of Novi subsidizes fares for residents with disabilities and those aged 55 or older, allowing them to receive in-boundary rides at no cost. PEX operates within a larger geographic area compared to the former Novi Senior Transportation, offering residents, starting at age 14, access to more destinations. Operating hours have also significantly increased, with service available earlier in the morning and later in the evening and on Sundays.

Ridership has grown significantly, with nearly 95% year-over-year growth. This substantial increase demonstrates that the expanded service is effectively meeting a previously unmet need in the community. Resident reception of the expanded transportation services has been predominantly positive, with many expressing appreciation for the increased availability, extended hours, and broader service area.



## OUT(SIDE) IN

The city once again partnered with the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) to host the Inside I Out program. Eight replica pieces were displayed throughout Novi from May to September creating a vibrant outdoor gallery. Interactive programming included a bingo scavenger hunt. Novi is fortunate to have public art collections or sculptures at the Novi Public Library, Fuerst Park, Villa Barr Art Park, Pavilion Shore Park, ITC Community Sports Park, and the Novi Civic Center.



# trust

## SHAPING THE FUTURE

On November 25, City Council approved the 2025-29 Strategic Community Recreation and Master Park Plan. The Plan evaluates existing recreation opportunities, reviews public input regarding recreation, establishes recreational goals, and proposes a five-year schedule of improvements and other related items the City wishes to pursue. The plan also provides eligibility to apply for and be awarded State and Federal grant monies. The plan can be found at [cityofnovi.org/parks](http://cityofnovi.org/parks).



## 20 YEARS AND COUNTING

In 2024, the Novi Parks Foundation proudly celebrated 20 years of enhancing the community through its unwavering support of recreational, educational, and cultural initiatives. Dedicated to enriching the lives of Novi residents, the Foundation has played a vital role in funding and advocating for various projects. These include playgrounds, pickleball courts, soccer field improvements, gardens, public art installations, the development of Villa Barr Art Park and its artist-in-residence program, and, most recently, the creation of Jessica's Splashpad. The Foundation's efforts continue to leave a lasting impact on the Novi community. Learn more at [noviparksfoundation.org](http://noviparksfoundation.org).



## TAKING PRIORITY

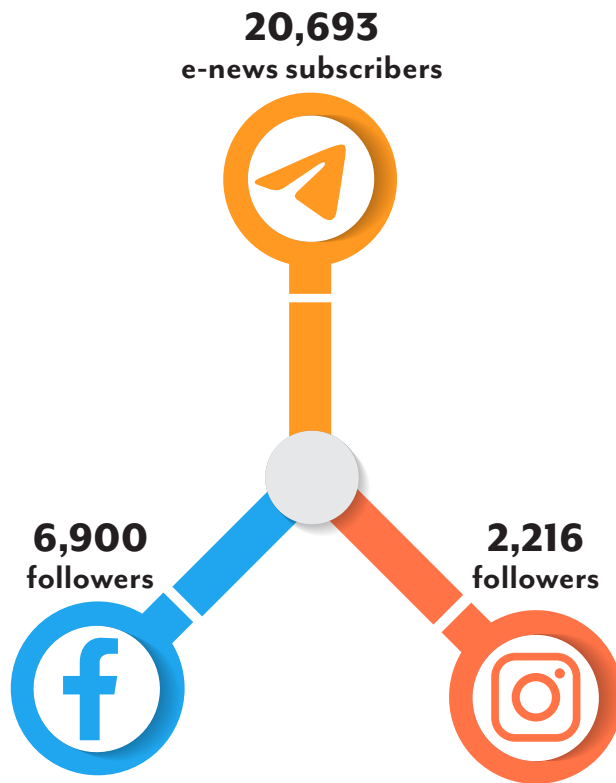
Over the past several years, Novi Parks has seen increased demand and participation across a variety of programs, including youth basketball, adult pickleball, and summer camps. While this growth highlights the popularity and quality of our offerings, it has also led to some participants being turned away due to space limitations. To address this, Novi Parks introduced resident priority registration for select programs this year. Residents may register one week ahead of non-residents. This change ensures that Novi Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services (PRCS) continues to prioritize serving Novi residents first and foremost.







# our digital reach



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