

MEMORANDUM



TO: JEFFREY HERCZEG, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
FROM: KEITH SALOWICH, FORESTER & CONTRACTS SUPERVISOR
SUBJECT: FY 2023–24 PLANTING SUMMARY AND FORESTRY UPDATE
DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2024

Trees play a vital role in Novi's environment by providing a wide array of economic, environmental, and social benefits, which far exceed the investments in planting, maintaining, and removing them. Trees reduce air pollution, improve public health outcomes, reduce stormwater runoff, sequester and store carbon, reduce energy use, and increase property value, among other benefits.

As such, the management of Novi's urban forest is multi-faceted, and includes proactive tree maintenance, reactive work in the wake of storms or resident concerns, and a focus on long-term urban forest resilience in a world of emerging threats.

PLANTING HIGHLIGHTS



The City's planting contractor, Crimboli Nursery Inc., augers a hole to plant a street tree in front of a Novi residence.

The City of Novi plants trees and shrubs annually during both the spring and fall planting seasons. Nearly all plantings are native species. Native species provide by far the greatest benefits to local ecosystems and are also well adapted to the growing conditions of the area. Staff also abides by the "right tree—right place" ethos and plants trees in sites where they can thrive for many years without posing significant conflicts with infrastructure.

The total number of tree and shrub plantings are illustrated in a table below, with some significant plantings of note:

- As part of the City's efforts to refurbish its 17 **entryway signs**, new landscape plantings were installed around several of the signs. An emphasis was placed on adding evergreen species to bring year-round interest to these sites that serve as Novi's first impression on passing motorists.
- There were eight trees, and 48 shrubs added to the City's new **Northwest Park** to enhance the landscape and add valuable wildlife habitat. City staff selected native species to complement that park's cohesion with the surrounding natural woodland.
- **Street trees** were planted adjacent to 121 different residences throughout Novi. Many of them were replacements for trees that had died, had fallen in storms, or were removed as part of the Neighborhood Sidewalk Program. There were also 35 new planting sites that had trees added for the first time.

	Trees	Shrubs	Total Cost
Fall 2023	179	906	\$71,130
Spring 2024*	115	65	\$48,035
Seedling Giveaway	873	440	\$2,397

* Includes installation of large trees to provide screening along Lakeshore Park

MAINTENANCE HIGHLIGHTS



One of the City's two tree maintenance contractors, CutMyTreeDown.com, chips debris from an invasive species removal effort in Lakeshore Park.

City forestry contractors continuously remove dead/dying/damaged/diseased trees, grind stumps, and prune trees year-round. The City Forester also assesses, diagnoses, and monitors public trees to form management decisions.

- Proactive maintenance pruning is performed on every City-owned tree in every Novi neighborhood as part of the City's block pruning program. This ensures that sidewalks and roadways remain clear of low-hanging branches, removes hazardous dead or damaged branches, and aids in scouting for pests, diseases, and dead trees that should be removed. Two block pruning crews worked in Barclay Estates, Taft Knolls, Creek Crossing, Cedarspring Estates, and all phases of Island Lake during FY 2023-24.
- There were 18 relatively small City-owned trees in harm's way due to construction projects in FY 2023-24, which were able to be saved through transplanting to a different site rather than removing and replacing them. For example, seven trees were transplanted to a different area on the Meadowbrook Commons property to allow for the pickleball court construction. These efforts saved trees and saved the City money on tree work costs.
- A City contractor removed invasive woody species, most notably buckthorn, from Rotary Park. Invasive species cause great harm to the environment by crowding out native species, thus drastically reducing species diversity, while providing minimal benefits for wildlife. The contractor cut the woody invasive species and treated the stumps with an herbicide concentrate to ensure long-term eradication.

MISC. HIGHLIGHTS

- City of Novi Forester/Contracts Supervisor Keith Salowich was appointed to a three-year term serving on the board of directors for the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)'s Michigan chapter in December 2023.
- The City of Novi received the prestigious ISA Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Arbor Day Activities at the 2024 ArborCon conference in February.
- Urban forestry efforts in Novi earned recognition by the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA (TCUSA) program for the 32nd time. Novi also earned its 14th Growth Award through the TCUSA program by going above and beyond the program's regular standards.
- Davey Resource Group prepared an updated Tree Management Plan for the City, and prepared Novi's first-ever tree canopy coverage report. These findings will help guide the direction of future management decisions. A memo highlighting the key findings of those reports is forthcoming.