

Older Adults Needs Committee

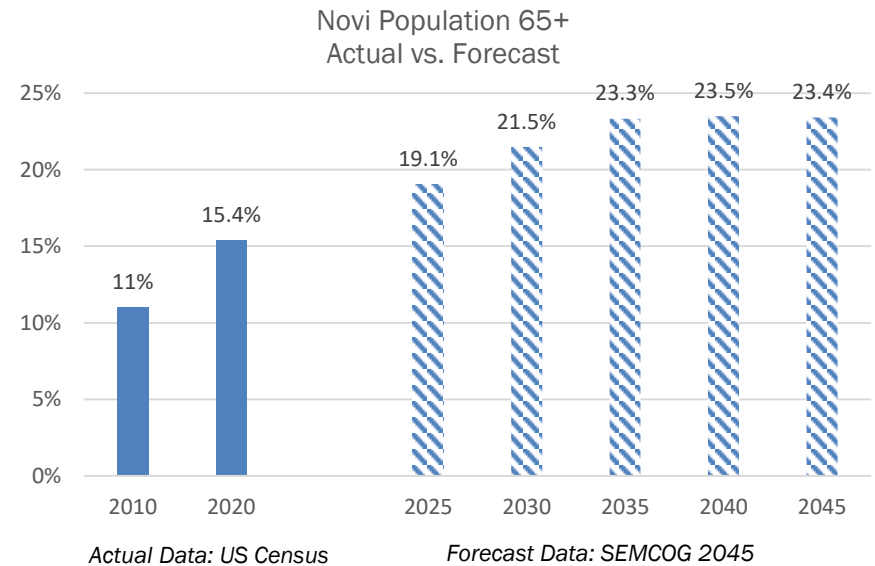
Early Review Mailout

October 9, 2023



The Coming Age Wave in Novi

- An increasing older adult population will bring changing needs for public safety, transportation, medical treatment social services, and community-building
 - [By 2040](#), about one in five Americans will be age 65 or older)
- We had a significant increase in the number of senior residents from 2010 to 2020 and are forecast to climb steadily to over 23% of residents being 65+ by 2045
- Alternatively, [SEMCOG](#) also projects that in 2045, 41% of Novi households will have a senior 65+ as a resident
 - Of these households, 33% will have a senior living alone



Developing the Older Adult Needs Committee

At its January 23, 2023 meeting, City Council passed a resolution creating the “Older Adult Needs” Committee and appointed the following members:

- Laura Casey, City Council
- Kathy Crawford, Library Board
- Jay Dooley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Commission
- Kim Nice, Historical Commission
- Brian Smith, City Council
- Ericka Thomas, City Council
- Debbie Wrobel, Historical Commission

- Staff liaisons appointed by the City Manager are Jeff Muck and Kit Kieser
- Deputy Clerk Melissa Morris and Executive Assistant to the City Manager Katherine Oppermann provided critical support



Committee Responsibilities Set in the Resolution

The committee was charged with the following responsibilities:

- To advise the City Council regarding *activities, needs, and volunteer community opportunities* for older individuals and groups in Novi
- To discuss *programs, projects, and facilities* as they pertain to Novi older adults
- To focus on *dissemination of information and advocacy* regarding recommended services for older adults in the areas of health information and referral, volunteer services, counseling, outreach to the home-bound, recreation, education, and other needs
- To identify *best practices for programs and service delivery needs* for Novi older adults
- To *formulate and recommend plans* to assist in meeting the critical needs of older adults and adults with disabilities



Committee Actions

- **The Committee has spent several months on a learning journey:**
 - Learning about the OAS department and the programs we offer
 - Understanding how the City offers transportation to residents
 - Touring Meadowbrook Commons to understand how we manage housing
 - Learning about senior center operations from three different communities
 - Hearing from first responders and code compliance to learn from what our first responders see and hear
 - Understanding library offerings for older adults
 - Getting program information from the Oakland County Chief of Older Adult Services and the Area Agency on Aging 1B
 - Reviewing existing data sources (i.e., 2023 Library community survey, 2021 SOS survey, 2022 senior center tour)
- **We're now starting on drafting our insights and recommendations for Council**
 - An early review is being shared today and a more complete report will be done in early 2024



Older Adult Services (OAS) in Novi

Vision

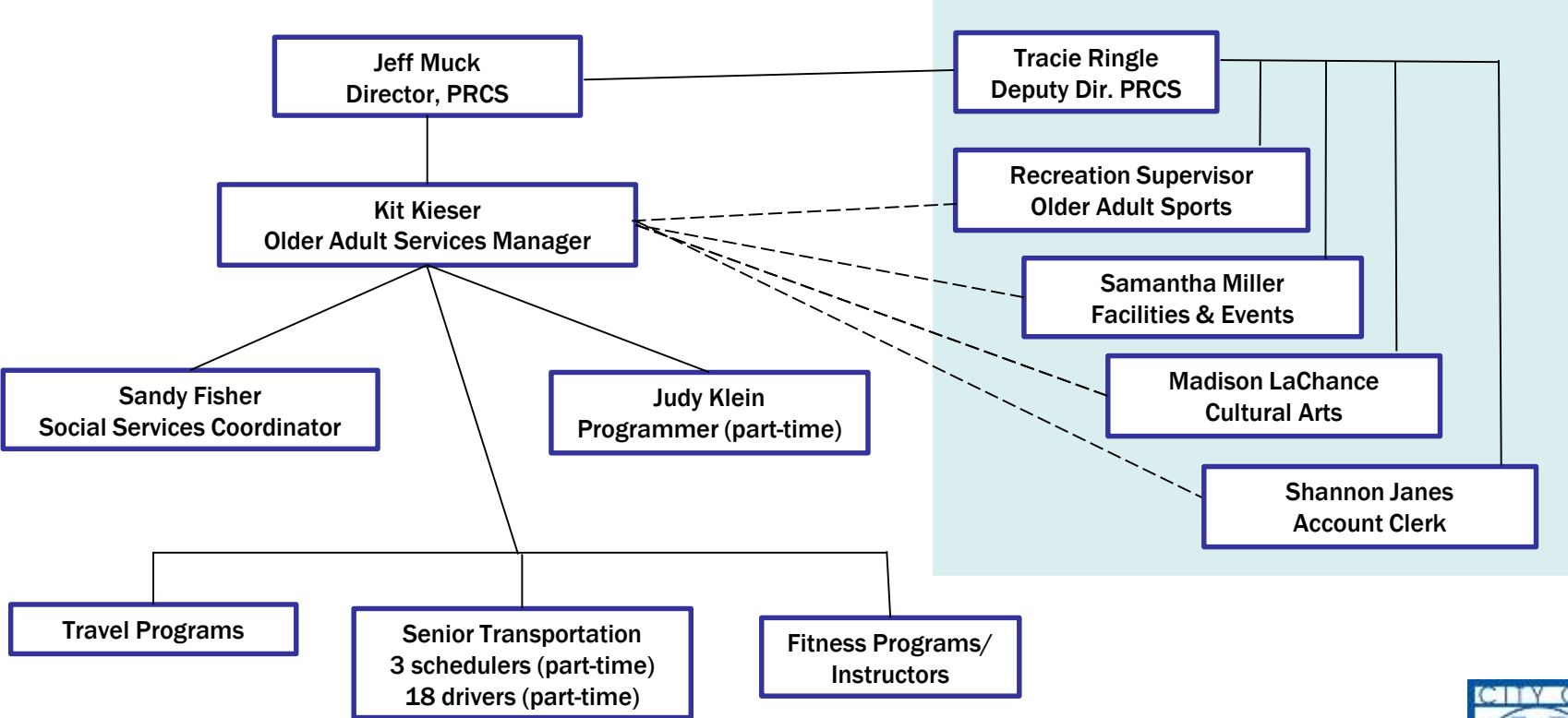
- Be the premier community for empowering adults 55+ to live healthy, active lifestyles.

Mission

- Promote healthy, active lifestyles that support independence and vitality for adults 55+ by providing opportunities and networks within the community for socialization, health and fitness, transportation, life-long learning and support services.

Novi Older Adult Services Team

The Older Adult Services team is part of the larger Parks, Recreation and Cultural Service Department



OAS Key Service Areas

HOUSING

- Meadowbrook Commons Senior Living Apartments

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

- Curb to curb transportation for 55+ and disabled adults

SUPPORT SERVICES

Nutrition Programs

- Focus: HOPE & TEFAP
- Daily Lunch & Meals on Wheels

Support Services

- Durable Medical Equipment Loan Closet
- AARP Tax Aide
- Estate Planning
- "Ask the Lawyer"
- Medicaid/Medicare Assistance Program Counseling
- Caregiver support

Support Groups

- Bereavement support group
- DATA hearing loss support group
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group

HEALTH, WELLBEING, & LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- No.VI Book Club
- One-on-one technology assistance
- AARP Smart Driver programs
- Technology education programs
- Evidence-based health education programs
- Therapeutic massage
- Blood pressure screenings

SOCIAL ENRICHMENT & TRAVEL

- Cards, bingo, & other games
- Crafts (knitting, etc.)
- Meal-based social activities
- Nature. Nurture. Novi outdoor activities
- Day & extended trips
- Mackinac Island Grand Experience
- Special events (e.g. Veterans Day Celebration)

EXERCISE AND FITNESS

- Yoga & Pilates
- Tai Chi
- Cardio, strength, & stretch programs
- Walking, hiking, running
- Pickleball
- 55+ Sports

Partners in Services

- AARP Foundation
- Area Agency on Aging 1-B
- Ascension Community Health
- Disability Network, Eastern MI
- Deaf and Hearing Impaired Services
- Hospitality House
- Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program
- MSU Tollgate Center
- Internal City of Novi Departments
- Novi Rotary Club
- Oakland County
- Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency
- Western Oakland Meals on Wheels
- Novi Schools Community Education
- Michigan Recreation & Parks Association (mParks)
- Oakland County Parks & Recreation
- Kensington Metroparks
- Friends of Maybury
- Michigan Association of Senior Centers
- Focus: HOPE
- Novi Public Library

Who We Serve – By the Numbers FY 22-23

HOUSING

Meadowbrook Commons residents: 204

TRANSPORTATION

Total rides: 13,778

SUPPORT SERVICES

Total served: 46,776

HEALTH & LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Total served: 1,421

SOCIAL ENRICHMENT & TRAVEL

Total served: 9,026

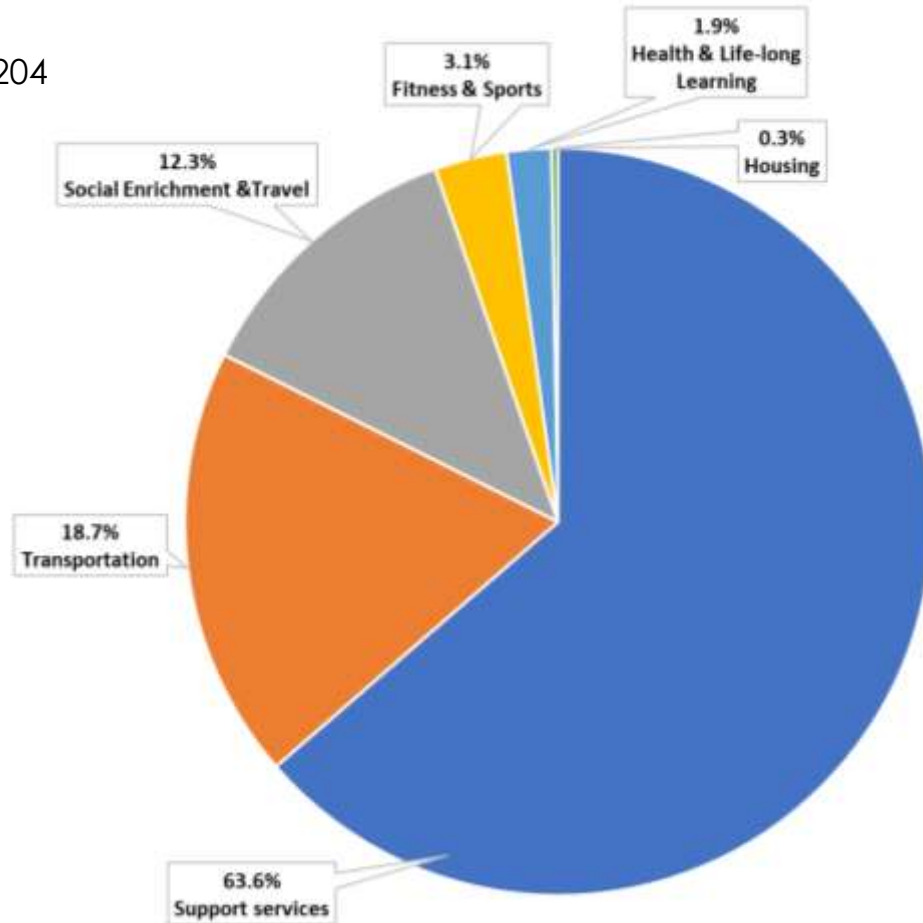
FITNESS & SPORTS

Registrations: 2,300

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer hours: 3,500

Market value: \$110,000



Community Focus Group

Why did we conduct focus groups first?

- Focus groups are often done in advance of a survey, so we can be smarter in the questions we ask in a survey. Surveys give us the “how many”, which is necessary input for planning
- The conversation among participants in a focus group gives direction, generates insights and helps us understand the “why” and the “what”
- We used an expert, Scott Adler, to work with us to develop the content and flow of the discussion, facilitate the focus groups and provide a final report

Scott Adler is the founding Partner of INSIGHT STRATEGIES, LLC, now in its 19th year of successfully helping clients become better at what they do. Insight Strategies, LLC has worked with clients in municipalities, higher education and health care.

Scott has been in health care operations, marketing, and business development for more than 35 years. He has managed clinical and retail operations in healthcare and has extensive process redesign training and experience. He has published articles on his work in relationship marketing, community development and health status improvement as well as a book chapter on quality and customer service. He co-wrote and produced the award-winning documentary, “Living With Cancer: The Windstorms of Life.”



City of Novi



**OLDER ADULT NEEDS COMMITTEE
FOCUS GROUP REPORT
OCTOBER 2023**

Deliverables



- **An improved understanding of:**
 - What resident seniors (50+) say they need in terms of services and activities
 - What resident seniors expect regarding how those needs are addressed, including the role the City of Novi should play in meeting those needs
- **An initial definition of “senior center”**
- **An improved understanding of whether a “senior center” as defined by the participants is something seniors would utilize**

Participants



- 41 residents
 - 50-59 = 7
 - 60-69 = 10
 - 70-79 = 12
 - 80+ = 12
- How long have you lived in Novi?
 - 45% = 20+ years
 - 15% = 6-10 years
 - 12% = 11-20 years
 - 27% = 5 years or less

Participants



- 88% have used Novi services
- 61% have used more than 6 services
- 66% have used a mix of different services, such as enrichment, physical fitness, social trips, and support programs

Methodology



- Common discussion guide
- Four 90-minute age-specific focus groups
 - Open discussion
- One two-hour large group session with all ages participating
 - Conversation guided by questions drawn from the previous focus groups
 - An interactive audience response system was used to track responses

Key Findings



- Participants are generally pleased with Novi's Older Adult Service offerings, although there is also a general belief that Novi is playing "catch up" with surrounding communities
- A single location community center is needed
 - 72% said it was very or somewhat important to be renovated space rather than new construction
- A central location that creates/provides the opportunity for a sense of community is vital
- A warm pool for exercise is missing from the available services for seniors
- Participants said they understand that this new programming isn't free and expressed willingness to pay for it

A Single Location Community Center Is Needed



- Participants spoke of the need to consolidate programming for seniors in a single location
 - 69% felt a single location was either very important (44%) or somewhat important (25%)
 - ❖ “The older you are the more important a single location is for accessibility.”
 - ❖ “It’s easier to keep track of and you can go there and see what’s going on.”
- The center needs to include space that would be adequate for the classes they attend
 - ❖ “The room was so small for yoga I couldn’t hardly move without touching the person next to me.”

A Single Location Community Center Is Needed



- It was deemed essential that the center focus on the needs of seniors, but that it be considered a “community center” and not a “senior center”
 - 68% felt the single location could be for all ages, but it was essential that time for seniors was carved out
 - ❖ “I would like classes or wings of the building to be for seniors but not necessarily the whole building.”
 - ❖ “I have young adult children and I would like everyone to be able to go because I would like them to come with me to classes or the pool.”
- Participants who didn’t think a single location was necessary generally focused on the classes they are most interested in
 - ❖ “I have found out that if I want to go there, I go there, so location does not matter to me. If I think it’s worth that, I’m going to go.”
 - ❖ “If there are multiple locations, then maybe I have at least something that is closer to me.”

A Single Location Community Center Is Needed



- **The services/programs/activities that should be in the community center, included:**
 - Enrichment activities (arts and concerts)
 - Physical fitness (pickle ball, chair volleyball, Zumba)
 - Social programs/opportunities (trips, cards, coffee shop)
 - Support programs (meals on wheels, transportation)
 - Mindfulness (yoga, Thai Chi)
 - Age-appropriate exercise (warm water pool, exercise room)
 - Available for rentals (birthday parties, retirement parties)

A Central Location And A Sense Of Community



- The single location represented something more than the programs it contained: A community-building opportunity
 - 93% said community-building opportunities were either very (63%) or somewhat important (30%) to be part of the single location
 - Participants talked about the importance of having a sense of community
 - Participants talked about a gathering place for seniors
 - ❖ “I’m worried about retiring and not being social, it’s a good place to have connection.”

A Central Location And A Sense Of Community



- 50% felt more drop-in opportunities were the main element missing from Novi's older adult offerings
 - Participants said they'd like to be able to stop by and see what's offered without having to register for all programs
 - There was a desire to have the ability to buy a single session rather than an entire series
 - ❖ "I'd like a place for 'free time' where we can craft, play chess, anything available there. Or just hang out."

A Warm Pool For Exercise



- There was broad support for a **warm water** pool for seniors
 - 75% felt a pool was either very important (55%) or somewhat important (20%) to include in the single location
- 87% felt a pool was either very important (32%) or somewhat important (55%) to include in the scope of Novi offerings
 - 50% said they'd definitely or probably use the pool
- There were three criteria required for the pool to be successfully utilized
 - The water temperature needs to be warm enough
 - There needs to be enough options throughout the day for seniors to access the pool
 - Children would not have access to the pool during senior times

Playing “Catch Up”



- There was strong support for the services currently offered
- There was general satisfaction with the quality of the services offered
- 47% felt that Novi’s older adult services is playing catch up with other surrounding communities
- When discussing what was missing, the groups identified:
 - No single location
 - No pool
 - No performing arts center
 - ❖ “I find myself going to the Hawk for ballroom dancing, concerts are free to watch, there’s an indoor track. We don’t have a whole community-based thing.”
 - ❖ “I think Novi is lacking a designated center for 55 and up.”
 - ❖ “I love Novi but there are things that are lacking.”

A Willingness To Pay



- Participants recognized the need to create a community center that would at least cover its costs each year
- Participants expressed a willingness to fund the community center
 - 53% said a small millage was appropriate
 - 30% said a monthly fee for some services or an increase in the individual classes or services was appropriate
 - ❖ “We have to look at this for other generations that will benefit when they get older as well, not just this senior generation.”
 - ❖ “A millage can be looked at like schools: the older generations don’t use schools but we still pay for it.”

Final Thoughts



- **Communicating what is offered is key**
 - Participants talked about how they struggled to stay “in the know”
- **Participants said they appreciated being included in the focus groups**
 - 91% strongly or somewhat agreed that Novi wanted to hear what they had to say on these topics
 - ❖ “It seems like they care.”
 - ❖ “I think it’s nice that they’re listening to what people are saying to get to this point. They didn’t have to have a focus group. Somebody is listening.”
- **The development of a single location should occur through renovating current space rather than new construction**
 - 72% said it was very or somewhat important to be renovated space rather than new construction



Quick Wins – Actions Stemming from Committee Discussion

- **Enhancements to communications – in development**
 - Electronic newsletter
 - Redesign area of engage to be more readable for older adults, consistent color theme
 - Additional outreach to senior living facilities
- **Increase current part-time OAS program staff to full-time immediately**
 - This will enable the continuation and expansion of the quality programs that we offer
 - Staff can implement this as quickly as the hiring process allows

The Current State of Transportation

- **The Committee has done a significant amount of research into transportation**
 - We have 17 part-time drivers and operate 4-5 shuttles daily
 - Our transportation team provided almost 14,000 rides in FY 22-23 and the majority of rides are in the middle of the day from 9-3
 - 66% of all rides taken are for medical appointments or work; the majority of rides (44%) are for medical appointments
- **We provide a great service, but there are still gaps in availability and timing that need to be met**
 - While riders must schedule their ride at least one day in advance, the frequency of rides to medical appointments challenge our ability to provide rides with notice shorter than seven days
 - Appointments for ongoing treatments are booked for an indefinite number of weeks into the future
 - We are not currently able to offer evening hours, which may exclude some residents from attending City events and activities
 - We are seeing an increase in rides from senior living facilities, who are starting to price their own shuttle rides at higher rates to encourage riders to use City transportation



The Future State of Transportation: For Council Consideration

The Committee recommends that Council contract with a 3rd party provider covered under the County millage to expand transportation to more residents

- It will become costly to maintain and expand our own program to meet the scheduling and availability gaps noted previously, including adding drivers and vehicles
 - There is a consistent challenge with part-time driver hiring and retention. To be competitive in recruitment/retention and match market rate, the City would need to move to full-time drivers and increase the hourly rate by \$4-6 an hour
 - The current lead time for obtaining any vehicle is 12+ months and the current estimated cost of an ADA-outfitted van is \$80,000. To meet an increasing demand, we would need to increase the fleet by several vehicles
- If there are concerns about the charges to users (\$2/one-way ride) under a 3rd party provider, Council may also explore subsidizing rides for residents 65+ with the provider
- Using a 3rd party provider will allow us to keep a few of our shuttles for more programming and potentially offer rides to evening City events
 - However, we should consider matching the same fee for transportation to City events as the 3rd party provider
- This is a quick overview given the timing of talks with the County - the Committee's final report will have more detailed information



Committee Next Steps

- **Using insights from the focus groups, conduct a survey to quantify**
 - Housing options (are people seeking to move as they age and why? what do they need to stay?)
 - Program/service needs and volunteer needs
 - Senior center needs, wants, potential usage, means of paying
- **Define a solution to help older adults who move to Novi learn how to find a local doctor, pharmacy, etc.**
 - Additional opportunity to help more older adults understand their Medicaid options
- **Further exploration on housing needs**
 - Survey realtors to understand what they hear from older adults moving out of Novi
 - Talk with Community Development and Economic Development about how to engage developers on bringing smaller, ranch-style or first-floor living housing to Novi, including exploring if that requires ordinance changes
 - Understand what developers of 55+ housing look for when choosing a site
- **Continue researching additional space requirements for older adult programming to develop a recommendation for the final report**
- **Schedule presentation from Disability Network to understand Universal Design and how it can apply to City activities and assets**
- **Understand more about the needs of each generation as it ages (Boomers, Gen X, etc.)**
- **Refine opportunities for future advocacy**
- **Finish research and prepare final report to Council**

