



*It is the mission of the Urbana Park District to:*

- *Improve the quality of life of its citizens through a responsive, efficient, and creative park and recreation system,*
- *Pursue excellence in a variety of programs, parks, and special facilities that contribute to the attractiveness of neighborhoods, conservation of the environment, and the overall health of the community.*

**NOTICE AND AGENDA OF MEETING**  
**URBANA PARK DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (UPDAC)**  
**TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024**  
**7:00 PM**  
**PLANNING & OPERATIONS FACILITY**  
**1011 E. KERR AVENUE**  
**URBANA, IL 61802**

- I. **Call to Order**
- II. **Public Comment**  
*Any member of the public may make a brief statement at this time within the public participation rules of the Board.*
- III. **Approval of the Minutes of the February 27, 2024 Meeting**
- IV. **New Business**
  - A. Emerging Trends in Parks & Recreation: Reports from annual IAPD/IPRA Conference (January 2024)
  - B. SPLASH/Afterschool Program Update
- V. **Reports**
  - A. UPDAC Chair
  - B. Board Representative
  - C. Director's Report
  - D. Capital Projects Report
    - a. Health & Wellness Facility Open House/Floor Signing Event – Saturday, 4/20/24 – 10:00AM – 12:00PM
- VI. **UPDAC Member Comments and Open Discussion**
- VII. **Adjourn**

***Upcoming meetings:***

***April 23, 2024***  
***May 28, 2024***  
***June 25, 2024***  
***July – No meeting***

**\*\*\* This month's secretary is Brittany Tammen \*\*\***

Note: The Meeting Agenda and Supporting Materials are on the UPD website at <http://www.urbanaparks.org/documents/index.html>; choose the "Public Meetings" category and search for the meeting information you wish to download.

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**URBANA PARK DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (UPDAC)**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024**  
**7:00 PM**  
**PLANNING & OPERATIONS FACILITY**  
**1011 E. KERR AVENUE**  
**URBANA, IL 61802**

The meeting of the Urbana Park District Advisory Committee (UPDAC) was held Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at the Urbana Park District Planning & Operations Facility at 7:00 pm. The notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the park district administrative office and at the location of the meeting. Copies of the notice and agenda were received by each member of the committee and by local newspapers, radio, and television stations at least forty-eight hours before the meeting in compliance with the Open Meetings Act of the State of Illinois. A copy of the notice and agenda is attached to the minutes. Also available for inspection are all documents that were reviewed or approved at the meeting.

UPDAC Members	PRESENT	ABSENT
Ashley Withers, Chair	X	
Lauren Chambers	X	
Lori Choquette		X
Reba Daniels	X	
David Dorman		X
Kanittha Fay		X
Lucia Maldonado		X
Hannah Sheets	X	
Ashley Sims	X	
Rachel Spencer	X	
Gary Stensland	X	
Michael Stevenson	X	
Brittany Tammen	X	
Gretchen Madsen Webb	X	
Karl Weingartner	X	
Darius White		X

**Others Present:**

Allison Jones, UPD staff;  
Keenan Portis, Park Planner;  
Derek Liebert, Superintendent of Planning & Operations;  
Tim Bartlett, Executive Director;  
Laura Hastings, UPD Commissioner;  
Cedric Stratton, UPD Commissioner;  
Mary Ellen Wuellner, Forest Preserve Friends Foundation;  
Jeff Yockey, Friends of the Kickapoo Rail Trail.

**I. Call to Order**

UPDAC Chair, Ashley Withers, called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

## II. Public Comment

There were no comments from members of the public.

## III. Approval of the Minutes of the November 21, 2023 Meeting

The minutes of the November 21, 2023 UPDAC Meeting were presented for approval.

**Reba Daniels made a motion with a second from Lauren Chambers to approve the minutes from the November 21, 2023. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.**

## IV. New Business

### A. Kickapoo Rail Trail updates – Mary Ellen Wuellner & Jeff Yockey

M.E. Wuellner & J. Yockey provided the committee with updates about the Kickapoo Rail Trail (KRT). They encouraged members to get out on the trail as well as utilize it themselves. They provided a background and history of how the KRT got started as an effort to make CU more bike friendly.

#### KRT Basics:

- The KRT runs from Urbana to Danville, with some places still needing to be completed. KRT phase 1 opened in 2017 with a trail from Urbana to St. Joe.
- The KRT scope is to have 1-3 mile short trails for walks, 7-20 mile trails for runners, cyclists, and eventually get to 30-300 miles to provide an active transportation network, connecting communities, creating destinations, and building trail town economic development.
- The next step is working on hiring an architectural firm to design the trailhead at Weaver Park. The trailhead will have a pavilion similar to the UPDAC Pavilion at The Anita Purves Nature Center.
- UPD, Champaign County Forest Preserve, IDNR, and Vermilion County all play a role in helping develop the KRT.
- The IDNR redid the railroad trestle in Oakwood and it soars above the trees. Really neat thing to check out on the trail.
- Once the KRT is complete there is a grand vision for the future to connect more communities like Clinton, Monticello, Danville and Bloomington-Normal.
- The entire trail will be completed in 2025.

#### Friends of the KRT:

- FKRT helps communities figure out how the trail will work and help them understand the monetary resources it can bring to the community through cyclists and trail users.
- The group meets once a month as does the steering committee.
- Jeff asked if anyone is a part of a group that can make a monetary contribution to the effort. If you have a connection, reach out to Jeff.
- The FKRT has needs like money, ties to legislature, and local officials.
- If you are looking to attend events or volunteer with the FKRT you can check out their website <https://friendsofkrt.org/>
- FKRT is looking for a part time employee who is a cyclist and would be interested in helping with the KRT.

**B. Urbana Park District trails updates – Tim Bartlett**

Derrick Liebert presented along with another UPD staff member Keenan Portis about the trail condition at South Ridge Park. They are currently working on a grant that would pay for 80% of improvements. Other projects that have been funded are loop trails with interpretation. South Ridge Park has a storm water drainage space and wetland habitat. Could envision some trail markers around the park, as well as kids/family games depending on the surface.

**Two Options:**

1. 5 to 6 ft wide paved concrete multi-use loop trail. Would cost around \$375,000
2. Larger 8ft wide trail in some parts, doesn't have to be paved, could be crushed limestone or recycled material would have a connector in the middle of the trail.

UPD will be surveying the neighborhood to collect feedback about the park. Many UPDAC members commented that a paved trail would be a much better fit since the gravel is harder to walk on, use scooters or strollers, and walk dogs.

**V. Reports**

**A. UPDAC Chair**

On April 20th, come and sign the floor at the Health & Wellness Center! UPDAC, donors, and community will be able to tour what has been completed so far.

Kelsey had her baby girl on Christmas Day named Joan Elizabeth (Joanie)!

**B. Board Representative**

There were no updates from the UPD Board.

**C. Director's Report**

Tim is looking for feedback on the in/out of district rate for the new Health & Wellness facility. Champaign Park District is looking to drop their out of district fees for membership centers, not programs. Would like us to think about this and discuss at the next meeting.

Some things to consider is that there are out of district areas adjacent to UPD facilities. UPD will be doing some deeper analysis. Breaking barriers is critical to the UPD mission.

2 UPDAC members brought up that they think one membership rate would be a no-brainer. They wouldn't want to be able to go to a facility while a next-door neighbor wouldn't be able to go because it is a higher rate.

More discussion will happen at the next meeting, please think about the topic between now and the next meeting.

Derek will bring maps to the next meeting to better illustrate the district boundaries.

Don't forget about the Smores & Stroll on March 10, 2024 at Crystal Lake Park.

D. Capital Projects Report

Derek Liebert reviewed UPD Capital Projects, including:

- Health & Wellness center is moving along
- PrairiePlay final play date, was really successful
- Popping pavers for folks who want to take them. Over 200 of the 1200 have been claimed. They are over 80 pounds each,
- Picket sales are still ongoing. Check out the Urbana Park District Foundation Website or the paper in the program guide
- New lighting for crystal lake with be motion activated and dark sky compliant

VI. **UPDAC Member Comments and Open Discussion**

- Indoor pool swimmers are happy the pool is back open.
- Dave asked about the progress of the map that was presented a few meetings ago, Derrick said it was moving along.
- Controlled burns were conducted at several UPD sites, including Weaver Park. Approval was granted by the Urbana Fire Department before proceeding.
- Next meeting will include a recap of parks and recreation conference and current trends.

VII. **Adjourn**

Ashley Withers adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Gretchen Webb



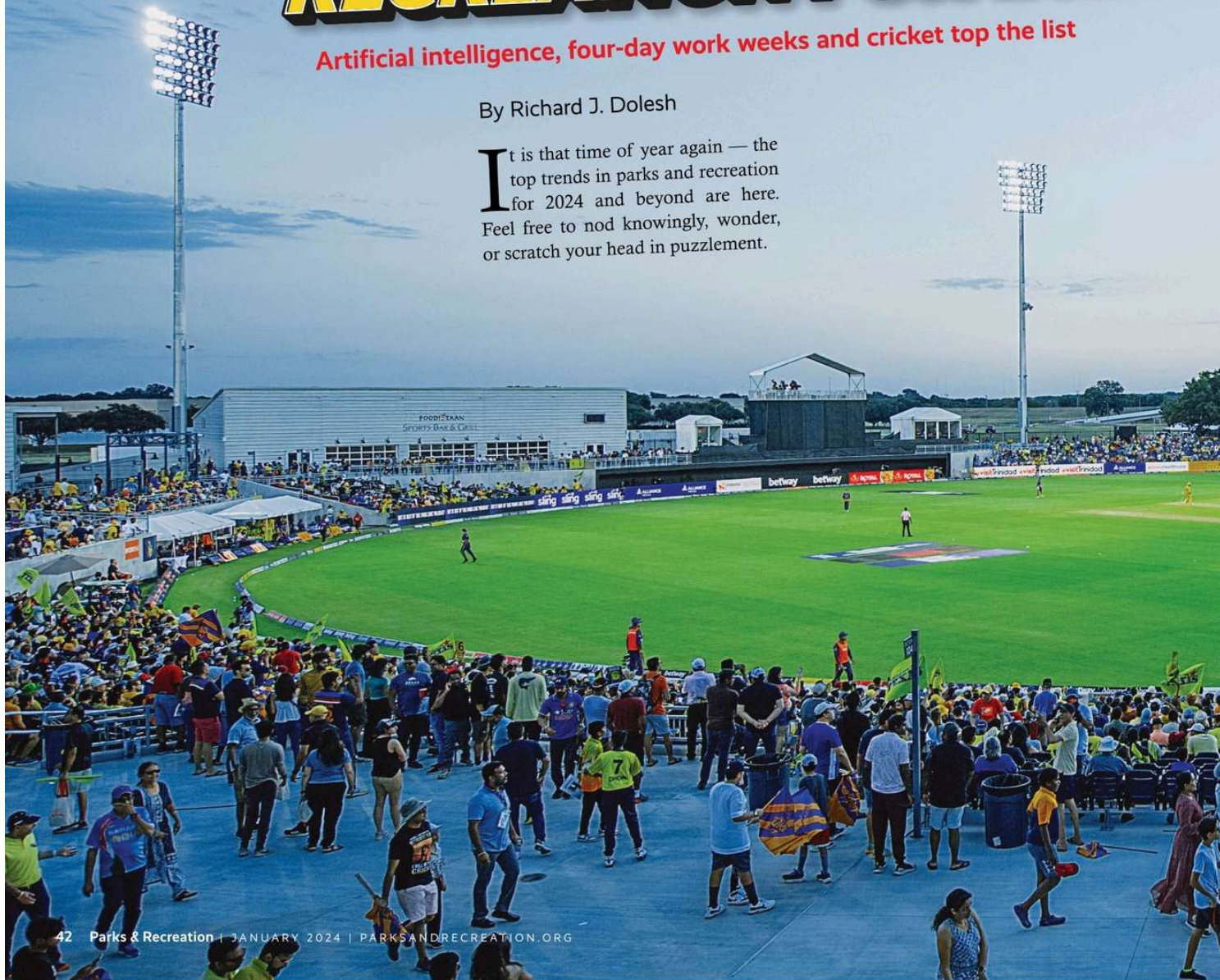
# TOP TRENDS

## IN PARKS AND RECREATION FOR 2024

Artificial intelligence, four-day work weeks and cricket top the list

By Richard J. Dolesh

It is that time of year again — the top trends in parks and recreation for 2024 and beyond are here. Feel free to nod knowingly, wonder, or scratch your head in puzzlement.





## Technology and Parks and Recreation

### Artificial Intelligence

How much of a disruptive innovation will artificial intelligence (AI) be for parks and recreation? That is a burning question for a lot of people in the park and recreation industry, and the answer is not clear yet. However, it can be said with certainty that AI will affect virtually everything we do from this point forward. Here are some of the ways: AI will enable us to answer phone calls, respond to the public more quickly, write speeches, summarize meetings, prepare reports, count visitors, monitor building systems, surveil parks, provide security, plan new parks and massively save energy. This is not a years-in-the-future blue-sky prediction about some far-off trend. It is already happening, and at breakneck speed.

AI chatbots are already improving the efficiency of local governments in responding to residents' inquiries. AI algorithms are help-

ing to process information at rates much faster than humans can, allowing faster decision making and better services to the public. AI-assisted analytics are improving traffic flow, monitoring community health and improving public safety, freeing workers for other tasks and responsibilities. There is little doubt that AI will bring disruptive innovation to parks and recreation on a scale that we have never seen before.

### Privacy, What Privacy?

There are more than 1,000 location-aware apps tracking your mobile phone and providing a real-time location log no matter where you go. The average smartphone, like a device similar to yours, has about 25 location-aware apps installed on it reporting your location. Some of these apps report your location hundreds or even thousands of

times a day! This personally identifiable data is aggregated, matched with other data, like your spending habits, purchasing histories and other very personal data, and is sold on the open market by more than 4,000 data brokers to anyone who wants to buy it. It is a \$200 billion a year market, growing by leaps and bounds.

Park and recreation agencies might want to purchase such location-aware data about their customers to better identify who is using their parks, where people are coming from, and what they did before and after they visited their parks. However, there is a sharp downside to public agencies obtaining and using such personally identifiable information — the public strongly objects to such invasions of personal privacy.

But there may be a good solution at hand. Ian Ross, the director of Civic at Placer.ai, a location analytics

Grand Prairie Stadium, formerly a minor league baseball park owned by the City of Grand Prairie, Texas, has been repurposed as a 7,200-person cricket-specific stadium. It is now the home field of the Texas Super Kings of Major League Cricket.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF GRAND PRAIRIE, TEXAS





company, says, “We are a privacy-first company. The data we obtain is totally anonymous and aggregated. Our partners that provide data to us only provide us device latitude and longitude, nothing else. We get a location, not who owns a device. Further, our 150 data scientists verify all data that we collect, and only then do we provide it to our customers after a three-day delay. It is our hard-and-fast rule that protects personal privacy.”

Placer.ai’s huge data set covers the entire United States and is accurate from a starting date of January 1, 2017. This six-year look-back window gives agencies, local governments, nonprofits and business customers an unparalleled ability to analyze geolocated devices in a variety of ways, such as how many people visited parks on a given day, for example, or the traffic flow along roadways into parks, or how much time people spent in parks.

“Public funds invested in parks are often unheralded,” says Ross. “With our data, we can show that investments in parks directly correlate to benefits to the local economy.” He cites the example of a unique creative event, called Flower Piano, that takes place at Golden Gate Park of San Francisco’s Department of Recreation and Parks, in which a dozen pianos are spread throughout the 55-acre botanical garden for people to play scheduled and open performances. Local businesses vociferously complained about parking spots being taken away near their restaurants during the five weekends of the event. Using Placer.ai data, they were able to show a direct increase of 35 percent in visits to local restaurants because of the Flower Piano event, proving to surprised restaurant owners the direct economic impact of the park on nearby businesses.

### The Impacts of Climate Change

It is becoming increasingly apparent that we are approaching, if not already living in, a post-climate change world. Parks and recreation must collectively adapt to this existential challenge. Despite concerted efforts to keep global temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) to stave off irreversible, and even devastating, impacts from climate change, average temperatures will continue to rise for decades, even if we progressively reduce the conditions causing the temperature rise. This has many implications for public and worker safety from extreme heat, and long-term health conditions that will last a lifetime from heat stress.

Fortunately, how Americans view the threats from climate change is changing. A new survey by the Pew Research Center shows that most Americans believe that climate change is harming people and that conditions will likely get worse during their lifetimes. In addition, nearly three-quarters of Americans believe that climate change will cause significant environmental harm, including the extinction of some wildlife species. Six in 10 people think heat waves will cause people to die, and nearly 6 in 10 believe that rising seas will cause migration away from coastal areas. However, only about 40 percent of Americans think that it will make much difference in their communities — a major disconnect with the topline beliefs about how much climate change will impact our nation.

Surprisingly, however, there is also good news in the report: The rate of climate change is slowing despite 2023 being the hottest year ever recorded. Carbon emissions in the United States are down 12 percent between 2005 and 2019.

The massive increase in ebike use globally is reducing oil consumption by 1 million barrels per day! Costs for renewable energy have plummeted. Solar energy costs have declined 70 percent and wind energy costs have decreased 90 percent. Eighty percent of new energy sources are from renewables. Bad news may abound from weather catastrophes and extreme heat, but for the first time, there are some promising climate-change signs as well.

One critical strategy for communities to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change is to enhance the means of self-protection, and one of the best ways to accomplish that is to become more resilient to both catastrophic spike events and long-term climate trends. Parks and recreation plays a vital role in helping communities achieve that goal through flood protection, retention of stormwater, green infrastructure parks, and protection against both long-term climate trends and single events.

This connection of parks to climate resiliency will increasingly become one of the most lasting proofs of just how essential parks are to all communities. Parks, from the smallest to the largest, will play an increasingly important role in 2024 and beyond in mitigating urban heat-island effects, preventing destructive effects of stormwater and flooding, measurably improving air quality in cities and densely populated urban areas, and improving community health, livability and sustainability.

Park and recreation agencies are already adapting to extreme heat. In Austin, Texas, for example, running clubs have shifted their training runs to take place in the dark, well before dawn. Phoenix Parks and Recreation is now leading night hikes to



Flower Piano is an event in which 12 pianos are placed within the San Francisco Botanical Garden for performances by musicians and open play by the public.

take advantage of lower temperatures. Running clubs in Tempe, Arizona, time their early morning runs to start at 5 a.m. Kids' daylight activities generally take place only under shade shelters or at shaded playgrounds. And some agencies are experimenting with earlier and later open hours to better address impacts of extreme heat.

### The Workplace Health and Wellness

Most of the focus of park and recreation agencies in improving health and well-being is directed toward the communities they serve. However, Allison Colman, NRPA's senior director of programs, says the park and recreation industry will see an equally heavy focus on both workforce development and staff well-being in 2024.

"The profession will look inward," Colman says, "and take steps to better prioritize the mental health and well-being of our own workforce." She points to the results of the American Psychological Association's 2023 Work in America Survey that shows people want to work for an organization that values their psychological well-being, provides support for mental health and respects work/life boundaries ([tinyurl.com/fmc6vze5](https://tinyurl.com/fmc6vze5)).

Gallup's influential *State of the Global Workplace: 2023 Report* ([tinyurl.com/2puzue5p](https://tinyurl.com/2puzue5p)) shows a definite uptick in employee engagement since the pandemic ended, but the engagement of remote workers to the mission and purpose of their organization has fallen to a record low.

### A Four-Day Work Week?

The idea of the four-day work week is gaining steam across America. According to Bankrate, a financial service and comparison company,



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRAVIS LANGE

81 percent of the full-time workforce support a four-day work week and more than 90 percent of younger workers support more flexible work options. Oshan Jarow, a Future Perfect Fellow at *Vox*, writes in the November 9, 2023 issue that support from workers for a four-day work week has never been higher and that demonstration programs internationally have shown the benefits outweigh the negatives. "The word is good — employees are happier [[tinyurl.com/mrxv8eek](https://tinyurl.com/mrxv8eek)], and employers seem to exhibit the same amount of productivity [[tinyurl.com/2s486wve](https://tinyurl.com/2s486wve)] they do with five-day [work] weeks."

Across these experiments, the results tell a similar story: Paying people the same amount for less time worked leaves them feeling happier and healthier and often boosts business, too. Studies have shown no declines in productivity or work program. But there can be unintended consequences. While the four-day work week could lower carbon emissions and reduce traffic congestion, it would have a negative effect on public transportation systems and the increased public use of local park and recreation services would affect agency work programs and budgets.

### There May Be a Four-Day Work Week in Your Future, But You Are Going Back to the Office

A four-day work week might sound great to workers, but 95 percent of companies with more than 100 employees plan to bring people back to the office in 2024, according to Jon Cooper, CEO and founder at Overalls, a concierge-like tech and financial benefit company. The pandemic may have led employers to tolerate and even encourage full-remote work, but that era is over. However, despite the firm employer conviction to bring employees back to the office, 65 percent of employees want to continue to work from home, a trend that points to a large disconnect between employee and employer preference of where people will work from.

### Recreational Program Trends Walking Trips Down 36 Percent Nationwide

The pandemic caused many people to spend more time in parks and walking on trails, but paradoxically, since the pandemic began, walking trips have declined precipitously nationwide.

A new report published by Street-



light Data, a transportation analytics firm, finds that walking activity nationwide declined an average of 36 percent since 2019. In some Midwest urban areas, walking trips have declined up to 50 percent, a shocking turn toward sedentary behavior.

One interesting correlation about the decline of walking, says Emily Adler, director of content for Streetlight, in Bloomberg's urban news site, *City Lab*, is that "If walking is declining less in warm weather metros, or coming back faster, it suggests that walking is becoming primarily a form of recreation." Adler speculates that more recreational walking is good for public health outcomes but less so for walking as a mode of transportation to destinations.

The implications for parks and recreation are significant. Recreation programmers, health staff and trail managers should have a ready audience to promote the much-needed health benefits of walking by offering more guided and self-guided

walking activities in 2024. Other program trends, such as family engagement activities, outdoor youth programs and senior walks, are tailor-made for parks and recreation to lead the way through walking.

#### More Pickleball – More, More, More

Like Godzilla rising from the sea, the recreation behemoth pickleball has still not slowed its seemingly unstoppable march through cities as the fastest-growing recreational sport in the nation.

Along with all the good that pickleball brings, the noise factor is drowning out even residents of communities who are most willing to accept the good about the sport: healthful active recreation, great for older adults, all ages can play — what's not to like? Unfortunately, conflicts over noise are growing. Neighbors are suing neighbors. Public hearings in some localities have become so heated that law enforcement has had to intervene.

As a result, park and recreation agencies have become much more careful when deciding where to site pickleball courts. Some agencies are now conducting sophisticated sound studies when planning new courts, and are looking at sound abatement measures that will reduce the incessant "thwack-thwack" noise that travels improbable distances from pickleball courts. Centennial, Colorado, a suburb of Denver, has just lifted a six-month moratorium on new courts and passed first-of-their-kind regulations that prohibit any courts within 250 feet of a nearby home's property line. Also, any new courts will require a city permit within 600 feet of a home and noise

must be under a 47-decibel limit.

In one unusual twist, the conservation group Birds Connect Seattle has objected to the conversion of old unused tennis courts in Lincoln Park into pickleball courts by Seattle Parks and Recreation because they believe the noise will harm certain species of birds, including hawks, owls, ravens and eagles that nest and roost in nearby big trees in the park.

The group also objects to the potential prospect of installing lights on the courts at some future date, which they believe would be especially harmful to the birds. However, this hasn't deterred advocates for more pickleball courts, who feel they have been promised more public courts soon.

Seattle Parks and Recreation Director Anthony-Paul "AP" Diaz explains that existing nearby tennis courts in Lincoln Park have been very popular with older adults from a senior community that lives nearby. The only way to provide pickleball courts was to convert some of the tennis courts, which was not a good solution. A staff member suggested repurposing some unused and in disrepair tennis courts that were used for maintenance storage as new pickleball courts. "We thought it was a win-win," says Diaz. However, when the bird nesting and roosting issue came to light, that created a new problem. To begin to resolve the conflict, Diaz has committed the department to doing a sound study to see if the new noise would affect the birds. Where the new pickleball courts would be located, he explains, is already an active recreation area with daytime noise from athletic fields, an outdoor summer pool, and aircraft landing nearby. "We want to protect nature too," Diaz says. He notes newly approved sound-deadening equipment recently endorsed by USA Pickleball



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Long a feature of public parks and plazas in Japan and Europe, self-cleaning toilets are making inroads in U.S. cities such as in Grand Rapids, Michigan.



could reduce the noise factor by paddles and balls by up to 50 percent. He has called a community meeting for all to express their concerns.

### Cricket Explodes

In the North Texas city of Allen, assistant recreation supervisor Greg Dunn says they are trying to meet the needs of the community, especially the rapidly growing Southeast Asian population, which has nearly doubled in just a few years. The surging popularity of cricket has made cricket one of the most popular sports in the region and led nearby Grand Prairie, Texas, to approve a long-term lease with Major League Cricket to redevelop the former Airhogs baseball stadium into a 7,200-person capacity cricket-specific stadium that opened this year. “Youth cricket is taking off in the Dallas-Fort Worth area as well,” says Dunn, citing the example of the Crown Cricket Academy. “We have made a huge push to be more inclusive in parks and recreation. I took the NRPA Equity in Practice course earlier this year, and I try to include the principles from that course in all that I do.”

### Recreation Programs That Are Hot in 2024

Family engagement nights, seasonal festivals, fitness programming, holiday karaoke, “eldertainment,” games and activities for “kidults,” and partnerships with libraries are all hot program trends for 2024, according to observations from park and recreation staff around the country. The growth of new seasonal programming and festivals leading to the hiring of more part-time program staff is a strong trendline as well, said a group of park and recreation staff at a recent Virginia Park and Recreation Society trends discussion.

### Communities Going to the Dogs...Willingly

Dog ownership surged during the pandemic and now comprises 45 percent of all families. Eighty-five percent of dog-owning families consider their dogs to be members of the family, according to a Forbes Advisor survey, and dog owners make “professional, financial and lifestyle choices” for their dogs. Dog parks remain the fastest-growing type of park and off-leash dog parks are the fastest-growing type of dog park. Even so, says Beth Miller, CEO of Wagtown, a national group that advocates for responsible dog-friendly people and communities, their survey of park and recreation leaders showed that “the top three barriers to great dog park experiences are available land, financial support and subject matter expertise.”

### Quick Takes Robot Dogs

Older adults, are you ready to take your robot dog for a walk in the park? This is not so far-fetched. A Hasbro-affiliated company, called Ageless Innovation, is doing a brisk business in selling animatronic dogs and cats to this consumer demographic who, from the company's promo video, are agog over how cute they are. Get ready for older adults in their micromobility motorized four-wheelers taking their robot dogs out for an excursion on your trails.

### A Talking, Self-Cleaning Public Restroom

Providing clean, safe and sanitary restrooms for the public has been a monumental challenge for public parks, especially in dense urban areas or in isolated urban parks without staff supervision. Self-cleaning toilets of various types have been used in Europe and Asia for de-

cades, but they are now appearing in U.S. urban parks. An all-weather, self-cleaning toilet graced by public art was installed in Heartside Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan, this past spring. A voice message warns patrons when their time is up, and a sensor ensures that no lingerers will get a human car wash. Disinfectant spray washes all surfaces, and a self-locking door prevents entry during the periodic cleaning cycle.

Self-cleaning toilets are not inexpensive, however, costing from \$100,000 up to \$500,000 for a multiple unit, but in certain urban locations they may be a great choice for public restrooms. “The best thing about it is to have all the usage data,” says Karie Enriquez, professional engineer and project manager for this installation. “It has been a big learning curve for us, learning the programming of the unit, but overall, it has been a positive experience,” explains Enriquez.

### An Elegant Meal in the Park

Drone-delivered pizza and beer in parks? So passé. A study in the *Journal of Open Innovation, Technology, Market and Complexity* surveyed potential customers about drone delivery of higher-end restaurant fare. The food service industry is energized by the idea of much more rapid delivery of prepared meals delivered anywhere, and potential customers love the idea of on-time delivery of piping hot meals to remote locations. Are you ready for drone-delivered candlelight dinners at overlooks, beaches and Instagram-worthy locations in your parks? Prepare to capitalize on this trend. It won't be long in coming. 🍕

**Richard J. Dolesh** is NRPA's retired Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Editor at Large for *Parks & Recreation* magazine ([dolesh@gmail.com](mailto:dolesh@gmail.com)).