

BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING



May 2021

PAGE 3

PAGE 5

PAGE 7

PAGE 8



FIND US ONLINE
BLOOMINGTON **MN.gov**



Presort Std
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit
#2293

ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
1800 WEST OLD SHAKOPEE ROAD
BLOOMINGTON MN 55431-3027



Residents, City staff, contributing partners and consultants met at the Lyndale Avenue Corridor Improvement Project event early in 2020. From left to right are Hennepin County Senior Planner Nate Hood and his daughter Hadley, and Stantec Urban Planner Joe Polacek.

GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT PROGRESS LYNDALE AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS

Lyndale Avenue is one of Bloomington's oldest commercial corridors. It serves the entire City and functions as a neighborhood "main street" to many residents, businesses and employers. Lyndale Avenue continues to thrive, but it is aging and is not responding to changing community needs.

The City, in partnership with Hennepin County and Stantec Consulting Services, has been working to define a clear vision and strategy to attract reinvestment and new development along Lyndale Avenue from I-494 to 98th Street (the Lyndale Avenue corridor). The goal is to transform this auto-oriented street into a walkable and multiuse corridor. This will take time and involve continued input from the community and neighborhood property and business owners. The Lyndale Avenue retrofit strategy will build on the corridor's main assets: jobs, adjacent residential neighborhoods, and the existing mix of businesses.

The City Council adopted the Lyndale Avenue suburban retrofit strategy last month, culminating in a 15-month partnership with Stantec Consulting Services and Hennepin County that also involved extensive engagement and input from the community. The project identified a vision and strategy to attract investment to this aging corridor and guide redevelopment over the next 20 years.

The City Council emphasized the need to be focused and strategic in implementing the recommended strategy, while also setting some aspirations for redevelopment over the next 20 years.

"Adopting the Lyndale Avenue Retrofit Strategy today means we are well-positioned to take advantage of opportunities to build a new and better center of community for future generations," Mayor Tim Busse said.

Explore the project site at blm.mn/letstalk. Questions? Call Senior Planner Julie Farnham at 952-563-4739.



VISION HIGHLIGHTS:

- Lyndale Avenue is a dynamic, walkable boulevard that connects a series of vibrant and distinctive neighborhoods offering opportunities to live, dine, play, and work.
- Lyndale Avenue embraces and preserves its unique role as the historic heart of the Bloomington community.

TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION WE WILL:

- Focus redevelopment and public investments around 86th and 98th streets.
- Foster new, exciting experiences to serve the interests and needs of the corridor's diverse residents and employees and create equitable and safe neighborhoods.
- Create a network of streets, sidewalks and trails that make walking and bicycling safer, more convenient and more comfortable; strengthen connections throughout the corridor and with adjacent neighborhoods.
- Create public gathering places that are conveniently accessible and complement residential, restaurant and shopping destinations.
- Incorporate opportunities to preserve and enhance the environment into future development, creating a place where nature meets business.



MAYOR’S MEMO

GET YOUR VACCINE

By Mayor Tim Busse

Have you gotten your vaccine yet? When you have the chance to get vaccinated, don't hesitate to take it. Each of us can make a big difference in the health and well-being of our community. We will all be in a better position to fight COVID-19 if more people become vaccinated. Together, we can put a stop to this pandemic.

No doubt, you’ve heard a lot about vaccines lately, and some of that information can be confusing. Vaccine hesitancy is real and some populations most at risk for complications of COVID-19 are the most hesitant to get vaccinated.

Let’s be clear: The vaccines that are currently available are effective and safe and each has provided 100% protection from hospitalization and mortality in clinical trials. Vaccines are proving to be extremely effective in protecting the people who’ve received them. Not only that, but we’re learning they are also really good at stopping the transmission of the virus to people who are not yet vaccinated. All Minnesotans 16 and older can now get vaccinated.

While the state has a path in place to vaccinate all Minnesotans, figuring out when, where, and how to get vaccinated has been a challenge for many people.

A tool called the Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector can help you to navigate your way to a vaccine. To reach the Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector, visit blm.mn/vaccinate or call 833-431-2053. It only takes a few minutes. The Vaccine Connector will let you know when you have become eligible for the vaccine and provide other updates along the way.

In addition to the Vaccine Connector, you can search for local providers on the state’s vaccine finder map at mn.gov/findmyvaccine.

After you’ve had your shot, be sure to continue to follow safety guidelines to protect your neighbors while they wait for their vaccine. We all need to remain vigilant and take steps to slow the spread. Wear a mask with two or more layers of fabric, keep six feet away from others, wash your hands often, stay home if you’re sick and get a COVID-19 test if you need one.

Stay safe, be well, and do your part. Roll up your sleeves and get vaccinated, Bloomington.



MAINTAINING CITY STREETS

PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: THE RIGHT ACTION AT THE RIGHT TIME

The City is committed to providing a cost-effective street maintenance program for Bloomington’s 340 miles of streets. From crack sealing and sealcoating to much more extensive full street reconstruction projects, the pavement management program ensures safe streets for all users—drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

The process begins with regularly scheduled field evaluations of each street, completed on a three-year cycle. Public Works staff rate the condition of street segments with a pavement condition index (PCI) value between 0 – 100. Staff measure and catalog all potholes, cracks and other pavement defects. The PCI values are then validated with regular drive-arounds every spring after the freeze-thaw cycles are complete. Staff then compile project forecasts for the next five to seven years. Other factors that are considered for project timing are other major development projects in an area, opportunities for safety improvements and quality of nearby sewer systems.

Street projects typically involve sealcoating, mill and overlay (surface grinding followed by paving new asphalt), reconstruction or trail reconstruction, or maintenance.

To learn more about the City’s Pavement Management Program, visit blm.mn/pmp or call 952-563-4870.

AN AVERAGE YEAR OF PMP BY THE NUMBERS

4 – 5 miles of reconstruction.

7 – 10 miles of mill and overlay.

25 – 30 miles of seal coat.

BRIEFING

Volume 29, Number 05

The *Briefing*, published monthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed to residents and businesses. Direct comments and requests for Braille, larger print or computer file to Communications Administrator Janine Hill, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3071; PH 952-563-8819; MN Relay 711; FAX 952-563-8715; Email: jhill@BloomingtonMN.gov
Website: BloomingtonMN.gov

BLOOMINGTON CITY COUNCIL



Mayor
Tim Busse
952-563-8782 (w)
952-457-7506 (c)
tbusse@BloomingtonMN.gov



Councilmember At Large
Nathan Coulter
952-239-0531
ncoulter@BloomingtonMN.gov



Councilmember At Large
Jenna Carter
612-704-0942
jcarter@BloomingtonMN.gov



Councilmember District I
Dwayne Lowman
952-270-2377
dlowman@BloomingtonMN.gov



Councilmember District II
Shawn Nelson
952-479-0471
snelson@BloomingtonMN.gov



Councilmember District III
Jack Baloga
952-944-5194
jbaloga@BloomingtonMN.gov



Councilmember District IV
Patrick Martin
952-454-6657
pmartin@BloomingtonMN.gov

Elected officials presented for informational purposes.

COUNCILMEMBERS

council@BloomingtonMN.gov

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Jamie Verbrugge, <i>City Manager</i>	952-563-8780
citymanager@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Kris Wilson, <i>Assistant City Manager</i>	952-563-8780
citymanager@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Karla Henderson, <i>Community Development</i>	952-563-8947
communitydevelopment@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Diann Kirby, <i>Community Services</i>	952-563-8717
communityservices@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Lori Economy-Scholler, <i>Finance</i>	952-563-8791
finance@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Ulie Seal, <i>Fire</i>	952-563-4801
fire@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Amy Cheney, <i>Information Technology</i>	952-563-4885
it@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Melissa Manderschied, <i>Legal</i>	952-563-8753
legal@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Ann Kattreh, <i>Parks and Recreation</i>	952-563-8877
parksrec@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Mike Hartley, <i>Police</i>	952-563-8601
police@BloomingtonMN.gov	
Karl Keel, <i>Public Works</i>	952-563-8731
publicworks@BloomingtonMN.gov	
General phone number	952-563-8700

The City of Bloomington complies with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs, and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. For more information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; 952-563-8733.

Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.



LET’S TALK BLOOMINGTON: ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The City of Bloomington is currently seeking feedback on several projects with its online engagement tool, Let’s Talk Bloomington at blm.mn/letstalk. Register to join in the conversation. Staff is looking for community members’ feedback and questions on the following projects:

CURBSIDE ORGANICS RECYCLING

The City is planning to make curbside organics recycling available to residents in 2022. Learn more about organics recycling, stay up to date on project milestones, ask questions and take a survey on the project page at blm.mn/letstalk.

PRIDE MONTH IN BLOOMINGTON

In recognition of the 50th anniversary of Twin Cities Pride, the Community Outreach and Engagement Division, in partnership with the Human Rights Commission, Artistry, Twin Cities Pride, Hennepin County Library and community members, is in the early stages of planning for the 2022 Pride events. Take the survey to help select a theme at blm.mn/letstalk.

RACIAL EQUITY STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The racial equity strategic planning committee will develop a shared vision and identify collaborative policy and operational strategies to achieve the City’s racial equity goals. Share about your experience, help generate ideas, define problems and identify solutions by contributing to idea boards at blm.mn/letstalk.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Visit Let’s Talk Bloomington to read more about several other projects that have closed surveys and comment sections. Recent projects include the sustainable bulky item disposal plan, time-of-sale energy disclosure, large building energy benchmarking, American Boulevard West traffic study and Lyndale Avenue retrofit.

JOIN A CITY COMMISSION OR BOARD

Participate in your local government by serving on a City board or commission. The City is seeking applicants to serve on the Planning Commission and youth (ages 16 to 23) to serve on the Human Rights Commission; the Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission; and Sustainability Commission. The deadline to apply is Sunday, May 9, 4 p.m. Visit blm.mn/boards for more information or to apply. Questions? Contact the Community Outreach and Engagement Division at 952-563-8733 or outreach@BloomingtonMN.gov.

PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN FRAMEWORK UNDERWAY

The Park System Master Plan is a road map for planning and completing park improvements. City staff and consultants worked with the City Council and the Parks Arts and Recreation Commission to study how to plan for Bloomington’s parks, natural resources, amenities, and programs.

A recent study looked at park and recreation trends, community demographics, facility needs, programming needs, and park maintenance. Everything was viewed through the strategic lenses of sustainability and equity. Throughout the process, staff gathered community input. From this we learned:

- Bloomington parks were designed and built in a similar fashion, which is outdated by today’s standards.
- Many existing parks and recreation amenities no longer match resident demographics and recreation needs.

- New facilities are needed to better engage current residents and attract new residents.
- Work is underway on a plan for making new investments in our parks using service areas largely defined by Council Districts. Four districts create a geographic balance of park amenities and an equitable park system.
- In a benchmarking study, results identified metrics that can compare Bloomington parks against similar cities with recognized park systems. The goal is to evaluate differences in efficiency, facilities, operations, budget and capital investment.
- Findings will be included in the final plan. Data from the findings will guide recommendations when the Council adopts and begins implementing the PSMP.
- For more information, visit blm.mn/letstalk and click on the PSMP topic or call 952-563-8877.

RANKED CHOICE VOTING TAKES EFFECT IN THE 2021 ELECTION

Last November, Bloomington voters approved an amendment to the City Charter that adopts ranked choice voting as the method for electing the Mayor and City Councilmembers. The City is now working to implement this change in time for the November 2021 municipal election.

This fall, all Bloomington voters will see one of the councilmember at-large seats on their ballot this November, and voters in Council District 3 and Council District 4 will also see their district councilmember on the ballot. The other councilmember at-large seat plus the Council District 1 and 2 seats and the mayor’s office are next up for election in November of 2023.

The City’s existing election equipment, including ballot counters, are compatible with ranked choice voting and will not have to be replaced.

Opportunities to practice casting a ballot using ranked choice voting will be provided later this year. Visit blm.mn/rcv to learn more.

WHAT IS RANKED CHOICE VOTING?

Sometimes referred to as “instant runoff voting” or “preferential voting,” ranked choice voting is a process that allows voters to rank their choices for each office.

First-choice votes are counted. If no candidate has a majority of the votes (more than 50%), the candidate with the least number of first-choice votes is eliminated. Voters who picked the eliminated candidate as their first choice have their second choice vote counted instead. This process repeats until one candidate has a majority.



CITY WELCOMES NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The Community Development Department has its next director. In March, Karla Henderson joined the City with a background in planning, infrastructure maintenance, community engagement and economic development. Her experience spans the private, nonprofit and local government sectors.

Over nearly two decades, she worked for Michigan cities, advancing into roles with progressively more responsibility. Her public service includes work for Highland Park and Ann Arbor, MI and for Detroit as the head of planning and facilities, working directly with Mayor Dave Bing. Her strong leadership abilities enabled her to advance quickly. Henderson is poised to enhance economic development and neighborhood vitality in Bloomington.

“I am humbled and honored to be Bloomington’s next community development director and to join a team of extraordinary public servants,” Henderson said. “There is much work to be done as we transition out of this pandemic and I am eager to serve the Bloomington community.”

Henderson plans to focus on expanding homeownership and affordable housing, and supporting the entrepreneurship and small business community in Bloomington.

CITY PARTNERS ON BUSINESS SURVEY

The City hired The Morris Leatherman Company (MLC) to conduct a randomized survey of Bloomington businesses with the goal of using feedback to address issues that are important to the local business community. The City worked with MLC to determine the focus of the questions. MLC wrote the questions and will call about 400 businesses to conduct the survey. Through addressing issues that are important to local businesses, the City aims to keep businesses in Bloomington and attract new businesses.

If you receive a call from MLC, please take the time to let the City know your thoughts. The survey is expected to take place in the months of May and June. For more information visit blm.mn/letstalk or call 952-563-4706.



YARD WASTE SERVICES

Yard waste collection season is in full swing. New this year, there is a maximum of 20 bags or bundles of yard waste that can be set out each week in addition to your cart. If you have more than 20 bags, save the extra bags for the following week. Residents receive a yard waste cart and can request one extra cart for a one-time fee of \$37.32.

What's accepted? Garden waste, grass clippings, leaves, weeds, soft garden materials, shrub and tree waste, and prunings. Twigs and branches must be three feet or less in length and three inches or less in diameter. Bags or bundles cannot be heavier than 40 pounds.

What's not accepted? Dirt, sod, rocks and wood chips.

To sign up for yard waste, contact Utility Billing at utilitybilling@bloomingtonmn.gov or 952-563-8726. The service costs \$84.78 per season. Residents can pay per bag for on-call service by purchasing yard waste stickers for \$4.26 each. Call the Finance Department at 952-563-8757 and the stickers will be mailed out. Limit of 20 on-call bags per week. For more information, visit blm.mn/yardwaste.

CURBSIDE ORGANICS

The City has begun considering how to offer curbside organics recycling to comply with Hennepin County Ordinance 13. The ordinance requires cities with more than 10,000 residents to make curbside organics recycling available in 2022.

The City recognizes that there is also a lot of community interest in making this service available. Interest in the organics drop-offs program has continued to grow. Over 1,650 residents signed up to divert their organics from garbage. Watch for more information regarding plans for curbside organics recycling in the Briefing in coming months. To learn more and provide feedback, visit blm.mn/letstalk and click the curbside organics project page.



EARTH ACTION HERO: JOHN JAIMEZ

John Jaimez knows how important organics recycling and other sustainability issues are for the health of the community. The 20-year Bloomington resident was part of the group that helped launch the Bloomington Sustainability Commission. A desire to help the City develop its sustainability efforts and improve its environmental and carbon footprints led to his volunteer work. Jaimez served four years on the commission and helped get the organics recycling program going. The work he did to help establish organics recycling in Bloomington is his proudest achievement with the commission.

“After the initial kick-off period that involved many residents who volunteered to oversee the sites and educate users of the sites, things quickly went on autopilot,” Jaimez said. “Now we have more than 1,500 households that regularly use these sites all year long to recycle their organics.”

Jaimez encourages others with similar interests to get involved with the Sustainability Commission. Help is needed with public education and outreach, and commissioner roles open from time to time.

“There’s a lot of opportunity for people to get involved,” he said.

Environmental issues are at the core of work Jaimez does for the Hennepin County Environment and Energy Department as an organics and recycling specialist. A large-scale project he’s working on will improve and expand the infrastructure available to recycle organics. The goal is to develop a new anaerobic digestion facility to convert food waste into clean, renewable energy and still produce a high-quality compost or fertilizer product.

REMOVING ASH TREES WITH EMERALD ASH BORER

Maybe you noticed cut trees around rights of way, park property or private property? Ash trees are being removed to control the spread of Emerald Ash Borer.

The City started preemptive removal five years ago. The plan is to eliminate more public ash trees over the next 15 years. “We always replant one for one. If the particular situation allows, we go in and plant ahead of time, but sometimes we don’t have room and have to remove trees first to create space,” Assistant Maintenance Superintendent Dave Hanson said.

Bloomington Parks Maintenance staff replant from 20 disease-resistant species of trees. Over time, the newly planted trees will replenish the canopy, and the diversity of trees will provide better protection from future insect invasions.

After City staff tree inspectors identify an infested tree, it is marked and must be removed. If it is on private property, the tree is tagged, and an information sheet is left for the property owner. Infested trees must be removed within 30 days, and the property owner is responsible for the cost.

Routine treatments can protect ash trees from Emerald Ash Borer, but they must start when a tree is healthy enough to be saved.

“While treatments can prevent infestation, the property owner has to decide if the cost is worth it. There’s no one approach for everybody,” Hanson said.

For more information, visit blm.mn/eab or call 952-563-8760.

ECOSYSTEM ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS PLANNED FOR SUMMER

The City is taking measures to create more resilient and enduring natural areas through ecosystem enhancement. This summer, two projects will launch to improve water quality and other ecosystem services in areas prone to water quality issues. The work will take place on a portion of a road median at 98th Street West and Nesbitt Avenue, and on a strip of City-owned land at Bogan Pond by West Bush Lake Road. Buckthorn, turf grass and other nonnative plants will be removed and replaced with native ecosystem types such as meadowlands. The projects will take three years to complete, but the bulk of the work will occur this year.

The goal is to make plant communities resilient enough to thrive on their own with little or no maintenance in the future.

“We live in an urban ecosystem and in the long run, natural landscapes should save money and provide more ecosystem services to residents,” Water Resources Specialist Jack Distel said.

Ecosystem enhancement can go beyond City-owned land. The choices that residents and businesses make for the upkeep of private lands contribute to the overall quality of the environment and its ecosystem services. Examples of ecosystem services can be found throughout the city. Trees provide shade. Flowers support pollinating insects. Neighborhood parks provide respite and serenity. Raingardens filter water. For more information, contact Water Resources Specialist Jack Distel at 952-563-8748 or jdistel@BloomingtonMN.gov.





CELEBRATING PRIDE MONTH IN JUNE

The City of Bloomington will recognize Pride Month in June with a proclamation from the City Council. Pride flags will fly at Civic Plaza and City Public Works facilities for two weeks during the month of June.

City staff is also beginning to plan for 2022 Pride celebrations. Next year marks the 50th anniversary of Twin Cities Pride. The City is partnering with Hennepin County Library and Artistry to plan an art exhibit in the Inez Greenberg Gallery. Visit blm.mn/letstalk to vote on the exhibit theme.

Those with a personal story to tell about their relationship to the LGBTQIA+ community can share their stories on blm.mn/letstalk. After you submit a story, you'll be able to see it on the message board along with other submitted stories.

"The goal of asking people to share their stories is to show that there is a range of experience here in Bloomington," Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator Amanda Crombie said. "It's about sharing the human story and building connections."

COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Bloomington has an abundance of parks and recreational areas and with the weather improving more people will be enjoying them. When you go outside for a walk, hike, bike ride or other activity, be aware of the latest COVID-19 guidelines for safe outdoor recreation.

- Stay six feet or more away from people outside of your household.
- Bring a mask with you to put on when you encounter people who may get closer than six feet.
- Limit your time around others.
- Visit parks and other outdoor areas at less busy times if you can. Exercise caution when using shared playground equipment, picnic tables, benches and other public amenities. Wash hands often or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Stay at home if you feel sick.
- Get tested if you are experiencing symptoms or think you have been exposed.
- Get your vaccine. See the mayor's memo about vaccines *on page 2*.
- Outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities when CDC guidelines are followed.

This guidance applies whether you have been vaccinated yet or not. As of the printing of this article, public health experts continue to learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions. It's important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic.

For additional outdoor safety tips, visit blm.mn/outsafe or call the Minnesota Helpline at 651-297-1304.



PEDESTRIAN SAFETY TIPS

With weather warming up, more pedestrians will be out on local sidewalks and roadways. Please keep these safety tips in mind.

WHEN WALKING:

- Always walk on the sidewalk; if there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic.
- Look across all lanes for moving vehicles before proceeding.
- When possible cross in a well-lit area at night.
- Stand clear of buses, hedges, parked cars or other obstacles before crossing.
- Obey pedestrian and traffic-control signals at all intersections that have them.
- Do not enter a crosswalk if a vehicle is approaching and it is impossible for the driver to stop. Use common sense.

WHEN DRIVING:

- Drivers must stop for crossing pedestrians at marked crosswalks and at all intersections without crosswalks or stop lights.
- Scan the road and sides of the road ahead for pedestrians.
- Before making a turn or backing up, look in all directions for pedestrians.
- Obey speed limits and traffic signals, and avoid distracted or aggressive driving.
- Never pass or drive around a vehicle that is stopped for pedestrians.
- Vehicles stopped for pedestrians can proceed once the pedestrian has completely crossed the lane in front of the stopped vehicle.

For additional pedestrian safety tips, visit blm.mn/walksafe or call 952-563-4900.



Ruth M. (Little) Larson, US Navy Nurse Corps, 1949 – 1951.

SUBMIT VETERAN PHOTOS

The City is beginning to collect photos and stories for the 2021 veterans' photo wall that debuts in November. Submit your photos and stories online at blm.mn/vet-photos. When submitting a photo, include your name, military branch and years of service.

Share your story on the photo submission form or by email. Questions? Contact Community Outreach and Engagement at 952-563-8733, MN Relay 711 or at outreach@BloomingtonMN.gov. There is no deadline for submissions.

ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS TO CITY SERVICES

Did you know that anyone with a qualified disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can request accommodations to make it easier to access City services, programs and events by filling out a form online? The City of Bloomington is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is equitable and inclusive for people with disabilities. Find the request form at blm.mn/adareq.

The City does not discriminate against a qualified person with a disability or exclude or deny the benefits of its services, programs, or activities to a qualified person because of a disability. The City will provide a reasonable accommodation or modify its policies and programs to allow people with disabilities to participate in all City services, programs, or activities.

However, the law does not require the City to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the City.

To read the City's full reasonable accommodation policy, visit blm.mn/adapolicy.



RECOGNIZING AND REMEMBERING POLICE

This year, National Police Week and Peace Officers Memorial Day will be recognized May 9 – 15 and May 15, respectively. The first National Police Week and Peace Officers Memorial Day were suggested by President Kennedy in 1962. It was resolved by Congress that May 15 be designated Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which it falls be designated as Police Week. The service and sacrifice of all officers killed in the line of duty is honored annually during the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund Candlelight Vigil. The candlelight vigil will take place virtually on May 13. Register for the vigil at blm.mn/vigil. A proclamation recognizing both events will be read at the May 3 City Council meeting.

Also at the May 3 meeting, a proclamation will be read on behalf of the Bloomington Optimist Club. The proclamation, recognizing Respect For Law Week, is meant to increase public awareness of the importance of law enforcement officers and to show appreciation for the role they play in the community.



BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEBUT DATA DASHBOARD

An informed community is a safer community. In the interest of transparency, the Bloomington Police Department created a new police dashboard. The dashboard provides access to public data including calls for service, accident and crash reports, citations and warnings, and arrests. Data is updated each week. Take a look at the data dashboard at blm.mn/bpd-data.

In addition to the data dashboard, BPD maintains a digital crime map. To learn how to use all the features of the online crime map, check out BPD’s webinar at blm.mn/crimemap-webinar.



NOTABLE NEIGHBORS: MARY AND MARK SCHWARTZ

The first thing you’ll notice about Mary Schwartz is the smile in her eyes, but if you look closely, you might even see a little dance in her step. The Bloomington resident has an optimistic spirit that comes through when she volunteers with the City’s Medical Reserve Corps. Mary and her spouse, Mark, help with COVID-19 vaccination clinics at Civic Plaza.

For Mary that sometimes means a happy dance with clinic patrons. “They’re happy to get their vaccinations so we do a little happy dance,” she said. “Obviously, we’re six feet apart and aren’t doing any high fives.”

The volunteer role of a greeter and usher is a natural fit for Mary. In February, she and Mark joined the City’s Medical Reserve Corps. They signed up online with no expectations about hearing back. It was a pleasant surprise when they got a call back and were asked to volunteer.

“We wanted to be part of the streamlined effort in the community,” Mary said. “The sooner we can get people vaccinated, the sooner we can get back to life again.”

COVID-19’s influence has touched the Schwartz’s household. Their son is in medical school and had to quarantine twice. Their daughter is taking part in a vaccine clinical trial. Concerns about the pandemic sparked Mary and Mark to volunteer.

“It’s not just me being a good person,” Mary said. “I have a lot of positive influence around me and have wonderful people around me—wonderful role models.”

No doubt, all that positive thinking is contagious. As a community volunteer and ambassador of goodwill, Mary’s a great role model, too.

PRESCRIBED BURNS TAKING PLACE

Each year the Park Maintenance, Bloomington Fire Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conduct prescribed burns together to restore Bloomington’s native prairies, wetlands and park landscapes. City staff will be conducting prescribed burns through May 31.

Prescribed burns do a lot of good. They remove built-up thatch and weed seeds; invigorate new growth of native plants, trees and wildflowers; control invasive plants; minimize the spread of pest insects; improve habitats for endangered species; and protect communities from fires.

To minimize risk, prescribed burns are conducted only when the burn area is dry, wind velocities are moderate, humidity is between 35 – 80%, and air temperature is 32 – 65 degrees. The exact date and time and may not be known until the day of the burn because of these variables. Staff will post notifications on the City’s website and social media accounts.

To learn more about prescribed burns and see a list of potential 2021 burn sites, visit blm.mn/prescribed-burns.



HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CARJACKING

There have been very few carjackings in the city, but the Bloomington Police Department has some helpful tips to share with residents to have as they move about the metro area.

“Statistically, your chance of being a victim of a carjacking is very slim,” said Crime Prevention Coordinator Katie Zerull. “However, preventative actions can reduce the risk even more. You can also help prevent these types of crimes by calling 911 to report suspicious activity immediately.”

To reduce your chance of being a victim of carjacking:

- Always keep your doors locked and windows up.
- Do not leave your car running with keys in the ignition.
- When stopped in traffic, keep one car length between you and the car in front of you. This gives you room to maneuver and escape if necessary.

- Beware of individuals approaching your vehicle to ask for directions, hand out flyers, etc.
- Keep your purse, tablet, laptop and other valuables in the trunk or out of sight. Keep your phone on you.
- Stay vigilant in public garages, parking lots and ramps, gas stations, drive-up ATMs, stoplights and controlled intersections.

Questions? Contact Crime Prevention Coordinator Katie Zerull at 952-563-8808 or kzerull@bloomingtonmn.gov.



AT YOUR SERVICE: JASON RAABE

With nearly 100 acres of greens and tree-lined fairways to maintain, there’s always something to do at Dwan Golf Course. Assistant Maintenance Superintendent Jason Raabe keeps the links in good condition. Taking care of an 18-hole, par 68/70, golf course is a year-round task. Raabe has worked at Dwan Golf Course since 2004, progressively taking on roles with more responsibility.

“I like being outdoors and this job works out well for that,” Raabe said. “I love working with the machines and the people.” He knows some of the golfers, especially the regular ones. Sometimes, patrons stop by the maintenance shop and say how much they enjoy the course and how well it’s maintained. Dwan Golf Course, 3301 West 110th Street, is one of the city’s star attractions and amenities.

Raabe encourages golfers of all skill levels to come play the course. “If you haven’t played in a while, we changed the green speeds and pace of play. We’re trying to make the game more enjoyable here,” he said. Dwan Golf Course is known for its customer-friendly offerings, and Raabe’s dedicated work helps make that possible. It’s a welcoming place. Some patrons almost become family. “I was born and raised in Bloomington and have lived here my whole life. The longer I’m in Bloomington, the smaller it feels,” Raabe said. “You really get to know people. It’s a big city that can have a small-town feel, and Dwan is like that too. Each year it’s one of Minnesota’s busiest courses, yet I see familiar, friendly faces every day.”

TENNIS ANYONE? SIGN UP FOR CITY LEAGUES

In Bloomington, tennis is more than a game. It’s a community. Players are competitive on the court, but off the court they make friends for life. Tennis is suitable for players of most any age. Families get into the game. The ease of social distancing is an advantage during COVID-19. Courts are busy, but playing in a league ensures court time.

The City offers doubles leagues and a singles ladder—all with accommodating features. If you don’t have a tennis partner, Parks and Recreation staff will find one for you. If you don’t want to commit to a whole season, you can be a substitute player. Tennis has a proud history in Bloomington. In the 1970s, the city had more courts per capita than most communities. Pro stars inspired generations of players. Today, the game still has many devoted fans. “The sport just grabs you and people play forever,” Tennis Coordinator Marcia Bach said. “Being a Bloomington resident, I always had my hand in tennis.”



SUMMER TENNIS LEAGUES

- Singles ladder: Players can challenge each other and schedule their own matches. Each player ranks at a certain point on the list but can move up after winning a match.
 - Women’s Doubles League: Sign up for a 10-week season. Registration ends May 17.
 - Men’s Doubles, Mondays and Mixed Doubles, Tuesdays: Players can register for a 10-week season plus a two-week playoff. Registration ends May 17.
- For more information, visit blm.mn/leagues or call 952-563-8877.

MAKE WAVES WITH YOUR WORKOUT AT BFAC

Want to make a splash with your workout routine? Sign up for water aerobics at the Bloomington Family Aquatic Center, 201 East 90th Street. Come take part in a variety of in-water exercises designed for all fitness abilities. Enjoy a 50-minute, cardio and strength combination workout. Classes begin June 6, and participants must be 16 or older. The fee is \$40 for eight Sunday sessions, and registration is required. For more information, visit blm.mn/parksrec or call 952-563-8877.

LIFEGUARD OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Want a summer job that means fun in the sun and responsibility? Apply to be a lifeguard at the Bloomington Family Aquatic Center, 201 East 90th Street. Benefits include competitive pay and an enjoyable working environment. Seasonal lifeguard opportunities (June 5 – August 15) are available to people ages 16 and older, including retirees. Applicants must be able to pass the American Red Cross lifeguarding prerequisites. Lifeguards are asked to commit to a minimum of 20 hours per week, up to 40 hours. “It’s more than just a summer job, you’re there to potentially save a life,” Recreation Supervisor David Benson said. To apply, visit blm.mn/parkjobs or call 952-563-8877.



ATTEND SUMMER SKATE SCHOOL

Want to learn how to skate or improve your skating? This summer the Bloomington Ice Garden Skate School will offer group skating lessons for skaters of all levels. Lessons will take place on Wednesdays, June 9 – July 28, at Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 West 98th Street. Class times run between 4:30 p.m. – 7 p.m. Registration opens May 18 for Bloomington residents, and May 21 for nonresidents. For more information, visit blm.mn/big, call 952-563-8841, or email rgelecinskyj@BloomingtonMN.gov.

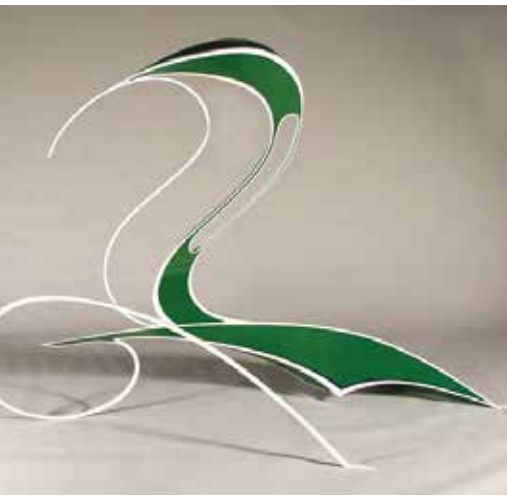


SWIMMING SAFELY AND SOCIALLY DISTANT AT BFAC

The Bloomington Family Aquatic Center may be subject to limited capacity in 2021. Due to COVID-19, the facility at 201 East 90th Street will implement appropriate physical distancing practices when open. At the time of printing, six feet of social distancing is required in the pool and on the pool deck. Safety practices are subject to change, and the latest guidelines will be followed. To learn more about the Aquatic Center or for other information, visit blm.mn/bfac or call 952-563-8877.



Artist Michael Schmidt.



Artist Luke Achterberg.

EXPERIENCE URBAN ABSTRACT EXHIBIT

Immerse your senses and experience the Urban Abstract exhibit. Artists Luke Achterberg and Michael Schmidt use distinctive surfaces and bold contrasts to create a vibrant feeling.

“I continually play with balance, both physical and aesthetic, creating a visual smoothness or sleekness, what I call ‘super sleek,’” Artist Luke Achterberg said.

Artistry, an independent nonprofit organization, presents the exhibit, May 21 – June 25, at the Bloomington Center for the Arts, Inez Greenberg Gallery, Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. A virtual Artist Talk will be held on Tuesday, June 15, 7 p.m. Dates for the Urban Abstract exhibit and Artist Talk are subject to change due to COVID-19. The Center for the Arts and the Inez Greenberg Gallery will use appropriate social distancing practices when open. Visit artistrymn.org or call 952-563-8575 for the most up-to-date information.



ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: CHRISTOPHER E. HARRISON

If you’ve visited the new nature play area in the Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge near the Old Cedar Avenue bridge trailhead, you are already familiar with artist Christopher E. Harrison’s work. The entrance gate installation is permanent public art, featuring representations of wildlife and plants from the region.

“I hope it has a sense of fun, interaction and identity,” Harrison said. “I try to put myself in the mindset of ‘what is the personality of where this art piece is going to be?’ To me that’s an important part of public art. It has to have the personality, the soul of the area it’s going to be in.”

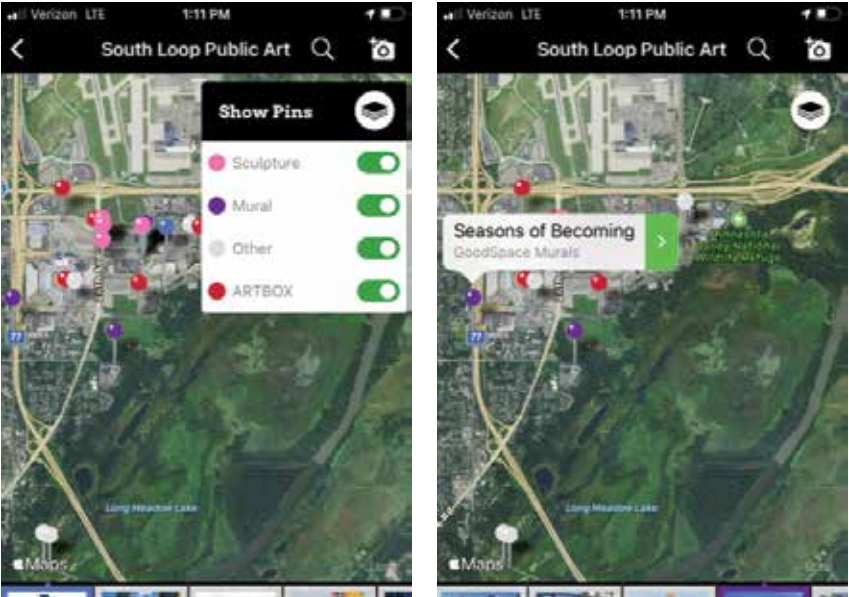
In the summer of 2020 when the uprisings happened in the Twin Cities following the killing of George Floyd, Harrison painted eight public murals around Minneapolis.

“That was my advocacy. I use the skills I have to push forward the discussion of civil rights and people being able to live the life they want to live without violence or struggle,” Harrison said. “It’s a way to release pain, aggression and fear and create a dialogue that people can absorb. Art really mirrors our time, our existence. It’s important to always have that element there so we can remind ourselves of our history.”

TOUR SOUTH LOOP ART WITH FREE APP

Experience public art in the South Loop with the brand-new South Loop public art audio guide, the Otocast app. The guide enables you to see, hear about and explore art in different ways. Use the location-based app to find and interact with 25 artistic points of interest in the South Loop. Detailed descriptions and audio clips, including artist interviews tell the stories behind the artwork you visit.

Don’t miss the option to add badges. You can collect badges for a South Loop package prize. There’s always something new to discover on the Otocast app. More art projects will be added by late summer. For more information visit blm.mn/otocast or call 952-563-8744.



Here’s a sample of public art in the South Loop that you can experience through the new Otocast app.

BLOOMINGTON YESTERDAY: MET CENTER SIGN

In the 1970s, the Metropolitan Sports Center played a significant role in the world of sports. During this golden era, the venue served as home to the Minnesota Kicks, North Stars, Buckskins and Fillies. In 1972, the facility hosted the National Hockey League All-Star Game. The Boys’ High School Hockey Tournament was an annual event from 1969 to 1975. Countless other sporting events and non-sporting attractions took place here. (Even Elvis performed concerts at the Met.)

In the photo above, a vintage sign proclaims that “The world begins again on May 8.” The date marked the beginning of the 1977 season for the Kicks. Buying preseason tickets was a good idea because the soccer team drew big crowds at that time. Over the years, attendance dwindled, and the Kicks’ last game was in 1981. The Met Center was razed 13 years later.

Today, the location serves as the IKEA store and parking lot, but you can still reminisce the gone-but-not-forgotten Met Center. The glory days of sports live on in Bloomington.

