



BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING



JUNE 2020

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Get outside and enjoy the sun and Bloomington’s parks and trails while practicing appropriate social distancing this summer. This shot looks to the west and shows the Minnesota River Valley and Reflections condominiums in South Loop. Photo courtesy of Steve Silverman.



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BUDGET DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE WITH NEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE

By Mayor Tim Busse

I’ve written and spoken about the multi-million-dollar budget shortfall we are facing in Bloomington as a result of COVID-19 and its impact on the local hospitality and retail industries.

In an effort to ensure budget discussions reflect community preferences, the City Council appointed a Community Budget Advisory Committee in May. The advisory committee is made up of nine members who have knowledge of municipal budgets and City government.

Through the coming months, the Community Budget Advisory Committee will engage community members and review the City’s budget and services to provide the Council with recommendations given our budget challenges.

By looking at the overall budget instead of reducing services one by one, the City Council and City staff are aiming to make sure service changes reflect what community members value most.

Earlier this spring, Council and City staff explored the idea of permanently closing Creekside Community Center located at 9801 Penn Avenue South and the Bloomington Motor Vehicle Office at 9930 Logan Avenue South to help with the budget shortage. The City Council gathered community feedback on the two operations via a survey that drew more than 3,000 responses.

In May, the City Council decided to keep Creekside closed temporarily to the public through the end of 2020, due to the health risks posed by COVID-19 for older adults. Food programs that operate out of Creekside, such as Loaves and Fishes, will be allowed access to the facility for food preparation and distribution. Closing Creekside to the public for the remainder of 2020 is estimated to save the City approximately \$390,000 this year.

The City Council also voted to reopen the Motor Vehicle Office in May following Governor Tim Walz’s Stay Safe MN order. The City implemented health and safety measures to keep visitors safe, such as running at 50% capacity with every other counter open. Other safety measures included offering longer transactions, such as getting a Real ID, as appointment-only. Learn more about the new Motor Vehicle operating procedures at blm.mn/motorvehicle or call 952-563-8719 before visiting the office.

The City continues to make changes to its services, operations and programming in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The temporary closure of Creekside and modified operations at Motor Vehicle are not permanent budget solutions. The Community Budget Advisory Committee will be taking a holistic look at both facilities when they review the City’s overall budget this summer.

HOW THINGS WORK: ENSURING FOOD SAFETY

Have you been concerned about food safety during the pandemic? Rest assured, food safety inspections are still being performed in Bloomington. The City’s six food inspectors work hard to ensure your food remains safe.

Inspectors check for foodborne illness best practices and new requirements for COVID-19 prevention. Since many restaurants have switched from dine-in to take-out, inspectors check for how restaurants are adjusting their food safety policies. For COVID-19, the important measures are how food workers are social distancing, wiping down surfaces and staying home if showing any symptoms.

On the job, inspectors wear masks, keep six feet away from other people and wash their hands throughout the inspection. All inspectors are committed to upholding the highest food-safety standards for the 700 food establishments in Bloomington and Richfield.

“The food system is not compromised by the virus. Currently, there are no reports of food or food packaging transmitting COVID-19,” Environmental Health Supervisor Jessica Jutz, *pictured above*, said.



PRIMARY ELECTION VOTING OPTIONS

The primary election will be held on Tuesday, August 11. Absentee voting begins Friday, June 26. The secretary of state is recommending voters request absentee ballots from Hennepin County to vote by mail at blm.mn/absentee. A postage-paid, addressed envelope will be included with your absentee ballot.

The State of Minnesota does not have a provision to cancel elections. The August 11 primary will go forward even with the COVID-19 pandemic. The City will employ CDC guidelines for polling place safety.

The general election will be held on Tuesday, November 3, with absentee voting beginning Friday, September 18.

CITY CEMETERY SERVICE REQUESTS

Did you know the City manages a cemetery at 10340 Lyndale Avenue South? The cemetery has been part of the Bloomington landscape since 1856 when it was started by the Oak Grove Presbyterian Church. A portion of the cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. To learn more, visit blm.mn/cemetery.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, services for the Bloomington Cemetery are available through prior appointment only. For more information about regulations and fees or to arrange an appointment, contact the Deputy City Clerk at 952-563-8729.

CITY SERVICES ACCESSIBLE ONLINE

COVID-19 has changed the way many residents do business these days. If you would like to access services provided by the City of Bloomington online, it’s easy to do so. Find a wide selection of services online, including building permit applications, home improvement loan applications, homestead applications, online utility bill pay, pending assessment, pothole repair reports and more. To see a complete list with links to resources, visit blm.mn/online. Call 952-563-8700, to be directed to other services.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell. Not everyone with COVID-19 has all of these symptoms.

Stay home while you are sick to prevent spreading COVID-19. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, stay home for at least 10 days. Before leaving home, go at least three days without signs of a fever.

Seek medical care immediately if your illness worsens or you have difficulty breathing. If possible, call before going to the doctor’s office or emergency room.

TESTING

The State of Minnesota’s online screening tool helps identify Minnesotans who should be tested for COVID-19. Visit blm.mn/covidtesting to determine if you should be tested.

TREATMENT

If you are caring for someone at home, monitor for emergency signs, treat symptoms, prevent the spread of germs and carefully consider when to end home treatment. If symptoms worsen and you need to see a doctor, call first. Some emergency warning signs include: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to wake up, and bluish lips or face.

There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, but getting plenty of rest, and drinking water and other liquids can help. Have the sick person isolate in a separate room. Wear face coverings, wash hands, clean surfaces and wash laundry thoroughly.

For more information visit mn.gov/COVID19 or call 800-657-3903.

HELP COMMUNITY PARTNERS

With its social distancing and economic shifts, COVID-19 has changed how our community partners provide social services in Bloomington. The need is greater than ever. Want to help? There are many volunteer opportunities across the city.

There are opportunities to donate food, dry goods, personal protective equipment, blood, money or your time at the following partner organizations: VEAP, Loaves and Fishes, Cornerstone, The American Red Cross, Hennepin County and Presbyterian Homes Bloomington Care Center.

For more information about how you can help, visit blm.mn/giveback. Or send suggestions of other organizations and their specific opportunities to website@bloomingtonmn.gov.

BRIEFING

Volume 28, Number 06

The *Briefing*, published monthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed to our 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
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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.



Residents take part in a chalk contest during National Night Out 2019.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT MOVED TO OCTOBER

Due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines, National Night Out will be rescheduled from August to the first Tuesday in October. Mark your calendar for October 6 to unite with your neighbors, catch up and talk about crime prevention. For more information and to register, visit blm.mn/NNO. With the changing situation COVID-19 presents, plans for National Night Out could change. Check the list of canceled events at blm.mn/COVID-info for the most up-to-date information.

BLOOMINGTON UNITED: POLICE ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Bloomington Police continue to reach out to the community and encourage engagement during the COVID-19 crisis. The Police Department's new Bloomington United campaign is a way to show how you and your neighbors are staying social while following social distancing guidelines. Treasure hunts, library houses repurposed as food shelves and car parades are some of the activities residents do to spread cheer and inspire others.

Do you have an example of community goodwill that you would like to share? To showcase great things happening in your neighborhood, upload photos at blm.mn/photos or post on Twitter @BPD_MN with the tag #BloomingtonUnited and #NeighborhoodWatchGroups.

WHY REPORTING CRIME IS IMPORTANT

Bloomington Police want to remind residents about the importance of reporting crimes. Consider it your neighborly duty to report crimes or other suspicious activity.

Often, criminals develop patterns of illegal activity and find areas they prefer to target. When you report a crime and all the facts about it, the information helps police to assign officers where crimes occur and could happen again. Your report will help keep your community safe.

According to the national Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2018:

- At least half of crimes went unreported.
- Only 43% of violent crimes were reported.
- Only 34% of property crimes were reported.

For more information, visit blm.mn/police.



AT HOME PROJECT: BUILDING A RAIN GARDEN

With social distancing the new norm, you may have more time for at-home projects. Why not do something to help protect Bloomington water? Create a simple rain garden to give water more space to soak into the ground and reduce impacts of storm water runoff. You can build a small rain garden with standard household tools and the following steps.

Step one: Choose a location. A downspout of sump pump outlet is a good water source.

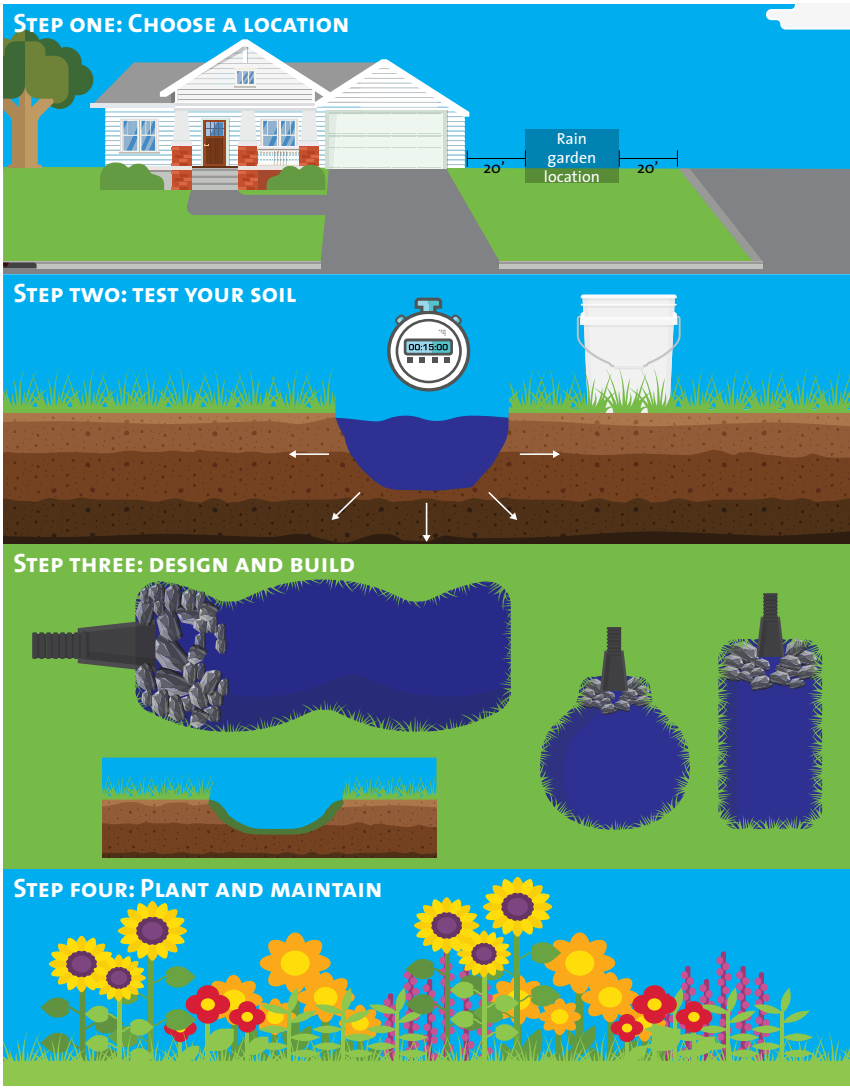
Step two: Test your soil. Dig a test hole and fill it with water. If the water does not soak in quickly, choose a new location.

Step three: Design and build your basin.

- Choose a simple shape and dig 3 – 6 inches deep.
- Make the bottom flat so water can spread out and seep into the ground.
- Stop erosion by slowing the water: add fist-sized rocks or pavers where the water enters the rain garden.

Step four: Plant and maintain. Use Minnesota native plants that like damp soil—flowering plants will attract butterflies and other pollinators. Top plantings and any bare soil with a layer of mulch.

Find out more information about how to build a rain garden at blm.mn/raingarden.



BIKE SAFETY TIPS

With warm weather and sunny days, more residents will be biking around Bloomington. Keep these safety tips in mind when you are out riding your bicycle.

- Wear a helmet.
- Follow the rules of the road.

Obey traffic signs, ride with the flow of traffic, and use proper hand signals.

- Discuss your bike route with others before leaving home.

- Keep at least six feet from other bikers and pedestrians to follow social distancing guidelines.

JOIN A COMMISSION

Looking for ways to serve your community? The City Council is looking for new members of the Planning Commission. Find more information and apply at blm.mn/commission. Applications are due June 10.



LIFT STATION PROJECT UNDERWAY

A new sanitary sewer lift station is under construction at West 82nd Street and American Boulevard West. Bloomington Lift Station L55 will pump wastewater from the local sanitary sewer system into a regional one. From there, a series of regional sewers takes the wastewater to Seneca Wastewater Treatment Plant in Eagan.

The project began last year and will be completed in the summer of 2021. Work to the sanitary sewer underneath the lift station is also underway.

Some adjacent properties may experience water interruptions but will be given advanced notice. Recently, some temporary road and lane closures around American Boulevard and West 82nd Street have made the project more noticeable.

To learn more or to sign up for email updates, visit blm.mn/liftst or call 952-698-8339.



Photo courtesy Andi Johnson.

COVID-19 SPARKS CREATIVITY

Even during a pandemic, creativity is just around the corner. These days, you’re likely to stumble upon art in the most unexpected places. From interactive sidewalk chalk drawings to painted rocks thanking frontline workers, artists of every style are responding to COVID-19 in creative ways. Unleashing creative energy can help pass the time and spread the joy of creative expression as you share your artwork for others to see.

“It’s using the arts to build hope, resilience and connections,” Director of Creative Placemaking Alejandra Pelinka said.



PUBLIC HEALTH ADAPTING DURING COVID-19

During the COVID-19 crisis, Bloomington Public Health continues to help clients and improve health throughout the community.

REACHING FAMILIES BY TEXT

Access to a home computer can be a barrier for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clients, but texting can be an alternative. More than 200 WIC clients have received texts about food, rental assistance and other critical resources.

DELIVERING FOOD AND HOPE

A family feared eviction and needed food after both parents lost their jobs. In response, a Public Health nurse delivered a meal pack and food gift card, and let the family know about the governor’s suspension of evictions.

STAYING CONNECTED IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Public Health reaches out to families in different ways. Technology provides ways to interact with clients. For a digital home visit, a nurse used a video call to read a children’s book with a mother and her child.



PARK RESPONSE TEAM HELPING KEEP PARKS SAFE

Bloomington has a large network of parks and trails that provide a much-needed respite during a time of social distancing and staying at home. In April, the Parks Response Team (PRT) was launched to help keep our outdoor spaces safe and accessible.

PRT members use a friendly and helpful approach to educate park users about the importance of using City parks responsibly. PRT is a resource to turn to if you see park activity that does not follow public health guidelines, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., daily.

To report concerns about activity in your neighborhood park, call 952-563-4773, email PRT@BloomingtonMN.gov, or complete the online form at blm.mn/park-form. For more information, visit blm.mn/prt.

PARKS AS IMPORTANT AS EVER

Parks offer a much-needed respite from a world combating the coronavirus pandemic. With residents spending even more time in parks than usual, planning for the future of Bloomington’s park system remains a top priority for the City. Work continues on Bloomington’s Park System Master Plan, and learning from the community about what is wanted and needed in the City’s parks, trails, facilities and amenities is as important as ever.

The online platform, project bloom!, has generated 5,887 visits and 496 comments from park users. Natural resources, environmental sustainability, equity, park and trail connections, and community gathering have emerged as some of the highest priorities for online respondents.

With the COVID-19 outbreak limiting in-person meeting opportunities, new and innovative approaches were needed to continue providing meaningful engagement opportunities. The project bloom! site has expanded and now features a new survey and idea board.

A similar survey will be featured in the July Briefing. It can be cut out, completed and mailed in or placed in drop boxes at parks throughout the City.

On June 11 and 13, virtual facilitated discussions will take place. The project website at blm.mn/parks-master-plan will include a link to join the video conferences and a phone

YOUR VOTES
5

Submit Votes

Fiscal Responsibility
Prioritize responsible spending and balanced budgets through self-sustaining park programs and infrastructure, and by developing creative public-private partnerships.

number to call if you require technical assistance. For more information, call 952-563-8877.

Staff will continue developing new ways for park users to provide input so everyone has the chance to help plan the future of Bloomington’s parks and outdoor spaces.

PARKS AND RECREATION DELAYS, CANCELLATIONS AND CLOSURES

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, changes have been made to Parks and Recreation programs, events and facilities. See what’s open, closed for the season, canceled or delayed.

OPEN

Most City outdoor spaces, including community gardens, canoe racks and Dwan Golf Course remain open. Bloomington parks offer residents places to stay active and connected to nature. To keep parks and other outdoor spaces open, accessible and safe, use them responsibly.

The Farmers Market will open as scheduled on June 13. While you’re there, pick up a Bloom-INGO card to play bingo during the Facebook live event that evening.

DELAYED

Arts in the Parks will be delayed until at least July 1. The Summer Fete July event is canceled. It may be rescheduled to September.

Adult sports, youth sports, and athletic field and picnic rentals are currently delayed as a result of the governor’s order.

CANCELED

Canceled programs include Adaptive Softball, Camp Kota, Dakota Language Camp, Mini View, River Rendezvous, Safety Boot Camp, Summer Adventure Playgrounds and The View.

CLOSED

The Bloomington Family Aquatic Center, Bush Lake Beach and Hyland Greens Golf and Learning Center are closed for the season. Bloomington Ice Garden is closed until further notice. Creekside Community Center will remain closed through 2020.

For more information, visit blm.mn/parkupdate or call 952-563-8877.