

BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING



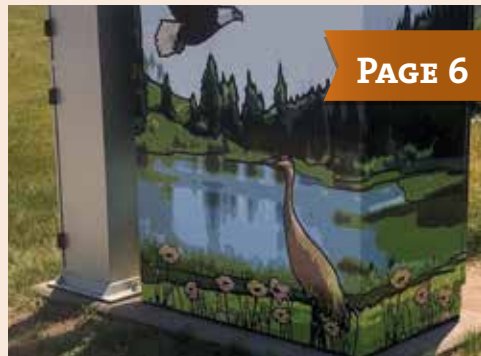
DECEMBER 2020

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OCTOBER SNOWFALL NEARLY SETS RECORD

If you grew up in Minnesota, the odds are good that you've heard of the Halloween blizzard of 1991. This year, the more-than-seven-inch October 20 snowstorm nearly broke that 1991 snowfall record in the Twin Cities. While it wasn't the biggest, it was the earliest big snowstorm in Minnesota record books, which go back more than 100 years. Pictured above is Bloomington Civic Plaza the day after the storm. Do you have any Bloomington winter pictures you want to share? Submit them at blm.mn/photo.

RESIDENTS GIVE CITY GOOD GRADES IN ANNUAL POLL

Residents feel positive about living in Bloomington, according to a recent survey. Ninety-two percent of residents who responded to the annual National Community Survey™ said Bloomington is an excellent or good place to live. The same number—92%—reported they would recommend living in Bloomington to someone who asks.

HIGH RATINGS FOR CITY SERVICES

A key question on the survey is how respondents perceive the value of City services for the taxes they pay. This year, 70% of those polled said the value of City services for taxes paid was excellent or good. This is a 7% increase from the 2019 and 2018 surveys. It is also higher than the national benchmark of jurisdictions in the National Community Survey™ database.

OTHER FINDINGS

- With a 91% approval rating, the City's drinking water ranked third among all jurisdictions polled nationwide.
- Overall customer service by Bloomington employees had a record high rating of 86% excellent or good.
- Ninety-six percent of respondents feel safe in their neighborhood and 92% feel safe in commercial areas during the day.
- Snow removal received excellent or good ratings from 82% of residents, up five percent from 2019 and higher than most jurisdictions in the nationwide database.
- Sixty-nine percent of residents reported they were in excellent or good health, the highest score since tracking began on this question in 2014.

This was the ninth year in a row that the National Community Survey™ was conducted in Bloomington. Polling for the scientific, random sample survey took place from July 31 to September 15. It was performed by the National Research Center of Boulder, Colorado.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information and complete survey results, visit the City's website at blm.mn/ncs.



Understanding Racial Trauma and Healing presentation led by Racial Equity Coordinator Faith Jackson in January 2020.

MAYOR’S MEMO

CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS NEW RACIAL EQUITY BUSINESS PLAN

By Mayor Tim Busse

This fall the City Council reached a milestone on our work on one of our strategic priorities—equity and inclusion. We unanimously adopted the City’s first-ever Racial Equity Business Plan. The business plan outlines the goals, strategies, resource needs, and performance and accountability measures that will guide the City’s internal racial equity work over the next several years.

The four overarching strategies of the plan are:

- To have a workforce at the City of Bloomington that reflects the diversity of the community.
- To foster a culture that values and advances racial equity.
- To commit to racial equity in the design of our services and programs.
- To commit to authentic and equitable community engagement.

Over the last several years, I do believe we’ve made progress on the City Council’s strategic priority of advancing equity and inclusion, but without question there is so much more work to be done. While we recognize that there is no single thing that can be done to resolve centuries of racial inequality, we are committed to learning from the past and being intentional about moving this work forward to create a better future for everyone.

Read the plan online at blm.mn/replan in English, Spanish or Somali. Thanks to Racial Equity Coordinator Faith Jackson who developed this plan in consultation with our executive staff team and my City Council colleagues.

Residents feel the City and the community are welcoming to people of different backgrounds. We asked questions about this in the recent National Community Survey™. Seventy-five percent of respondents said the City does an excellent or good job at making all residents feel welcome; 72% rated the City positively at valuing and respecting residents from diverse backgrounds. However, only 61% positively rated the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.

I think this reflects the concern people are feeling after a very difficult summer of civil unrest, protests, tension and demands for racial justice both locally and nationally. I have shared this concern and have been motivated to put renewed energy behind our equity and inclusion efforts.

We will amplify our efforts to create and support an inclusive culture that values and advances racial equity. We are committed to authentically engaging communities most affected by racial inequities and injustice in ways that foster shared learning, understanding and power. We will listen. We will learn. We will move this work forward.

VOTERS DECIDE ON RANKED CHOICE VOTING AND GARBAGE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION

Bloomington residents voted to keep City-organized collection in November. There will be no change in the way your garbage and recycling is collected. On the first ballot question, residents voted to amend the City Charter to give residents the chance to vote on changing to a City-organized waste-hauling system. On the second question, residents voted to allow the City to organize trash hauling, with more than 70% of voters in favor of keeping City-organized collection in place.

That outcome means the Charter will be amended and organized collection will continue in Bloomington. Residents should continue to set carts out as usual by 7 a.m. on their regular collection day. *See holiday collection information and a full 2021 collection calendar clip out on page 4.*

Fifty-one percent of voters approved ranked choice voting for future council and mayoral elections. The ranked choice voting system will be used beginning with the 2021 election. Learn more at blm.mn/ballotfaq.

ZONING CHANGES ENCOURAGE HOME DEVELOPMENT

Bloomington has a long history of advancing housing options for people of all incomes. In 1974, the City substantially reduced residential minimum zoning standards for lot size, lot width, floor area, and front and side setbacks. The changes lowered the cost of development and increased housing affordability.

Bloomington continues to look for ways to promote housing affordability. In 2019, the City adopted the Opportunity Housing Ordinance, which provides significant zoning incentives for owners who include affordable housing in their developments.

Today, as a built-out city, Bloomington experiences much more multifamily redevelopment than single-family

construction. The Opportunity Housing approach allows for considerable flexibility on zoning standards in exchange for providing affordable housing.

Several multifamily projects have taken advantage of Bloomington’s innovative approach over the last year. Nearly 1,500 units have been completed or are under construction in 2020, including 298 new affordable units. Another 846 units have received zoning approvals and are anticipated in the near future. Of those, 272 will be affordable.

For more information on the opportunity housing ordinance, visit blm.mn/housing or call 952-563-8937.

BRIEFING

Volume 28, Number 12

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 W. 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
612-701-0321
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	
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	
Jeffrey Potts, <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 W. 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.



COUNCIL CONSIDERS BUDGET OPTIONS PRESENTED BY COMMUNITY BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This month, the City Council will vote on the 2021 property tax levy. This levy funds 69.4% of the City’s General Fund budget. The remainder of the General Fund budget is supported by lodging and admission taxes, license and permit fees, grants and program revenues. The preliminary levy, which was approved in September, reflects a 5% increase over the 2020 levy. The final levy can be less than the approved preliminary levy amount, but not more.

PROPOSED BUDGET SOLUTIONS

To ensure budget discussions reflected community preferences, the City Council appointed nine residents with knowledge of municipal budgets to the Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) in May. CBAC presented three budget proposals to the City Council in November that include varying levels and types of service reductions. To read the details of each potential budget scenario, visit [blm.mn/cbac](#). The three options CBAC presented can be summarized as:

- Scenario A: 5% levy increase, a cost increase of \$3.40 per month for owners of median-valued homes, \$4.35 for renters of average-cost apartments.
- Scenario B: 3% levy increase, a cost increase of of \$1.51 per month for owners of median-valued homes, \$3.14 for renters of average-cost apartments.
- Scenario C: 0% levy increase, a cost savings of \$1.33 per month for owners of median-valued homes, a cost increase of \$1.34 for renters of average-cost apartments.

CONTROLLING COSTS

The City has already taken action to respond to an ongoing loss of revenue due to the pandemic, while still providing core public services. The City expects to balance the 2021 budget by controlling personnel costs with a wage freeze and reducing staff positions; drawing down fund reserves where available; carefully analyzing City services for possible reductions; and analyzing lower interest rates to borrow for projects instead of paying for them in cash.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

CBAC studied the City’s budget and services, and hosted many community engagement initiatives to provide the City Council with recommendations for balancing the budget. This year, CBAC held several rounds of listening sessions to hear from residents. The most recent round took place in October. Attendees gave feedback on the three potential budget scenarios. They voiced support for funding public safety services, parks and recreation, cultural arts and more. To read all the feedback received during the October events, visit [blm.mn/cbac](#).

LEARN MORE

The City Council will hold a virtual public budget hearing on Monday, December 7, at 7 p.m., via WebEx video conference. Residents will be able to call in and participate. For instructions, visit [blm.mn/cc-1207](#). For detailed information, including staff presentations, summaries of community input and minutes of CBAC meetings, visit [blm.mn/cbac](#).



FLU SHOT REMINDER

Have you gotten your flu shot? If you missed it during the fall, get your flu vaccine now. It’s not too late to get vaccinated, even during the winter. Flu season can last late into the spring. A flu shot protects you and your family for the remainder of the season. Remember, you need a flu shot each year. Without a flu shot, you are more at risk to become sick from the flu. For more information, visit [blm.mn/flu](#) or call 952-563-8900.

THE FLU AND COVID-19

This year keeping in good health is especially important. The flu and COVID-19 share many similarities, although there are distinct differences. While the flu and COVID-19 are both respiratory illnesses, they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 can be much more severe, and can cause a change in or loss of taste or smell. A test could be the only way to tell.

For more information, visit [blm.mn/fluorc19](#) or call 800-232-4636.

COVID-19 IN BLOOMINGTON

Do you want to know more about COVID-19 in Bloomington? Check out the online dashboard at [blm.mn/cdash](#). It includes statistics like:

- Total number of cases.
- Number of deaths and cases hospitalized.
- Demographics of cases.
- Likely source of exposure.

This data is reflective of testing priorities and capacity in Minnesota since January 20, 2020. It does not reflect the total number of cases in Bloomington, as many people have not been tested. Current testing capacity is sufficient for all symptomatic individuals to be tested.

All data is preliminary and subject to change, as cases are interviewed and information is updated.

To protect individual’s privacy, data is suppressed if there are less than 10 individuals in that reporting category. Data is updated by 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, with information from the previous day.

CITY HIRES NEW HRA ADMINISTRATOR

Aarica Coleman has been appointed as Bloomington’s next housing and redevelopment authority administrator. Coleman emerged from a strong pool of candidates as the person best suited to take on this important opportunity in a moment of great community and organizational need.

Coleman comes to Bloomington from the city of Minneapolis, where she served as a senior project coordinator in community planning and economic development, working to manage home buyer programs, coordinating community engagement, serving as a liaison for public-private development initiatives and managing federally funded programs and city-owned rental property. She also served Hennepin County as a property manager specialist in the tax forfeited land unit.

Before her time in government, she served in the private sector as a compliance technician and manager for Sand Companies.

“The HRA has an important dual function in Bloomington, serving the present-day needs for housing by individuals and the future revitalization of the entire community through redevelopment,” City Manager Jamie Verbrugge said. “Aarica will bring a unique blend of professional experiences and tremendous leadership and people skills to continue moving the HRA forward.”

Coleman is a licensed real estate broker, and a certified Housing Development Finance Professional through the National Development Council. She has served on the Commercial Land Trust Initiative Advisory Board, Minneapolis Area Realtors Board of Directors, and the National Association of Real Estate Brokers.

“I am excited to join the HRA team,” Coleman said. “I look forward to working with the community and our stakeholders for equitable outcomes, where impact matches our intent.”





RECYCLE YOUR TREE

Want to have your natural Christmas tree picked up as yard waste? Trees will be collected during the weeks of January 4 – 8 and 11 – 15. A fee of \$10.66 per tree will appear on your following month’s utility bill.

To prepare your tree for pickup, remove all decorations, wires and stands. Set out before 7 a.m. on your collection day but no earlier than the day before pickup. Keep snow or ice off the tree. No plastic, compostable or other bags should be included.

For collection outside these two weeks, call Utility Billing at 952-563-8726 and schedule a bulky item pickup for a fee. Visit blm.mn/ garbage for information.



EXTRA RECYCLING AROUND THE HOLIDAYS

During the busy holiday season, extra recycling accumulates. Wondering what to do with the surplus? First, fill your cart with recyclable materials. If any recyclable materials are left over, place them in paper bags and put the filled bags next to your recycling cart. Cardboard should be flattened and stacked into a pile no larger than three-feet wide and one-foot tall. Bundle the stacked cardboard with string or twine and place next to your cart. For more information, visit blm.mn/recycling.

2021 RECYCLING CALENDAR

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- RECYCLE WEEK
- HOLIDAY; PICKUP IS DELAYED BY ONE DAY
- HOLIDAY TREES PICKED UP FOR A REDUCED FEE

YARD WASTE SEASON*:
MONDAY OF THE SECOND FULL WEEK IN
APRIL - FRIDAY OF THE LAST FULL WEEK
IN NOVEMBER, WEATHER PERMITTING
APRIL 12 - NOVEMBER 27
*SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE, EXTRA CHARGES APPLY

HOLIDAY RECYCLING TIPS

Did you know from Thanksgiving to New Year’s Day, holiday waste increases by more than 25%? Ensure you’re putting your holiday discards in the right place. Here’s what you can and cannot put in your recycling cart.

Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gift boxes: Break down to recycle or save intact to use again next year.• Cartons: From eggnog, wine, broth and milk.• Cards, junk mail and newspapers.• Tins: Decorative, cookie and pie, or save for reuse.• Aluminum foil and trays (mostly clean): Ball up the foil to be three inches in diameter or larger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ribbons.• Wrapping paper: New this year, wrapping paper is no longer accepted, with or without glitter or reflective or reflective decorations. Consider reusable alternatives such as cloth or gift bags.• Plastic bags• Holiday lights: Bring to the Hennepin County Drop-Off Facility, 1400 West 96th Street, for recycling.

Want to recycle your food waste? Take your food, prep scraps, leftovers and paper towels to an organics drop-off location listed at blm.mn/organics.
For more information about how to properly dispose of items, visit blm.mn/recycling or call 952-563-8760.

2020 HOLIDAY GARBAGE AND RECYCLING SCHEDULE

With so much to do around the holidays, it’s easy to forget about garbage pickup days. Take note of the holiday garbage and recycling collection schedule. This year Christmas Day and New Year’s Day fall on a Friday. The schedule will change with Friday collections occurring on Saturday. For more information, visit blm.mn/garbage.

December						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

- RECYCLE WEEK
 - HOLIDAY*
- * No pickup; pickup one day later.

AT YOUR SERVICE: STEVE GURNEY

You can tell when someone really likes their job. Enter Steve Gurney, a water resources expert with the City.

“I really love what I do,” he said. “I love serving the residents of Bloomington.”

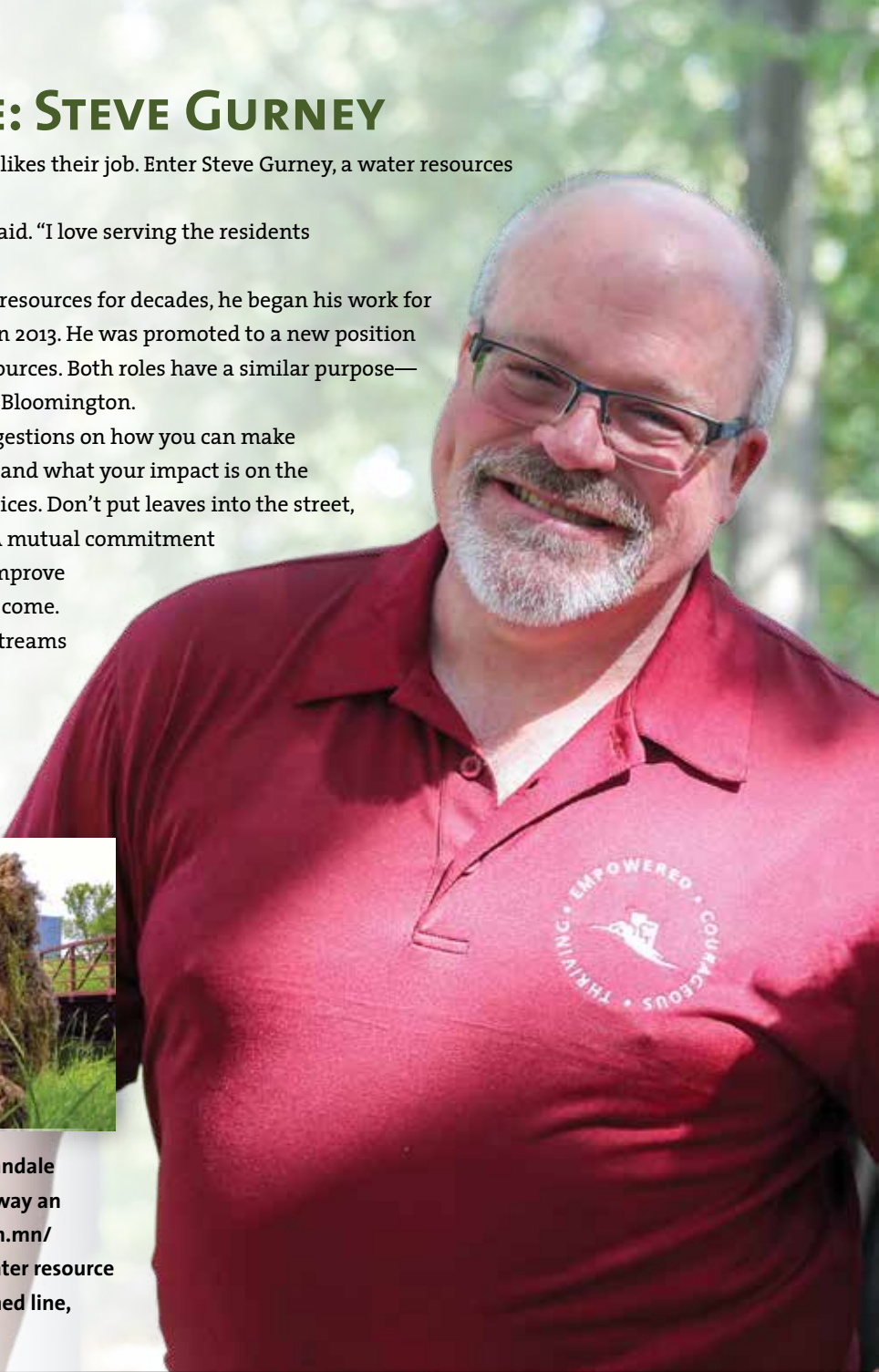
While Gurney has worked in water resources for decades, he began his work for the City as a water resources specialist in 2013. He was promoted to a new position last year as a civil engineer in water resources. Both roles have a similar purpose—to protect and improve surface water in Bloomington.

Everyone can help. Gurney has suggestions on how you can make a difference with water quality. Understand what your impact is on the environment and aim to make good choices. Don’t put leaves into the street, and don’t dump paint down the drain. A mutual commitment from the community and the City can improve surface water quality for generations to come. Bloomington’s scenic lakes, ponds and streams are worth the effort.

“One of the things Bloomington is blessed with is a lot of surface water,” Gurney said. “The City works to protect it and make it better.”



In a video about the restoration of Normandale Lake made in 2018, Steve Gurney scolds away an overgrown pond weed character. Visit blm.mn/pondweed to see how Gurney puts his water resource talents to the test as he proclaims his famed line, “Pack your bags, pondweed.”



HOW TO RECOGNIZE A SCAM AT YOUR HOME

Knowing what to look out for when it comes to scams is one of the best ways to protect yourself.

- If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is. A contractor offering a last-minute offer or forcing you to make a quick decision often indicates a scam or offer that is not in your best interest. Have a trusted individual review the offer before taking any action.
- Unsolicited or unexpected contact. Be very leery of people showing up to your home. Verify identification and authenticity before letting anyone into your home.
- If a person demands cash on the spot, do not pay them. Do not make up front payments. Ask them to return at a later time and then pay with a check or credit card. Do not pay in gift cards.
- Do not retrieve money or open a safe with an unknown person in your home. It’s likely they are canvassing your home to understand where you keep funds.
- Stay alert when contractors or solicitors show up to your home. Don’t let an individual take you to the backyard or another area where an accomplice could easily gain access into your unsecured home.
- If you see an unknown person at your neighbor’s home, or you’ve been a victim of a scam, call 911 to report it. Visit blm.mn/scams to learn more about common scams and how to protect yourself.



NOTABLE NEIGHBOR: AYAN ABUKAR

In June of this year, healthcare was top of mind for many people. Longtime Bloomington resident Ayan Abukar fulfilled one of her dreams by opening a new healthcare resource—Action Care Community Clinic (ACCC)—in the city she calls home.

“I used to own a child care business in Bloomington. Most of our customers were East African. They had a lot of different problems when it comes to navigating the stigma around healthcare. And most multilingual services were in Minneapolis at the time, so I saw a need to be filled here in Bloomington,” ACCC Executive Director Abukar said.

ACCC’s mission is to provide quality healthcare to all patients, including those who have no insurance, don’t understand the system, don’t speak English and people with low income. They also provide health education and dental services.

It’s always been important to Abukar to give back. She says this stems from her childhood spent in the midst of a civil war and then in refugee camps.

“In the refugee camps the only resources we really had were each other,” she said. “We grew up helping each other in order to survive.”

Abukar also serves as director of Action for East African People.



HOW THINGS WORK: INSPECTING UNDERGROUND STORMWATER STORAGE

Important work is happening at Penn American and some is below ground. In the fall, staff from the Engineering Division inspected the underground stormwater storage system for the area. Most routine inspections of underground storm sewer systems are done with closed-circuit television cameras. In this case, a physical inspection was needed due to the large size of the structure. Entering confined spaces such as this requires planning and a number of safety precautions to protect the workers in these dangerous locations.

Underground systems are designed to trap sediments, but sediment levels cannot be observed and tracked from the surface. Inspections confirm if structures are functioning as designed and verify the system’s structural integrity.

The Penn American stormwater project won the American Public Works Association – Minnesota Chapter project of the year award in 2019. Water Resources Manager Bryan Gruidl has coordinated the project from concept to completion.

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

BUSH LAKE WELL TO BE SEALED

A City-owned well will be sealed at Bush Lake, 9140 E. Bush Lake Road. The well was originally drilled to provide water for Bush Lake. The well was last used in the 1990s when state rules changed to reduce pumping to protect aquifers.

The Department of Natural Resources requires that unused wells be sealed. Open well holes no longer in use pose a threat due to the potential for groundwater contamination. The project is partially funded by a grant from the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment.

The City will continue its groundwater protection efforts by sealing similar wells throughout the city.

For more information, call 952-563-8760 or email publicworks@BloomingtonMN.gov.

CITY CLOSES FACILITIES DUE TO COVID-19

The City of Bloomington continues to monitor the situation surrounding the pandemic in order to protect the health and safety of the community.

As a result, the City closed Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 W. 98th St., and Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road on November 20.

Bloomington is following the guidance of the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) on implementing community measures to help slow the spread of COVID-19, including the recent order from Governor Walz to put a pause on adult and youth sports.

Indoor programming will not be offered and all rentals and reservations will be canceled.

Many City services are available online or by appointment. To see a list and learn more, visit blm.mn/online.

To see the most up-to-date information about cancellations and closures, visit blm.mn/covid-info.

The City will reevaluate reopening facilities on an ongoing basis and with guidance from MDH.



ENTER ARTBOX CONTEST

Ready to get creative? Bloomington's Creative Placemaking Commission, in partnership with Artistry, is seeking designs to transform utility boxes in the South Loop into creative objects of art. Designs should celebrate Bloomington while enhancing the district's character and vitality. The contest is open to anyone 18 or older, working in any medium—paint, photography, etc. Submit one design for consideration. A \$1,000 stipend will be provided to selected applicants. Bloomington residents will be given priority. Proposals are due by December 15. For guidelines and an application, call 952-563-8744 or visit blm.mn/placemaking.

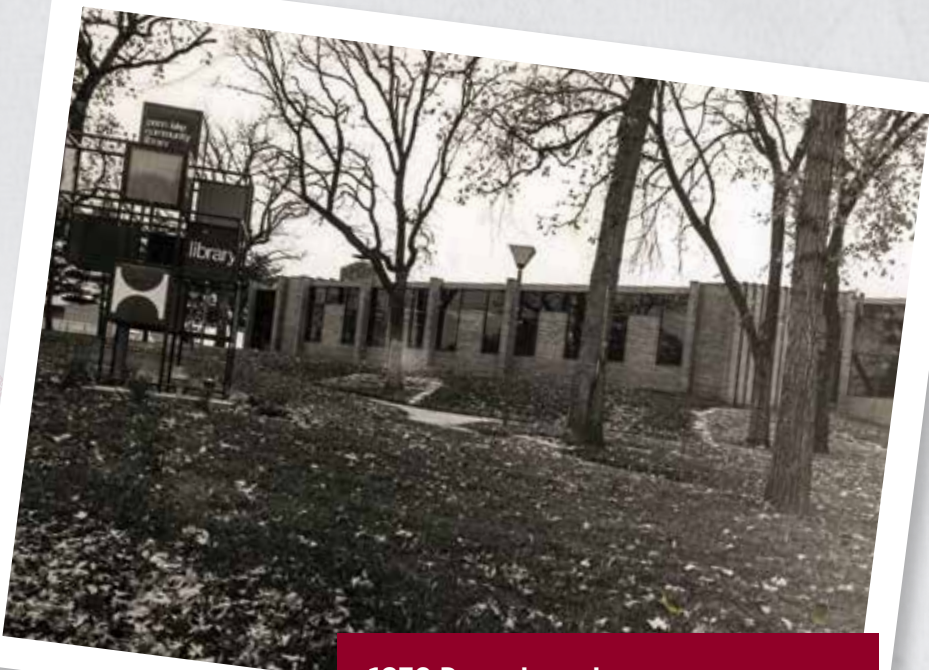
BLOOMINGTON YESTERDAY TURNING A PAGE OF HISTORY

Even a quiet neighborhood library deserves to make a little noise about turning 50. The Penn Lake Library is a Bloomington landmark at 8800 Penn Ave. S. Since the 1970s, generations of residents have gathered here to find books and attend community events. (Current CDC guidelines for COVID may change library practices.)

The Bloomington Library Study Committee suggested the Penn Lake name, and in May 1968, it was adopted by the City Council. In March 1969, Mayor John Thomasberg, library commission members and other local dignitaries broke ground for the site. The library opened 10 months later.

Amenities fit the times. Remember when libraries had card catalogs, community phone books, phonograph records and motion picture projectors.

The Penn Lake Library operates as part of the Hennepin County Library System. For more information visit hclib.org or call 612-543-5800.



1970 PENN LAKE LIBRARY OPENING

- 82,000 Lot square footage with 14,700-square-foot library space.
- 30,000 Books in the original collection with room for 20,000 more.
- 5 Librarians and four clerks in the original staff, plus several part-time shelvers.
- 4 Study rooms.
- 1 Community room.

RECENT COLLEGE GRAD HELPS STUDENTS

Ansley Schwerr is putting her gap year to good use by helping others. In May, she graduated from Normandale Community College (NCC) and high school at the same time. Hamline University was the next step, but COVID-19 changed everything.

With her characteristic resilience and positive outlook, Schwerr adjusted her plans. In August, she returned to the NCC campus to work as the Student Resource Center coordinator, a one-year opportunity provided through AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). Schwerr connects students to the resources they need for affordable housing, food and financial assistance.

“It’s the best way to be giving back to the community that helped me,” she said.

This year student needs are expected to increase more than ever. “COVID-19 exacerbated housing and food insecurities,” Schwerr said. In addition to the Student Resource Center, NCC has other programs in place to help. The Campus Cupboard served more than 1,100 students and distributed 19,000 food items during the last academic year.

Want to help? The Campus Cupboard is funded by campus and community donors. Consider a monetary donation, or drop off non-perishable food items or hygiene products to the front desk of College Services, Room 1180, 9700 France Avenue South. For more information, visit blm.mn/cupboard or call 952-358-8119.



OMAR BONDERUD HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD WINNERS NAMED

This year, there are two Omar Bonderud Human Rights Award winners—Darringer Funches, right, and Karam Law, bottom right. In a tradition going back to the 1970s, the Human Rights Commission honors individuals and organizations making significant contributions to ensure the human rights of people in Bloomington.

Students at Valley View Middle School look up to Darringer Funches. As the Dean’s Office paraprofessional, his unconditional empathy and advocacy help youth thrive. Among peer school staff, Funches promotes anti-racism change.

“After the incident involving George Floyd, I wanted to do more personally and initiated conversations with the superintendent and assistant superintendent of Bloomington Public Schools,” Funches said. “As a result of that incident, many are looking to bring about change. As an African-American male, father, and role model, I feel that I have to make sure I’m doing my due diligence for my son, my daughters and others within my community.”

Karam Law assists immigrant families seeking reunification, advises employers securing work visas for their diverse workforce, and advocates for immigrants needing humanitarian protection.

“With over 145 years of collective experience, our staff speaks six languages, and uses those skills not only in the day-to-day business of law, but also in volunteer capacities as mentors, tutors, law professors, on foundations, and other pro bono work,” Managing Attorney Leslie Karam said.

For more information, visit blm.mn/bonderud or call 952-563-8733.





Joe Rath, third from left, with his Bush Lake Beach coworkers in 2019.

JOE RATH WINS PARKS AND RECREATION AWARD

Joe Rath is the winner of the 2020 Parks and Recreation Award of Excellence. The longtime Bloomington resident volunteers at Bush Lake Beach, in a tradition of community service that he began in 1975.

“It’s an honor to receive such a wonderful award for my years of service to the incredible Bush Lake Beach and Park Reserve,” Rath said. “It means a lot to me to be recognized for doing what I enjoy, giving back to my community.”

From beach cleanup to swimming and boating safety instruction and more, Rath has contributed his time and talents to create a better Bloomington. He even used his own money to purchase and install “No Swim Zone” streamers and flag systems to help ensure swimmer safety and help improve water quality.

“The contributions Joe Rath made over the years at Bush Lake Beach are extensive. Parks and Recreation and the community owe Rath sincere thanks, and this award is one way to convey our gratitude,” Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission (PARC) chairperson Lenny Klevan Schmitz said.

The annual Bloomington Parks and Recreation Award of Excellence is given by PARC to recognize community service that benefits parks and recreation programs and facilities. For more information, email parkrec@bloomingtonmn.gov or call 952-563-8877.

TEMPORARY BOARDWALK TRAIL ADDED AT HYLAND PARK RESERVE

Bloomington has a new boardwalk on the northwest side of Hyland Lake Park Reserve. Three Rivers Park District constructed the boardwalk above the paved trail along East Bush Lake Road to provide users access over water-prone areas. In recent years, rainfall increased the water level of Goose Nest Pond and caused flooding along East Bush Lake Road near Bush Lake Beach.

A recent study looked into flooding issues at Hyland Park Reserve. Goose Nest Pond was of particular concern. The study’s findings will help guide future flooding measures. The boardwalk is considered temporary and Three Rivers Park District must develop a plan for a permanent solution for use of the park trail during high water conditions by June 2022.

The paved trail by Goose Nest Pond connects to City trails by the entrance of Bush Lake Beach, 9140 E. Bush Lake Road. For more information, visit blm.mn/gnptrail or call 763-559-9000.

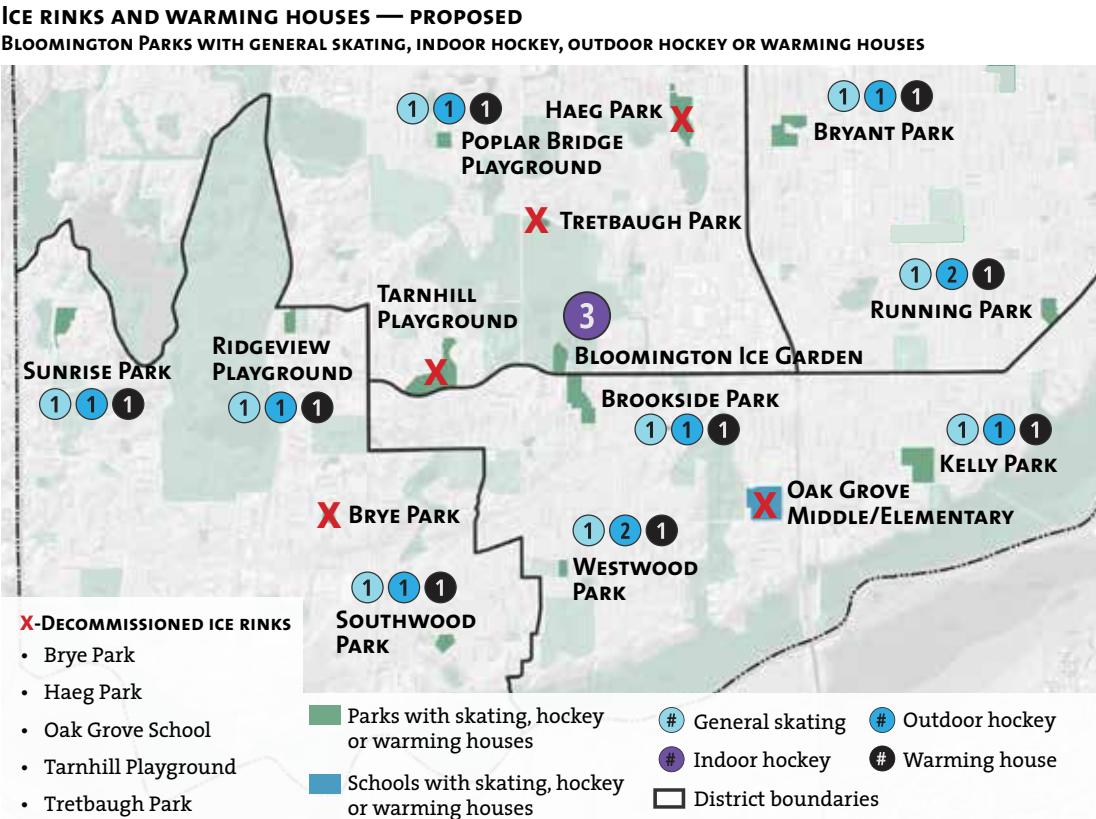
PARKS PLANNING FOR OUTDOOR RINK CHANGES

The comprehensive Park System Master Plan review and planning process has included research, comparative analysis and thoughtful attention to feedback from staff, policy makers and residents. After months of general information gathering, specific key concepts and recommendations are now ready for public input via a new platform—Let’s Talk Bloomington.

While the City continues seeking input on a broad range of park-related matters, one change is already slated for implementation. This winter the number of outdoor skating rinks will be reduced from 14 to nine.

The City has been studying the role of outdoor ice rinks and how to best provide this experience in the future. Climate change and shifting recreational trends have created challenges for outdoor skating. Balancing input from the Park System Master Plan process with the need to improve fiscal efficiency in light of the City’s budget challenges, staff recommended skating rink reduction to the Community Budget Advisory Committee and advised that it be implemented this winter. The nine remaining skating locations were chosen based on rink use, quality of facilities and Park System Master Plan Capital Improvement concepts designed to provide an equitable geographic balance of park amenities.

To view and comment on winter skating sites, visit blm.mn/letstalk and select the Park System Master Plan topic.



PICKLEBALL COURTS NAMING AT WESTWOOD PARK

The pickleball courts at Westwood Park, 3490 W. 109th Street, have a new name. Jim Klaseus Pickleball Courts honor the work Jim Klaseus, pictured above right, has done to popularize the sport. The longtime Bloomington resident, teacher and coach is considered by many to be the founder of pickleball in Minnesota. Through his many years of teaching and training, Klaseus built a following for the sport. Bloomington was one of the first communities to have dedicated pickleball courts. Today, the game enjoys widespread popularity.

Pickleball is played on a court with a wooden paddle and a ball. The game shares many similarities to tennis, badminton and pingpong.

For more information, call 952-563-8877.

BOOK A PARK SHELTER

Does winter have you thinking about summer and more outside events? Maybe you want to book a park shelter? Bloomington shelters will soon be available to rent for picnics, receptions, reunions and meetings as Minnesota Department of Health guidelines allow. Registration begins January 4, for shelter use April 15 – October 15. Shelters have electricity, grills, restrooms and drinking fountains. City parks offer nearby playgrounds, volleyball and horseshoe courts, trails and softball fields.

- East Bush Lake Park, 9140 E. Bush Lake Road, Shelter 3: Accommodates 200.
- West Bush Lake Park, 94th Street at West Bush Lake Road, Shelter 1: Accommodates 200. Shelter 2: Accommodates 100.
- Moir Park, 104th Street at Morgan Avenue, Shelter 1: Accommodates 200+. Shelter 2: Accommodates 60.

Maximum capacity of shelters is subject to change to comply with the latest guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health.

Call 952-563-8877 or visit blm.mn/rentals for more information. Smaller shelters at other City parks may be available to reserve upon request.

SNOW EMERGENCY SURVIVAL GUIDE



Snowfalls define Minnesota winters, but the City is prepared. Bloomington residents get through winter road conditions safely with snowplowing services at a cost of \$4.05 per month for an owner of a median-valued home. Well before dawn, snowplow operators are on the streets, preparing them for morning traffic after or during a snowfall. They plow the most heavily used roads first and then move on to other roads and cul-de-sacs. The City prides itself on its snow removal services. In the 2020 National Citizen Survey, 82 percent of respondents rated the City’s snow removal services as excellent or good, which is higher than the national average.

WHAT’S A SNOW EMERGENCY?

A snow emergency is a declaration the City can make any time weather conditions warrant it. During a snow emergency, no parking is allowed on city streets for the following 48 hours or until the full width of the street has been plowed.

KEEP INFORMED

When a snow emergency is declared, the City posts alerts on its website, social media pages, cable channel and E-Subscribe. To receive an email alert whenever the City declares a snow emergency and updates about parking restrictions, sign up for E-Subscribe alerts at blm.mn/esub.



TREATMENTS FOR SAFE STREETS AND WATER BODIES

The City treats roads with an anti-icing brine solution to make it tougher for snow and ice to stick. The brine is a mixture of water and salt. After it is sprayed on the streets, the solution evaporates and leaves behind thin deposits of salt. The salt prevents the bonding of snow and ice so plows can more easily scrape the street clean. The brine reduces the amount of salt required to clear streets. This treatment protects the surrounding bodies of water from salt runoff in the spring.

PLAY IT SAFE

From sledding to snowballs, there’s no shortage of fun kids can have in the snow. Help your children play it safe. Never allow children to build tunnels or snow forts near the street. The force and weight of the snow from the plows can collapse tunnels or forts and may severely harm kids. Keep sleds and other toys out of the street and far away from the edge of the road. Snowbanks make it difficult for plow operators to see children in these areas.

WAIT TO CLEAR YOUR DRIVEWAY

Wait to clear the end of your driveway until after the full width of your street has been plowed so you only have to shovel once. While clearing streets, snowplows may inadvertently push snow from the road into driveways that have already been shoveled.

PLACE CARTS FOR WINTER

This winter, think about where you put your garbage and recycling carts. If the weather gets snowy or icy, shovel out a safe, accessible space and path for your carts—just for when haulers collect so they can access your cart. Be sure to place your carts a minimum of three to five feet from other carts, mailboxes, vehicles, bushes, trees and other objects. Keep carts off sidewalks and out of the street. Visit blm.mn/recycling for more information.



KEEP SIDEWALKS CLEAR

Keeping your sidewalk clear of snow and ice makes walking around Bloomington safer for pedestrians. The City asks that residents and business owners keep their sidewalks free of all snow whether fallen snow or snow that may be moved onto the sidewalk during street or driveway snow removal efforts. It’s illegal for any vehicle to block a public sidewalk.

SHOVEL OUT FIRE HYDRANTS, MAILBOXES AND GARBAGE BINS

Help protect your neighborhood from house fires. Accessible hydrants lessen the time it takes firefighters to extinguish a fire. Keep your mailbox clear of snow. Mailboxes should not extend past the curb and should have sturdy four-by-four timber posts. The bottoms of mailboxes should be no less than 45 inches off the ground and located on the left side of your driveway. If it snows on or near garbage collection day, keep garbage and recycling bins away from the end of the driveway and behind the curb. Place containers off sidewalks to leave room for plows.



MOVE YOUR CAR OFF THE STREET WHEN IT SNOWS

Parked cars make plowing more challenging and result in lingering patches of snow. You can help the City plow more quickly and efficiently. Move your car off the street to avoid having to dig it out of a snowbank or getting a ticket when it snows. To ensure that all streets are fully cleared, Bloomington Police enforce a parking ban during snow emergencies. To see if a snow emergency has been declared, visit the City’s website or call the Snow Emergency Hotline at 952-563-8768.



WATCH FOR SNOWPLOWS

Did you know a snowplow weighs 17 times more than a car? In a crash with a plow, car passengers are more likely to be seriously injured. Keep these tips in mind to share the road safely:

- Yield to snowplows and stay alert.
- Give snowplow drivers plenty of space. Allow at least five car lengths between you and a snowplow.
- Never drive into a snow cloud created by a snowplow.
- Do not use cruise control on wet, icy roads.
- Keep garbage cans in your driveway, not on the road.

If damage to turf or a mailbox occurs due to snow removal operations, call Street Maintenance at 952-563-8760.