

B L O O M I N G T O N BRIEFING



FEBRUARY 2022

PAGE 3

PAGE 6

PAGE 7

PAGE 8



SOUTH LOOP SONGBIRD COMES IN FOR A LANDING

Inspired by the more than 250 migratory birds that pass through the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, a 30-foot-tall South Loop songbird sculpture by Donald Lipski was installed at the southeast corner of the intersection of Killebrew Drive and Old Shakopee Road in December.

“This sculpture creates a distinctive sense of place and identity that reflects the South Loop while providing an opportunity to surprise and delight those who visit, work and live in the area,” Creative Placemaking Director Alejandra Pelinka said.

During the research and planning of this project, community members were invited to vote on which local songbird should be represented in the sculpture. The American Goldfinch, pictured above, was the clear winner.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS, COUNCIL AND CITY STAFF DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

A core planning team of 30 residents and City employees who volunteered to work on the City’s upcoming strategic plan, *Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.*, met with City Councilmembers from December 2 – 4 to get started on the draft.

The team’s work resulted in a set of core values, mission, strategic objectives and strategies that will guide the organization over the next five years.

The mission is “To cultivate an enduring and remarkable community where people want to be.” It describes Bloomington as unique, special and distinct—a noteworthy community with a rich history that stands on its own merits and attracts people because of these attributes.

The following core values underpin the City’s mission and strategic plan:

- We believe that the community thrives when its members share responsibility for its well-being.
- We believe that transformation will come through collective courage and the willingness to take risks.
- We believe that when diversity is embraced, the community is strengthened.
- We believe that everyone benefits when there is equitable access to opportunity.
- We believe that safety and security are critical components of a resilient and healthy community.

The plan focuses on three strategies. They are:

- Diversity and connection.
- Environmental and human resources within the community.
- Economic and financial security for community members.

The City has convened teams around measurement and action planning to develop plans around these strategies. The action team will construct a plan of action for putting the strategic plan into motion. The measurement team will develop tools to monitor and measure progress on the strategic plan. Both teams started meeting in early January, and will wrap up their work by March. It is anticipated that the city manager will present the final draft of the strategic plan to the City Council for adoption in April 2022.



FIND US ONLINE
BLOOMINGTON [MN.gov](https://www.bloomingtonmn.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

THE CITY CONTINUES TO MONITOR THE SITUATION WITH COVID-19 AS IT EVOLVES. CHECK [BLM.MN/COVID](https://blm.mn/covid) FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION FOR EVENTS PROMOTED IN THIS ISSUE.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING, FEBRUARY 2022



MAYOR’S MEMO

ENERGY DISCLOSURE ORDINANCES WILL HELP CITY REACH SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

By Mayor Tim Busse

The buildings in our community play a big role in the local greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change—the electricity and natural gas used to fuel our buildings are the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the city. Bloomington’s Energy Action Plan outlines a goal of reducing these emissions by 75% by 2035. Last fall, the City Council took significant steps to meet this goal when they adopted these two energy disclosure ordinances.

One of the ordinances adopted in September focuses on large building benchmarking. This ordinance requires public, commercial and multifamily buildings that are larger than 75,000 square feet to benchmark and disclose high-level energy metrics on an annual basis. The City will implement these requirements in phases based on building size and type. Public buildings were the first to require benchmarking, with an initial reporting date of December 30, 2021. Commercial and multifamily buildings more than 100,000 square feet will follow, with an initial reporting date of June 1, 2022.

“Benchmarking helps building owners track energy performance, control costs and identify options to improve efficiency,” said Steve Flagg, Bloomington sustainability commissioner and founder of the Bloomington-based Quality Bicycle Products, which will be a participant in the benchmarking program.

The second ordinance the City Council adopted will help potential homebuyers know important things about a home’s energy efficiency before buying. The time-of-sale energy disclosure ordinance leverages the City’s existing time-of-sale inspection to gather and disclose information about a home’s energy assets.

Beginning on April 1, 2022, inspectors will collect energy metrics about a home’s heating and cooling system, water heater, wall and attic insulation, and windows before it is listed for sale. The City will summarize those metrics in an energy disclosure report and require sellers to display that report at open houses. Bloomington is the second city in the state to require energy disclosure at the time of sale.

Sharing information about a home’s energy assets helps potential buyers understand the energy cost of ownership. Energy disclosures also provide the City a way to identify and connect residents with resources to address inefficient homes. Learn more about the City’s efforts around its Energy Action Plan at blm.mn/eap.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PROPERTY TAX STATEMENT

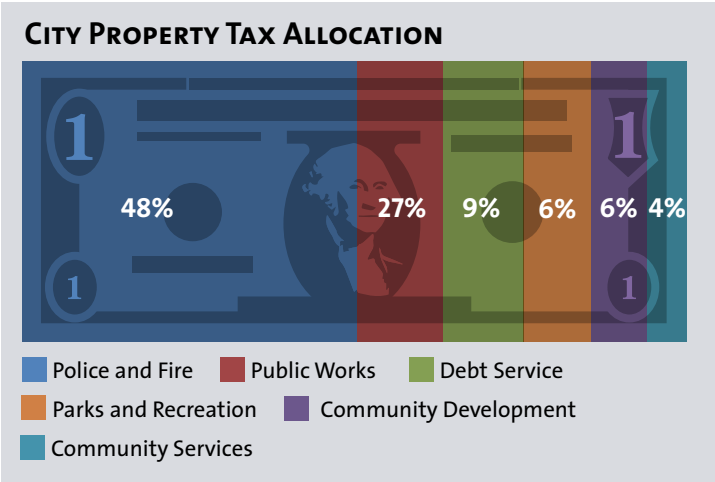
Hennepin County will mail out 2022 property tax statements in March. You’ll see the market valuation of your home on the statement. That value is determined by Bloomington’s Assessing Division, which is responsible for appraising 32,000 parcels each year and determining their annual estimated market value. This is the probable selling price if it was placed on the open market. The statement also shows the tax amounts that go to the county, the City and Bloomington Public Schools. The City’s 2022 tax levy was set at \$68.3 million, an increase of 2.75%. In the graph at right, you’ll see how that amount is allocated among police, fire, public works, community development, parks and recreation, community services and debt service.

Hennepin County’s tax levy increase is 3.5%, the City’s increase is 2.75%, and Bloomington Public Schools’ increase is 1.4%. However, many property owners will notice that their overall 2022 property tax has increased more than those percentages. This is because there has been an overall shift in the amount of taxes paid by residential properties as the strong demand in the housing market increased the values of many homes in Bloomington. At the same time, commercial properties saw a decline in value due to the pandemic, mainly in the lodging and retail sector.

Minnesota property tax calculations are very complex. In general, overall properties that have higher values pay a higher portion of the tax levy. The City’s total levy amount of \$68.3 million is allocated among properties based on their value and property type. The state offers property tax refunds based on income for both homeowners and renters. The state offers another property tax refund when a home’s value has increased substantially in one year. That state refund form is called M1PR and can be found on the Minnesota Department of Revenue’s website at blm.mn/mdr.

“Keeping a City running takes a lot of work and resources. The City Council doesn’t take the taxing decisions they make lightly,” Mayor Tim Busse said. “Each year, department budgets and services are carefully analyzed to ensure services are aligned with residents’ needs and City Council’s strategic priorities.”

Detailed information about the 2022 City budget can be found online at blm.mn/budget.



BRIEFING

Volume 30, Number 02

The *Briefing*, published monthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed to residents and businesses. Direct your 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
Lona Dallessandro
612-231-6824
ldallessandro@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	
Michael Sable, <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 does not discriminate against 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, activities, and employment. 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 make a request for a reasonable accommodation, ask for more information, or to file a complaint, contact the Community Outreach and Engagement Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; 952-563-8733, MN Relay 711.



Bloomington Fire Department 75th Anniversary

Fire Trucks Then and Now

Rescue is a fundamental function for fire departments. To perform in this role, firefighters use lots of equipment, including their iconic fire engines. It’s interesting to see how these trucks have advanced over the years.

THEN IN THE 1940s ...

In the photograph above left, the truck in the center is one of the first trucks BFD acquired. It was a 1946 Ford truck that had been retrofitted with a 250-gallons-per-minute pump and a 500-gallon water tank.

NOW IN THE 2020s ...

Pictured above right is the newest fire engine, Engine 1. It is a 2020 Custom Rosenbauer General with a 2,000-gallons-per-minute pump and a 750-gallon water tank.

Then and now, Bloomington’s fire engines have proven their worth to our firefighters as they put out all manner of structural, vehicular, brush, trash and other types of fires. As the fire threats changed and building structures became larger and taller, so did the specialization of the fire engines.

As BFD celebrates 75 years of service in 2022, look in the *Briefing* for monthly stories about the BFD.

EXTRA CHEERS FOR SECOND ANNUAL SANTA COP

Children could benefit from extra cheer year-round, but especially during the holidays. In December 2021, Bloomington Police Department delivered toys and gifts to more than 75 children in the community.

“It’s an amazing thing to see the community working together to make the lives of children a bit brighter,” Bloomington Police Department’s Crime Prevention Specialist Katie Zerull said.

This event was made possible due to generous donations from the community. The BPD received gifts, including Legos, dolls, games, and tech accessories from community members and businesses.

Children were nominated by police department staff, social workers, schools and organizations in Bloomington. Recipients included children who may have lost a parent, children under the guardianship of someone other than their parent or families experiencing financial hardship.

The gifts for each child or youth were hand-selected and wrapped in the police department before making that delivery—not in a sleigh, but a squad car—to their residence.

“To see the excitement and joy on a child’s face and to bring some love to the community—this is what holiday season is all about,” said Zerull.

The BPD was honored to organize this event and make this season a bit merrier. They are already looking forward to doing it again next year.



CURBSIDE ORGANICS RECYCLING DEBUTS NEXT MONTH

Starting the second week of March, residents will be able to recycle organics conveniently at the curb. To sign up to receive your organics cart, call Utility Billing at 952-563-8726, email utilitybilling@bloomingtonmn.gov or visit blm.mn/organics.

Residents who sign up for the service will receive a 30-gallon organics cart and a welcome packet with information and tips for collecting organics at home. Organics carts will be collected weekly on garbage day. Like regular recycling, curbside organics recycling service will be paid for by all residents in the City’s garbage and recycling program. The monthly rate for this service is \$5.50. Because one-third of

an average resident’s garbage is organic material that could be composted, residents participating in the organics program can save money by switching to a smaller garbage cart.

After organics are collected from the curb, they are taken to a facility where they are turned into compost, a nutrient-rich addition to soil.

What should you do with your organics in the meantime? Residents are encouraged to drop off organics at one of the City’s organics drop-off sites. The City will continue to operate the free organics drop-offs for residents in multifamily housing not serviced through the City’s garbage and recycling program. To start composting now, visit blm.mn/organics.

2022 PIONEERS AND CHANGEMAKERS

Bloomington pioneers and changemakers is a profile series featuring Black leaders who have a connection to Bloomington. February is Black History Month and a fitting time to recognize the impact the people featured here have made. Those who are featured in this series have worked to advance civil rights and remove barriers to equity in the fields of faith, education, law, housing, government and more. Each February, the City will honor some of the pioneers who have done so much to chart the path to where we are today and changemakers who are paving the way for future generations. To see who is being honored in the 2022 pioneers and changemakers series, visit blm.mn/changemakers.

Interviews with the 2022 honorees will be posted on the City’s Facebook page and website through the month of February. Bloomington City Council will recognize the 2021 and 2022 pioneers and changemakers at its February 29 meeting.

In 2021, the City recognized Dr. Josie Johnson, Dinna Wade-Ardley, Nur Mood, Jasmyn Green, Imam Mohamed Omar and Jerry W. Blackwell. Read more about them at blm.mn/changemakers or watch video features at blm.mn/pacvideos.

If you would like to nominate someone to be featured in the 2023 Bloomington pioneers and changemakers campaign, contact Racial Equity Coordinator Faith Jackson at fjackson@BloomingtonMN.gov or 952-563-8779.



A TIMELINE: Bloomington Fire History 1950s – 1960s

Throughout the year, the City will present a timeline of Bloomington Fire Department history. Here are highlights from 1954 – 1969.

1954 A new addition increased the size of Fire Station 1.

1958 The fire department went into a 24-hour dispatch system in conjunction with the police department.

1959 The fire department had 46 members. A garage was converted into Fire Station 2.

1961 Three major fires in one day—a house exploded from a natural gas leak, Lueger Boat Works had more than \$50,000 in damages, and GEM Furniture Store burned in a total loss.

1967 Purchased a complete sprinkler system from a soon-to-be destroyed building for training. New Fire Station 2 and 3 built.

1969 A training tower was built behind the addition of Fire Station 1.



HOME IMPROVEMENT FAIR CANCELED

After careful consideration of current trends of the COVID-19 pandemic, the planning committee for the Bloomington Home Improvement Fair has canceled the February 26 event. This popular biannual event will return on February 24, 2024.

For more information, please visit blm.mn/homefair or contact the Bloomington Housing and Redevelopment Authority at 952-563-8937 or hra@bloomingtonmn.gov.

2022 CURBSIDE CLEANUP

2022 CLEANUP SCHEDULE

- East of Portland
(Monday hauling district) April 2
- Penn to Portland
(Tuesday hauling district) April 9
- France to Penn
(Wednesday hauling district) April 16
- Normandale to France
(Thursday hauling district) April 23
- West of Normandale
(Friday hauling district) April 30

NEW PLAN FOR MANAGING BULKY ITEMS STARTS THIS YEAR

After months of digital community engagement, a survey and community listening sessions, the City Council approved a new plan for handling bulky waste items in a more sustainable way than the Curbside Cleanup program of the past. The purpose behind the new program and the added activities, listed below, is to reuse and recycle more, and landfill less. The new plan and activities begin this year, including changes to the spring Curbside Cleanup with limited items accepted.

Changes in the new program include:

- A Curbside Cleanup event that will take place every other year starting in 2022.
- Small items that can fit in a small garbage cart will no longer be accepted during the cleanup, read more on these items below.
- A new annual drop-off event for recyclable materials will be open to all Bloomington residents.
- Swap events for exchanging items such as sporting goods or gardening tools will be open to all Bloomington residents.
- The City is also exploring options to have a regular pickup of reusable bulky items for customers with City garbage and recycling.

New in 2022, small items like clothing, bedding, broken toys and garden hoses will not be accepted during Curbside Cleanup. Instead, you should dispose these items throughout the year in your regular garbage cart. Regular garbage is sent to the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center—a waste-to-energy facility in downtown Minneapolis. Garbage picked up during the Curbside Cleanup is taken to a landfill. By disposing of small items throughout the year in your regular garbage, you will reduce the amount of material that is sent to the landfill and the annual disposal costs associated with this program.

To learn more about the process for making the transition, visit blm.mn/bulky.

2022 CURBSIDE CLEANUP GUIDELINES

To prepare for your Curbside Cleanup day, set your materials at the curb before 7 a.m. Be ready—collection trucks pass by one time only. Large appliances and brush are collected for recycling in separate trucks and any remaining items are collected and disposed of in a landfill. Please consider only setting out items that cannot be reused or recycled. The Curbside Cleanup program is only available to residents in the City’s garbage and recycling program, and certain townhomes and apartments that have opted into, and pay for, Curbside Cleanup services.

PLANT A TREE AND BUILD THE URBAN CANOPY

You can help build Bloomington’s forest canopy by ordering a tree for your yard through the City’s annual Arbor Day tree sale. Bloomington residents can pre-purchase affordable bare-root trees to be delivered during the first week of May. Now in its 15th year, this program helps the City maintain its Tree City USA designation and has added more than 3,000 trees to Bloomington’s urban forest. Residents may purchase a maximum of five trees per household. To place a tree order, go to blm.mn/treesale, mail in the order form below or call 952-563-8760. Find more information on the trees and how to plant them at blm.mn/forestry.

ARBOR DAY TREE SALE ORDER FORM

Bloomington residents only. All trees are bare-root, one-and-a-quarter to one-and-a-half inches in diameter and cost \$50 each. *Trees are viable at the time of sale and no refunds will be issued.*

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Email (needed to arrange deliveries) _____

Fill in number of each tree type desired. First come, first served. Maximum five trees total per household, \$50 each. Check must accompany order.

_____ Autumn blaze maple	_____ Black Hills spruce	_____ Imperial honeylocust	_____ Japanese tree lilac	_____ River birch
_____ Serviceberry	_____ Snowdrift crab apple	_____ Prairie fire crab apple		

Total trees

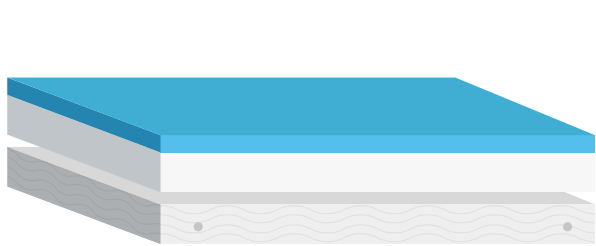
X \$50 ea. = \$

Total cost

Trees will be delivered to the address listed on the order form in the first week of May.

Send a check and this form to City of Bloomington, Park Maintenance,
1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027.





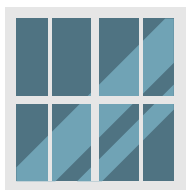
TWO MATTRESSES OR BOX SPRINGS



TWO PIECES OF FURNITURE



TWO APPLIANCES



FOUR OTHER BULKY ITEMS

FOLLOW QUANTITY LIMITS AND KNOW WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT ACCEPTED AT THE CURB

New in 2022, small items like clothing, bedding, broken toys and garden hoses will not be accepted during Curbside Cleanup. They should be disposed of throughout the year in your regular garbage cart. Regular garbage is sent to the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center in downtown Minneapolis, which is a waste-to-energy facility. Garbage picked up during the Curbside Cleanup is taken to a landfill.

See the item quantity and size limits listed above. Items surpassing specified limits will not be picked up and will remain on the curb; residents will need to arrange for bulk material disposal. Excess materials could increase your costs. By disposing of small items throughout the year in your regular garbage, you will reduce the amount of material sent to the landfill and the annual disposal costs associated with this program.

WHAT IS ACCEPTED AT THE CURB



- **Appliances:** Limit of two. Water heaters and softeners, microwaves, washers, dryers, stoves, air conditioners, dehumidifiers, freezers, dishwashers, trash compactors, garbage disposals, water coolers, refrigerators (remove door or tie securely shut). Do not set out until the morning of your pickup date.
- **Unusable furniture:** Limit of two items. Tie down or disassemble hide-a-way sofa beds so they cannot open when handled.
- **Mattresses or box springs:** Limit of two items.
- **Other bulky items:** Limit of four “other” items. This includes any other bulky item not listed in categories above that cannot fit in a small garbage cart, including:
 - Doors, windows, screens, cabinets.
 - Large metal items like bikes, grills, lawn mowers, snow blowers, swing sets, treadmills; drain all fluids and remove tires.
 - Carpet and pads: Roll and securely tie with twine. Keep under five feet in length and one foot in diameter.
 - Garden furniture and décor that cannot fit in a small garbage cart.
 - Home décor items like mirrors, lamps.
 - Children’s items like toys, sporting goods, car seats, strollers and furniture that **cannot fit in a small garbage cart**.
- **Household building materials:** Pile size is limited to what fits in one level, standard size pickup truck bed. Includes building materials such as flooring, drywall, sheetrock, siding and untreated lumber. Lumber must be stacked and no longer than five feet.
- **Bundled brush:** Branches must be smaller than three inches in diameter and three feet in length, tied with twine and put in bundles that should be light enough for one person to carry. Bundled brush piles must be no more than what can fit in a standard pickup truck bed.

WHAT IS NOT ACCEPTED AT THE CURB



- **Tires, batteries.**
- **Tubs, sinks and toilets.**
- **Extra heavy and bulky items:** Pianos or organs, etc.
- **Electronic items:** Cell phones, computers, stereos, printers and TVs.
- **Hazardous waste:** Fluorescent tubes, motor oil, paint, propane, solvents and other household chemicals. Take these items to the South Hennepin Recycling and Problem Waste Drop-Off Center, 1400 West 96th Street.
 - **Certain building items:** Contractor materials, bricks, concrete, railroad ties, shingles (asbestos) or treated wood.
 - **Organic materials:** Food waste, grass clippings, leaves, logs, sod and stumps.
 - **Loose cardboard:** Extra cardboard that can’t fit in your recycling cart can be bundled and placed next to your recycling cart for pick-up.
 - **Recyclable materials:** Boxboard, cans, newspapers and plastic bottles.
 - **NEW! Small items that can fit in a small garbage cart:** These items should be disposed of throughout the year in the regular garbage that is processed at a waste-to-energy facility instead of landfilled during curbside cleanup. This includes:
 - Clothing, textiles, linens, bedding and pillows.
 - Broken toys.
 - Books and other entertainment.
 - Other home and garden décor that can fit in a large garbage cart.
- **Small appliances like radios, clocks, coffee makers, and hair dryers.**
- **Small metal items.** Take smaller items to the South Hennepin Recycling and Problem Waste Drop-Off Center, 1400 West 96th Street.

FOR MORE CURBSIDE CLEANUP INFORMATION

For questions or other information about Curbside Cleanup, visit blm.mn/curbside or call 952-563-8760. Want to report illegal dumping or scavengers making a mess? Call the nonemergency number for Bloomington Police 952-563-4900.

To find more tips about how to properly dispose of items not accepted at the curb, visit the Green Disposal Guide on Hennepin County at blm.mn/green-dispose or call 612-348-3777.



KEEP ICE AND SNOW OUT OF STORM DRAINS

While most of us pull out the shovel to clear our driveways or sidewalks, Public Works would like to remind everyone to also keep an eye out for storm drains.

“During the winter months, when storm drains are blocked with ice and snow, water flows by, freezes and becomes an icy pool,” Civil Engineer Steve Gurney said. “Residents can help by monitoring their neighborhood drains and keeping the storm drains clear.”

If a storm drain is blocked, use a shovel to clear the top of the grate and break up and remove any built-up ice. It may mean clearing the drain repeatedly as more snow falls, plows pass or ice builds up. Here are some more tips:

- Do not block storm drains with snow shoveled from driveways and sidewalks.
- Never try to remove a storm drain lid.
- Remove snow and ice within a three-foot perimeter of fire hydrants.

If you can do so, aim to keep your storm drain clear year-round. Consider signing up for the adopt-a-storm drain program. It’s a free and easy way to promote clear storm drains and make a difference in the community. For more information, visit blm.mn/drain or call 952-563-4870.



Pictured above from left to right: Kelly Olson, Somuayira Nsude, Dan Richardson, Figensia Alcenat, Oliver Johnson, Jackson Buch, Marcus Jensen, Maisie Pederson, Hoang Nguyen, Jorge Escutia-Cardenas, Mark Robinson, and Carlos Avila Dominguez.

EARTH ACTION HERO: KENNEDY GREEN CLUB

Kennedy High School’s Green Club aims to improve local environmental issues through education, restoration, preservation and protection of the ever-endangered ecosystem.

“Green Club isn’t a club for the sake of existing. Students don’t join to put it on a college application or resume,” Green Club president Marcus Jensen said. “It’s a club because we need to do something to help save our planet in as many large or small ways as possible.”

It all began when a few students were inspired by Greta Thunberg, a Swedish environmental activist and leading young spokesperson urging action from world governments on climate change. The student-led club was organized in 2019. With about 25 passionate students and two faculty advisors, they meet once a week to watch a short educational video or presentation on environmental issues, and then students come up with project ideas and work in small groups to make them happen.

During the pandemic, the Green Club organized and carried out a tree-planting project through Tree-Plenish, a nonprofit organization that recruits high school volunteers to help them plan tree-planting events. They successfully distributed and planted almost 200 trees, which is about the equivalent of annual paper usage by the school. Last fall, they helped out with a buckthorn bust at Nine Mile Creek. Also the Green Club organized some trash pickups at various parks across the city.

“Little things, but every little bit counts,” Jensen said. “I quickly realized that we (high schoolers) actually did have the power to change things for the better through this club, and I really started to put my heart into it.”

This spring, the Green Club plans to continue trash pickup efforts in the parks. Other projects they hope to accomplish include:

- Installing a rain garden on school property in the spring.
- Retrofitting the school recycling bins designed to fit paper only so that cans and bottles can easily be deposited in them.
- Looking into ways to improve the ecological footprint of the school cafeteria.
- Planning a redesign and beautification of a courtyard to encourage more outdoor activity during the school day.

For the Green Club, saving the planet means doing what they can do now in their community, and this is just the beginning. Faculty advisor Dan Richardson said, “Our focus is on looking for projects that we can plan and do in our own school environment and in Bloomington.”

For more information about the City’s sustainability efforts, visit blm.mn/sustainability.



GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR ECO-FRIENDLY GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE PROJECTS

Spring is fast approaching now that February is here. Spring forward on planning eco-friendly gardens and landscape projects to improve Bloomington’s neighborhoods and community. Environmental stewardship grants are available to help fund projects that protect and improve natural resources.

- The goals of the grants are to provide general support to:
- Preserve, protect and restore native ecosystems with native plantings or addition of wildlife habitat.
 - Improve water quality by reducing the amount of nutrients and sediments flowing into lakes, streams, wetlands and rivers.
 - Increase the capacity of the watershed to store or infiltrate water.

While the rain garden has become a symbol of urban natural resource restoration, there are other ways to improve local ecological health. Meadow lawns, pond buffers, rainwater reuse and other projects can make positive environmental impacts. Your eco-friendly garden and landscape will promote environmental stewardship, provide habitat for pollinators and wildlife, improve air quality and build soil structure.

Cost share programs provide funding which residents match. Typically, grants are awarded to cover up to 50 – 75%



of a project’s cost for professional consultation, engineering, labor and materials.

“The grants offer a funding source for residents who are interested in some local, small-scale environmental projects, like rain gardens, meadow lawns or pollinator gardens,” Water Resources Specialist Jack Distel said. “While each grant is slightly different, they are sources of money that help residents get their project ideas off the drawing board and onto the ground.”

Watershed district grants are available to residents, associations, nonprofits, schools and businesses within the respective district. To find which watershed district you live in and related links, visit blm.mn/watershed. A list of grants available can be found at blm.mn/rain-gardens. Contact Engineering with questions at 952-563-4870.



CITY JOBS FOR 2022 SUMMER SEASON

The City is looking for motivated people to fill a variety of seasonal jobs this summer. Staff will enjoy learning valuable life skills such as leadership, teamwork, customer service, communication and responsibility. Positions include:

Lifeguard—Applicants must be at least 16 years of age and be able to pass the American Red Cross lifeguarding prerequisites: swim 300 yards continuously, tread water for two minutes using only the legs and complete a timed event within 1 minute, 40 seconds. Lifeguards typically work a varied schedule including nights and weekends.

Admissions/concessions attendant—To assist with the daily operation of the Bloomington Family Aquatic Center, staff will work in the admissions or concession stand, answer phones, sell food and merchandise, provide customer service and maintain building cleanliness. Open to anyone 16 years or older.

Audio/visual technician—Set up and operate sound and lighting equipment for a wide variety of fun events and concerts taking place throughout the summer in Bloomington such as Summer Fete and Arts in the Parks. Minimum age to apply is 16 years old.

Youth program and inclusion coordinators, specialists, leads and instructors—Plan, organize and direct activities and experiences for children in a group setting while overseeing the general safety and development of the children under their supervision. Staff should be available to work the entire summer season, Monday through Friday, from June to mid-August.

Adaptive Softball coordinator, leads, and instructors—Coach both youth and adult athletes with disabilities in softball by organizing skills practices, games, and encouraging social interaction. Program runs weekly on Mondays and Tuesdays from June to early August.

Seasonal groundskeeper—Assist with maintenance at Dwan Golf Course, including mowing, trimming, raking, edging, planting and pruning and miscellaneous course upkeep. Must be at least 16 years of age upon starting date of employment.

In 2021, several popular summer camps and programs were cancelled due to staffing shortfalls. The City needs to fill all of its seasonal positions to ensure that its 2022 youth programming takes place as planned. Visit blm.mn/prjobs or call 952-563-8877 for a complete listing of opportunities.

ART OF THE GRAIN EXHIBIT FEATURES WOOD ARTISTS

Art of the Grain is a collection of passionate Minnesota-based wood artists who value distinctive design, quality materials, and meticulous construction. Their unique pieces highlight the natural beauty of wood. Through their exhibit, Art of the Grain, members hope to expand awareness of custom-made furniture as a viable option for those who appreciate quality design and construction.

The exhibition features Art of the Grain wood artists: Jake Brown, TiAnna DeGarmo, Yana Frank, Richard Helgeson, Craig Jentz, Craig Johnson, Roger Knudson, Bob Kraby, Mark Laub, Steph Lunieski, Ed Neu, Mike Nesnidal, Tom Schrunck, and Greg Stevens.

Visit the exhibition February 24 – April 1, at the Inez Greenberg Gallery inside Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, February 24, 6 – 8 p.m. For more information about art exhibitions, visit blm.mn/upcomingexhibitions.



LUMINARY NIGHT HIKE

Light up the night on a beautiful self-guided walk at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (Old Cedar Avenue Trailhead) 9898 Old Cedar Ave South. This unique, after-dark experience is on February 11 – 12 from 6 – 9 p.m. It is free, entirely outdoors and open to all ages. This event is being put on in partnership with the City of Bloomington Creative Placemaking Commission and the Community Outreach and Engagement Division. Come enjoy the Refuge's trails lit up with ice luminaries to guide you through the hike. Registration is required to support COVID-19 safety guidelines. For more information, visit blm.mn/luminaryhike.



PLAN YOUR PARKS AND REC SUMMER

Parks and Recreation summer program registration information is coming soon. Look for a special feature page in the March issue of the *Briefing* that highlights 2022 summer programs and events. Program sign-up will take place April 18, but hiring for seasonal positions is taking place now.

The full Parks and Recreation Summer Experience catalog will also be available online and in limited quantities at Civic Plaza. For more information on summer programs and jobs, visit blm.mn/parksrec or call 952-563-8877.

HAVE FUN WITH SOCCER SHOTS

This high-energy program introduces kids to the fundamentals of soccer and builds on their soccer basics. During each session, instructors highlight positive character traits such as respect, teamwork and appreciation. There are three levels offered at three locations. The spring session of Soccer Shots has a Mini level for ages 2 – 3, a Classic level for ages 3 – 5 and a Premier level for ages 5 – 8. The session runs April 12 – May 26, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings. The program costs \$105. Spring session sign-up starts January 31 at 10 a.m. online at blm.mn/webtrac.



RESOURCES TO HELP YOU QUIT SMOKING

This is a great year to quit smoking or vaping. QuitPartner offers free help to quit your way. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or visit QuitPartnerMN.com.

Some popular resources QuitPartner provides are free text messages and email for regular support, free coaching over the phone and free patches, gum or lozenges for those over 18 years of age.

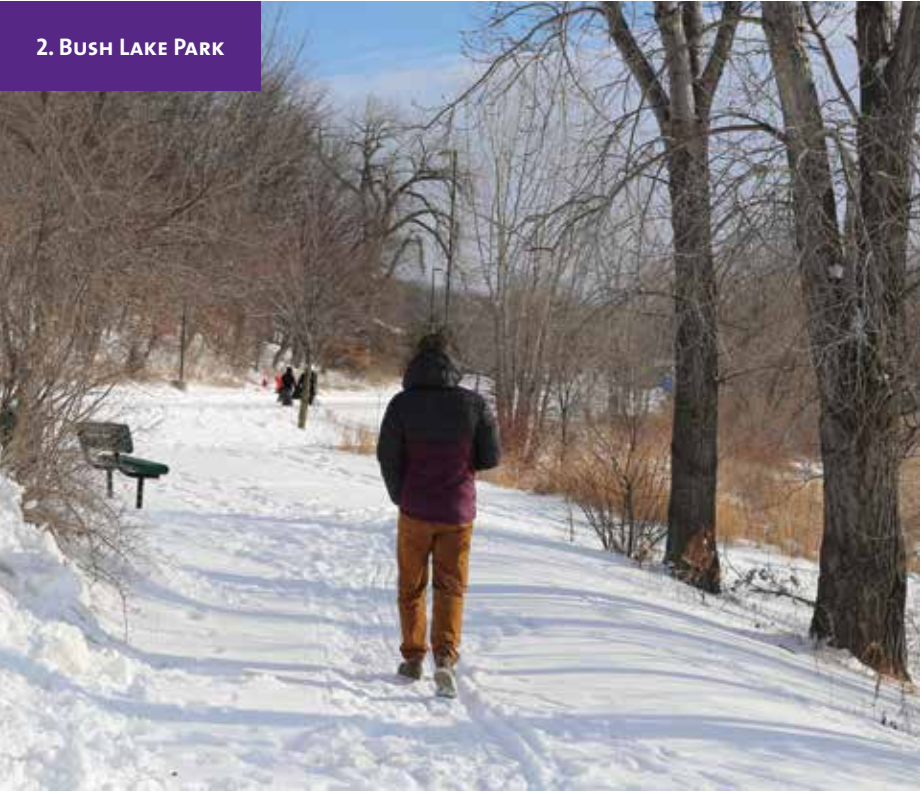


DISCOVER LOCAL TRAILS ALL YEAR LONG

With more than 36 miles of off-road trails, Bloomington has plenty of places for you to take a walk and get some fresh air. Many of the longer trails have segments that are plowed in winter to allow year-round access. Take a look at a few trails around Bloomington in the map above. Or check out the City's complete online trail map at blm.mn/hikemap. For more information, visit blm.mn/parks or call 952-563-8877.



The trail that loops around Marsh Lake is about 3.3 miles. This includes a new raised boardwalk on the west side of France Avenue between West 84th Street and 98th Street. This walk provides a mix of urban and natural views.



A paved trail runs along most of the shoreline at Bush Lake, 9140 East Bush Lake Road. The whole loop is nearly five miles long. Private properties block some areas. Do not trespass.



At just under a mile, the trail around Girard Lake provides scenic surroundings for a shorter walk for all skill levels. The trail starts at 8401 France Avenue South.



This 2.2-mile trail meanders through Moir Park, 10320 Morgan Ave South, ending at the Minnesota River. The paved portion north of 106th Street is plowed.