

# BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING



APRIL 2022

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## DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN TO BE REVIEWED BY CITY COUNCIL THIS MONTH

RESIDENTS MADE UP THE MAJORITY OF THE PLANNING TEAMS

A core planning team of 30 residents and City employees who volunteered to work on the City's upcoming strategic plan, *Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.*, has completed a draft of the plan. City Manager Jamie Verbrugge will present it to the City Council this month.

In January and February, action and measurement teams met to expand on the plan developed by the core planning team. The action team constructed a roadmap for putting the strategic plan into motion. The measurement team developed metrics to monitor and measure progress on the strategic plan.

*Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.* is a community-based strategic planning initiative that connects City representatives and residents to shape the future of Bloomington.

Throughout the process, resident and community member voices were at the forefront. Bloomington community members made up more than half of each strategic planning team. This exceeded the City's goal to have residents make up at least half of the members of each group.

"I had a very positive experience being a part of this plan coming together," Nur Mood, core planning team member and Bloomington resident said. "I am an immigrant from East Africa and I never had the opportunity to participate in government there at any level. In this process, community members have had a voice in each step. Seeing people of different backgrounds and cultures coming together, talking about their perspectives and agreeing on a decision gives me hope. I think the final product will chart a great path forward for Bloomington."

Some City staff on the planning teams are also residents. City councilmembers served on all of the teams—three on the core planning team, three on the action team and one on the measurement team. Other Bloomington stakeholders, like Bloomington Public Schools Superintendent Eric Melbye, also participated.

"Participating in the core planning team was important to me as a resident and a City staff member because the plan will have an impact on the future of the community where I live. I have the opportunity to be involved in carrying out the plan through my work at the City," Recreation Manager Alison Warren said.

City representatives and community members worked together at every stage of the process:

- Understanding who and what Bloomington is.
- Forming a unifying mission statement and strategic objectives.
- Developing action-planning priorities for implementation.
- Identifying measurements for success.

When approved, this plan will be effective for five years and reviewed annually. Learn more at [blm.mn/btt](https://blm.mn/btt).



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# MAYOR’S MEMO

## CELEBRATING BLOOMINGTON’S VOLUNTEERS

By Mayor Tim Busse

We appreciate you, volunteers! Volunteer Appreciation Week will be celebrated April 17 – 23. Each year, we take this week as an opportunity to recognize the time and service volunteers give in Bloomington. Volunteers have donated their time and talents serving on boards, commissions, advisory task forces and committees. They have contributed time to beautify parks, coach a sport, usher at arts and culture shows, support the Farmers Market, assist with vaccine clinics and help with large initiatives like *Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together.* Volunteers help make our city resilient.

“During the pandemic, we still have people who are willing to go above and beyond, not only to give their time but to serve the community in which they live,” Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator Jean Sanon said. “Without volunteers, a lot of the programs and opportunities that we provide would not be able to function. And for them, we are forever grateful.”

The City couldn’t have provided more than 20,000 doses of vaccine without a dedicated Medical Reserve Corps volunteers.

“Medical Reserve Corps volunteers offered their time and for that we are grateful,” Public Health Specialist Amanda Lemke said. “When the time came for ‘all hands on deck,’ you answered the call and went above and beyond.”

Whether you’re volunteering in the Medical Reserve Corps, helping create the City’s next strategic plan or assisting with a variety of Parks and Recreation programs or activities, you’re making a difference. Volunteering is a cornerstone of community and civic engagement. The economic impact is vast but there are other benefits, too—things that can be harder to measure. It’s good for the community, for the volunteers and for those served. People are fed, illnesses are treated, animals are rescued, the environment is conserved—and the community is better for it.

Are you interested in finding a way to give back to your community? For more information on volunteer opportunities, visit [blm.mn/volunteer](http://blm.mn/volunteer).



The renderings shows what a renovated BIG could look like.

## COUNCIL SEEKS AUTHORITY TO ASK VOTERS FOR BLOOMINGTON SALES TAX

Bloomington City Council passed a resolution in January asking the legislature for permission to put a new local sales tax on the ballot for residents to consider. The proposed Bloomington sales tax would be a 0.5% added tax charged on retail sales in the city. The revenue collected by the sales tax would be used to fund improvements to aging City facilities. This local sales tax would generate approximately \$11 million each year over 20 years. The legislature has already held hearings about Bloomington’s sales tax proposal, and the bill is being held for possible inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

It is estimated that 75% of a Bloomington sales tax would be paid for by visitors and 25% would be paid for by residents, according to an independent analysis by the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality.

The new tax would only apply to items that are currently taxable, meaning that items such as clothes and staple groceries would not be taxed. Approximately 80 units of government in Minnesota currently have a local sales tax.

The legislature will consider the request during the 2022 legislative session. If the legislature approves Bloomington’s four requests, Bloomington voters will be asked to vote on each measure through four separate ballot questions, most likely during this November’s General Election. If approved by Bloomington voters, the sales tax would go into effect by the second quarter of 2023.

### FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT A GLANCE

Many of Bloomington’s most-used assets need significant investment or replacement. Four regionally significant projects have been identified that could be funded through a Bloomington sales tax (estimated costs do not include interest or financing costs):

- **Bloomington Ice Garden** renovation including a new roof, a new refrigeration system, locker room improvements, and other guest service and ADA improvements: \$32 million estimated cost.
- **A new community health and wellness center** to replace the Public Health building and Creekside Community Center: \$70 million estimated cost.
- **Dwan Golf Course** improvements including total replacement of the clubhouse as well as golf course and bunker improvements and on-course restrooms : \$15 million estimated cost.
- **Bloomington Center for the Arts** expansion that would add a concert hall and Schneider Theater updates: \$33 million estimated cost.

But because 75% of sales taxes are paid by people visiting Bloomington, using a sales tax to pay for these projects would lower the estimated cost to only about \$72 per Bloomington household per year.

For more information, visit [blm.mn/bst](http://blm.mn/bst).

# BRIEFING

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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](mailto:jhill@BloomingtonMN.gov) Website: [BloomingtonMN.gov](http://BloomingtonMN.gov)

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Elected officials presented for informational purposes.

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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.



## AT YOUR SERVICE: REBECCA AMES

Rebecca Ames has been a plumbing inspector with the City of Bloomington for 15 years. She inspects plumbing projects in commercial, industrial and residential settings. In a busy construction year at the City of Bloomington, Ames performs more than 2,000 commercial, residential and industrial inspections.

“My job is to interpret the code for plumbers and educate homeowners on their plumbing projects. My greatest responsibility is serving as the plumbing inspector for Mall of America, a three million-square-foot building in Bloomington that is home to 500 retail stores and restaurants,” Ames said. “I like to challenge myself. I like to be active and learn every day. Looking back over the last three decades, it seems I found my ideal career. This has been a great way to make a living.”

Ames’ first plumbing project was at age of 13, when she helped her father drill a well for a cabin he was building. After attending culinary school and working at a restaurant in New York City, she decided to explore a different path. She enrolled in technical college and trained to become a plumber. She graduated in 1990. She became a journeyman plumber right out of technical college. It would be 10 years before another woman became a journeyman in her union, Plumbers Local 34 in St. Paul.

“I have been the only woman on the job site for most of my career. I set out to change this by getting involved with Women in the Trades, a nonprofit organization focused on showing young women how a career in the trades is possible for them,” Ames said. “Whenever I see another woman on the job site to this day, I always make time to introduce myself and commend her for the path she has chosen.”

Rebecca Ames was recently inducted to the 2021 Red Wing Wall of Honor to recognize her dedication and achievements working in the trades for the last 31 years.

## VETERANS MEMORIAL PROJECT PROGRESSES

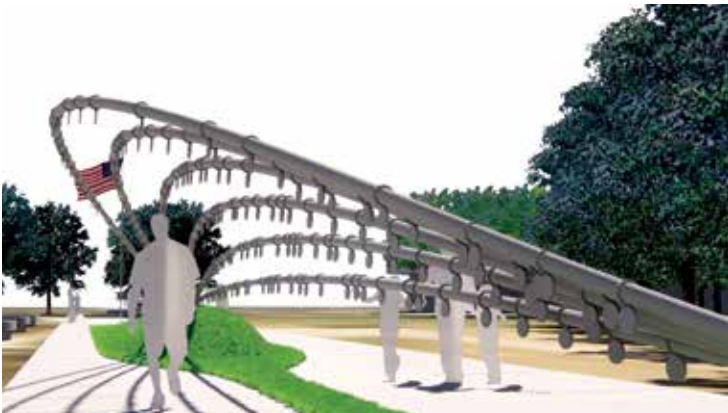
Local veterans and volunteers established a nonprofit in 2018 with one project in mind—to build a permanent veterans tribute in the city they call home. The nonprofit, Bloomington Remembers Veterans Inc., has since worked closely with the City to plan for a future memorial on the grounds of Civic Plaza. Bloomington Remembers Veterans is dedicated to the mission of honoring and recognizing all veterans from all times of service.

City Council selected and approved a memorial design by Leo A. Daly. It captures the themes of honor, reflection, education, community and the future. The memorial will be constructed on the east lawn of Civic Plaza. The six military branches will be recognized in the design through armatures and service emblems. Individual recognition will be provided through symbolic dog tags hanging from the armatures with QR codes that visitors can scan to learn more about the veteran listed and their service.

The group is working on fundraising for the memorial. They has also connected with the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce.

“The Bloomington Chamber fully supports the Bloomington Veterans Memorial—an impressive, important, once-in-a-lifetime project that unites the community,” Brent Pavia, Bloomington Chamber president, said.

To learn more about donating or volunteering with the project visit [bloomingtonveteransmemorial.org](http://bloomingtonveteransmemorial.org). Are you interested in adding a loved one to the memorial? Contact Terry Collins at 952-334-3859 or [collinsterry13@icloud.com](mailto:collinsterry13@icloud.com).



## BLOOMINGTON’S HISTORIC CEMETERY

The Bloomington Cemetery, at 10340 Lyndale Avenue South, is operated by the City of Bloomington. The cemetery was established in 1856 by the Oak Grove Presbyterian Church and acquired by the Town of Bloomington in 1864. Over the past 150 years, nearly 3,600 people have been buried there, including some of Bloomington’s early pioneers. The City Clerk’s Office maintains the records of the cemetery, dating back to the 1800s. The cemetery offers in-ground gravesites and above-ground columbarium niches. Current and former Bloomington residents receive preferred pricing. A portion of the cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. To learn more, visit [blm.mn/cemetery](http://blm.mn/cemetery). For more information about regulations and fees, or to arrange an appointment, contact the City Clerk’s Office at 952-563-8729.



## CITY OF BLOOMINGTON WELCOMES ITS NEXT POLICE CHIEF

City Manager Jamie Verbrugge selected Dr. Booker T. Hodges to be City’s next Police Chief. Dr. Hodges started in his new role on April 4.

“I am excited for our community to get to know Dr. Hodges. His vision for a values-based organization that prioritizes engagement and reflects our community will make our organization better,” Verbrugge said. “Bloomington residents value their sense of safety, and I know Dr. Hodges shares that value.”

Dr. Hodges served as the assistant commissioner at the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Before his work at DPS, he served as the Prior Lake police chief, undersheriff in Ramsey County and sergeant at the Dakota County Sheriff’s Office. He has also served as a patrol watch commander, a school resource officer, a narcotics detective and a SWAT operator.

Dr. Hodges has a doctorate in public administration from Hamline University, a master’s degree from St. Mary’s University and a bachelor’s degree from Florida Southern College.

“I am looking forward to working with the women and men of the Bloomington Police Department as we continue to build a department that will be the beacon on the hill as far as how we interact with the public and each other,” Dr. Hodges said.

Hodges will be sworn in on April 11.



## IN MEMORIAM: JON OLESON

Former City Councilmember Jon Oleson passed away in January. His work made an impact in Bloomington. Before his years on the City Council (2013 – 2017), Jon served on the City’s planning commission. He also served on the HRA board during his time on the City Council and afterwards.

Public service was a theme in Jon’s life. He had a 32-year career with Duluth Public Schools, where he served as a teacher, curriculum advisor and an assistant principal. In 2000, he moved to the Twin Cities to continue his work as a school administrator until his retirement.



CURBSIDE ORGANICS  
RECYCLING SERVICE HAS  
BEGUN

Curbside organics recycling service started in the second week of March. The program is off to a strong start with 20% of households already signed up for the service.

Carts are delivered with a welcome packet that will help you get started composting right away. The packet includes a starter set of 10 compostable plastic bags, a reference guide magnet, and a home set up tip guide that will help you set up your kitchen for collecting organics.

All organics collected at the curb are turned into compost, which is used to add valuable nutrients back into the soil. When compost is added to the soil, it reduces the need for fertilizers and pesticides and increases water retention, allowing for more efficient water use. Composting reduces greenhouse gas emissions at landfills and increases energy efficiency at garbage incinerators.

**Ready to get started?** See page 8 for a clip out section of what can be included in organics recycling and information about how to sign up.



ATTEND A VIRTUAL  
ORGANICS WORKSHOP

Are you unsure how to get started with organics? Attend the virtual workshop Tuesday, April 19, 6 – 7:30 p.m., to receive detailed information about what can go in organics carts, what types of bags to use and even “tour” two expert composters’ kitchen setups. There will also be plenty of time to answer your questions during the workshop. Past attendees said that they left the workshop very confident to start collecting organics in their homes. For more information or to register, visit blm.mn/workshops.

EARTH ACTION HERO: Q & A WITH  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSIONERS

Three founding members of the Sustainability Commission left after their terms expired in February. Appointed by the City Council, the Sustainability Commission advises the Council on five areas of sustainability: air, water, energy, land and ecological resources, and waste. The Commission works with the City, businesses, citizens and the local community to protect and preserve such resources to ensure a high quality of life for present and future generations.

**Rob Bouta** joined the Sustainability Commission to help Bloomington adapt to climate change while sustaining natural open spaces that contribute quality to our lives.

**Q:** What accomplishments have you seen, or notable projects have you worked on during your service on the Commission?

**A:** We’ve done a lot with natural resource stewardship. The Sustainability Commission obtained a grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to restore oak savannah in the Minnesota river valley. That’s still going on and there’s opportunity to do a lot more.

**Q:** What advice do you have for residents to apply sustainability efforts in their lives?

**A:** Everyone can look at their solid waste, and sign up for the City’s curbside organics recycling, because organics will be turned into mulch instead of filling up landfills. Also, everyone can also think about their carbon footprint—home energy use and vehicle energy use.

**Steve Flagg** joined the Sustainability Commission to promote and focus on sustainability in the business community and to see the green potential for Bloomington overall.

**Q:** What accomplishments have you seen, or notable projects have you worked on during your service on the Commission?

**A:** Since businesses use more than 70% of the electricity in Bloomington, I have a special interest in promoting businesses that have succeeded in saving money through environmental initiatives. For both businesses and residents, we have found a two-year payback on LED lights as well as basic insulation.

**Q:** What role does sustainability play in your personal life?

**A:** For my own house, I am gradually switching over to more electrical appliances in order to reduce my gas usage, because gas is not a renewable energy.

**Paul Erdmann** joined the Sustainability Commission to advocate for natural resource conservation in Bloomington.

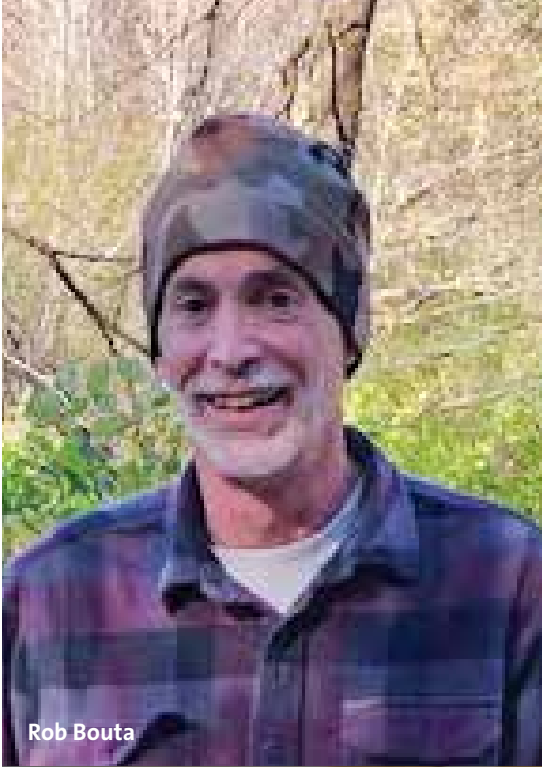
**Q:** What accomplishments have you seen, or notable projects have you worked on during your service in the Commission?

**A:** The Commission, City staff and the City Council have made great progress in restoring our parks by removing invasive plants so that native plants and animals can thrive and residents can enjoy them more. It was great to see that Bloomington residents place a high value on these efforts as well, as we had more than 70 volunteers turn out for a buckthorn bust along Nine Mile Creek and tree planting events in City parks.

**Q:** What advice do you have for residents to apply sustainability efforts in their lives?

**A:** We all make impacts with what we do, or don’t do, in our homes and yards. Residents can plant native plants to help songbirds and pollinators, and refrain from using chemicals on their lawns for better water quality. If we each do a little bit, it adds up to a whole lot.

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



Rob Bouta



Steve Flagg



Paul Erdmann

WHAT’S INSIDE YOUR LOCAL POND

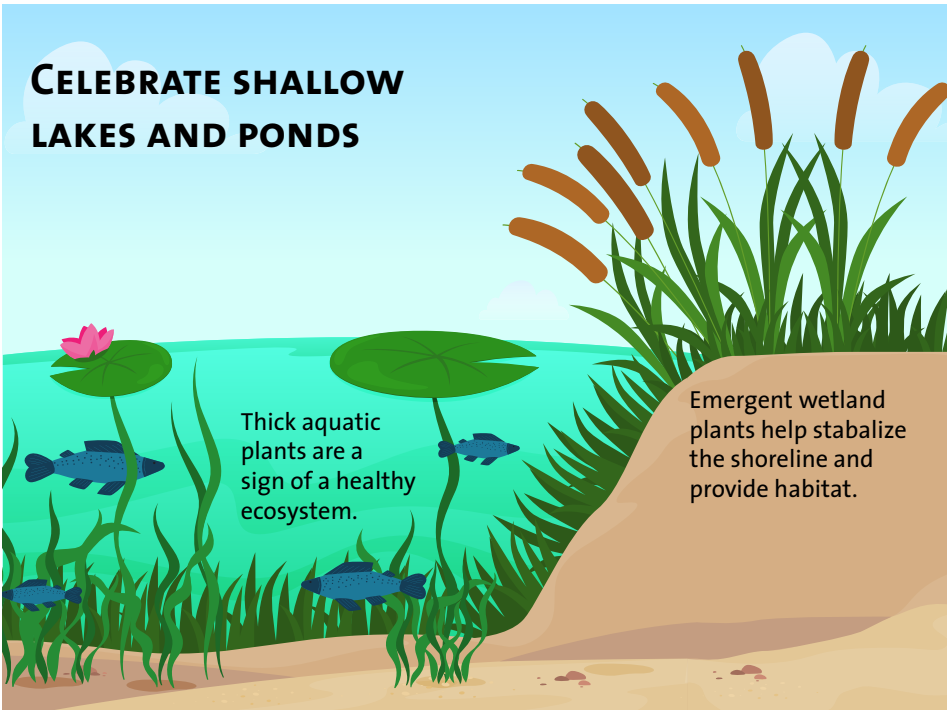
From plants and bugs to turtles and fish, shallow lakes and ponds contain their own complete ecosystems. Bloomington has around 500 shallow lakes, according to Water Resource Specialist Jack Distel.

“We define a shallow lake as a body of water that doesn’t get deep enough to have different layers of water temperature,” Distel said. “That includes ponds. Bloomington has a lot of these types of bodies of water. The ecosystems they hold are really cool.”

Shallow lakes and ponds exist in two states. One is called a turbid state—that is when the water looks muddy. The other is called a clear water state—that means sunlight can hit the bottom so plants can thrive.

“The right kind of plants thriving are good news because they are the main competitors for invasive plants and algae,” Distel said. “They also provide oxygen, food and occasionally shelter for the wildlife that call these bodies of water home.”

Check out the illustration *above* to see how a clear water shallow lake or pond serves as its own complete ecosystem.



# 2022 CURBSIDE CLEANUP

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 can’t be reused or recycled elsewhere. 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.



## 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

## 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 Curbside Cleanup is taken to a landfill.

See the item quantity and size limits listed below. 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](http://blm.mn/curbside) or call 952-563-8760. Want to report illegal dumping or people making a mess of your curbside pile? 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](http://blm.mn/green-dispose) or call 612-348-3777.



MEET THE NEW ASSISTANT GOLF COURSE MANAGER

Longtime PGA professional Scott Roth officially started as the new assistant golf course manager in Bloomington’s golf operation on January 10. Roth assists in management of seasonal staff, events, guest relations and general facility operations at Dwan Golf Course.

Roth was first introduced to golf when he was 12 years old. He saw his friends play in the backyard and wanted to try it out. “I was hooked from that first day,” Roth said. “So hooked in fact, that I made three clubs out of wood in the garage the next day since we didn’t have the money for real clubs then.” That love for golf led Roth to more than 20 years in a golf career where he has been a head golf professional, a director of golf and a general manager.

Roth comes to Dwan after having served in a variety of management positions including, most recently, as director of strategic initiatives at the National Sports Center in Blaine, Minnesota. Concurrently, Roth also served as director of golf at Blaine’s Victory Links Golf Course.

“What interested me in working with the City of Bloomington was its reputation for outstanding stewardship of the community and City staff,” Roth said. “And what interested me in working at Dwan specifically was the fact that it was so successful. When a Minnesota golf course has 50,000 rounds in one season, they must be doing many things right.”

Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation Susan Faus pointed to Roth’s well-rounded operational background as an important factor in his hiring. She is responsible for the City’s recreation facilities.

“He has a strong philosophy predicated on providing the highest quality customer experience possible. He cultivates engaged staff, employs sound business practices and works hard to ensure guests always enjoy a high-quality golf experience,” Faus said.

A native of Iowa and a graduate of Iowa State University, Roth previously served as the school’s head golf professional and was an adjunct teaching professor in its College of Health and Human Performance.



GOLF SEASON TEES UP

Prepare your golf bags and get ready for a fun season in 2022. The golf season typically begins sometime in April depending on weather. At Dwan Golf Course, 3301 West 110th Street, our friendly staff is ready to serve your golfing needs. Whether you are an experienced golfer, new to the game, or somewhere in between, you’ll enjoy the fun challenge of Dwan Golf Course.

Reserving a tee time is simple. Book online with credit card pre-payment to guarantee a time. Visitors can also call or walk in anytime to book a tee time. If you play more than a few rounds of golf yearly, purchase a patron card for savings on your overall golf experience.

For the latest course updates, to book a tee time or find other information, visit [blm.mn/dwan](http://blm.mn/dwan), call 952-563-8702 or email [golf@BloomingtonMN.gov](mailto:golf@BloomingtonMN.gov).

SUMMER PROGRAM REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Make summer 2022 an unforgettable experience with Parks and Recreation’s summer programs. Participants can experience sports, crafts, games and water activities. Keep your child active all while being easy on your budget. Parks and Recreation offers a variety of engaging, inclusive and entertaining experience that are educational and competitive for people of all ages, abilities and interests. Registration for many programs begins Monday, April 18, 12 p.m. Fee assistance is available for qualified participants. You can find all the details in the full 2022 Summer Experience! catalog online at [blm.mn/parksrec](http://blm.mn/parksrec).



NEW GLEE CHOIR

The Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs is excited to announce its newest ensemble, “Glee Choir,” which is designed for singers with special needs in grades 4 – 12. Members with varying abilities will be able to sing and grow musically in a fun and safe environment. The instruction will be specifically geared to meet the abilities of children with physical, social, emotional and/or intellectual challenges. The goal of the choir is to provide access to the arts, build self-esteem and pride, improve emotional well-being and share the joy of singing with others while making new friends and building community.

This group is not performance oriented. One parent or guardian is required to attend in the rehearsal room. Siblings are also encouraged to come along.

Classes will be on Saturdays, 10 – 10:45 a.m., beginning April 23 and lasting eight weeks at Creekside Community Center, MN Valley Room. Sign up now through Bloomington Community Education at [blm.mn/gleeclub](http://blm.mn/gleeclub) or by phone at 952-681-6132. For additional information visit [www.angelicacantanti.org](http://www.angelicacantanti.org) or call 952-563-8572.



NOTEABLE SINGERS PRESENT: “WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A WOMAN...”

Join the NOTEable Singers as they perform songs that explore the themes of joy, love, empowerment and resilience. Music from various eras and lively choreography will illustrate just what happens when a woman wants to have fun, make a change and determine her own path. Sing along and enjoy the lively show choir at Schneider Theater, Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. Concert is Saturday, May 28, 5 p.m. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. Tickets are available for purchase now at [blm.mn/artistry-tickets](http://blm.mn/artistry-tickets).



# Bloomington Fire Department 75th Anniversary: The Importance of Fire Training



At the Bloomington Fire Department, fire training is a serious matter. Firefighters learn skills and techniques that help them save lives, preserve property and keep themselves safe. Training provides firefighters with experience to deal with any situation.

“When we show up somewhere, we want to be prepared. We don’t want it to be our first time seeing something,” Assistant Fire Chief Jay Forster said. “Firefighters show up to an incident prepared to make the operation run very smoothly, and you can only do that by having good training and good equipment.”

BFD trains weekly on a variety of topics, including live fire structure training, hoseline deployment, ladder, forceable entry training, vehicle extrication, ropes and knots, small equipment training, SCBA, ice rescue, water rescue and EMS training.

Training occurs at each of the fire stations and at the South Metro Training Facility in Edina. Last fall, BFD was able to conduct several fire trainings inside the old Days Inn building before it was demolished.

As fire trucks became larger and more complex, the BFD improved its training to include operation of a fire truck.

“We’re driving these massive vehicles around, and we have to know how to drive them, how to operate them, how to pump when we need water, how to put the ladder up on an aerial truck,” Forster said. “So, yes things have changed in how we may do training, but I still believe that from the day I joined, it’s important to be prepared, to get there quickly and do a good job.”

Through the years, as the fire service improved its tools and trucks. One thing remained unchanged—BFD’s fire training program.

“Bloomington Fire has always had a good reputation of being well-trained. And that started back many, many years ago,” Forster said. “When I got on the department, they were really big on training. And we still are today.”

BY THE NUMBERS IN 2021

- 109 firefighters
- 11,200 hours of training
- 1,400 involved live structure fire trainings

## Bloomington Police Adds Four Hybrid Vehicles to Its Fleet

Operations in the Bloomington Police Department are getting greener after the City Council approved the purchase of four hybrid patrol vehicles in December. The vehicles will join BPDs fleet this summer.

“Not only will these hybrid vehicles reduce fuel costs for BPD, they will produce 40% fewer greenhouse gas emissions compared to gasoline-powered patrol vehicles,” Mayor Tim Busse said. “This effort aligns with the City’s Energy Action Plan goals, which outlines ways Bloomington can responsibly address climate change.”

The hybrid vehicle the City selected is the Ford Interceptor SUV hybrid, which is currently the only pursuit-rated hybrid on the market. Bloomington Fleet Manager Michael Keim said BPD is trying to reduce operational costs and that patrol cars are prime candidates for using hybrid vehicles due to their special operating conditions.

“The amount of electronics on the unit run down a standard battery very quickly so if they shut them off, they may not restart,” Keim said. “The hybrids have a much larger battery and automatically shut off and restart the engine as needed based on total battery charge.”

Driving gasoline-powered vehicles is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Bloomington. Climate change brings problematic weather trends to Bloomington, such as extreme rain events, warmer winters and an increased likelihood of extreme summer heat. Purchasing hybrid vehicles instead of standard internal combustion vehicles supports Minnesota GreenStep Cities best practices and aligns with the City’s 2017 commitment to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

For more information about the City’s sustainability initiatives visit [blm.mn/sustainability](http://blm.mn/sustainability).

## Bloomington Yesterday: A Look Back at Girl Scouts

For many people, springtime means Girl Scouts cookies. As Bloomington’s population soared from 9,900 in 1950 to 50,500 in 1960, so did schools and youth organizations. Groups, like the Girl Scouts thrived in Bloomington as they made friendships and learned about civic duty and kindness.

In 1960, Girl Scout cookies came in four varieties: vanilla or chocolate-filled sandwich, shortbread, and chocolate mints (now known as Thin Mints). Each box of cookie sold for less than 50 cents.

The Intermediate Girl Scout uniform was a green blouse and skirt worn with a tie and beret.

Additional memorabilia of youth organizations 1930s to 1960s are on display at Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, through April. Journey to the past of youth organizations: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, 4H and the Bloomington Athletic Association.



## Bloomington Fire Department History

Timeline story: 1990s – 2000  
Here are highlights.

1992

Volunteer firefighters were paid \$2 for every call they answered.

1993

A new Fire Station #1 opened at 95th Street and Nicollet Avenue. The 35th annual Bloomington Fireman’s Tournament attracted approximately 25,000 spectators.

1994

BFD’s first fire chief and founding charter member, Arnold Friendshuh, passes away at age 80.

1997

BFD turns 50 years old with 145-volunteer firefighters.

2000

Decathlon Club fire caused more than \$1.2 million in damages.

## Honoring 911 Dispatchers

Telecommunicators, also known as 911 dispatchers, play a critical role in public safety. They are the first link between callers and emergency services. They gather details that make it possible to send appropriate aid to help those in need and keep first responders safe.

During National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, April 10– 16, the Bloomington Police Department is recognizing its dispatchers and the high-quality service they provide to all who live, visit, or work in Bloomington. In 2021, BPD staffed eight dispatchers who handled 166,408 phone calls and entered 64,904 computer-aided dispatch events.

During a proclamation recognizing National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, Mayor Tim Busse thanked each dispatcher for their compassion, understanding and professionalism over the last year.



## WHAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN CURBSIDE ORGANICS RECYCLING

- All food
- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, fish and bones
- Dairy products
- Eggs and egg shells
- Pasta, beans and rice
- Bread and cereal
- Nuts and shells
- Food-soiled paper
- Pizza boxes from delivery
- Napkins and paper towels
- Paper egg cartons
- Certified compostable products (Look for the BPI or Cedar Grove logos or the term “compostable” on certified products.)
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Hair and nail clippings
- Cotton balls and swabs with paper stems
- Houseplants and flowers
- Tea bags
- Small wooden items such as chopsticks, popsicle sticks and toothpicks

For a detailed list of what can and can’t be composted, visit [blm.mn/detailed-organics-list](http://blm.mn/detailed-organics-list).

### How do I sign up?

To sign up to receive your organics cart, call Utility Billing at 952-563-8726, email [utilitybilling@bloomingtonmn.gov](mailto:utilitybilling@bloomingtonmn.gov) or visit [blm.mn/organics](http://blm.mn/organics).

Residents who sign up for the service will receive a 30-gallon organics cart, a welcome packet with information and tips to start collecting organics, and compost bags. The organics will be collected weekly on their garbage day.

### What should I do with my organics if I don’t have City garbage and recycling service?

Drop off organics at one of the City’s organics free drop-off sites. The City will continue to operate the free organics drop-off sites for residents in multifamily housing not serviced through the City’s garbage and recycling program. To start composting now, visit [blm.mn/organics](http://blm.mn/organics).

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS: CARE AND CONNECTION DURING THE PANDEMIC

Changing times require creativity to meet community needs in new ways. Bloomington community organizations stepped up to the task during COVID-19. In this series, you’ll learn more about how Cornerstone, VEAP, LA RED Latina de Educacion Temprana and Oasis for Youth found innovative ways to connect and care in pandemic times.

## CORNERSTONE

Cornerstone’s services encompass comprehensive programming for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, sexually exploited youth and general crime.

Cornerstone offers emergency safe housing and operates a 24-hour crisis line, the Day 1 Hotline, to ensure people receive the help they need.

“Our goal is centered around safety and what can we do to help our participants become safe and maintain safety in the context of whatever it is they want to do,” Program Director Cheryl Kolb-Untinen said.

**How did Cornerstone innovate?** They incorporated online services.

During the pandemic, Cornerstone remained open because of its 24-hour service model.

“We had to quickly put very high precautions in place and social distancing. That meant rearranging things,” Colleen Schmitt, senior director of emergency services, said. “We accepted fewer families in the shelter at one time, but we continued to expand and work with community hotels. We were able to serve the same number of participants that are seeking safety.”

A switch to online services proved to be effective immediately. Online platforms allowed for services to be accessed at any time.

“We learned to do our work in a different way,” Kolb-Untinen said. “I believe we will take that knowledge moving forward. There will be some services offered both in person as well as a virtually for our participants’ benefit.”

For more information or to request assistance, visit [cornerstonemn.org](http://cornerstonemn.org) or call 952-884-0376.

## VEAP: VOLUNTEERS ENLISTED TO ASSIST PEOPLE

VEAP is a basic needs organization that focuses on access to healthy food, housing stability and social services. Prior to the pandemic, people came to the food pantry and shopped for their own food twice a month. Regardless of the cause, VEAP helps people with rent and utility assistance and how to maintain financial stability.

**How did VEAP innovate?** They went with contactless food delivery.

In March 2020, VEAP had to pause any in-person shopping at the pantry. To make sure people have access to food during this pandemic, VEAP increased its efforts to take care of the need.

“We had to change everything to go to contactless food deliveries, whether that’s a drive-through or delivering food to people’s homes,” Chief Executive Officer Joe McDonald said.

“Since the start of the pandemic, housing support and needs have grown exponentially. People have really been hit hard; lost jobs, lost income and have experienced housing instability,” McDonald said. “We’ve been able to help keep people up to date on their rent payments, so that people don’t have to worry about that while they’re trying to find jobs. It’s been pretty incredible the partnership we’ve had with the cities, other nonprofits and the county.”

If you need food or housing assistance, visit [veap.org/get-help](http://veap.org/get-help) or call 952-888-9616.



## LA RED LATINA DE EDUCACION TEMPRANA

LA RED is a community-based organization that provides tools for family, friend and neighbor childcare providers (known as “FFN care”), a common form of care for infants and toddlers. LA RED connects Spanish speaking childcare providers with quality trainings, educational opportunities and leadership development.

**How did LA RED innovate?** They expanded training and support.

In the past two years, LA RED transformed the way trainings are provided. “LA RED invested time and resources to help its members learn how to use the new technology available, like Zoom, in order to share knowledge and teach classes or trainings,” Ruth Evangelista, LA RED founder said.

LA RED trains Spanish speaking providers on early childhood development, safety, First Aid, nutrition, physical activity, school literature and support for children with special needs. To support its members and the community, LA RED extended its reach with additional services and resources by participating in food distribution, coordinating testing and vaccination clinics, donating school supplies and providing stipends to help FFN childcare providers during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, many families turned to FFN care when their typical childcare provider closed, or they did not feel safe to have their child in a childcare center.

“Childcare is an essential service critical to working adults and or families,” Evangelista said.

If you would like more information about LA RED Latina, contact Ruth Evangelista at [ruthevangelista@hotmail.com](mailto:ruthevangelista@hotmail.com).

## OASIS FOR YOUTH

Oasis for Youth serves youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability to provide a pathway for youth to become self-sufficient contributing members in their communities. The organization works with youth on employment support, rental assistance, education and health and wellness. They offer a drop-in center that offers food, clothes, showers, a place to do laundry and legal aid.

**How did Oasis for Youth innovate?** They went mobile. During the pandemic, Oasis for Youth quickly developed mobile services. Executive Director Nicole Mills explained that going mobile was part of their strategic plan prior to the pandemic, but the pandemic pushed them to implement these changes sooner.

The organization fundraised for two cargo vans and a minivan that were built-out to be mobile offices. Oasis increased their outreach team and became mobile.

Oasis for Youth continued to offer a physical drop-in center where youth can have a safe place to shower, do laundry, access a clothing closet, get food and other help.

“It was a place for our young folks to get out of their element and a place to hopefully have some positive interaction with caring adults,” Mills said. “It’s an honor to work with our young folks for trusting us to guide them through a really uncertain time.”

Learn more about Oasis For Youth at [oasisforyouth.org](http://oasisforyouth.org). To request assistance, text or call 952-512-2061.

