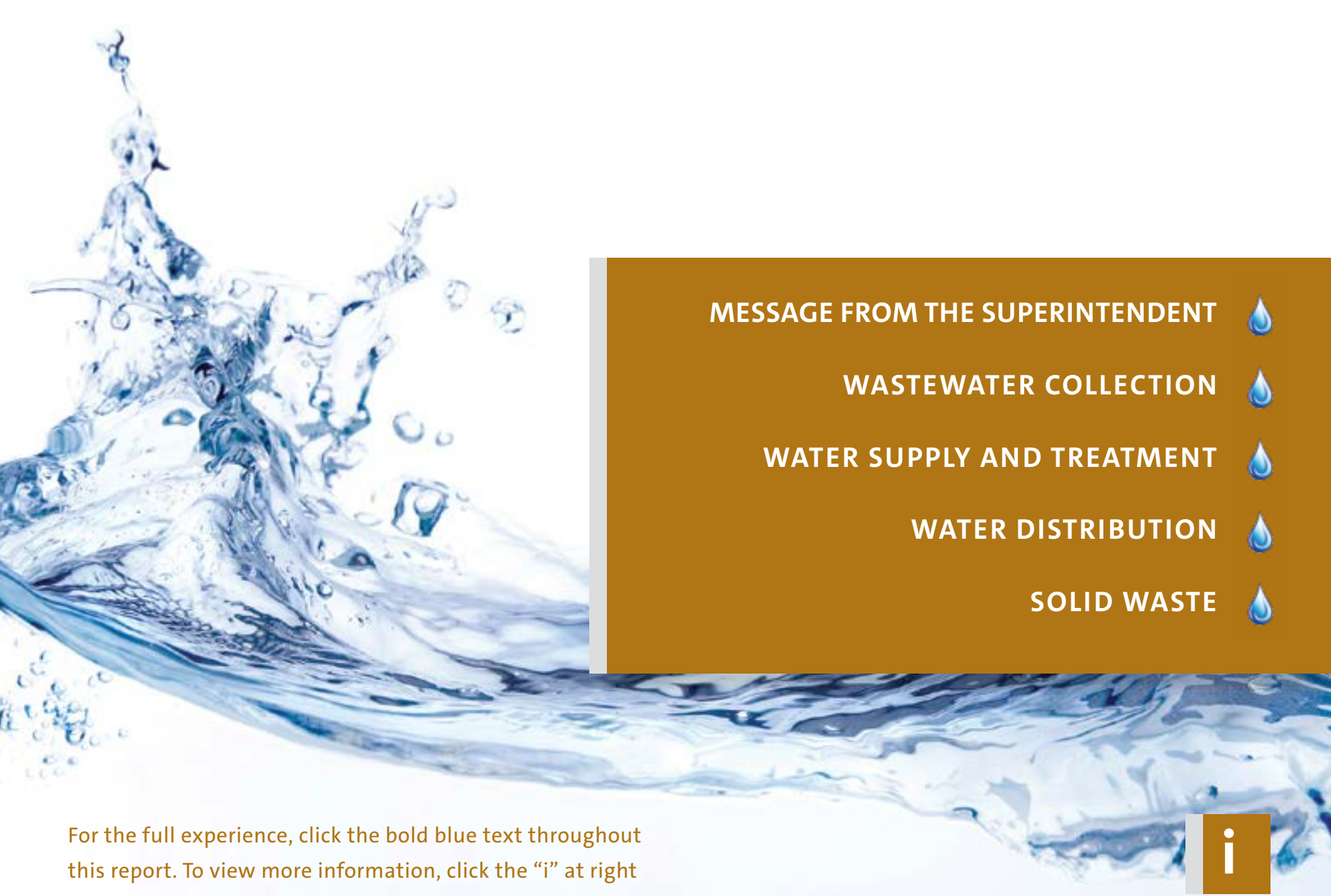

BEST OF
BLOOMINGTON
UTILITIES ANNUAL REPORT
2025
FOR BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA 2024 YEAR END



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Message from the Superintendent

Congratulations to Bloomington Utilities on again capturing the recognition of our peers by achieving another MN AWWA Best in Glass award! Bloomington topped a field of 17 participating utilities at the MN AWWA annual conference making it win number three since 2015. This success wouldn't happen if not for a great team and their collective commitment to produce and deliver safe, high-quality drinking water for the residents, businesses, and visitors of Bloomington.

Also in 2024, Utilities completed and received verification of the City's lead service line inventory from the Minnesota Department of Health. This inventory revealed no lead service lines or galvanized lines requiring replacement, which means Bloomington's water customers can remain confident that potential exposure to lead from drinking water mains and services remains unlikely. This inventory, combined with the corrosion control practices at the treatment plant, provides additional protection from sources not covered by the inventory such as private plumbing fixtures.

The Utilities Division employed more than 50 people, with a budget of more than $31 million.

Other highlights in 2024 include welcoming the Solid Waste team into Utilities, adding a third set of vital and important services for residents that help protect health, safety and welfare of the community. Garbage, recycling, organics, bulky items, and yard waste residential services are organized and administered, and numerous public outreach activities take place each year aimed at engaging residents in waste reduction and other sustainable approaches to solid waste, recycling, and re-use.

The Utilities Division continues to make exciting progress in implementing the utility-wide asset management program including refined workflows with help from staff, new dashboards and tools that are being created to track work and provide data and reports that assist with work prioritization, budget preparation and capital planning. These activities go a long way to helping ensure the water and wastewater utilities are operating as efficiently as possible and extending asset life while keeping utility rates affordable.

Lastly, Utilities took part in a City-wide Gallup employee engagement initiative and individual strengths assessments. These tools will be useful in helping to ensure we continue to be an organization that supports our team in their delivery of critical public services by providing opportunities to employ individual strengths and increase ownership and growth. We're looking forward to continuing this momentum going into 2025 and beyond!

ALSO IN 2024

- The Utilities Division employed more than 50 people. Professionalism is a highly touted value within the Division. All operations staff are encouraged to continue to ascend their **STATE LICENSES**.
- Utilities continued its **TOTAL ASSET MANAGEMENT** plan with the goal of institutionalizing the program to make the right investments at the right time to maximize asset performance in a sustainable manner.

The Administrative Section of Utilities is committed to providing a comprehensive water and wastewater utility services package at a rate that is less than the average cost of other cities providing a similar level of service. Each year, the Utilities Division is benchmarked in our **ANNUAL RATE SURVEY** **WATER RATES** **WASTEWATER RATES** against similar utilities. Rates are ultimately driven by the **WATER AND WASTEWATER FUNDS' EXPENSES.**

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TIM KAMPA

Almost 50-year career

In 1973, at 14 years old, I got my first job with the City of Bloomington, cleaning up several parks as part of the Youth Tree Trust Program. We earned 50 cents an hour for three weeks of work and kids lined up around the block for 2 hours to get those jobs. Then, on the day of my high school graduation in 1977, I got an offer to work as a part-time draftsman with the Engineering division. This evolved into a full-time Engineering Aide position, working as a draftsman, inspector and survey crew member. In 1980 I decided to go to NDSU and get a degree in Civil Engineering. In the summer of 1981, there were no Engineering jobs available, so I worked at Dwan Golf course as a starter, cashier, and food server. The next several summers I was able to get a job with Bloomington Utilities as a temporary Engineering Aide. After graduation in 1984 I started continuous full-time service in the Utilities division as an Engineering Aide. In 1988 I was promoted to the position of Utility Operations Engineer which eventually was changed to my current position of Civil Engineer-Utilities. In the early days all the plans, maps, and records were drafted by hand on mylar film with ink and Leroy lettering templates. It was quite an art to accurately draw and display all that information. A blueline print machine was used to make paper copies of the original mylar sheets for everyday use. Intersection details, tie cards, hydrant cards, property files and more were used to capture all the data associated with our assets. There were no computers, the rooms were filled with blue cigarette smoke, Farrah Fawcett calendars, loud typewriters and tile floors, and shouting was normal behavior. Over time the work environment improved thanks to carpets, computers, and personnel rules.

In the late 1980's City staff decided to begin moving hand drafted maps and data into a new Geographic Information System (GIS) called UltiMap. I was able to lead several team members in developing utility asset naming conventions, printing and extracting detailed information from private site plans and Engineering As-builts for every sewer and water item in the city, and manually digitizing the paper maps and As-builts into the Citywide GIS. It was an extremely difficult process but in the long run has provided an invaluable tool for managing the infrastructure. UltiMap GIS was replaced with Smallworld GIS, and Smallworld GIS was replaced with ESRI ArcMap GIS which is being upgraded to ESRI ArcGIS Pro GIS.

Wastewater Collection strives to provide the continuous conveyance of wastewater into the regional treatment system. One benchmark used to evaluate Utilities' performance is the number of **POSITIVE SEWER STOPPAGES** in 2024 – 0ur goal continues to be zero stoppages. The Division used routine operational and maintenance activities, such as **SEWER JETTING AND RODDING**, and **CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISING** to keep the sewage flowing in 2024.

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Over the years I've had the opportunity to work on a constant variety of projects including:

- Surveying and inspection of construction projects across the farm fields in the west part of the city for Bloomington Ferry Rd and several new subdivisions. Roughly a quarter of the City's water and sewer systems have been built since my start in 1977.
- Helping with the Hwy 77 / Old Cedar Ave construction, and now the MNDOT 494 projects.
- Inspection of water tower repainting projects.
- Lift station upgrades.
- Water pressure assistance programs.
- A Sewer capacity assistance program.
- Tracking forecast development as it relates to computerized sewer modeling capacities and comprehensive planning.
- Reporting and collecting Sewer Availability Charges (SAC) for the Met Council which resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in credits for Bloomington's Sewer fund.
- Administrating several Met Council inflow and infiltration (I/I) grant programs. This resulted in almost $850,000 in funds for system rehabilitation work and has helped realize a 36% reduction (or over 1.4 billion gallons per year) in sewer flows which saves about $5 million a year in treatment costs paid to the Met Council.

Almost 8 million gallons of wastewater flow out of the City each day. The City's 26 pumping stations are used to move more than 2 million gallons of that flow.

- Review and approval of proposed utility changes for private development projects.
- Design and build Lime Softening Waste holding ponds so that the water hardness being removed from city water (via the water treatment process) can be used as a beneficial agricultural product rather than dumping it into a landfill.
- Oversee the City's procedure for CCTV inspection of sewer mainlines.
- Track sewer system flow monitoring and Met Council metering of wastewater flows.
- Review and recommend utility system repairs needed with annual pavement management projects.
- Prepare plans and specifications and coordinate work for lining defective sewer mains with CIPP (cured in place pipe).
- Help set up the groundwork for the City's sewer mainline asset management effort.
- Participated in Minnesota AWWA presentations and coordinated advertising in the Monthly Breeze newsletter.
- Promote and require the use of grease interceptors (at food establishments) to control illegal discharge of fats, oils, and grease into the city sewer system.
- Worked with and coordinated projects with staff from: MNDOT, Met Council, MPCA, MDH, Hennepin County, neighboring communities, Bloomington planning, BFD, B&I, Engineering and more.

Over the years I've worked for and with three different sets of City Managers, Utilities Superintendents, City Engineers, and numerous other City employees. The common theme that I've seen over the years is that our employees look for ways to continually make things better, always improving what we do to serve the community. The employees work together and support each other in so many ways.

I'm so thankful that my God showed me the value of being a servant and that I've been blessed to have a career that has supported me while I have tried to serve the people of my hometown for almost 50 years.

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BUILDING A GREENER FUTURE: SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS AT THE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY

The commitment to sustainability is at the forefront of operations at the Sam H. Hobbs Water Treatment Facility, where innovative approaches are conserving resources and protecting the environment. Recent efforts have resulted in significant reductions in water waste, showcasing the facility's dedication to reducing its environmental footprint while maintaining high standards for water quality.

One major improvement stems from the facility's annual Self-Monitoring Report (SMR) for the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES). As part of the testing process, water from the Wet Lab faucet ran continuously to check the quality of the water every few hours. However, during this process, it was discovered that a significant amount of clean, potable water was being wasted as it flowed directly down the sink.

To address this issue, the WTP implemented a simple yet impactful solution. The faucet system was valved to ensure that water flowed into the sewer only when it was being tested; otherwise, the water was redirected back to the treatment process. This adjustment not only prevented unnecessary waste but also aligned with the facility's mission to maximize resource efficiency.

The results have been remarkable. Over the past year, approximately 1.5 million gallons of clean water that would have otherwise been sewered have been rerouted back into the treatment process. This conservation effort highlights the facility's ability to identify and resolve inefficiencies while maintaining its commitment to delivering safe and reliable water to the community.

These sustainability initiatives reflect the water treatment facility's broader dedication to environmental stewardship. By continuously finding innovative ways to conserve resources and reduce waste, the facility ensures that it remains a responsible and forward-thinking cornerstone of the community.

Between October 7 and October 18, 2024, 19,298 tons of Agricultural Liming Material were transported and spread over 2,643 acres of farm fields.

Water Supply and Treatment strives to provide a sustainable supply of water that meets or exceeds all federal and state standards.
A benchmark of this endeavor are the results reported in the federally mandated **WATER QUALITY REPORT.** In 2024, water usage fell short of the **PROJECTED DEMAND.**

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LEAD AND COPPER RULE

Lead, unlike many other drinking water contaminants, is usually not present in the drinking water source; rather, an elemental contaminant not expected to be present in water leaving treatment plants.

In 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created a policy called the Lead and Copper Rule. The treatment technique for the rule required the community water system to monitor drinking water at customers' taps to prove the corrosion control treatment in place was effective. In 2024, the EPA updated this legislation, to further advance protecting the population from the significant and irreversible health effects from lead. The revised rule added two key factors: removal of all lead service lines within 10 years and lowering the lead concentration action level of 15ppb to 10ppb (parts per billion). In addition, if the public water supply has an action level violation, the treatment plant must team up with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to create a corrosion control treatment plan that works.

Corrosion control treatment varies from water system to water system, based on the age of pipes and service lines, where the water originates and its overall chemical make-up. The City of Bloomington (COB) collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Health decades ago to create an optimal corrosion control treatment plan for the water treatment plant. The City of Bloomington's water treatment plant promotes a "scaling effect" which is a buildup of mineral deposits, primarily constructed from calcium and magnesium, forming a hard crust known as "scale" which acts as an insulator or barrier of sorts against leaching. The COB has excellent water quality and the lead in water is checked every three years for compliance. Since the program began, the COB has never exceeded an action level.

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HELP PROTECT WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE - DISPOSE OF THESE ITEMS PROPERLY

Everyday household items like wipes, cotton swabs, and unused medications can create issues in your home's plumbing and the broader wastewater system when they're flushed down the toilet. Below is an overview of why these items cause problems and how to dispose of them safely.

Common Items You Shouldn't Flush

- **Wipes (including "flushable" ones):** These often contain synthetic fibers that don't break down like toilet paper, leading to blockages in pipes and pumps.
- **F.O.G:** Improper disposal of fat, oil, and grease (F.O.G.) can block sewer service lines and wastewater distribution pipes. Blocked pipes can cause sanitary sewer overflows, causing health concerns, environmental issues, and property damage.
- **Cotton Swabs and Other Hygiene Products:** These can clog household plumbing and wastewater equipment.
- **Medication:** Flushing or pouring medication down the drain can introduce harmful chemicals into the wastewater system and eventually into our lakes, rivers, and groundwater.

Why It Matters:

- **Clogs and Backups:** When these items build up, they can cause sewer backups in homes and neighborhoods.
- **Increased Maintenance Costs:** Removing clogs and repairing equipment can create unnecessary maintenance costs.
- **Environmental Impact:** Chemicals from medications can pass through wastewater treatment systems and affect aquatic life.

The water distribution system's 4,600 hydrants and 6,900 valves require constant vigilance.

Water Distribution strives to provide an uninterrupted flow of high quality potable water for both domestic and firefighting purposes. The largest potential disruption to service occurs as a result of main breaks.

There were 15 **MAIN BREAKS REPAIRED** in 2024.

The **10-YEAR AVERAGE** for main breaks is 25 per year.

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JOURNEY OF WATER: FROM SOURCE TO TAP

We cannot imagine life without water.

From source to tap, it's so easy to take for granted, but water is a part of everything we do. It flushes our toilets, powers our showers and cleaning routines, and is essential for brushing our teeth. Additionally, water is used to make ice cubes, popsicles, and lemonade, and it fuels recreational activities like swimming and outdoor play.

The City of Bloomington gets its water from deep underground aquifers and the Mississippi River. Then the processing begins by treating, testing and softening the "raw" water product into a safe, drinkable product.

The City's Sam H. Hobbs Water Treatment Plant treats groundwater from six deep wells and then pumps it into the distribution system for use by residential and commercial customers. After treatment, the water is stored in reservoirs and water towers before being delivered through the City's water distribution system based on demand.

The City of Bloomington won "Best Tap Water" in Minnesota for 2024. The competition was held in Duluth where judges tasted room-temp water from 17 cities.

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BLOOMINGTON WATER SERVICE LINE INVENTORY COMPLETE

In accordance with requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, Bloomington has completed and submitted our water service line materials inventory to the Minnesota Department of Health. The accepted inventory can be viewed using the Lead Inventory Tracking Tool (LITT), available at https://maps.umn.edu/LSL/.

City staff reviewed historic city code, connection permits, customer service records, construction records, and performed limited resident-driven data collection to classify every active and inactive water service in the City. All services were determined to be non-lead, and there were no galvanized requiring replacement (GRR) and no unknown service materials identified.

WEATHER AND OUR WATER SYSTEM

As most of you know when the weather gets cold, water tends to freeze. The pipes that feed your home and all the other buildings in Bloomington are underground. Typically, deeper than 6 feet so they don't freeze when it gets cold here in Minnesota.

When it gets cold the ground freezes, and the frost tends to move the ground around. This is why the roads get bumpier in the winter. Frost in some years with no snow cover can get around 6 feet or more. 2014 was one of those years and we had over 200 frozen pipes underground.

When we get subzero cold snaps of a week or more, the City tends to see main breaks. As the frost dives down into the ground it tends to push down just as it pushes up. This can put stress on our pipes. The City of Bloomington will have anywhere from 6 to 30 watermain breaks a year. Majority of the breaks are circumrenal. This is due to the stress on the pipe from the ground shifting. These are repaired relatively easily with a stainless-steel water main repair sleeve. It still involves digging down through the frost to the pipe for repairs. One thing that can make these difficult to pinpoint is that with the frost in the ground the water tends to not surface right where the break is. It will travel to a spot where the frost is not so deep, like to the side of the road or where there is more snow cover.

Bloomington Utilities digs most of our main breaks with the utility team. We have all the equipment and knowledge to do the repairs fast to keep our customers in service with little disruption of service. On average our repairs take a day, with water off to customers for about 4 hours on average.

Cold weather also makes working outside more difficult. Snow and ice with lots of layers of clothes can make moving around more difficult. Also, the cold tends to freeze the wet soil that we dig out in the dump trucks, but some trucks have boxes that the exhaust runs through to keep this from happening. It helps, but when it's subzero, it still freezes. Our team is used to working in this weather and has all the gear to stay warm and comfortable. Our crew is amazing.

SOLID WASTE 101

In Bloomington, the City provides curbside collection of garbage (weekly), recycling (every-other-week), organics recycling (weekly), yard waste (seasonally) and bulky items for single-family properties, which include duplex housing and certain townhomes. The City completes the billing and provides customer service, program administration, and education and outreach for the approximately 22,000 households within the residential solid waste program.

Solid Waste Contract Renewal with Bloomington Haulers' Consortium

The City contracts with a group of haulers, the Bloomington Haulers' Consortium, for residential solid waste services. The Consortium is made up of Republic Services servicing 54% of residential solid waste dwelling units, Waste Management servicing 36%, and Aspen Waste Systems servicing 10%. In 2024, after a lengthy review of customer service and pricing, the City opted to renew the Agreement with the Consortium for an additional five-year period due to resident satisfaction, environmental benefits, and competitive prices. Service enhancements in the renewed contract, which begins in 2026, will include the addition of an every-other-week garbage service level. The new contract will remove the collection of brush during every-other-year Curbside Cleanup to help reduce the costs of the Curbside Cleanup program.

New Pay-As-You-Throw Rates Structure

In 2024, the City contracted with Skumatz Economic Research Associates, Inc. (SERA) to study how a Pay-As-You-Throw rates structure can motivate residents to reduce their garbage output and recycle and compost more items. City staff gathered data through a curbside cart survey, online customer surveys, and in-person outreach at multiple events. SERA included additional data from comparable case studies. After reviewing SERA's detailed analysis and multiple options, the City Council approved plans to implement a new solid waste rate structure model. The new rate structure will include a higher financial incentive between garbage cart sizes, and the addition of a new garbage service level: every-other-week garbage pickup. The changes will take effect in 2026.

Customer Service processes more than 135,000 meter readings per year and manages approximately 27,000 accounts

Customer Service continually strives to meet or exceed our customers' expectations. In addition to the permitting duties, staff is charged with mandated **ONE-CALL UTILITY LOCATING.** Customer Service also oversees the water meter maintenance program, and read more than 134,486 readings in 2024.

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