



minnetonka memo

A newsletter from the city of Minnetonka
December 2005

Holiday offerings at the Arts Center on 7

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HOLIDAY entertainment, check out these local groups. All performances take place at the Arts Center on 7, 18285 Hwy. 7, Minnetonka, a facility co-owned by the city of Minnetonka and the Minnetonka School District.

Music Association of Minnetonka

For 32 years, the Music Association of Minnetonka (MAM) has been providing enriching musical experiences for people of all ages and abilities. December performance dates and times are as follows:

Friday, Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m.

Juletide, featuring the Minnetonka Choral Reflections, Symphony Chorus, and Cappella, Concert and Chamber choirs


Saturday, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.

Sounds of Youth, with the Cappella, Concert, and Chamber choirs

Sunday, Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m.

Welcome Winter, featuring the Minnetonka Symphony and Chamber Orchestras and music by Haydn, Respighi and Schubert

Minnetonka Community Theatre

Add a bit of a magic to your holiday season with the timeless enchantment of *Cinderella*, a fairy tale reborn with the Rodgers and Hammerstein hallmarks of originality, charm and elegance as well as great warmth and a touch of hilarity that both children and adults will enjoy. The Minnetonka Community Theatre invites you and your family to attend a special holiday performance of *Cinderella* Dec. 16, 17 and 18. Evening performances will take place each day, with matinee performances on the weekend. Tickets are \$10. To order, call the box office at (952) 401-5748 or visit www.minnetonkatheatre.com. 

Truth in Taxation hearing set for Dec. 5

MINNETONKA RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY owners are invited to participate in the city's annual Truth in Taxation budget hearing, set for Monday, Dec. 5, at 6:30 p.m. in the city council chambers, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka.

November's *Minnetonka Memo* provided information on the city's proposed 2006 budget as well as its potential effect on property taxes. The city is committed to providing residents with accurate and timely financial information to allow for open public discussions prior to finalizing decisions on city services and the costs for those services. The city council discussed preliminary budget plans at two public meetings in August and November and plans to adopt the final 2006 budget on Dec. 19.


In recent years, basic services have been reduced to absorb state revenue cuts and state-imposed costs. The city's operating and capital spending was cut by nearly \$1 million in 2003, and the state continues to impose additional requirements on the city without providing funding. In

total, state-imposed mandates will cost Minnetonka property taxpayers about \$1 million in 2006.

To absorb these unfunded costs and still meet residents' service and tax expectations, the city council directed that \$250,000 of budget reductions be made to limit 2006 budget growth to historical levels — about four percent annually. This means that property taxes will increase by one percent

to cover basic city services, with an additional 3.3 percent necessary to pay for state-imposed costs.

The council also directed that the 2006 budget continue to place a priority on public safety and street maintenance, and adopted a major road revitalization program earlier this year to restore and maintain local streets. The new road revitalization program will increase property taxes an additional 5.5 percent in 2006, for a total of 9.8 percent.

For more information on the proposed 2006 budget, please see the October or November 2005 *Minnetonka Memo*, or visit www.eminnetonka.com. For information on the road revitalization program, please see page 3 of this newsletter. If you are unable to attend the Dec. 5 meeting but would like to offer your comments, please contact Minnetonka Mike at mike@eminnetonka.com or (952) 939-8586. 


Truth in Taxation Public Hearing
Monday, December 5, 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers
14600 Minnetonka Blvd.

General election results announced

THE GENERAL ELECTION WAS HELD Tuesday, Nov. 8. Minnetonka offices on the ballot included Mayor, Council at Large Seat A, and Council at Large Seat B. Just over 26 percent — 9,297 — of the 35,422 registered voters in Minnetonka cast ballots in the general election.

Jan Callison was elected mayor, Dick Allendorf was elected for Council at Large, Seat A, and incumbent Terry Schneider was re-elected to Council at Large Seat B. To see the total vote counts for each candidate, visit www.eminnetonka.com.

The newly elected city council members will be sworn in January 9, 2006.

For information about the Nov. 22 Dist. 43 special election results, visit www.eminnetonka.com. 

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Volunteer Corner



Volunteer with the city of Minnetonka

IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE MORE INVOLVED with your city, consider volunteering your skills and time working with Minnetonka city staff on specific projects. You'll become more familiar with city programs, services, and issues; while the city benefits by stretching tax dollars and establishing partnerships between citizens and staff.

Volunteers can range in age from teens to older adults. Opportunities are available for individuals and groups. Volunteer positions may involve a one-time special event, a short-term project, or ongoing opportunities.

Current volunteer positions include clerk; history event staff member; Juvenile Diversion Program leader; maintenance person for equipment and grounds at Williston Center; Minnetonka Mike mascot; oral history interviewer and transcriber; and storm drain monitor. Several of these positions require a background check.

For more information on each position or for an application, visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on Volunteer Opportunities, or call Joan Post, volunteer coordinator, at (952) 939-8215. ☺

Minnetonka celebrates 50th anniversary

IT'S TIME FOR A PARTY, AND IN THIS CASE IT'S a year-long party! In 2006, Minnetonka marks its 50th year of incorporation as a village. A volunteer committee made up of residents, business people and representatives of the local school district, Hennepin County Library and other organizations has been hard at work since March planning a year's worth of activities for Minnetonka residents of all ages to help celebrate Minnetonka's last 50 years.



Many of the anniversary activities will take place in conjunction with existing city events such as Kids' Fest and Summer Fest, but other activities will be available as well, such as a community reading collaborative, coloring contest, self-guided historical tours and an August Jubilee event on the actual date of Minnetonka's incorporation as a village. Don't miss the January *Minnetonka Memo*, which will include a full list of activities for next year!

How you can help

The volunteer committee is working on a historical display about Minnetonka's history, especially over the last 50 years. While the city and the Minnetonka Historical Society have many photos, we need your help to make the display truly fantastic. If you have photos or memorabilia of Minnetonka's history that you'd like to share with your fellow residents, please share it with the anniversary committee.

Also, a documentary video is being developed. If you have old film showing historic events in Minnetonka's history, such as the building of main roads or shopping centers, please consider loaning it to the anniversary committee for possible inclusion in the documentary.

All items shared will be returned to you after they have been copied. For more information contact Jacque Larson, community relations manager, at (952) 939-820 or e-mail jl Larson@eminnetonka.com. Thank you for helping to make next year's anniversary memorable! ☺

New offerings at Williston Center

ENJOY THE NEW BASKETBALL AND VOLLEYBALL COURTS AT THE WILLISTON FITNESS CENTER during open gym programs. See table for available days, times and ages.

Do you want to improve your baseball or softball game? Then take part in private hitting, pitching and/or fielding lessons from three highly qualified instructors at the Williston Center. Williston amenities include four batting cages, an instruction cage and several pitching mounds. See table for fees.

The Williston Fitness Center, owned and operated by the city of Minnetonka, is located at 14509 Minnetonka Drive, Minnetonka. Call (952) 939-8378 or visit www.eminnetonka.com for more information. ☺

Ice rinks to open

WEATHER PERMITTING, SKATING RINKS and warming houses at eight locations will open Monday, Dec. 26, and will remain open through Feb. 13, 2006. Call (952) 939-TELL for conditions, closings and updates.

Locations are Boulder Creek, Covington, Gro Tonka, McKenzie, Meadow and Spring Hill parks and Gatewood and Glen Lake schools.

Hours are weekdays 4:30-9 p.m.; Saturdays, noon to 9 p.m.; and Sundays, 12:30-6 p.m. ☺

Co-Rec Open Gym Basketball		
Monday	8 – 10 p.m.	All Ages
Tuesday	6 – 8 a.m.	Adult
Thursday	10:30 – 11:45 a.m.	55+
Thursday	11:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Adult
Co-Rec Open Gym Volleyball		
Tuesday	10:30 – 11:45 a.m.	55+
Tuesday	11:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Adult
Thursday	6 – 8 p.m.	All Ages

Softball/Baseball Private Lesson Fees	
Williston Members	
30 minutes	\$35
60 minutes	\$65
Group(4 or more)	\$99
Non-Member	
30 minutes	\$40
60 minutes	\$70
Group(4 or more)	\$125

City road improvements continue

AS ANNOUNCED IN THE AUGUST *Minnetonka Memo*, the city has undertaken a road revitalization program to respond to residents' growing concerns about local road conditions.

The program will take two approaches to improving roads: thin overlay, a cost-effective method for stabilizing deteriorating pavement and prolonging the life of city streets by five to eight years; and complete road reconstruction for the worst roads.

Thin overlay work has already begun. This year, Minnetonka Public Works crews used nearly 9,500 tons of bituminous to complete thin overlays on eight miles of streets. Beginning next year and continuing through 2011, about 12 miles of streets will receive thin overlay each year. The general areas that will be covered in 2006 are shown on the map accompanying this article.

How quickly the road revitalization program will be implemented will be



decided by the Minnetonka City Council this month, when they set the city's total property tax levy (see front page).

For more information, call Jeff Dubay, streets maintenance manager, at (952) 988-8414. ♪

Community association wins CAR Award

CONCERNED ABOUT THE water quality in their local pond and wanting to take action to improve it, Al and Rosemary Ritchie and nearly 40 of their neighbors formed the Clear Springs Pond Association. Over several meetings last winter, the group created a five-year plan to improve the pond's water quality.

This spring, they started implementing several components of their plan, including sampling the pond for phosphorus levels and expanding the existing wetland buffer. In addition, the group is very aware of the affect storm water runoff has on the pond and so has pledged to clean up the storm water in the neighborhood.

While Al and Rosemary Ritchie were the catalyst for bringing this group together, the entire neighborhood has participated in the project, including Jeff Becklund; Pam and Greg Bradford; Vicki Brouillette; Bette and Olivier Breton; Jill and Steve Ericson; Pip and Al Fischer; Knute and JoAnn Gilbertson; Rich and Joan Gosen; Tina and Tom Hoff; Kim, Doug, Lili and Colette Jaeger; Cynthia Jung; Jane Kennedy; Mark and Callie Kuyava; Peg and Scott Lord; Ralph and Mary Ann Mader; Ken and Mary Lou Marsh; Ron and Pat Parker;



The Clear Springs Pond Association recently received a CAR award from the city. Photo courtesy of Andrea Lex.

Joyce Schultenover; Carl and Beth Swaggart; and Pete and Mary Thome.

For their efforts, the Clear Springs Pond Association received a Minnetonka Community Action Recognition Award at the Nov. 28 meeting of the Minnetonka City Council.

The Minnetonka Community Action Recognition Award was created to recognize and celebrate the contributions of individuals, organizations and businesses that contribute so much to Minnetonka's unique character. Visit www.eminnetonka.com to complete and submit an application online, or call (952) 939-8207. ♪

Leaking water... and money

IF YOU'VE NOTICED A SPIKE IN YOUR WATER bill, it's time for a little detective work. You might have a leaky faucet or toilet in your home.

Minnetonka residents pay \$1.55 per thousand gallons of water used. That's a relatively low figure that can add up fast when you consider the average leaky toilet may waste up to 500 gallons of water in a single day. That amounts to a staggering 15,000 gallons a month and 45,000 gallons over a three-month billing cycle—about \$70.

Leaky faucets aren't as bad, but still may leak up to 2,000 gallons of water per year.

If you hear your toilet storage tank refilling occasionally, even though it hasn't been flushed, then you may have a leak. A \$15 repair kit from the local hardware or home improvement store will most likely fix the problem.

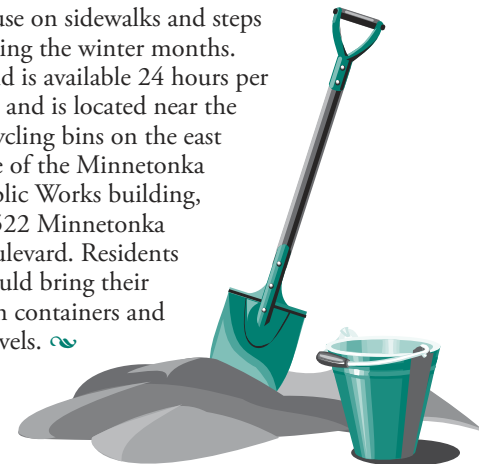
Help to conserve water by being aware of how much water appliances use: clothes washers can use as much as 35 gallons of water per cycle while dishwashers use nearly 25 gallons per cycle.

To save about 20 gallons of water, take a quick shower rather than a bath. Save more than five gallons of water per day by turning off the water when brushing your teeth or shaving.

By taking the time to fix leaking faucets and toilets, and by taking a few simple steps to conserve water, you'll reduce your water bill and do your part to protect one of the earth's most precious natural resources—water. ♪

Sand available to residents

THE CITY OF MINNETONKA HAS sand available for residents to use on sidewalks and steps during the winter months. Sand is available 24 hours per day and is located near the recycling bins on the east side of the Minnetonka Public Works building, 11522 Minnetonka Boulevard. Residents should bring their own containers and shovels. ♪



The basics of tree pruning: how, what, why and when

THE TREES ARE BARE, AND NOW IS A great time to assess whether or not they should be pruned. Read on for more information on tree pruning.

Why prune your trees?

In a forest, trees naturally “self-prune” by dropping branches that don’t get enough sunlight or simply falling over as a result of internal decay. Those fallen parts then decay over time and add nutrients to the soil, helping new trees and plants to grow.

However, in a suburban area like Minnetonka where homes, buildings and people co-exist next to trees, it’s important to keep trees pruned in order to prevent property damage or personal injury. By properly pruning a tree, you reduce the risk of falling trees or branches.

When should trees be pruned?

It’s a common belief that trees have to be mature before pruning is required, but it’s better for the tree to be pruned and maintained while young, when the pruning cuts required will be smaller and will close better than larger wounds on older trees.

Survey your trees in the autumn, after the leaves fall. You can see the tree structure clearly and examine them for visible signs that the tree should be pruned or removed. For example, if you see large holes in a tree trunk, call a certified arborist to assess the species of tree, the level of decay and its location in your yard. They can then determine how likely the tree is to fall.

While you can prune most trees throughout the year, it does make them more susceptible to insects, disease and other stresses that can be avoided if pruning is done in late winter. One exception is oak trees, which should never be pruned between April and June (tax day to 4th of July), as this is the high-risk season for transmission of oak wilt disease.

The best time for pruning trees is February or March, just before spring growth begins. Diseases and insects are not yet active, but the tree will begin growing soon, thus sealing any wounds left behind by pruning.

Who should prune trees?

A good rule of thumb is, if you have to get on a ladder or use a chainsaw to prune a branch, you should consider hiring a certified arborist instead. The need of a ladder or chainsaw means you are dealing with a large tree, and you can do a lot of damage to the tree and yourself if you are not a trained professional.

Also, never prune trees that are near or under utility lines. Instead, contact the utility company and then a professional trained to work near the lines.

THE CITY OF MINNETONKA forestry staff thanks the many residents who removed their elm trees with Dutch elm disease and red oak trees with oak wilt this year. Your diligence is appreciated, and since these tree diseases spread across many property lines, your role in helping protect Minnetonka’s community forest is crucial!

How do I prune a tree?

The most important points to remember when pruning a tree are:

- Remove any dead or decaying branches, as well as any branches that impede sightlines near driveways or home entryways.
- Remove any branches that cross or rub against each other.
- When cutting, favor branches with u-shaped unions. Remove branches with v-shaped unions, because they are not structurally sound.
- Most trees should only have one central leader. More than one leader can lead to structural weakness. Favor the larger, more developed leader.
- Remove any broken or damaged branches.
- When pruning, make clean cuts to encourage better wound closure, which will reduce the chance of decay.
- When pruning trees with fungal or bacterial disease, sterilize your pruning tool between cuts with diluted bleach.
- Raising the crown by pruning the lower branches of the tree creates better clearance for vehicles and mowing.

What tools do I need?

Use a hand pruner for branches up to one inch in diameter; a handsaw or loppers for branches up to four inches; and a chainsaw for branches or limbs larger than four inches.

A pole pruner allows for pruning branches higher in the canopy of the tree, but should only be used for branches smaller than four inches.

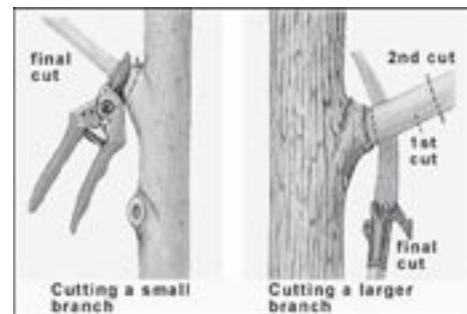
Where should I cut?

Make small cuts early in the tree’s life to minimize decay, and cut branch, not stem, tissue. In order to do this, first find the branch bark ridge—the area where the stem tissue and branch tissue merge. Cut the branch just outside the branch bark ridge.

The trunk provides stability for the tree, so never make the pruning cut flush to the trunk—you’ll be cutting into the stem tissue, which can weaken the tree structure by possibly allowing decay.

Don’t leave a large branch “stub,”—these require more energy for the tree to seal. When pruning live branches, use the “three-cut method” (taken from *How to Prune Trees*, published by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service).

1. The first cut is a shallow notch made on the underside of the branch, outside the branch collar. This cut prevents a falling branch from tearing stem tissue as it pulls away from the tree.
2. The second cut should be outside the first cut, all the way through the branch, leaving a short stub.
3. The stub is then cut just outside the branch bark ridge/branch collar, completing the operation.



Should pruning wounds be covered?

The only time you should cover pruning wounds is when you are cleaning up a storm damaged branch or limb on an oak tree during the high-risk season (April through June) for oak wilt. In these instances, paint on a water-based paint (no tar or spray paint) within the first 15 minutes of making a clean cut. In all other cases, as long as a good pruning cut is made, trees naturally seal over wounds.

For more information on tree pruning, visit www.mntrees.org; www.na.fs.us or www.extension.umn.edu. For a certified arborist, visit www.isa-msa.org.

Safety tips for keeping the happy in the holidays

KEEP YOUR HOLIDAYS MERRY INSTEAD of scary by following these simple security tips, offered by the Minnetonka Police Department.

Credit cards

Credit cards are as good as cash and unfortunately, not all clerks check identification. Most credit card companies hold the owner responsible for all purchases until the card is reported lost.

- Keep your credit cards in a safe place — never leave them visible in the house.
- Inventory your credit cards daily and report any losses immediately.
- Take only the cards you will need while shopping.

Cash

The tendency to carry large amounts of cash is greater during the holidays than at any other time of the year. Take special precautions when carrying large amounts of cash, and use checks or credit cards whenever possible.

- If you must carry cash, take only the amount you plan to spend.
- Avoid flashing your money in public. Keep your bills flat in a wallet so you can count them without taking them out of the wallet.
- Keep all money in a safe place — do not leave it visible around the house.

Transporting Gifts in Your Car

Gifts left unattended on the back seat of your car can be tempting to a thief.

- Always lock your car, and lock all purchases in the trunk of your car before going to your next destination.

- Pick up major items at the end rather than the beginning of a shopping trip.
- When arriving home, immediately remove all purchases from your car.

Deliveries

Packages left on doorsteps are easier to steal than those left in cars. Thieves have been known to follow delivery trucks, so don't allow them an easy opportunity.

- Schedule deliveries for times you will be home. If you are unable to be home, make arrangements to have parcels delivered to a neighbor.
- If you observe a delivery person doing anything that looks suspicious, ask to see their identification or call the police.

Displaying Gifts

Many people like to keep their presents out for days before or after the holiday. Houses are particularly vulnerable during this time, given the amount of time they are left vacant while residents are out shopping and visiting.

- Keep presents hidden until they are given, or put them away before leaving your house.
- Garage locks are usually the weakest locks in a home, so avoid hiding presents in the garage. A second-story closet or attic is a safer storage place.
- Collapse boxes, especially from items such as televisions and stereos, and put the boxes in garbage bags so they are not easily visible to potential thieves.

For more information, call Nicole Nelson, crime prevention analyst, Minnetonka Police Department, at (952) 939-8546. ☺

Do you know a Caring Youth?

IF YOU KNOW A YOUNG PERSON IN GRADES 7 through 12 who shows an ongoing awareness of others through volunteering or other activities, consider nominating him or her for a 2006 Caring Youth award.

Each year, the cities of Minnetonka, Hopkins and Golden Valley, in conjunction with the Hopkins and Minnetonka school districts, host a Caring Youth Recognition event to honor the contributions of caring young people. This year's event is set for Thursday, March 23, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. at the Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka.

To qualify for the award, a Caring Youth must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Live in Minnetonka, Hopkins or Golden Valley;
- Attend school in Hopkins or Minnetonka; and/or
- Volunteer (unpaid and not as a requirement for a class or co-curricular program) in Minnetonka, Hopkins or Golden Valley.

Young people may only be nominated by the organization they are serving. Nominations are due by Friday, Feb. 3, 2006. For more information, visit www.eminnetonka.com or call Jacque Larson, community relations manager, at (952) 939-8207. ☺

Get the inside scoop on city news

WOULD YOU LIKE A WEEKLY EMAIL update on what's happening in Minnetonka, including information on road construction projects, city council meetings, crime alerts and recreation offerings?

Then subscribe to Hot Topics, the city's free electronic newsletter that is sent out each Friday. It's easy to sign up—visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on "Sign up for our e-newsletter." For more information call (952) 939-8207 or email jl Larson@eminnetonka.com. ☺

Spaces still available for the 2006 Citizenship Academy

WHAT'S THE ROLE OF THE CITY COUNCIL? WHAT ARE THE CITY'S ZONING AND SUBDIVISION regulations? What recreational opportunities does the city offer? These are just a few of the questions you'll be able to answer after attending the 2006 Minnetonka Citizenship Academy.

This free program takes place over four evening sessions — Feb. 7, 15, 21 and 28 — at Minnetonka City Hall. Throughout the sessions, you'll hear presentations from various departments of the city including police, fire, administration, planning, community development, engineering, public works, recreation, legal and finance. Graduates receive special city council recognition upon completion of the program.

To enroll, email Jacque Larson, community relations manager, at jl Larson@eminnetonka.com or call (952) 939-8207. Please provide your name, address, phone number and email address. Registration deadline is January 10, 2006. ☺

Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

December
2005

Call (952) 939-8200
for more
information.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

5 City Council (*Truth in Taxation hearing*), 6:30 p.m.

7 Park Board, 7 p.m.

8 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.

13 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.; Economic Development Authority, 6 p.m.

19 City Council, 6:30 p.m.

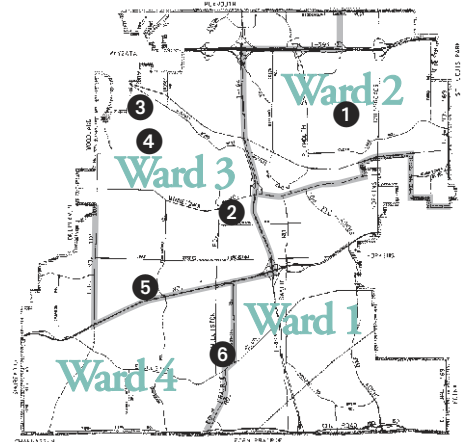
26 Christmas observed, *city offices closed*

29 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The following items are tentatively scheduled to come before the Planning Commission in December. Please call (952) 939-8200 for updated information or visit the city Web site at www.eminnetonka.com. Meeting agendas are posted on the site the Friday prior to each commission meeting.

- 1 Aggregate side yard setback variance for an addition to the home at 11925 Hilloway Road. (05092.05a)
- 2 Wetland setback and buffer variances for a performance area on the Minnetonka Civic Center campus.
- 3 Multiple variances to build a new house at 2510 Bantas Point Lane.
- 4 Aggregate side yard setback variance for a new house at 16000 Grays Bay Boulevard. (05093.05a)
- 5 Preliminary plat, site and building plan review, building setback variance and parking lot variances for four two-story office condominiums at 16200 State Hwy. 7. (86092.05a)
- 6 Three-phased Glen Lake Redevelopment Project in the vicinity of 14400 Excelsior Boulevard. (05091.05a)



Find out more about city projects

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN THE CITY — FROM ROADS, TO SEWER AND WATER UTILITIES, TO DRAINAGE AND storm sewer — visit www.eminnetonka.com to find out everything you want to know. Click on “Hot Topics,” then “Projects.” Each project is listed by the street on which it is taking place. You’ll find project maps, newsletters, schedules and contact information for city staff if you have questions. Each project page is updated frequently, so you’ll find up-to-the-minute information when you visit. ☺

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CITY OF MINNETONKA

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8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

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