

MINNETONKA MEMO

A publication from the City of Minnetonka



Ranked choice voting adopted by Minnetonka voters

Election Day 2020 was Tuesday, Nov. 3, and a majority of Minnetonka residents voted to adopt the use of ranked choice voting for city elections (mayor and city council) beginning November 2021.

Adoption of ranked choice voting received 54.7 percent of the vote (18,475 total votes), while 45.3 percent (15,293 total) voted to reject the change and continue using the city's current election system.

Under ranked choice voting, voters will be asked to rank mayoral and city council candidates in order of

preference on their ballots, and primary elections will no longer be used. The city council will adopt an ordinance to establish rules and procedures.

Please remember, ranked choice voting only impacts mayor and city council elections. It will not change the way you vote for school board, county, state or federal offices.

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/rankedchoicevoting to learn more.

Apply to serve on a board or commission

Do you want to make a positive impact in our community and get involved in local government? Apply to serve on one of Minnetonka's boards and commissions, including our new sustainability commission!

Sustainability commission

This new commission will further the city's efforts to protect and preserve the environment by reviewing and providing input on sustainability issues, acting as a sustainability ambassador to the community and serving as a resource for existing city advisory groups. The commission will meet monthly or bi-monthly on a weekday evening at City Hall.

We're seeking Minnetonka residents to serve on the commission and fill the following openings:

- **Five adult members**
- **Two young adult members under 25 years old**, one of which must attend Minnetonka, Hopkins or Wayzata High School
- Two additional members from the park board and planning commission

Contact Drew Ingvalson at 952-939-8293 or dingvalson@minnetonkamn.gov to learn more or ask questions about the sustainability commission.

Other openings

- **Park Board**
- **Senior Advisory Board**

Apply by Jan. 1, 2021

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/boards-commissions to learn more and apply online by Jan. 1, 2021. You must be a Minnetonka resident and able to fulfill all obligations. All applications remain on-file for one year so you can be considered for any mid-year vacancies.

The online application is equipped with Google translate to accommodate a variety of languages.

Contact McKaia Ryberg at 952-939-8211 or mryberg@minnetonkamn.gov to ask questions or request application assistance.

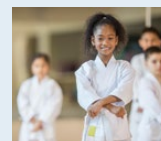
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2021 budget summary and public hearing

In September, the city council adopted a preliminary property tax increase of no more than 3.5 percent for 2021.

The council will vote on adoption of the final 2021 budget and levy at its Dec. 7 meeting.

What does this mean for the average homeowner?

City property taxes for the median valued home in Minnetonka (\$390,000 for taxes payable in 2021) will decrease by approximately \$5* next year.

What's new in 2021?

The goal of the budget is to reduce the 2021 levy from prior projections, without burdening future years. New initiatives include \$150,000 for diversity, equity and inclusion; \$127,000 for elections and \$50,000 to expand sustainability efforts. Adjustments to the Capital Improvement Program and a change in the city's health insurance provider allowed the city to reduce the levy increase by more than two percent.



Learn more and provide input

To review the Sept. 21 meeting materials and learn more about the 2021 budget, visit minnetonkamn.gov/budget.

To provide feedback on the 2021 budget:

- Submit feedback online at minnetonkamn.gov/request.
- Attend the Monday, Dec. 7 virtual city council meeting. Visit minnetonkamn.gov/budget-meeting to sign up to speak, submit written comments and watch live or on-demand.
- Email Finance Director Darin Nelson at dnelson@minnetonkamn.gov.

Learn more about the 2021 budget at minnetonkamn.gov/budget.

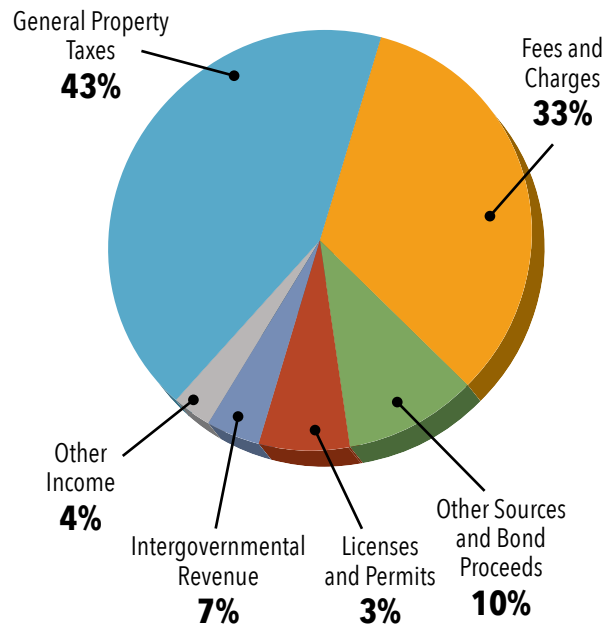
**The exact impact on specific properties will depend on the assessed market value of each home. These numbers do not include the proposed increase from other taxing jurisdictions such as the county and local school district.*

2021 City Budget Overview

Here's how we're funded

Projected 2021 Revenue

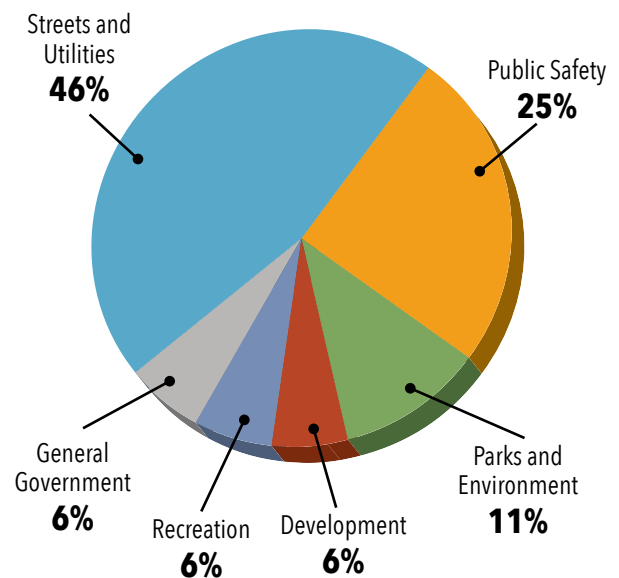
Property taxes make up approximately 43 percent of the city's expected revenue in 2021.



Here's how it's spent

Projected 2021 Expenses

The city spends 71 percent of its budget on essential services: public safety, streets and utilities.



Get ready for winter snow removal

Please keep the following items in mind as winter weather approaches:

- **Plowing operations typically begin between midnight and 4 a.m.** (but it can vary).
- **Above-average snowfalls may require a multi-day operation** to clear (in this order) streets, parking lots, sidewalks, trails and ice rinks.
- **Snow removal takes place in three steps:** a first pass to provide access, full-width plowing and cleanup.
- **Snow cleared from your property must remain on your property.** Don't push it into the street or onto sidewalks and trails, where it could interfere with traffic or plows.
- **The city will repair damage to curbs and sod caused by city snowplows.** Mailboxes damaged by direct contact with city snowplows will also be repaired. Damage to private improvements (fences, sprinklers, rock gardens, etc.) in the right-of-way are the responsibility of the property owner.
- **Place curb markers to show plows the edge of your lawn or driveway.** These are available for free at city hall. Try to install before the ground freezes.



- **Plowing will result in snow at the end of your driveway.** Unfortunately, this is unavoidable and clearing the driveway is the property owner's responsibility. Plows will try to evenly distribute snow in cul-de-sacs when possible.

- **Set garbage and recycling cans behind the curb line** so they don't interfere with plows.
- Visit minnetonkamn.gov/snowplowing for full details about snow plowing in Minnetonka. Call public works at 952-988-8400 to learn more or ask questions.

Winter parking reminders

- Vehicles can't be parked on a public street between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., or in one place for more than six hours.
- Parked vehicles and trailers can't interfere with the removal of snow, sleet, slush or ice and may be towed at the owner's expense.
- Visit minnetonkamn.gov/parking to learn more. Call Minnetonka Police at 952-939-8500 with questions or concerns.



Officer Matt Vellance receives police department's top honor

Minnetonka Police Officer Matt Vellance received the department's highest honor - the 2020 Glen Lake Optimist Officer of the Year award - which recognizes contributions to the department and community over the past year.

The Officer of the Year models the city's shared values, provides leadership and demonstrates commitment to the department and community through performance and professionalism.

Officer Vellance has valiantly served the Minnetonka Police Department since 2008 in a number of roles: patrol officer, retail crimes investigator, SWAT team member and has led training exercises. He's a dedicated teacher and mentor who always works to improve both himself and his peers.

Exceptional leadership skills, dedication to the department and his contagious enthusiasm help Vellance positively impact our community.

Congratulations to Officer Vellance on this well-deserved honor!



Register for winter-spring recreation programs

Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services has developed a wide array of winter and spring programming to help you stay active and engaged, while keeping you safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the uncertainty caused by COVID-19, we didn't publish a winter-spring recreation brochure. Instead, all programs and descriptions are available online, and highlights for each age group are included below. Please note, programming is subject to change.

Registration begins Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 8 a.m. Visit minnetonkamn.gov/register to browse programs, learn more and register online. Call 952-939-8203 to register by phone Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

WINTER-SPRING RECREATION Program Highlights



PRESCHOOL

- Kidcreate and Science Explorers
- Hop-Kids Sports
- Music Together
- Platinum Dance



YOUTH AND TEEN

- Afterschool Outdoor Winter Adventure
- Blizzard Ski and Snowboard Club
- Conquer Ninja Rec Team
- RevSports Basketball Skills
- At-Home Stem Kits
- Drone Championships
- Tennis and Swimming Lessons
- Esports Gaming



ADULT

- Broomball League
- Co-Rec, Men's and Women's Volleyball Leagues
- 3-on-3 Basketball League
- Badminton Open Gym
- Martial Arts
- Personal Defense and Safety Training



SENIOR

- Yoga and Fitness Classes
- Technology Classes
- Lunch and a Movie
- Dementia Programs
- Presentations
- History Classes

Hit the ice this winter!

It's winter in Minnesota, so that means it's ice skating and hockey season! Check out our great indoor and outdoor skating options.

Minnetonka Ice Arena

Enjoy public open skate, ice skating lessons and adult open hockey this winter at the Minnetonka Ice Arena (3401 Williston Road).

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/icearena, or call 952-939-8310 to learn more and find COVID-19 safety guidelines.



Outdoor Ice Skating Rinks

Outdoor skating rinks with warming houses are scheduled to open Saturday, Dec. 19 (weather permitting) at the following Minnetonka and Hopkins parks.

- **Minnetonka:** Boulder Creek, Covington, Glen Lake, Gro Tonka, McKenzie, Meadow and Spring Hill
- **Hopkins:** Burnes, Central, Harley, Interlachen and Valley

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/outdoor-ice-rinks for more information and COVID-19 safety guidelines.

Call the weather hotline at 952-939-8355 for conditions, closings and updates.

• Hours

- Monday-Thursday: 4:30-9 p.m.
- Friday: 4:30-9:45 p.m.
- Saturday: Noon-9:45 p.m.
- Sunday: Noon-7 p.m.

Get fit at Williston!

Are you looking for a new place to work out, trying to stay active this winter or just hoping to beat the COVID blues in a safe and sustainable way? Sign up for a Williston Fitness Center membership!

Williston is a city-run exercise and fitness center with affordable monthly and annual rates for the entire community.

Work out with treadmills, exercise bikes, ellipticals, stair climbers, weight machines and free weights, or sign up for one of our many fitness programs, including aerobics, water fitness, personal training, group cycling, baseball and softball training, equipment orientations and our run club.

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/Williston or call 952-939-8370 to learn more and view our COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

Membership fees	Monthly	Annual*
Individual (22 and older)	\$45	\$507
Dual	\$62	\$715
Household	\$72	\$820
Senior (60 and older)	\$31	\$358
Senior Dual	\$45	\$507
Student (15-21 years)	\$35	\$417

* Fee for annual memberships paid in full



Save money and energy

Schedule a virtual or in-person visit with the Home Energy Squad to improve your home's energy efficiency and save money on your utility bills.

Virtual visits

Discover low cost energy-saving opportunities and identify future projects to save even more. These free visits typically last 1-2 hours and include:

- A pre-visit questionnaire
- A virtual walk-through of your home with energy experts
- A customized report with recommendations and next steps



Home visits

The city will pay half of the \$100 fee for the first 280 homes to schedule an in-person home evaluation. Home Energy Squad staff will wear masks, wash hands and social distance. These visits include:

- Installation of energy saving materials (LED light bulbs, weather stripping, programmable thermostat, etc.)
- Blower door test (to check for air leaks)
- A customized report with recommendations

Schedule your visit

Visit mncee.org/home-energy-squad, call 651-328-6220 or email hesscheduling@mncee.org to schedule your virtual or in-home visit and learn more.

Southwest Light Rail Transit update

The Metropolitan Council's Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) project is now fully funded and construction continues. Minnetonka highlights include:

- Opus Station platform construction
- Shady Oak Station construction
- Highway 62 tunnel excavation and construction
- Smetana Road and Feltl Court bridge construction



Most construction activity will continue through November, then pause for the winter. Some tasks, including Highway 62 tunnel construction, will continue throughout.

Visit [SWLRT.org](https://www.swlrt.org) to learn more and subscribe to project updates.

Practice holiday-season fire safety

In addition to festive gatherings and decorations, the holiday season also brings increased fire risk. Follow these tips to ensure a fun and safe holiday season!

- **Decorations:** Choose flame-resistant materials. Keep away from lit candles, fireplaces, stoves, windows and doors.
- **Lights:** Hang with clips instead of nails. Ensure indoor- and outdoor-only lights are used in the proper setting. Replace lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Turn off lights before leaving or going to bed.
- **Entertaining:** Ensure all smoke alarms are working properly. Tell guests about your home's fire escape plan. Never leave the kitchen while cooking; if you have to step away, turn off the stove and remove pans from burners.



Learn more about fire safety at [nfpa.org/education](https://www.nfpa.org/education).

How we protect our community forest

The city's plant pest program limits the spread of Dutch elm disease, oak wilt and emerald ash borer, and prepares for emerging threats to our community forest.

Dutch elm disease (DED) has steadily declined in Minnetonka thanks to an ordinance that requires removal of diseased elms within 30 days. From 2017 to 2020, DED-marked trees have decreased by 70 percent.

Oak wilt occurs in oak trees with fresh wounds from broken or cut limbs and often spreads through shared root systems to nearby trees. Strong summer winds and storms contributed to unusually high oak wilt rates in 2020.

Emerald ash borer (EAB) has been confirmed in Minnetonka, and our staff is scouting for EAB citywide. If you have an infested ash tree, we'll notify you and provide a timeline for winter removal. We'll also work with property owners to manage ash along roads.

Tree protection and planting are also key components of our forestry program. We planted 75 young trees from 20 different species in city parks and public spaces in 2020, and our annual tree sale (held each February) offers diverse tree species to residents at a reduced price. We've also treated numerous ash trees to prevent EAB; treated ash trees are marked with a green band.

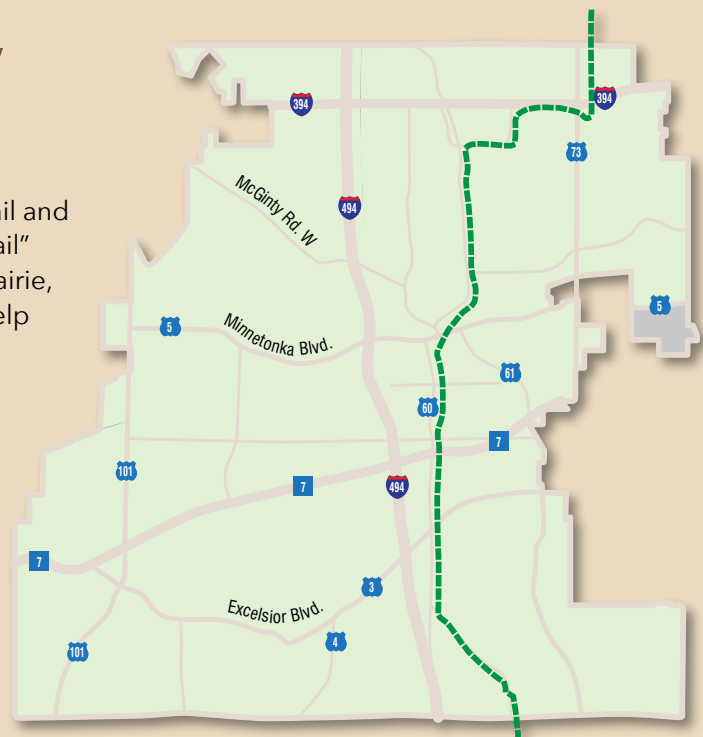
Visit minnetonkamn.gov/NRus to learn more.



Provide input on new regional trail

Three Rivers Park District is planning a new regional trail and wants your input! The 16-mile "Eagle to Bryant Lake Trail" will run north-south to connect Minnetonka to Eden Prairie, Plymouth and Maple Grove. Public engagement will help guide decisions on the trail's preferred route.

Visit LetsTalkThreeRivers.org to learn more, provide feedback and post comments on the trail's interactive map.



Trail: 



City of Minnetonka Calendar

- 2 Park Board, 7 p.m.
- 3 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 7 City Council, 6:30 p.m.
- 10 Economic Development Advisory Commission, 6 p.m.
- 12 Winter Farmers Market, 9 a.m.
- 17 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 21 City Council, 6:30 p.m.
- 25 Christmas Day, city offices closed

City meeting will be held virtually until further notice. Visit minnetonkamn.gov/virtual-meetings to learn how to participate remotely. Watch meetings live and on-demand at minnetonkamn.gov/tv.

For up-to-date information, visit minnetonkamn.gov/calendar or call 952-939-8200.



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Drive-thru the Minnetonka Winter Farmers Market

Dec. 12, Jan. 9, Feb. 13 | 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Minnetonka Community Center | 14600 Minnetonka Blvd.



In 2020, the Minnetonka Winter Farmers Market is a drive-thru experience to keep shoppers safe and socially distant. Pre-order your items or shop in-person with contactless pickup from the safety of your vehicle!

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/farmersmarket to learn more, place a pre-order, become a vendor and subscribe to updates.

Follow the city on social media for market highlights.



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