

MINNETONKA MEMO

A publication from the City of Minnetonka



Minnetonka police begin using body cameras

Beginning in early 2021, Minnetonka police officers began using body-worn cameras to capture video and audio evidence. The goal of this new policy and equipment is to improve criminal investigations, police transparency and public trust.

"People will begin to notice officers wearing cameras as they are out in the community. We are pleased to add them to our toolbox," said Scott Boerboom, Minnetonka's chief of police. "This is a step that will not only assist us with investigations but also help us continue to build relationships all across our community."

The department's in-car video systems - which have been in use for years - were also upgraded and integrated with the new body-worn cameras.

The policy was developed in early 2020, and a draft was presented to residents to review and provide feedback. The city council reviewed the draft at its May 11, 2020 study session, and accepted public comment at its June 22, 2020 meeting.



Visit minnetonkamn.gov/policepolicies to learn more and view the full body-worn cameras policy.



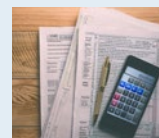
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Register for summer recreation starting March 16

Registration for summer recreation programs begins Tuesday, March 16 at 8 a.m. Visit minnetonkamn.gov/recreationbrochure to check out program options and choose from hundreds of activities, including fitness classes, arts and crafts, kids' programs, senior programs and athletic leagues. There's something for everyone!

All programs will adhere to state COVID-19 protocols and safety measures, and are subject to change or cancellation based on the state's response to the ongoing pandemic.



Visit minnetonkamn.gov/register to register online, or call 952-939-8203 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Summer fun for Minnetonka kids

The Kid's Corner program offers daily fun for Minnetonka and Hopkins kids entering grades 1-5 all summer long! The program meets at Williston Fitness Center and includes swimming, field trips, sports, ice skating, arts and crafts, trips to neighborhood parks and more.

Kid's Corner runs Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. from June 10 to Aug. 18. Cost is \$525 per child per month, billed monthly, plus a non-refundable \$50 registration fee.

Returning families will be offered early registration. Remaining spots will be filled by a lottery, which begins March 16 at 8 a.m. and ends March 26 at 4:30 p.m. All registrations during the lottery period have an equal opportunity to be selected.

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/register to learn more and enter the lottery. Questions? Call 952-939-8203.



Become a savvy energy consumer

Sustainable Minnetonka Webinar Series

Tuesday, March 2 | 6-7 p.m. | Virtual (Zoom)

The Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota will lead this free, virtual, sustainability webinar to provide tips how to be a savvy energy consumer. During the session, you'll:

- Receive tips to reduce energy consumption and expenses.
- Learn about utility programs and rebates to help you save money.
- Be able to ask all your energy-related questions.

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/green to learn more, register and subscribe to email/text updates. Details will be emailed to all who register a day or two before the event.

The Sustainable Minnetonka Webinar Series is brought to you by Minnetonka's Energy Action Team with help from Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy program.





Virtual State of the City Address coming in April

Due to COVID-19, Mayor Brad Wiersum’s State of the City Address couldn’t be held in February as planned. However, a virtual version of this important annual message is coming soon!

The 2021 State of the City Address will be shared with the community via video in April. Look for more details in the April Minnetonka Memo, on the city’s website and on social media.

‘Adopt a Park Sign’ this summer

Our Adopt a Park Sign program is a great way to get outside and keep Minnetonka’s parks beautiful!

Individuals, families, neighborhood groups or organizations can volunteer to plant flowers at the entrances of city parks.

Here’s how it works:

- The city partners with Tonkadale Greenhouse to provide flowers of the volunteer’s choice.



- Volunteers are responsible to plan, water and maintain the flowers throughout the season, beginning in late May or early June.

2020 volunteers will receive first priority to adopt their sign again in 2021.

To volunteer or learn more, visit minnetonkamn.gov/parksign or contact Kate Egert at 952-939-8354 or kegert@minnetonkamn.gov.



AARP tax appointments full

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide typically offers free tax preparation at the Minnetonka Community Center. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, AARP was only able to offer limited assistance by appointment, and all appointments have been filled.

If you relied on this service in the past, you should make alternate plans to prepare and file your 2020 federal or state tax return. Hire an accountant, ask family or friends for help, or use an online service, such as the free online software from AARP and the IRS.

- aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide
- irs.gov/filing

To learn more or ask questions, call the AARP Tax-Aide hotline at 1-888-227-7669.

Property and renter’s tax assistance

If you only need to file for a property tax or renter’s refund, AARP plans to prepare those after April 15. Call 952-939-8393 to be placed on a list for assistance.



Apply for home improvement and purchasing loans

Are you planning a home improvement project or looking to buy your first home? The city has a pair of low-interest loan programs to help qualified applicants. Income and asset limits apply.

- **Home improvements** - The Minnetonka Home Loan Enhancement program offers loans up to \$15,000 to help with qualified enhancements. Visit minnetonkamn.gov/homeloans to learn more.
- **First-time home buyers** - The Welcome to Minnetonka loan program offers loans up to \$15,000 to help with down payments and closing costs. Visit minnetonkamn.gov/welcometominnetonka to learn more.

Contact Economic Development Coordinator Rob Hanson at rhanson@minnetonkamn.gov or 952-939-8234 to learn more or ask questions.

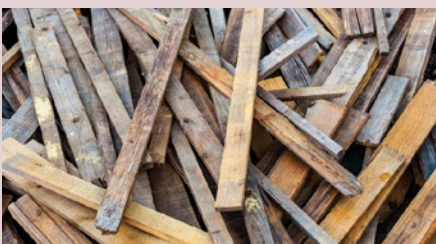
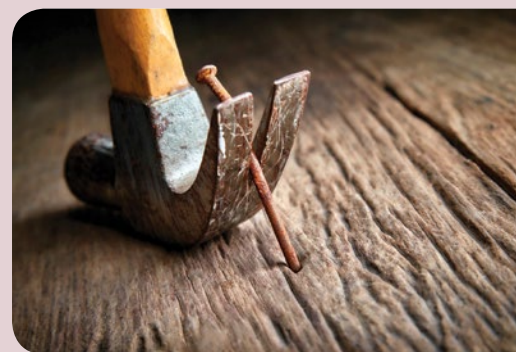


Apply for a deconstruction grant

Deconstruction is the process of carefully dismantling building structures to salvage materials for reuse. To promote this unique form of recycling, Hennepin County is offering grants to help offset deconstruction's additional time and labor costs.

Homeowners and developers can apply to receive grants up to \$5,000. Projects must be 500 square feet or larger on structures built prior to 1950 and must meet other criteria.

Visit hennepin.us/deconstruction to learn more, find eligibility requirements and apply online.



Look for tax notices this month

Residents will receive two notices this month related to property taxes. One is the market value notice from the city, which will affect property taxes to be paid in 2022. The other is the property tax bill for 2021, which is mailed by Hennepin County and must be paid this year.

The city accounts for a little less than 29 percent of a homeowner's total property tax bill. The rest includes taxes for your school district (33 percent), county (32 percent) and other jurisdictions (six percent).

2021 market value notice - applies to 2022 property taxes

Property tax in Minnesota is a complicated process governed by state law. Although the City of Minnetonka administers the assessment, Hennepin County and the Minnesota Department of Revenue oversee the process.

The Minnetonka real estate market continues to thrive, with nearly all property types increasing in value.

Average 2021 value changes by property type

- Single-family homes - 4% increase
- Townhouses - 5% increase
- Condominiums - 6% increase
- Commercial - 2% decrease
- Apartments - 2% increase
- Industrial - 4% increase

Keep in mind, individual properties may vary greatly, and adjustments vary by market.

How is market value determined?

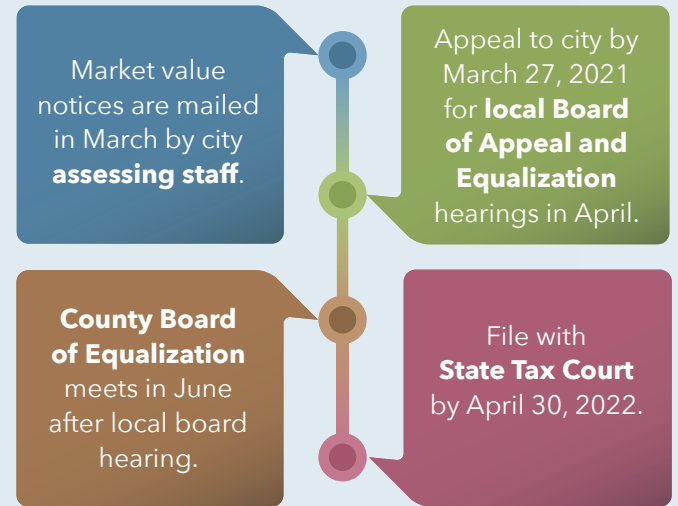
The city's assessing division maintains records for every property in Minnetonka. Adjustments are made to the market value of most properties based on actual real estate sales of comparable properties from the past year.

At least 20 percent of all properties are physically inspected each year and adjusted based on the results of those inspections. Market value adjustments are also made for building additions, remodeling and other improvements.

What if I don't agree with my property's market value?

If you have questions or concerns about your property's market value notice or the assessment process, call 952-939-8220. Assessing staff will review property records and sales information with you. Based on the review, the appraiser may or may not make a change to your market value. If not, you have the right to appeal.

Market value appeals process



Learn more

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/property-taxes and minnetonkamn.gov/market-value to learn more. Call 952-939-8250 to ask questions.

Help is available

There are several state programs that assist eligible residents with property taxes. Many programs are subject to income limitations.

Learn more at minnetonkamn.gov/property-taxes or revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-refund, or call the Minnesota Department of Revenue's tax helpline at 651-296-3781.

Programs include:

- Property tax refund program
- Special property tax refund program
- Senior citizens property tax deferral program
- Foreclosure prevention counseling



City to update Parks, Open Space and Trail System Plan

The City of Minnetonka's Parks, Open Space and Trail System (POST) Plan guides the city's commitment to provide a comprehensive, balanced and sustainable system of parks, open spaces, natural areas, trails and recreation activities and programs to benefit our community.

In 2021, city staff will update the POST Plan with extensive input from the public and elected and appointed officials.

Plan updates will reflect changes in the community, climate and recreation trends, and will complement and collaborate with the city's Trail Improvement Plan and Natural Resources Master Plan.

Learn more and stay tuned

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/POSTplan to learn more and subscribe to email/text updates. Stay tuned for community engagement activities and opportunities to provide input.

Questions? Contact Park and Trail Planner Carol HejlStone at chejlstone@minnetonkamn.gov or 952-939-8342.



Water efficiency rebates available

It pays to improve the efficiency of your lawn's sprinkler system ... literally.

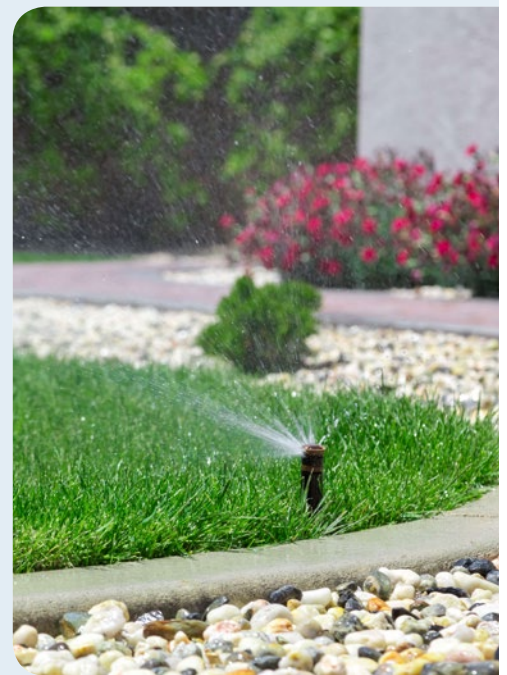


In 2021, Minnetonka property owners who install WaterSense certified sprinkler heads and/or smart controllers can apply for a rebate from the city. WaterSense products are EPA-certified, high-performing products that use at least 20 percent less water.

In Minnetonka, residential water use triples in the summer, so it's important to start thinking about improvements before lawn-watering season arrives. Adjustments to your existing systems, or investments in equipment or technology, can make a big difference for our environment, and your water bill.

Inspect your sprinkler system annually to ensure it's working properly and don't over-water - most plants and trees only need one inch of water per week from a combination of rain and irrigation.

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/NRyou to learn more about the rebate program, apply online and find helpful tips to improve your water efficiency.





Resilient landscaping

Grass lawns provide a nice, tidy aesthetic and space for recreation - but they also need a lot of maintenance, which can impact the environment. If you're considering landscaping changes on your property in 2021, consider these attractive, low-maintenance alternatives.

Choose fescue

Fescue is a type of grass that tolerates cold weather, heat and drought. You can replace existing turf with fescue, or add fescue seed to your lawn's shady, wet or problem spots. Fescue doesn't require fertilizer and tolerates road salt better than more-common grasses.

Fescue lawns can be kept at a height of three inches to encourage root growth, hold moisture in the soil and reduce erosion. Mowing at that height also reduces fossil fuel emissions to help our air quality.

Plant for pollinators

Consider adding pollinator-friendly plants to your yard, such as low-growing legumes and perennial herbs, including Dutch white clover, self-heal (in the mint family) and wild violet.

Another option is to replace traditional turf with meadow vegetation, which is similar to this region's native prairie.

Fertilizers and pesticides should not be used in pollinator habitat, and pollinator habitat in public view must be marked with a lawn sign. Email cpetersen@minnetonkamn.gov to request a sign.

Learn more

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/NRyou to learn more.

NATURAL RESOURCES HAPPENINGS

March 2020

Buckthorn workshop

Tuesday, March 23 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Minnetonka Community Center | Community Room

Learn best practices to control buckthorn and replace with native plants to improve the ecological health of your property.

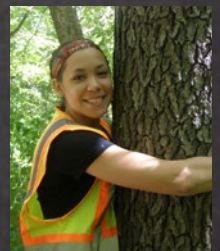
Space is limited, so advance registration is required. Register and learn more at minnetonkamn.gov/NRsignup.



Sign up for natural resources news

Learn more about Minnetonka's abundant natural resources and how you can help protect them!

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/natural-resources to sign up for news, tips and events via email or text message.



City of Minnetonka Calendar

- 2** Sustainable Minnetonka Webinar, 6 p.m.
- 3** Park Board, 7 p.m.
- 4** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 8** City Council, 6:30 p.m.
- 9** Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.
- 11** Economic Development Advisory Commission, 6 p.m.
- 18** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 22** City Council, 6:30 p.m.

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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Apply for summer jobs

The City of Minnetonka has exciting summer seasonal opportunities for high school and college students, or anyone looking for a great part-time job.

We're currently accepting applications for the following positions, which offer valuable experience and training in a fun atmosphere.

Recreation

- Lifeguards and swim instructors
- Shady Oak Beach staff
- Grays Bay Marina attendants
- Kid's Corner day camp staff
- Park Adventures staff
- Park attendants
- Inclusion specialists

Public Works

- Parks, streets and utilities maintenance
- Tree inspectors
- Habitat restoration and watering technicians

For more information or to apply online, visit minnetonkamn.gov/employment.