

Park Perspective

February 2024

www.stlouisparkmn.gov



Meet your St. Louis Park City Council



Pathways to Policing application window opens this spring. Story on page 3.

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This is the official city newsletter of the City of St. Louis Park. It's printed on 30% post-consumer recycled paper in an effort to meet the city's environmentally preferable purchasing policy.



Pictured (left to right): Sue Budd, Margaret Rog, Tim Brausen, Nadia Mohamed, Lynette Dumalag, Yolanda Farris, and Paul Baudhuin. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/city-council for more about the city council.

In January, two St. Louis Park council members and a new mayor were sworn into four-year terms ending January 2028. Incumbents Yolanda Farris and newcomer Paul Baudhuin were sworn in as at large council members, and Nadia Mohamed was sworn in as mayor. The 2023 election saw the highest turnout for a municipal election in St. Louis Park in at least three decades, up 20% from the most recent high in 2019. Municipal elections are held in odd-numbered years. For more about elections and voting, visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/vote or turn to page 2 of this newsletter.

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Planning Manager and Deputy Community Development Director Sean Walther with Planner of the Year Award



Fire Chief Steve Koering with Fire Officer of the Year award plaque

City employees receive statewide awards

Walther named Planner of the Year

Sean Walther, City of St. Louis Park planning manager and deputy community development director, was named the Peg and Otto Schmid Planner of the Year by the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association (MnAPA). The Peg and Otto Schmid Planner of the Year Award is given to a mid-career planner who has demonstrated excellence in planning and a significant, positive contribution to the planning practice in Minnesota.

Sean was recognized for his exemplary work across many areas of planning in St. Louis Park and beyond, as well as his advocacy for race equity, stakeholder engagement and transparency in the planning profession.

Chief Koering is Fire Officer of the Year

St. Louis Park Fire Chief Steve Koering was named the 2023 Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association (MSFCA) Fire Officer of the Year for a city with a population over 10,000. Chief Koering was recognized with the award at the MSFCA annual conference in October 2023.

Award selection criteria emphasizes leadership, innovation, professional development, integrity, service to the public and contributions to the fire service as a whole. All of a nominee's fire service activities and accomplishments are considered, with special emphasis on the last three years. Two Fire Officer of the Year awards are presented annually and categorized based on city population size.

Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/employment to read about current job openings with the city.



Arts & Culture Grants awarded for 2024

Five grants were awarded for 2024 as part of the City of St. Louis Park Arts & Culture Grant program. The program funds art projects and cultural activities that build bridges between artists and communities, engage people in creative learning and promote cultural health, well-being and cultural experiences in St. Louis Park. Nine applications were received during the 2024 grant process. The review committee chose five projects that best met the grant program criteria:

- **Aquila Elementary Parent Teacher Organization:** outdoor mural at Aquila Elementary School (\$3,300)
- **Community Storytelling Forum:** community storyteller events throughout the year (\$500)

- **Overdressed Duo:** three free public opera performances in the park (\$3,700)
- **Thai Cultural Council of MN/Wat Promwachirayan:** Southeast Asian performances during the Minnesota Thai Festival 2024 (\$7,500)
- **WOW Mobile Metal Lab:** public workshops to create sculptures (\$5,000)

Funding for the program is provided through the City of St. Louis Park Development Fund, with \$20,000 budgeted for art projects in 2024. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/arts for more information. The application window for the 2025 Arts & Culture Grant program will be July – September 2024.



We're on TikTok!

Follow the city @stlouisparkmn



Follow the city's strategic priorities

The symbols below represent the five core priorities of the City of St. Louis Park and its city council. Spot them throughout this newsletter.



Being a leader in racial equity and inclusion in order to create a more just and inclusive community for all.



Continuing to lead in environmental stewardship.



Providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood-oriented development.



Providing a variety of options for people to make their way around the city comfortably, safely and reliably.



Creating opportunities to build social capital through community engagement.



Three elections in 2024

This is a busy year for statewide and national elections, with three elections scheduled in Minnesota:

- March 5, presidential primary (early voting now open)
- Aug. 13, state primary (early voting starts June 28)
- Nov. 5, general election (early voting starts Sept. 20)

To be eligible to vote, you must be:

- At least 18 years old on Election Day
- A U.S. citizen
- A resident of Minnesota for 20 days
- Not currently incarcerated for a felony



Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/vote for details and useful resources. Use mnvotes.gov/pollfinder to find your polling place. Call 952.924.2503 or email elections@stlouisparkmn.gov with additional questions.

Stay informed



To talk to someone in person, visit city hall at 5005 Minnetonka Blvd., during business hours, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Can't make it out? Call the main number during business hours at 952.924.2500 or try one of our many online resources. For city events, activities, schedules and news updates, visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov, sign up for text and email notifications through govDelivery, or follow us on social media.

govDelivery www.stlouisparkmn.gov/sign-up



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nextdoor.com



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www.youtube.com/slpcable

Make service requests or receive city information via the app

mystlouispark.org or visit www.mystlouispark.org.

ParkTV channel lineups change

ParkTV has updated its Comcast cable channels to include more high definition (HD) channels, while still maintaining standard definition (SD) viewing options. This means some of your favorite selections have moved to different HD or SD channels. Visit www.parktv.org for details.

- HD 798/SD 14 - Live and recorded public meetings of the city council, economic development authority and planning commission
- HD 799/SD 15 - Locally produced and submitted programming
- HD 859/SD 16 - St. Louis Park Public Schools, including sports, school board meetings and concerts

Citywide hydrant flushing starts May 5

City crews are scheduled to flush watermains starting Sunday, May 5, weather permitting. Flushing hours will be at night, mainly from 8 p.m. – 6 a.m. and should be complete by Friday morning, May 10.

Watermain flushing is done each spring to loosen normal mineral buildup inside underground watermains. Crews flush the watermains by opening fire hydrants, so don't be alarmed if you see water gushing from hydrants while a city truck is nearby. The flushing process will take five days to complete citywide. Any one neighborhood or area won't be affected for the entire week. Residents can check to see if watermains have been flushed in their neighborhood by visiting bit.ly/WMflushing to view a map.

While water has improved color and taste after watermain flushing, the process can temporarily discolor water due to loose particles. During this period, avoid doing laundry without first checking to see if your water is rust colored. Check water by running the tap. If it's rust colored, don't run your washing machine until you've cleared the water. To clear your water, run the cold water tap in your laundry tub until it clears. If your laundry is stained by the water during this time, keep the laundered items wet and call public works at 952.924.2562. Staff will deliver a chemical that will remove the stains.



Change batteries – Save lives

On March 15, when you change your clocks for daylight saving time, it's also a great opportunity to change your smoke and carbon monoxide alarm batteries. The majority of house fire deaths are in homes without working smoke detectors. Remember to also test the batteries monthly, and replace alarms completely every 10 years. This saves lives!

Police department program opens pathways for diverse candidates

Pathways to Policing

Around much of the country, police departments are struggling to maintain adequate staffing levels and attract diverse candidates. In many cases, qualified candidates are held back simply due to a lack of time or resources to attend the required schooling.

In 2017, the St. Louis Park and Bloomington police departments teamed up to address this issue. They created a program to draw a more diverse pool of candidates, including people of color, women, veterans and those who have a career or education background outside of law enforcement who could bring fresh perspectives to the job.

The resulting Pathways to Policing program was designed to remove barriers for candidates interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement but who may not have the means to pay for or availability to attend a two-year public safety program while continuing their current careers. The one prerequisite is candidates must have at least a two-year associate's degree in any field.

Selected candidates are paid a full-time wage while they attend an accelerated, four-month training. Their tuition and other costs are covered, allowing them to better focus on their new career path and education, as well as their current roles and responsibilities outside of work.

After completing training and passing the Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) exam, candidates are sworn in as St. Louis Park Police Department police officers. Traditionally, candidates are required to complete their two-year degree, peace officer and public safety training and POST exam before applying to become an officer. This program cuts that process nearly in half.

Program successes

The program received the League of Minnesota Cities City of Excellence Award in 2018 and the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association Excellence in Innovation Award in 2018. One of the city's first program participants was named the department's Robert Linnell Officer of the Year in 2019.

Since the program started in 2017, 11 officers have been hired with nine fully completing field training.

Take the path, apply now!

The St. Louis Park Police Department looks for new candidates to join the Pathways program every spring. For more information or to apply, visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/pathways-to-policing.

This year, the State of Minnesota developed a similar initiative: The Intensive Comprehensive Peace Officer Education and Training Program. Keep an eye on the website listed above for how this program might influence or involve Pathways to Policing.



Q and A with three of our Pathways graduates

Officer Maurice Smith

Years of service with the St. Louis Park Police Department: six

College degrees: corrections, sociology minor

What made you interested in a career in public safety?

I grew up in the inner city of Chicago and didn't have a great relationship with law enforcement then. I saw friends and a lot of young people choosing bad paths and ending up in the system. I felt like if I could connect with the youth early, I could be almost like a saving grace and a role model. That is what started my career path in corrections and then eventually policing. I also wanted to give back to the community to help bridge the gap between the Black community and law enforcement. I wanted to do something bigger than just me.

What interested you about the Pathways to Policing program?

Not having to pay for additional schooling. After graduating college with a corrections degree, I already had a lot of student loans. Knowing I could have my schooling paid for, get paid while going to school and have a guaranteed placement with the department was a no-brainer. I don't think I would be in this career position if not for this program.

How do you see this program benefiting the community?

It will continue to allow the department to diversify its staffing. As our population grows, we will grow to look more like the community we serve — and they do notice it. The kids, our future workforce, notice it as well. They will see more and more officers who look like them. We will also have staff to better assist those who may be more comfortable speaking with a woman officer, someone of color or someone whose first language may not be English.



Officer Callie Anderson

Years of service with the St. Louis Park Police Department: four

College degrees: liberal arts, psychology minor

When did you become interested in a career in public safety?

I first knew it in high school. It was always a gut feeling, but I also wanted to gain experience and decided to go to college first. After college, I enrolled in the Army National Guard and was deployed overseas. This is where I met fellow St. Louis Park Police Officer Derek Imsande, who told me about the Pathways program, which increased my desire to become a police officer.

What drew you to the Pathways to Policing program?

At that time in my life, being selected for the program was the only way I could securely make the transition into law enforcement. Financially, it would not have been possible for me to go to school again without having to work extra jobs at the same time.

How do you see this program benefiting the community?

The program fosters stronger community relations by prioritizing candidates with cultural competency skills, leading to increased understanding and trust between law enforcement and the diverse populations we serve. The emphasis on aligning police values with community expectations also ensures officers are better attuned to the needs and concerns of the community.



Officer Isaiah Moore

Years of service with the St. Louis Park Police Department: one

College degree: psychology

When did you become interested in a career in public safety?

When I was young, I wanted to become a detective. As time went on, some of that drive faded until I started a job as a hospital security guard after graduating. While working at the hospital, I had many interactions with law enforcement for various reasons, and that passion began to grow again. I saw the similarities between what I was doing and their police work, in de-escalating situations and connecting with people. I wanted to continue to help people as a police officer.

What interested you about the Pathways to Policing program?

It's not always feasible for someone to just quit their job, lose that income and attend school full time for a couple of years. The program allowed me to continue my life without having to make significant changes or incur additional debt.

How has your psychology degree helped you in your role?

It has helped me tremendously. With what I learned then, I can better recognize certain psychological, mood and behavior disorders. I know the signs, which helps me better evaluate and address situations. Most officers learn to do that on the job, but I came into the job already having that experience.



Police department launches behavioral health unit with full-time social worker in 2024

The St. Louis Park Police Department launched its new behavioral health unit Jan. 1. This unit includes two police officers and a department-embedded social worker. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/police to learn more about the program and its assigned officers. More information will also be shared in the next *Park Perspective*. To contact the unit, email slpbhu@stlouisparkmn.gov or call 952.924.2119.

MnDNR grants boost funding for EAB management

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources awarded the city two Community Forestry Grants to assist staff and residents with emerald ash borer (EAB) tree care — \$371,000 for the city's Shade SLP Plus program and \$489,232 for the city's boulevard tree removal and replacement efforts.

Shade SLP Plus offers tree care funding for eligible residents

Shade SLP Plus is a full-service, income-based program that helps property owners preserve, remove or reestablish trees on private land. The need for assistance is particularly high right now due to the invasive emerald ash borer (EAB) beetle and its deadly impact on area ash trees.

Don't delay. Dead or dying ash trees become brittle quickly. Removal costs increase the longer a property owner waits.

To qualify for funding assistance, residential property owners must have an adjusted gross income equal to or below 80% of the area median income, adjusted for household size, as determined by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Adjusted gross income can be found on your most recently filed tax return. Property owners must self-certify their income qualification.

Eligible property owners can apply for the following services at no cost:

- Tree consultation (required before other services can be provided)
- EAB infested ash tree removal
- Ash tree insecticide injections to treat EAB
- Tree planting
- Developmental tree pruning

Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/shade-slp-plus for applications. Find paper copies available at city facilities or call 952.924.2562. Note: Funds are limited and issued in order of applications received.

Boulevard tree replacement project ramps up thanks to grant

Thanks to the MnDNR Shade Tree Program Bonding Grants, the city will be able to remove approximately 468 ash trees that are not already part of the city's EAB preventive treatment program. A total of 474 replacement trees will be planted. Each planted tree will receive mulch and a water bag. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/trees for more about this project. Email naturalresources@stlouisparkmn.gov or call 952.924.2562 with questions.



DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

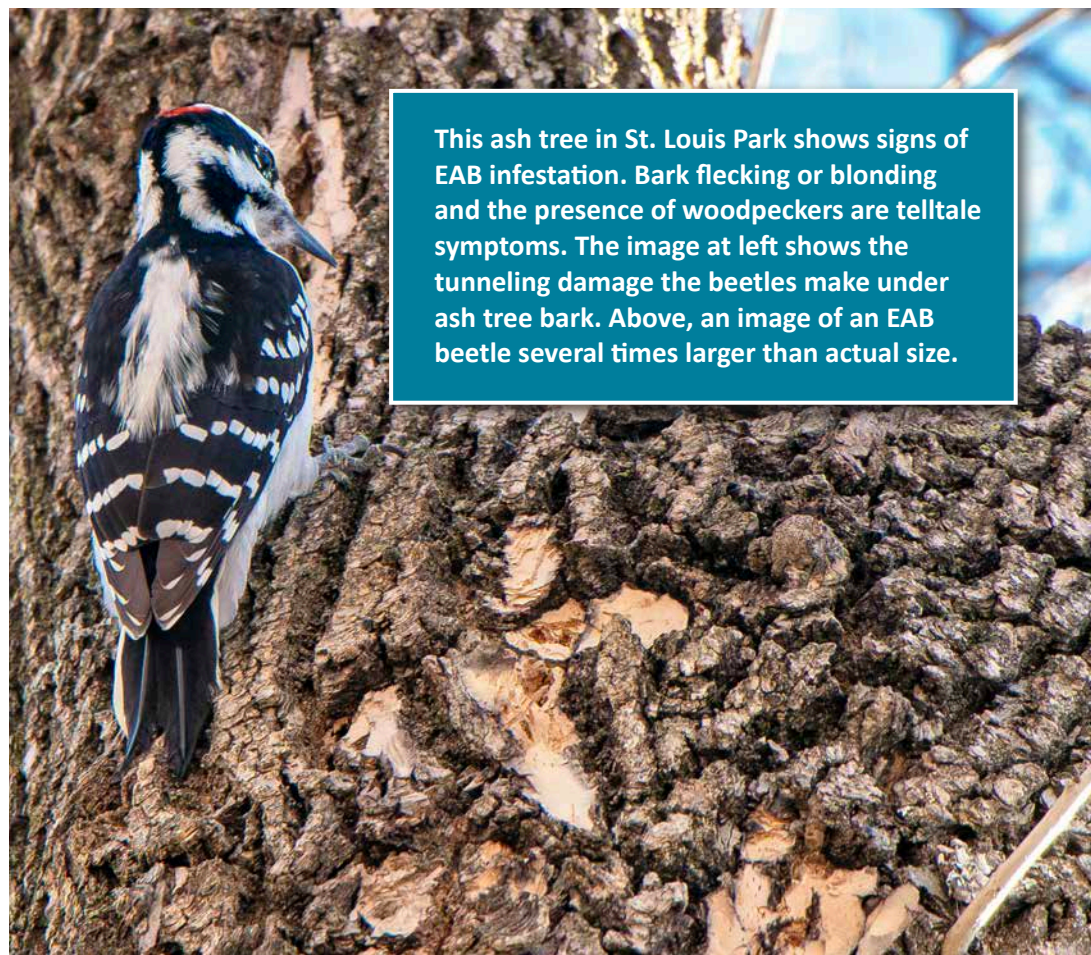
These projects are made possible through funding from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.



Signs of emerald ash borer infestation

The emerald ash borer (EAB) beetle kills every ash tree it infests and will eventually reach every ash tree in the region. Unless treated early with insecticides, ash trees will succumb to EAB damage within two to five years. Signs become apparent after roughly two years of infestation. These include:

- The presence of woodpeckers and woodpecker holes
- Bark cracking, flecking or peeling
- Bark blanding or discoloration
- Thinning leaves or dead branches
- S-shaped patterns below the bark



This ash tree in St. Louis Park shows signs of EAB infestation. Bark flecking or blanding and the presence of woodpeckers are telltale symptoms. The image at left shows the tunneling damage the beetles make under ash tree bark. Above, an image of an EAB beetle several times larger than actual size.



Tree Inspector Vanessa Larson.

Free tree inspections and discounted tree care

Not sure about the health of an ash tree on your property? The city offers free tree inspections for St. Louis Park residents. If treated with insecticide early, particularly before infestation, ash trees can be protected from emerald ash borer. If the infestation is too far along, the tree won't survive. A tree inspector can help determine the ash tree's condition and offer advice. Dead ash trees become increasingly expensive to remove as they grow more brittle.

Whether you're removing ash trees or treating them with chemicals, it's best to act quickly. Through 2024, Rainbow Treecare offers discounted EAB treatment for city residents. Call 952.767.6920 or email info@rainbowtreecare.com to find out more. To arrange a free tree inspection with the city, call 952.924.2562 or email naturalresources@stlouisparkmn.gov.

City budget finalized

At its final meeting of 2023, the St. Louis Park City Council approved a 2024 budget and final property tax levy increase of 7.3% over 2023. This concluded several months of budget discussions between city council, staff and community partners. It was developed with the city's strategic priorities in mind.

Overall, the proposed 2024 budget will maintain city services while advancing city strategic priorities through new investments in public safety, environmental stewardship, infrastructure, housing and neighborhoods, racial equity and social capital. Public safety accounts for the largest portion of the budget at 44% and includes police, fire, emergency response and public safety facilities upkeep.

Commercial and residential property taxes provide about 68% of the city's revenue. The city portion of property taxes paid by individual households is determined by the levy, as well as the market value of all properties in the city. The city's median home value is \$373,300, a 0.4% increase from the previous year. The projected property tax increase for a median homeowner with a homestead exemption is 3.6%, or \$57.54 annually.

Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/finance for more information about the 2024 proposed tax levy and overall budget.

What's next

Property tax statements for 2024 will be mailed by March 31. Most property taxes are due May 15 and Oct. 15 in equal installments. You'll receive a valuation and classification notice that will impact your 2025 property taxes. When you receive the notice, read it carefully. If you believe your property valuation and classification are accurate, no further action is needed. If you have questions about either, contact the St. Louis Park Assessing Division at 952.924.2535. Don't delay in calling – this is the time to appeal or question your valuation for 2025. Appeals must be made before property taxes are sent.

The state has two property tax refund programs for homeowners. Visit www.revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-relief for more.



Save money by taking advantage of 2024 sustainability incentives

The new year is here and with it comes a surplus of rebates and tax credits for home energy, electric vehicles, e-bikes and more. Be prepared to take advantage of these incentives. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/sustainability to sign up for the city's Climate Action Plan newsletter.

Next, sign up for a Home Energy Squad planner visit: call 651.328.6220 or visit www.mncee.org/home-energy-squad. This visit is a requirement in order to be eligible for many incentive programs. Once you're ready to start a project, apply for pre-approval for the city's Climate Champions for Homes program, which offers rebate matches up to 150% on eligible projects. This can also make you eligible for a bonus solar cost share from the city on top of 30% federal tax incentives! Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/climate-champions to learn more.

Check out Rewiring America's Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) online calculator at www.rewiringamerica.org/app/ira-calculator to see what incentives you may be eligible for based on your income.

2024 utility rate increases explained

The City of St. Louis Park reviews utility rates annually to ensure they're properly structured and generate enough revenue to operate and maintain the city's water, sewer and solid waste services.

In late 2023, the city council adopted recommended rate changes for 2024.

The fee changes include a 15.5%, or \$55 increase, in quarterly bills for the median residential user in 2024. This calculation is based on a household using 32 units of water per quarter and a 60-gallon garbage service. The increase is larger than normal because it makes up for five years of higher-than-average inflation not accounted for in the previous five-year solid waste collection contract. After 2024, rates should have a stable five-year outlook with no major rate spikes.

It's important to note that rates vary based on water use and garbage service level.

Solid waste

Why did solid waste rates increase 45% for 2024? The above-normal, one-time jump in rates is due to new five-year contracts for solid waste collection services. Collection costs increased substantially between 2018, when previous contracts were negotiated, and 2023. This was due to higher-than-average inflation and increases in costs for hauling companies to retain licensed truck drivers and procure equipment.

Of the 12 hauling companies contacted through the process, only four provided proposals after others withdrew from the process citing labor shortages. In addition, the city engaged haulers a second time to solicit proposals for yard waste collection, as the first round of proposals would have resulted in even higher costs.



Services included in solid waste rate

Solid waste rates cover the cost of all city collection services and the cost of providing

city-owned carts for residential customers. (Note: The solid waste rate for individual households is dependent on their garbage service level.)

2024 solid waste rates pay for:

- Garbage – collection and disposal costs for garbage
- Recycling – collection and recycling costs for recyclables, including extra recyclables at no extra cost
- Organics – collection and composting costs for organics (food scraps) and certified compostable bags
- Yard waste – collection and composting costs for yard waste from April through November

Reducing waste saves money

The city offers multiple levels of service that vary in price based on cart size and frequency of pick up. Households can save money on their utility bill by reducing their garbage service level and participating in recycling and organics programs, which are available to all residential households at no additional cost.

Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/garbage-recycling to review collection service options.

Water

Water and water meter charges increased 4.5% for 2024. Water rates are structured to encourage water conservation. Water service charges are quarterly fixed fees based on meter size and help cover the cost of making water service available to users. These charges also help cover costs related to infrastructure and water meter system maintenance.

Sanitary sewer

The sanitary sewer rates increased 5.5% for 2024. Sanitary sewer rates include charges for sewer usage, as well as a fixed sanitary service charge that helps cover infrastructure maintenance costs.

Storm drainage/stormwater

The single-family stormwater rate increased 4.5% for 2024. The quarterly rate pays for flood control projects and stormwater infrastructure operation, maintenance and reconstruction.

Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/utility-billing to view a full list of 2024 utility rates.

Reduce your utility bill with rebates for some high-efficiency appliances; apply by June 30

If you're purchasing an ENERGY STAR or WaterSense appliance, you might be eligible for a rebate in the form of a utility credit! In partnership with the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services and the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, the city is offering rebates to encourage residents to install toilets and irrigation components that reduce water use, as well as energy-efficient washing machines and dishwashers.

Rebates are up to \$200 for a WaterSense toilet; up to \$250 for a WaterSense irrigation controller and/or irrigation spray sprinkler bodies; and up to \$300 for ENERGY STAR washing machines and dishwashers. You can replace multiple toilets in your home and receive utility credits for all the devices.

Keep a copy of your purchase receipt that shows the cost of the device separate from the installation cost. Also take a photo of the WaterSense or ENERGY STAR logo on the device.

Email proof of purchase information along with your name and address to Beth Holida at bholida@stlouisparkmn.gov to submit a rebate request. For questions, call 952.924.2181. Rebate requests must be submitted by June 30, 2024. Rebates are for product purchases only; residents are responsible for installation and permit costs. Funding is limited. For more details and guidelines, visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/water-sewer.





A new pedestrian and bike bridge over Beltline Boulevard and the METRO Green Line Light Rail Extension opened this winter as part of the Green Line project.



2024 construction projects overview

Below is an overview of some of the current and upcoming construction projects in St. Louis Park. For more details about projects near you, visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/construction-updates to sign up for email updates.

METRO Green Line Extension

The METRO Green Line Extension made significant progress in 2023. The segment of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail from Beltline Boulevard to France Avenue opened in late December. The trail is now open from Blake Road into Minneapolis. Most of the work at the Beltline Boulevard, Wooddale Avenue and Louisiana Avenue stations is complete. In 2024, work will focus on areas near the station platforms and the overhead electric wiring that will power the train cars. Visit greenlineext.org to sign up for the Metropolitan Council's weekly updates.

Alley rehabilitation

The city is planning to upgrade select alleys in the Bronx Park, Fern Hill and Pennsylvania Park neighborhoods in 2024. Construction includes removing the existing surface, regrading, drainage improvements and installing a new concrete surface. Call 952.924.2670 with questions.

Minnetonka Boulevard reconstruction

Minnetonka Boulevard (County Road 5) between Highway 100 and France Avenue will be getting a makeover in 2024 and 2025. This is a Hennepin County led project that will include:

- Reducing the lanes of traffic from four to three to better facilitate vehicle turns and increase safety
- Enhancements for people walking, biking and rolling, including curb extensions, raised medians and crossing beacons
- Trails along both sides of the corridor
- Stormwater improvements
- Watermain replacement
- Streetscape improvements

Construction is expected to begin this spring and take two years to complete. Visit hennepin.us/minnetonka-boulevard to learn more about the project.

Cedar Lake Road and Louisiana Avenue improvements

- New pavement
- A roundabout at the intersection of Cedar Lake Road and Louisiana Avenue
- Enhancements for people walking and rolling, including curb extensions, raised medians, crossing beacons and other upgrades to ensure compliance with American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Accommodations for people biking
- New sidewalks on south side of Cedar Lake and east side of Louisiana

This project to be completed over three construction seasons, 2024 – 2026:

- Work in 2024: Cedar Lake Road from Jordan Avenue to Rhode Island Avenue, construction scheduled from spring to fall 2024
 - Phase 1: Boone Avenue to Virginia Avenue, anticipated construction April to July
 - Phase 2: Jordan Avenue to Boone Avenue, anticipated construction July to September
 - Phase 3: Virginia Avenue to Rhode Island Avenue, anticipated construction September to November
- Work in 2025: Louisiana Avenue from 22nd Street to Interstate 394, construction scheduled from spring to fall 2025
- Work in 2026: Cedar Lake Road from Rhode Island Avenue to Kentucky Avenue and Louisiana Avenue from 24th Street to 22nd Street, construction scheduled from spring to fall 2026

To learn more about this project, affected bus routes, parking restrictions and detour schedules, visit bit.ly/RedoCedarLou, or contact Joseph Shamla, project manager, at jshamla@stlouisparkmn.gov or 952.924.2552.

2024 pavement management project, May through fall

Several streets in the Minikahda Vista and Browndale neighborhoods are scheduled for rehabilitation during the 2024 construction season. This includes pavement replacement; watermain, sanitary sewer and storm sewer reconstruction; new sidewalk construction; and sidewalk repair. The city's annual pavement management project proactively addresses the condition of residential streets within the city. The program was developed to extend pavement life and enhance system-wide performance in a cost-effective and efficient way. Call 952.924.2673 with questions.



The Cedar Lake Regional Trail is now open from Blake Road into Minneapolis. It goes over Beltline Boulevard and under Wooddale Avenue. Photo shows the top of the Beltline bridge looking west.



First week of yard waste collection is April 1

Yard waste collection will begin the week of April 1 for all households with city collection service. Remember, yard waste must be in your own reusable containers, compostable bags or bundled separate from garbage. It must be set out by 7 a.m. to ensure collection. It's illegal to throw yard waste in the garbage or to use traditional plastic bags for yard waste. Each bag or bundle should weigh no more than 40 pounds. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/yard-waste for more information.

Tree sale starts March 1

Help increase our city's tree canopy by adding trees to your landscape! Starting March 1, visit www.treetrust.org to order and pay for your trees as part of the city's annual tree sale. Trees are \$35 each; a maximum of three trees per property may be purchased. Preview of this year's available trees will begin mid-February. Tree sale pickup will be Saturday, May 4, from 8 a.m. – noon or Monday, May 6, from 5 – 7 p.m. at the Municipal Service Center, 7305 Oxford St.

Need a new tree but not ready to plant it yourself? You are in luck! The city offers a full-service tree sale option where the city covers a portion of the planting costs. Total cost can be as low as \$35 depending on your location in the city. The cost-share amount is higher for those who have had an ash tree removed due to emerald ash borer. Visit treecanopyslp.myshopify.com to find out more and reserve your tree.

Gardening swap is May 21

The 2024 gardening swap will be May 21 from 5 – 7 p.m. at the Recreation Outdoor Center (ROC), 3700 Monterey Drive. The swap is a great opportunity to clear out gardening tools you no longer use and take home new seeds, tools and more! The event is free and open to everyone. No items may be sold; everything must be given and taken freely. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/reuse for more information and a list of acceptable items. Call 952.924.2562 or email recycling@stlouisparkmn.gov with questions.

Brush drop-off site opens April 2

If you have excess leaves and grass clippings you want to get rid of before your next yard waste collection day, the city's brush drop-off site will be open Saturdays, Sundays and Tuesdays starting April 2. There is no charge for St. Louis Park residents. A Minnesota ID, driver's license or utility bill is required as proof of residency. Call 952.924.2562 with questions.

Residents can drop off branches, brush, logs, grass clippings and leaves at the site during the dates and times listed below.

April 2 — Oct. 29

- Saturdays: 7 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Sundays: noon – 4 p.m.
- Tuesdays: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Nov. 2 — 24

- Saturdays: 7 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Sundays: noon – 4 p.m.

The drop-off site is located at 6215 Cedar Lake Road with the entrance on the southeast side of the railroad tracks.

Collection service info and contacts

Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/recycling to download a yearly service calendar, find your collection day or sign up for email reminders.

Collection service provider contacts:

- Garbage/recycling: 952.226.6457, SLP@buckinghamcompanies.com
- Organics: 952.941.5174, SLP@republicservices.com
- Yard waste: 612.405.9579, SLP@wastecontainersystems.com



Take the water service line survey

The City of St. Louis Park needs your help to inventory all private water service lines connected to the public water system. This is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirement to help people identify and replace any lead service lines in their homes. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/water-sewer to learn more. Scan the above QR code to go directly to the survey.

Lead line replacement project background

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 included funding to replace all lead service lines in the United States. The city's water service line material survey required by the EPA is part of that initiative. In the early 2000s, St. Louis Park undertook a citywide effort to find and replace all lead service lines.

The 2015 – 2016 citywide water meter replacement project provided another chance to identify lead service lines. Only one lead line was found, and it was replaced. The city continues to investigate any possible lead service lines found in old records by contacting the property owner directly for an inspection. St. Louis Park provides high-quality drinking water that meets and exceeds EPA action levels for lead and copper. To learn more about the city's drinking water, visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/drinking-water-report.



Smart salting workshops

Winter is here, and so is the need for smart salting. You can attend a smart salting training from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to learn how to maintain safety, reduce infrastructure damage, save money and minimize negative impacts to the environment. Whether you're a winter maintenance professional or a conscientious community member, you can get certified or refresh your salting knowledge by registering at bit.ly/3Rv0mzv for an upcoming training.

Spring street sweeping

The city will start spring street sweeping in March and continue with a second round of sweeping in May after the trees have leaves. Hours of sweeping will be 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. The city doesn't post "no parking" signs for street sweeping. However, the city has created a street sweeping map to show what streets have been swept and estimated sweeping dates by neighborhood. Visit bit.ly/street-sweeping to view the map. As always, the estimated dates can be affected by the weather, current maintenance needs or emergencies that staff need to address.

Rainwater Rewards program

The city's Rainwater Rewards program offers funding and technical guidance to residential property owners who install projects that do at least one of the following:

- Protect and restore stormwater by capturing pollutants in rain runoff
- Increase the watershed's ability to store water
- Preserve and restore native plant and wildlife communities
- Protect and preserve groundwater quality and quantity

Program benefits include cost share, guidance with management practices, selecting designers and contractors, and future planning. Project examples include rain gardens, tree plantings, rain barrels, permeable pavement and green roofs.

The program is available to residential properties in St. Louis Park. Applications are accepted all year, first-come, first-served. Learn more at www.stlouispark.org/rainwater-rewards or contact Erick Francis, water resources manager, at efrancis@stlouisparkmn.gov or 952.924.2690.

Upcoming event highlights



Saturday, March 16, noon – 5 p.m.
\$50 per team • Registration deadline: March 12

Gather your team and sign up for the annual ShamROC Ice Bowling event at the Recreation Outdoor Center (ROC), 3700 Monterey Drive! Bowl four frames for a chance to win prizes and stay for the food, drinks, music and fun. Register your team of four and secure a time slot by March 12. Visit www.shamroceicebowling.com for rules, registration and more information. Games take approximately 30 minutes. For ages 12 and above.

Top sponsors:



Severe Weather Awareness Week: April 8 – 12

Severe Weather Awareness Week is designed to refresh, remind and educate everyone about the seasonal threats from severe weather and how to avoid them. It's also a great time to make and practice your emergency plan and build or refresh your emergency preparedness kit.

Statewide tornado drills are April 11

- 1:45 p.m. drill for schools and businesses
- 6:45 p.m. drill for families and businesses

What conditions trigger emergency sirens?

You may hear emergency sirens in St. Louis Park for three reasons:

1. A tornado is spotted or developing in or near the city.
2. Straight-line winds have been recorded in excess of 70 miles per hour.
3. Testing on the first Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m.

West Metro HOME REMODELING FAIR

Sunday, Feb. 25 | 10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.
 Eisenhower Community Center
 1001 Hwy. 7, Hopkins

- Free admission • Free parking
- Free seminars • Consultations

www.homeremodelingfair.com

Paper shredding and cleanup days

The city will host a free paper shredding event for residents to safely dispose of confidential papers May 31, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m., and a spring cleanup day event for residents to dispose of unwanted household items June 8, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Both will be at the Municipal Service Center, 7305 Oxford St., St. Louis Park. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/cleanup or call 952.924.2562 for more information on event guidelines and restricted items.

Clothing swap is Feb. 27

Join the annual clothing swap Feb. 27, 5 – 7 p.m., in The Rec Center Banquet Room (3700 Monterey Drive). Bring your gently used clothing that is no longer right for you, and swap it for new-to-you items! All styles, sizes and types of clothes and shoes are welcome. The event is free and open to all ages. You don't need to be from St. Louis Park to participate. Call 952.924.2187 or visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/reuse for more details, guidelines and a list of accepted items.

Drug take-back day

The St. Louis Park Police Department will host a prescription and over-the-counter drug take-back event Saturday, April 27, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., at the police department, 3015 Raleigh Ave. S. If you can't attend, a medicine drop box is available 24/7 in the police department lobby. You can also find medicine disposal bags at Fire Station 1, 3750 Wooddale Ave. S., and city hall.

Arbor Day planting celebration

Join our free annual Arbor Day celebration, featuring tree-focused family activities at Birchwood Park, 2701 Zarthan Ave. S., May 11, 9 a.m. – noon. Want to help plant trees? Volunteer sign-up starts in March at www.treetrust.org/volunteer.

SAVE THE DATE!

Register for spring and summer parks and rec programs!

Registration for spring and summer parks and recreation programs opens 8 a.m., March 6. Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/rec-registration to register.



Other upcoming events and activities: Frosty Mug Crawl, Feb. 24; Skate School annual ice show, March 16 and 17; Lions Club Egg Hunt, March 30; Move into Spring Challenge, April 1 – May 16; Step to It Challenge, May 1 – 28; Aquatic Park opening June 3, and more! Stay informed of weather-related schedule changes by calling the weather line at 952.924.2567 if the weather that day looks questionable.

Visit www.stlouisparkmn.gov/events or scan the QR code for more details on city events and activities or to sign up for updates.