

Woodbury City Update

September 2017 • Volume 18, No. 8



Woodbury Drive

Applicants needed for citizen advisory boards Students encouraged to apply

Applications are being accepted through Tuesday, Oct. 17, for openings on Woodbury advisory commissions. Citizens appointed to these groups serve on a volunteer basis. The term is for three years in most instances.

Joining an advisory commission is a great way to learn more about the community and develop leadership skills. People of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

This year, there will be some openings to fill on the city's advisory boards. In addition, there are up to two openings on the Parks and Natural Resources Commission and Planning Commission for 11th- and 12th-grade high school students who are Woodbury residents. The term for students is for one year.

The city is seeking volunteers to fill vacancies on the commissions. In some instances, incumbents are eligible for reappointment. The groups include:

Audit and Investment

Commission – The commission assists the City Council in reviewing the city's financial affairs. Responsibilities include recommending the appointment of the independent auditors and reviewing: the city's annual financial information,

annual audit report and management letter, the adequacy and effectiveness of accounting and financial controls, and the city's investment policy and portfolio. The AIC generally meets three times per year.

Economic Development

Commission – The EDC is responsible for developing a strategic plan, including long-range strategies for economic development for the city. The commissioners recommend economic development policies and programs to the City Council and work with the city's economic development consultant, City Council and staff in promoting the city, attracting economic growth and development, and retaining businesses in the community.

Parks and Natural Resources

Commission – There are three functional areas of the Parks and Natural Resources Commission: parks, natural resources and recreation. The commission is responsible for advising the City Council and other advisory commissions regarding matters relevant to parks, natural resources, and recreation. The commission encourages the conservation and preservation of

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Two major roadway projects in planning stages for 2020 construction

Woodbury Drive project

The public is invited to attend a public open house about future improvements to Woodbury Drive (County Road 19) Thursday, Oct. 12, from 6 to 8 p.m., in the Ash and Birch Conference Rooms at Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road.

A presentation will begin promptly at 6 p.m. Project staff will be available for one-on-one discussions any time during the open house.

Woodbury Drive is among the busiest roads in Washington County and serves as a gateway corridor into the City of Woodbury. Over time and with new developments, the number of vehicles traveling this corridor and the surrounding local roadways has increased to levels that are at or exceeding the capacity of the existing roadways and intersections.

Washington County, the City of Woodbury and traffic and engineering consultant Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. are studying, analyzing and developing a preferred design that will improve capacity and safety and meet the needs of this gateway corridor into the future.

The project involves improvements to county and city roads between I-94 to Tamarack Road and in the surrounding area, and will range from repaving to consideration of roadway expansion, intersection improvements and city trail enhancements.

The goals of the project are to:

- Determine near and long-term corridor vision

- Improve the safety, capacity and operation of Woodbury Drive and surrounding local roads
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Identify and implement stormwater drainage improvements
- Improve quality and life of pavement

For more information, visit: www.co.washington.mn.us/2659/County-Highway-19-Woodbury-Drive.

Woodbury Drive improvements open house

Thursday, Oct. 12, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Woodbury City Hall,
8301 Valley Creek Road
Ash and Birch Conference Rooms

Bailey Road project

Significant development is occurring along the Bailey Road corridor prompting Washington County to partner with the cities of Woodbury and Newport to determine a long-term vision that will address safety, capacity and access needs between I-494 and Woodbury Drive.

Bailey Road not only serves as a primary connection to the regional transportation system, but also facilitates access to a multitude of businesses, commercial enterprises, schools, churches and residential properties/neighborhoods. Its primary function is to provide safe and efficient mobility

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Council Perspective

By Mayor Mary Giuliani Stephens

On-call firefighters/EMTs play key role in emergency response

I hope you never need to call 911 for fire services, but if you do, we work hard to ensure you'll receive the fastest, most efficient response possible.

Our Fire Services Division uses a combination of full-time and on-call employees to respond to calls for service. The department is staffed with 12 full-time firefighters, 14 cross-trained police officer/firefighters and almost 70 on-call firefighter/emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

Our firefighters respond to life safety emergencies such as fires, rescues, hazardous material spills, gas leaks, alarm calls and emergency medical calls in Woodbury. Our paid on-call firefighters/EMTs spend most of their time responding to medical calls (they serve with paramedics during evening and overnight hours to cover 24-hours-a-day ambulance service).

On-call firefighter/EMTs and on-call EMTs are not full-time employees of the city. They are individuals who work a regular full-time job elsewhere and respond to emergencies when they are home. On-call employees are paid about \$15 per hour when they respond to emergency calls, and when they attend training, continuing education and other required activities. They are required to respond to at least 30 percent of the calls to their designated station each year, attend weekly training sessions, and cover at least one shift per month at the fire station. They also assist at public safety education events and fire prevention programs such as Night to Unite, Safety Camp and Big Truck Day.

Woodbury Firefighters Benefits Association

Our on-call firefighters perform serious, life-threatening tasks. So it's important they have access to a benefits package that acknowledges this potential risk.

The Woodbury Firefighters Benefits Association (WFBA) provides service pensions and ancillary benefits to its members (Woodbury paid on-call firefighters) and their beneficiaries.

The WFBA maintains a special fund for the relief, pension and support of the sick, injured, disabled and retired members of the association and their dependents, and a general fund for its current members.

This progressive pension benefit requires a five-year vesting requirement. That means after five years of service, members are eligible for 40 percent of a \$6,720-per-year of service benefit, or \$2,688 per year; \$13,440 for five years of service. The benefit continues to increase 4 percent per year until the member reaches 20 years of service, at which time the member is eligible for the full \$6,720 per year benefit for each year of service (or \$134,400 for 20 years of service). It is paid out in a lump sum, only after the member turns 50 years old and separates employment as a paid on-call firefighter/EMT.

The pension program serves as an effective recruitment and longevity tool; the longer you serve, the greater the benefit.

To fund the pension program, 2 percent of your property insurance bill is collected by the state and passed through to the city. The program also is funded through the WFBA investment interest. In years the pension is not fully funded, the city may be required to make an additional contribution, but the pension has been fully funded without additional city support for several years.



The state auditor has oversight over the funds and performs an annual audit.

The WFBA Board of Directors is comprised of six elected on-call firefighter/EMTs and three members from the City of Woodbury, including myself, Deputy Public Safety Director Todd Johnson and Finance Director Tim Johnson. The board meets more than four times per year and I participate in discussions and provide feedback. All board meetings are open to the public. For more information about the WFBA, or to view the schedule of upcoming events/meetings, visit the WFBA website at woodburyfba.org.

Want to become an on-call firefighter/EMT?

The city accepts applications year-round for paid-on-call firefighter/EMT positions, which we need to fully staff all four of our fire stations at the city. To apply or learn more, visit the city's website at woodburymn.gov or contact the Human Resources Division at (651) 714-3526 or hr@woodburymn.gov.

The Woodbury newsletter is published 10 times per year by the City of Woodbury and mailed to all residents and businesses. Send comments to: Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road, Woodbury, MN 55125-3330. Phone: (651) 714-3500. Email: jason.egerstrom@woodburymn.gov.

Mayor: Mary Giuliani Stephens. **Council Members:** Christopher Burns, Andrea Date, Julie Ohs, Amy Scoggins. City Administrator: Clinton Gridley. Communications Coordinator: Jason Egerstrom.

The City of Woodbury is subject to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In accordance with the act, the Woodbury newsletter is available in other formats. Call Jason Egerstrom, (651) 714-3500; TDD: (651) 714-3568.

2020 roadway projects...from page 1

at higher speeds with managed access to the local roadway network.

The goals for the Bailey Road project are to:

- Understand magnitude/timing of growth and development
- Determine long-term vision for the corridor and prioritize needs
- Identify a near-term project (2020) bound by available funding
- Improve the safety, capacity and operation of intersections and roadway segments
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities and access
- Identify and implement stormwater drainage improvements
- Proactively manage future access needs for development

Additional project information can be found on the project website at www.co.washington.mn.us/baileyroad.

Community input for Bailey Road project

A series of meetings were held during the summer of 2017 to gather input from citizens and business owners who live or work along the corridor to help inform the study. A public open house for the broader community is being planned for the fall 2017 to present project information and alternatives under consideration. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide input at this future meeting.

For project updates, including upcoming meeting announcements, sign up to receive InTouch email updates from the city (Street Closure Advisory list) at woodburymn.gov/intouch.

Contact for both projects:

Nathan Arnold, PE
Washington County Project Manager
(651) 430-4384
Nathan.Arnold@co.washington.mn.us

As kids head back to school, motorists get safety reminders

School buses and crossing guards have returned to city streets, as children throughout Woodbury head back to school. It's the time of year when the Public Safety Department reminds motorists to drive carefully, watch for children, and observe all laws pertaining to school zone safety.

"In addition to the normal everyday traffic laws that drivers are familiar with, there are also traffic laws designed specifically to protect our children as they travel to and from school," said Woodbury Police Cmdr. John Altman. "Most people are aware of these laws. Unfortunately, our hectic lives tend to cause motorists to want to cheat a little, and this can cause accidents."

Distracted driving is a concern any time of the day, but it's especially alarming when it comes to school zones.

"Minnesota traffic law prohibits using electronic devices while behind the wheel, even if stopped in traffic," Altman explained. "This includes texting, email - anything outside of a phone call, really."

Stop for the buses

Failing to stop for school buses when the stop arm is extended is a serious violation which, depending on the circumstances, can result in a substantial fine, loss of driving privileges, or even jail time. The Woodbury Police Department investigates every complaint reported by school bus drivers, who jot down license plate numbers of offending vehicles.

Motorists should know what is required whenever the flashing amber or red lights of a school bus are activated. The Minnesota State Patrol provides the following descriptions:

- **School bus pre-warning signals** – The flashing amber lights are meant to warn drivers that the school bus is preparing to load or unload students. Upon observing a school bus displaying flashing amber lights, be extra alert and be prepared to stop. It is a gross misdemeanor to pass or attempt to

pass on the right side of a school bus displaying flashing amber warning lights.

- **School bus red lights and stop arm** – When the school bus is stopped with flashing red lights activated and its stop arm extended, traffic from both directions must stop at least 20 feet away from the school bus. Motorists must remain stopped until the stop arm is retracted and the red lights are no longer flashing. The only time motorists are not required to stop for a school bus with its red lights flashing is when the bus is on a separate roadway. A separate roadway means a road that is separated from a parallel road by a safety isle or safety zone.

More safety reminders

School buses aren't the only concern with the kids going back to school. Pedestrian safety at crosswalks in Woodbury also is critical. The law is unequivocal: Drivers must yield to pedestrians. This pertains to all school crossings and crosswalks throughout the city.

Following are some additional school safety reminders for motorists:

- Observe school zone speed limits. These are either 20 or 25 mph, and are clearly posted and strictly enforced.
- Do not pass on the shoulder.
- You must stop when a school patrol member has his/her flag extended at an intersection or crossing. Think of the flag as the red light of a traffic signal.
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. This law pertains to all school crossings and crosswalks.

Teach the children

While safety messages often go primarily to drivers, it's important for parents to instruct their children in safe crossing practices, and also in school bus safety. Children need to be shown how to judge if there is adequate time to cross a street. They must be alert and cautious at all crossings,



and never enter a road from between parked cars. Students also should be told to:

- Wait for the school bus at least 10 feet from the road - further if the weather is bad.
- Remember that motorists may not always stop for the school bus as they should. When crossing the road, wait for a signal to cross from the bus driver, then look left, right, and left again, and continue to look and listen as they cross the road.
- Never cross behind the school bus.

- Stay out of the danger zones of the school bus (10 feet around the bus). Make sure they can see the bus driver and the bus driver can see them!
- Wait until the school bus has come to a complete stop before approaching the bus.
- Walk facing traffic on neighborhood streets where there are no trails or sidewalks.

Questions relating to school bus or school zone safety can be directed to the Public Safety Department at (651) 714-3600.

Advisory commissions...from page 1

natural resources in order to achieve a more sustainable community. The commission also encourages the dissemination of information to, and coordination with, individuals and organizations interested in parks, natural resources and recreation functions such as garden clubs, civic organizations, other communities and other groups providing recreation programming in the city such as athletic groups.

Planning Commission – The Planning Commission is responsible for all questions relating to planning, zoning and sign regulations. It reviews all applications for development and recommends approval or denial based on conformance with the comprehensive plan and zoning regulations.

Two other groups – the South Washington County Telecommunications Commission and the Watershed District (there are three in Woodbury) will not have vacancies in 2018.

Woodbury residents who are interested in serving on any of these advisory boards may call City Hall, (651) 714-3500, to request an application. Applications also are available on the Woodbury website, woodburymn.gov; under the "Your Government" heading, select "Advisory Commissions." Applications also are available on the Woodbury website at woodburymn.gov/commissions.

The City Council will interview applicants on Saturday, Nov. 4. Criteria for evaluation include: personal and professional experience which may relate to the subject areas of the board or commission; knowledge of the community; knowledge of city government process; contribution to creating or maintaining a diversity of membership with respect to geographic location, gender, age or race; experience from similar appointments. New appointees begin their terms in January.



2020 roadwork planning begins

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On-call firefighters are key

Mayor's column



School safety reminders

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Improved online utility bill pay service

City of Woodbury Utility Billing will soon offer more convenient payment options online. The new service will allow customers to:

- View their utility bills online anytime
- Pay online with credit/debit card, e-check, or by phone anytime
- Pay by text – sign up to receive text notifications and make a payment by text with a default payment method
- Go paperless; receive reminders and bills via email
- Set up automatic payments so you never miss a payment

Watch for more information in your next utility bill!

Postal Patron
Woodbury, MN

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Prepare irrigation systems for winter and consider upgrades

At the end of the growing season, irrigation systems should be “blown out” and winterized to reduce or eliminate damage to the underground lines over the cold, winter months. This is also a good time to assess their overall functionality and make improvements as needed.

Here are some ways individual homeowners, neighborhood associations and commercial properties can improve irrigation efficiency and save money on their water bills.

Commercial properties and homeowner associations

The city’s Water Efficiency Incentive Program provides 50 percent cost-share assistance to homeowners associations and commercial properties that are seeking to improve irrigation efficiency. In the first year of the program in 2017, 18 associations and

four commercial properties participated. Once complete, the projects are expected to save 9.4 million gallons of water every year, with an average annual savings of \$990 per property.

Applications for the 2018 program will be accepted early next year. The application requires a detailed proposal of system upgrades and an estimate of savings, so now is the best time to talk to your irrigation company about areas for improvement that will result in the greatest savings. Better yet, hire a certified landscape irrigation auditor to complete an audit.

Sign up for the city’s InTouch email notification system at woodburymn.gov/intouch (Sustainability and Environmental News and Events list) for information about future irrigation efficiency opportunities.

Individual systems

Homeowners with their own irrigation system also are encouraged to implement irrigation efficiency improvements. Upgrading to a WaterSense certified smart irrigation controller in Woodbury can result in reducing annual household water use by more than 30,000 gallons. Smart controllers have the ability to use weather information to skip scheduled watering after a recent rainfall or when rain is forecasted. Smart controllers also can be controlled remotely through a smartphone or computer, and can be programmed with smart home devices such as Amazon Alexa or Google Home. Visit woodburymn.gov/SmartIrrigation and complete the online form to be added to the waiting list for future city-sponsored irrigation controller programs for residential water users.

More information is available at smartwateruse.org. Questions about irrigation system programs should be directed to Kristin Seaman, environmental resources specialist, at kristin.seaman@woodburymn.gov or (651) 714-3593.

Another way to reduce water use is to convert grass to native plantings in areas not used for recreation. Contact your Watershed District and/or the Conservation District for funding and planning assistance. Visit mnwcd.org/financial-assistance to schedule a free site visit and learn about grant opportunities.