City seeking input on Central Park improvements

The public is invited to provide feedback on a proposed Central Park remodeling project Tuesday, April 12. A community open house is scheduled from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Central Park, 8695 Central Park Place.

The City of Woodbury – in partnership with Washington County – is exploring potential improvements to the community’s indoor park and Lookout Ridge indoor playground.

A short presentation about the project will take place at 6:45 p.m. The remaining time will be available for the public to view displays, ask questions and provide input.

Feedback can be provided online at woodburymn.gov/CentralParkProject through Friday, April 22.

The city is seeking $15 million in State of Minnesota bonding to cover a portion of the estimated cost of the proposed addition and improvements.

About Central Park

The multi-use indoor facility provides important gathering space by linking many different resources and people from all around the east metro. The recreational and educational programming offered at Central Park is made possible through successful partnerships among various public and private facility stakeholders, including the R.H. Stafford Library, the South Washington County Schools Community Education program, Great Rivers Adult Education Consortium, the YMCA, Stonecrest Senior Living and the City of Woodbury.

Woodbury’s population has grown from about 49,500 to approximately 77,000 since Central Park opened in 2002. Nearly 20 years have passed without significant updates to the facility. As the community ages and becomes more diverse, there is an increasing need to reinvest in the spaces offered at Central Park and the services provided at the facility. At minimum, several deferred maintenance items, including energy efficiency improvements, environmental sustainability enhancements, upgrades related to Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility compliance, and parking lot improvements, must be addressed with the project. However, there may be opportunities to make more substantial upgrades as well, including remodeling Lookout Ridge indoor playground, increasing community gathering opportunities, expanding the multi-use space capacity to allow for additional programming needs and for hosting larger special events, and enhancing learning space for adult education and English language and life skills.

Learn more about project details at woodburymn.gov/CentralParkProject.

Work begins on long-term water treatment plant

In 2021, the city acquired land for a long-term water treatment facility to treat per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the city’s water system. The long-term water treatment plant will be constructed south of Hargis Parkway and east of Radio Drive (see adjacent map).

City staff, along with its consultants AE2S and Jacobs, continue to conduct preliminary engineering work on the long-term treatment plant to identify:

- The best pathways for water pipes between the treatment facility and existing wells, future wells and redistribution water pipelines to the community;
- Various evaluations of treatment technologies and potential facility layouts;
- Permitting, easement procurement and other time sensitive tasks that must be coordinated; and
- Non-water treatment infrastructure needs related to the site (e.g., a possible education center) and review of other possible efficiencies with city services.

At the conclusion of this work, a matrix will be developed of all projects, summarizing the individual projects needed to complete the long-term treatment facility, the funding sources and timing. Following this critical step, a draft project timeline will be created. It’s anticipated the long-term water treatment facility and associated supporting infrastructure will take more than five years to complete.

“While five years may seem like a long time, this is infrastructure that will be in our community for generations to come,” Hurliman added. “In the meantime, we have projects underway today, including temporary treatment expansion and the building of two new wells, that will help us maintain treatment and pumping capacity so that we can continue to meet water demand.”

About PFAS

PFAS were made and used by several companies around the world in household and industrial products such as stain repellents, lubricants, fire retardant and suppressants, and more. The 3M Company made PFAS at its Cottage Grove facility from the late 1940s until 2002.

Woodbury’s drinking water continues to meet state and federal guidelines for PFAS.

The long-term treatment plant is needed because the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has issued health advisories on nine of the city’s 19 water production wells since 2017, including two thus far in 2022.

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Looking back on 2021, it was a year marked by robust construction activity in both the residential and commercial sectors, which added new residents, tax base and employment opportunities to Woodbury.

While there is a lot of development in Woodbury, this is not new or unexpected. The level, type and location of residential and commercial growth that Woodbury is experiencing is consistent with the city’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Carefully planned and orderly growth is a fundamental part of the history and future of Woodbury. From its early days as a city, Woodbury officials anticipated full development of the community and implemented long-term planning strategies that have allowed the city to prudently manage growth over time. Fast forward to today, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan identified the following vision for Woodbury: “A model of carefully managed growth, Woodbury will be known for its vibrant residential neighborhoods, thriving business community, diverse employment opportunities and exceptional municipal services. Woodbury will demonstrate sustainability through preservation of its resources and responsible environmental stewardship.” I would like to share more about our progress toward implementing this vision.

New residents are attracted to Woodbury’s well-planned neighborhoods, extensive parks and trails, excellent schools and overall quality of life. The city encourages a diversity of housing stock to accommodate people of all ages, income levels and family status and has long had a goal of achieving a 50-50 split between single-family and multi-family housing choice. Interestingly, since 2000, the split between new single-family and new attached housing units (townhomes and apartments) has been almost exactly even, with 51 percent of the units being single family and 49 percent being attached.

Adding to the diversity of housing, several new rental options exist in the northeast part of Woodbury at the northwest corner of Hudson Road and Settlers Ridge Parkway. Beyond Apartments and rental townhomes, Sundance at Woodbury, were completed in 2021. Talamore of Woodbury, a senior housing development, and the Edison at Woodbury apartments are currently under construction.

Another rental community, Orville Commons, located to the south of Jerry’s Foods, recently began construction and includes 211 units of affordable apartment-style living and 24 affordable townhome units. This project will bring to fruition the affordable housing component that was envisioned as part of the Urban Village master plan and furthers one of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan goals to “provide a variety of housing styles, sizes and prices that lets people of all ages and incomes live in Woodbury today, adapts to future changes in demographics, and meets local labor force needs.”

Healthy growth was also seen for commercial development in Woodbury. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan supports expanded employment opportunities, which grow and diversify the city’s tax base and create more choices for residents to work in Woodbury. In 2021, building permits were issued for seven new commercial buildings totaling 579,000 square feet of space. Almost all of this new commercial development (96 percent) is considered Places to Work, or non-retail.

One area where the city has seen a lot of commercial activity is the northeast area along Hudson Road between Settlers Ridge Parkway and Manning Avenue. With more than 400 acres of contiguous land guided for Places to Work, the northeast area offers a unique opportunity to diversify the city’s job and tax base by creating a business environment that will provide for office/showroom, warehouse, distribution and light industrial businesses.

Kindeva Drug Delivery, located near Settlers Ridge Parkway on the west end of this area, opened their facility in fall 2021. Kindeva is a pharmaceutical contract development and manufacturing organization, specializing in complex drug delivery systems such as inhalers, transdermal patches and micro-needle based delivery systems. Project Belle, a 517,000-square-foot warehouse distribution center located near Manning Avenue on the east end of the northeast area, began construction in fall 2021. Amazon will be the tenant of this building, which is expected to open in late summer 2022. These two projects form the “bookends” for the northeast area, and are important first steps toward implementing the economic vision for this area outlined in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Turning to existing businesses, several businesses paused or delayed decisions to reinvest or expand in 2020 due to the economic uncertainty brought about by the pandemic. However, 2021 saw a resurgence of commercial leasehold and tenant improvements. I’m looking forward to honoring these commercial investment projects at the city’s annual Business Celebration May 5 at Central Park.

This construction activity, when combined with overall value growth of existing properties, has resulted in significant growth to the city’s tax base, which currently exceeds $13.5 billion. This growth helps the city to minimize annual tax levy increases. Considering that the full taxable value of new development isn’t fully realized until a couple years after construction, the full impact of some of these development projects on the tax base has yet to be realized.

Commercial and residential development continues

Gold Line construction slated to begin this year

Metro Transit, in partnership with Washington County and Ramsey County, is planning the METRO Gold Line, a 10-mile dedicated bus rapid transit (BRT) line that will connect Woodbury to Saint Paul and other eastern suburbs. Construction of the Gold Line is scheduled to begin later this year and is expected to be in service in 2025.

Three Gold Line stations are being planned along the route in Woodbury. They will be located along Bielenberg Drive, north of Tamarack Road; near the Woodbury Theater on the corner of Queens Drive and Guider Drive; and at the corner of Guider Drive and Woodlane Drive, where a new park and ride is proposed to be constructed.

The city kicked off a master planning process in 2020 to guide land use, lighting, landscaping and streetscape elements in the corridor and property adjacent to the station areas. The land use work builds a vision for properties along the corridor should the property owners decide to investigate redevelopment opportunities spurred by the transit investment.

A summary of this engagement will be provided to the Planning Commission and City Council during their formal review. Visit woodburymn.gov/GoldLine to submit comments about the draft plan to city staff. Questions and comments specifically related to the Gold Line transit project should be directed to Liz Jones, Metropolitan Council community outreach coordinator, at 651-602-1977 or at elizabeth.jones@metrotransit.org.

Transit is a regional system under the purview of the Metropolitan Council, the region’s metropolitan planning organization. The Metropolitan Council is responsible for design, engineering, environmental review and community outreach as well as building, maintaining and operating the line. The Gold Line project team – which includes staff from Metropolitan Council, Ramsey County, Washington County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation – is preparing for project construction and related infrastructure improvements.

Learn more and sign up to receive emails from Metro Transit at metrotransit.org/gold-line-project.
Summer road construction will impact motorists

Road construction season will soon be in full swing. Below is a summary of the major projects taking place on Woodbury roads this summer.

Lake Road Safety and Mobility Project – city project

A Lake Road transportation study was completed in 2016, which recommended converting portions of Lake Road from a four-lane roadway to a three-lane roadway to increase safety for vehicles and pedestrians. Work will begin in June and include pavement rehabilitation and restriping of the roadway from Woodlane Drive to Pioneer Drive. Lake Road will be open to traffic throughout construction with temporary delays and closures expected. The intersection of Lake Road and Courtly Road will be closed for approximately three weeks for pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements. In addition, the Lake Road and Pioneer Drive intersection will be reconstructed as a single-lane roundabout. Crosswalk enhancements will be completed to improve pedestrian safety and construction will include accommodations for future trail connections. Traffic impacts will be identified as the project progresses to construction. The project is expected to be completed in August.

Hudson Road east of Settlers Ridge Parkway – city project

Road construction will continue in the northeast area of Woodbury with construction on Hudson Road between Settlers Ridge Parkway and Manning Avenue. Improvements include the addition of a center median and turn lanes to improve safety, increase capacity and provide access to developing properties in the area. Construction will require the continued closure of Hudson Road east of Settlers Ridge Parkway until the anticipated work completion in late summer.

Ojibway Drive and Ojibway Park parking lot – city project

Ojibway Drive south of Courtly Road will be reconstructed beginning after Woodbury Days in August. As part of the project, the Ojibway Park parking lot will be rehabilitated with trail improvements included. Ojibway Drive and the Ojibway Park parking lot will be closed from late August to October. The project is anticipated to be completed in October.

Gold Line bus rapid transit – Washington County project

The city continues collaborating with its regional partners to bring transit options to Woodbury. The Metro Gold Line is a planned 10-mile dedicated bus rapid transit line that will connect St. Paul, Maplewood, Landfall, Oakdale and Woodbury. Construction of the Gold Line is scheduled to begin this fall with utility relocations along Bielenberg Drive. Periodic temporary lane closures area anticipated as work is conducted. Construction is planned to continue through 2024 and the line is expected to be operational in 2025. For more information, see related article on page 2.

I-94 between Century Avenue and the St. Croix River – Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) project

I-94 between Century Avenue and the St. Croix River will be resurfaced starting in July and continuing through 2024. Additional work includes constructing a new eastbound lane from I-494 to Woodbury Drive, improving drainage, replacing signage, upgrading lighting and installing a median barrier. Significant traffic impacts are expected with lane, ramp, interchange and road closures. A long-term, single-lane eastbound closure is expected from Woodbury Drive to the St. Croix River bridge in 2022. A virtual public open house is planned for early May. Additional information will be posted on the project website at dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/194oakdale-stcroix/stcroix/ as details become available.

Road closure notices

Email notices of city road closures are available through “road closure advisory” list on the city’s InTouch email notification system. Sign up at woodburymn.gov/InTouch.

Project information is available on the city’s website. If you have additional questions about any of the road projects listed above, contact the Engineering Division at 651-741-3593 or engineering@woodburymn.gov.

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That means these wells have detectable levels of PFAS that on repeatable occasion exceed one or more thresholds established by the MDH.

All nine of the wells, upon receipt of a health advisory, were removed from service and Woodbury’s drinking water continues to meet state and federal standards and guidelines for PFAS.

PFAS levels in other city wells may trend toward receipt of health advisories from the MDH at some point in the future. Woodbury will continue working with the MDH to monitor, assess, and sample its water for PFAS. If the MDH does issue health advisories on an additional well or wells, the city will immediately remove it from service until it can be treated. The public will be informed if/when new advisories are issued.

Four of the nine wells with health advisories were returned to service in June 2020 with treatment at the temporary water treatment plant in order to maintain supply levels. The temporary water treatment plant capacity is being expanded to bring an additional PFAS impacted well back into service (needed until the long-term treatment facility is fully operational). In addition, two new wells are being constructed: one to make up for a well that was permanently removed from service due to PFAS contamination and another to respond to anticipated and planned growth in the community.

3M settlement

In 2010, Minnesota’s attorney general sued 3M Company alleging that the company’s production of chemicals known as PFAS had damaged drinking water and natural resources in the southeast Twin Cities metro area, including Woodbury. On Feb. 20, 2018, the State of Minnesota and 3M reached a settlement agreement, with the state receiving a settlement from 3M for $850 million, with approximately $700 million directed to address PFAS in East Metro drinking water. In August 2021, the State of Minnesota released its long-term Water Supply Plan for the East Metro drinking water, providing guidance and funding for communities to treat water for PFAS.

Crews conduct horizontal drilling operations needed for installing new pipes connecting two additional wells to the temporary water treatment plant. The city expects the two wells to be placed back into operation in June, weather permitting.

Residents who have questions about their private water supply well and whether it is impacted by PFAS should contact the MDH.

More details about the history of PFAS in Woodbury wells and testing results are available on the city’s website at woodburymn.gov/PFAS.
Apply now for summer seasonal jobs with the city
Seasonal employment opportunities are now available at the City of Woodbury. Summer positions last from three to six months and are available for our maintenance, golf course and recreation programs.

The minimum age requirement is 16 for golf course and recreation positions. Applicants for the Utilities, Streets and Parks maintenance positions must be at least 18 years old.

Interested individuals should apply online at woodburymn.gov/Jobs. Email hr@woodburymn.gov or call 651-714-3500 with any questions.

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Water wisely this summer: Watering rules and rate changes
Residents are strongly encouraged to conserve and efficiently use water when irrigating their lawns this summer. Woodbury city code restricts both the day and time that you can water your lawn. Remember:

- Lawn watering is prohibited between noon and 5 p.m. every day of the week.
- Watering is allowed before noon and after 5 p.m. on an odd/even schedule. This means that residents with addresses ending in an even number (0, 2, 4, etc.) may water their lawn on even-numbered calendar days. Likewise, those with addresses ending in an odd number (1, 3, 5, etc.) may only sprinkle lawns on odd-numbered calendar days.
- As of Jan. 1, 2019, homes with private wells must follow the same watering restrictions.

City Code and State Statute requires all irrigation systems have one of the following in working condition: rain sensor, soil-moisture sensor or a WaterSense-certified smart controller. If your irrigation system was installed before 2018 and does not meet this requirement, visit woodburymn.gov/waterwise to purchase a smart controller through the city at a discounted rate.

As of Jan. 1, 2019, homes with private wells must follow the same watering restrictions.

Special watering permits for newly-placed sod and seed are available at woodburymn.gov/WaterPermits.

New water rates
As residents, homeowners associations and businesses start up their irrigation systems this spring, they should remember that the following changes to water rates were made in 2022:

- Residential and commercial water rates increased by 10 cents per thousand gallons, raising the base water rate from $1.60 to $1.70 per thousand gallons
- The administrative fixed fee for water increased by $1 per quarter
- The commercial and homeowner association irrigation rate increased from $3.18 to $3.50 per thousand gallons

The rate increases are needed to support utility infrastructure operational and replacement costs.

Learn more about utility rates and how to check your home for leaks at woodburymn.gov/UtilityBilling. Or check out the city’s YouTube channel (youtube.com/CityofWoodburyMN) and search “water leaks” for a video on checking for leaks in your home.