



City of  
*St. Francis*

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022 | VOL. 7, NO. 1

## Housing Market

St. Francis was named one of ten exurbs that made the list of the hottest housing markets in the twin cities. The *StarTribune* identified ten cities as the most dynamic housing markets in the metro area last year. This data is collected as part of their annual Hot Housing Index, which tracks sales changes, price, and availability of house listings. The index is information that, instead of focusing on cities that were simply the most affordable or expensive, identifies communities that experienced the most significant changes in 2021 compared with previous years. Per the article, *“Top-ranking Cambridge,*



*St. Francis and Isanti all saw price increases that exceeded 30 percent, besting Wayzata and several places that were historically high in demand.”*

St. Francis was the only city in Anoka County to make the list.

### Development Continues

St. Francis continues to spark the interest of builders and developers. As our new census numbers reached 8,100 people, the building has not slowed down. The annual department report for Community Development wrapped up 2021 by identifying several projects working their way through the process. The City is working with housing developers on properties that will create 13 to 294 new housing units each. Developers are presenting the City with a mix of development proposals from single-family homes, townhomes, apartments, and a senior living facility. Commercial development also continues with discussions of new business uses along Highway 47 at 241st all the way to Cree Street. The project process is long and can take up to two years as they work through the complicated steps. Watch for more to come as St. Francis continues to grow and change with new families and new options.

## Message from your Mayor

I don't know about you, but I am definitely ready for spring, and those subzero temps are not on my list of favorites. Just remember, each day gets a little longer, and the Masters Golf Tournament in April is already being advertised on television.

If you haven't already stopped in at the newly remodeled bottle shop, it's worth a look. We've added

2,420 square feet to it, put in a wine tasting area, enlarged the already big walk-in cooler, and refreshed the whole interior. I think you're going to like it.

By the time this newsletter comes out, the City will be in the process of hiring a new city administrator. Joe Kohlmann is moving on, and we

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*Visit us on social media!*



## Permits are needed for outdoor projects

Are you thinking about putting up a shed (under 200 sq. ft.), fence, replacing, or adding a driveway or parking pad? These types of projects will require a zoning permit.

The following information will give you a brief overview of the regulations most commonly associated with these types of projects.

### Sheds

You will need to show the location and dimensions of any existing and proposed structure and setbacks from property lines on a survey or geographic information system (GIS) aerial. This is referred to as a site plan.

- If you live in the urban service area of the City, sheds are allowed up to 200 sq. ft. If you are in the rural service area, shed size is based on the size of your property, and if larger than 200 sq. ft., it will require a building permit.
- Sheds must be the same or similar in exterior details and aesthetics as the principal dwelling (house).

### Fences

For any new or expanding fence projects in the City, you will need to submit a permit application indicating the size, type, and signed neighbor's agreement if installing it on or within two feet of the shared



property line. Fences must be residential in nature unless in the rural service area in conjunction with a legally permitted use.

- The finished side of the fence must face outward.
- The fence's sides and rear are no taller than six feet (excluding yards on corner lots).
- Front of the fence – no taller than four feet.

### Driveways and Parking Pads

If you replace or expand your current driveway or add a parking pad for a recreational vehicle or trailer, you will need to provide a permit and site plan showing size and surface type. All driveways in the urban service area must be constructed with bituminous, concrete, or concrete pavers and a minimum of 50 feet from the paved street in the rural service area. If abutting a road with a gravel surface, then the rural driveway standards must be met.

- The minimum setback from the property line is three feet.
- No residential driveway can be less than 10 feet wide or wider than 24 feet where it meets the street.
- Parking pad size is limited to 500 sq. ft. and must extend at least 12 inches around the perimeter of the recreational vehicle. Approved surfaces are bituminous, concrete, concrete pavers, class IV aggregate, and landscape rock.

Contact the zoning department if you have any questions about your proposed projects by calling 763-753-2630.

## Recycling Reminders

Every year St. Francis Public Works collects old, used, broken, or worn-out cell phones and holiday lights for proper recycling. These items cannot be recycled through curbside recycling carts; instead, most are usually thrown in the trash. Public



Works will collect your used cell phones and lights for proper recycling at a local facility. Drop your cell phones and holiday lights at the Police and Public Works Facility during regular business hours, 6:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you have any recycling questions or concerns, please call Public Works at 763-233-5200

### Take the Recycling Survey

To serve our residents to the best of our ability, we need to hear from you! The St. Francis recycling program has grown from one event a year to five events. That includes year-round drop-off service of string lights and organics. To keep providing the best for our residents and further grow the recycling program, please take a moment and give us your feedback at [www.stfrancismn.org/publicworks/webform/recycling-survey](http://www.stfrancismn.org/publicworks/webform/recycling-survey)

Free Organics Program sign-up in the Public Works lobby

Get on board with your fellow residents and sign-up for the **Free Organics Program!** Sign-up and obtain your free organics bucket and compostable bags at the Public Works during lobby hours Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Have questions? Please call Public Works at 763-233-5200.

The St. Francis Public Works is located at 4058 St Francis Boulevard NW, St Francis, MN 55070.

## Capturing rainwater and preventing runoff

When it rains, water can't soak into impervious surfaces like rooftops, driveways, and roads. Instead, it runs off into streets and storm sewers, creating stormwater. Stormwater picks up nutrients, dirt, salt, fertilizers, pesticides, oil, bacteria, and garbage from our roads to our streams.

Reducing runoff is critical to minimizing our yards and gardens' impact on the surrounding lakes and streams. Rain will soak into the ground where there are gardens and other vegetation, and you can also capture rainwater for use in your yard. Either way, stormwater is reduced, and our lakes and rivers stay clean.

When you are planning changes to your house or lot, think about reducing the size of hard surfaces. For areas where hard surfaces are necessary, consider pavers or pavement that lets water through (permeable). There are a variety of porous pavements on the market specifically designed to increase infiltration into the ground. Ask your contractor or home and garden supply store for water-friendly pavers, porous pavement, or asphalt.

Rain gardens and native plants: are beautiful solutions to water pollution

A rain garden is a popular landscaping choice that prevents water pollution by allowing stormwater to soak into the ground before it runs off. Rain gardens and native plants also:

- Prevent erosion by holding soil in place with its deep roots.
- Attract birds and butterflies.
- Require little watering and maintenance once established.

Rain gardens are concave gardens that collect runoff from downspouts or driveways. Plants that tolerate "wet feet" should be planted in the bottom, while plants that need less water should be on the edges.

### Rain Barrels

Another way to reduce runoff is to capture some of it with rain barrels. A rain barrel is for collecting rain coming off of your roof. Rain barrels also help conserve water. They can be fancy or simple, but the basic structure is to have a barrel at the end of a downspout. The barrel has a spigot or hose that you can use to water your garden or yard. Several home improvement stores now sell rain barrels.

*Source: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Minnesota Stormwater Manual. Capturing rainwater and preventing runoff. Retrieved from [https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php?title=Capturing\\_rainwater\\_and\\_preventing\\_runoff](https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php?title=Capturing_rainwater_and_preventing_runoff)*



## Mayor

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wish him all the best. He has played an essential role in advancing St. Francis since he started in 2015.

Check out the new "spotlight window" on the City's website, [www.stfrancismn.org](http://www.stfrancismn.org). It will give you a quick reference to events we think you should be aware of.

I know I have mentioned this in other newsletters, but it is worth mentioning again. If you have an issue or concern, please bring it up to the City staff, an individual council member, or the whole council at a meeting. Going on social media will not get you the remedy or help you need. Give the City an opportunity to look into your issue or concern and let us fully vet it so that we will be able to give you the correct answer. It may not be the result you are looking for, but it will have been fully vetted and discussed. Doing it this way will help the City to serve you better. After all, the City is basically a public customer service business, and the residents like yourself are the customers.

Stay warm, stay safe.

Respectfully,  
Mayor Feldman

## Now Enrolling for the 2022-23!

The Anoka/Washington County Head Start-Early Head Start program is enrolling for the 2022-2023 program year. Programs are free for eligible families with children from birth to age five and pregnant women. Our Head Start center-based preschool option offers students a 6.5-hour day, four days per week.

Anoka/Washington County's Head Start-Early Head Start program provides education, nutrition, mental health, school readiness, and parent engagement services to children and families from income-eligible households. Our approach is to provide a high-quality educational curriculum while connecting families with growth and learning opportunities. To learn more or apply, visit our website at [www.accap.org/head-start/enrollment-4](http://www.accap.org/head-start/enrollment-4) or call our enrollment hotline at 763-783-4314.



# Fire Department News

With spring drawing near and warmer weather just around the corner, we will all soon be out of our winter slumber to enjoy a little bit more of the great outdoors. The St. Francis Fire Department hopes that all of you enjoy the spring time as much as we do. We would like to remind you that when we change our clocks in March to also check the batteries on your smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. The number one way you can keep you and your family safe from fires is to ensure your smoke alarms and CO alarms are in good working condition.

As the snow and ice begin to melt we all look forward to putting those crock pots away and firing up the grills and smokers. The National Fire Protection Association and St. Francis Fire Department would like to remind you to grill safe. Below are some tips to follow this grilling season.



**There's nothing like outdoor grilling. It's one of the most popular ways to cook food. But, a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. They can be very hot, causing burn injuries. Follow these simple tips and you will be on the way safe grilling.**

## SAFETY TIPS

- ▶▶ Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors
- ▶▶ The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches
- ▶▶ Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area
- ▶▶ Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill
- ▶▶ Never leave your grill unattended
- ▶▶ Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting

## CHARCOAL GRILLS

- ▶▶ There are several ways to get charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- ▶▶ If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- ▶▶ Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- ▶▶ There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- ▶▶ When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

## PROPANE Grills

Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test and there is no flame, turn off both the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department. **If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department.** Do not move the grill.

If the flame **goes out**, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least **five minutes** before re-lighting it.

## FACTS



July is the peak month for grill fires.



Roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.

## Adopt-A-Park Program

The City of St. Francis' Adopt-A-Park program encourages volunteers, with the assistance of the Public Works Department, to adopt a park or city trail in St. Francis for regular maintenance and cleanup, including picking up litter and planting flowers.

The program's mission is to beautify city parks and promote neighborhood and community involvement. This program is an excellent opportunity for individuals, families, organizations, churches, service clubs, youth groups, schools, and businesses to get involved in the community. Depending upon volunteer activity, duration and location, a specific minimum schedule will be set up for each volunteer opportunity.

Please notify the Public Works Department at 763-233-5200 if you are interested in volunteering.



### CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

Gopher State One Call

Local: 651-454-0002

Toll Free: 1-800-252-1166

[www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org)

### KNOW THE FLOW!

[www.knowtheflow.us](http://www.knowtheflow.us)

## Wastewater and Chlorides

**Why do municipal wastewater plants have chloride in their discharge?**

The answer starts with water hardness. People soften their water to make soaps lather more and prevent calcium buildup on appliances and fixtures. Point-of-entry ion exchange water softeners are widely used to treat water hardness in Minnesota. To ensure the continued operation of a point-of-entry ion-exchange softener, it must periodically regenerate with high salt brine that contains chloride. This brine eventually drains to a municipal wastewater system. The cumulative loading from all the point-of-entry softeners in the sewershed contributes significantly to the high chloride concentrations in the wastewater plant discharge.

**Where in Minnesota is chloride in wastewater a problem?**

Chloride in wastewater discharge appears to be



a problem in about 100 Minnesota communities, most of them in southern and western areas of the state. Chloride flows into wastewater treatment facilities from homes and businesses that use water softeners. Treatment facilities are designed to remove particles like grit and sand and biologically degrade organic waste, such as food and human waste. Once chloride is dissolved in water, it cannot be removed by settling or biologically degraded by standard treatment processes. The technology to remove chloride is available but is costly. It would involve microfiltration and reverse osmosis (RO), the same treatment processes used to produce pure water used in laboratories.

*Source: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Alternatives for addressing chloride in wastewater effluent. MPCA analyzes treatment options for salty parameters.*

*Retrieved from [www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-wwprm2-18.pdf](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-wwprm2-18.pdf)*

## Crosswalk safety tips

### As a pedestrian

- Although a crosswalk exists at every intersection, whether marked or not, it is still your responsibility to make sure all vehicles have yielded before stepping into a crosswalk and crossing the roadway.
- Whenever approaching a crosswalk you should remove your earbuds, turn off your music and stop texting or talking on the phone. Be attentive when crossing. Distractions can lead to accidents.
- Make your intention to cross the road known by:
  - Extending your arm
  - Illuminating an overhead light
  - Extending and waving a crosswalk flag
- Make eye contact with the driver. Never assume a driver sees you.
- Be especially alert for turning vehicles, many vehicle-pedestrian incidents occur with a right-turning vehicle.
- If you are not in a marked crosswalk, as a pedestrian you must yield to all vehicles.

### As a driver

- Drivers must yield the right of way to pedestrians lawfully in or stopped at a marked crosswalk.
- Stay alert and reduce speed in areas with crosswalks.
- Avoid distractions—using a cell phone, any hand-held device, listening to loud music, reaching for something on the floor, etc. These types of distractions can easily lead to accidents.
- Proactively check for pedestrians. In the same way you use your mirrors to be aware of traffic, check sidewalks and side streets for pedestrians who may be crossing at an upcoming crosswalk.
- Wait until pedestrians have crossed at least one lane past the lane you are in before resuming travel.
- Never pass another vehicle that has stopped or is slowing down at a crosswalk.



## Citizens Academy

The St. Francis Police Department is excited to announce its 2022 Citizens Academy openings. The program will offer citizens an inside look at the St. Francis Police Department's operations. There will be a broad spectrum of topics covered, which include:

- Tour of the police department and squad cars.
- Classroom and hands-on training.
- Understanding the call for service process, from start to finish.
- Understanding and learning the difference between officers' and citizens' use of force.
- Review of typical calls for service.
- DWI demonstrations.
- Learning about the different types of traffic stops (Then conducting your own).
- What happens during the searching and handcuffing of a suspect.

Each week will build off the previous weeks with real-life scenarios. St. Francis Police Officers will teach the academy classes. We ask that you commit to attending all the sessions. The sessions will be every Thursday starting on April 14 and run until May 19, from 6:00 until 8:30 p.m. **All classes are free!**

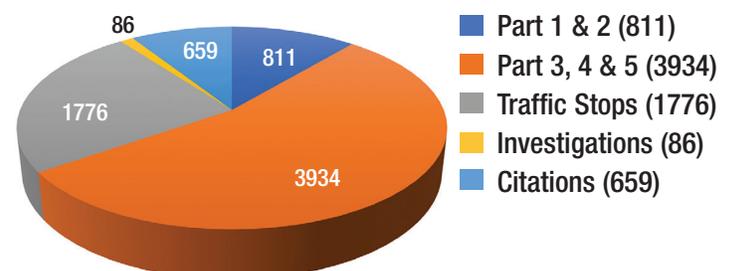
After successfully completing this program, citizens will have an opportunity to ride along with a St. Francis Police Officer for four hours during their shift.

If you are interested in participating in the citizen's academy, fill out an online application form at [www.stfrancismn.org](http://www.stfrancismn.org) (under Police and Supporting Documents). Please contact Officer Hearn at [lhearn@stfrancismn.org](mailto:lhearn@stfrancismn.org) or 763-753-1264 with any questions.

Please return the application no later than Thursday, April 7. Participation will be limited.

## Police respond to 6,521 Calls for Service in 2021

In 2021, the St. Francis Police Department engaged in activities such as traffic enforcement and calls for service, which generated 6,521 incidents. Proactive policing, community service, and theft prevention remain a top priority for patrol staff.



# St. Francis Police Department 2022 Spring Events

## April 4-8 Severe Weather Awareness Week

Statewide Severe Weather Awareness Week is an opportunity to increase awareness of and response to severe weather hazards. This is an opportunity to test your communication methods as if it were a real situation.

During Severe Weather Awareness Week, there will be a statewide tornado drill on Thursday, April 7 when the sirens will sound at 1:45 p.m. and 6:45 p.m.



## Saturday, April 30 | 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Drug Take Back Day

National Take Back Day is a safe, convenient and responsible way to dispose of unused or expired prescription drugs. In 2021, 260 pounds were collected.

The event will take place at the St. Francis Police Department, 4058 St. Francis Boulevard NW

The St. Francis Police Department has a drop box for safe disposal of prescription drugs available in the lobby during normal lobby hours, Monday-Friday, 6:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.



## Saturday, May 7 | 9 a.m.- Noon Free Dog License Day

This is a tentative date and time, please check with City's website and Police Department's Facebook page for updated information. The event will be held at the St. Francis Police Department, 4058 St. Francis Boulevard NW.



**St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce**

PO Box 655  
St. Francis, MN 55070

763-438-5163  
chamber@stfrancischamber.org  
www.stfrancischamber.org

The St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce serves the needs of its membership in working toward the common goal of a growing, healthy business environment and community as a whole.

**GO GREEN on  
St. Patrick's Day**

**with the St. Francis Chamber**

Join the St. Francis Chamber at Mulligans (The Ponds) for a networking event, and a presentation by Anoka County Recycling specialist to discuss Recycling options for your business.

Mulligans  
4:00 to 5:30 PM  
March 17th, 2022



## Bike Rodeo - June date TBD

The St. Francis Police Department's 6th Annual Bike Rodeo will held in the department's parking lot. Highlights are safety skills course and bicycle inspections. Check the department's Facebook page for more details.

Find us on 

Please "like" the St. Francis Police Department Facebook page. The page provides information on local events, safety tips, and press releases for significant incidents.



23340 Cree Street NW  
St. Francis, MN 55070

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 8  
St. Francis, MN  
55070

## ECRWSS POSTAL PATRON

## Events Calendar

Visit the City's website [www.stfrancismn.org](http://www.stfrancismn.org) for calendar updates during COVID-19 restrictions.



## Did You Know?

If you need to report a street light that is out or stuck on, you can do so through Connexus Energy at 763-323-2650 (business hours) or 763-323-2608 (after hours).

They will ask you for the following information:

- Where the light pole is located. Please give the nearest intersection or the closest address to the light pole.
- The pole number. The number is typically four-digits on a silver tag approximately five to six feet off the ground.

Reporting lights that are out, broken, or stuck on is an essential public safety practice.



## City Council Meetings

First and third Monday each month at 6:00 p.m.  
(If a holiday, the meeting will be Tuesday.)

## Planning Commission Meetings

Third Wednesday each month at 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at  
St. Francis Area Schools District Office  
4115 Ambassador Boulevard NW

Agendas and minutes online: [www.stfrancismn.org](http://www.stfrancismn.org)

## City Hall Location

23340 Cree Street NW  
St. Francis, MN 55070

<b>Hours</b>	Monday-Thursday	7:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
<b>Contact Us</b>	<a href="mailto:city@stfrancismn.org">city@stfrancismn.org</a>	763-753-2630
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stfrancismn.org">www.stfrancismn.org</a>	

## City Council

Mayor Steve Feldman	763-235-2310
Councilmember Sarah Udvig	763-235-2311
Councilmember Robert Bauer	763-235-2312
Councilmember Kevin Robinson	763-235-2313
Councilmember Joe Muehlbauer	763-235-2314