



City of
St. Francis

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024 | VOL. 9, NO. 4



Understanding the Budget Process

Your property values contribute to the health of our City! Taxes are collected through the property tax levy to provide the best in public safety, road maintenance, general operations and much more. The City's comprehensive budget process ensures the tax levy supports the services you value the most.

Beginning in late spring, St. Francis staff works to formulate a draft budget. Staff start by updating revenue projections, reviewing year-to-date expenses, updating capital planning documents and evaluating tax base changes using information from the Anoka County Auditor's office and the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

Information is then presented to the City Council and discussed in a series of workshops to collaboratively create a draft budget. This process helps the City Council prioritize pending and set preliminary levy amounts every September. Once the preliminary levy is set, Anoka County gets the information to prepare the notices sent to property owners of the proposed taxes. This notice also states the dates of the meetings that the different entities must discuss the budget. The council and staff continued to refine the budget throughout the fall before the final property tax levy and budget were adopted in December.

How to get involved in the budget process

- Attend budget workshops. Workshops are posted on the City's website at www.stfrancismn.org.
- Ask questions and provide feedback. Reach out to city staff with your questions or feedback. You can request to speak with someone from the finance or city administration departments.
- Participate in public engagement opportunities. Look for chances to give feedback on major projects. The City often holds open houses for public input and may offer surveys or other public engagement options.
- Get involved in local government. St. Francis residents can run for City Council or apply for an appointment to be on boards like the Planning Commission or the Park Board.



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Visit us on social media!



Resident Survey Regarding Joint Fire Protection Services

For St. Francis and Bethel

In January 2024, the cities of St. Francis and Bethel began providing joint fire protection under a contractual agreement. This contract for services currently runs until 2027. However, as demands on the fire service continue to increase, the two cities are working towards a long-term joint powers agreement to provide sustainable fire protection to both communities.

As we explore opportunities for both cities to continue a successful and lasting partnership, we need the residents' input on accomplishing the long-term goal of effective, professional and timely fire and EMS services to our communities. Please take a minute to complete the survey by scanning the QR Code. This survey does not ask for personal information and will be used for informational purposes to guide the future of fire protection in our communities.



**SANTA'S
COMING TO
TOWN!**

**Thursday,
December 12
5:00-7:00 p.m.**

**St. Francis
Police Department**

**4058 St Francis Blvd NW
St Francis**

A colorful illustration of Santa Claus in his traditional red and white suit, carrying a large sack of gifts and holding a golden bell. The background is light blue with white snowflakes.

Assessor's Corner

2024 Property Review update: The City Assessors have finished their visits to all properties due for a five-year review this year. In the weeks ahead, they will visit all areas of the City to view work done on permits (new construction, demolition, decks, additions, etc.) issued this year and follow up on projects that were in progress at the end of 2023.

2025 Proposed Property Taxes Statements will be mailed out from Anoka County in November. This is a notice showing the preliminary estimate of the property tax amount for 2025. The proposed tax estimate amount is based on preliminary levies submitted by Anoka County, the City of St. Francis, school districts, and other taxing authorities. Dates and times are given for upcoming public meetings for each taxing authority, where property owners may bring questions and concerns about the levy amounts. This notice does not include amounts for waste management fees, special assessments, or school district referenda approved in the fall. More information about these statements can be found online at www.anokacountymn.gov/4315.

Other Resources: For more information about MN Property Taxes, visit the MN Department of Revenue online page at www.revenue.state.mn.us/understanding-property-tax.

Bring Your Sled!

The St. Francis Sledding Hill is located at Seelye Brooke Park, 4550 229th Avenue NW. The parking lot is east of the playground, behind the pine trees. It is open to everyone during normal park hours, 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Please do not park on the road. Check the City website, www.stfrancismn.org, for an interactive park map and more information on our parks.





What would our cities look like if kids were in charge?

The Mayor for a Day essay contest is open until December 13. The contest opens to fourth, fifth and sixth graders through the League of Minnesota Cities. Log in to answer the question, “What would you do if you were mayor for a day?”

Enter now to win \$100 and recognition in Minnesota Cities magazine. Find more information and enter your essay at www.lmc.org/mayorforaday.



Santa on the Fire Truck will start at 5:00 p.m. Non-perishable food items will be collected and go to the NACE Food Shelf. For more information on the routes, please visit the city website at www.stfrancismn.org/fire or scan the QR Code.



CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

Gopher State One Call
 Local: 651-454-0002
 Toll Free: 1-800-252-1166
www.gopherstateonecall.org



Recycle Smart – Keep “Tanglers”

Such as plastic bags out of your curbside recycling cart!

“Tanglers” is a recycling industry term for any item that could get wrapped around equipment at recycling sorting facilities. You may not realize this, but all the recyclables you combine in your curbside recycling cart must be separated by material or they cannot be sold to companies that make products. Items such as plastic bags and stretch film, holiday string lights, electrical cords, rope, garden hoses, clothing and chains are all considered tanglers. These items become tangled on sorting equipment and workers can spend hours each day removing them, causing costly processing delays.

However, some of these items are recyclable at drop-off centers since drop-offs collect items separately and therefore, they can be sent directly to a market without sorting.

The following list are tanglers that can be recycled at drop-offs:

- **Plastic bags, stretch film and air pillows**

Reduce/reuse: Avoid using plastic bags by bringing your own bag. Bring packaging materials to mailing stores or the Coon Rapids Recycling Center for reuse.

Recycle: Clean, dry bags and stretch film can be taken to large retailers or grocery stores. Puncture plastic air pillows so they can be recycled with other plastic film. Look for collection containers by store entrances.

Trash: Non-stretchy cellophane, wet or food-contaminated bags, plastic handles.



- **Holiday/string lights and electrical cords**

Recycle: Many city halls and recycling centers collect these items for recycling. Any scrap metal or electronics recycler will accept them as well.

- **Clothing**

Reduce/reuse: There are many outlets for clean, usable clothing. Some food shelves, drop boxes, thrift stores and charitable pickup services accept functional clothing. If ripped or torn, it is best to use it as a rag or donate to organizations that accept rags.

- **Metal chains/ropes/garden hoses**

Reduce/reuse: Ideas of what to do with old, leaky garden hoses abound on the Internet and having some spare rope on hand is usually a good idea.

Recycle: Metal chains can be recycled with scrap metal.

Rope and garden hoses—cannot be recycled.

Trash: If you can't repurpose them, worn rope and damaged hoses are not recyclable and must be thrown away.

Go to AnokaCountyMN.gov/RecyclingDirectory for additional information.



Winter Salt Alternatives— Ways to Reduce Chloride Pollution

As the snow season draws near, consider this: sodium chloride (NaCl) is the most common form of salt used for de-icing roads and walkways. It is used so much that it has become a water pollutant. Here are ways to reduce chloride pollution, have safer walking areas and save some money.

- Remove snow during a snowstorm instead of waiting until the end. Start with the very first snow and keep up the rest of the winter, especially in shaded walkways.
- Think “anti-icing.” The goal is to break the bond between ice and pavement where you need it so it can be shoveled or plowed (as opposed to melting everything).
- Treat before a storm to help prevent ice buildup, so less deicer is needed.
 - o Alternatives: for traction ONLY, sand is safe and effective, but sweep up excess and reuse.
 - o Liquid magnesium chloride, calcium chloride, potassium chloride (all three work better than regular salt in colder temps), calcium magnesium acetate and potassium acetate.
- Do NOT apply if ice has already formed, in rainy, sleety, blowing conditions or snowfall is more than one inch per hour.
- Concrete may require specialized use or product. Salt, chlorides and urea-based (“pet-friendly”) options can cause pitting or spalling of concrete surfaces. Check the product label for use on concrete.
- After storms, use as little de-icer as possible:
 - o The closest salt substitute is potassium acetate, but it is hard to find—ask for it to create demand.
 - o Sand – safe for pets and children (sweep up excess).

Remember, regular salt is ineffective at temperatures below 15 degrees (F). Try sand or pre-treat with liquid magnesium, calcium or potassium chlorides.

Information provided by Coon Creek Watershed District (763-755-0975 or www.cooncreekwd.org).

**Recycle
Smart**

Keep plastic bags out of your recycling cart.

Why Does Stormwater Need to be Managed?

What is stormwater and stormwater runoff? The water on Earth constantly cycles between liquid, gas and solid states. As part of the water cycle, water vapor in the air condenses and falls as rain and/or snow. When that rain or snow hits the ground, it is called “stormwater.”

Why does stormwater need to be managed? Over the past century, we have built homes, roads, shopping centers, commercial buildings and so on, dramatically increasing the impervious surface. At the same time, we have modified the landscape to facilitate rapid drainage of stormwater runoff from our developments. This has concentrated stormwater runoff and decreased infiltration, causing three problems.

1. Flowing water is powerful and picks up soils, debris, leaves, and oils from the impervious surfaces it flows over. Unless treated, this material reaches surface waters, polluting them beyond where the water supports wildlife or recreation.
2. The increased volume of water running off and the increased drainage speed mean large quantities of water reach surface waters quickly, which can lead to flooding and scouring (erosion) of river channels.
3. Less water infiltrates, reducing soil moisture and less water percolating into groundwater. Consequently, plants may be stressed during dry periods and aquifer (groundwater) levels may decrease. Depleted groundwater levels may, in turn, reduce water levels in streams and reduce drinking water supplies.

We can minimize or reduce these negative impacts through proper management of stormwater. Examples of management strategies include the following:

- Retain runoff water and release it slowly to reduce flooding.
- Capture and treat runoff to reduce pollutant loads.
- Stabilizing slopes with ground cover and removing debris and other potential pollutants from the runoff’s path can reduce the amount of materials available to the rapidly flowing water.

Sources: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. *Minnesota Stormwater Manual. What is stormwater, and why does it need to be managed?* Retrieved from https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php?title=What_is_stormwater_and_why_does_it_need_to_be_managed%3F



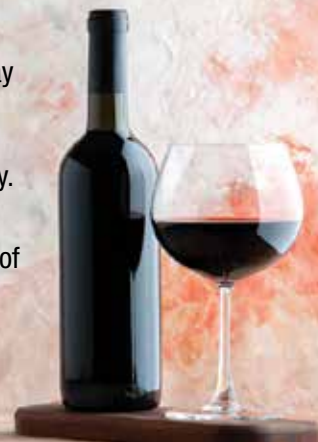
Winter Parking and Snow Removal Reminders!

- Do NOT blow, shovel or push snow from your driveway into the street. It is illegal and the City will be issuing code enforcement violations on residents who violate this law (Minnesota Statute 160.2715). Violations are misdemeanors, but civil penalties would also apply if the placement of snow creates a hazard, such as a slippery area, frozen rut or bump contributing to a motor vehicle or pedestrian crash. The civil liability can extend to the property owner and the person who placed the snow.
- When shoveling your driveway apron, shovel the snow to the right of your driveway. If you are looking at the street, it will reduce the amount of snow in your driveway when the plow comes by.
- Do NOT park your vehicle in the street. (No parking is allowed on any city street during November through May from 1:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and/or during a snow event. A snow event occurs when snowfall is two inches or more and ends when the roads have been cleared to full width. Violators will be towed at the owner’s expense.)
- Please help keep fire hydrants clear next to your home.
- Do not place your garbage cans in the street. Ensure they have a spot at the edge of your driveway.
- Keep the area around and behind your mailbox clear of snow. It allows room for more snow without it piling up. The image below describes USPS requirements for your mailbox. Using these requirements can help reduce the chances of your mailbox being damaged.

BOTTLE SHOP

Remember to shop locally this holiday season. Supporting the municipal is excellent for our community as the money goes back into the community.

Check the back of your receipts at County Market now through the end of the year for additional savings!



Package Theft Deterrents

Holidays are approaching fast and more packages are being delivered to homes than ever. Millions of Americans have packages stolen from their homes each year. There are several ways to protect yourself from criminal activity. Here are some measures that can be taken to protect yourself from package theft.

- If you know you won't be home during the delivery of a package, have it delivered to your workplace.
- Place insurance on the item being delivered.
- If you're leaving for the holidays, place your package on hold.
- Require signature on delivery.
- Install a security camera. Security cameras can deter a thief and act as a tool for law enforcement if a theft occurs.
- Check with your vendors and delivery services for other security options.



Ice Safety

There is never such a thing as 100% safe ice. Be prepared with a survival plan.

Did you know?

- New ice is generally stronger than old ice.
- Ice seldom freezes uniformly.
- Ice that is formed over flowing water and currents is often dangerous.
- The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process.
- Booming and cracking ice isn't necessarily dangerous—this is the expansion and contraction as temperatures change.



ST. FRANCIS AREA SCHOOLS
Kindergarten Registration
 Events in January for students enter school in September 2025

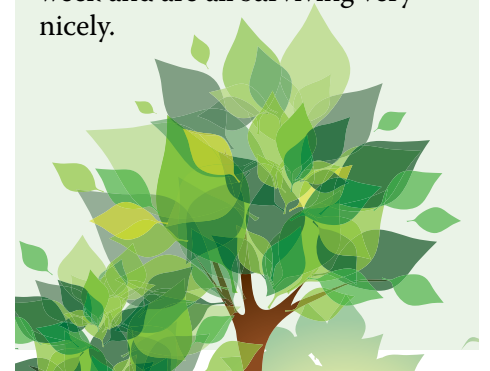
Enrollment for kindergarten at the three St. Francis Area Schools elementary schools begins in January. To provide families an opportunity to see their child's school and learn more about the registration process, each elementary school will host a Kindergarten Registration Event.

- January 13
East Bethel Elementary School
 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- January 14
Cedar Creek Elementary School
 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- January 16
St. Francis Elementary School
 6:00-7:30 p.m.



DNR ReLeaf Grant Update

In 2023, Public Works applied for the DNR ReLeaf Grant and received \$147,797.75 to help mitigate Emerald Ash Borer. Since then, the City hired a contractor to remove 117 Ash trees and planted 104 new (disease-free) trees in June. Staff have been watering the newly planted trees multiple times a week and are all surviving very nicely.



- Visit www.isd15.org/kindergarten to:
- Learn more about the kindergarten enrollment process.
 - Use the interactive map to determine your child's school (determined by your home address).
 - Register for a Kindergarten Registration Event.



St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner

W E L C O M E

TO *Fabulous*

CASINO NIGHT

Hosted by the St. Francis Area
Chamber of Commerce



SAVE THE DATE

**FRIDAY,
JANUARY 31ST
2025**

**@ The Refuge
Golf Course**

- Play Casino Games
- Chances to win Prizes
 - 50/50, Silent Auction & Raffles
- Dinner & Cash Bar



Get your tickets online: stfrancischamber.org/annual-dinner

