



City of Oak Park Heights

Tree City USA

First Quarter 2014 Newsletter

Inside this issue:

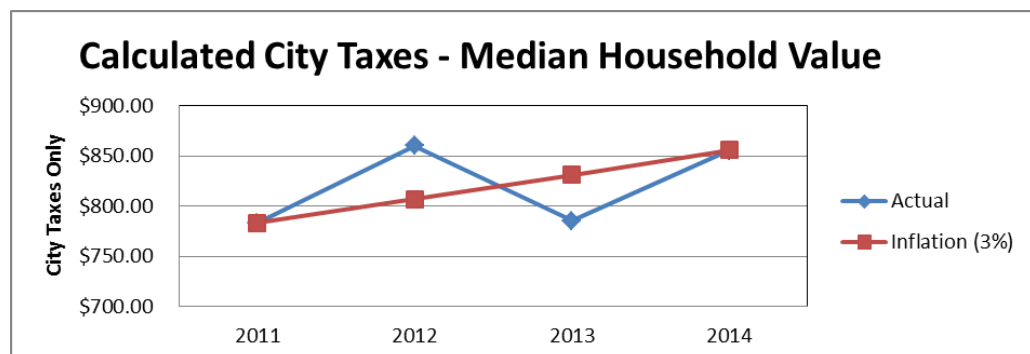
St. Croix River Crossing Update	2
Recycling Pickup Calendar	3
What's Included in Trash Pickup	3
Washington County Tree Sale	4
Pet Owner Reminders	4
Survey from MnDOT	5
Arborist News	6
Snow Removal Q&A	7
Notes from Public Works	9
Winter Parking Reminder	10
Ice Rink Hours	10

2014 Budget and Property Taxes Update

At the December 10, 2013, City Council meeting, the Council adopted the City's 2014 Budget as was reflected on the Truth in Taxation Notices sent to all property owners this past November. The 2014 City Budget includes an increase in the tax levy of 5.4 percent as compared to 2013. The increase was greatly attributable to increases in contractual services that the City utilizes. The City has contracts for many public services, including legal, planning, engineering, grass cutting, waste collection, snow plowing, and fire services, which helps keep the City costs and overhead low.

The actual 5.4 percent increase in the tax levy will result in an average eight to nine percent increase in individual residential taxes for payable 2014. This is due, in part to a shift in the market value/tax capacity of the properties in the City. Residential properties on the average increased 1 percent in market value while commercial property values remained the same. Commercial properties comprise of more than 60 percent of the City tax base and results in a tax shift to residential properties.

For example, based on a median home valued at \$174,000, total taxes for the City are increased by \$73.41 over 2013 taxes. This increase is comprised of \$25.05 from the market value shift and \$48.36 for the City's increases in the 2014 budget. In contrast, the 2013 taxes for residential properties decreased by 8.7 percent as compared to 2012. Therefore a two-year comparison will result in similar tax bills. **2012 taxes are similar to 2014 tax bills and compare with three percent inflation since 2011.**



As compared to many communities, the City residents will continue to not pay addi-

[continued to Page 2...](#)

...continued from Page 1

tional garbage pick-up fees, which can average over \$100 per year, or utility street lighting or utility franchising fees. In addition, the City has saved over \$2,600,000 for street reconstruction purposes. These funds are being planned for the proposed street reconstruction projects of 2014—2015, which will reduce the benefitting property owner's cost substantially. Additional savings are planned to continue so that all areas are benefitted by such plan.

Federal and State financial situations are more challenging, and greater burdens will continue to be placed on local governments to provide services and maintain infrastructure without assistance. Considering this, it is vital to note that the City's financial position is sound, manages cash flow without borrowing, and is largely capable of replacing major units of infrastructure.

The City Council and City Staff continue to work to keep taxes as low as possible while ensuring that the demands of operating a safe, vibrant, and clean community are met.

If you have any questions about the 2014 City Budget, or the budgeting process, contact Finance Director Betty Caruso at 651-439-4439.

St. Croix River Crossing Update

The St. Croix Crossing project remains active despite the winter season; and expect construction to ramp up significantly as temperatures begin to warm up.

Last year saw many accomplishments for the project, to include completing all river bridge pier foundations work below the river surface at five locations (Piers 8-12). In 2013, construction crews also built a new signalized intersection directly between Hwy 36 and Hwy 95, built the new Beach Road Bridge, extended the South Frontage Road to Stagecoach Trail, completed utility work, paved new Hwy 36 eastbound lanes and expanded Hwy 95 lanes to two lanes in each direction.

In December, construction crews began the pile driving process for Piers 1-7 on the Minnesota shore. This will continue through May. Crews also plan to begin building up the pier closest to the Minnesota shore (Pier 8) later this winter. Construction at the other river piers will resume once the ice melts.

2014 includes a packed construction schedule along Hwy 36 and Hwy 95. The plan is to have all approach work and utility work complete by the end of 2014. In early spring, work begins along the

North Frontage Road and on the South Frontage Road east of Osgood Avenue to Club Tara. During the summer crews will also re-do the Hwy 36 eastbound and westbound lanes and the rest of Highway 95 north of Highway 36. Reconstructing the South Frontage Road between Osgood Ave. and Oakgreen Ave. will occur later in the season. The project team is finalizing these details now and will share specifics with residents and businesses later this winter.

One great way to get detailed updates as they become available is to sign up for regular e-mail updates. You can do this on the website. www.mndot.gov/stcroixcrossing

If you have questions or comments, we encourage you to:

- ◆ Call: 1-855-GO-CROIX (1-855-462-7649)
- ◆ E-mail: stcroixcrossing.dot@state.mn.us
- ◆ Stop in: 1862 Greeley St. S., Stillwater



Recycling incentive program

The City of Oak Park Heights has a recycling incentive program. The City awards a prize of \$25.00 or a fire extinguisher and/or smoke detector. Residents participating in curbside recycling are picked randomly twice a month.

Recycling benefits the environment in countless ways: it reduces the amount of natural resources used to make new products, it saves energy, it prevents water and air pollution including greenhouse gas emissions, and it reduces waste. This means that the simple act of recycling in your daily life provides significant protection for our environment and reduces global warming.

Thank you for recycling!

2014 Oak Park Heights Recycling Calendar

■ Recycling Day

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

What's included in trash pickup?

In addition to the typical garbage and recycling pickup, the City also covers the disposal of yard waste, large household items, and 'white-goods' such as televisions, refrigerators, couches, chairs, desks, water-heaters, stoves, dishwashers, dryers, etc. for single family residences and complexes with four units or less in Oak Park Heights. In order to have these items picked up in a timely fashion, please contact Judy Tetzlaff at City Hall, 651-439-4439, at least two days prior to collection day so that the special truck may be dispatched to your home. If you receive a bill from Advanced Disposal for these additional services, please call the City Administrator at 651-439-4439 as most, if not all, of these items are covered under the City's contract, and you should not be billed.



Some items are not included in your monthly fee are extra bags of garbage not placed in your container. The City's waste hauler, Advanced Disposal, will bill you \$1.50 per bag. Some other items that are picked up for a fee are sinks, toilets, and construction debris. You will be billed by Advanced Disposal at a regulated rate as monitored by the City.

REMINDER!!

Waste pick-up is every THURSDAY and recyclable pick-up is every-other THURSDAY. However, if one of the six holidays—New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas—falls on a weekday, collection may occur on FRIDAY of that week.

Annual Washington Conservation District tree sale

Winter weather got you down? Make plans to plant a tree (or many!) in your yard come spring to improve your local habitat. Trees are both beautiful and functional. They shade your house from scorching sun in the summer and block it from icy winds in the winter. A mature tree canopy can intercept 1600 gallons of rainwater per year; this is stormwater that may otherwise run off of roofs and streets, causing pollution to be carried into local water bodies. Trees improve air quality by catching dust in the air and provide valuable habitat for birds and other wildlife.



When selecting trees for your yard, it is best to plant a variety of natives to prevent the spread of disease. By interspersing conifers and deciduous trees, you will ensure that your landscape is verdant throughout the year. Choose a fruiting tree, such as a chokecherry or plum, to attract birds and maybe even give yourself a canning project come fall.

The Washington Conservation District is currently taking orders for their annual tree sale. Trees can be ordered in bundles of 25 for only \$35, and the selection includes conifers, hardwoods and shrubs. In addition we are offering a special bird pack of trees – 30 bird friendly trees for \$50 that include Bur Oak, White Oak, Black Cherry, White Pine, Chokecherry, and Wild plum. Conservation District staff can also help you to plan your planting project and have tree bars available for rental. To order trees, check for sold out trees, or to learn more about the program, call Wendy at (651) 275-1136 x24 or visit www.mnwcd.org.

City Meetings (subject to change)

City Council:

Second and fourth Tuesdays at
7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission:

Typically the second Thursday at
7:00 p.m.

Parks Commission:

Third Monday at 6:30 p.m.

Agendas and Minutes are posted on
the City's website:
www.cityofoakparkheights.com

Attention Pet Owners

The City of Oak Park Heights has a leash law in effect that prohibits pets from running at large. Any dog or cat that is off the premises of the owner and not under the physical control (by leash or by voice) of the owner or another designated person is in violation of this Ordinance. When you are out walking your pet, please remember to bring a plastic bag. Pet owners are required by City Ordinance to clean up pet waste on public and private property. Removal and proper disposal of pet waste helps keep our City clean and healthy. All dogs and cats in the City for more than 30 days are required to have a City Pet License. There is no charge for this service and it could save your pet from a trip to the animal shelter. Bring proof of your pet's rabies vaccination to City Hall to receive a pet license and tag. For more information, please call City Hall at 651-439-4439. City Ordinances can be viewed on the City's web-site: www.cityofoakparkheights.com.



Communications Survey

To ensure Oak Park Heights residents are getting needed information about the St. Croix Crossing project, we want to hear from you. Please fill out this brief survey, tear it out, tape it closed and mail it. **All postage is paid.** If you receive our email updates, you may have already taken a similar looking survey. This paper survey is important because it allows us to focus in on Oak Park Heights residents. Thank you for taking a few minutes to help us improve how we communicate with you.

How do you receive St. Croix Crossing project updates? Check all that apply:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email updates | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media (Facebook or Twitter) | <input type="checkbox"/> At 511mn.org |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Mailings to my home | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broadcast media (TV or radio) | <input type="checkbox"/> At www.mndot.gov/stcroixcrossing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

What other ideas do you have to get project information to Oak Park Heights residents?

Are you receiving the information you need about the St. Croix Crossing project?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

If no, what information would be helpful to you?

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the least, 5 being the most) the information I receive about the St. Croix Crossing project is:

Accurate:	1	2	3	4	5
Timely:	1	2	3	4	5
Accessible:	1	2	3	4	5
Comprehensive:	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to Understand:	1	2	3	4	5
Relevant:	1	2	3	4	5

If you marked 1-2 for any of the above statements, please explain the reasons below:

Have you ever visited the St. Croix Crossing website (www.mndot.gov/stcroixcrossing) for information about the project?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, does the website provide you with the information you need?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

What other information would be helpful to you to include on the website?

If you would like to begin receiving regular email updates, provide your email address below. (Please print clearly):





NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

St. Croix Crossing Project Office - MS 950
Minnesota Department of Transportation
395 John Ireland Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55101-9799



Fold Here

Tape Here

Tape Here

Pruning Trees

Early to mid-winter are good times to prune shade trees. Ornamental and fruit trees are best pruned in late February or early March. There is no need to apply tree wound dressing or paint to wounds made in fall or winter. Hire a tree service if pruning needs to be done on large shade trees.

Risk tree detection

Winter is also a good time to check trees for decay and defects which might affect their structural stability. Signs to look for are: shelf fungi on tree trunks or branches, wildlife holes, open decay columns in the main trunk, particularly at the base of

the tree, and cracks in trunk or branches, particularly at main stem unions. If any risk factors are found, call the Arborist, or a professional tree service, to evaluate the extent of the risk.

Emerald Ash Borer

Emerald ash borer (EAB) has not yet been confirmed in Oak Park Heights or elsewhere in Washington County; however, it's good to check ash trunks and branches for "D-shaped" adult exit holes and "S-shaped" larval galleries under the bark. If larvae are present there may be a lot of woodpecker activity, particularly in the top half of the tree. If you see any signs of EAB activity, or want to discuss insecticide treatment to protect ash, please contact the Arborist. Do not move ash wood with intact bark from one area to another, as this is one way that emerald ash borer is easily spread.

Ash removal and replacement

The City of Oak Park Heights is continuing to remove ash trees which are doing poorly, are interfering with power lines, competing with other trees, have storm damage, or are blocking sight lines along the street. If you have an ash tree that you think should be removed, contact the Oak Park Heights Arborist.

Oak Wilt

It is best to prune oaks between October 15th and March 15th due to insect transmission of the oak wilt fungus to fresh wounds on healthy oaks during the growing season. Once there is a hard frost, it is fine to prune oaks.

Tree Problems?

If you are an Oak Park Heights resident, and have a problem with a tree or shrub, such as an insect or a disease, have planting questions, or just want to have a plant identified, call Dr. Kathy Widin, the Oak Park Heights Arborist, at 439-4439 Ext. 1106. She can either answer your question over the phone or make an appointment for a site visit. This service is paid for by the City of Oak Park Heights.



Winter snow removal and road clearing

How does the plowing process work in Oak Park Heights?

The City of Oak Park Heights contracts street snow plowing and ice control with Raleigh Trucking. The contractor's crews remove snow and/or apply ice control after each snow event throughout the winter months. Snow removal and ice control operation varies with particular snow events, but typically the contractor begins ice control and attempts to keep roads as clear as reasonably possible very shortly after the event begins. During events whereby heavy accumulation is expected, the contractor makes several passes, concentrating on Oak Park Heights' main thoroughfares, such as the frontage roads, 58th Street, and those streets with heavy traffic and steep slopes. After snowfall stops, the contractor resumes snow removal and ice control in the early morning to have roads cleared as best as possible for the morning commute. Several passes are necessary to clear snow and ice after any given snow event.

Why does slush remain on Oak Park Heights streets shortly after the roads have been plowed?

Often after a snow event, slush remains on Oak Park Heights streets as the salt applied "works" to allow the plow blades to scrape the remaining compacted snow off of the street. Ice control consists typically of an 80/20 mix of sand and salt, but some occurrences require straight salt to remove the packed ice. Salt melts the snow and mixes with the water to decrease the freezing point from 32 degrees to approximately 0 degrees; therefore, the use of salt is no longer feasible when temps fall below this point.

When are Oak Park Heights walking trails cleared?

Oak Park Heights Public Works staff work diligently to remove snow from the trail system after each snow event. During snow events, staff's priority is maintaining access and a clear and safe passageway for the Oak Park Heights Police Department and City Hall entrance. During heavy snow with substantial accumulation, trails are plowed initially during the snow event. During snowfalls with less than four (4) inches accumulated, trails are typically cleared the following morning beginning with the main trail thoroughfares leading to Stillwater Area High School. The remaining trails and infrastructure sites such as sanitary sewer lift stations, well houses, and water towers are plowed after the priority routes are complete.

When is snow removed from Ice Rinks?

Ice rinks are cleared in conjunction with the trail system. Most of the time, rinks are cleared of snow and swept to clean ice less than 24 hours after a snow event.

The plow hit my mailbox; who is responsible to repair it?

The City of Oak Park Heights realizes that on occasion, heavy snow or a plow blade will topple a mailbox. Of course, we regret this inconvenience and thank you in advance for your patience. Please call City Hall at 651-439-4439 to report it. The City does reimburse for broken mailboxes due to plow damage.

What are the parking restrictions in Oak Park Heights?

Oak Park Heights enforces parking restrictions in order to safely and efficiently remove snow from City streets. Parking restrictions begin on November 1st through March 31st. During this time, the no parking restriction is enforced between the hours of 1:00 AM to 6:00 AM. Parking restrictions are enforced regardless of a recent snowfall.

NOTES FROM PUBLIC WORKS

Clearing around hydrants

Note the location of the nearest hydrant to your home. It is extremely helpful and appreciated that residents help city staff and the fire department in maintaining hydrants clear of snow. Keeping a hydrant clear and easily accessible could save precious time in the case of an emergency.

Trash receptacles

During a snow event on a trash pickup day, it is helpful to the street plowing crew when residents keep trash receptacles from creeping too far into the street. Please be aware on trash day if a snow event is occurring. The plows will likely be out.

Protect your house from frozen meters and pipes

You can take easy and inexpensive steps to prevent the damage, expense and inconvenience associated with freezing pipes and meters. Temperatures are colder along the floor and cement block wall of the basement than near the ceiling. Circulating the warmer air can help prevent frozen meters. In some homes, meters are in separate unheated rooms or boxes; open the doors to rooms or open a meter box to allow warmer air to circulate. Simply keeping your home and basement warm enough will help prevent freezing. In addition:

- Check along the foundation for areas where cold wind can enter the basement or crawl space and plug with insulation.
- Close off crawl space vents and doors.
- Replace broken or cracked basement windows or doors.
- Install a storm window or cover basement windows with weather insulation kits
- Make sure basement doors and windows close tightly.
- Seal or caulk cracks in the walls.
- Insulate pipes.
- **Don't forget to turn off the water supply and drain all outdoor faucets!**

Streetlight out in your neighborhood?

Your help in identifying street lights that are not working is very important, as we rely solely on your notification assistance. Once City staff is aware of a light out, we contact Xcel Energy immediately to help make sure the light is repaired in a reasonable amount of time. Xcel Energy Streetlighting Department strives to repair outages within two business days of notification that the light is out or not working properly. To report a City street light out, please contact City Hall at 439-4439.

If possible, have the following information available:

- Property address and/or nearest cross street to where the light pole is located.
- Whether the light is located on a corner, midblock, or in a cul-de-sac.
- The nature of the problem (i.e. light is out, light is blinking, light is broken).

City of Oak Park Heights

14168 Oak Park Blvd. N.
PO Box 2007
Oak Park Heights, MN 55082
Phone: 651-439-4439
Fax: 651-439-0574

Police non-emergency: 651-439-4723
Police Emergency: 911

Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
excluding legal holidays

MAYOR
Mary McComber: 351-7879

COUNCILMEMBERS
Chuck Dougherty: 491-0419
Mike Liljegren: 351-2742
Mike Runk: 439-5458
Mark Swenson: 270-5385

CITY ADMINISTRATOR
Eric Johnson

Visit our Website!
www.cityof oakparkheights.com

*The Oak Park Heights
newsletter
is published by the City
of Oak Park Heights.
Comments are welcome.
651-439-4439*

City of Oak Park Heights

First Quarter 2014 Newsletter

WINTER PARKING REMINDER

Parking regulations begin November 1st through March 31st. No parking is allowed on City streets during the hours of 1:00am and 6:00am.

Winter parking restrictions are put in place in an effort to enable snow removal equipment the opportunity to do a top quality and efficient job in removing snow from city streets. Please be aware that these parking restrictions are in place AND ENFORCED regardless of whether or not there has been recent snowfall. Move off the city streets during those hours to avoid citation and towing. Please help us by obeying the winter parking restrictions.

WINTER WARMING HOUSE HOURS

Ice rinks are open as weather permits. Warming house hours will be as follows:

Weekdays:	3:30pm-9:00pm
Weekends:	9:00am-9:00pm
Holidays:	9:00am-9:00pm

PARK HOURS

Park and trail hours are October 1—April 30 from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and May 1—September 30 from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Presorted
Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Stillwater, MN
Permit No. 558

City of Oak Park Heights
14168 Oak Park Blvd N, Box 2007
Oak Park Heights, MN 55082-2007