



City of Oak Park Heights

Tree City USA

Fall 2015 Newsletter

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2016 City Budget Outlook



The City's Preliminary Budget for 2016 is set at \$5,648,561 and is generally adjusted for the changes necessary to fund operations at the present level. The Preliminary Budget, includes all operations and debt services for the next year and is an increase of \$246,561 or 4.56% over the 2015 budget. The increase in expenditures includes snowplowing, debt repayments and capital purchasing funds for streets, fire station contribution and vehicle replacement. Decreases in the budget for 2016 include reductions in employees and shifting the consulting services of the arborist to staff.

The Preliminary Tax Levy for the 2016 budget is \$5,191,593, an increase of \$168,862 or 3.36% over the 2015 tax levy and would largely fund the above 2016 Budget. The remaining funds would be anticipated to be derived from other sources such as fees, permits, earned interest and other revenues.

	TAX LEVY	TAXES ON A MEDIAN HOME	INCREASE OVER 2015
TAX LEVY 2015			
2015 OPERATIONS	\$ 4,414,731		
2015 DEBT	\$ 608,000		
TOTAL 2015 TAXES	\$ 5,022,731	\$ 1,062.70	
INCREASE DUE TO VALUE INCREASE		6.54	0.62%
CHANGES TO LEVY			
OPERATIONS	\$ 156,862	\$ 14.26	1.35%
DEBT	\$ 12,000	\$ 2.60	0.24%
TOTAL 2016 BUDGET INCREASE	\$ 168,862	\$ 16.86	1.59%
TOTAL INCREASE		\$ 23.40	2.20%

Impact on Residential Property

City residential property values are increasing on average 1% as compared to 2015 which calculates to an estimated increase in property taxes for a residential property at .6% even if the budget Preliminary Levy did not change from 2015. The following is an example: A residence valued at \$205,800 in 2015 is valued at \$206,840 for 2016 taxes. The 2015 taxes were \$1,062.70, while 2016 is estimated to be \$1,086.10. A 2.20% increase; **(1.6% due to the Levy increase and .6% due to the residential value increase = Total 2.20 %)**

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Change in Property Value Share

Property values for the City consist of values for residential, commercial and public utility properties. Each of these property classes share in the property tax levy. As market values of properties change so does each property class portion of levy. The following chart reflects that in taxes payable 2011 residential properties paid 30.71% of the tax levy. The Residential portion dropped to the lowest at 26.44% in payable 2013 due to a decline in property values. For taxes payable 2016 Residential property is estimated to pay 32.18% of the taxes; Commercial 29.56%; and Public Utility 37.44%. As Commercial values have declined, the City has seen a tax levy shift from Commercial Property to Residential Property.

PROPERTY CLASSES - TAX CAPACITY % OF TOTAL					
TAXES PAYABLE YEAR	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	PUBLIC	ALL	TOTAL
	PROPERTY	INDUSTRIAL		OTHER	
2011	30.71%	35.26%	33.13%	0.89%	100.00%
2012	28.75%	35.02%	35.33%	0.90%	100.00%
2013	26.44%	34.08%	38.55%	0.93%	100.00%
2014	27.63%	33.38%	38.05%	0.94%	100.00%
2015	30.36%	30.36%	38.44%	0.84%	100.00%
EST 2016	32.18%	29.56%	37.44%	0.82%	100.00%

Truth in Taxation Hearing – December 8, 2015

The Preliminary Budget and Tax Levy is continuing to be reviewed and adjusted prior to its final adoption in December, however the City may NOT increase the amounts. The City's Annual "Truth In Taxation" meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2015, 7:00 pm at City Hall where the City will receive input on the 2016 Budget and Levy prior to any final changes and adoption.

House Numbers Required by City Ordinance

Not only are house numbers required by the City's Zoning Ordinance, they are essential for people to find you and can be critical for emergency response groups, such as the police department, fire department and emergency medical responders to assist you as quickly as possible.

To make it easy to locate your home, your house numbers should be:

- ◆ A minimum of 3 inches in height
- ◆ Made of a durable, weather resistant material such as metal, glass, plastic, etc.
- ◆ A color that stands out with the house or background upon which they are placed such as dark numbers against a light background
- ◆ Easily and clearly seen from the street when approached from any direction. You may want to consider having the numbers coated with a reflective material for better visibility at dark or locating them beneath a light source
- ◆ Attached to your home or a sign post that faces the street

If your home does not have house numbers on it, make it a priority to put them on today.

New City Arborist

The City of Oak Park Heights has a new arborist! Lisa is an Oak Park Heights Public Works Operator and took over for Kathy Widin when she retired. Lisa has a Bachelor's Degree in Conservation Biology which she earned at the University of Wisconsin—River Falls and is a Certified Arborist.

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, please call the new City Arborist, Lisa Danielson, at 651-439-4439, ext. 1302. 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.



Oak Wilt

Due to insect transmission of the oak wilt fungus to fresh wounds on healthy oaks, oaks should not be wounded or pruned during the 'high risk' period from April 1st to July 1st. If they are wounded anytime during the growing season (April 1- October 1), the wounds should be painted with latex house paint to prevent oak wilt infection. It is best to prune oaks between October 15th and March 15th.

Ash tree removal and replacement

In an effort to continue to reduce the population of ash trees on boulevards and in parks, 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 any questions about the ash tree removal plan, contact the Oak Park Heights Arborist.

Watering Trees and Shrubs

If the weather is drier, established shrubs, small trees, and evergreens will need water. Water plants well, once per week, at the ground line. If the property slopes at all where you are watering, use a root-feeder, which attaches to your garden hose, pushed into the ground about four inches. Water plants weekly until the ground freezes.

If you receive a new boulevard tree in the fall, please water those trees well once a week (at least 10 gallons of water per week) up until the ground freezes. Any week where we have a half inch of rainfall or more, you will not need to water. Leave mulch around new trees for at least several years to help retain soil moisture.

Frozen pipes in the winter months

Your water lines may be at risk of freezing during prolonged periods of bitter cold. Water service lines that run from the main line to the home are private property as are the water shut-off boxes. The City does not have the capacity to thaw frozen private water lines.

Here's what you can do to prepare:

- Monitor the weather reports for extended periods of severe cold; then take action.
- Allow warm air to circulate in the area where the water comes in to the house.
- Leave utility room doors open and clear space around the waterline.
- Remove contents of vanity cupboards and leave the doors open.
- If possible/practical leave snow cover over the area where your lateral water line runs from the curb stop to the house.
- Put a fresh battery in the thermostat if the thermostat is not hard wired in to the home.
- Run your cold water closest to the water line entry point for a couple minutes and then take the temperature of the water. Please first notify the City if you must leave your water running.
- If water from the tap is below 40 degrees Fahrenheit it is recommended that you let your cold water run from this faucet at a pencil thickness until a few days after frigid temperatures subside.
- You may want to run your faucet non-stop overnight when temperatures typically dip lower or no water is being used for a period of time. Monitor such flows and keep track of water use and proactively inform the City that you are running water to preclude a frozen water line. The City will make appropriate adjustments to water and sewer billings for homes that do run water to prevent freeze-up.
- Contact the City with any questions you may have as we head into the winter season.

Garbage and Recycling

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 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 City Hall at least three days prior to collection day so that the special truck may be dispatched to your home.



Some items not included in your monthly fee are extra bags of garbage not placed in your container. The City's waste hauler, Tennis Sanitation, 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 Tennis Sanitation at a regulated rate as monitored by the City. Electronic and hazardous waste cannot be picked up, but can be brought to the Washington County Environmental Center, 4039 Cottage Grove Drive in Woodbury. Call 651-430-6655 for directions and hours.

The City's general fund covers the cost of garbage and recycling services for single family residences and multiplexes with four or less units. In order to keep costs down for the City, please use the container size that fits your needs. If you currently have a large container that you are not filling each week, please call City Hall to have your container size reduced to a small or medium size.

Don't flush 'flushable' wipes

The City of Oak Park Heights Public Works Department provides for the collection, operation, and maintenance of a wastewater system that ultimately leads to treatment and the return of water back to the ecological system at an environmentally safe level.



Oak Park Heights has approximately 28 miles of sanitary sewer mains, roughly 750 sanitary sewer manholes and four lift stations. Each year about 30,000 linear feet or roughly six miles of the City's sanitary sewer mains are cleaned and inspected. Mains that require a higher level of maintenance are cleaned more frequently. This routine maintenance helps to prevent blockages and sewer backups; however when unauthorized items are flushed into the sanitary sewer, the City's ability to prevent backups is no longer controllable.

As a resident, you play a key role in preventing sanitary sewer backups. To help prevent backups, please dispose of the following items properly, by NOT dumping in a drain or flushing down the toilet:

- Diapers
- "Flushable" wipes (these do not dissolve, therefore they clog sanitary sewer lines and pumps)
- Cooking grease and oil
- Sanitary napkins
- Rags or shop towels
- Garage waste products such as oil, grease, gasoline, antifreeze
- Household waste such as ashes, corrosives, glass, metals, paint, poisons, or solvents
- Yard waste such as sand, soil, or mud.

Sanitary sewer problems should be reported to the City of Oak Park Heights Public Works Department during business hours by calling City Hall (651) 439-4439. The public works department also has a 24 hour emergency only hotline (651) 485-2304.

The sewer main is owned by the City. City staff are responsible to maintain the City main lines. The sewer service or lateral from your home, business, or other property to the City sewer main is the property owner's responsibility. That means the property owner is responsible for clearing any blockages in the service lateral between the home and the main.

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.

Go GREEN: Pay & View Oak Park Heights Utility Bills Online



We accept...



Pay ONLINE

Go to www.CityOfOakParkHeights.com

1. Click "Pay Utility Bill"
2. You will go to our payment processor's website where you should register and make your payment

Or CALL

1-877-885-7968 (have your bill handy to provide your account number)

View Bills Online

Go to www.CityOfOakParkHeights.com

1. Click "View Utility Bill"
2. You will go to our payment processor's website to register
3. You will get an email each time your bill is ready

You don't have to pay online to view your bills online.

WHY?

Help save natural resources by viewing and paying online.

- Easy, fast and secure
- Pay immediately, schedule a payment or set up Auto-Pay
- Keep costs down; opt out of paper bills
- Print receipts, view payment history and more



City Meetings (subject to change)

City Council:
2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission:
2nd Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Parks Commission:
3rd Monday at 7:00 p.m.

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

Third quarter 2015 utility bills

Utility bills for the third Quarter of 2015 (July 1 — September 30) will be mailed to residents in October and will be due November 9, 2015.

Auto pay is available. With auto pay, there is no need to waste time writing and mailing a check. Paying your utility bill electronically allows you to save time and money on stamps and late fees. The amount you owe on your utility bill is automatically withdrawn from the account you designate on the billing due date each month. You will continue to receive your bill so that you know the date and amount to be withheld from your account.

If you are interested in participating, please call or stop by City Hall to obtain an enrollment form. The form is also available on the City's website, under City Information, Forms & Handouts.

Call Judy Tetzlaff at City Hall, 651-439-4439, if you have questions.

Oak Park Crossing Park

The Oak Park Heights City Council and Parks Commission held the Oak Park Crossing Park Ribbon Cutting Event this summer on July 20, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. Oak Park Crossing Park is the City's newest park and features a new playground and picnic shelter, walking trails, prairie grasses, and plenty of parking.



The new park is located north of Valley View Park and west of Cover Park at 15055 60th Street North, which is the former Moelter fly-ash site. The site has been capped off and turned into a beautiful park.

Oak Park Crossing Park received its name through a 2013 contest open to children 17 years and under. The entries were considered by the Parks Commission and narrowed down to three finalists. The winning name was submitted by resident Shelby Zeuli. Shelby was recognized at the City's Party in the Park on September 8, 2013, by Mayor Mary McComber.

This park will continue to be developed. The Parks Commission and City Council are currently working on a trail plan that could possibly include some pavilions and scenic overlooks.

Leash Law Reminder

The City of Oak Park Heights City Council updated its Leash Law Ordinance effective March 1, 2015. All dogs and cats that are off the premises of the owner must be on a leash at all times and under control of the owner or another designated person. If you do not have your dog or cat on a leash, you will be in violation of the new Ordinance.



Also, 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.

Pet Licenses

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 website: www.cityofoakparkheights.com.

City of Oak Park Heights

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Oak Park Heights, MN 55082
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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.cityfoakparkheights.com

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

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Volunteer Opportunity

The City Parks Commission is always searching for volunteers to host and organize Park Improvement Projects.

In the past this has included planting rose gardens, installing blue bird boxes, park-trash clean-ups and even buckthorn removal events.

There are certainly other opportunities. For example, if your organization is looking for a location to host a "raised garden," the City Parks may be able to accommodate allocating space for such an opportunity. If you or your organization are looking for a way to give back to the City Parks, simply contact City Hall and let us know your ideas and/or what you are looking to do.

**This is a special edition of the
City of Oak Park Heights Newsletter.**

**This edition includes the 2016 City Calendar.
Remove the newsletter pages to use your calendar.**