



# NEWSLETTER

Fall 2019

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## PARKS AND TRAILS COMMISSION VACANCY

The City of Oak Park Heights is seeking Oak Park Heights residents who are looking for an interesting and rewarding opportunity to participate in the development and governance of Oak Park Heights.



Applications are now being accepted to fill a vacancy on the Parks and Trails Commission. Commission terms are three years, running from January to December. The Commission typically meets at 6:00 p.m. the third Monday of each month, and periodically holds workshops or other special meetings.

The Parks and Trails Commission is comprised of five members, who are appointed by the City Council to serve on the Commissions in an advisory capacity. The objectives of the Parks and Trails Commission are to make recommendations to the City Council, which will guide the development of City parks, trails and related services and facilities.



For consideration, interested citizens may pick up an application packet at Oak Park Heights City Hall, 14168 Oak Park Blvd. N. or may download the application from the City's website: [www.cityfoakparkheights.com](http://www.cityfoakparkheights.com).

**Completed applications shall be accepted for consideration until 2:00 p.m., Friday, November 8, 2019.** For additional information

contact City Administrator Eric Johnson via email at [eajohnson@cityfoakparkheights.com](mailto:eajohnson@cityfoakparkheights.com) or via phone at (651) 439-4439.

# 2020 CITY BUDGET

The purpose of this article is to provide you a briefing on the City’s proposed 2020 Budget, the anticipated Tax Levy and the Impact to your property taxes. We ask that you understand the following KEY POINTS:

**Point #1:** The Proposed Budget for 2020 is \$5,803,520. This is a .05% increase or \$2,632 over the 2019 Budget. This was achieved with a concern of the operations of the City and the long-term financing of capital plans such as the Street Maintenance Program which seeks limited Street assessments compared to other cities. Generally, there are no new programs or major policy changes within the Budget. The revenue needed to support this 2020 Budget however has shifted further to the property tax levy (compared to other sources) for 2020 by \$172,948. This is a 3.4% increase over the 2019 Tax Levy. The loss in other revenues is due to: Permit revenue is expected to reduce by 49% as well as a 5% reduction in State Revenues, and a 37% decrease in Charges for Services. See Figure 1.

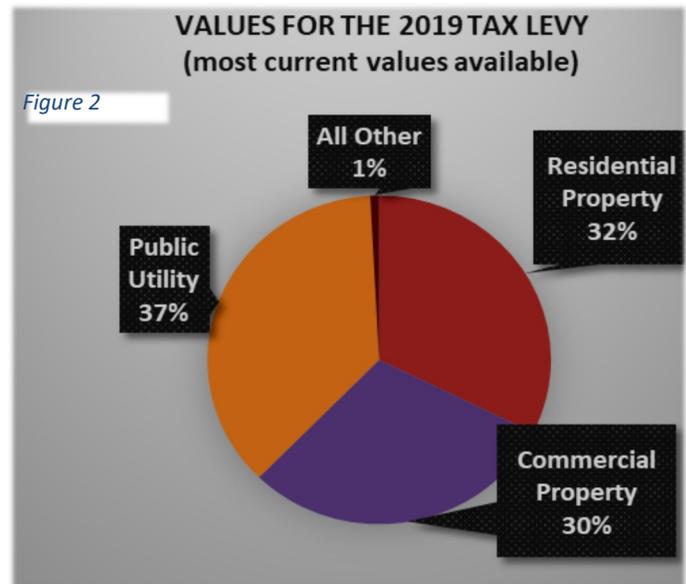
GENERAL FUND REVENUE SUMMARY					
	12/31/2018	2019	REQUESTED	INCREASE	
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	BUDGET	(DECREASE)	
TAXES - PROPERTY	\$ 5,351,781	\$ 5,090,246	\$5,263,194	\$ 172,948	3.40%
TAXES - OTHER	\$ 21,283	\$ 72,500	\$ 67,500	\$ (5,000)	-6.90%
BUSINESS LICENSE-PERMITS	\$ 52,459	\$ 41,280	\$ 44,826	\$ 3,546	8.59%
NONBUSINESS LICENSES-PERMITS	\$ 171,728	\$ 89,000	\$ 45,000	\$ (44,000)	-49.44%
FINES & FORFEITS	\$ 48,618	\$ 40,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 5,000	12.50%
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUES	\$ 150,080	\$ 103,396	\$ 98,500	\$ (4,896)	-4.74%
CHARGES FOR SERVICES	\$ 180,908	\$ 54,000	\$ 34,000	\$ (20,000)	-37.04%
MISC REVENUES	\$ 182,525	\$ 106,800	\$ 105,500	\$ (1,300)	-1.22%
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 6,159,382</b>	<b>\$ 5,597,222</b>	<b>\$5,703,520</b>	<b>\$ 106,298</b>	<b>1.90%</b>

Figure 1

**Point #2:** The City’s 2020 Proposed Tax Levy is increasing by 3.4%, however due to the change in the market values of property in the city, you could see a higher than 3.4% percentage increase in your taxes. Overall, 2019 values of Residential properties increased on average 9.8%, while Commercial property values decreased by .08%. The Public Utilities (Xcel Energy) property values decreased by 1.68%.

This means that more of the tax burden is placed on the City’s housing stock versus these other lands. As the Pie Chart indicates in Figure 2, various property types share comparable portions of the tax levy. Increases in one type’s values and decreases in the other types will shift more of the tax levy to the properties that were increased. For the year 2020, that means Residential Properties.

It is estimated that the increase in the City’s share of property taxes for 2020 compared to 2019 will be about 11%. However, half of this amount is due to the shift in property values alone.



## 2020 BUDGET ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

**Point #3:** It is vital to understand that the information expected to be reflected on your upcoming Truth in Taxation (TNT) notice does NOT take into account this shift in property taxes as described above. This solely due to steps taken by the MN Department of Revenue (DOR), a reduction in values to Xcel Energy and the timing in which they provide data to the City and County.



In May 2019 the DOR supplied values for Xcel energy to Washington County to use for property tax calculations. These are Preliminary Values and subject to change. After receipt of an August petition from Xcel Energy to reduce their tax burden – shifting it to other property tax payers, the DOR negotiated a new value for Xcel Properties which is an estimated \$11,620,600 reduction in the market value. This is a 4.7% decrease from the Preliminary Values given to the County in May (reducing Xcel Energy taxes). TNT notices are then generated by Washington County which utilizes an immense amount of data subject to State deadlines. Due to DOR making reductions to the Xcel properties after the deadline needed by the County, Washington County was unable to change the information on the property tax calculations for the TNT notices. Therefore, it is expected that the TNT notice will show the City’s estimated tax rate of 48.8775, however the **REAL** tax rate, with the adjustment in values to the Xcel properties, is 50.0137. The following chart reflects what may be on your TNT notice, however the more accurate amount of your taxes is listed under column D in Figure 3.

Figure 3

2020 TAX IMPACT FOR CHANGE IN XCEL VALUES				
<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
HOME VALUE	CITY TAXES <u>2019 ACTUAL</u>	COUNTY UNADJUSTED VALUES <u>2020 TNT</u>	CORRECT VALUES <u>2020 TNT</u>	ACTUAL TAX INC OVER 2019
\$ 246,400	\$ 1,037.42	\$ 1,130.67	\$ 1,156.95	\$ 119.53
\$ 100,000	\$ 310.49	\$ 350.89	\$ 359.05	\$ 48.56
\$ 150,000	\$ 558.61	\$ 617.06	\$ 631.40	\$ 72.79
\$ 250,000	\$ 1,055.41	\$ 1,149.97	\$ 1,176.70	\$ 121.29
\$ 400,000	\$ 1,800.34	\$ 1,949.05	\$ 1,994.35	\$ 194.01

The FINAL tax bill sent by the County for your 2020 taxes will calculate on the Correct Values including the reduction in Xcel Energy property values. The City is sending you this information as it has no other method to impact the timing of these figures and how they would be stated on your TNT notice.

The City will be holding its annual Truth in Taxation Public Hearing prior to any final adoption of the 2020 Annual Budget. This will be held at City Hall on December 10,, 2019 at 6:00 PM. The City welcomes public comment on the Budget and these related issues. For additional budget information please visit the City’s website at [www.cityofoakparkheights.com](http://www.cityofoakparkheights.com) or call City Hall at 651-439-4439.

# ELECTION WORKERS NEEDED FOR 2020 ELECTIONS

The City of Oak Park Heights encourages all citizens to vote and to become involved in the election process. One of the most rewarding ways to become involved is to serve in your community as an election worker at the polls. Citizen involvement is essential in conducting open, accurate, and fair elections. Please consider participating in the election process by signing up to be an election worker. Election workers



are paid \$10 per hour. No experience is necessary. Paid training is provided. All meals are provided for election workers on election day as well.

## What are the dates of the Elections in 2020?

There will be three elections in 2020: the Presidential Nominating Primary on March 3, the Primary Election on August 11, and the Presidential Election on November 3. If you apply, you are not required to work on all three dates. We will ask your available and shift preference.

## Who can be an election judge?

To serve as an election judge, an individual must meet the following qualifications:

18 years of age; Must be able to read, write, and speak English; Must not be the spouse, parent, child, or sibling of any other judge in the same precinct or to any candidate; and, Must not be a candidate for elective office in the same election. High school students who are 16 or 17 years of age may serve as trainee election judges. The student must be in good academic standing, be in or have completed a course in government, and have permission from their school and parents.

## What are the duties of election judges?

To attend at least two hours of training (for which the election judges are paid) provided by the City Clerk (date to be determined); serve on Election Day; to open and close the polls; to be responsible for all election materials; to ensure that only qualified voters are permitted to vote only once; to distribute ballots; to ensure that all votes are cast in secret; to help voters requiring assistance; to maintain order in the voting place throughout the day; to obtain the results after the polls are closed.

## How can you become an election judge?

An application can be found on the City's website, [www.cityof oakparkheights.com](http://www.cityof oakparkheights.com) or by contacting City Clerk Jen Pinski at [jpinski@cityof oakparkheights.com](mailto:jpinski@cityof oakparkheights.com) or 651-439-4439.



## PAY & VIEW OAK PARK HEIGHTS UTILITY BILLS ONLINE

### PAY ONLINE

Go to [www.cityfoakparkheights.com](http://www.cityfoakparkheights.com)

1. Click "Utility Payments Online"
2. Scroll to bottom and click "Pay Online"
3. You will go to the payment portal website

### OR CALL

877-885-7968

Have your bill handy to provide your account number

### VIEW BILLS ONLINE

Go to [www.cityfoakparkheights.com](http://www.cityfoakparkheights.com)

1. Click "Utility Payments Online"
2. Scroll to bottom and click "View Bill Online"
3. You will go to the payment portal website
4. You will get an email each time your bill is ready

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



## SUBMIT YOUR OAK PARK HEIGHTS PHOTOS

The City is seeking your photos that have been taken in the City of Oak Park Heights. Photos could be of landscapes, nature, people, places, events, or anything that captures the beauty of our City.

By submitting a photo, you will be granting the City the right to use it on the website, Facebook, in the City newsletter or annual calendar, and on other informational and marketing materials.

Please send your photos to City Clerk Jen Pinski: [jpinski@cityfoakparkheights.com](mailto:jpinski@cityfoakparkheights.com). Information about your photo, such location and date, is appreciated. Include your name for photo credit.



Three Seasons in One Picture. Photo credit: David White

# GET READY FOR CENSUS 2020



## What is the census?

Once a decade, America comes together to count every resident in the United States, creating national awareness of the importance of the census and its valuable statistics. The decennial census was first taken in 1790, as mandated by the Constitution

## Why is the census important?

It counts our population and households, providing the basis for reapportioning congressional seats, redistricting, and distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funds annually to support states, counties, and communities' vital programs. These programs impact housing, education, transportation, employment, health care, and public policy.

## How can I take the census?

There are three modes of response: online, over the phone, or by returning a paper questionnaire.

## What is the census timeline?

- ◆ September 2019-April 2020: Enumerators (census workers) are hired (see [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) to apply).
- ◆ March 2020: Questionnaires are mailed to most homes.
- ◆ April 2020: Census Day is observed nationwide on April 1. By this date, households will have received an invitation to participate in the census. Throughout the month, census takers will begin following up with households and conducting quality check interviews.
- ◆ May-July 2020: The bureau begins following up with households that have not responded to mailed requests.
- ◆ December 2020: The bureau delivers apportionment counts to the president (apportionment is the process of dividing the 435 seats of the House of Representatives among the 50 states).



For more information regarding the 2020 census, visit [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## STREET LIGHT 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).



## COMMUNITY THREAD JEWELRY SALE



Community Thread's Baubles, Bangles and Bling jewelry sale is an event you won't want to miss! The sale begins on Friday, October 11 from 10am-4pm. Early bird shopping is available at 9am on Friday for \$5 at the door. Shopping will continue on Saturday, October 12 from 9am-1pm.

Guests can expect to find one-of-a-kind vintage, new and gently used jewelry, handbags and fashion scarves. The sale will take place at Community Thread, 2300 Orleans Street West in Stillwater. Learn more at [www.CommunityThreadMN.org](http://www.CommunityThreadMN.org)

For 50 years, Community Thread has been connecting people, neighborhoods and lives together to strengthen the community. The nonprofit's mission is to leverage resources and volunteers to improve the quality of life for adults and their families in our local community. The vision of Community Thread is a community where all people are engaged, enriched and connected. Visit [www.CommunityThreadMN.org](http://www.CommunityThreadMN.org), or call 651-439-7434.



## HIRING A TREE SERVICE/LANDSCAPE COMPANY

When hiring a tree service and or landscape company for tree pruning, chemical treatment or tree removals contractors are required to have a current Tree Worker's License with the City of Oak Park Heights as required by City Ordinance 1307. A current list of licensed tree workers can be obtained from City Hall.



## FALL LANDSCAPING CHECKLIST



- Aerate and overseed bare patches
- Plant new evergreen trees and shrubs
- Fertilize your lawn
- Protect susceptible evergreen plants from winter injury
- Water evergreens deeply to hydrate before the ground freezes
- Prune back perennial plants
- Mulch around young trees and plants
- Remove leaf piles from landscape beds and turf areas

## RISK TREES



Winter is a good time to look for structural problems in trees in your yard and near your home. When leaves are gone, it is a lot easier to see risk issues such as broken, hanging limbs, cracks in large branches and main trunk unions, and decay issues such as cavities (wildlife holes, openings in the trunk), or conks (shelf fungi) on the main trunk, on large branches, or at the base of the tree. If a large tree has died back from the top or has had signs of decline (small leaves, early fall coloration, thin leaf canopy) in the past few years, it should be examined for decay and other

## WINTER LANDSCAPING CHECKLIST

- Prune dead, diseased, or unsafe branches
- Prune elm and oak trees
- Inspect your trees and shrubs for ice and snow damage
- Have hazardous or dead trees removed by a licensed tree worker



## TREE QUESTIONS?

If you have a problem with a tree or shrub, such as insects, diseases, site factors, or just want to have a plant identified, call Lisa Danielson, the City Arborist at 651-439-4439 or via email [ldanielson@cityofoakparkheights.com](mailto:ldanielson@cityofoakparkheights.com)

She can either answer your question over the phone or make an appointment for a site visit. This service is free for residents of Oak Park Heights.

# Recycling at Home

Empty and rinse all containers

## Glass

Bottles & Jars



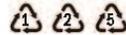
## Metal

Food & Beverage Cans



## Plastic

Bottles & Containers



## Cartons



## Paper & Cardboard



**When in doubt, keep it out.** Putting these items in your recycling cart does more harm than good.

# NO!

**Do Not Bag  
Recyclables**



**No Plastic  
Bags or Wrap**



**No Tangles**  
(No hoses, wires,  
or string lights)



**No Shredded  
Paper**



# Recycle More

**Not everything can be conveniently recycled at home. Consider these options to recycle more.**

## Donate

Did you know that the average person throws away 70 pounds of clothing and other textiles each year? Donating reusable items to charitable organizations is a great way to reduce waste and help your community. You can donate clothing, toys, sporting goods, books, music, and more.

Search by item to find a donation opportunity near you:

[recyclesearch.com/wcdd](http://recyclesearch.com/wcdd)

## Check the Disposal Directory

Quickly find local disposal and recycling options for items you no longer want or need by searching the Washington County Disposal Directory. Easy to use and mobile-friendly, the Disposal Directory is your go-to resource for disposal information in Washington County.

Search the Washington County Disposal Directory today!

[recyclesearch.com/wcdd](http://recyclesearch.com/wcdd)

## Visit the Environmental Center

The Washington County Environmental Center is a year-round drop-off facility where residents can get rid of household hazardous waste, electronics, and recyclables. In addition to common recyclables accepted curbside, the Environmental Center accepts these items for recycling:

- Plastic bags and wrap (must be clean and dry)
- Plastic campaign or real estate lawn signs
- Holiday lights and extension cords
- Scrap metal

Several times a year, document shredding is available at the Environmental Center. See website for scheduled dates.

[www.co.washington.mn.us/envirocenter](http://www.co.washington.mn.us/envirocenter)

## GARBAGE AND RECYCLING

In total, the City expends over \$250,000 annually in solid waste disposal, recycling services, and spring/fall clean-up costs, and generally handles over 2,000,000 pounds of trash and 500,000 pounds of recycling annually. The City offers three solid waste container sizes: 35, 65, or 95 gallon containers. Solid waste is collected from approximately 1,100 households and is billed to the City based on container size.

Unfortunately, solid waste costs for disposal of this tonnage has regularly increased and the City's ability to continue to fully fund these costs through the general property tax levy is declining. Therefore, the City must evaluate cost savings options where appropriate BUT MUST also ensure that a balanced solid waste collection system is kept in place.



Please look at your solid waste bin size and determine if you regularly fill it to capacity, OR if there is regularly some space remaining in it so that you could reduce your bin size to a smaller size. Also consider:

- That 35 gallon or 65 gallon solid waste container is what the majority of the households have in the City
- If you have the 95 gallon container, perhaps give a smaller size a try
- Residents may put out an unlimited volume of recyclables and may use any reasonable container
- Residents may use the Washington County Environmental Center to dispose of other items that may be eligible (visit: <https://recyclesearch.com/profile/wcdd> for the Washington County Disposal Directory)



Garbage pickup in Oak Park Heights is every Thursday (on the weeks containing a holiday, pickup will be on Friday). Recycling pickup is every-other-Thursday (recycling follows the same holiday schedule as garbage). What happens to your recycling? Recycling is delivered to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF). At the MRF, all materials are separated, baled, and shipped to markets for recycling. Aluminum cans are shipped to mills in the southern U.S. and made into new cans. Glass is taken to Anchor Glass Container Corporation (Shakopee) and made into new glass bottles and jars.

Paper is sent to Liberty Paper (Becker) and West Rock (St. Paul) to be recycling into boxboard and cardboard. Plastic soft drink bottles are made into carpeting and fabric at textile mills in the southeastern U.S. Plastic milk and detergent bottles are sent to Bedford Technology (Worthington) and Master Mark (Paynesville) and made into plastic lumber and lawn and garden products. Tin cans are taken to Gerdau Ameristeel in St. Paul to be recycled into rebar for construction products. Recycling is very important and helps keep our garbage costs low.

# City of Oak Park Heights

14168 Oak Park Blvd N

Oak Park Heights, MN 55082

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Permit No. 90100

#### City of Oak Park Heights

14168 Oak Park Blvd. N.

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

Carly Johnson: 261-5801

Mike Liljegren: 351-2742

Mike Runk: 439-5458

#### CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Eric Johnson

Visit our Website!

[www.cityof oakparkheights.com](http://www.cityof oakparkheights.com)

*The Oak Park Heights  
newsletter*

*is published by the City  
of Oak Park Heights.*

*Comments are welcome.*

## WINTER PARKING REMINDER

**Parking regulations are in effect November 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>. 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. Vehicles left parking on the streets may be removed without notice by the Oak Park Heights Police Department. Move off the streets for overnight parking for the winter to avoid citations and towing. Please help us by obeying the winter parking restrictions.

