



## Shop at the Plymouth Arts Fair

The free Plymouth Arts Fair is set for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 23 and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 24 at the Plymouth Creek Center, 14800 34th Ave. N. Around 30 local and regional artists display and sell their artwork. Entertainment is available for the entire family, including a special children's art activity 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. Musical performances are slated throughout both days of the event.

## Plymouth Creek Center renovation and expansion project approved

The renovation and expansion project at the Plymouth Creek Center moved forward this fall when the Plymouth City Council approved the proposed schematic and architectural design of an 80,000-square foot addition to the community center.

In the coming months, city staff will continue to work with project architect HGA and construction manager RJM Construction to finalize construction documents and project cost details.

The project is expected to proceed to the bidding process in summer of 2020.



PCC ... continued on page 4 The Plymouth Creek Center is set for a major expansion and renovation.



## File for homestead by Dec. 15

Residents who recently purchased a home may file for homestead classification. Certain relatives may also qualify. Benefits include possible eligibility for reduced property taxes. The deadline for filing is Sunday, Dec. 15. Homes must be owned and occupied by Sunday, Dec. 1, 2019 to be eligible for taxes payable in 2020. For more information, call 763-509-5350 or visit [plymouthmn.gov/homestead](http://plymouthmn.gov/homestead).

## The 2020 budget features Plymouth Creek Center funding while maintaining low tax rate

With a population nearing 80,000, Plymouth is a growing city. This growth is a guiding factor as the city prepares the 2020 budget. Through recent years, Plymouth has maintained a steady pace of budgetary increases to keep consistent with growth. The proposed 2020 budget features a 7.5% levy increase from 2019, which is a step up from last year's increase of 4.9%.

### Plymouth Creek Center

Factors affecting this year's levy include Plymouth's long-term budgetary plan and the expansion and renovation project at the Plymouth Creek Center (see the above article for details). To manage the cost of the Creek Center project, Plymouth will spread a tax levy increase ranging from 7.5-7.97% over a three-year period. This gradual

levy increase is designed to avoid large spikes in the tax rate. These proposed increases also include funding for fire station renovation planned for 2022 and all other existing operating and capital needs.

### Growth Offsets Budget Increase

While the proposed budget features a levy increase, the impact on average homeowners in Plymouth is minimized. For owners of a \$350,000-\$500,000 home, the increase is about \$24-\$31 for the year 2020. This is because the increased budget is balanced by growth in Plymouth's tax base, which has increased by 7.7% over last year and now totals nearly \$13 billion in total market value.

Budget ... continued on page 3



## The Rockford Road bridge is open

Reconstruction of the Rockford Road (County Road 9) bridge over I-494 was completed in October. As construction wraps up on the project, lane closures and traffic shifts should be expected on the bridge. The project is in its third and final phase. At press time, the southeast ramp (the ramp from northbound I-494 to Rockford Road) was closed. The project is expected to be completed in late November, weather permitting. Learn more about the project at [plymouthmn.gov/rockfordbridge](http://plymouthmn.gov/rockfordbridge).

## Plymouth on Parade 2019



Parade-goers greet a Plymouth fire truck as it makes its way up the Plymouth on Parade route. The annual event, held in September, featured floats, marching bands, face painting, balloon animals, food trucks and other attractions.



# Plymouth plow crews stand ready for what the winter season brings

The inevitable return of snowfall in Minnesota is met with mixed reactions from residents. Whether the weather is welcomed or not, the City of Plymouth is ready to keep streets safe and clear of ice and snow.

Last year, Plymouth made a variety of changes to its snow and ice management operations that reduced the amount of time it takes to complete a citywide plow callout and improved cul-de-sac clearing operations.

The changes came about after city staff analyzed past years' snow removal activities, considered resident feedback, reviewed other cities' policies and examined the results of citywide plowing surveys.

## Snow Plowing Threshold

This season will be the second with a lowered citywide callout threshold. A snowfall of 2 inches or more triggers a snow emergency. The previous threshold was 2 1/2 inches.

For snowfalls of less than 2 inches, the city continues to treat and plow main roadways. During any snow event, drivers should give plow operators plenty of room to do their jobs and parents should stay alert to keep children safe when plows are in the neighborhood.

## Service Time

The city added another main plow route this year, increasing the number of routes to 23. Route and staffing changes that began last year allowed Plymouth to reduce the time it takes to complete a citywide plow by about an hour. While each snow event is unique, the goal is to have streets and cul-de-sacs cleared within nine hours after snow quits falling, based on an average snowfall.

Additionally, after a citywide plow has been completed and the full plow crew goes home to rest, the city retains a small crew to handle routine follow-up calls.

"The changes that we made last year were effective in increasing our ability to clear roadways efficiently," said Streets and Utilities Manager Joe Paumen. "We look forward to carrying those changes into this year, and continuing to fine tune our operations."

## Cul-De-Sacs

Cul-de-sacs present unique snow plowing challenges – and Plymouth has more than 920 cul-de-sacs among its 325 miles of streets.

Plymouth continues to increase the number of contracted plow drivers clearing cul-de-sacs, and created additional zones last year to ensure timeliness.

The city now requires that contractors keep equipment in each cul-de-sac zone until plowing is completed, including a requirement of utilizing automatic vehicle locating so the city can track real-time progress.



Last season's changes to Plymouth's snow plowing operations included lowering the snow emergency threshold from 2 1/2 inches to 2 inches of snow.

## Balancing Act

As changes take effect, Plymouth Public Works will continue to balance safety, economics and personnel, and environmental concerns as it seeks to meet the challenges of winter weather.

"While our goal is to clear Plymouth's roadways as quickly as possible, safety remains paramount," said Paumen. "We also want to make sure we get the job done right, and reduce our environmental impact as we go."

## Trail Plowing

In addition to plowing streets, Plymouth has a crew clearing the city's many miles of trails. The Parks and Forestry Division clears 115 of the city's 170 miles of trail and the entire process is done without chemical treatment. Parks and Forestry staff asks residents remember the following:

- Conditions often do not allow plows to clear trails down to bare pavement
- The popular Luce Line and Medicine Lake regional trails are cleared by Three Rivers Park District
- Trails often need multiple passes to clear – in some cases, plows clearing adjacent roads will push snow on an already plowed trail

Staff clears trails as designated by City Council action each year. In late October and early November, city staff marks trails with stakes so plows can more easily navigate the paths. Staff asks residents not to remove the stakes.

According to Plymouth City Code, residents of homes with abutting sidewalks are required to keep paths clear of snow and ice. Residents who wish to clear sidewalks beyond their property line to establish trail loops are able to do so with permission from the city. Plymouth's recreational trails that are not cleared remain open for snowshoeing, walking or cross country skiing, as conditions allow.

## Stay Informed

Residents should keep up-to-date on snow emergency information – sign up for snow emergency alert emails at [plymouthmn.gov/snow](http://plymouthmn.gov/snow).

## Tips for residents

To keep operations efficient, residents should know winter regulations and use the following tips.

### Follow Parking Regulations

- Parking is prohibited on all streets after a 2-inch snowfall until the street has been plowed curb-to-curb. Violators may be ticketed and towed.
- Plymouth also has a year-round ordinance that prohibits parking on city streets from 2-5 a.m.

### Shovel Smart

- Do not shovel, plow or blow snow into the street. In addition to being illegal, blowing snow in the street makes it difficult to clear roadways.
- Keep mailboxes clear to ensure postal delivery.
- If it's likely that streets will be plowed on collection day, place refuse and recycling containers a few feet back in the driveway to prevent waste from being scattered.
- Help clear snow and ice around fire hydrants.
- Help clear snow and ice around storm drains.

### Play it Safe

- Parents are encouraged to talk to children about snow plow safety. Children should stay away from snow piled at the curb and be warned not to build forts in the piles. The force of snow coming off a plow can bury a fort and harm a child. Children should also be taught to stay at least 20 feet back in the driveway when a plow comes down the street.
- Be careful when driving and keep a safe distance when following a snow plow. Use extreme caution when passing plowing or de-icing equipment. It is difficult for operators to see directly behind their equipment.

### Make Snow Removal More Efficient

- To protect your turf, mark the edge of the road or curb to help snow plow operators avoid damaging the lawn. Mark the curb along the property with 2-foot-tall reflective or brightly colored stakes placed at about 20-foot intervals.
- To protect your mailbox, inspect the post before the first snowfall. Mailbox posts damaged from things like weed whippers are more vulnerable to snow being thrown by plows.
- Wait until the street is plowed before shoveling to the end of the driveway.
- Pile snow at the end of the driveway to the right, facing the street. This helps reduce snow in the driveway from the next plowing.

## Quick question about panhandlers in Plymouth

At times, the city receives questions regarding panhandlers in Plymouth, and what the Police Department can do to prohibit the activity within the city.

The City of Plymouth is extremely limited in its ability to address panhandling complaints.

If panhandlers are not blocking the roadway or causing some other hazard, there is nothing that can legally be done to prevent the activity. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that panhandling is protected under the First Amendment's protection of speech.

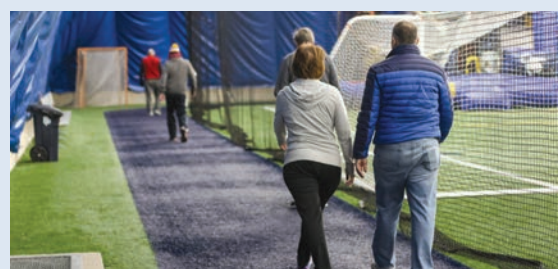
Additionally, various state and federal courts in other jurisdictions have taken up the issue. Every federal appellate court that has reviewed the issue has also determined that panhandling is speech or expressive conduct covered by the First Amendment.

## SEASONAL SPOTLIGHT

**Yard Waste Site Closes Nov. 24** – The Yard Waste Site, 14900 23rd Ave. N., is set to close for the season Sunday, Nov. 24. The site is open 3-6 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays and 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekends, weather permitting. Due to the site's popularity in the fall, residents are encouraged to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to closing time. For hours and information, visit [plymouthmn.gov/yardwaste](http://plymouthmn.gov/yardwaste).

**City Offices Close for Holidays** – City offices will be closed for Veterans Day (Monday, Nov. 11), Thanksgiving (Nov. 28-29), Christmas (after noon Tuesday, Dec. 24 and Wednesday, Dec. 25) and New Year's Day (Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2020).

**Indoor Walking** – Stay active this winter by taking advantage of free indoor walking at the Plymouth Creek Center Fieldhouse, 14800 34th Ave. N., from November through March. For hours, call 763-509-5292 or visit [plymouthmn.gov/fieldhouse](http://plymouthmn.gov/fieldhouse).





# Northwest Greenway Trailhead project approved off Peony Lane

The Plymouth City Council recently approved a Northwest Greenway trailhead project that will provide the broader community an access point to one of the city's top parks and recreation amenities.

Slated for the east side of Peony Lane, south of 54th Avenue North, the trailhead will include an open air shelter, multi-use plaza, parking, restrooms, climbing/bouldering course and other amenities.

## Decades-Long Preservation Project

For nearly 20 years, the city has acquired land for the Northwest Greenway, a more than 350-acre reserve of land with a looping paved trail for walkers and bikers. More than 5 1/2 miles of the Northwest Greenway are complete and open for use.

When finished, the Greenway will stretch from Lake



A trailhead is planned for the Northwest Greenway on the east side of Peony Lane, south of 54th Avenue North. This project will give the broader community access to the trail.

Camelot on the east to Wayzata High School on the west and connect to the Medicine Lake Regional Trail, which links French and Elm Creek regional parks.

Visit [plymouthmn.gov/nwgreenway](http://plymouthmn.gov/nwgreenway) for more information.

## Help Plymouth be counted in the 2020 census

This spring, residents should stand up and be counted to make sure that the Plymouth community is fully and accurately represented in the 2020 Census.

The census is held nationally every 10 years, and has far-reaching effects, including funding, planning and representation.

### Why it Matters

If residents ignore or do not participate in the census, the Plymouth community could lose out on population-based programs and political representation.

Up to \$28,000 per person in federal spending is allocated each year in programs such as transit grants, school breakfast, children's health care and more.

Those who do not participate in the census put Plymouth at risk of being underrepresented and losing out on funding.

Census data also determines the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. This year,

Minnesota is at risk of losing one of its congressional seats. Without a proper census count, the state could lose political representation at the national level.

"The city is committed to helping all of our residents get counted," Plymouth Planning Manager Barb Thomson said. "Filling out the census form is easy, and it's an important tool for Plymouth to be accurately represented at state and federal levels."

### What to Do

By April 1, 2020, households will receive a mailed invitation to participate in the census. The invitation will give details about three options to complete a census form – online, by phone or through the mail.

This is the first census that will offer an online option. The census is 10 questions long and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

*Census ... continued on page 4*

## Budget ... from page 1

Because of Plymouth's traditionally conservative financial practices, the city's tax rate is expected to once again be the lowest among peer cities in the area. Through sound debt management and long-range planning, Plymouth has kept a low tax rate while providing high-quality essential services.

### Staff Additions

Also included in the 2020 general fund budget is funding for five new city staff positions, including three full-time firefighters, one parks maintenance worker and one communications specialist. As the city's population grows, Plymouth strives to maintain quality city services through appropriate staffing.

Public Safety has remained a top priority for staffing increases as the northwestern portion of the city is built out. The additional firefighters in 2020 are scheduled to be followed by three more positions in 2021.

This increase allows Plymouth to transition from a paid-on-call model fire department to a blended approach department with select fire stations staffed 24/7.

Even with additional positions, comparative staffing levels in Plymouth have remained largely unchanged for decades. For example, there were 3.5 full-time-equivalent employees per 1,000 residents in 1980. The proposed 2020 budget features about 3.6 FTEs per 1,000 residents.



Staff additions in the 2020 proposed general fund budget include three new full-time firefighters, a parks maintenance worker and a communications specialist.

### Upcoming Budget Milestones

The City Council could still lower, but not increase, the tax levy. Upcoming meetings are held at City Hall, 3400 Plymouth Blvd.

The City Council will hold another budget study session to address any remaining questions. It is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 12.

A meeting is set for 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10 and will include a public hearing and adoption of the Capital Improvement Plan, budget, 2019 levy and utility rates.

View the budget, CIP and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which provides detail on the city's financial status and practices, at [plymouthmn.gov/financialreport](http://plymouthmn.gov/financialreport).

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

# Volunteer!

The city is seeking volunteers who are:

**Enthusiastic about winter sports.** Take tickets at high school hockey games through February.

**Committed to emergency preparedness.** Provide support to police, fire and paramedic services as a Community Emergency Response Team volunteer. Applications are due Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

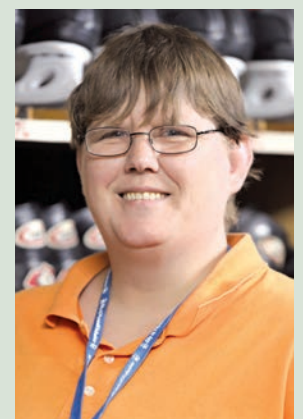
**Friendly and love to provide good service.** Greet visitors and help with activities during special events, including Fire & Ice, Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020.

To find out more about these and other opportunities, visit [plymouthmn.gov/volunteer](http://plymouthmn.gov/volunteer) or call 763-509-5230.

## Take a Closer Look

### Lee Singley

Plymouth Ice Center Open Skate volunteer



**As a volunteer, my job is to** interact with people who rent skates to participate in men's and women's open hockey and open figure skate times.

It's important that I provide good customer service to them – helping them find the right skate size, keeping the skates clean after they are returned and chatting with the regular customers.

**My favorite thing about being a city volunteer is** feeling like I contribute to the community. Volunteering gets me out of the house and gives me something to do, so I am useful to others. I also enjoy getting to know the Plymouth Ice Center staff and building relationships with them.

**Because Lee volunteers,** the Plymouth Ice Center has a flexible and dependable staff member who provides great interactions with patrons who rent ice skates.



Applications are being accepted for City Council advisory groups.

## Apply for City of Plymouth committees, commissions

The City of Plymouth is accepting applications for several groups that advise the City Council. Applications will be accepted through 4:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 8. The City Council will interview applicants and make appointments later this year for terms beginning in early 2020.

Council will consider making appointments to the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, Environmental Quality Committee and Planning Commission. The council will also appoint Plymouth representatives to the Bassett Creek Watershed, Elm Creek Watershed and Shingle Creek Watershed management commissions.

To download an application and learn more, visit [plymouthmn.gov/commissions](http://plymouthmn.gov/commissions).



## PCC ... from page 1

### New Community Spaces

After an extensive community engagement process, the city utilized public feedback to develop a range of amenities included in the expansion.

These new features include:

- **Gymnasiums** – Two full-size gyms to support community events along with programming for all ages through activities such as pickleball, basketball, badminton and more
- **Walking Track** – Dedicated year-round indoor facility
- **Indoor Playground** – Unique indoor play components similar to an outdoor park
- **Multipurpose Rooms** – Designed for groups, senior clubs, recreation programs, social gatherings and community meeting rooms
- **Fitness/Wellness Studios** – Yoga, aerobics and Zumba classes, with appropriate flooring and amenities
- **Art Rooms** – Designated for art and creative programs
- **Art Gallery** – Space for rotating community art displays
- **Common Space** – Gathering and/or lounge area
- **Dance Studio** – Appropriate floor and amenities for dance classes
- **Party Rooms** – Birthday parties, gatherings and more

- **Music Rooms** – Acoustical spaces for music classes and lessons
- **Renovated Ballroom** – Weddings, events, corporate and catering
- **Redesigned Black Box Theater** – Theater, seminars, education and meetings

“We look forward to offering a range of activities that we haven’t been able to offer in the past,” Parks and Recreation Director Diane Evans said. “The new design will also increase our capacity for rentals and private events, which will help offset initial operational costs.”

The project cost estimate is \$52 million, which includes about \$8.7 million for maintenance and renovation of the existing building. The cost also includes mechanical systems that could support a third gym in the future. The city is seeking \$15 million in state bond funds and other offsetting revenues to help pay for the project.

### Timeline

The proposed timeline is as follows:

- **June 2020** – Design/construction documents complete
- **June/July 2020** – Bonding notification received
- **June-August 2020** – Bid process
- **August/September 2020** – Construction begins
- **September 2022** – Project completion

Visit [plymouthmn.gov/PCCProject](http://plymouthmn.gov/PCCProject) for more information or to sign up for eNotifications about the project.

## HAPPENINGS



**Old Fashioned Christmas** – Old Fashioned Christmas returns 2-5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, at Plymouth Creek Park and Plymouth Historical Society, 3625 Fernbrook Lane. Participants can roast s’mores, take a horse-drawn sleigh ride, enjoy choir songs, hear holiday tales and visit Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, elves and reindeer. The event includes a toy drive for children from birth to age 18, which accepts new, unwrapped toys.



**Santa’s Mailbox** – Children can drop off a letter for Santa Monday, Nov. 25 through Friday, Dec. 6 at Plymouth City Hall (3400 Plymouth Blvd.), Plymouth Ice Center (3650 Plymouth Blvd.), or the Plymouth Creek Center (14800 34th Ave. N.). Santa’s helpers will send a personalized response. Letters must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

## Census ... from page 3

Residents can sign up for an extra reminder from the U.S. Census Bureau at [census.gov](http://census.gov) and receive an email as soon as census forms are available to complete.

Residents should note that, by law, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot share respondents’ answers with anyone – including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. For more information about the census in Minnesota,

visit [mn.gov/admin/2020-census](http://mn.gov/admin/2020-census). The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting people to assist with the census count. Candidates must be at least 18 years old, have a valid Social Security number and be a U.S. citizen.

Available temporary jobs include census takers, recruiting assistants, office staff and supervisory staff.

Census takers in Hennepin County earn \$20 per hour. Learn more and complete an online application at [2020census.gov/jobs](http://2020census.gov/jobs).

## Volunteers make important community contributions

By Mayor Jeff Wasje

In 2008, I took a job with a local firm – it was the first time in my career I was living and working in the same community, which gave me the opportunity to give back.

In my case, I joined the Plymouth Rotary and raised my hand to serve the city, where I had the opportunity to be part of the Transit Committee.

Serving, volunteering and giving back are important values to me – and that is why I felt especially honored to formally express my appreciation to city volunteers at the annual recognition event last month.

Volunteers take on a myriad of assignments. They inventory city infrastructure, clean parks, put together mailings, assist in emergencies, help at events, handle special projects, evaluate service on Metrolink buses, plant flowers, take tickets at the Plymouth Ice Center, care for the Millennium Garden and much more. The impact of their work is remarkable.

I often find that volunteers downplay the significance of their role, despite the fact they make an undeniably important contribution, individually and collectively. Last year, more than 1,600 volunteers contributed almost 27,000 hours of service valued at more than \$665,000.

It is important for city volunteers to know how crucial they are to the City of Plymouth’s success. They continuously help us do more and do it better. We could not accomplish all that we do without their assistance.

Additionally, we want residents to understand the role volunteers play in city operations. The people residents see working at the Farmers Market, preserving local history or picking up litter are likely volunteers.

And residents can be sure that as volunteers do all of this – they are also stretching tax dollars and building community.

**Plymouth News** is published bimonthly by the City of Plymouth to update residents and businesses on city government news.

## City Council

- Jeff Wasje**, Mayor  
763-509-5007 (voicemail), [jwasje@plymouthmn.gov](mailto:jwasje@plymouthmn.gov)
- Alise McGregor**, Ward 1  
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- Nick Roehl**, Ward 2  
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- Jim Willis**, At Large  
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## Contact the City

Phone.....763-509-5000  
MN Relay (Hearing/Speech Impaired).....7-1-1  
**Hours:**  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday  
8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday (Community Development only)

## View Meetings

Live on Channel 16, 7 p.m.  
On-demand video link at city website  
**City Council:** Nov. 12, 26 and Dec. 10  
**Planning Commission:** Nov. 6, 20 and Dec. 4, 18

## Connect with Plymouth

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