

Inspire • Educate  
Involve • Communicate



*"Hopkins" by Chris Torberg,  
2023 Community Photo Contest Winner*

**2023-2024**

# Annual Report



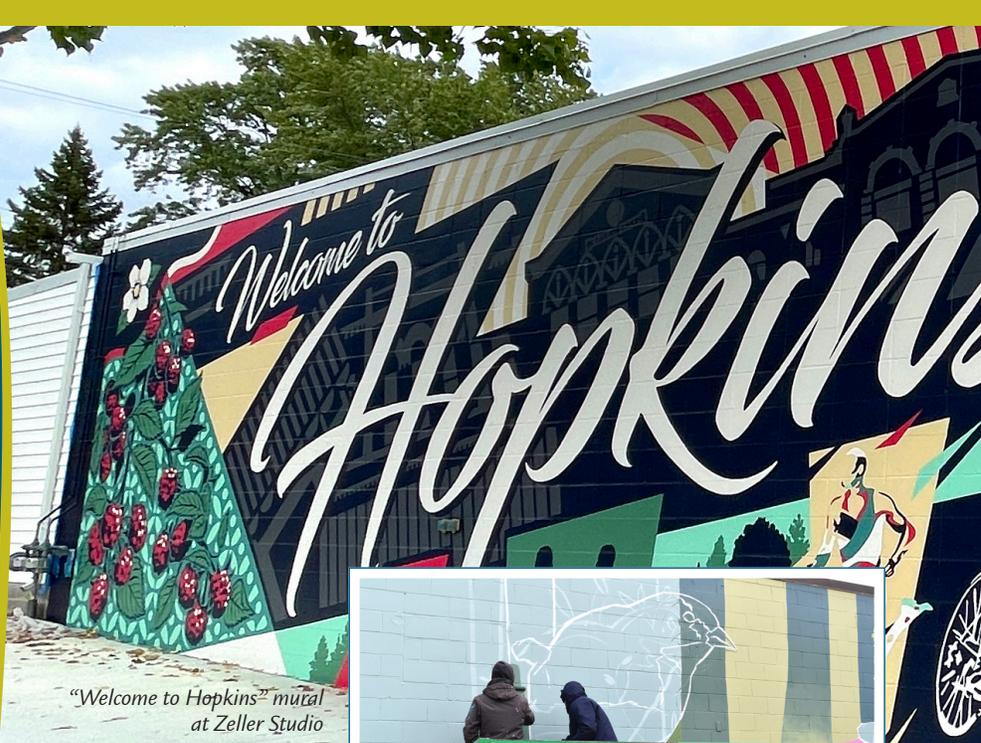
# 2023: Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future

While it is always emotional to say goodbye to cherished places and faces, it is these changes that bring new opportunities for growth to Hopkins.

And grow we have. City staff were busy behind the scenes in 2023 to help bring to life new public art, new businesses and new developments to our community. Though the landscape may be changing, the City is committed to maintaining our hometown atmosphere, and the events, traditions and heritage that make Hopkins “Hopkins.”

In 2023, City Council and staff prioritized work toward equity, sustainability and community safety, positioning Hopkins to not only adapt to change but to thrive in the years to come, reinforcing our city as a destination to live, work and play.

It is an exciting time to be a part of Hopkins and to watch it grow into a city that we can all be proud of. Enjoy this look back at our productive 2023.



“Welcome to Hopkins” mural at Zeller Studio

Artist Ernesto Maranje works on his mural “Where the Raspberries Grow” at the Little Blind Spot



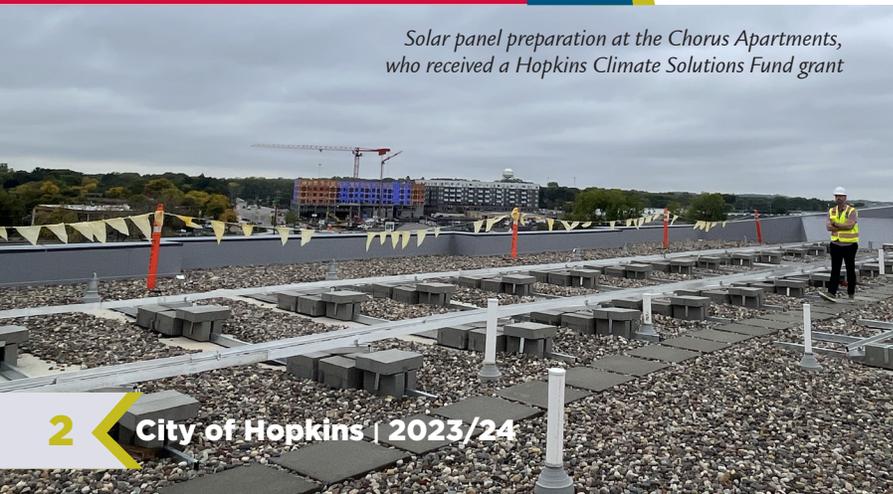
## In With The New

2023 brought major changes in the landscape of Mainstreet and beyond. While emotional for some, the groundbreaking of new development projects in Hopkins will bring in new businesses and visitors, and will add hundreds of new homes and a significant amount of taxable property value.

**New Public Art:** In cooperation with the property owners, the City of Hopkins commissioned two artists to create murals on two buildings in the downtown. Jeremy Jarvis was selected to paint a “Welcome to Hopkins” mural on the Zeller Studio building at 1421 Mainstreet and Ernesto Maranje was selected to paint a mural on the Little Blind Spot building at 17 8th Avenue South.

American Rescue Plan Act funds were used to pay for the murals that are intended to welcome visitors, add beauty to daily life and reinforce the idea that Hopkins is an arts-supportive community – all leading to a stronger economic environment.

Solar panel preparation at the Chorus Apartments, who received a Hopkins Climate Solutions Fund grant



## Hopkins Climate Solutions Fund

Using American Rescue Plan Act dollars, the City offered in 2023 incentives to residents and businesses to accelerate the transition to cleaner and more efficient energy through the Hopkins Climate Solutions Fund. Eligible items include solar energy systems, electric heating and cooling technologies, and even electric bicycles. (continued to right)



**Under Construction:** 2023 saw many multi-family housing developments underway including Vista 44, Ovation Apartments, Hallon 2 and Chorus. Combined, these developments will add 566 new homes to Hopkins at a variety of affordability levels and include new retail opportunities. Hallon 1 and Chorus Apartments both opened in late 2023 and Vista 44, Ovation and Hallon 2 will open in 2024.

**Ribbon Cuttings:** Several new businesses opened their doors in Hopkins in 2023 and the City Council was busy welcoming them with official ribbon-cuttings. We are sharpening the giant scissors for more exciting openings to come in 2024!



Ribbon cutting at K'kinaco - Nikkei & Pisco Bar

## Inclusionary Housing Policy

The City of Hopkins adopted an Inclusionary Housing Policy in 2023 that requires most new housing developments over 20 units to make some of the units available to households with low to moderate incomes. The policy aims to meet the City of Hopkins' goal of preserving and promoting economically-diverse housing options in our community by creating high quality housing for households of various income levels, ages, and sizes.

## Partners in Energy

Working with the Center for Energy and the Environment (CEE) and in collaboration with Xcel Energy, the City formed an Energy Action Team in order to develop and implement an Energy Action Plan based on Hopkins' needs and overall energy-reduction goals. The work of the Team was completed in 2023 and implementation of the plan will happen in 2024 and beyond.

The City provided \$55,000 in grants to residential and commercial properties, who in turn invested \$750,000 of private funds into clean energy products.

Using franchise fees, the City Council established a continuous source of funding for this program and applications will be accepted again starting in spring 2024.

## Sustainability Specialist

The City of Hopkins is dedicated to improving the overall sustainability and resiliency of community by being responsible stewards of the environment. In 2023, a new Sustainability Specialist position was created to centralize and expand on the work that various staff members within the City have already undertaken. This is including, but not limited to, the Hopkins Climate Solutions Fund, Partners in Energy, SolSmart, GreenStep Cities, fleet electrification and more.



Top: Crews complete utility work at 12th and Mainstreet  
 Left: Crews work at night to complete paving work



## 2023 Street & Utility Improvements

This year, construction was completed along portions of 12th, 14th, 15th and 16th Avenues north of Mainstreet, as well as portions of 2nd Street N. The project involved replacement of old sewer and water lines, improvement of the street drainage system, reconstruction

of the streets and sidewalks, and upgrades to the signals on Mainstreet. Like many construction projects in town, minimizing impacts to residents and businesses was a challenge, especially with redevelopment of several parcels in the area occurring at the same time. The project team effectively and creatively worked with multiple project stakeholders to minimize the impact and headaches for all. The newly reconstruction infrastructure will reliably serve Hopkins for decades to come.

## Fiber Optic Communications

In 2023, The Hopkins Public Works Department started the process of better protecting its water and sewer systems by installing fiber optics throughout the city. Fiber optic networks offer significant advantages in terms of security, bandwidth, and resistance to both cyber and physical attacks. By adopting these advanced networks, Hopkins Public Works can bolster their cybersecurity posture. Investing in these measures is crucial to protect the Hopkins community from the potentially devastating impact of cyber threats on our critical infrastructure.

## Lighting System Upgrades



Public Works staff replace a light

The 2023 street lighting project covered three areas this year, with Public Works replacing outdated high pressure sodium lights that were very inefficient. Street lights on 10th and 11th Avenue from Excelsior to 1st Street N were changed from the old “shoe box” style light to an updated Eco LED high efficiency light. Public Works also replaced all 52 lights in parking lots 500 and 600, which qualified for Xcel Energy’s lighting rebate.

Additionally, Public Works purchased 20 LED retrofit light globes for Mainstreet east of 5th Avenue that will be installed throughout the winter season. All of the City-owned street lights on Excelsior Boulevard will receive new LED retrofit globes early in the new year.



New LED globe light

In the coming years, Public Works will continue upgrades to the Downtown area, with upcoming project areas including 7th, 8th and 9th Avenues, and parking lots 700 and 750, as well as the Hobby Acres neighborhood.

# No Slow Down in Sight

The City of Hopkins maintains a joint recreation program with the City of Minnetonka that offers residents of both cities access to a variety of different recreational program opportunities.

## Strong Staff at Shady Oak

Applications rolled in for part-time seasonal positions at Shady Oak Beach in the summer of 2023. Over 90 applications were received, of which 64 were hired for the roles of concession and gate attendants, lifeguards, shift leaders and a facility supervisor.

The lifeguard staff showed off their skills by competing in and winning the Lifeguard Olympics, a competition against teams from surrounding cities that evaluated skills, teamwork and lifeguard knowledge.

In partnership with three surrounding cities (St. Louis Park, Crystal, and New Hope), Recreation Services applied for and was awarded a Lifeguard Services Grant from Hennepin County. Each city will receive \$9,563 for the next three years to be used toward lifeguard recruiting, training and equipment costs. This should ensure a strong lifeguard staff for years to come.



Shady Oak Beach Lifeguards



Dog sled rides at Kids' Fest

## Kids' Fest a Huge Success in Hopkins

Kids' Fest took place in February and was held at the Hopkins Pavilion for the first time. An estimated 2,500 people enjoyed indoor and outdoor activities including face painting, arts and crafts, a dance DJ, dog sled rides, kicksledding, horse-drawn carriage rides and more.

The beautiful weather resulted in a near record attendance for the annual event.



S'mores at Kids' Fest

## Volleyball Leagues Growing

The level of interest in playing adult recreational volleyball is not slowing down in our community. Recreation staff got creative with indoor court space at the Hopkins School District facilities in order to allow an additional 15 teams to participate in 2023 for a total of 243 teams during the fall, winter and spring sessions. Additionally, participation in the outdoor sand volleyball league at Valley Park increased by 4 teams in 2023 for a total of 40 teams.

## Swim Lessons in High Demand

Registration for swimming lessons, both group and private, has been on the rise for the past several years. With the purchase of The Marsh by the city of Minnetonka in 2023, there is now additional pool space available to meet the rising demand.

Lesson registration increased by approximately 750 participants in 2023 from the previous year.



## Recruitment

The Hopkins Police Department understands that providing quality services to the community begins with hiring individuals who support the mission and vision of the police department and embody our core values.

Over the past year, officers represented HPD at various recruiting events and career fairs across the state. The department has also created hiring incentives for entry level and lateral candidates to ensure we remain competitive with surrounding departments.

HPD's approach to community policing and unmatched support from the community have been, and continue to be, a top consideration for prospective candidates.

The department remains committed to finding, hiring, and retaining quality individuals who will contribute to making the City of Hopkins a safe and welcoming community.

## Promotions

This year, HPD added a new Police Lieutenant position within the Administrative staff. Sergeant Greg Pilon, who has over twenty years of experience working for the department, was promoted to Lieutenant.

HPD also promoted two more officers to Patrol Sergeant positions. Officers Alex Cady and Nick Colleran will be leading two separate patrol teams, working to keep the community safe.



## SPEEDS Events

In the spring of 2023, Hopkins police prioritized a community education pilot program called SPEEDS. This program acronym stands for "Speaking with Police to Educate and Enhance Driver Safety." HPD applied for a grant through the Minnesota Chief's of Police organization and was awarded just over \$2,000 to assist with this pilot program in the summer/fall of 2023.

The intent of the SPEEDS initiative was to look at the specific areas of the city where violations for traffic stops occur and attempt to educate the community in that area.

Through the SPEEDS initiative, Hopkins police held four separate neighborhood socials focused on traffic safety education and discussions, which allowed community members to gain a greater understanding of how traffic laws are enforced and what is required of drivers. This in turn, created transparency into police procedure.

Hopkins police had the opportunity to listen to the concerns of the community and community members learned how they can collaborate to create safer roads and neighborhoods. These socials allowed police and the community to come together to share food, participate in fun at activities for youth and families, and create relationships focused on traffic safety and mutual cooperation.

## Investments in Technology

This past year the Police Department was able to use some of the American Rescue Plan Act funds to advance safety and technology within the City. The department acquired a mobile camera trailer, which has 360 degree view technology to monitor locations where crime has occurred or deploy to areas where crime prevention measures are needed. This trailer has also assisted us with large scale events, such as the Raspberry Festival, Mainstreet Day and the Food Truck Festival.

This past year we have added to our already existing bicycle patrol program, with two additional E-bikes. These bikes are a great way to patrol throughout the community and the regional trails, while providing some relief to our officers as they travel throughout the community while carrying all of their emergency gear.

Mobile camera trailer





**FIRE**

*HFD ladder truck sprinkler pop-up*

## Fire Department Completes Staffing Study

In January 2023, the Hopkins Fire Department began the process of conducting a Staffing Study to help establish a long-range vision for the department to address changing trends in recruitment and retention of fire service members and plan for anticipated changes to the City’s population and land use patterns.

The City issued a Request for Proposals in Spring 2023, and selected Kansas City-based firm, Raftelis as the consultant to conduct the study. Raftelis did an extensive study on all aspects of the operations of the department, looking at the current staffing model, call response, fire inspection, fire prevention and training of members.

The key conclusion from the study was that the current model is functioning at a high level, but is not sustainable. It was deemed appropriate to consider service alternative models to provide 24-hour staffing. The Fire Department will present an implementation plan to the City Council in 2024.

## Building Safer Communities Micro Grants

In 2023, the City of Hopkins provided funding to 10 people/programs that promote community safety and connectivity through Building Safer Communities Micro Grants. The micro grants were a one-time grant opportunity using funds allocated to the City from the American Rescue Plan Act.

Projects included a postpartum support group for BIPOC parents, a bike rodeo at Gatewood Elementary, and a neighborhood event to paint a ladybug at the intersection of 9th Avenue N and 2nd St North.



*Building Safer Communities  
Micro Grant project*

**COMMUNITY  
SAFETY**



2023 ACE program  
interns and staff

## Equity Strategic Action Plan

Building on work done in 2022, the City embarked on its first Equity Strategic Action Plan (ESAP) to bring more systemic change related to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts across the organization. As part of the ESAP work, the City Council formally adopted three vision statements regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) for the organization that will be used to shape future work. The vision statements are:

- The City of Hopkins is reflective and inclusive of our diverse community in all roles across the organization.
- The City of Hopkins makes decisions informed by equitable and authentic community engagement, genuine partnerships and relationships with the community.
- The City of Hopkins is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the development and evaluation of services and programs.

City leaders will continue to work to create meaningful and measurable change within these areas in 2024.

## Park System Master Plan

In 2023, the City made major headway in our first ever Park System Master Plan. The plan will establish a 20-year vision for the Hopkins park, open and public spaces system to ensure that the City is prioritizing the needs, desires and interests of the community today and the next 20 years based on anticipated demographic, economic, and recreation trends and preferences, and social changes.

The Park System Master Plan will evaluate how current and future public gathering spaces (Artery, Clocktower Plaza and the Hopkins Center for the Arts plaza) are being used and how they can be enhanced to maximize community and economic development goals.

The plan is set to be approved by the City Council in 2024.

## ACE Program

In 2023, the City of Hopkins and the City of Minnetonka hosted nine paid interns for eight weeks over the summer through the Advancing Careers and Employment (ACE) program. The ACE program aims to help young adults ages 16-24 who may have barriers to employment explore government careers while gaining professional development and mentorship experience.

The program is made possible through funding from both cities, and a grant from the United Way.

## Legislative Agenda

Each year, the City sets legislative priorities that offer our state and federal legislators a quick reference of the City's position on particular issues facing the municipalities that may impact us directly.

In 2023, the City began working with government relations staff on specific issues such as the City's Bonding Bill request for two new park buildings at Oakes and Valley Park, and a sprinkler system at Dow Towers.

The City is grateful to Senator Ron Latz and House Representative Cheryl Youakim for their assistance on Hopkins legislative agenda.