

INSPIRE  
EDUCATE  
INVOLVE  
COMMUNICATE

2020/  
2021

ANNUAL REPORT

# 2020: A Year Unlike Any Other

As 2020 comes to a close, we are looking back and reflecting upon what has surely been one of the most unique and most difficult years in recent memory. While the coronavirus forced many to slow down, work throughout the City was as busy as ever.

The City's IT Department faced the unprecedented task of transitioning City operations in the span of just weeks so that business could continue as usual.

The City Council and many City departments held meetings virtually, determined to not let the circumstances hinder the public from having their voices heard.

The Hopkins Elections team worked tirelessly so that residents could safely and securely cast their vote in a historic presidential election.

These are just a few examples. Staff City-wide went above and beyond in 2020 to continue to provide the outstanding City services that residents and community members have come to expect.



## A City Evolving Southwest Light Rail Reaches Key Milestone

In 2020, the Federal Transit Administration awarded a grant of almost \$1 billion in federal funding for the Southwest Light Rail, a key milestone for the project. The 14.5 mile light rail route will connect Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Minneapolis. Hopkins will be served by the Blake Road, Downtown Hopkins and Shady Oak Stations.

Major construction in Hopkins is underway, as crews continued work in 2020 on an underpass for the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail at the Blake Road Station, an LRT bridge over Excelsior Boulevard near the Depot Coffee House, and the station platforms at the Downtown Hopkins and Shady Oak Stations.

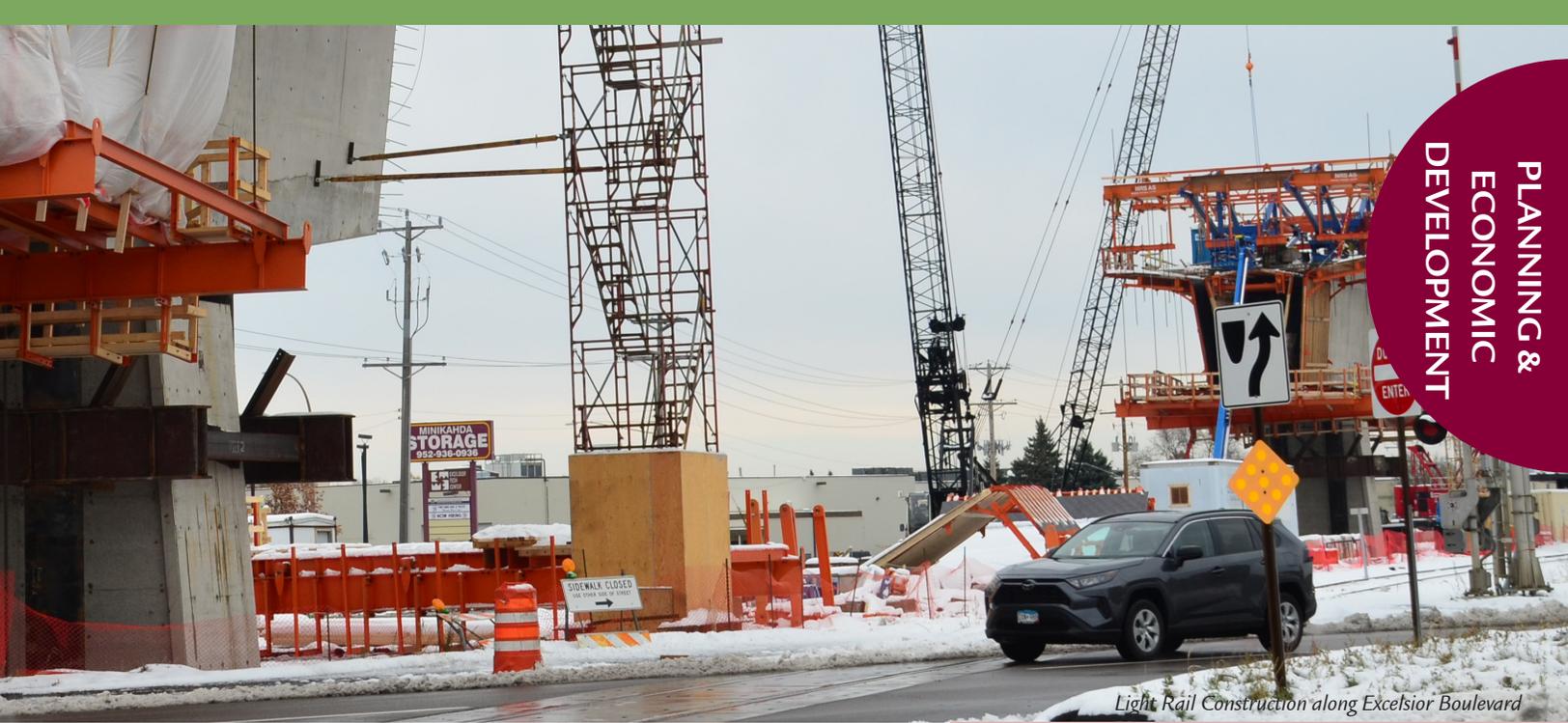
Construction will continue throughout 2021, with systems testing in 2022. The METRO Green Line Extension is expected to begin passenger service in 2023, with an estimated average weekly ridership of 34,000.



## Chickens Find a Home in Hopkins

In August, the City Council passed new zoning standards allowing backyard chickens in Hopkins. The regulations allow hens (roosters or other types of poultry are prohibited) and provide standards for the proper confinement, care and maintenance of backyard chickens.

Interested property owners can learn more about these standards and apply for a backyard chickens license on the City website at [www.hopkinsmn.com/1061/Backyard-Chickens](http://www.hopkinsmn.com/1061/Backyard-Chickens).



Light Rail Construction along Excelsior Boulevard

## Comprehensive Plan is Completed

In November, the City completed a multi-year effort to update its comprehensive plan, Cultivate Hopkins. The comprehensive plan lays out how the community sees itself in the future and how it intends to get there. The purpose of the plan is to provide long-range guidance for growth, development and investment in the City of Hopkins to the year 2040.

The plan's vision statement asserts that "Hopkins will cultivate the best elements of the Built, Natural, Social and Economic Environments into a complete and sustainable community that is rooted in tradition, characterized by vibrant and unique places, is physically and socially connected, and resilient to changing conditions."

The concept for Cultivate Hopkins came out of a desire to continue to cultivate and grow the City as a distinct and meaningful place. It is based on the principles of sustainability, resilience, equity, and complete and connected communities. From this foundation, the plan provides a framework for preparing for the future by retaining what is valued while also proactively addressing and welcoming change.

Learn more about the comprehensive plan at [www.CultivateHopkins.com](http://www.CultivateHopkins.com).

## HELPING OUR SMALL BUSINESSES

Small businesses are the heart of Hopkins and many experienced challenges in 2020. Through CARES Act funding, the City of Hopkins offered a Small Business Emergency Assistance Loan Program for local businesses that were impacted by COVID.

The program was designed to provide working capital to assist small businesses in sustaining operations, preserving employment, and preventing business closure in order to promote long-term economic vitality in the Hopkins community.

The City of Hopkins provided forgivable loans of \$5,000 to 19 local small businesses.

## Mainstreet Façades Get Facelifts

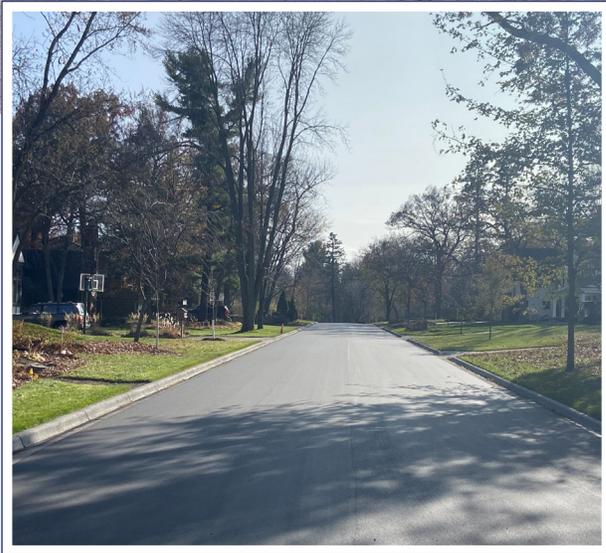
Three buildings along Mainstreet got facelifts in 2020 as part of the City of Hopkins' Façade Improvement Program, which is designed to help strengthen the vitality of downtown through façade revitalization. The properties located at 821-823, 1022, and 1023 Mainstreet — home of Hopkins Dance Company, Express Employment Professionals, Wild Boar, and kiddywampus — participated in the program.

The forgivable loan program provided a dollar for dollar match, up to \$25,000, and helped leverage additional investment by the building owners.





*Curb construction on Goodrich Street*



*Oakwood Road after construction*

## 2020 Street & Utility Improvements

This year, reconstruction began on the streets and utilities in the Interlachen Park neighborhood. The project includes the replacement of old sewer and water lines, the addition of drainage infrastructure and the full reconstruction of the neighborhood streets.

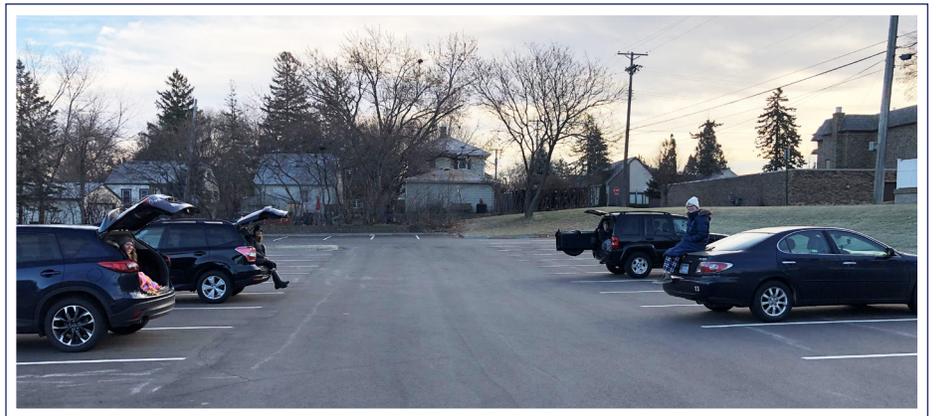
There are approximately four miles of streets throughout the neighborhood, and the project is scheduled to be completed over two years.

Work in 2020 was focused in the southern half of the neighborhood, with the project resuming in the northern portion in Spring 2021.

## Parks and Trails Become an Escape During Pandemic

In 2020, Hopkins parks and trails gave residents and community members a place to escape and unwind away from the confinement of their homes during the coronavirus pandemic.

From water fun at Shady Oak Beach and the Burnes Park Splash Pad, to pickleball at Central Park, to innovative, socially distanced parking lot meet-ups, the City's many parks and trails allowed community members to have fun and stay active.



*Community members have a socially distanced gathering in the parking lot at Maetzold Field*

# Rec Programs Keep Community Engaged

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.

## The Rec Box

With many of the traditional summer programs being canceled this year, Recreation staff had to find other ways to safely provide entertainment for youth. Thus came The Rec Box, a pre-packaged box full of arts and crafts activities, experiments and more, which could be purchased and picked up at the Minnetonka Community Center. Seven different themed boxes were offered for purchase throughout the summer and fall, and 30 boxes were created for each theme. The boxes contained supplies and instructions for six to eight activities for youth to complete indoors and outdoors. The Rec Box was a huge hit and a nice way to stay connected with previous summer program participants.

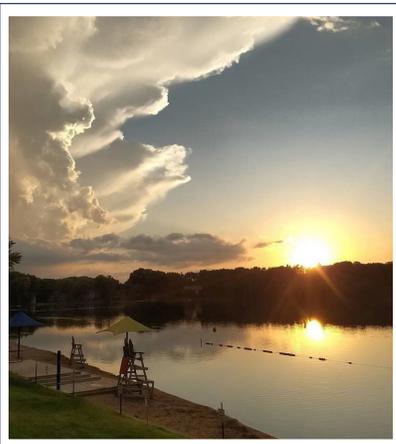


Hop-Kids T-Ball

RECREATION

## Hop-Kids Pre-School Programming

Summer pre-school programs kicked off a bit late this year, but by mid-July activities were back up and running. Hop-Kids programs, a partnership with Hopkins Community Education, were offered in the areas of art, music, dance and various sports, including soccer, t-ball and flag football. A total of 287 youth enjoyed the great outdoors in one of the 37 programs offered.



Shady Oak Beach

## Shady Oak Beach

Shady Oak Beach proved to be a popular destination, as usual, in 2020. In May, the plan was to keep the facility closed for the summer, but due to demand from the public, the gates were opened daily beginning in early June for people to visit between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. No fees were charged for entry and no additional amenities were offered, such as concessions, equipment rentals, inflatables or the high dive. Park attendants were scheduled to drop-in twice daily to perform light maintenance and cleaning. With record high attendance numbers throughout the first several weeks, it became apparent that lifeguards were necessary to ensure the safety of beach users. Beginning mid-July, lifeguards were on duty from 12 to 6 p.m. daily through late August. The gates remained open until Labor Day for patrons to continue to enjoy the outdoor space.

## Race and Equity Efforts Continue

Race and equity continue to be top priorities for the City of Hopkins, and it became even more apparent in 2020 that there is still much to do toward becoming a community that welcomes and values all people.

The Hopkins Race and Equity Initiative, a partnership between the City of Hopkins, the Hopkins Police Department, Hopkins Public Schools and Gethsemane Lutheran Church, went virtual in 2020, maintaining the group's commitment to engaging the community around race and equity in meaningful ways.

Virtual events focused on the history of racist covenants in real estate within the Twin Cities metro area, and the impact it has on west metro neighborhoods still to this day. Nearly 4,500 community members engaged in the events, which can still be viewed on the Hopkins Race and Equity Initiative Facebook page.

HREI



*HPD staff dress up for Halloween drive-thru event*

## Service Above Self

2020 has been an unusual year for everyone. The challenges the Hopkins Police Department has encountered and the resiliency to overcome these challenges demonstrates the department's commitment to you, Hopkins residents and community members, to fulfill the obligation to serve and protect all. Amidst the pandemic, the police department has figured out alternative approaches to continue community building initiatives and unwavering service to the community. A stronger and more unified community is developed through continuous communication, transparency and developing relationships. The Hopkins Police Department looks forward to continuing these efforts toward serving you in 2021.

## Halloween Drive-Thru

As Halloween neared, it was evident that the police department's annual Haunted Jail Tour would not be the safest method for the community to celebrate. Instead, department staff joined forces with Hopkins Public Works staff to hold a Haunted Drive-Thru at the Public Works facility. Over 700 vehicles filled with families participated in the drive-thru event, where they could view ghosts and goblins while receiving bags of candy and glow in the dark face masks. Knowing that Halloween is a beloved holiday for many, the police department relied on available resources and the creativity of City staff to create a new, special way for the community to celebrate.

## Thanksgiving Meal Delivery

As Thanksgiving approached, the police department confronted the struggles and challenges that many in the Hopkins community were facing, from seniors isolated alone at home, to those struggling to pay the bills.

The department decided to partner with the Rotary Club of Hopkins, the Hopkins Business and Civic Association and our Hopkins Fire Department to bring prepared meals from Driskill's Downtown Market to families and individuals in need. Together, the four organizations delivered over 150 meals throughout the Hopkins community.



*HPD staff deliver Thanksgiving meals to community members*

*HPD participates in Birthday Patrol/JCI Rolling with the Bunny event  
Photo by Amber Rishavy, Pixel Dust Photography*



## Birthday Patrol

In the beginning of April, when stay-at-home orders were first initiated, the Hopkins Police and Fire Departments came together to hold birthday patrols/parades, celebrating over 100 different community members in socially distant ways.

The police department gifted stuffed animals to many Hopkins children during these events and celebrated numerous senior citizen birthdays as well. The department recognized that the birthday patrol was one way to positively interact with the community, even during a lockdown.

# Hopkins Recognized as City of Excellence

In 2020, the League of Minnesota Cities recognized the City of Hopkins as a City of Excellence for the Hopkins Fire Department's participation in the Sound Off Fire Safety Program.

The fire department was one of three departments in Minnesota to volunteer to deliver this newly developed fire safety education program established by the Center for National Prevention Initiatives at the Michigan Public Health Institute.

The Sound Off program provides a new style of fire education taught to second and third graders. The program is delivered through the school system by both teachers and firefighters in Hopkins, creating an

encompassing communication network to provide education and life safety devices to residents.



*Hopkins Fire Department participates in Birthday Patrol  
Photo by Amber Rishay, Pixel Dust Photography*

## Fire Department Receives Recruitment, Retention Grant

Due to budget restrictions, the fire department did not hire any new firefighters in 2020. After applying for a federal grant in June, the department was notified in August that it was selected to receive a \$192,000 grant to help in recruiting new firefighters and retaining our current department members.

While allotted a total of 42 staff, the fire department currently employs only 32, with two retirements anticipated in 2021. Hopkins residents interested in becoming a member of the department can learn more on the City website at [www.hopkinsmn.com/256/FirefightersHiring](http://www.hopkinsmn.com/256/FirefightersHiring).

## Coronavirus Keeps Fire Department Busy

The Hopkins Fire Department played a large role in the City's management of the coronavirus in 2020. Pandemic related duties included:

- Activation of the Emergency Operations Center to provide daily situation reports to City employees
- Working with mutual aid partners, and the Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota emergency operation centers to stay informed on the latest pandemic-related updates
- Building an eight month cache of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the police and fire departments
- Applying for federal grants for assistance with the purchase of PPE and other medical supplies
- Staffing 24-hour duty crews to assist with any medical calls
- Working with local Hopkins businesses to help with reintegration plans as restaurants and other small businesses were allowed to re-open after the "Stay Home" order
- Assisting City departments with re-integration plans once facilities re-opened
- Working with all City departments to provide the proper PPE and necessary sanitizing supplies
- COVID-testing of all Hopkins public safety personnel
- Participating in birthday patrols, the Halloween drive-thru event and Thanksgiving meal delivery.

Community gardens at Valley Park

# City of Hopkins

## MISSION

**Inspire. Educate. Involve. Communicate.**

## VISION

**Creating a spirit of community where...**

All people feel safe and respected, and diversity is celebrated.

Business growth is supported and a vibrant downtown is maintained.

People enjoy exceptional government services, neighborhoods and outstanding schools.

## GOALS

### STRATEGIES

### **Preserve the Home Town Feel of Hopkins**

- Support a vibrant business community
- Promote and enhance city events
- Provide accessible, friendly and efficient city services
- Embrace and strengthen partnerships

### **Urban Design: Do It Right**

- Improve walking and biking infrastructure in the city
- Practice environmental responsibility
- Support a range of housing options
- Support transit-oriented development

### **Take It To Them**

- Involve diverse populations
- Engage the rental community of Hopkins
- Inspire community and citizen engagement