



# Fridley

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Parks and Recreation Brochure Enclosed

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023  
NO. 244

WE BELIEVE FRIDLEY WILL BE A SAFE, VIBRANT, FRIENDLY AND STABLE HOME FOR FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES.

7071 University Avenue NE  
Fridley, MN 55432  
phone: (763) 571-3450  
FridleyMN.gov

email: info@FridleyMN.gov

Mayor – Scott Lund  
Councilmember-at-Large – David Ostwald  
Councilmember 1st Ward – Tom Tillberry  
Councilmember 2nd Ward – Ryan Evanson  
Councilmember 3rd Ward – Ann Bolkcom  
City Manager – Wally Wysopal

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### Stay Connected!

Like Us on Facebook: search City of Fridley

Follow Us on Twitter: @CityofFridley

Watch City Programming: Search Fridley Municipal TV

Sign up for email notifications on FridleyMN.gov



## PUMPKIN NIGHT

### IN THE PARK / OCT. 21 | 5-9 P.M.

Tickets | Beginning September 1!

\$12 per ticket or \$2 off per ticket with the early bird discount code "PNITP2023" until September 15.

### FEATURING:

- More than 1,000 carved and lit pumpkins
- Fire dancers
- DJ + Dance
- Food trucks
- Costumed characters

SCAN ME



[SpringbrookNatureCenter.org/PumpkinNight](http://SpringbrookNatureCenter.org/PumpkinNight)



TWIN CITIES GATEWAY

PRESORTED STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Twin Cities, MN  
Permit NO. 92886

## Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR)

The City recently completed its first-ever Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR). The PAFR is intended to increase knowledge of the City's financial condition in a simple, easy-to-read format. It contains valuable, summarized financial information and showcases various City programs and services. Through more user-friendly financial reporting, the PAFR exemplifies Fridley's commitment to the community to maintain transparent communication and preserve public confidence. The PAFR can be found at [FridleyMN.gov/2022PAFR](http://FridleyMN.gov/2022PAFR).





## Mississippi River Corridor and Critical Area Updates

The Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) includes land along each side the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area that has been granted special protection by the State of Minnesota. In Fridley, the MRCCA includes all properties west of East River Road. Fridley properties in the MRCCA have been regulated by additional zoning standards since the adoption of the Critical Area Overlay District in 1983. These local zoning standards include structure height and setbacks from the river and bluffs, vegetation management, land alteration, and subdivision of land to preserve the corridor's unique natural, recreational and cultural values. In 2017, the State of Minnesota adopted new state rules governing the MRCCA. The rules more consistently protect habitat, scenic views and water quality, and allow redevelopment to address contemporary needs such as higher density and mixed uses. The City of Fridley (City), along with the other jurisdictional communities along the river have been in the process of updating their local zoning codes to be compliant with the new State rules. At the July 24 City Council meeting, the updated Critical Area Overlay District Chapter language was adopted. While many of the zoning standards remain the same, a new Critical Area permit was created for projects in the MRCCA that are subject to Critical Area Overlay District rules but are not otherwise covered by a building or land alteration permit.

### New Terms

The Critical Area District Chapter includes the following new terms which are helpful for understanding MRCCA regulations. More information and maps of these areas can be found at [FridleyMN.gov/CriticalArea](http://FridleyMN.gov/CriticalArea):

- **Bluff impact zone:** The bluff and land within 20 feet of the bluff. The definition of a bluff was changed from areas with slopes of 12 to 18 percent.
- **Intensive vegetation management:** The removal of all or a majority of the trees or shrubs in a contiguous patch, strip, row or block.
- **Shore impact zone:** 50 percent of the required structure setback from the river.

- **Significant existing vegetation stands:** Largely intact and connected plant communities that contain a sufficient representation of the original native plant community.

Additionally, the Critical Area in Fridley has been divided into three districts, a map of the districts can be found at [FridleyMN.gov/CriticalArea](http://FridleyMN.gov/CriticalArea):

- **Separated from River District:** Properties in the Critical Area but that do not contain river frontage and are north of 61st Way NE.
- **River Neighborhood District:** Properties in the Critical Area that contain river frontage and are north of 61st Way NE.
- **Urban Mixed District:** Properties in the Critical Area that are south of 61st Way NE.

### Building and Construction

Structures, impervious surface, and facilities must meet the following design requirements:

	Separated from River District	River Neighborhood District	Urban Mixed District
Setback from Bluff	40 feet	40 feet	40 feet
Setback from River	100 feet	100 feet	50 feet
Setback from Tributary	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet

Some exemptions exist for access paths, stairways, water-oriented accessory structures, patios and decks, and other infrastructure. To learn more, visit [FridleyMN.gov/ CriticalArea](http://FridleyMN.gov/CriticalArea).

### Land Alteration Standards (Grading & Filling)

Land alteration in areas near water and on steep slopes increases the risk of soil erosion. Land alteration permits will continue to be required for any project in the bluff impact zone or that disturb more than 10 cubic yards or 1,000 feet of soil within 50 feet of a public water, wetland or natural drainage route.

The new rules state that:

- Erosion control projects, habitat restoration, repair and maintenance of existing structures, and water access paths are allowed with a permit in the bluff impact zone. All other activities are prohibited in the bluff impact zone.
- Riprap, retaining walls or other erosion control structures to correct an established erosion problem are allowed with a permit. There are specific design standards and conditions for constructing these structures. The construction of structures below the ordinary high water level will continue to require a DNR permit or approval.

### Vegetation Management Standards

Retaining vegetation along the river, its tributaries, and on slopes is important to stabilize soil and to slow, absorb, and filter stormwater before it runs into the river. Vegetation is also important for retaining the scenic qualities of the river. A permit is required for intensive vegetation management in bluff impact zones, shore impact zones, significant existing vegetative stands, and areas within 50 feet of a wetland or tributaries, except for the following activities:

- Maintenance of existing lawns, landscaping and gardens.
- Removal of vegetation in emergency situations as determined by the City.
- The removal of isolated individual trees or shrubs that are not in a contiguous patch, strip, row, or block and that does not substantially reduce the tree canopy or understory cover; however, all trees over four inches in diameter that are removed from these areas need to be replaced.

For more information, please visit [FridleyMN.gov/CriticalArea](http://FridleyMN.gov/CriticalArea). To discuss how your project may be impacted by the Critical Area Overlay District or Shoreland Overlay District contact Rachel Workin, Environmental Planner at 763-572-3594 or email [Rachel.Workin@FridleyMN.gov](mailto:Rachel.Workin@FridleyMN.gov).

# 53rd Avenue and 2023 Street Rehabilitation Project Updates

## 53rd Avenue Trail and Walk Improvements Project

The 53rd Avenue Trail and Walk Improvements Project was awarded to Park Construction Company of Spring Lake Park in June. Construction is currently underway with completion anticipated in October 2023. This project adds new trail connectivity to surrounding areas by adding a 10-foot bituminous shared-use trail on the south side of 53rd Avenue from Main Street to Central Avenue (Trunk Highway 65) and a 6-foot concrete walk on the north side of 53rd Avenue from University Avenue (Trunk Highway 47) to Monroe Street. Other improvements will include bituminous rehabilitation, concrete curb and gutter replacement, and miscellaneous utility repairs.

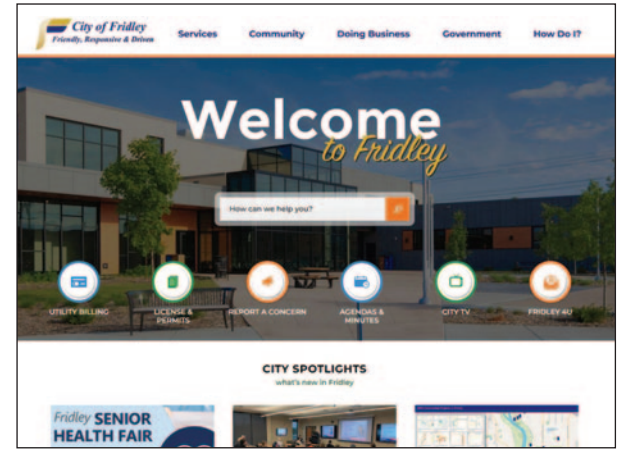
## 2023 Street Rehabilitation Project

The 2023 Street Rehabilitation Project includes pavement rehabilitation, concrete curb and gutter spot replacement, and miscellaneous utility repairs across four distinct project areas: Cheri Lane-Fillmore Street east of Trunk

Highway 65 and south of I-694, 51st Way and the East River Road East Service Drive in the southern industrial center, the East River Road West Service drive north of I-694 accessing the Georgetown Apartments, and Stinson Boulevard from 73rd Avenue (County Road H2) to Osborne Road (County Road I). In May, the project was awarded to T.A. Schifsky & Sons, Inc. of North St. Paul, Minnesota. Construction is currently underway with completion anticipated in October 2023.

## 53rd Avenue Roundabout Safety Project

This project was awarded to Forest Lake Contracting in June. The project includes street rehabilitation and safety improvements on 53rd Avenue from Central Avenue (Trunk Highway 65) to 1,200 feet to the west. The total project length is approximately a quarter mile. Construction for this project started in August. This project includes pavement rehabilitation, concrete roundabout, concrete median and minor utility work. Completion is anticipated for fall 2023.



## Help Create a Better City Website!

Are you interested in helping create a better City of Fridley website? We are looking for resident feedback to make the website more user-friendly. Please visit [FridleyMN.gov](http://FridleyMN.gov) to learn more and take a quick survey.

## Recodification Update: Health, Safety and Welfare Complete, Work Begins on Public Nuisance

The City is updating the City Code to better reflect the needs of residents, business owners and City government. It will also create vibrant neighborhoods through our community for current and future residents.

In 2021, the City Council authorized the City Manager to begin a full review and update to the entire City Code, a process known as recodification. The project is led by the City Manager's Office and facilitated by the City Clerk's Office. Staff from every department at City Hall have been working together to review the Code to see what areas can be updated to make the Code easier to navigate.

The Council has approved the 20 chapters that make up the third title of the Code (Health, Safety and Welfare). The updated title was published at the end of April.

Staff have now started work on Title 4, Public Nuisance. This grouping of chapters deals with ways the City government works to mitigate any conduct that interferes with the rights of the public. Examples include abatement of exterior public nuisances, management of clandestine drug sites, chemical dumps and houses of prostitution, and rules for noise.

The City Council held a public hearing and first reading of Title 4 on August 14 with publication expected at the end of August 2023. Staff will then move on to Title 5, Lands and Buildings.

The City has created a webpage for the project where all supporting documents may be viewed. Any questions on the project may be directed to [CityClerk@FridleyMN.gov](mailto:CityClerk@FridleyMN.gov).

## Thank You for Another Successful Citywide Garage Sale!

This year nearly 160 people registered to host a garage sale during Fridley's Citywide Garage Sale on July 23-24. From antiques and furniture to tools and games, there was something for everyone! Residents were able to navigate to the many sales via an interactive digital map or a printed copy.

Thank you to all who hosted a sale and to those who spent the weekend shopping!



## CIVIC CAMPUS FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION + TOUCH-A-TRUCK

**FREE EVENT**  
**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**  
**11 A.M. - 2 P.M.**  
**CIVIC CAMPUS PLAZA**

Join us as we celebrate five years of our Civic Campus location!

- Unveiling of new medallion designed by a Fridley artist
- Center Ice designation of the former Columbia Arena
- Live music
- Food trucks
- Games & activities for all ages
- Touch-A-Truck event in partnership with Fridley ECFE





## Join the Organics Recycling Program

Join your neighbors in the curbside organics recycling program that picks up food scraps and other compostable materials from your home each Wednesday. Each household participating in the program diverts an average of over 500 pounds from the landfill each year. Common products that go in the landfill but could be commercially composted instead include: food waste, egg shells, coffee grounds, paper towels, fruit and vegetable pits and peels, and more.

To learn about the benefits of curbside organics recycling, we checked in with Fridley resident Beth LaBreche who has lived with her family in Fridley for 45 years. She began bringing her organics for commercial composting in 2016 and signed up for the curbside organics recycling program when it became available in 2018. She says, "I participate in the recycling program because I feel I can throw away food with a more clear conscience. It helps the environment and also helps our water supply not to use a garbage disposal." When asked what she would like other Fridley residents to know about organics recycling, Beth replied "I would like people to know how easy it is to recycle your organics if you freeze your meat items (no maggots), spray your cart with pepper spray (no squirrels eating the container) and use the little container offered by the city under your sink (no smell)." Thank you to Beth and other recyclers who are helping the City meet our recycling goals!

Learn more and sign up for curbside organics recycling at your home at [FridleyMN.gov/Organics](https://www.fridleymn.gov/Organics). The curbside organics recycling program costs \$11.36 per month through Republic Services and includes weekly pick up on Wednesday, free compostable bags at Fridley City Hall or Springbrook Nature Center, and a kitchen pail.

**Get ready for low-waste holidays!  
Sign up by September 30 and  
receive three free months  
on your second billing cycle.**



## Plan now for your 2024 Home Improvement Projects

If there are projects left on your home improvement "to-do" list, planning ahead for the next construction season could save you money and time.

1. Prepare a list of possible projects. If you are considering energy efficiency upgrades, this is a great time to contact the Home Energy Squad to schedule a visit. For general improvements, the Fridley Housing and Redevelopment Authority offers a free Remodeling Advisor service. Visit [FridleyMN.gov/HomePrograms](https://www.fridleymn.gov/HomePrograms) for more information.
2. Contact professional contractors to bid the work, or begin preparing material lists and implementation timeframes for DIY projects. It is always a good idea to consider prices from 2-3 sources, as pricing will vary.
  - Some contractors – particularly for landscaping projects – will not be able to give an accurate price estimate when the ground is covered in snow, so do not wait to contact firms. Winter can be an ideal time for some types of landscaping projects, including tree trimming and removal.
  - Ask friends and neighbors for advice on finding a contractor. The City of Fridley cannot provide referrals.
3. Develop a financing plan. Once you have an idea of project costs and when they will

be incurred, it's time to plan your financing. Will you put money into savings extra each month until the project begins? Will you set aside your tax refund? Will you apply for a grant or loan?

- Applications for Fridley's Senior Deferred Loan Program and Front Door Grant are expected to be available in January (Low-interest loans are available year-round). These programs can help fund most types of permanent property improvements. Learn more about available programs at [FridleyMN.gov/HomePrograms](https://www.fridleymn.gov/HomePrograms).

4. Research permit requirements at [FridleyMN.gov/1604/Permits](https://www.fridleymn.gov/1604/Permits)

- Many types of property improvements require a permit and city inspection, in order to ensure that work is completed safely. If a contractor is performing the work, they will typically be the one to apply for required permits. However, the property owner is ultimately responsible.
- Building permits are valid for 180 days (six months) after approval, so wait until you are ready to begin work to submit an application.

With a little bit of advanced planning, you will be ready to hit the ground running in spring!

## Adopt-A-Drain

Fall is a great time to adopt a drain through [MN.Adopt-A-Drain.org](https://www.MN.Adopt-A-Drain.org). Drain adopters volunteer to remove leaves, trash and other pollutants from storm drains to keep our water bodies clean. Volunteers in the Twin Cities have adopted over 18,000 drains and kept more than 500,000 pounds of debris from our water bodies. Fridley is currently participating in the Anoka County Adopt-A-Drain Challenge to encourage participation in the program. Recent winners in the challenge, Fridley residents Stephen and Dolores Varichak say, "What a way to help the community by doing the Adopt-A-Drain program. To keep the drains free from debris helps the drains run better and keeps pollutants out of the water. It doesn't take much to clean around the drain. Just pick up the twigs, grass, leaves etc. that get trapped by the drain. Check it every once



in a while as you walk by or after a major rain to make sure it's clear. That's all you need to do. Think about it, you too could adopt a drain." Sign up at [MN.Adopt-A-Drain.org](https://www.MN.Adopt-A-Drain.org) to adopt a drain in your area!

Thank you to the Varichak family and other community members who help keep our drains clear!



## A Splash of New Life: City of Fridley Paint Rebate Program Ignites Memories and Community Spirit

On the East side of Fridley, MaryAnn and Mike Gwiazdon’s home stood as a testament to a different era. Built in 1958, the house held countless cherished memories, from the joyous arrival of their third daughter to the playful moments spent in the open fields surrounding their property. Reflecting on Fridley’s evolution, MaryAnn nostalgically recalled the days when open fields enveloped her family’s home. “It’s amazing to see how Fridley has changed,” she recalled. “The kids used to play and fly their kites in those fields. It’s all houses now.”

With a shared vision and the assistance of the Paint Rebate Program in 2022, MaryAnn and her daughter, Wendy, decided to repaint the house. After careful consideration, they decided on the Sherwin Williams 2022 and 2021 colors of the year: Evergreen Fog and Urbane Bronze. The vibrant hues breathed new life into the exterior, complementing the mature Silver Maple trees that MaryAnn’s father-in-law had planted when the house was first built.

The impact of the project reached beyond the Gwiazdon home. Three neighboring families were captivated by the transformation, with

MaryAnn and Wendy’s efforts inspiring them to begin their own repainting projects. Wendy beamed with pride as she shared their feedback: “Our project inspired others to update their homes. It’s wonderful that Fridley has these programs; they help out a lot of people, especially seniors.”

The City of Fridley’s Residential Paint Rebate Program offers homeowners rebates of up to \$500 for exterior painting materials and supplies. This program enables homeowners like MaryAnn to partake in DIY projects. Taking the lead, Wendy applied for the program. After her project was approved, she maximized on the grant funds by purchasing the necessary supplies during a Sherwin Williams 40 percent off sale. Wendy then spent the next few weeks painting her childhood home. Finally, she submitted her receipts to the City and successfully claimed the rebate. The process began in June and was completed in October 2022.

For MaryAnn, the program’s impact goes beyond the physical transformation of her home. It serves as a reminder of Fridley’s commitment to its residents, fostering a strong sense of community and ensuring that even



WENDY (LEFT) & MARYANN (RIGHT)

long-standing homes like hers continue to be cherished and maintained.

Discover more about the Residential Paint Rebate Program at [FridleyMN.gov/HomelImprovement](https://FridleyMN.gov/HomelImprovement). Funds are still available for income-qualified homeowners planning to complete projects this fall. Apply today and join the wave of transformation in Fridley!

## Reminders for Your Fall Yard Clean-up

Fall is in the air, the leaves are changing colors and soon, they will be dropping from the trees. Leaves and other yard waste are not allowed to be blown into the street or deposited within 25 feet of a waterbody. Yard waste blown into the street can enter the storm sewer system and pollute downstream waterbodies such as Rice Creek, Moore Lake or the Mississippi River. If you notice a property dumping yard waste or other unauthorized materials in the street or storm drains, please call 763-572-3566 to report it as an illicit discharge.

Please keep these tips in mind as you start your fall clean-up:

- 👉 Fridley residents can coordinate yard waste collection with their garbage hauler, drop off yard waste at Bunker Hills Compost Site or practice backyard composting.
- 👉 Yard waste can only be stored in bags or bundles outside through your next pick-up day.
- 👉 Bagged yard waste must be placed in compostable bags.



### Bunker Hills Compost and Yard Waste Drop-off Site

13285 Hanson Blvd NW, Coon Rapids  
(763) 767-7964

**April - November, weather permitting**  
Monday - Friday: 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday: Noon - 5 p.m.

**December - March, weather permitting**  
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.



## 2023 Night to Unite Recap

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Night to Unite a success! More than 85 parties were hosted throughout Fridley on August 1.

Police officers, firefighters and City staff stopped by these parties and shared information on a variety of topics. Parties received insight on projects and initiatives happening within the Public Safety

Department, ways to get involved and how the Police and Fire Divisions are working with the community to keep Fridley's neighborhoods safe.

Thank you to AAA and the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association for sponsoring this event, as well as Sam's Club, Walmart and Forgotten Star Brewing for their generous donations.



## After-school Activities

The Parks and Recreation Department is offering classes after school at Hayes Elementary this school year. Classes are open to all: there is transportation for students enrolled at Stevenson and parents/caregivers can also drop children off for the programs. Classes take place from 4-5:15 p.m., and a snack is provided each day. The following activities are offered this fall: Soccer, Outdoor Games and Halloween Fun, Mobile Machines, Ho Ho Holiday Fun, and Track and Field. Registration is available at [FridleyMN.gov/Rec](http://FridleyMN.gov/Rec).



# Fridley SENIOR HEALTH FAIR

**September 27, 2023**  
**10 a.m. - noon**

**Fridley Fire Department**  
7071 University Avenue NE  
Fridley, MN 55432



This health fair is open to all community members but geared towards the aging population to connect them with many referrals and services that are available to them regarding health, finances and more! We will have over 20 different vendors with a raffle and light refreshments served. No pre-registration needed and at no charge.

# Ryan George: Director of Public Safety

On July 1, former Deputy Director Ryan George was promoted to Director of Public Safety for the City of Fridley.

George joined the Fridley Police Division in 2005 as a police officer. Throughout his 18 years with the department, he has served as a patrol officer, school resource officer, detective, patrol sergeant, lieutenant, captain and most recently, deputy director. He graduated from the University of Minnesota – Duluth with a bachelor’s degree in criminology and sociology and received a degree in law enforcement from the Fond du lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet. George has continued his education while working for the City of Fridley and received a master’s degree in Police Leadership from the University of St. Thomas. Additionally, he has completed School of Police Staff and Command at Northwestern University and the Chief Law Enforcement Officer and Command certification program through the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association. George earned his Basic Emergency Management certificate from the MN Department of Public Safety Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. To broaden his understanding of Public Safety’s Fire Division, George successfully completed the Anoka County Fire Academy in 2021.

Since he was young, George has always had a desire to serve. This extends into his previous positions in the department, his role as Director of Public Safety and his involvement in other community organizations. He is the Board Chair of the Alexandra House, a



member of the Fridley Columbia Heights Rotary and a member of Medtronic Toastmasters. In his new position George is looking forward to continuing to build partnerships within the Fridley community.

When asked about his new role, George said, “We already have a really good internal culture. Members of Fridley Public Safety are expected to do the right thing. I want to focus on the things we’re already doing well and embrace the changes of law enforcement in general. This includes developing community partnerships to provide options and resources to community members, and leveraging changes in technology to do our jobs more efficiently and effectively.”

Outside of his career George enjoys spending time with his wife and three daughters. As a family, they enjoy traveling and camping.

George is excited to continue this chapter with the Fridley Public Safety Department and is confident his staff will continue serving the Fridley community with honor and professionalism.



## ART IN THE PARK

Community Art Partnership with North Suburban Center for the Arts (formerly Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts)

### TEEN DRAWING

AGES 12-17

Join us in the park to learn more about drawing! This weekly class will introduce you to the fundamentals of drawing as you work on perspective, shading, blending, design and composition. No experience or tools necessary—come prepared to learn and have fun!

6262 W Sep 13 - Oct 11 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. \$40  
Commons Park Shelter

### SKETCHES AT SPRINGBROOK

AGES 15+

You’ll be lead on an artistic journey at Springbrook Nature Center! You’ll immerse yourself in different areas of the park where you can slow down and create a sketch of the natural world around you. Learn how sketching is fun—and anyone can do it! This class is intended for all levels and no experience necessary.

6261 Sa Sep 16 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. \$25  
Springbrook Nature Center

## BECOME AN ELECTION JUDGE

for 2024 Elections

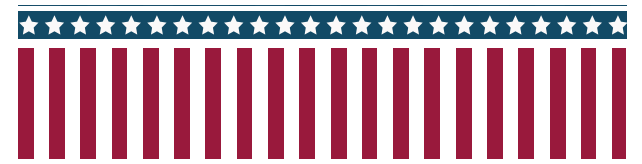
Be a valuable asset to your polling place on Election Day! Represent your community and see the democratic process in action by applying to be an Election Judge.

Election Judges learn every function of a polling place, including opening and closing the polls, registering voters, assisting voters with different visual and hearing abilities, explaining how to mark ballots and more.

There are three Election Days in 2024:  
**March 5 | August 13 | November 5**

Requirements of being an Election Judge include:

- Must be a U.S. citizen
- Must not be related to another Election Judge in the same polling location
- Must be able to read, write and speak English fluently
- Must not be a candidate in the election, or a family member of a candidate



## Fridley Community Calendar

### September

- September 4 | City offices closed for Labor Day
- September 5 | Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
- September 7 | Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Meeting
- September 11 | City Council Meeting
- September 12 | Environmental Quality & Energy Commission (EQEC) Meeting
- September 20 | Planning Commission Meeting
- September 25 | City Council Meeting

### October

- October 2 | Charter Commission Meeting
- October 2 | Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
- October 5 | Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Meeting
- October 9 | City Council Meeting
- October 10 | Environmental Quality & Energy Commission (EQEC) Meeting
- October 18 | Planning Commission Meeting
- October 23 | City Council Meeting

NOTE: City Council and Commission meetings start at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at the Fridley Civic Campus, 7071 University Avenue NE. The public is welcome.

Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in any City of Fridley services, programs, or activities. Hearing impaired persons who need an interpreter or other persons who require auxiliary aids should contact the City at 763-572-3450.

# Park System Improvement Plan Update

Park improvements are coming to a park near you! Four Fridley parks are already under construction to receive new playgrounds, courts and amenities and another four will transform in 2024. The Fridley park system will continue to be revitalized over the next six years with many more parks scheduled for improvements.

In the case of neighborhood parks, staff will be holding meetings in the park the summer before construction to get input from residents on park and playground designs.

Commons Park, centrally located in Fridley, will also be redeveloped over the coming years with the addition of a pickleball court complex, splash pad, community building and destination inclusive playground.



**ONE OF THREE PLAYGROUND CONCEPT PLANS CREATED FOR A NEIGHBORHOOD PARK IN FRIDLEY**

Fridley received notice of the award of a State of Minnesota grant in the amount of \$500,000 for a large new playground at Commons Park

that will be designed to allow individuals of all ages and abilities to safely enjoy play features and interact with others using this inclusive play space. Public input will be a large part of the design process in partnership with project advocates from Gillette Children’s Hospital, Allina Health, Multicultural Autism Action Network, The Arc Minnesota, Autism Society of Minnesota, Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and Minnesota Autistic Alliance.

To see park design concepts, surveys and project timelines for Moore Lake Park, Commons Park or your neighborhood park, visit the Park System Improvement Plan project page at [FridleyMN.gov/ParkPlan](http://FridleyMN.gov/ParkPlan).

## PLAY IN OUR PARKS!

Each month, the Recreation Division team invites you to get outside and play in our parks with a curated, FREE, family-friendly event.

### TELESCOPES AND CONSTELLATIONS

Come out to Commons to take a close look at the stars in our sky! Experts from the Bell Museum will tell constellation stories and have telescopes on hand for you to explore the stars and planets that make up our night sky! Meet at Commons Park Shelter.

All ages    Sat    Sep 23    7 - 9 p.m.    Free  
Commons Park

### PUMPKIN CARVING

Sign up to carve pumpkins at Springbrook Nature Center! Our Community Carving events are what help make Pumpkin Night in the Park so special. Carve a pumpkin, then return to Pumpkin Night to try and find it on the trails! Sign up at [SpringbrookNatureCenter.org](http://SpringbrookNatureCenter.org).

All Ages    October 15    noon - 4 p.m.  
October 16-19    4 - 8 p.m.    FREE  
Springbrook Nature Center



## Bird Banding Program at Springbrook Nature Center Ends after 35 Years

On certain early Sunday mornings, volunteers have gathered at Springbrook Nature Center with an interest in helping capture and record scientific data about birds found throughout the park. This program, in existence for 35 years, was the brainchild of Master Bird Bander, Ron Refsnider. Following the tornado that devastated much of the forest land in the Nature Center, Ron came to then Nature Center Director, Siah St. Clair with an idea. Refsnider suggested a long-term project that would study bird recovery in the park following the 1986 tornado.

Since then, there have been more than 500 bird banding sessions run by volunteers who have accumulated more than 65,000 hours of service. Bird banding volunteers are trained to set up traps or mist nets at specific locations throughout the park. They carefully remove birds from the traps or nets and place them inside cotton drawstring bags to be brought back to a central location to be studied. Each bird is weighed and measured, identified, aged, banded and released. Data collected has documented the year-round resident birds and how they have changed over the years. It has also shown that there are some species of birds that are found here only in the winter, only in the summer or are passing through during a fall or spring migration.

In addition to valuable scientific data, the bird banding project at Springbrook has been an



outstanding hands-on learning experience for members of the public. Banding volunteers have been eager to share information about the banding process and the birds being studied, helping the public make a connection with nature in a unique way. Lucky individuals have even helped release birds back into nature with gentle instruction from one of the talented bird banding volunteers.

We are grateful for the dedication and service of our bird banding volunteers. Over the last 35 years, volunteers have captured 111 species of birds. They have banded more than 15,000 birds and re-captured more than 13,000 previously banded birds. For those of you doing the math – that’s more than 28,000 birds studied.

Thank you, bird banding volunteers, for your time and talents, dedication to the scientific study of birds within Springbrook, and your willingness to share what you know with the people around you. You have embodied our mission of connecting people with nature.

## Winter Lights Tour

It’s almost time to get those lights and decorations out of storage and ready for the 2023 Winter Lights Contest! Submissions will be accepted from November 6 through December 10. All entries will be placed on a map so that residents can create their own custom light tour around town. Winners in multiple categories will be announced when maps become available December 15.

