

Chapter 10. Public Facilities



Fridley Civic Campus

Public Facilities

10.0 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to not only provide an inventory of the facilities that are City owned and operated, but also to allow the City to assess its future facility needs. Starting near its boundaries, the City's entry monument signs are an example of public facilities owned by the City. Inventory of City owned and operated facilities revealed that there are a total of 112 existing facilities with the two new buildings for the Fridley civic campus. Facilities as counted include: entry monument signs, wells, pump houses, water towers, water treatment facilities, cold storage buildings, and those buildings that you more commonly think of when you hear the word facilities such as City Hall and the Public Works Garage.

10.1 Public Facilities Inventory

New Civic Campus

A very analytical approach was used to determine whether the next fifty years would be spent in the existing City Hall/Police/Fire facility, or whether a new modern complex would be the best for continuing the delivery of high quality service to Fridley Residents and businesses.

Ultimately, a decision was made to combine the services that the City provides into one convenient location to better serve its customers. This Civic Campus Concept now will include: City Hall, Fire Station 1, Police/Public Safety complex, and a new Public Works Complex. The Public Works complex construction will be completed in June 2018 and the City Hall/Fire/Police complex will be ready to occupy in November 2018.

Much effort was taken to assure that the building is built with equipment that will maximize efficiency of the overall operation. The City worked with its architects (BKV Group) and Xcel Energy to specify a package where each device is at least a step above the standard Minnesota Energy Code requirement. In some cases, items such as controls specified were several steps above what the standard energy code requires. Other efficiencies were built into the complex as well. The interior spaces will be easy to navigate for the customer, as the layout has been done in a manner that allows a far more intuitive understanding of how to get to the various department locations.



Civic Campus Construction, December 2017, photo by Ryan Wickstrom

Police Station

The Police Station on the New Civic Campus is modern in every sense of the word. The security system has been thoughtfully designed to ensure a safe, friendly, vibrant, stable feel for campus visitors, staff and the general public. Like City Hall, the space will be intuitive for visitors who choose to visit the Police Station. Internal spaces again will be designed with a more open floor plan allowing daylight and a very positive work environment.

A squad garage below City Hall will keep the police fleet of vehicles out of the weather and will eliminate the wear and tear on the vehicles that comes with otherwise keeping them running and ready for calls.

An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has also been designed and built into the complex and will serve as command central in the event of an incident and will also serve as a training center for public safety staff.

Public Works Garage

The garage is a new and modern paradigm of public works complexes. It will allow the City to keep its expensive, large scale (plow trucks, vacuum truck, street sweeper, sewer operations trucks, and mowers), fleet indoors.

Maintenance of all City vehicles can now occur inside in a temperature enclosed environment that is appropriate for the safety and wellness of those maintaining the fleet. Offices for the Public Works Staff will also be included in the new Public Works Building. A ground floor bathroom will be open to the public during off business hours. This will allow those using the plaza an opportunity to use that convenience when enjoying the plaza and pathways.

Outdoor Plaza

An Outdoor Plaza, pond, aerator fountains, an amphitheater, and trail system were also integrated to further the cause of health, wellness, and outdoor enjoyment for the public. Daytime and nighttime lighting will be appropriate for the safe enjoyment of the campus and an advanced security system has been specified and will be installed to assure peace of mind. A generous donor has offered to assist with the funding of a band shell for the amphitheater. Evaluation of what the band shell will include and how it will be designed is essential to assure the open-space feel and view shed to the park beyond is not negatively impacted by its construction.



Outdoor Plaza

Existing Administrative, Police, and Fire Building

The existing City Hall/Police/Fire complex will be vacated for another user or buyer to occupy. It is the City's goal to make the site available to a tax-paying entity that will help to broaden the tax base and place one more site in the private land owner category. As the site is in a redevelopment zoning district, the options are wide ranging as to what the site's re-use will be.

The frontage road along University Avenue directly in front of the current Fire Station and former Cummins building at 6499 University will be removed and will be repurposed for pathway and pervious area that will be both aesthetic and environmentally sensitive.



Fridley Civic Campus

Fire Stations

Fridley has three fire stations. Fire Station 1 is housed in the Municipal Center and was originally constructed as the Village Hall in 1949. This station houses the administration and staffing for emergency response. The five apparatus bays are designed to accommodate vehicles and supporting equipment.

Fire Station 1 will be relocated as part of the construction of a new Municipal Center. The new station will house the administration and staffing for emergency response as well as the training facility and six apparatus bays designed to accommodate vehicles and supporting equipment. A new training facility will include: a shared class room that will also serve as an emergency operations center, a second level fire simulation and building search area and a four story tower that includes confined space and rope rescue.

Fire Station 2, located at 6381 Old Central Avenue, was constructed in 1988. The living quarters are leased and furnished by Allina Transportation as a base for ambulance service.

Fire Station 3, located at 110 77th Way, was constructed in 1989. Station 2 and 3 each has about 2,000 sq. ft. of space and is only staffed when personnel are called back for emergencies. Each station is well maintained with recent replacement of interior



Fire Station 2

lighting, carpeting and paint.

A feasibility study conducted in 2013 indicated “The two sub-stations, Stations 2 and 3, are in good condition and meet the current needs adequately. However, both are at maximum storage capacity and have no room for future expansion.” Stations 2 and 3 were considered in the planning of the new Fire Station 1 and the recommendation was to keep these two stations in service. Future changes in staffing or consolidation of services with another department could allow the status of one or more of the stations to change.



Child dressed as a firefighter climbing into a firetruck

Liquor Stores

The City of Fridley owns and operates two municipal liquor stores. The Fridley Market location is leased space located near University and 694 and is the larger of the two stores. The secondary store, referred to as the Moore Lake store, is located at 6289 Hwy 65. In 2017, it's anticipated that Fridley's liquor operations will provide nearly \$340,000 in funding to offset the City's operational and capital expenses. Over the years this funding has been an essential revenue source and has helped the City maintain low property taxes for the benefit of its residents and businesses.

The City is continually reviewing its liquor operation to ensure the business is viable and competitive. This task has become increasingly difficult as large retailers have moved into the metro and as traffic and neighborhood trends have evolved, but the City has seen its successes, the Fridley Market location is a prime example of how that work and investment have paid off. With the revitalization in that neighborhood in the past three years and with the Fridley Market liquor store remodeling project, gross profits have continued to increase. This increase in net profits does not match downward trends seen around the metro area with municipal liquor operations. Prior to renovations, gross profits were steadily declining about 3% per year. Since renovations of the store and the revitalization of the area, gross profits have increased on average 10% per year.

In 2017, the City completed a market analysis of the two existing stores along with determining if a third store

would provide additional profit or just shift the current customer base. Based on the current market environment, the study identified that a third site located on the north end of the City could generate additional profit for the City's liquor operation. That store would be dependent on the impact of a 2017 liquor license change approved by the City of Coon Rapids, the City bordering the north. Coon Rapids removed a restriction imposed on grocery and warehouse/membership type stores which limited the types of allowable liquors to be sold. In addition, the City of Spring Lake Park bordering the east side of Fridley is prepared to sell its liquor operation to a large liquor



Fridley Marketplace Liquor Store

franchise. Fridley plans to monitor these recent developments and will continue to analyze the viability of expanding its liquor operation.

The Moore Lake liquor store building is owned by the City and provides 21% of the total net profit for the City's liquor operation. Sales at this store have been declining for nearly two decades as a result of changing traffic patterns and accessibility. This store is due for significant non-routine maintenance and improvements. Staff has identified and prioritized the work necessary and has incorporated those improvements in the City's Capital Investment Program. The City has suspended scheduled non-routine maintenance and improvements until a determination of a third store is made.

Finally, in 2017 the state legislature amended state law allowing for Sunday Liquor sales. This is believed to be the first change in many anticipated in liquor laws with continued pressure coming from grocery and private liquor operations to modify current restrictions allowing for expanded service areas and delivery options. The City continues to identify new initiatives designed to retain and expand its customer base and educate the community on the importance of a municipally owned liquor operation.



Fridley Liquor Store

10.2 Needs Assessment

Staff has evaluated the unused platted roadways, alleys and miscellaneous parcels throughout the City to determine what needs to be maintained and what needs to be placed back on the tax rolls by virtue of vacation, or land sale. It is the policy of the City to sell land that is not needed for planned redevelopment projects or future planned roads with the intent of getting that property back on the tax rolls.

Non-vacated, But Unused, Alleys & Streets

Early plats and planning processes generally resulted in layouts for streets and alleys. Most of those were utilized and are evident today. For those that were not utilized, a determination should be made regarding its future usefulness. In 2017, a 60' street right-of-way that existed between properties was vacated and 7,200 sq. ft. was given back to adjacent properties, not only for their enjoyment, but also as an opportunity to get property back on the tax rolls and to be maintained by private owners, rather than the City.

Like the 2017 vacation and giveback, the City has other situations identical to that example. Where those lots exist, the City needs to evaluate the best future use and either create a plan using the parcels, or like the 2017 example, vacate and allow the land to be used by private properties that pay taxes.

Entry Monuments

On each major corridor through the City there are two entry monument signs welcoming folks to Fridley, one north, and one south. A seventh sign exists at the south-west quadrant of the intersection of Mississippi Street and University Avenue. The signs are made of top grade, Clear-Heart Redwood and were sandblasted, painted and installed in honor of the City's 50th Anniversary (1999). Originally, the signs were produced by a sign Company in Osseo, MN. The City has sought to repaint the signs on a 5-year scheduled rotation. Currently, the south facing signs are ready again for a refresh and typically need to be re-painted more often due to sun. The City's Public Works Staff uses its most artistic staff member's talents in this effort to assure that the painting refresh pays homage to the original painting and techniques used on the sign and they will assure we keep the message and art around it fresh and welcoming. The expense for time and materials to complete this task has been absorbed in the Public Works Maintenance Budget.



Fridley Welcomes You

10.3 Resiliency

In order to be a stable community, Fridley needs to be able to withstand the effects of natural disasters. Disasters most likely to impact life in Fridley are flooding, drought, and wind damage. When disaster strikes, Fridley residents have come to rely on the City for help. Business owners expect the City to prevent their street from flooding and homeowners expect the City to collect tree waste for free when a wind storm passes through. Decades ago, the City had abundant financial reserves to be able to front the cost of emergency cleanup, while the City applied for a FEMA disaster declaration approval for reimbursement of costs. But, the City is not as well positioned financially now, as those reserves were used to pay daily expenses over the past 16 years due to Charter restrictions that prevented the City from increasing utility fees to cover increased rates from the Metropolitan Waste District.

The challenge now is how can the City be more resilient? How can the City be prepared for the next tornado? How can the City protect property owners from the impacts of a flood? How can the City minimize the impacts of a drought? Many action steps in this plan address ideas on how the City can become more resilient in times of crisis and what the City can do to minimize contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. One thing being considered at the new Civic Campus is installation of an electric vehicle charging station for customers.

Every few years, the City updates its Emergency Operations Plan. Anoka County has an extensive Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and full time emergency staff. The City also monitors programs that FEMA offers to buyout properties in danger of flooding so loss of life and property can be prevented.

10.4 Summary and Action Steps

In 2018, the City will open its new Civic Campus on University Avenue between the stop light on University Avenue and 69th and 73rd Avenue. The Rice Creek Regional Bike Trail crosses University Avenue at grade near the stop light at 69th Avenue, which has a 55 mph speed limit in this location. In addition, the City plans to sell part of the property to build an estimated new 500 housing units, which will increase the number of people desiring to take transit at the existing transit stops, which are slated to become one of the Central BRT line stops.

- **Action Step:** Study the feasibility of constructing a trail overpass at 69th and University Avenue (Hwy 47).

A generous donor has offered to assist with the funding of a band shell for the amphitheater on the new Civic Campus.

- **Action Step:** Evaluation of what the shell would include and how it would be designed will be essential to assure the open-space feel and view shed to the park beyond is not negatively impacted by the construction of a band shell.

The frontage road along University Avenue, directly in front of the current Fire Station and the office building at 6499 University, will be removed and will be repurposed for pathway and pervious area that will be both aesthetic and environmentally sensitive.

- **Action Step:** The City will evaluate the best reuse of the former frontage road and incorporate that design and implementation into the development agreement for the reuse of the existing City Hall/Police /Fire Complex at 6431 University Avenue.

Fire Stations 2 and 3 were considered in the planning of the new Fire Station 1 and the recommendation was to keep these two stations in service. Future changes in staffing or consolidation of services with another department could allow the status of one or more of the stations to change.

- **Action Step:** Continue to study efficiencies and potential re-use of these satellite fire stations and make recommendation for re-use if/when a station is deemed non-essential.

The City is continually reviewing its liquor operation to ensure the business is viable and competitive.

- **Action Step:** The City continues to identify new initiatives designed to retain and expand its customer base and educate the community on the importance of a municipally owned liquor operation.

Staff have evaluated the unused platted roadways, alleys and miscellaneous parcels throughout the City.

- **Action Step:** The City will work to determine what needs to be maintained and what needs to be placed back on the tax rolls by virtue of vacation, or land sale.

The City's Emergency Preparedness Plan has not been updated for a few years.

- **Action Step:** The City will update its Emergency Preparedness Plan, coordinating with Anoka County's plan.

Construction of a new Civic Campus offers new opportunities for energy reductions.

- **Action Step:** The City will explore options for new fleet vehicles, as they are scheduled for replacement, which reduce the City's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.



Fridley City Hall Rendering

The new public facilities in Fridley's new civic campus represent Fridley's future growth and ongoing redevelopment. Significant changes are occurring in many highly visible locations in the City, demonstrating how the community is growing and changing. These new facilities also demonstrate a new focus on connecting new office and housing development to nearby park amenities, offering workday recreation in addition to leisure recreation. Streets are being designed differently to offer safe passage for multiple modes of transportation, which has not occurred in previous developments. Attention is also being made to how storm water can be treated as an amenity rather than just piped underground. The changes incorporated into new public facilities serve as a guide for private development and will improve the City's resiliency.

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