

Summer 2014

THE CITY OF  
LAKE ELMO

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# THE SOURCE

Your source for City news and information

## State Bonds \$3.5 Million for Lake Elmo Water Main Project

Spearheaded by a bipartisan effort of local legislators, Lake Elmo was able to secure \$3.5 million in state bonds to construct a water main line to the I-94 corridor to support future growth and bypass the adulterated water supply in the southwest quadrant of the city. The funding represents 42% of the overall water infrastructure funds needed to construct the proper hydraulics for the City's future water utility.

"We had a great team of legislators from both sides of the aisle help us with this project," said Mayor Mike Pearson, who worked tirelessly since last November to have the bill considered for inclusion in the \$846 million state bonding package.

Senator Karin Housley, (R - St. Mary's Point) and Senator Susan Kent (D - Woodbury) sponsored the legislative effort in the State Senate. Representative Kathy Lohmer (R - Baytown), Representative Joann Ward (D - Woodbury), Representative Matt Dean (R - Dellwood) and Representative Peter Fischer (D-White Bear Lake) sponsored the effort in the House.

Aided by a former state legislator James Clark, Lake Elmo was able to persuade the legislature that it was caught in an impossible situation of having to grow (by the Metropolitan Council edict) in a portion of the community that is fraught with groundwater problems.

"Many legislators from across Minnesota were sympathetic to our plight of having to transport water from the northeast portion of the City around the Lake Elmo Park Reserve down to the I-94 corridor," said Mayor Pearson, who met with more than 30 legislators during the process.

The \$3.5 million bond will be available for the City to use in 2015 to build a water main from the intersection of 27th Street and Inwood Avenue down to 10th Street where development is scheduled to take place later in the year with four new subdivisions, the ISD 916 \$13 million school project, and a new medical clinic. The project will also contain a booster station that will help equalize the water pressure in the community.



City Administrator Dean Zuleger and Mayor Pearson recently recognized Senator Housley, Senator Kent, Representative Lohmer, and Representative Ward (inset) for support and advocacy that resulted the inclusion of \$3.5 million in the state bonding bill for infrastructure to provide clean water in Lake Elmo.



"The differing elevations of Lake Elmo make it necessary to construct booster stations and put in reducing valves to make sure everyone has proper water pressure," said City Engineer Jack Griffin.

While Mayor Pearson led the effort in the Capitol, Council Member Wally Nelson and members of the Finance Committee worked on the overall budget of putting a water utility together spending countless hours reviewing financial statements to make sure the project could cash flow.

"The state bonding funds will allow Lake Elmo to build an efficient water system without adversely affecting taxpayers. The \$3.5 million infusion into the utility allows us to meet the needs of growth, provide clean water to residents, and move toward our stated goal of reducing water rates in the next four years. It was a big game changer for us financially," said Nelson.

## The Mayor's Corner



*Hello Neighbors!*

I believe the biggest news for Lake Elmo residents is our success in securing \$3.5 million of state bonding money for our water infrastructure. Our local legislators did an incredible job of supporting our request. Senators Karin Housley and Senator Susan Kent worked the Senate while Kathy Lohmer and Joann Ward pushed for us in the House. Truly a bipartisan effort with our administrator Dean Zuleger doggedly determined to keep the issue in front of the Capitol audience. Your council members played a big part in this as well with contacts to legislators and creating a groundswell of citizen contacts in support of the effort. It's a big win for us as this allows us as it allows the delivery of potable water near areas with adulterated ground water and ensures that over time our exceedingly high water use rates will become more in line with surrounding communities in the St. Croix Valley.

Our first of four neighborhood meetings occurred and although the turnout was modest, it was an enjoyable evening. Hopefully you'll be able to make one the remaining events (listed below right). Come see your

neighbors, meet your city staff and council members, offer us your questions, concerns, suggestions, or simply listen in and become more informed with what's going on in Lake Elmo. Finally, please keep in mind your local businesses when making your purchasing decisions. A list of these businesses is located on the website. I think most people would be surprised to see all Lake Elmo has to offer. Options include dining at every level from pub food to five-star, a pharmacy, insurance services, building contractors, legal, groceries, fly fishing, garment repair -- you name it and we probably provide it.

*Mayor Mike Pearson*

### SUMMER NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING SCHEDULE

Thursday, July 10, 6 - 7:30 pm  
Pebble Park - 8160 Lake Jane Trail

Thursday, July 24, 6 - 7:30 pm  
Stonegate Park - 750 Jasmine Avenue N.

## Lake Elmo Restructures Government with Standing Committees

*By Dean Zuleger, City Administrator*

The City of Lake Elmo operates on the premise that we can get better at what we do every day, period.

Whether it is citizen engagement, performing against established metrics, or bringing the best our resources have to offer to serve the community – each council member, department head and employee strives to improve each day to better serve our residents.

In 2014 we have sought to improve organizationally by establishing standing committees made up of elected officials and appointed experts from the community in the areas of finance, human resources, economic development, public safety and next generation citizens. We have added nineteen new voices



to our policy making that have real world experience in some of our more critical areas. We have a former CFO of Cargill and a non-profit finance officer on our Finance Committee. Three HR professionals help us with our personnel policies. Our Economic Development Authority is manned by the best real estate, finance and small business professionals that our community has to offer. And our Next Gen Committee is looking forward to what Lake Elmo might be in twenty years.

If you couple this with seven new planning commissioners and six new park commissioners, we have a brand new government with new voices that make being in 2014 Lake Elmo an exciting and hopeful time. And there is a lot to do...

We currently have openings for two Planning Commissioners (how our land is used), one Finance Commit-

tee member (how we spend), one Human Resource Committee member (who does the work), and one Economic Development Authority member (how we grow). That's right, there are five critical spots open to help shape the future of the community that you live in. Each commission or committee is staffed with a technical staff person that is trained well in their discipline and meetings are shaped around our busy schedules. Our meetings are ordered, respectful, thoughtful, and productive.

I am hoping that you will get involved by giving me a call at 651-747-3905 (I answer my own phone) and think about adding yourself to our cadre of experts in Lake Elmo. I am sure there is a place we can utilize your talent. We have unlimited potential as a community and great resources to draw from, and I hope to hear from you soon.



# Downtown Makeover is Underway

Along with planning for an extension of sanitary sewer service into the Village Area, the City is working to improve other aspects of downtown Lake Elmo. Thanks to steadfast support from Washington County, the City is participating in a project to reconstruct Lake Elmo Ave from Trunk Highway 5 (Stillwater Boulevard) to 30th Street North beginning in 2015. The aptly named Lake Elmo Avenue Corridor Management and Safety Improvement Project will be a catalyst to provide improved streetscape and pedestrian facilities for the downtown area.

In order to proceed with a successful downtown project, the City and County are working diligently to address many different aspects of downtown improvements as part of the overall scope of work. Included in the project scope is the extension of sanitary sewer, replacement of old watermain, road reconstruction, and storm water management and drainage improvements. The project is proposed to be phased over two construction seasons in 2015 and 2016.

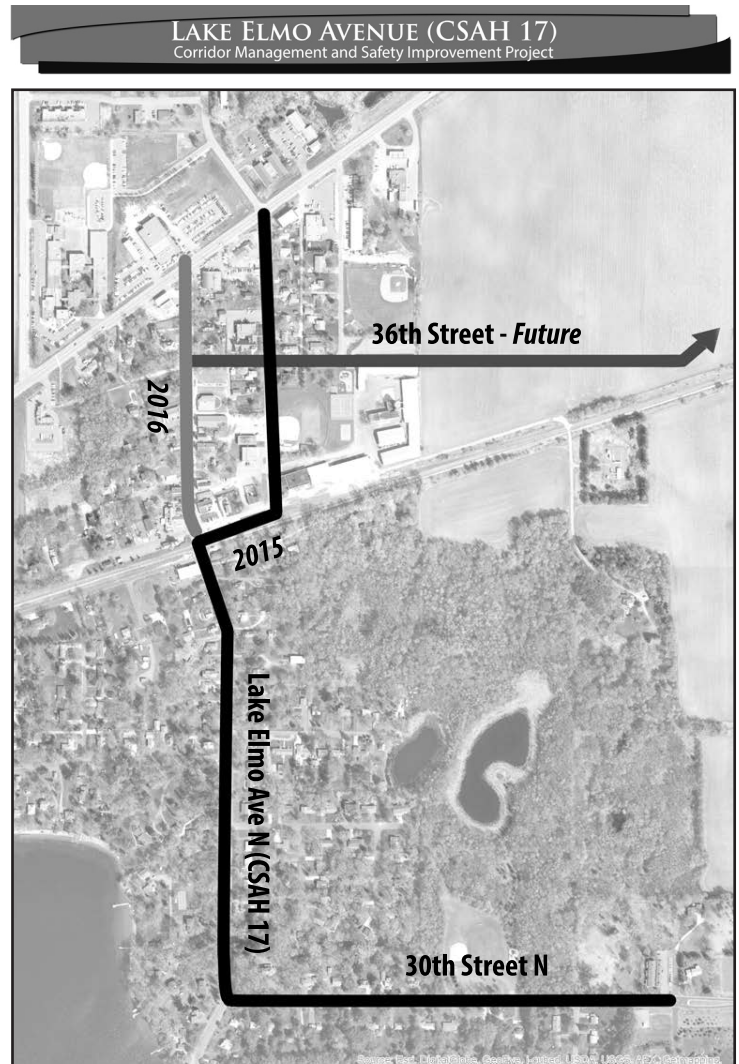
The 2015 phase will include reconstruction of the following segments:

1. The portion of Lake Elmo Avenue from 30th Street to Upper 33rd Avenue.
2. Upper 33rd Street from Lake Elmo Avenue to Laverne Avenue
3. Laverne Avenue from Upper 33rd Street to Trunk Highway 5.

The 2016 Phase of the project will include the downtown stretch of Lake Elmo Ave. from Upper 33rd St. to Trunk Highway 5.

Over the course of construction, the City and County will work to maintain access to adjacent properties and businesses to the best extent possible. The City has worked to obtain feedback from the broader community by hosting two open houses at Christ Lutheran Church. The preliminary design process will be wrapped up with county and municipal consent in late August or early September.

In addition to this large capital improvement investment, the City has also begun work on a downtown market analysis with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The intent of this study is to determine the potential for new businesses to locate in the downtown area, and specifically to identify gaps in the Lake Elmo market that may provide opportunities for new businesses to lo-



Utility and roadway improvement locations and construction schedule for the Lake Elmo Avenue Corridor Management and Safety Improvement Project are indicated on the map above.

cate in the community. While being led by the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the downtown market analysis is being completed with input from the local business community. At its first meeting, the project team identified the market area to include in the study and verified the list of the existing businesses operating in Lake Elmo. The Extension Service will now be using this information to generate detailed reports for the City that identify the shopping preferences of customers within the trade area and to discover where there may be demand for certain types of businesses in the community.

Both of these efforts are being completed on a parallel track to best position the City from an economic development standpoint and represent important first steps towards the revitalization of the Village Area.

# Summer Event Series Planned in Downtown Lake Elmo

Members of the community gathered in downtown Lake Elmo on Saturday, June 21, to kick-off the first day of summer with live music, and a family-friendly fun!

Residents can look forward to several other events taking place this summer; some new joined with long-standing favorites.

## Friday, July 4: Fourth of July Kids Parade, Noon

Kids of all ages are invited to walk in the annual Lake Elmo 4th of July Kids Parade. The parade starts at noon. Participants are asked to line up by 11:50 a.m. northbound on Lake Elmo Avenue south of 32nd Street. The parade ends at the Lions Park playground, where there will be an ice cream social sponsored by the Lake Elmo Rotary Club.

## Friday, July 11: Street Dance Featuring the Tumblin' Dice, 7-11 pm

Head downtown on Friday, July 11 for some live music by the Tumblin' Dice, the Twin Cities number one Rolling Stones tribute band. The street dance will run from 7 pm to 11 pm.



The annual Battle of the Bands Competition is one of several events planned in downtown Lake Elmo this summer.

## Thursday, Aug. 7 - Sunday, Aug. 10: 38th Annual Huff 'n Puff Days & Softball Tournament

More than just a four-day softball tournament, Huff 'n Puff Days is truly a fun family weekend event for the St. Croix Valley area. In addition to the 96-team softball tournament there will be many other activities to enjoy. Huff 'n Puff Days, sponsored by the Lake Elmo Jaycees, is an annual fund-raiser for community and youth activities in the St. Croix Valley Area.

## Friday, Aug. 8: Battle of the Bands Competition, 7-11 pm

The St. Croix Battle of the Bands is the biggest band competition in the east metro. The competition draws talent from across the Twin Cities, from a variety of genres and skill level. This high energy event is one you don't want to miss. For more information or to apply visit [www.lakeelmo.org/bands](http://www.lakeelmo.org/bands).

For more information on community events call 651-747-3908 or email [amacleod@lakeelmo.org](mailto:amacleod@lakeelmo.org).

## City Receives Bond Rating Upgrade to AA+

Standard and Poor's Financial Services, a municipal credit rating agency, has raised Lake Elmo's long-term rating to AA+ from AA based on the application of its local government rating criteria. The upgrade reflects the following:

- Lake Elmo's local economy is very strong with per capita buying income at 163% of the national average and a 4.6% unemployment rate;
- The City of Lake Elmo has 88% of an annual operating budget in reserve;



- The City has ended its last two years with a budget surplus exceeding the national average;
- The City has strong liquidity and fiscal management is viewed as strong with the establishment of disciplined financial policies over the last two years. S & P raised

the City's Financial Management Assessment from "standard" to "good";

- The City's debt liability profile is adequate and management plans to retire 66% of the direct debt within 10 years.

In related news, Moody's Investors Service assigned an Aa2 rating to the City of Lake Elmo based on a strong local economy, strong financial operations, and healthy reserves.



# Council Approves New Fire Truck

The Lake Elmo Fire Department will be getting a new truck in 2015. Lake Elmo City Council approved the purchase of a 78-foot aerial fire truck at the cost of \$715,000. The new truck will replace the current 50-foot truck, which the department purchased 34 years ago.

The need for a new truck was first addressed nearly six years ago, but no action was taken. Last November a fire truck committee comprised of Officers and Engineers (Truck Operators) from the fire department was formed to re-evaluate the need, and research options and pricing for a new truck.

Rising maintenance costs and safety concerns became the driving forces behind raising the urgency level on the purchase of a new truck. "Standard parts for our current truck are no longer stocked, so we have to resort to custom-made parts, which becomes costly to maintain," said Lake Elmo Fire Chief Greg Malmquist.

Malmquist added that the ladder height of the current truck is not ad-



The fire truck pictured above is similar to the new truck that the Lake Elmo Fire Department will be getting in early 2015.

equate to fight fires in many of the homes in Lake Elmo. "Our firefighters rely on their equipment when they are responding to a call," he said. "The new truck will greatly improve the safety and confidence of our firefighters, as well as the members of our community."

The truck purchase was reviewed and approved by both the public safety and finance committees before going to council for approval on May 20, 2014. The vehicle will be purchased with CIP funds.

## Engagement Survey Identifies Community Needs, Desires

A community engagement survey was released in the Spring 2014 issue of "The Source" to better understand the needs and desires of Lake Elmo residents.

The survey consisted of 12 questions asking how often residents are involved in community activities or utilize City amenities, how residents rate particular aspects of quality of life, and what types of amenities do they feel the City is lacking.

Overall, respondents consider Lake Elmo an excellent place to live and raise children. Areas for improvement include offerings for jobs and retirement housing options.

In terms of community needs, the most desired amenities according to survey respondents include a farmers market, coffee shop, community center, small businesses, and more casual dining options including a pizza parlor or ice cream shop.

A survey results summary can be viewed online at [www.lakeelmo.org/engagementsurvey](http://www.lakeelmo.org/engagementsurvey). Residents who have not yet completed the survey can do so at this link, as well. For more information call 651-747-3908.

## Fire Department Concentrates on Inspections

The Lake Elmo Fire Department will be visiting all commercial sites in the city perform inspections in an ongoing effort to better serve and ensure the safety of the business community. The department hopes to reach out to every business in 2014 and annually thereafter. The purpose of the visit will be to conduct fire inspections to ensure the safety of businesses, their employees, and their customers.

While conducting inspections, the LEFD will also be gathering information to build a "pre-plan" database. Information collected will include building layout, type of business, potential hazards, contact information, alarm systems, sprinkler systems, etc. This database will be helpful for responders in the event they are called to a business in an emergency situation.

**MARCH, APRIL, MAY**  
**EMERGENCY CALL RESPONSE**  
**Fire: 31, Rescue: 14, Medical: 48**

# Stormwater: A Threat to Drinking Water Supplies

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. It is critical to allow clean stormwater runoff to soak into the ground to replenish drinking water supplies. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, and other pollutants and carry them into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, or wetland. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into bodies of water we use for swimming, fishing, and drinking water.

The City of Lake Elmo is working cooperatively with homeowners to implement stormwater preventive measures to help protect drinking water supplies. Treating drinking water is becoming increasingly expensive so keeping groundwater and surface waters clean saves money and keeps you safe and healthy. Several ways you can help protect drinking water:

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved

surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain and eventually into your local body of water.

- Check vehicles, and other machinery for leaks and spills. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand, and don't rinse the spills into a nearby storm drain.

- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Don't dump these chemicals down the storm drain or dispose of them in your trash.

- Select native plants and grasses that are drought resistant. Native plants require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides.

- Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas. Compost or recycle yard waste when possible.

- Don't over water your lawn. Water during the cool times of the day, and don't let water run off into the storm drain.

Visit [www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/index.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/index.html) for more information.

## Annual Water Quality Report Available Online

Demonstrating its commitment to public health protection and the public's right-to-know about local environmental information, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires community water systems to put annual drinking water quality reports into the hands of their customers. These reports (also known as consumer confidence reports), which the EPA developed in consultation with water suppliers, environmental groups, and the states, will enable Americans to make practical, knowledgeable decisions about their health and their environment.

A copy of the 2013 Consumer Confidence Report is available for download at [www.lakeelmo.org/ccr](http://www.lakeelmo.org/ccr). For more information, contact City Hall at 651-747-3900.

## Partnership Will Study Drainage to Mitigate Downtown Flooding

The City of Lake Elmo, Washington County and the Valley Branch Watershed District will study the possibility of diverting drainage from the downtown area in an attempt to solve a decades old problem prior to the reconstruction of Lake Elmo Avenue in 2015. The three entities will look at diverting surface drainage to Sunfish Lake Park to the west and to Goetschel Pond to the northeast as a way of

managing the volume and rate of water as it approaches the Old Village.

Sunfish Lake is considered to be an impaired lake by the Valley Branch Watershed District due to low volume and water quality. It is thought that the diversion of water may help the condition of this basin. Any diversion to Sunfish Lake would have to be met with the approval of landowners adjacent to the lake.

Diverting water to Goetschel Pond will relieve pressure on storage ponds along Highway 5 that eventually drain in Downs Lake. These ponds have been known to crest after significant rain events causing flooding concerns to adjacent properties and Highway 5.

"It appears that new growth and the rebuilding of Lake Elmo Avenue have given us a unique opportunity to work together to protect public and private property from flood damage. My thanks go out to Washington County and the Valley Branch for partnering with us on this important issue," said Mayor Mike Pearson.



The City is working on developing solutions for downtown drainage issues.



## Improvements in Store for Sanctuary, Pebble Park



A Zipkrooz, pictured above, is one of the new features that residents will soon be able to enjoy in Pebble Park, as part of the Park Commission's 2014 park improvement plan.

The Lake Elmo Park Commission's primary goal in 2014 is to make improvements to several of the City's parks. The commission conducted audit of the parks last fall to determine which parks could benefit the most from added enhancements.

The first park that will be experience a face-lift will be Pebble Park. The park, located in the Tri-Lakes area off of Inwood Avenue at Lake Jane Trail, is

one of Lake Elmo's largest community parks. The first phase of improvement includes the addition of several new pieces of play equipment, refreshed landscaping, and a small picnic shelter. Second-phase improvements currently under consideration include a double volleyball court, full-sized basketball court, permanent restroom, and paving and striping the parking lot.

"Pebble Park is one of our most frequently used parks," stated Shane Weis, park commission chair. "Adding these amenities will significantly improve the appearance and functionality of the park."

The second project on the Park Commission's list is developing the park space in the Sanctuary Park neighborhood. Residents from the neighborhood addressed the commission in spring of 2013 requesting that play equipment be added to the development's designated park space in order to meet the needs of the growing number of young families and children in the area. The commission is currently working on a plan to implement a play structure by fall of 2014, with long-term plans to expand the park with the development of the adjoining property.

All of the park improvements are being paid for by parkland dedication fees that have been acquired through new development.

## Lake Elmo Public Library Opens New Children's Room

Have you been to the library lately? The new children's room opened for use just in time for the summer. A busy team of volunteers and library staff transformed a former office suite into an open, colorful, and welcoming space for the youngest library users. Collections of books for babies through grade school readers, DVDs, and audiobooks are arranged on child-size shelves and on colorful book displays. Inviting furniture in primary colors provides seating for quiet reading and program activities. A bright alphabet rug helps to define the picture book area.

The Lake Elmo Public Library is offering a Summer Reading Program again this year for children of many ages, from lap-sitting babies through junior high school students. This year's theme is Read S'More Books.

Weekly programs, held on Wednesdays at 3 p.m. in the library, include the 3M Visiting Wizards' magnet program, library mini-golf, movies, and the Kids Who Read 'R' Cool Magic Show. The complete schedule can be found on the library website, <http://lakeelmopubliclibrary.org>. The summer reading program is partially funded by a gift from the Lake Elmo Jaycees.

Families with infants through pre-school aged children are invited to sign up for the 1,000 Books before Kindergarten



The Lake Elmo Library's new children's room is a popular place for young readers.

challenge. This early literacy program is funded by a grant from the Stillwater Elks Lodge 179.

Regular public service hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 10 to 5, Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 to 8, Fridays and Saturdays 10 to 2. Library services, including the online catalog, e-books, and other online resources, are available 24/7 at <http://lakeelmopubliclibrary.org>.



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## Lake Elmo Moves to Monday-Thursday Garbage Pick Up Starting July 14th

In an effort to reduce daily neighborhood traffic and preserve the local street system, the City of Lake Elmo and its six affiliated residential garbage haulers (Maroney’s, Tennis, Allied, Republic, Highland and Waste Management) will move to a two day garbage pick-up schedule (MONDAY-THURSDAY) beginning the week of July 14th.

The two day schedule was agreed upon after two meetings with the hauling community in April and May. Cimarron will continue to have its garbage picked up on Friday. Many East Metro communities have gone to a two day schedule in recent years.

Prior to the agreement, the City staff surveyed the community on the idea with 61% of the community agreeing with the two-day pick-up and 39% opposed to the idea. Verbatim comments centered on the need to reduce daily traffic and noise in the neighborhoods and the ability to continue to be able to choose the individual garbage carrier. In addition, 85% polled favored

an early week (Monday-Tuesday) pick up versus 11% who favored later in the week.

“From an infrastructure standpoint, we like giving our roads five days of rest, technically called reflection, especially during spring thaw. It also provides some recovery period for those roads that have asphalt curbs during hot summer days. We understand that it is still the same number of divisible loads on the streets – but when you couple the infrastructure benefits with the traffic and noise concerns of our taxpayers, it was the right thing to do,” said Dean Zuleger, City Administrator.

Residents should watch their mail for the change in their individual garbage pick-up schedules – which should coming in the billing statements for most of the carriers or they can call their hauler directly.


**THE SOURCE**  
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