

PUBLIC WORKS

Pipeline

Edina to Provide More Skating Rinks This Winter

By Krystal Caron

When the weather turns cold and snowy, Minnesotans don't just hunker down inside. This year, outdoor-enthusiasts can get outside to skate even sooner at any of the 12 skating rinks at parks around Edina, as well as try out a brand new regulation-size rink at the Braemar Athletic Complex.

"Edina has a lot of rinks – more than a lot of other cities," said Recreation Supervisor Eric Boettcher. "We also have a lot more use here than rinks in other communities because the [Edina] Hockey Association uses the rinks for practice time."

A dozen general ice skating rinks are located at parks throughout Edina. Skaters can find the rinks at Arden, Cornelia School, Countryside, Creek Valley, Highlands, Lewis, Normandale, Pamela, Strachauer, Todd, Walnut Ridge and Weber parks. Edina is one of a few cities that is able to offer warming houses, open skating and hockey rinks at all locations. Each rink also has staff who work to flood and groom the rinks each morning.

Because of longer and colder winters in recent years, the Parks & Recreation Department plans to open the rinks earlier this year. This year, rinks will open Dec. 15 (weather permitting), and remain open through March 1 (weather permitting). In addition, the Pamela Park shelter will be upgraded and redesigned. The new shelter will include a

storage area for athletic associations and the Parks & Recreation Department, new restrooms and a room for the community to utilize for neighborhood gatherings.

"The [shelter] should be open early in the season. That will be a different shelter, but the rinks should be the same. It's kind of the same thing we had at Countryside last year," explained Boettcher.

In addition to the variety of park rinks, the City also has a 10-acre rink at Centennial Lakes Park and a new outdoor ice rink at the Braemar Athletic Complex. The Centennial Lakes Park rink will be open, weather permitting, Dec. 13 through March 1. The park offers skate rentals, concessions and a rink-side warming house. The rink at the Braemar Athletic Complex is a refrigerated, regulation-size rink. It is expected to open Dec. 5 and remain open through the end of March. Because the rink is refrigerated, staff is able to open it earlier in the season and keep it open longer in the spring.

"It's going to be really nice; I think it's going to be one of the nicest outdoor rinks around," said Braemar

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Autumn 2014

Trim Trees and Protect Against Invasive Species for a Healthier Yard

Photo by Krystal Caron



Forester Tom Horwath ensures that trees around Edina City Hall are trimmed and pruned properly.

Healthy trees are one of the most important parts of a beautiful yard or park. Edina City Forester Tom Horwath recommends protecting them through routine trimming and preventative efforts to defend against invasive species like buckthorn or Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

Horwath stresses three main things that residents can do to maintain and protect the trees and landscaping on their property.

- Trim your trees to aid in proper growth and prevent overhanging limbs around sidewalks and roads.
- Continually work to remove buckthorn from your property. It is invasive and can threaten the health of nearby trees.
- Periodically treat any ash trees on your property to prevent EAB infestation and/or consider planting another tree or trees on your landscape to have a replacement in the event you lose an important ash tree.

According to City Code, all streets and alleys must be clear of vegetation to a height of 16 feet above the curb or street edge and 8 feet above sidewalks, regardless of whether the plot is private or public.

“Try to be more proactive when the trees are young in doing a little ‘raising.’ Raising means cutting off the lower branches as the tree is growing,” explained Horwath. He added that January and February are very good months to trim trees since trees are dormant then, resulting in less stress and greater recovery of the tree.

In addition to tree trimming, property owners should work to protect themselves from invasive pests and plants. Buckthorn is a highly invasive, non-native shrub that damages the native woodland composition.

“Buckthorn is a problem along the street – it loves the edges. [Do your best to] eradicate it along the streets because it’s a continual trimming problem if you don’t,” explained Horwath.

He noted that the City offers a buckthorn drop-off during the last two weekends of October from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and noon to 4 p.m. Sundays. The buckthorn-only drop-off site is located on Ikola Way, across from the Braemar Golf Dome.

Finally, do your best to monitor and prevent the spread of EAB. Horwath recommends planting new, resilient trees now in the event that you lose any ash trees on your property to the disease. Another option is to chemically treat ash trees. If you use chemical protection, keep in mind that application must take place every one to three years. Read more about EAB at www.emeraldashborer.info.

The City has a list of qualified tree care professionals for those looking for assistance with tree maintenance. For more information or to request the list, contact Horwath at 952-826-0308 or thorwath@EdinaMN.gov.

– Compiled by Krystal Caron



Save Your Mailbox With Routine Maintenance

When winterizing your home and yard this fall, give your mailbox some TLC. A little maintenance can help extend the life of your mailbox.

When clearing the streets following a snowfall, snowplow operators take great care not to damage property. On rare occasions, a plow might tip over or cause structural damage to a residential mailbox.

If damage is reported, complaints are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If an inspection determines the cause of damage was a collision of a City plow or equipment, the Public Works Department's Streets Division will install a standard size, non-decorative metal mailbox. If necessary, a 4-by-4 inch, decay-resistant wood support post will also be installed in the spring. Alternatively, the City will reimburse a homeowner \$50 for a replacement box and post.

In most cases, winter mailbox damage is the result of heavy snow or excessive ice. In these cases, the homeowner is responsible for repairs. Likewise, if a mailbox is made

unserviceable by age or lack of maintenance, the City is not responsible for the purchase or installation of a replacement.

Check your mailbox post closest to the ground for signs of wear and rotting, said Streets Supervisor John Scheerer.

"Most mailbox damages are the result of rotten posts or a mailbox poorly anchored to the post," he said. Such damage weakens a mailbox, and lowers its chances of surviving the winter.

During the winter months, residents should monitor the quantity of snow and debris surrounding their mailboxes. After City plows have removed snow from streets, residents should clear snow surrounding the mailbox. According to the U.S. Postal Service, failure to keep the area in front of the mailbox safe for mail carriers may cause disruption in mail service.

For more information, contact the City of Edina Public Works Department at 952-826-0376.

– Compiled by Jordan Gilgenbach



City Uses Hydroseed To Regrow Grass

Have you ever noticed the light green fluff sprayed on the dirt after a construction project? The fluff is a mixture of grass seed and fertilizer called hydroseed that is used to restore lawns.

Previously, the City used sod to restore lawns following street reconstruction projects. The City's Engineering Department found that, while attractive when first laid, it took a lot of effort to keep alive and it often died quickly. In 2013, the City switched to hydroseeding, a proven performer in producing healthy lawns.

"Sod comes from a farm raised under ideal conditions, so it looks good at first, but requires a lot of water to get established," said Assistant Engineer Pat Wrase. "It's not the most resilient turf material and is easily susceptible to heat and lack of moisture. Hydroseed, which is established under more natural conditions, has a better prognosis in its long-term survival."

As an added benefit, hydroseed costs significantly less than sod, adding to overall project cost savings. On average, sod costs about four times more than hydroseed.

Hydroseed is a mix of fertilizer, mulch and a seed mix specially mixed for our area. It is more resistant to pests and weeds as it is grown in place rather than transplanted. Additionally, it's more resilient to weather.

"Hydroseeding still needs maintenance during dry periods, but the engineered material and the fiber hold moisture well, helping the seed and root sprouts to grow," Wrase said. "Hydroseed is placed on loose soil, and the root penetrates and grows naturally. With sod, the turf is growing already, and the root base needs to establish itself in the in-place material, which could take longer to happen."

Following a street reconstruction, the contractor maintains the hydroseed for 90 days after placement. The contractor will

water, fertilize and mow the hydroseed, as needed, during that time. At the end of the maintenance period, a final inspection is done, and areas that do not meet contract specifications will be re-hydroseeded. Once the hydroseeded area is given a passing grade, maintenance becomes the full responsibility of the homeowner.

For more information, visit www.EdinaMN.gov/Engineering or call 952-826-0371.

– Compiled by Jordan Gilgenbach

Good maintenance practices make for a good lawn in any circumstance. Follow these tips to maintain a hydroseeded lawn:

- Keep soil moist with light sprinkling in the morning, late afternoon or early evening.
- Continue watering even after the grass looks established.
- Fertilization requirements vary, depending on the time of year. Consult a reputable nursery or seed center for fertilizer specifications.
- Mow as soon as the grass blades are 3 to 4 inches high. Set the mower deck to the highest setting, and make sure the blades are sharp. Dull blades can bruise and damage new grass.
- Do not collect the clippings as this helps feed the soil and accelerates development.

Weeds will likely appear and are best controlled by growing good, healthy grass and following proper maintenance techniques.

Meet one of the newest members of Public Works: The Elgin Crosswind

One of the newest members of the Public Works Department is a dust-collecting, leaf-gobbling, environment-friendly mechanical dynamo. Meet the Elgin Crosswind, the versatile, flexible and thorough street-sweeper.

The vehicle is a welcomed addition to the Public Works fleet. It features a unique pickup head and vacuum that is capable of incredible suction power, a large hopper and the ability to suck up fine dust out of street cracks. In other words, the Crosswind has the technology and power to pick up the stuff the other guys leave behind.

“The new sweeper combines new technology and speed so that we can increase our efficiency by taking less time to travel to our sweeping sites. In this day and age, every budget dollar counts,” said Brian Olson, Public Works Director.

What sets this machine apart from the City’s two other mechanical sweepers are its vacuum and water tank. The Crosswind specializes in picking up fine particles of dust and debris and trapping the collection in water.

The City’s mechanical sweepers use brooms to pick up anything on the street surface and place on a conveyor, which loads debris into a hopper. They work well on rocks and sand, but cannot contain fine particles.

The Crosswind cost the City \$209,148, after receiving a \$20,000 grant from the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.

The addition of the Crosswind means a more comprehensive cleaning for Edina’s streets, which leads to less impact on the environment.

Photo by Michael Braun



Rick Puppe, Darrell Cote and Dean Blenker all operate the Elgin Crosswind, which uses air and water to keep the City’s air and water clean.

“Removing soil and debris from the streets means it will not get into our lakes and streams. This keeps the waterways cleaner and healthier,” said Laura Adler, Water Resource Coordinator.

The City conducts two main sweeps per year. Each sweep takes at least a month and a half to complete. The remnants of winter – salt, sand and dust – are picked up in the spring. Leaves make up the majority of the load during the autumn sweep.

For more information on street sweeping, contact the Public Works Department at 952-826-0376.

– Compiled by Frank Petrovic

Salt Brining System Makes Salt Usage More Effective and Efficient

Photo by Kaylin Eidsness



Streets Supervisor Shawn Anderson hooks up the truck to the salt tank in the background to fill with brine. The salt brining system has helped Public Works make the most of its salt.

By Kaylin Eidsness

Days before a winter storm is forecasted to arrive, Public Works employees throw on their thinking caps to figure out how they should attack the upcoming storm system based on the predicted temperatures and snow amounts.

“We have graphs and data that we use to help, but it’s oftentimes a guessing game,” said Streets Supervisor Shawn Anderson, about knowing when and when not to use different products to combat the snow and ice.

A salt brining system, procured through a \$25,000 matching grant from the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, has helped Public Works make the most of its salt, benefitting motorists and the environment.

The salt brining system includes a salt hopper, into which rock salt and water are poured, and two tanks where the salt solutions are stored. A 4,000-gallon tank holds the basic salt brine, while a 2,000-gallon tank holds sodium chloride brine. The Public Works Department uses both kinds of salt. Regular

salt is effective until around 15 degrees, while sodium chloride is effective until 0 degrees.

“Once both salts lose their punch, because it’s just too cold, it doesn’t do us any good to put them on the road,” explained Anderson. “They will actually just worsen the problem and turn to ice after they melt a little.”

The salt brine, used as an anti-ice, is sprayed on roadways days before a snow storm is predicted to arrive. Once seeped into the road, it prevents the snow and ice from forming a bond, which Anderson says makes plowing much easier and efficient.

The salt brine is also used on the plow trucks to wet the rock salt as it’s sprinkled on the roads. This helps the salt stay on the road, which means less salt is needed. Water Resources Coordinator Laura Adler, who helped Anderson procure the grant, likes to see that.

“One teaspoon of salt can permanently pollute up to five gallons of water,” she said. “All of the little critters and aquatic plants that live in the streams and lakes, they don’t do well in salt water.”

While the City only owns one vehicle used to anti-ice the roads, Anderson is searching for a grant to help purchase another, larger vehicle that can hold more brine. These vehicles can cost up to \$160,000.

“Right now, we pretreat what we call, ‘critical streets’ – the streets that are used more heavily – and then treat whatever streets we can get to afterward,” said Anderson.

For more information on the salt brining system, contact Anderson at 952-826-0313.

Winter Parking: The Ordinance for Your Benefit

The winter parking ordinance has been in existence in Edina for a long time, and for good reason. Residents benefit greatly from this ordinance and it helps Public Works keep the city safe and clear from snow obstruction.

“Night parking ordinances are extremely beneficial to us,” said Public Works Director Brian Olson. “[They allow the Public Works Department] to start plowing immediately when overnight snowfall occurs.”

Public Works employees take pride in clearing Edina’s streets of snow and ice. When cars obstruct the streets, it takes more time to clear the roadways, and they cannot be cleared completely without towing the vehicles.

Long before plows take to the road, Edina Police Officers patrol the area to keep plowing schedules on track. Police Chief Dave Nelson speaks highly of the officers’ ability to ensure streets are cleared before plows come through.

“Towing is the last resort, but we need to get compliance from residents and drivers to help Public Works,” he said. “The sooner [the roads are plowed], the better. We do our best to get ahold of the vehicle owner before towing, but it does delay plowing schedules.”

Plow drivers do their best to plow around vehicles left on the street, but depending on the amount and nature of the snowfall, complications with visibility often occur. Additionally, vehicles left on the street may get blocked in due to the way plows push the snow. Because of these aspects, residents shouldn’t follow the ordinances just to ensure streets are plowed well, but also to protect their vehicles.

“Plow drivers adjust their speed based on road conditions, but they still need inertia to move snow,” said Public Works

Coordinator Dave Goergen. “[With poor visibility], they can easily hit vehicles on the street.”

According to local law, no vehicle may be parked on a street, highway or alley under these conditions:

- From 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. Nov. 1 through March 31, regardless of wintery conditions.
- When 1.5 inches or more of snow has fallen. Once streets and roadways have been plowed to the curb line, residents can then park vehicles on designated roadways.
- For six hours after a snowfall has ended, unless City traffic signs specifically allow vehicles to park on roadways.

For more information about winter parking ordinances, contact the Police Department at 952-826-1600.

— Compiled by Lauryn Grimes



Clear Sidewalks for a Safer Community

As much as we hate to think about it, the season for clearing sidewalks and driveways will soon be upon us. Although shoveling the walk is a tedious chore, it's one that has major implications.

"The most important thing [we want to avoid] is having kids walking out on a street because the sidewalk isn't cleared. It's very dangerous," said Streets Supervisor Shawn Anderson. He also added that emergency personnel, postal workers and delivery people count on sidewalks being clear and ice-free to do their jobs safely and efficiently.

According to Edina City Code, "All snow and ice shall be removed from a sidewalk by the owner of the property adjoining the sidewalk within 48 hours of the cessation of the precipitation."

If a sidewalk isn't cleared by a property owner within 48 hours, the City may send a letter prompting snow removal. In the event that snow is not removed in a timely matter, the City will eventually clear the sidewalk and assess the cost to the property owner. In addition, property owners must clear snow from around fire hydrants on their lots. Fire hydrants must be visible and accessible to emergency workers at all times.

Anderson explained that residential sidewalk snow removal is difficult for City staff because sidewalks are narrower and therefore too small for the City's usual snow-removal techniques. Some sidewalks that are funded by State aid, due to higher amounts of traffic, are cleared by the City. Those sidewalks, such as the ones along France Avenue and 50th Street, are wider and easier for Public Works employees to keep clear.

If you plan to leave for a vacation or are unable to clear your own sidewalk, there are a number of options.

"Neighbors helping neighbors is something we always encourage," Anderson said. He also noted that the City has a list of groups and companies that can provide snow removal.

"It makes a better winter for everyone if we all pitch in and maintain the walkways, the driveways and the roadways," Anderson said.

For more information, contact Anderson at 952-826-0313 or sganderson@EdinaMN.gov.

– Compiled by Krystal Caron

"Rinks" continued from page 1

Arena Assistant Manager Amanda Holle. "We're going to have a roof over it so we won't get the snow buildup or direct sun that melts the ice. We won't get the effect of having the wind run through there, either," she added.

The outdoor rink at the Braemar Athletic Complex will be available to the public for open skating from 8 to 9:30 p.m. on Fridays, as well as some select daytime open skating hours during the week. Special events and leagues are also being

organized, so Holle encourages skaters to keep an eye out for details on the website www.BraemarArena.com.

For more information on the refrigerated rink at the Braemar Athletic Complex, call 952-833-9500.

To learn more about skating at Centennial Lakes Park, visit www.CentennialLakesPark.com or call 952-833-9580. For additional information about the 12 park rinks located throughout Edina, visit www.EdinaParks.com or call 952-826-0367.



Snowplow drivers are unable to identify forts in snow drifts because they are often built with their entries facing away from the direction of the plow.

Snow Forts: An Invisible Danger

Winter is approaching and with it brings snowballs, snowmen and snow forts. When the snow pants, mittens and boots go on, it's important for all residents to remember the potential dangers that come with winter fun.

When constructing snow forts, many children build their structures in the largest drifts of snow, which are oftentimes alongside the road due to piles created by snowplows. However, it's because of the plows that parents and residents should remind children this is a dangerous place to be.

"If there is anyone in a fort when a plow passes, they are in tremendous danger," said Streets Supervisor John Scheerer. This is primarily because children tend to make the entry points of their structures facing away from the direction snowplow drivers are approaching.

Snowplow drivers cannot tell the difference between a snow drift with or without a fort, unless there is a visible sign of activity such as shovels or sleds lying outside. From inside a fort, most noise is muted, so there is no indication of a plow approaching.

"Building forts near the street is not a safe thing to do," said Edina Police Chief Dave Nelson. "Parents should be cognizant of where their children are playing."

Snowplow trucks are big, bright and have a lot of moving parts. To a child, these aspects are fascinating and harmless if you're not in the middle of the street, but are a life-threat for people too close to the road.

"A multiple-ton plow can easily bury or injure an adult, not to mention a child," said Public Works Coordinator Dave Goergen.

However, the concern for safety does not relate only to snow forts and tunnels.

"[Snow forts aside], there are a lot of hidden snow banks that draw the attention of children. They can run out from behind a drift and into the street without warning," said Scheerer. "We don't want to discourage kids from building forts and playing with snow, but we encourage them to build [their forts] in the backyard or away from roadways and without roofs to avoid potential for a collapse."

For more information, contact the Public Works Department at 952-826-0376.



Winter Teamwork Keeps Edina's Streets Clear And Safe

The City of Edina has more than 2,000 hydrants scattered throughout the community, but many residents still don't know where the nearest one is located. In the event of a fire, however, these structures arguably have the biggest role. Without them, firefighters could not do their job.

Hydrants must be easily accessible to the firefighters. The first step is making sure they are visible. The second step is making sure they are accessible, but when there's five feet of snow on the ground, that's easier said than done.

"The key is to be able to see and access hydrants as we are approaching the address," said Fire Chief Tom Schmitz. "If we can't find the hydrant, often we have to look further, which delays the timeframe for getting to the secured water supply."

The Minnesota State Fire Code calls for a three-foot cleared radius completely free from all structures and snow, including flower beds and landscaping improvements.

"The Public Works Department does its best to do the annual maintenance – painting, flagging, flushing and cap checks," said Edina Fire Marshal Jeff Siems. "When it comes to clearing, that's where we ask for folks to help out."

Property owners are expected to keep any fire hydrants on their property accessible. Those who don't have the capability of clearing a hydrant on their property should contact the Fire Department.

Even if residents don't have a hydrant to clear on their own properties, there are ways to help.

The City's mobile app, Edina To Go, has the ability to process service requests, so residents can report hydrants they see that need to be cleared in a matter of seconds. Another option for residents, groups or other organizations is to "Adopt-a-Hydrant" and help the City maintain a publicly owned hydrant year-round, including clearing snow and painting.

"In the past, we've had athletic teams and volunteer organizations like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts do this as a volunteer project," said Public Works Coordinator Dave Goergen. "Public Works will provide mapping and other resources [required to get the job done]."

The City thanks all residents and businesses in advance who help clear and maintain hydrants. By taking the time to make sure they are well maintained, lives may be saved.

For more information about the Adopt-a-Hydrant program or fire hydrant regulations, contact the Edina Fire Department at 952-826-0378. Download the City's mobile app, Edina To Go, for free in the iTunes App Store and the Android Google Play store and use it to report obstructed fire hydrants.

– Compiled by Lauryn Grimes

Be Sure To Inform Your Snow-Clearing Contractors Of Edina's Regulations

Many Edina residents hire private contractors to handle their snow removal needs. While it's nice to have someone else take care of this for you, please remember that it is still your responsibility to make sure the people you hire follow Edina's regulations.

Private plows must not deposit snow onto or across a roadway. Any snow that is removed from a sidewalk or driveway must remain on that property or be hauled away at the property owner's expense.

The City of Edina's Public Works Department will monitor private snow plowing contractors on a regular basis, though the property owner is ultimately responsible.

Property owners will receive a warning letter for violations on the first offense. If a second offense is reported, the City may issue the property owner a fine of up to \$700.

– *Compiled by Frank Petrovic*





Watch For Water Main Breaks During Winter's Cold

Minnesotans know the ups and downs that Minnesota winters bring. Seeing puddles of water thaw and refreeze is a common sight. On rare occasions, ice on the ground isn't the result of weather – it's the result of what is underneath.

Water main breaks occasionally occur in the winter, and must be fixed as quickly as possible. Because the infrastructure is buried about eight feet underground, a winter water main break will not result in a geyser. The signs are more subtle.

Water coming out of cracks in the pavement or out of grassy boulevard areas near streets is common, according to Utilities Supervisor Gary Wells. The volume of water usually indicates whether it is a water main break or a problem with a more localized residential service line.

Besides service outages, winter breaks also present an immediate hazard. Leaked water can quickly form large sheets of ice. These can happen anywhere, anytime, even on busy streets and in clear conditions when drivers are unlikely to be on the lookout for ice.

Public Works crews respond to water main breaks as soon as they hear about them. In order to minimize ice hazards, once a team arrives, their first priority is to locate and close the valves to slow the flow of water. Residents are notified that the water will be shut off as long as necessary to make the emergency repair.

"Age of the pipes, soil condition and weather conditions all contribute to water main failures," Wells said. The City responds to about 24 breaks during an average winter, each varying in severity.

If you see or suspect a water main issue this winter during regular work hours (7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday), call Edina Public Works at 952-826-0376 or report the issue using the City's mobile app, Edina To Go. To report a break after hours, call the Edina Police Department's non-emergency line at 952-826-1610.

– Compiled by Jordan Gilgenbach