



# Cottage Grove Reports

## City Council Approves 2021 Budget and Levy

The City Council adopted the preliminary 2021 property tax levy and operating budget on September 2. The 2021 property tax levy of \$17.6 million is a 3.99% increase from the 2020 levy of \$16.9 million. Despite the increase, growth in the City-wide tax base will result in most residents paying the same amount in City property tax in 2021 as they did in 2020.

Property specific notices were mailed to all residences in November with comparisons of proposed property taxes by jurisdiction and year (2021 vs. 2020). Residents were encouraged to review their notice and attend the public information sessions identified by each taxing entity to learn more about their 2021 property taxes.

The City's 2021 budget and final levy were adopted after an informational meeting on Wednesday, December 2. Look for more detailed information on the budget in the January 2021 edition of the Cottage Grove Reports.

## Housing in Cottage Grove; Measured Growth, Sustained Success and a Plan for the Future

While the pandemic has changed the economy in a number of ways, the housing market in the City of Cottage Grove continues to thrive. However, builders are now developing a wider range of housing options in the City, whether it be family apartments, new townhome products, entry-level villa style and express single family homes or higher-end single family homes. "Our strong housing market is a testament to our City as we provide options for life-cycle housing. We now have the ability to offer housing options for first-time home buyers, empty nesters and seniors," Mayor Myron Bailey recently explained. New home permits have increased every year in the past 5 years. In 2015, the City



processed just a shade more than 50 permits; last year it welcomed nearly 284 new construction projects, and in the first 11 months of 2020, 337 permits were processed. "Over the past 10 years, the City has experienced a 31% growth in market value and a \$10.6 million tax capacity increase, allowing the City to reduce the tax burden on existing property owners while maintaining the City's high level of services and amenities," Community Development



Director Ben Boike said. The City has focused on continuing to grow multi-family housing options, which includes several senior living facilities, allowing residents to transition to new living spaces and remain in Cottage Grove. There is also an influx of developers interested in new market rate apartment housing. Work continues on Grove80, a four story, 120-unit facility located at the old City Hall site, and several other developers are discussing multi-family housing projects in town. Cottage Grove's 2040 Comprehensive Plan also includes new "mixed-use" districts in the commercial areas of 80th Street and Highway 61 and Jamaica Avenue and Highway 61. Multi-family housing units in these areas should lead to higher interest levels from desired restaurants and retailers. So, what's next? The City's long term housing plan will be released to the general public in early 2021, featuring housing stock and demographic data as well as the City's housing challenges and goals moving forward. The plan will also outline available housing assistance programs through the County, State and federal government. Needless to say, the City of Cottage Grove enters the year 2021 with great momentum and optimism.

## Winter Reminders from the Public Works Team

### Parking and Trash Can Reminder:

- Don't forget to place garbage and recycling containers at the end of your driveway, not in the street!
- Winter Parking rules are in effect. No on-street parking is allowed between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., regardless of whether it is snowing. On-street parking is allowed at all other times if the vehicle doesn't interfere with snow and ice removal

### Mailbox Damage:

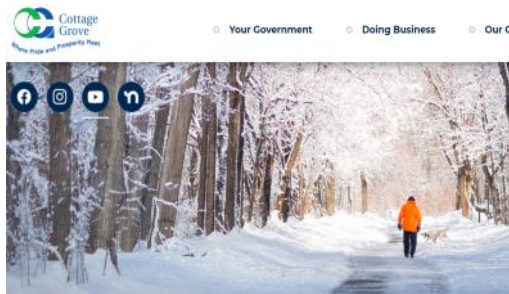
- The City is responsible for damage if a plow (not snow) makes physical contact with a mailbox. Please call (651) 458-2808 to report the damage

### Fire Hydrant Reminder:

- Please clear snow away from hydrants. When firefighters respond to a house fire, time is of the essence. If you have a hydrant on your property, remember to keep three feet of clear space around it, as required by Minnesota Fire Code, section 507.5.5. The members of the CGFD thank you in advance; there are more than 1,700 fire hydrants in the City of Cottage Grove!



## City Launches New and Improved Website



On November 13, the City of Cottage Grove launched a new and improved website ([cottagegrovemn.gov](http://cottagegrovemn.gov)), built specifically to meet the needs of the

City's residents and the contractors and developers who conduct business here. Alongside City staff members, developers used data in determining a more organized layout, ensuring easier navigation for everyone. The new site seamlessly translates to mobile devices and guarantees Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. It was built by CivicPlus and was paid for through federal CARES act funding.

## Firefighters Lead County's COVID-19 Testing Initiative



During the month of November, the Cottage Grove Fire Department was on the frontlines of the coronavirus battle, facilitating hundreds of tests for members of the general public. Firefighter/Paramedics facilitated testing on five consecutive Mondays last month at the Washington County Environmental Center in Woodbury.

Washington County Public Health employees and Sheriff Deputies handled all of the logistics for the testing events. Residents scheduled appointments, waited for a short time in line, took 30 seconds to provide a nasal sample and then learned if they tested positive for COVID-19 in two or three days time.



### Washington County COVID-19 Testing by the Numbers:

- Total number of residents receiving tests: **2,613**
- Total number of testing hours: **32**
- Number of CGFD employees who worked on testing events: **15**
- Cost of tests for residents: **FREE**

## Don't Want to Keep Em' For Next Year? Do Not Throw Your Holiday Lights in the Trash!

When it comes time to take down those Holiday decorations, please do not throw broken strands of lights in the trash or recycling bins! Lights that end up in single-stream recycling facilities cause big problems for those sorting and processing machines so bring them to the Washington County Environmental Center for proper disposal. Other items to separate and bring to the Center include extension cords, plastic signs and metal posts and scrap metal, including pots and pans, tomato cages and smaller tools.

Washington  
County

M I N N E S O T A

Environmental Center

4039 Cottage Grove Drive in  
Woodbury, MN 55129

For hours of operation and more  
information on recycling, please call  
(651) 275-7475 or visit the website at  
[www.co.washington.mn.us](http://www.co.washington.mn.us)



Finally, just wanted to provide a quick reminder that wrapping paper, tissue paper and gift bags are not recyclable. Throw them in the trash if you are not able to reuse them!

## There's Still Time to Enjoy the Holiday Season in Cottage Grove



If you haven't had the chance to check out the City's Holiday Lights Map, there's still time. This year we had so many entries that we had to split them into two maps, but in these tough times, it was a really good problem to have! To access a map highlighting all the merry and bright outdoor displays throughout town, please log on to the City's website at [cottagegovernn.gov/holidaylights](http://cottagegovernn.gov/holidaylights).

There are more than 40 homes you can drive by and take a look at; Cottage Grove residents really lit it up this year!

Also, you still have time to take a picture in the large, wooden chair our Public Works Elves put together. It is sitting right in front of the Official Holiday Tree at City Hall. And when you stop by, there's a mailbox for letters to Santa if you, or your children, have any last minute gift requests. Thank you again for helping the City pull off a festive and socially-distant Holiday season. It wasn't easy, and we had to get a little creative, but with your help, Cottage Grove was still able to show off that Holiday spirit!

## An Enormous Turnout for Cottage Grove Voters

Those pre-General Election predictions for high voter turnout were certainly accurate for the City of Cottage Grove. 22,932 residents voted; in comparison, 19,799 people voted in the 2016 General Election. This year presented several challenges for the City Clerk's office which relied on a record 138 election judges to help institute safety precautions based on the pandemic. To put that into perspective, 123 judges helped facilitate a busy 2016 election. The City of Cottage Grove would like to thank all of those judges who worked at the City's seven polling sites! The other big change this year? 61% of voters cast their ballots prior to Election Day (compared to 24% in 2016).





**City Hall**

12800 Ravine Parkway South

Cottage Grove, MN 55016

(651) 458-2800

[cottagegrovemn.gov](http://cottagegrovemn.gov)

Mayor Myron Bailey and Council Members Steve

Dennis, La Rae Mills, Justin Olsen and Dave Thiede

**Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation and Ice Arena**

**(651) 458-3400**

Due to the Governor’s Executive Order (20-99) regarding COVID-19, which does not expire until December 18th , we do not have any updates to provide on recreational programming and activities at the Cottage Grove Ice Arena. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and staff members look forward to offering new and exciting programming soon.

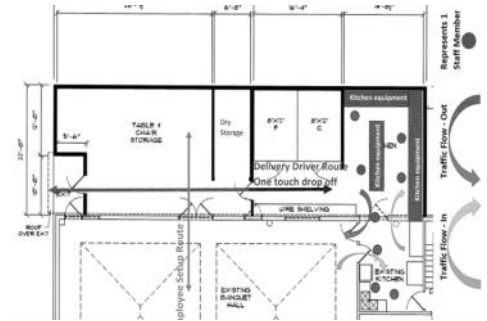
**River Oaks Ready to Debut New, Improved and Expanded Kitchen**



The record number of golfers at River Oaks this year must have noticed a fair amount of construction activity on the west end of the Event Center. Throughout the summer, and into the fall, crews expanded the kitchen by

1,200 square feet. Not only has the kitchen cooking space been tripled, a walk-in cooler will allow for greater storage of a larger variety of food options. This addition will also increase the ability for staff to cater more events and gives the Executive Chef even more opportunities to produce meals made from scratch. Before this expansion, employees were forced to bring food and banquet tables and chairs upstairs from the basement. With this larger space,

River Oaks staff will be able to remain socially-distant and maintain a better traffic flow for servers. The expansion was paid for through Federal CARES Act funding and will serve employees and guests for years to come.



**River Oaks Golf Course & Event Center**

11099 South Highway 61 . (651) 438-2121

**Gift Cards:** Dreaming of the days when you can tee it up again? The golfer in your life is! Gift Cards are available at [riveroaksmunigolf.com](http://riveroaksmunigolf.com)

**Booking Weddings for 2021/2022:** If you’re going to “tie the knot” next year (or in 2022), the newly renovated River Oaks Event Center is the place for you. Contact Jaime at [jmann@cottagegrovemn.gov](mailto:jmann@cottagegrovemn.gov) or (651) 438-2121 for details.