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MEETINGS

CITY COUNCIL

1st & 3rd Tuesdays 6:30pm

PLANNING COMMISSION

3rd Tuesday 7:30pm

City Officials

Mayor Brad Spencer

City Council

Lynn Betts

Brad Fisher

Ray McCoy

Steve Grotting

Planning Commissioners

Robert Gardner, Chair

Anita Volkenant

Leith Dumas

Hal Tearse

Steve Thompson

Jon-Paul Story, Alternate

Timothy Usset, Alternate

2026 BUDGET INFORMATION

2026 Budget Highlights

For the ninth consecutive year, the City Council has adopted a preliminary budget that reduces or holds flat the municipal tax rate, reaffirming our commitment to efficient, effective, and value-driven local government. This approach ensures that the City's share of property taxes remains stable year over year—assuming consistent market valuations as determined by the Hennepin County Assessor's Office.

Did you know? The City's portion of property taxes accounts for only about one-third of your total property tax bill. The remaining amount is split between Hennepin County and your school district.

Since 2017, Independence has consistently maintained or lowered its local tax rate while continuing to deliver high-quality services to residents. This fiscal responsibility extends to our long-range capital planning for streets, utilities, equipment, and buildings. All capital expenditures are fully funded with cash—no debt issuance—ensuring financial stability for years to come.

What's new for 2026?

We've increased funding and updated our long-range street improvement plan, focusing on upgrading all gravel roads with:

- 3–6 inches of new gravel
- Enhanced drainage systems
- Culvert replacements

Other critical improvements to ensure safer, more durable roads.

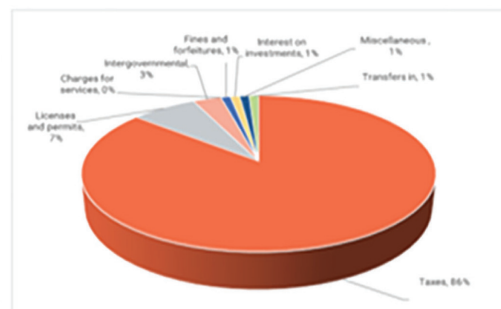
2026 Projected General Fund Revenue

Revenues

Taxes	\$ 4,019,763
Licenses and permits	299,100
Intergovernmental	129,315
Charges for services	6,100
Fines and forfeitures	25,000
Interest on investments	30,000
Miscellaneous	55,563
Transfers in	30,000

Total Revenues

2026
\$ 4,594,841



SEE PAGE 2 FOR OTHER CHART



Mayor Brad Spencer

MAYORS MESSAGE

Fall Forward – If there was a way to describe the Fall quarter in our beautiful City it might be “A season of successful collaborations” Maple Plain, Independence and the West Suburban Fire District have worked together to consolidate the Maple Plain Fire Department into the West Suburban Fire District (formerly

known as Loretto and Hamel FD’s) to better serve both our communities and the Volunteer Firefighters we rely upon. This process should culminate in a combined entity as of January 1, 2026.

Delano, Maple Plain and Independence, seeing little progress on the next stage of safety improvements to the Highway 12 corridor have joined forces to contract for professional lobbying/grant application assistance to further the cause. The alliance has already yielded an added stop on the Senate Capital Investment Committee bonding tour – Hopefully we can gain some funding visibility in 2026.

After more than a year of discussions, the Met Council has agreed to assume responsibility for replacement / upsizing of a section of the Joint Powers sewer line that serves the cities of Independence, Medina, Loretto, and Greenfield. This collaboration should save the 4 communities including ours roughly \$600,000. Kudos to our Administrator Mark Kaltsas!

The high-water problems continue to plague the lake Independence residents and users. This summer, with the coordination primarily by Chris Dahlberg and the Lake Independence Citizens Association, the outlet channel was cleared of the vegetative blockages with a cost share spread between LICA, Three Rivers Park District, Pioneer Sarah Creek

Watershed, Medina, and Independence. Hopefully this will alleviate the high-water levels experienced during the past 2 summers.

A quiet crossing is being sought for the CP Rail crossing at Townline Road just west of Loretto. There is some County funding for these projects but due to the complexity and concern for safety, these proposals can take many years. The project was proposed at the request of Loretto and is compliment to the quiet crossing at CR19. It includes both the Cities of Independence and Medina due to the crossing location. If successful an installation project could commence in early 2028.

Mark your calendars for these seasonal events including: WHPS Reserves View Santa on Saturday December 6th in Maple Plain and Independence , CP Rail Holiday Train in Loretto on December 15th from 4:30 – 5:00pm, bring something to contribute to the Food shelf at both of those events. Old Fashioned Christmas in Delano on Saturday December 6 from 10am-4pm. Toys for Tots drop off site will again be at Independence City Hall.

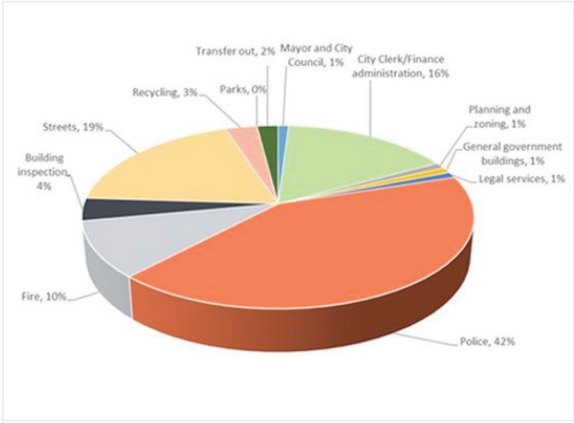
As the holiday season approaches, we’re reminded of the joy and comfort that come from sharing time with family & friends, celebrating traditions, and giving thanks. It’s a season rooted in gratitude, reflection, and connection, a time when folks come together in a spirit of generosity. Amid the festive lights, bustling stores, and joyful gatherings, it’s also an opportunity to extend kindness beyond our circles and think of those who may be facing difficult times.

With Gratitude - Brad Spencer – Your Mayor



2026 Projected General Fund Expenditures

Expenditures	2026
Mayor and City Council	\$ 23,800
City clerk/ Finance administration	733,622
Election	9,100
Planning and zoning	55,800
Water resource	5,000
General government buildings	62,453
Legal services	43,500
Police	1,934,049
Fire	451,000
Building inspection	181,732
Streets	861,250
Street lighting	3,500
Recycling	122,435
Parks	17,600
Capital outlay - general government	15,000
Capital outlay - public safety	-
Capital outlay - public works	-
Transfer out	75,000
Total Expenditures	4,594,841



PIONEER CREEK CHANNEL CLEANOUT BRINGS NEW TECHNOLOGY TO LAKE INDEPENDENCE

If you were traveling along Pagenkopf Road or Independence Road in mid-October and thought you saw a tank floating on Pioneer Creek — you weren't imagining things!

The Lake Independence Citizens Association (LICA), in partnership with the Cities of Independence and Medina, the Three Rivers Park District, and the Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission, recently completed a project to clear out cattail vegetation that had built up in the lake's outlet channel over the past several years. This vegetation — both floating and rooted — was impeding water flow. Because the channel serves as the lake's only outlet, the blockage contributed to the sustained high water levels experienced in recent years.

Over the past 15 years, two previous cleanout projects were completed in the dead of winter, when thick ice allowed heavy equipment to access the area. Excavators drove out over the frozen channel and dug through the ice to remove the dense cattail roots and sediment that had accumulated during warmer months. With no direct lake access and no suitable launch site, working on the ice was once the only feasible option.

Recent advances in equipment technology, however, have opened new possibilities. In the fall of 2024, LICA partnered with Aquatic Weed Harvesting of Henning, Minnesota, to plan a channel cleanout using an innovative amphibious machine called the Truxor. The Truxor can operate on land, water, or wet terrain in between — eliminating the need for a traditional launch site. It's equipped with two key attachments: a mower that cuts cattails at the channel floor, and a bucket that removes floating debris clogging the surface.



To make the project possible, LICA obtained the necessary permits from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and worked with nearby homeowners for access to the channel. Special thanks go to the Knox and Geyen families for granting access from their properties along Pagenkopf Road. A special shout-out also goes to Joe Baker, Independence's commissioner on the Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission, for cutting through buckthorn to help open the access path!

Once the Truxor was in the water, Aquatic Weed Harvesting used it to traverse the 3,500-foot channel, clearing cattails from the bottom and reopening a path from Pagenkopf Road all the way to Independence Road. After mowing the vegetation, the crew switched attachments to remove floating root mats and debris, restoring the channel to its designated 15-foot width, as required by the DNR.

The removed cattails and root material were floated or carried by machine to the access point, where they were brought to shore and loaded by skid loader into dump trailers. The debris was then hauled to the City of Medina's compost facility, where it will decompose into nutrient-rich organic material.

As part of its ongoing water quality improvement efforts, LICA has also developed an annual maintenance plan to minimize cattail regrowth and remove floating bogs as needed to keep the channel clear.

Additional photos and details about the outlet channel cleanout project are available at www.lakeindependence.org.



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PROJECT

Students: Addi Conely & Kailey Jessen

Grade Level: Juniors

School: Delano High School

Project Title: Buckle Up for Safety – Supporting the Toward Zero Deaths Campaign

Project Overview:

Addi Conely and Kailey Jessen partnered with the West Metro Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) initiative to promote safe driving habits among youth and community members. Their project focused on increasing visibility and awareness of seatbelt use through strategic placement of BUCKLE UP signs in high-traffic areas around Delano and neighboring communities.

Community Collaboration:

The students worked closely with local leaders and safety advocates, including:

- Paige Lowery, West Metro TZD Regional Coordinator
- Matt DuRose, Chief of Public Safety, West Hennepin
- Brad Spencer, Mayor of Independence
- Barry Voight, Principal of Delano High School
- Phil Kern, Delano City Planner

Addi and Kailey extend special thanks to: Sgt. Raskin and Sgt. Ebeling of West Hennepin Public Safety for working with them throughout the project.

These community leaders helped identify optimal locations for BUCKLE UP signage that would maximize public exposure and reinforce the importance of seatbelt safety.

Impact:

This project not only supported the mission of TZD to reduce traffic-related fatalities but also empowered Addi and Kailey to engage in civic leadership, public safety advocacy, teamwork and project management. Their efforts contributed to a safer community and demonstrated the values of service and responsibility central to NHS membership.



Chief Matt DuRose introduced himself to members of the Delano Sportsmen's Club during their monthly meeting on September 30th.



Mayor Brad Spencer, Officer Ben Raskin, James Leeder-Botnan, Mayor Julie Maas-Kusske, and Chief Rick Denneson before the start of the McGarry's Open golf tournament benefiting WHPS and MPFD on September 15th.



You are never too young to learn about fire safety at the Maple Plain Fire Department! Deputy Chief McGinty (left) and Fire Fighter Lucas McKown (right) are showing off some of our first aid medical equipment that we carry with us to help serve the community. Thank you to everyone young and old that came out to our fire station open house on October 6th!



As Minnesotans know all too well, winter isn't just a season—it's a test of patience, preparation, and perseverance. With snow-covered roads, icy intersections, and limited visibility, driving during a Minnesota winter can be treacherous. But with the right knowledge and a little planning, we can navigate the coldest months with confidence and safety.

1. **Slow down** and increase your following distance to allow more reaction time.
2. **Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle** that includes essentials such as: warm blankets, a flashlight and batteries, ice scraper, jumper cables, and a first aid kit.
3. **Check the forecast** and road conditions at 511mn.org.
4. **Prepare your vehicle** by making sure your tires are winter ready and properly inflated. Keep plenty of gas in the tank and check your battery, brakes, lights, and windshield wipers.
5. **Always make sure** all windows are completely free and clear of frost and snow before hitting the road.

We can all hope that the snow and cold will stay away this winter season, but it's best to be prepared. Stay safe and warm this winter season!

West Hennepin Public Safety is excited to welcome the newest member of our team, Officer Mason Splichal, as a patrol officer. Officer Splichal is a recent graduate of Hennepin Technical College. He recently finished his contract with the Minnesota Army National Guard as a Combat Medic.



Chief DuRose said "Mason is a great addition to the team. I look forward to watching him learn and grow in training over the next few months. He brings valuable experience and commitment with him that will suit him well for a long career at WHPS."

Officer Splichal said "Outside of work I enjoy trapshooting, fishing, hunting, and spending time with my little siblings. I chose to apply at WHPS because I wanted to find a place that felt like home, and after looking at the department's social media and website it seemed like a good fit for me. I look forward to serving the community and helping whenever possible."

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

As the holiday season approaches, our community lights up with festive decorations, busy stores, and shoppers searching for the perfect gifts. Unfortunately, it's also a time when thefts and crimes of opportunity tend to increase. At West Hennepin Public Safety, we want to help you stay safe and enjoy a peaceful season by sharing a few important safety tips.



Be Aware While Shopping

- Park in well-lit areas, close to entrances when possible.
- Lock your car doors and close windows even if you're only stepping away for a moment.
- Don't leave valuables in plain sight. That includes shopping bags, electronics, and purses. Lock them in the trunk before you arrive at your destination.

Online Shopping? Stay Cyber-Smart

- Shop only from secure, trusted websites (look for "https" in the URL).
- Monitor your bank accounts for unauthorized charges.
- Don't click on suspicious links in emails or texts that look like shipping updates or holiday deals.

Package Theft Prevention

- Use delivery tracking and signature requirements when possible.
- Have packages sent to a work address, locker, or ask a trusted neighbor to collect them.
- Install security cameras or a video doorbell if feasible.

If You See Something, Say Something

- Trust your instincts. If you see suspicious behavior—someone checking car handles, following shoppers too closely, or lurking near doorways—call 911.

From all of us at West Hennepin Public Safety, we wish you a joyful and safe holiday season. With a little extra awareness and preparation, you can help protect yourself and your loved ones from becoming victims of theft.

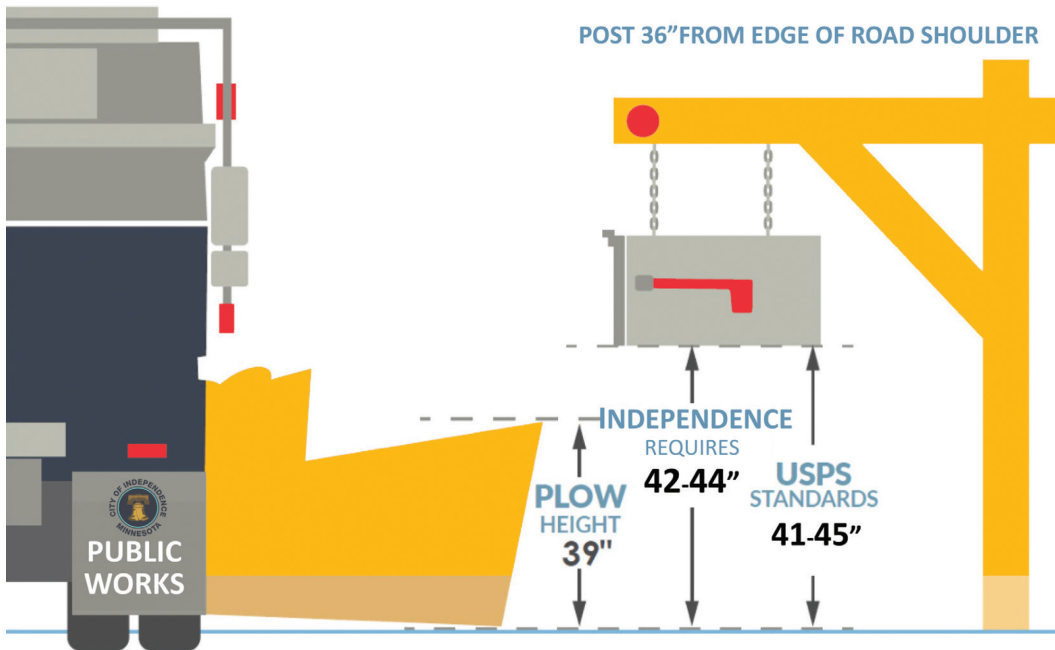
Stay safe, stay alert, and happy holidays!



WHERE TO PLACE YOUR GARBAGE CANS DURING WINTER

Heavy snow accumulation, icy roads and/or poor visibility during snow removal can make it difficult for snowplows to avoid garbage cans placed alongside the road. PLEASE do not place garbage cans in the roadway. We realize this cleared area is an inviting location to place garbage cans, but it creates a hazard as they can be hit by vehicles or by snowplows.

Most garbage trucks are equipped with a hydraulic arm that grasps garbage cans. It is recommended that garbage cans be placed at least 3 to 5 feet off the edge of pavement (but not on top of snow piles), into your driveway, so they are out of the way of the snowplow while the snowplow is clearing the road. Please keep in mind, the Highway Department is NOT responsible for damaged garbage cans.



YOUR MAILBOX PLACEMENT IS IMPORTANT!

ENSURE YOUR MAILBOX POSTS ARE STURDY AND SET SOLIDLY IN THE GROUND. THE CITY IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MAILBOXES DAMAGED BY SNOW BEING PUSHED OFF ROADS WHEN THEY ARE NOT PLACED WITHIN THE CITY'S MAILBOX REGULATIONS.

Thank you for your cooperation!



NO PARKING - FOLLOWING A 3-INCH SNOW FALL

On street parking is prohibited until a street has been plowed curb to curb.

IT IS UNLAWFUL

To Plow Snow Onto **OR** Across City Roads

Violations of *MN Statute 160.2715* are MISDEMEANORS.

Accidents/Road Surface Damage Caused by this Act May Result in Liability and/or Reclamation Charges to the PROPERTY OWNER.

Questions?

Call City of Independence Public Works:
763-479-0530.



SEASONAL PARKING

November 1 - April 14

Between the hours of 2 a.m. and 8 a.m. on street parking, of any vehicle, is prohibited.



HAVEN HOMES SKILLED NURSING

Adopt a Senior

For Christmas at Haven Homes

Please email Aidan McGraw, Director of Therapeutic Recreation,
at aidan.mcgraw@cassialife.org or message us on our Haven Homes Facebook page to adopt one of our seniors!

Wrapped gifts are due back to the facility by Friday, December 12th!

Save the Date



The West Hennepin Public Safety Reserves are Sponsoring the 42nd annual "View Santa" program.

Saturday, December 6, 2025

3:30 to 4:15 p.m. ❄ Independence City Hall Atrium

4:45 to 5:30 p.m. ❄ Maple Plain Veterans Memorial Park

Meet Santa and take photos or see Santa on his route through town.

The reserves will also collect nonperishable food donations for local food shelves.



STOP DETAILS

Date: Monday, December 15, 2025

Time: 4:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Location: County Road 19 railway crossing

- The event is free to attend.
- Performers will be playing live music from the train.
- The event is a fundraiser for the local food bank, and attendees are encouraged to bring donations.

Sponsored by City of Independence, MN

Drop Site:
Independence City Hall
Nov. 24 – Dec. 12

Mon-Thurs 8:00 – 4:30

Friday 8:00 - Noon

*Unwrapped, New Toys for Children
of All Ages are Accepted!*





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1920 County Road 90
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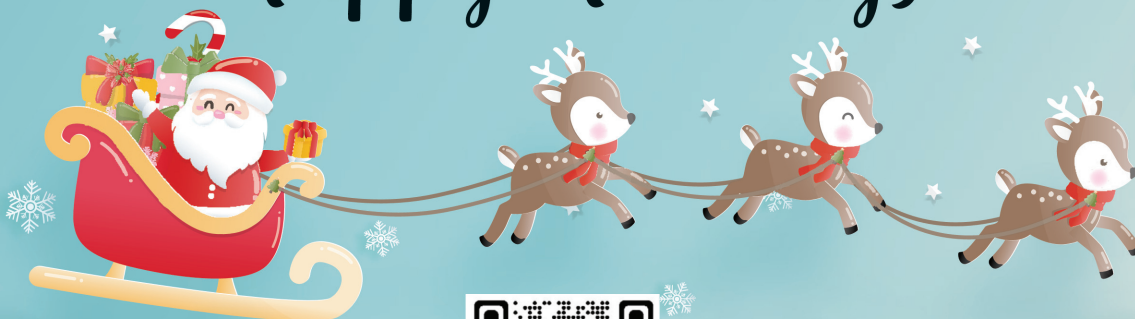
csolien@ci.independence.mn.us

asimon@ci.independence.mn.us

City Staff

Administrator, City Planner	Mark Kaltsas
Admin. Services Dir.	Amber Simon
Public Works Supervisor	Ben Lehman
Building Official	Bruce Satek
Permit and Utility Analyst	Carrie Solien
Receptionist	Katie Powell

Happy Holidays!



The West Hennepin public safety reserves are
Sponsoring the 45th annual **"VIEW SANTA"** program.

It will be held on **Saturday, December 6, 2025.**

The reserves will also collect nonperishable food
donations for local food shelves.

Visit with Santa, take photos, and enjoy refreshments at the
Independence City Hall Atrium from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m. or at
Veterans Memorial Park from 4:45 to 5:30 p.m.,
Or see Santa on his route through town.