

WACONIA WAVELENGTH

A City of Waconia Newsletter Publication



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2026 Community Survey Highlights

What do Waconia residents love most about their community? The results of the City's recent community survey give us plenty to celebrate, while also providing valuable insight into areas where we can continue to improve.

A High Quality of Life

Though the survey, it is clear people enjoy living in Waconia. Ninety-two percent of respondents rated Waconia positively as a place to live, while 89% gave positive marks to the overall quality of life. Ninety-three percent rated Waconia as an excellent or good place to raise children, a score higher than the national benchmark. Additionally, 90% said they would recommend living in Waconia to others.

2026 COMMUNITY SURVEY

BRIGHT SPOTS



98%

FEEL SAFE IN
NEIGHBORHOOD & IN
DOWNTOWN &
COMMERCIAL AREAS



93%

SAY WACONIA IS AN
EXCELLENT OR GOOD
PLACE TO RAISE A
FAMILY

90%

RECOMMEND LIVING
IN WACONIA TO
SOMEONE WHO ASKS



90%

SAY WACONIA HAS
EXCELLENT OR GOOD
QUALITY OF HEALTH
SERVICES

89%

RATE OVERALL
QUALITY OF LIFE
POSITIVELY



A Strong Sense of Safety

Residents gave high marks to safety throughout the community. Ninety-eight percent feel safe walking in their neighborhoods during the day and in Waconia's downtown and commercial areas. Ninety-six percent feel safe from violent crime, while 94% feel safe from property crime. Eighty-seven percent gave positive marks to the City's efforts to prevent crime.

Mobility in Waconia

Residents also shared positive feedback about transportation and mobility. Eighty-eight percent said it is easy to travel around Waconia by car, while 77% gave positive marks to the ease of walking throughout the community, both ahead of national benchmarks. While travel by car and foot received high ratings, less than two in ten residents rated ease of travel by public transportation positively, significantly below the national benchmark.

Street cleaning and snow removal received positive ratings of 81% and 80% respectively.

Looking Ahead

While there is much to love about Waconia, the survey also identifies areas where there is room for improvement. Residents expressed concerns about employment opportunities, the cost of living, and local street repairs. Only 37% rated employment opportunities positively, while 31% gave positive marks to the cost of living. Fewer than half of respondents were satisfied with the current condition and repair of local streets.

Could You Qualify for Property Tax Relief?

Property taxes are an important source of funding for local services, but we know they are also a significant expense for many Minnesota homeowners. Did you know that the State of Minnesota offers several programs that may help eligible homeowners reduce or defer their property tax costs?

Homestead Credit Refund: Homeowners may qualify for a refund when their property taxes are high relative to their household income. Eligibility is based on income and property taxes paid, and the refund is typically claimed when filing your state income taxes each year.

Targeting Property Tax Refund: There is also a special "targeting" refund for homeowners whose property taxes increase by more than 12% and at least \$100 compared with the previous year. Additional details about this program are available on the Minnesota Department of Revenue's Property Tax Refund webpage, linked below.

Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral: Qualifying homeowners age 65 and older may be able to defer a portion of their property taxes. Income and other eligibility requirements apply.

These programs are administered by the Minnesota Department of Revenue, not the City of Waconia. If you think you may qualify for one of these programs, we encourage you to learn more about the eligibility requirements and application process.

Visit the Minnesota Department of Revenue's Property Tax Relief webpage for more information about these programs and other property tax relief options available to Minnesota residents: www.revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-relief.

The City will use this feedback, along with other community data and our 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, to help guide future priorities and investments. Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey and took the time to share what you love about Waconia and where you think we can continue to improve. To explore the full survey results, visit waconiamn.gov/survey.

65th Annual Nickle Dickle Day!

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, September 19**, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm for the 65th annual Nickle Dickle Day!

Downtown Waconia will come alive with shopping, sidewalk sales, a classic car show, races, 3-on-3 basketball, the popular Medallion Hunt, an arts and crafts fair, live music, book sales, and delicious food vendors in the park and throughout downtown.

Be sure to stop by the City of Waconia's booth at City Square Park to learn more about what's happening in our community and connect with City staff and officials.

Visit destinationwaconia.org for event details.

September Yard Waste

Residents can bring grass clippings, garden waste, shrubs, and branches no larger than 3" in diameter and 4' in length to Public Services at 310 E. 10th Street.

The September schedule is:

Friday, September 11 & Thursday, September 24

10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Saturday, September 19

8:00 am to 12:00 pm

The cost is \$1 per bag or \$10 per truck or trailer load. Proof of Waconia residency is required. A copy of the full schedule is available at waconiamn.gov.

Compost collection runs April through November. Dates may be cancelled due to weather. Cancellations will be posted to the City's website and social media.

Save the Date: Fire Department Open House

The annual Waconia Fire Department Open House is scheduled for **Sunday, October 4**, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Community members are invited to stop by the fire station at 10451 10th Street West for a light lunch, family-friendly activities, fire truck rides, and an opportunity to explore the station and learn more about the Waconia Fire Department.

Bring the whole family and meet the firefighters who help keep our community safe. We hope to see you there!

Sudheimer Park Project Receives State Support

The City of Waconia is excited to share an important step forward for the future of Sudheimer Park. On July 30, the Sudheimer Park project was selected by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for inclusion in its recommendations for funding through Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

If approved by the Minnesota Legislature and signed into law by the Governor in 2027, the funding would support the development of trails, picnic areas, interactive educational features, and opportunities for nature-based play and exploration throughout the park.

The project is designed to preserve and showcase Sudheimer Park's unique natural features, including old-growth forests, wetlands, and prairie, while creating opportunities for residents to connect with and learn about the natural environment right in the heart of Waconia.

"The support of LCCMR for this park development will preserve and protect unique natural features in the community such as old-growth forests, wetlands, and prairie, and allow citizens to directly interact with and learn about the natural environment," said Park Board Chair Lucas Reiners. "This will be a truly one-of-a-kind natural recreation amenity within our community."

The Sudheimer Park proposal was one of 116 projects recommended for funding from more than 430 proposals submitted to LCCMR. The recommended projects represent approximately \$130 million in proposed funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

LCCMR will finalize its recommendations this fall before they are presented to the 2027 Minnesota Legislature. If approved, the Sudheimer Park project could begin as early as July 2027.

Stay tuned for updates as the project moves through the legislative process and learn more about the future of Sudheimer Park at waconiamn.gov.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) is a permanent dedicated fund in the Minnesota state treasury that was established by 77% voter approval of a constitutional amendment in 1988. The amendment directs forty percent of the net proceeds of the Minnesota State Lottery into the ENRTF through the year 2050. Since 1991, approximately \$1.3 billion from the ENRTF has been provided through the LCCMR to over 1,800 projects that protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources in every county of the state.

September Office Closures

City offices will be closed on **Monday, September 7** in observance of the Labor Day Holiday. The City Council Meeting will be moved to 6:00 pm on **Tuesday, September 8**.

In addition, City offices will be closed on **Thursday, September 24** from 8:30 am - 12:00 pm for an all-staff training. We will reopen for regular operations at noon. Thank you for your understanding!

Utility Billing - Sign Up for AutoPay!

Streamline your monthly routine and never worry about a late payment again by enrolling in AutoPay through your online account portal—completely free of charge! This service is available exclusively for property owners.

Why sign up for AutoPay?

- **100% Free:** No hidden fees, service charges, or added costs to set up or use automatic payments.
- **Save on Postage:** Eliminate the recurring cost of stamps, checks, and envelopes every month.
- **Enhanced Security:** Avoid lost or stolen mail by processing payments through a safe, encrypted electronic system.
- **Set It and Forget It:** Your payments are automatically processed on time, every time, giving you total peace of mind.

Want to save paper, too? Electronic notifications are also available! Go paperless to receive your account notices and bills directly in your email inbox.

Setting up recurring payments and paperless billing takes just a few minutes. To enroll, log in to your account portal today at myaccount.waconiamn.gov and update your preferences.