



CITY OF DES MOINES

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Fall 2020 Edition



— YOUR —
**LOCAL
OPTION**
SALES & SERVICE TAX
↑\$↑\$↑
AT WORK



Inside:

**Local Option Rings Up \$38 Million
City Helps Residents During Pandemic
Parks and Rec. Honored Nationally**





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David Derong Public Information Office
Tim Paluch Public Library
Shay Willis Public Works

Council Meeting Dates

Mondays • 4:30 p.m.

Sep 14 | Oct 19 | Nov 23
Oct 5 | Nov 9

Boards and Commissions

Each year, the Des Moines Mayor and City Council members make appointments to 20 local boards and commissions, who in turn offer a wide variety of services to the City Council and residents of Des Moines. For more information, or if you're interested in becoming part of the public process or applying for an open position, please visit DSM.city or contact the **City Clerk's Office** at (515) 283-4209.

Racial Profiling Ordinance Moves Forward



It took two years and a lot of work but today the City of Des Moines has a comprehensive racial profiling ordinance on the books.

The City Council unanimously approved the ordinance earlier this summer, putting it into effect immediately.

"This historic ordinance is a bold and positive step forward for Des Moines and will serve as a model for other communities around the country," said Mayor Frank Cownie. "This measure should be viewed as an important beginning for our community to work together, make a positive difference and improve our understanding of each other."

The City and the Des Moines Civil and Human Rights (CHR) Commission began work on the racial profiling ordinance in 2018. City leaders and the Commission worked closely with a community alliance that includes the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, to further strengthen the ordinance.

"It has certainly been a journey, and we appreciate the opportunity to be part of this," said Betty Andrews, president of the Iowa-Nebraska NAACP. "We are very pleased...we reached a major milestone."

The elements of the new racial profiling ordinance include:

- Prohibiting biased policing and racial profiling
- Mandating annual de-escalation, cultural diversity, cultural competency, and implicit bias training for sworn police personnel
- Directing the Des Moines CHR Commission to educate the public and assist those who witness or believe they have experienced discrimination with filing complaints
- Prohibiting discriminatory pre-textual stops – which are prohibited already by state and federal law
- Requiring employees who witness biased policing or racial profiling to report the incident and, where use of unreasonable force occurs, to intervene
- Mandating the public availability and accessibility of police personnel policies and standard operating procedures in person and on the City's website

Historical Promotion Happens within DMPD



Capt. Lillie Miller

A moment in history was etched in the books in late July when the City of Des Moines Police Department (DMPD) promoted Lieutenant Lillie Miller to captain. Her promotion is historic as she is the department's first Black female captain. Miller has served the residents of Des Moines since 1999. During her career, she has earned a reputation as a community-oriented and caring leader.

On the same day of Miller's promotion, DMPD Chief Dana Wingert also had the opportunity to promote Lieutenant Jeff Edwards to captain. A recipient of the DMPD Medal of Valor, Edwards has served in leadership roles through-



Capt. Jeff Edwards

out the organization since 1991. His experience and skills will be beneficial to not only the department, but to the community, for years to come.

Senior Police Officer Scott Newman, a well-respected member of the DMPD tactical unit, has served for 21 years, often excelling through his extraordinary actions. In the early morning hours of July 5, SPO Newman was driving home from a duty assignment.

He came across a fiery car crash and was able to rescue one of the vehicles five occupants. For his brave and heroic actions at that scene, Chief Wingert awarded him the DMPD Lifesaving Award.

City Aids Residents During Pandemic

On April 2, 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), allocated more than \$3 million to the City of Des Moines. The funds are earmarked to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The City was able to use the money to assist with small businesses, housing and homelessness assistance as well as emergency food distribution.

Small Business Recovery Program

City staff worked with the Greater Des Moines Partnership and Polk County to provide grants up to \$10,000 to Des Moines businesses. The priority was to assist small, service-based businesses including retail, personal services, and restaurants. More than 200 businesses received more than \$1 million total in assistance of which \$200,000 came from HUD funding.

Emergency Food Distribution

The City also partnered with Central Iowa Shelter and Services (CISS), the Food Bank of Iowa, and Urban Dreams to provide free meals to Des Moines families and residents in need. Emergency food distribution stations were set up at several locations across the community. The food program served between 100 and 500 residents of any age per day, six days a week, for 13 weeks.

Rent and Mortgage Assistance

In addition, IMPACT Community Action Partnership administered the City's HUD funds to pay housing payments on behalf of low-income households and families who fell behind

on rent and mortgage payments as a result of COVID-19. Residents were able to apply for up to three months of housing payments, which were then paid directly to their landlord or lender. Approximately 200 households were assisted by this program.

Homelessness Assistance

Approximately \$1 million of the COVID-19 funds were used for homelessness programs. These programs include emergency rent or utility payments on behalf of residents at risk of homelessness, rent payments for formerly homeless persons, emergency shelter, and hotel or motel payments for residents needing to quarantine.



Council Member Linda Westergaard distributing meals to residents



Permit Development Center Goes Digital

Do you need a residential permit for a new fence, installing a pool or remodeling your home? Looking for a trade permit or commercial building permit for commercial work? The Permit and Development Center has recently made it easier to acquire a permit without visiting our buildings.

You can now look up your permit number and make payments for your permit without leaving your house. Permit fees can now be paid online using a Visa or MasterCard credit card. Visit [DSM.city/pdc](https://dsm.city/pdc) to learn more.

Local Option: Year in Review

In the first year, the City of Des Moines has taken great strides to deliver on the priorities residents mandated prior to approving the Local Option Sales & Service tax in March 2019. Local Option went into effect on July 1, 2019 and has since supported the City Council's effort to stabilize property tax rates while simultaneously accelerating the City's efforts to tackle street improvements, flood prevention, neighborhood property and service improvements, as well as supporting our firefighters and mobile mental health crisis services. City Council approved a spending policy on December 17, 2018 to ensure funds generated by Local Option continue to focus on priorities identified by feedback from residents.

Early projections estimated that Local Option would generate \$37 million for these priorities (approximately one-third generated by visitors). In FY2020, Local Option generated \$38.1 million. City Council reduced the City's property tax rate to the lowest in seven years, launched the largest street repair effort in Des Moines' history, increased Des Moines Public Library hours, demolished a record amount of blighted properties, launched Invest DSM and hired additional firefighters, all thanks to your investment in your city.

"With the approval of Local Option, Des Moines voters demonstrated overwhelming support for our City and its neighborhoods. They also delivered a clear mandate to all of us who serve this City and its residents, and we look forward to delivering on our promise to use these funds responsibly and in a transparent manner."

— Scott Sanders, City Manager



Resident-mandated Local Option priorities



PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

By state law, 50 percent of the new sales tax revenue must go toward property tax relief. After receiving approval from voters, Des Moines City Council reduced the City's property tax levy rate to the lowest it had been in seven years.



STREET IMPROVEMENTS & FLOOD PREVENTION

Visitors and commuters now help fund necessary improvements to Des Moines' important infrastructure, including accelerated street repavement and replacement, and storm sewer upgrades.



NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS

The City is committed to using Local Option revenue to invest in neighborhoods throughout Des Moines, including accelerated removal of blighted houses and expanded library hours.



PUBLIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS & EXPENDITURES

To better serve our quickly growing city, Local Option revenue is used to fund public safety enhancements, including continued funding for 13 firefighter positions and a community grant for mobile mental health crisis services for youth.



View the full report online

The City of Des Moines has completed a 21-page expenditure report for FY2020. The report dives into more detail about each Local Option priority, the programs supported by the sales tax and plans for the future.

DSM.city/localoption

FY2020 Highlights



Property Tax Relief

\$0.60 levy rate reduction down to \$16.64, the lowest in seven years



2019 Residential Paving Program

\$1,589,995 in construction costs funded by Local Option



Blitz on Blight

\$1,422,870 in total estimated demolition costs, \$700,000 supported by Local Option funding



SAFER Firefighter Positions Retained

\$1,300,000 in costs funded by Local Option

Thank you for your investment in your community!

FORE! Our Parks Golf Outing and Bike Ride Scheduled for September



The Friends of Des Moines Parks is hosting their seventh annual FORE! Our Parks golf outing and bike ride at Waveland Golf Course on Friday, September 18. This event is an opportunity to learn about Des Moines' 75 parks while supporting the economic, environmental, health and recreational benefits they provide central Iowans.

Residents are encouraged to sign up for the 18-hole, best-ball tournament starting at noon or the 18-mile ride beginning at 1 p.m. Cost is \$150 for individuals, \$500 for foursomes, \$75 per cyclist or \$125 for two cyclists. Proceeds benefit park and trail improvements. Participants can learn more or register at bit.ly/foreourparks2020.

The event may look a little different this year – that's because keeping our guests safe is our top priority. The Return to Play protocols in place for this year's event will make sure that participants can support the parks and trails safely.

Des Moines Parks and Recreation Receives Multiple National Honors

The Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department has been recognized with two prestigious honors from The Trust for Public Land and the National Recreation and Park Association.

In May, The Trust for Public Land announced that Des Moines Parks and Recreation moved up from 39th place to 34th place in the 2020 ParkScore® ranking, surpassing cities such as Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Atlanta and Omaha.

The ParkScore® program evaluates how parks and recreation services rank against the 100 largest cities in the U.S. and compares public access to parks and trails, services and investment. Of the 100 cities ranked in the program, Des Moines was the smallest.

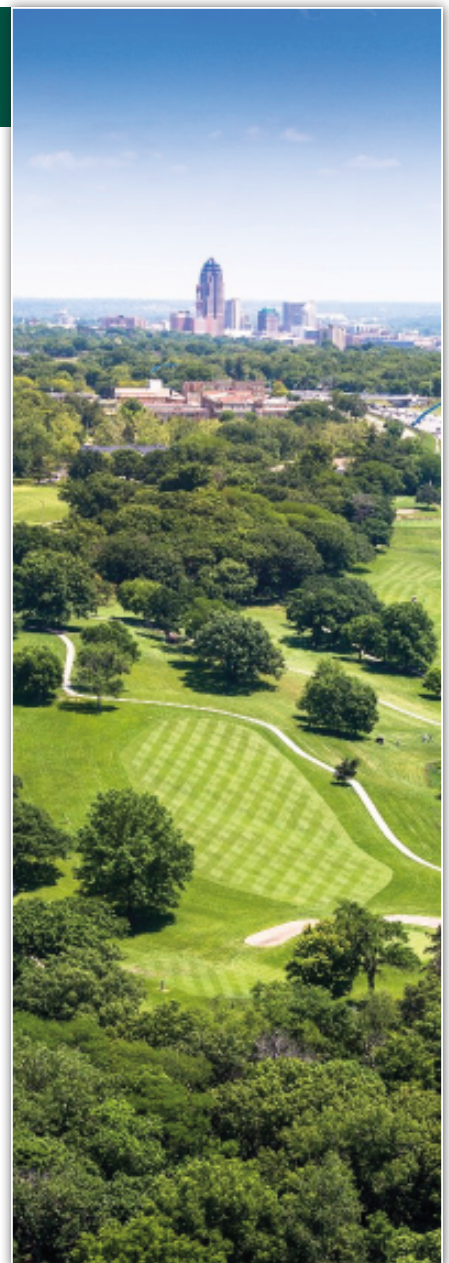
Certain projects also contributed to raising the department's score for this year, such as a partnership with Des Moines Public Schools to add a new park at Weeks Middle School and new trail additions in Brook Run and Cohen Parks. As a result, these investments have increased the percentage of residents within a 10-minute walk of a park or trail from 69 to 70%, while the national average is 55%.

"None of the work we do or the programs we provide happen alone," said Ben Page, Parks and Recreation director. "It is through the spirit of cooperation and teamwork with the residents of Des Moines who believe in our mission which empowers our staff, board and City Council to perform at the highest level."

The department is also a Class II finalist for the 2020 National Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. This is the second time the department has been a finalist for the Gold Medal Awards, the first time being in 2015.

The Gold Medal Awards program honors communities in the U.S. that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation planning, management, volunteerism, program and professional development and environmental stewardship. The Class II category includes cities with a population of 150,001 to 400,000.

Departments are judged based on their ability to address the collective needs of the community, staff members and elected officials. The six Grand Plaque recipients will be announced during the 2020 National Recreation and Park Association Conference in October. For more information on the Gold Medal Awards visit nrpa.org/goldmedal or aapra.org.



Open Burning Prohibited in Des Moines

What could a firefighter's self-contained breathing apparatus and a Compost It! sticker have in common? While most people think of a firefighter's gear as primarily protecting against heat, perhaps the most important part of our gear is the breathing apparatus we wear. It is becoming well-known that most fire victims succumb not to burn injuries, but from inhaling what a textbook might call the "byproducts of incomplete combustion"—smoke. The Fourth of July weekend saw an advisory from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources warning of poor air quality in several Iowa cities, including Des Moines, stemming from fireworks usage and a stagnant air pattern. Readings in the metro were elevated; in Des Moines levels reached three times the EPA's limit for those with health problems, and twice what the agency deems "unhealthy" for the general population. That makes fall an important time to remember that, like fireworks, open burning is prohibited in Des Moines.

While burning yard waste is permissible under Iowa code, many communities ban such practice, including several in the metro area. Not only does such burning increase fire danger to surrounding structures and vegetation, but "burn barrels" and uncontained piles of debris are notoriously inefficient means of combustion, producing enormous amounts of carbon monoxide and particulate matter that are at best irritating to the healthy and, at worst, dangerous to those with pre-existing respiratory problems.

On average, the Des Moines Fire Department responds to over 250 instances of materials being illegally burned each year, from bonfires to inappropriately used/located fire pits to yard waste being burned in the fall. While such infractions simply received



written warnings previously, the City's municipal code now allows fines to be levied at \$250 per first offense in a calendar year and \$500 for each subsequent offense.

Speaking of yard waste, one of the best ways to avoid a costly pile of leaves, is by using CompostIt! Bags. However, for those with a "do-it-yourself" mindset, purchasing a home composting setup allows you to repurpose yard/food waste for later use on your lawn, garden and flowers. Once underway, it's a low-maintenance project that the entire family can enjoy. Home composting also helps your soil retain more nutrients and water. The Metro Waste Authority has many resources available for those interested in composting and helping keep to our neighborhoods safe and clean.

mwatoday.com/residents/yard-waste/backyard-composting.aspx

Spring Cleanup to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB) Days

SEP
19

MWA Transfer Station, 4198 Delaware Avenue
MWA Compost Center, 1601 Harriett Street
[MEGA SCRUB] Bell Avenue Business Park, 1901 Bell Avenue

7 AM – 2 PM
7 AM – 2 PM
7 AM – 1 PM

OCT
17

MWA Transfer Station, 4198 Delaware Avenue
MWA Compost Center, 1601 Harriett Street

7 AM – 2 PM
7 AM – 2 PM

NOV
21

MWA Transfer Station, 4198 Delaware Avenue
MWA Compost Center, 1601 Harriett Street

7 AM – 2 PM
7 AM – 2 PM



For restrictions and guidelines, visit DSM.city/SCRUB.

Public Works Offers Gold Level Recycling Program

It only takes one recycling cart contaminated with incorrect contents for an entire truckload of recyclables to be redirected from the recycling facility to the landfill. In an attempt to improve our efforts, the City of Des Moines Public Works Department Solid Waste Division is performing a recycling audit. The audit educates residents on what can't be recycled but also shares information about a program the department offers for those who are super recyclers. The Gold Level Recycling Program is for residents who consistently recycle the proper items. For more information on how you can be a leader in your neighborhood and earn a yellow lid for your cart, visit DSM.city/recycling.





DMPL Responds to Pandemic with New Services

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic forced Des Moines Public Library to make the difficult decision to close all six of its buildings to the public back in mid-March, and as of late July, the buildings remained closed.

The closure doesn't mean the library has ceased serving its communities. The staff has worked to adapt, offering new and evolved services to ensure library patrons' needs are being met as best as possible. Here are a few of the highlights, and ways you can engage and interact with the library while buildings remain closed.

Enhanced Digital Services

From the moment the libraries closed, staff pivoted to digital resources and services. Budgets were shifted to increase the number of eBooks and eAudiobooks offered, new services like Medici.TV (a streaming video service for fans of classical music, opera, and performing arts), and more were added.

Curbside Pickup

The Library launched a brand new contactless Curbside Pickup program, giving people the opportunity to finally borrow physical books, DVDs and book club sets again. More than 13,000 cars were served during the first eight weeks. The library has since expanded Curbside Pickup to include evening and Saturday hours so more working families can get access to books.



Des Moines Public Librarian Mary Slattery records a live story time in July at the Central Library

Public Internet by Appointment

The Library knows access to computers and the internet is as important as ever – and that many patrons use the vital service to communicate with families, search for jobs, and other essential functions. The Central Library this summer began offering limited computer use by appointment, even though the rest of the buildings are closed. Patrons are required to wear masks when they are in the building. A limited number of computers are spaced far enough apart to allow for appropriate social distancing. Computers are sanitized after each usage.

Virtual Programs

Programming, a staple of the library's engagement with its community, has changed dramatically. Staff have developed new ways to deliver fun and interesting programs to all patrons - digitally. Youth librarians are recording story times, creating easy at-home crafts, and show-

ing how to do fun STEM experiments for the Book Your Summer! summer reading program and beyond. Partnerships with community organizations allow for programs to be hosted for teens on platforms like Discord, and for adults, Zoom is being used for virtual book clubs, author events, and more.

Book Chat

Book Chat, launched in July, provides a quick, easy way for patrons to ask, "What should I read?". To check it out, visit the Book Chat website (dmpl.org/book-chat) or call the Book Chat hotline ((515) 248-6286) and answer a few questions. Suggestions will be returned within 3-5 days, and staff can put those titles on hold for patrons.

We also now offer Book Bundles, a stack of books chosen for you by our librarians. Just fill out an online form and the bundle will be ready for pickup within one business day.

For more information on all of the new services being offered and to start exploring the many ways to use the library, visit dmpl.org.

