

December/January 2012



Happy holidays, and happy new year! The 2012 budget has been balanced and approved by the full board, featuring a reduced property tax levy for the second straight year. Read about that and other year-end updates below. As always, feel free to contact me at commissioner.stenglein@co.hennepin.mn.us or call my office at 612-348-7882 with any questions, comments or concerns. Have a safe and happy new year!



Board reduces property tax levy, approved 2012 budget

On December 13, the County Board reduced the tax levy by \$1.0 million from 2011 or by 0.15-percent and approved a [2012 county budget](#) of \$1.65 billion.

This is a balanced budget that cuts the property tax levy for the second year in a row, while protecting core services, innovating in health care delivery and investing in important public infrastructure.

The approved budget lowers the property tax levy, however, the overall operation budget is increasing by \$40 million more than 2011 due to the creation of a Medicaid demonstration project - [Hennepin Health](#), which will use a combination of state and federal funds. Hennepin Health is a new approach to delivering medical, behavioral health and human services to clients in the county's safety net, who tend to have poor health outcomes and be high users of county services. The goals are to improve health outcomes

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LINKS

Helpful links for Hennepin residents:

- [Board meeting minutes/videos](#)
- [Road construction](#)

while reducing costs and impacts on other systems such as law enforcement, corrections, the courts and community agencies.

In addition to the operating budget, the Board also passed a 2012 capital budget, which is \$61.4 million less than 2011, and a levy for the Hennepin County [Regional Rail Authority](#) and the [Housing and Redevelopment Authorities](#).

Hennepin has maintained a top triple-A credit rating for 35 years. There are 3,100 counties in the United States, and only 38 of them - including Hennepin - have a triple-A rating from all three rating agencies.

Learn more about Hennepin's budget [online](#), or read about it in the [Star Tribune](#).



Progress continues on Lowry Bridge as arches begin to rise

Installation of the [Lowry Avenue Bridge](#) arches began this month. The arches are the exclamation points on the bridge, and when this process is complete, we'll have the signature connection between North and Northeast Minneapolis that has been envisioned from the start and will be a staple of this region for 100-plus years.

The south arch will be lifted first, alternating pieces between the east and west banks of the river, followed by lifting the north arch. A crane will lift each of the 22 pieces – nine pieces per arch and four connecting pieces – into place. The arches will eventually form a [basket handle design](#), but the process is detailed and tedious work, and it will be some time before the recognizable arch is visible. Weather permitting, work will continue throughout the winter, with the following milestones:

- Late December – The first four segments, base pieces weighing approximately 130,000 pounds each, will be installed.
- Early January 2012 – The segments reaching out over the Mississippi River, which weigh approximately 70 – 80,000 pounds each, will be installed.

- [locator](#)
- [Property Information Search](#)
- [Service Center information](#)
- [Join the Friends of Hennepin County Libraries](#)
- [Hennepin Road/Bike Maps](#)



Recycle your holiday lights

As you decorate for the holiday season, you may come across tangled strings of holiday lights that no longer work. You can [recycle those lights and electric cords](#) at Hennepin County [drop-off facilities and collection sites](#) throughout the Twin Cities participating in the Recycling Association of Minnesota's Recycle Your Holidays program.

[Click for more tips on disposing holiday decorations once the holidays are over.](#)



County fleet acquires first all-electric vehicle



Hennepin County has acquired a Ford Transit Connect 100 percent electric vehicle through [Drive Electric Minnesota](#), a public/private partnership with Xcel Energy and other government agencies. The county's Transit Connect, a mini cargo van, will be used to deliver interoffice mail

- Mid-January 2012 – The last piece of the arch will be lifted into place. More information about the installation of this piece will be communicated closer to the date.
The next steps will involve installing the cables and lights, starting in February 2012.

There is currently an average of 100 workers on the bridge at any given time.

For more information, including construction updates and photos, [visit the project website](#).

Residential recycling policy changes



The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) 2010-2030 Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan has established a goal that by 2015, at least 45 percent of municipal waste generated in Hennepin County will be recycled. The county currently has a recycling rate of 38 percent, and the recycling policy needs to be revised to conform to MPCA requirements.

The county estimates that 45 percent of all municipal waste comes from residential sources, and the county encourages recycling of that waste by providing financial support to municipalities for their residential curbside recycling programs. The county's funding from the State of Minnesota to support recycling is distributed in accordance with the [Residential Recycling Funding Policy](#).

The amount of funding to each city is based on the number of households receiving curbside recycling service from the city. In 2011, the county awarded \$2.9 million to cities, and they reported recycling approximately 100,000 tons of recyclable materials from 345,000 households in 2010.

The revised policy for 2012 through 2015 includes several major changes, including:

- Expanding the list of materials collected to include all food and beverage plastics, juice boxes and milk cartons.
- Specification of materials to be collected.

among county buildings. An electric vehicle charging station for public use has also been installed under the partnership. The county's charger is located in the Hennepin County Library – Minneapolis Central underground parking ramp. Currently, there is no fee to use the charger, but users are required to pay the usual parking ramp fees. Information about parking rates is included [in this link](#).

Applications for Citizen Advisory board openings due Dec. 31

Hennepin County is [seeking applicants from the community](#) to fill positions on nine citizen advisory boards. The County Board appoints some or all of the members of each board.

The deadline to apply for citizen advisory board vacancies is Dec. 31, 2011. Interviews are later in January. For more information about these vacancies or other advisory board appointments, and to apply online, visit Citizen Advisory Boards.

The following boards have vacancies, [click here for details on the boards](#):

- Adult Mental Health Advisory Council
- Capital Budget Task Force
- City Planning Commission (Minneapolis)
- Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin County
- County Extension Committee

- Required use of single- or dual-sort collection.
- Use of common terminology and images to describe recyclable materials.
- Measuring recycling performance.

- Human Resources Board
- Library Board
- Mental Commitment Attorney Panel Advisory Board
- Workforce Investment Board

For most cities, the proposed revisions to the policy are minor and don't require major changes in their curbside recycling programs. But Minneapolis will need to make a major change in its collection method. The policy provides a time period for the city to come into conformance with the policy.

County Environmental Services staff are gearing up to help efforts to communicate with their residents and increase their public education and outreach efforts about recycling.

These improvements to the policy will make it easier and more convenient for residents to recycle and add new materials for collection, and help the county reach the MPCA's 45-percent recycling requirement by 2015.



\$2.2 million awarded in Youth Sports grants for 2012

The [Hennepin Youth Sports Program](#) awards capital grants to build, repair, renovate or expand youth sports facilities in Hennepin County. Since 2009, a total of \$8.9 million has been awarded to 54 capital and 16 equipment projects throughout the county. Surveys have found increased youth participation at sites that received grants.

Approximately \$2 million is available each year, with grants ranging from \$15,000 to \$325,000. The 2012 grant round is the first time funds have been set aside outside of the total amount available for grants ranging from \$1,000-\$10,000, which can be used to purchase equipment or other small capital assets.

2012 capital grants in District Two include:

- [New Hope Ice Arena](#): \$275,000 for energy improvements
- St. Anthony ISD 282, Central Park: \$249,000 for

soccer field, lights for stadium multi-purpose field

- Minneapolis, citywide program: \$7,900 for pitching machines
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Farview Jordan Youth Athletic Council: \$6,400 for football practice equipment

[See complete list of 2012 recipients.](#)

Healthcare merger approved

Leading hospitals and physician groups across Minnesota and the U.S. are integrating operations to align delivery of care, redesigning to shift the financial risks of caring for patients to the people and entities that are providing the care. Integrated delivery systems offer a way to achieve these financial goals while preserving the quality of patient care.

The Hennepin County Board [approved changes](#) to the Hennepin Healthcare System (HHS) bylaws to make it possible for Hennepin Faculty Associates (HFA) a private, non-profit physician practice plan to integrate its operations into HHS, doing business as Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC), a public subsidiary corporation owned by Hennepin County. It will become official Jan. 1, 2012. There will be no change to the mission of the medical center, which will continue its commitment to provide patient-centered care, medical education and research.

The move will integrate two organizations that already have a longstanding relationship. HFA has been providing the majority of physician services to HCMC under contract since 1984. Prior to 1984, physicians were employed directly by Hennepin County to provide services at the medical center. Since HFA physicians constitute the majority of the medical staff at HCMC, the merger would not change current caregiver relationships.

In Minnesota, HCMC was one of only four providers to create a Coordinated Care Delivery System to serve General Assistance Medical Care patients for a short time in 2010. In 2012, HCMC will be part of a new demonstration project called [Hennepin Health](#) that will be based on the coordinated care model and include capped payments and shared risk for taking care of a specific patient population.



New 911 Emergency Communications Facility approved

The Board gave final approval for the new [911/Emergency Communications Facility](#), scheduled to be constructed on the Adult Corrections Facility (ACF) campus in Plymouth.

The current facility in Golden Valley was built in 1948. The [Hennepin County Sheriff's Office](#) has provided a countywide public radio communications system and dispatch of police, fire and emergency medical service calls for the past 70 years. Dispatchers answer about 700 thousand calls a year from 23 police agencies and 36 different communities

The projected budget for the new facility has been approved by the board at \$33.75 million. The new facility will address significant current facility shortfalls and provide appropriate code-mandated mechanical and electrical services that will ensure continuity of operation and a building flexible enough to grow and adapt to unpredictable developments in the future.

The new facility will significantly increase communications system reliability, improve operational efficiencies and optimize operating expenses by collocating three principal functions – the 911 Public Safety Answering Point, Critical Infrastructure Radio and Data Network Center, and Radio Systems Operations and Technical Services.

The new 59,200-square-foot facility will accommodate all of the Sheriff's communication divisions, as well as facilities to support 911, providing 21 dispatch consoles, with a maximum capacity for 30 consoles. The facility will include a 9,500-square-foot radio installation and electronic mobile equipment storage garage. The site will maximize the use of an existing communication tower on the ACF site.



CTIB reaches funding milestone

The [Counties Transit Improvement Board \(CTIB\)](#), made up

of five counties – Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington – have invested in and advanced transit projects by awarding annually capital and operating grants. Commissioner Stenglein is one of the two Hennepin appointees to CTIB, along with CTIB chair Peter McLaughlin. The board works in collaboration with the Metropolitan Council and Carver and Scott counties. This week, in the final meeting of 2011, CTIB awarded \$149.9 million in grants to transit projects throughout the region. With the awarding of these grants, CTIB has invested a grand total of \$463 million in transit projects since 2008, nearly half a billion dollars toward the creation of a 21st Century transportation system that serves residents and keeps our region economically competitive.

The 2011 capital grants awarded by the board include:

- [Central Corridor Light Rail Transit \(LRT\)](#) Project, \$97.9 million for supporting right-of-way-acquisition, light rail vehicle design and fabrication, fare box collection system design and construction. This is CCLRT's fourth grant completes the board's commitment to fund 30 percent of the total capital costs of the project.
- [Southwest LRT](#) Project, \$13.6 million for portions of the preliminary engineering and final environmental impact statement phases.
- [Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit \(BRT\)](#), \$8.79 million for construction of bus shoulder lanes and completing Stage I of the project. This is the third grant received by the project, fulfilling the board's commitment to fund 30 percent of the total capital costs for bus shoulder lanes.
- [Northstar Commuter Rail](#) Ramsey Station, \$2 million for construction of the Ramsey Station, which is scheduled to open for service the end of 2012.

The board's work has also been recognized throughout the state as a leader, winning a 2011 Association of Minnesota Counties Achievement Award and a 2011 William Koniarski Public Sector Transportation Advocate Award from the Transportation Alliance of Minnesota.

[See more CTIB funded projects, including future projects, online.](#)