

**AGENDA**  
**MAPLEWOOD CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2021 @ 7:30 P.M.**  
**(VIA TELECONFERENCE, [WWW.CITYOFMAPLEWOOD](http://WWW.CITYOFMAPLEWOOD) FOR DETAILS)**

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Motion to Excuse Councilperson
5. City Attorney Statement
6. Approval of the Council Agenda
7. Public Forum
8. Announcements
9. Approval of the October 26, 2021 City Council meeting minutes
10. Sustainability Commission report by Heidi Schoen
11. An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Maplewood, Missouri, appropriating one thousand one hundred seventy dollars (\$1,170.00) in Local Grant Funds from Account 32-000-70010 ½ Cent Fire Sales Tax Capital Outlay
12. Bill 6175 an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Maplewood, Missouri, amending Chapter 34-Offenses to add a new Article IX-Holidays to include June 19, Juneteenth National Independence Day, as a legal public holiday
13. Old Business
  - November 16 Budget Town Hall Update
  - Citizen and Business Survey Update
14. Council Communication
15. Mayor's Report
16. City Attorney's Report
17. City Manager's Report
18. Public Forum

19. Motion to hold a Closed Session to discuss matters relating to litigation, legal actions and/or communication from the City Attorney as provided for in Section 610.021(1)RSMO. and/or specifications for competitive bidding under Section 610.021(11) and/or sealed bids and related documents and sealed proposals and related documents under Section 610.021(11) and/or personnel matters under Section 610.021(13)RSMO. and/or employee matters under Section 610.021(3)RSMO. and/or real estate matters under Section 610.021(2)RSMO. and/or documents related to a negotiated contract under Section 610.021(12)RSMO

20. Adjournment

October 26, 2021

The October 26, 2021 City Council meeting was called to order via teleconference at 7:32 p.m., Mayor Nikylan Knapper presiding.

ON ROLL CALL, the following members were present: Mayor Knapper, Councilmember Crosley, Councilmember Faulkingham, Councilmember Page, Councilmember Phillips, Councilmember Schmidt and Councilmember Wood.

MOTION TO EXCUSE COUNCILPERSON: No need.

The City Attorney asked that the record reflect that pursuant to Section 610.015 of the Missouri Sunshine Law provides that members of the City Council who are not physically present in the Council Chambers can participate and vote remotely on all matters when an emergency exists and she asked that the minutes reflect that we are still under the COVID-19 pandemic.

APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL AGENDA: Councilmember Schmidt motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, which motion received the approval of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARING TO HEAR CITIZEN'S COMMENTS ON A REQUEST FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A DOG GROOMER AT 3110 SUTTON BLVD.: No one spoke.

PUBLIC FORUM: No one spoke.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Councilmember Wood made the following "save the date" announcements:

- Maplewood Kiwanis annual pancake and sausage breakfast on November 13, 2021 from 8:00-11:00 a.m. at the VFW located at 1717 S. Big Bend. Proceeds to benefit the MRH School District programs
- Christmas Tree Walk will be held on December 3, 2021 from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at the CNB Park with the grand tree lighting, Santa, live entertainment, carolers, carriage rides and complementary refreshments with merchants having open houses throughout downtown Maplewood

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 12, 2021 CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES AND CLOSED SESSION MINUTES: Councilmember Schmidt motioned to approve, seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, which motion received the approval of the Council.

LIBRARY BOARD REPORT BY BOARD PRESIDENT KRIPA NITHYA: Kripa Nithya presented the Library Board report.

**R21-46**, A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI, TO PURCHASE TWO (2) LIFEPAK 15 CARDIAC MONITORS BY MEANS OF THE SAVVIK BUYING GROUP IN THE AMOUNT OF SIXTY-FOUR THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED FORTY-TWO DOLLARS AND SEVENTY CENTS (\$64,142.70) was introduced.

It was moved by Councilmember Schmidt and seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham to approve the resolution, which motion received the following roll call vote: Ayes, Mayor Knapper, members Crosley, Faulkingham, Page, Phillips, Schmidt and Wood. Nays, none.

**R21-47**, A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI, TO ACCEPT THE BID OF TRAMAR CONTRACTING INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF TWENTY-FOUR THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SIX DOLLARS AND EIGHTY CENTS (\$24,406.80) FOR STREET PAINTING was introduced. It was moved by Councilmember Schmidt and seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham to approve the resolution, which motion received the following roll call vote: Ayes, Mayor Knapper, members Crosley, Faulkingham, Page, Phillips, Schmidt and Wood. Nays, none.

**R21-48**, A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI, AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF PROCEDURES FOR APPOINTMENTS TO CITY'S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS was introduced. Councilmember Schmidt motioned to approve and seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham. Mayor Knapper would like to amend items 1 (f) and 2 (d) to read the "Mayor" will notify applicants if not chosen. Councilmember Schmidt would like to amend item 1 (b) by adding "and make appointment recommendations to the Mayor" as the last sentence. Councilmember Schmidt motioned to amend the resolution as previously noted, seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, which motion received the approval, by voice vote, of the Council. Councilmember Schmidt motioned to approve the resolution as amended, seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, which motion received the following roll call vote: Ayes, Mayor Knapper, members Crosley, Faulkingham, Page, Phillips, Schmidt and Wood. Nays, none.

**BILL 6175**, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI, AMENDING CHAPTER 38-PERSONNEL TO MODIFY ARTICLE IX-HOLIDAYS TO INCLUDE JUNE 19, JUNETEENTH NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY, AS A LEGAL PUBLIC HOLIDAY was given its first reading. It was moved by Councilmember Schmidt, duly seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, that Bill No. 6175 be moved to its second reading, which motion received the approval, by voice vote, of the Council.

On its second reading, it was moved by Councilmember Schmidt, duly seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, that Bill No. 6175 be passed to its third and final reading, which motion received that approval, by voice vote, of the Council.

**BILL 6173**, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI, AMENDING CHAPTER 34-OFFENSES TO ADD A NEW ARTICLE XI.-RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANTS was given its third and final reading. It was moved by Councilmember Schmidt, duly seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, that Bill No. 6173 be approved, which motion received the following roll call vote: Ayes, Mayor Knapper, members Crosley, Faulkingham, Page, Phillips, Schmidt and Wood. Nays, none.

Bill No. 6173 was approved by the City Council on this 26<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2021 as **Ordinance Number 5968**.

**BILL 6174**, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI GRANTING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO MARGARET SQUIRES TO OPERATE A DOG GROOMING BUSINESS AT 3110 SUTTON BOULEVARD was given its third and final reading. A motion was made by Councilmember Schmidt that Bill No. 6174 be tabled for the reading of the findings of fact, duly seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham,

which motion received the approval, by voice vote, of the Council.

The Mayor and City Council make the following findings of fact for the petition for a Conditional Use Permit for a dog grooming business at 3110 Sutton Boulevard:

- The proposed use complies with all applicable provisions of the Zoning Code.
- The proposed use will contribute to and promote the community welfare and convenience.
- The proposed use will not cause substantial injury to the value of neighboring property.
- The proposed use does comply with the overall neighborhood development plan and existing zoning provisions.
- The proposed use will provide, if applicable, off-street parking and loading areas in accordance with the standards of the Zoning Code.
- The proposed use will not substantially increase traffic hazards.
- The proposed use will not substantially increase fire hazards.
- The proposed use will not overtax public utilities.
- The proposed use will not place an undue burden on municipal services.

It was then moved by Councilmember Schmidt, duly seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, that the findings of fact be approved, which motion received the following roll call vote: Ayes, Mayor Knapper, members Crosley, Faulkingham, Page, Phillips, Schmidt and Wood. Nays, none.

Councilmember Schmidt motioned to bring Bill 6174 back onto the table, duly seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, which motion received the approval, by voice vote, of the Council.

A motion was made by Councilmember Schmidt, duly seconded by Councilmember Faulkingham, that Bill No. 6174 be approved, which motion received the following roll call vote: Ayes, Mayor Knapper, members Crosley, Faulkingham, Page, Phillips, Schmidt and Wood. Nays, none.

**BILL NO. 6174** was approved by the City Council on this 26<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2021 as **Ordinance No. 5969**.

(8:01 p.m.) **OLD BUSINESS–NOVEMBER 16, 2021 BUDGET TOWN HALL OUTLINE AND DISCUSSION:** City Manager Reese presented the draft agenda. The Council would like the agenda and breakout session questions posted on the city’s website and Facebook page and additional time added to the agenda to review the breakout session questions. The Council also requested signs be placed around the city advertising the town hall event.

**OLD BUSINESS-CITIZEN AND BUSINESS SURVEY UPDATE:** City Manager Reese stated the surveys were sent out in late September/early October with a 3-4 week delay caused by the Post Office. The good news is that residents have begun receiving the surveys and data collection from the surveys will begin. Between late November and December 26, ETC will finish their data collection and will send a draft report to the City Manager and Community Development Director Miller. A tentative final presentation to the Council is planned for January 25 or February 8 of next year. The Council would like to know how many surveys were sent out, the percentage of overall residential population and how many renters versus homeowners received the survey.

**COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:** None.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Knapper gave a brief update on the board and commission process and let the audience know to apply if they have interest in a board or commission.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT: No report.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: City Manager Reese stated he added the Human Services Commission to the city's website and sent information on this Commission out via social media. He also provided an update on the open fire and police chief positions which will include an upcoming fire chief listening session for residents on November 17.

PUBLIC FORUM: Mary Killian expressed concern for residents who do not have a presence online or on social media. She asked the city to look for ways to disseminate information about city events to these individuals.

Carrie Ismaeel echoed Mary Killian's comments about residents who are not connected digitally.

MOTION TO HOLD A CLOSED SESSION, IF NEEDED, TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO LITIGATION, LEGAL ACTIONS AND/OR COMMUNICATION FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY AS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTION 610.021(1)RSMO. AND/OR SPECIFICATIONS FOR COMPETITIVE BIDDING UNDER SECTION 610.021(11) AND/OR SEALED BIDS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS AND SEALED PROPOSALS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS UNDER SECTION 610.021(11) AND/OR PERSONNEL MATTERS UNDER SECTION 610.021(13)RSMO. AND/OR EMPLOYEE MATTERS UNDER SECTION 610.021(3)RSMO. AND/OR REAL ESTATE MATTERS UNDER SECTION 610.021(2)RSMO. AND/OR DOCUMENTS RELATED TO A NEGOTIATED CONTRACT UNDER SECTION 610.021(12)RSMO: No need.

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned.

# INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

---

TO: Michael Reese, City Manager

FROM: Acting Chief Peter Marsac

DATE: October 20, 2021

RE: Missouri American Water Grant

Sir:

The Maplewood Fire Department received Grant Funding from Missouri American Water that was deposited October 15, 2021 in the amount of \$1,170.00 for the purchase of six Type V Personal Flotation devices to be utilized by Swiftwater Technicians.

The Grant Funding purchase was not budgeted for the 2021/2022 fiscal year. We did not anticipate Missouri American Water offering Grant Funding. We were scheduled to purchase the equipment next fiscal year and although not budgeted, purchasing the equipment now with Grant Funding reduces future expenditures.

I request that the funds be appropriated from Account 32-0000-70010 ½ Cent Fire Tax Capital Outlay, which is used to purchase such items.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter C. Marsac  
Acting Fire Chief

**BILL NO.**

**ORDINANCE NO.**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI, APPROPRIATING ONE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY DOLLARS (\$1,170.00) IN LOCAL GRANT FUNDS FROM ACCOUNT 32-0000-70010 1/2 CENT FIRE SALES TAX CAPITAL OUTLAY.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

Section I. One thousand one hundred seventy dollars (\$1,170.00) is hereby appropriated from the ½ Cent Fire Sales Tax Capital Outlay account 32-0000-70010.

Section II. These funds will be used to purchase six (6) Type V Personal Flotation Devices to be placed on both fire apparatus for immediate access by firefighters.

Section III. The City Manager hereby certifies that one thousand one hundred seventy dollars (\$1,170.00) is available for appropriation in account 32-0000-70010 ½ Cent Fire Sales Tax Capital Outlay.

Section VI. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect fifteen (15) days after its passage and approval.

Passed this    day of

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nikylan Knapper, Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Scheidt, Deputy City Clerk

Approved this    day of

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nikylan Knapper, Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Scheidt, Deputy City Clerk



AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI, AMENDING CHAPTER 38 – PERSONNEL TO MODIFY ARTICLE IX – HOLIDAYS TO INCLUDE JUNE 19, JUNETEENTH NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY, AS A LEGAL PUBLIC HOLIDAY.

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to amend Chapter 38 of the Maplewood City Code of Ordinances to modify an Article adding Juneteenth as a legal public holiday; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes that by declaring Juneteenth as a legal public holiday for Maplewood city employees, it will result in the closure of public offices of the city; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has designated Juneteenth National Independence Day as a legal public holiday, the first new federal holiday since 1983; and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865, enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas were told they were free; and

WHEREAS, the term Juneteenth is a blend of the words June and nineteenth and Juneteenth National Independence Day is also called Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Black Independence Day and Juneteenth Independence Day as it commemorates the end of slavery in the United States, observed annually on June 19; and

WHEREAS, the City of Maplewood celebrated Juneteenth with its community members in 2021 and will plan to celebrate the holiday with residents, businesses and guests of Maplewood each and every year going forward.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

Section I. The Maplewood Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by amending Chapter 38, Article IX, to modify Sec. 38-246. – Holidays:

New Years Day

Martin Luther King Day

Washington’s Birthday

Memorial Day

Juneteenth National Independence Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and the Friday of Thanksgiving day “weekend” (said Friday in lieu of Veterans Day)

Christmas Day and December 26 (day after Christmas)

Personal holiday (see subsection (g) of this section)

Section II. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval as provided by law.

Passed this     day of     , 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nikylan Knapper, Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Scheidt, Deputy City Clerk

Approved this     day of     , 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nikylan Knapper, Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Scheidt, Deputy City Clerk

**Town Hall Budget Meeting**  
**November 16, 2021**  
**7: 00 PM – 9:00 PM**  
**Via: Zoom**

**Agenda**

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>I. Welcome and Introduction</b>                       | Mayor and Deputy Mayor (10 min)    |
| <b>II. Budget Overview and Timeline</b>                  | Karen Dilber (10 min)              |
| <b>III. Review and Digest Breakout Session Questions</b> | City Manager (5 min)               |
| <b>IV. Breakout Session</b>                              | Councilmember Faulkingham (20 min) |
| <b>V. Breakout Session Recap</b>                         | Mayor and Council (20 min)         |
| <b>VI. Additional Questions or Comments</b>              | Mayor and Council (20 min)         |
| <b>VII. Next Steps</b>                                   | City Manager (5 min)               |
- a. After Action Survey
  - b. Link available for additional questions and or comments
  - c. Will post meeting recording on the City's YouTube

**Draft Budget Town Hall Breakout Session Questions:**

1. What questions do you have about the budget and how it works?
2. What would help you learn more about the budget?
3. What services provided by the City do you value?
4. What services need more investment? Less investment?
5. How would you characterize your value of services for taxes paid?

**From:** Robert Heacock <[Robert.Heacock@etcinstitute.com](mailto:Robert.Heacock@etcinstitute.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 27, 2021 1:14 AM

**To:** Michael Reese <[m-reese@cityofmaplewood.com](mailto:m-reese@cityofmaplewood.com)>

**Cc:** Laura Miller <[l-miller@cityofmaplewood.com](mailto:l-miller@cityofmaplewood.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Surveys

Michael - I appreciate the questions and will try to address them in turn.

- 1) 6 of 7 of our Council Members received the survey. And the one who didn't received the survey, is a renter.

Surveys were mailed to 2,691 households (this number is shown on the status sheet that Liz emails daily. It looks like there are a little over 4,000 households in the City. Since about 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of all households in the City received a survey, it's not surprising that 6 out of 7 Council Members received a survey.

- 2) Can you explain why 6 of 7 Council Members received the survey? Isn't the survey random?

See answer above. Also, we have no idea who the Council Members are or what their address is, so this would have no impact on whether or not they were randomly selected to receive a survey.

- 3) How many total residential surveys were mailed and what % of the population is supposed to receive a survey?

Surveys were mailed to 2,691 households. This number was based on reaching our goal of 300 completed surveys. Typically we mail surveys to 8 to 9 times the number of households as completed surveys that we need. There is not a certain % of the population that is supposed to receive a survey.

- 4) What was done to make sure renters are receiving the survey at the same level as homeowners?

All households (homeowners and renters) in the City had an equal chance of being randomly selected to receive a survey. I can check internally on this, but Glancing through the addresses that received a mailed survey, and it includes many addresses with apartment numbers.

- 5) How will the data appear in the final report and will it be anonymous?

We will not provide the address of households that completed a survey. The report will only include the data in aggregate form.

I hope this helps. I'm happy to discuss further if necessary.

Robert

---

**From:** Michael Reese <[m-reese@cityofmaplewood.com](mailto:m-reese@cityofmaplewood.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 26, 2021 8:49:56 PM  
**To:** Robert Heacock <[Robert.Heacock@etcinstitute.com](mailto:Robert.Heacock@etcinstitute.com)>  
**Cc:** Laura Miller <[l-miller@cityofmaplewood.com](mailto:l-miller@cityofmaplewood.com)>  
**Subject:** Surveys

Robert,

I provided an update to City Council this evening and the Council and I have several questions/concerns:

- 1) 6 of 7 of our Council Members received the survey. And the one who didn't received the survey, is a renter.
- 2) Can you explain why 6 of 7 Council Members received the survey? Isn't the survey random?
- 3) How many total residential surveys were mailed and what % of the population is supposed to receive a survey?
- 4) What was done to make sure renters are receiving the survey at the same level as homeowners?
- 5) How will the data appear in the final report and will it be anonymous?

I may want to have a conference call to discuss these items. I am providing another update to City Council at their next meeting on November 9 and I need to have answers to these questions.

Michael

Michael D. Reese  
City Manager  
City of Maplewood  
7601 Manchester Road  
Maplewood, Missouri 63143  
Direct: (314) 646-3603

# INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

---

TO: Mayor & City Council

FROM: Michael D. Reese, City Manager

DATE: November 4, 2021

RE: City Manager's Report

**December 14 Work Session:** We will have a Work Session on Tuesday, December 14 at 6:00 PM to review and discuss potential amendments to the individual boards and commissions ordinances and resolution.

**Fire Chief Listening Session:** As a reminder, we are having a listening session on Wednesday, November 17, 7:00 – 9:00 PM, for residents to share their priorities as we look to hire a fire chief. The public can participate via zoom or come in person to city council chambers.

**Retreat Update:** I have identified \$8,500.00 in the legislative and executive portions of the budget that we can use for a retreat next year. This money will be available as long as we don't spend money in the areas I've identified, or go over in other areas of the specific departmental budgets. The plan is to have a retreat in May 2022. In the coming months, I will be working on a retreat agenda and will keep the Council posted.

## **Website Update:**

- Content migration has been completed – the information from our current site has been migrated to our new site.
- Training and Beta Site Review – Tiffany Hyde and Laura Miller have completed a general training on the new site and are scheduled to have additional training in the next week for form creation.
- Content Clean up – Tiffany Hyde and Laura Miller are reviewing the new site page by page, testing links and making sure all the content migrated. This process will include building new forms, adding new photos and updating the site with content that was not included in the migration.
- Training staff – additional staff will be trained on various aspects of the site that they are responsible for (ex. Posting agendas and calendar updates).
- Staff is preparing social media and email messages that will go out at the launch of the new site informing residents and business owners of the updated site and new features.
- The new site will go live by January 31, 2022.

**Motor Vehicle Crimes and Residential/City Response:** The St. Louis Metropolitan area, including the City of Maplewood, has experienced a significant increase in car break-ins and other vehicle crimes during the past several months. Theft from parked vehicles is one of the most frequently reported crimes. On Thursday, November 4, we put out an email blast notifying residents of this issue and steps to take to protect yourself and your property. Attached is the actual language that the public received on November 4 in an email blast.

Our police department has taken steps to address this disturbing trend, including informing block watch captains about what is happening, increasing patrol in high risk areas and working with other agencies to attempt to identify those responsible.

enclosure



**Maplewood Police Department  
7601 Manchester Road  
Maplewood, MO 63143  
Lt. Matt Nighbor, Acting Police Chief**

## **MOTOR VEHICLE CRIMES**

November 4, 2021

The St. Louis Metropolitan area, including the City of Maplewood, has experienced a significant increase in car break-ins and other vehicle crimes during the past several months. For the month of October, there were forty-five (45) reported incidents involving motor vehicle crimes which include the following:

- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Catalytic Converter Theft
- Stealing from Parked Vehicles
- Stolen License Plates
- Tampering with Unlocked Motor Vehicles
- Property Damage

Theft from parked vehicles is one of the most frequently reported crimes.

The Maplewood Police Department recommends that you park your vehicle in a garage if possible. If you must park the vehicle in your driveway or on the street, make sure there is adequate outdoor lighting to deter potential thieves.

Lock your car and roll up the windows at all times, including securing sunroofs. Suspects prefer to enter an unlocked vehicle rather than forcibly break into it. Forcing open a car lock or breaking out a window takes more time and increases the chance of detection. Do not leave any valuable items in your vehicle. Recent police reports indicate victims had left wallets, purses, credit cards, jewelry, cell phones, electronics, money, and firearms in their vehicles. Keep the interior of your vehicle in a clean and orderly condition. Your goal is to make the suspect move on because no valuables are visible inside the vehicle.

Many times, organized groups who are breaking into vehicles arrive in a stolen vehicle and may steal another vehicle from the area before departing.

Most importantly, never confront any suspicious person(s) or suspect(s) breaking into a vehicle. Armed suspects have been captured on video surveillance relative to several of these incidents in the City of Maplewood.

---



As reported by several of the St. Louis news outlets, the St. Louis Metropolitan area is currently experiencing a concerning trend regarding motor vehicle thefts and vehicle break-ins at gas stations/convenience stores. Generally, the suspects will arrive in a stolen vehicle and circle the gas pumps attempting to locate running vehicles or unsecured vehicles with the key/key fob remaining inside. These suspects will approach a target vehicle by pulling next to an unsuspecting victim. An occupant of the stolen vehicle will then exit, approach the target vehicle in a crouching motion as to not be detected by the vehicle owner, and pull on the door handle looking for an unlocked vehicle. In many instances, the owner of the vehicle is standing on the other side of their vehicle actively filling the gas tank. The suspects are successful when the vehicle door is unlocked and the vehicle is either running or the key/key fob is located inside the vehicle. As with the residential vehicle break-ins, video surveillance at these gas stations/convenience stores have captured the suspects armed with a firearm as they attempt to enter the victim's vehicle.

There are several precautions you can take to avoid becoming a victim of these potentially dangerous suspects.

1. Be aware of your surroundings. Scan the area for suspicious activity and avoid becoming distracted while fueling your vehicle, i.e. cellphone, smartwatch, etc.
2. Avoid leaving your key or key fob inside the vehicle and keep it in your possession when exiting your vehicle.
3. Lock all doors to your vehicle and activate the alarm while fueling. A majority of vehicle alarms will activate when the door handle is tampered with, bringing unwanted attention to potential car thieves.
4. Report suspicious activity to police as soon as possible and avoid confronting any potential car thief.