

ARDEN HILLS

notes

The Official City Newsletter for Arden Hills Residents

Jan/Feb 2025

Rice Creek Commons (TCAAP): A Look Back at 2024

Rice Creek Commons (RCC) remains a centerpiece of progress and vision for the City of Arden Hills. Below, you'll read a recap of some key efforts and milestones achieved over the past year.

California Parcel Development

The Joint Development Authority (JDA) approved a preliminary development agreement with Alatus to remain the developer for the approximately 380-acre California Parcel with the intention that parties reach a final development agreement by June 30, 2025. The City and County met regularly with Alatus over the course of the year to advance development plans.

The City Council held two work sessions to review and discuss plans for future park developments and the potential purchase of the 1.6-acre civic site. This site is located at the east end of the Town Center, south of Main Street, and adjacent to the Natural Resources Corridor.

Outlot A Development

Ramsey County executed a purchase and sale agreement with Ryan Companies for Outlot A, the 40-acre shovel-ready parcel in the northern part of Rice Creek Commons. This area is zoned for commercial, industrial, and retail development. Ryan Companies is actively working to develop specific plans for Outlot A.

Expanded Housing and Affordability

The City Council approved zoning and comprehensive plan amendments to increase housing density at Rice

Creek Commons, allowing for an additional 500 units, bringing the total to 1,960 housing units. At least 20% percent of these units will be designated as affordable, available to families earning 60% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Clean Energy Policy

The Rice Creek Commons Clean Energy Analysis Report, prepared by consultants Ever-Green Energy and LHB, was completed in November 2024. The report outlines potential options for clean energy solutions to power the site, including geothermal, solar, and community district energy systems. It also identifies strategies for minimizing building energy use and incorporating additional sustainability measures throughout the development.

In alignment with these findings, the JDA adopted the following clean energy policy: *"Rice Creek Commons seeks to be an all-electric, carbon-free development, and the JDA directs staff to identify steps to implement this policy and provide updates to the JDA."*

Sustainability Commitments

The JDA instructed staff and the Rice Creek Commons energy consultant to pursue LEED for Communities certification for the project. This globally recognized standard establishes benchmarks for energy efficiency and sustainability. Achieving this certification will guide the project in meeting its ambitious energy and environmental goals while ensuring accountability through independent third-party verification.

Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR)

The City updated the AUAR for the site, which is a hybrid of the environmental review processes. This planning tool evaluates how different development scenarios might impact the community's environment before construction begins and outlines how to mitigate these impacts. This document is required to be updated every five years.

State Bonding Efforts

To support public infrastructure on the site, Ramsey County sought state bonding assistance in 2024. While a bonding bill was not passed by legislators, this request remains a top priority for the County. Efforts to secure state funding will continue during the next legislative session.

Advancing Infrastructure Design

Ramsey County finalized an engineering contract for the design and related infrastructure of the Spine Road, the future County road that will run through the site, with Kimley Horn and Bolton & Menk as joint collaborators. This design phase of the project is expected to last around 18 months and is an important piece in preparing the site for vertical construction.

The accomplishments of 2024 and progress from previous years have laid a strong foundation for the ongoing development of RCC. But there is still more to be done! Visit [ricecreekcommons.com](https://www.ricecreekcommons.com) to stay informed and track RCC's progress.



Service Directory

City Hall

1245 West Highway 96
Arden Hills, MN 55112
cityofardenhills.org
651-792-7800

Office Hours

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sheriff and Fire

911 - Emergency & Non-Emergency

Water and Sewer Problems
(During non-business hours)
651-767-0640

Mayor

David Grant • 651-538-0747
dgrant@cityofardenhills.org

City Councilmembers

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bholden@cityofardenhills.org

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rousseau@cityofardenhills.org

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Interim City Administrator

Jessica Jagoe • 651-792-7810
jjagoe@cityofardenhills.org

Resident Resources

cityofardenhills.org/resident-resources

Council meetings are held at City Hall on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 7 p.m. Council meetings, Work Sessions, and Planning Commission meetings are televised live on Cable Channel 16. Please visit cityofardenhills.org for information about archived meeting playbacks.

Arden Hills Notes is the official newsletter of the City of Arden Hills, an equal-opportunity employer.

City News

New Lifetime Pet Licenses Available Starting January 1, 2025

As of January 1, the City has transitioned to a pet license that is valid for the lifetime of the individual pet, making it easier than ever to ensure your furry friends are properly registered. The cost for this license is \$50 per pet for AH residents.



Licensing your pet is an important step in promoting responsible pet ownership and helps reunite lost pets with their owners. For more information or to apply, visit cityofardenhills.org/150/Pet-Licenses.

City Hall Closed on President's Day

In observance of President's Day, City Hall will be closed on Monday, February 17, 2025. Regular office hours will resume on Tuesday, February 18. Police and fire services will remain fully operational. For any emergencies, please call 9-1-1.

Introducing Arden Hills' New Deputy City Clerk

The City welcomes Jen Estling, who joined the staff as the Deputy City Clerk this past July. Jen has a wealth of administrative experience as an Administrative Assistant, including her previous role at Mound City Hall. She supported multiple departments, including Community Development, Public Works, Finance, and the City Clerk. While there, she also began the City Clerk path, which helped prepare her for the Deputy Clerk role at Arden Hills.



Jen has three amazing adult children, and she recently moved back to her hometown of Fridley. She is also a registered Yoga teacher and an avid paddle boarder! This past summer, Lake Johanna was one of her favorite local spots.

Since joining the City, Jen has said, "All of the residents and business owners I've been in contact with have been friendly, and I notice how much they care about the community." She's also excited to explore the City's parks, trails, and other great places to visit in Arden Hills.

Get Ready for Spring and Summer Fun!

It may still be chilly outside, but it's the perfect time to start planning for warmer days ahead! The 2025 Spring/Summer Recreation Activity Guide will be available in early February.



Explore a wide range of activities, including soccer, t-ball, playground programs, yoga, and much more! Visit cityofardenhills.org/203/Recreation-Programs for details and to find the perfect program for you and your family.

City Council Benchmarks

Dec. 9, 2024 City Council Meeting

All votes 5-0 unless otherwise noted.

- Approved Claims and Payroll
- Approved 2025 Non-Union Employee Compensation Plan
- Approved Resolution 2024-056 – 2025 City Contribution to Employee Monthly Benefits
- Approved Northeast Youth and Family Services 2025 Agreement Approved Planning Case 24-009 – Lake Johnanna Fire Department Development Agreement
- Approved Ordinance 2024-016 Approving the 2025 Fee Schedule and Authorizing Publication of a Summary Ordinance
- Approved 2025 Liquor License Renewals
- Approved 2025 Tobacco License Renewals
- Approved Ordinance 2024-017 Amending Chapter 3 Related to Adult Cannabis Retail Business Registrations and Cannabis Events and Authorizing Publication of a Summary Ordinance
- Approved Cancellation of the December 23, 2024 City Council Work Session and Regular Meeting
- Approved Cancellation of the January 27, February 24 and March 24, 2025 City Council Regular Meetings and Work Sessions
- Approved Agreement for Professional Services for Public Works Support Services – Engineering, Parks, MS4 and GIS – Bolton & Menk
- Approved Resolution 2024-057 – Application for Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) for 2025 Private Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) Grant Program
- Approved Resolution 2024-058 Authorizing the City to Submit a 2024 MnDOT Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grant Application
- Approved Resolution 2024-061 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids – South Tower Improvement Project (\$250,000 – budgeted)

- Adoption of the 2025 Budget and Tax Levy

- o Resolution 2024-059 Setting the Final Tax Levy at 13.5% for Taxes Payable in 2025 (*motion passed 3-2, Fabel and Monson opposed*)
- o Resolution 2025-060 Adopting the Proposed 2025 Budget

Dec. 16, 2024 Special City Council Meeting

All votes 5-0 unless otherwise noted.

- Approved 2025-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement – IUOE 49 with amendments
- Approved Appointment of Joint Development (JDA) Chair (2025-2026) (*motion passed 3-2, Grant and Holden opposed*)
- Approved Cummings Park Pavilion Roof Replacement (\$40,850)

Jan. 13, 2025 City Council Meeting

All votes 5-0 unless otherwise noted.

- Approved Claims and Payroll
- Approved Resolution 2025-001 Relating to the 2025 Organization of the City of Arden Hills
- Approved Resolution 2025-002 Relating to the 2025 Appointments and Chairs of the Commissions and Committees of the City
- Accepted Resignation of Frank Cupery from the Economic Development Commission
- Approved Resolution 2025-003 Relating to 2025 Curbside and Non-Curbside Recycling Fees
- Approved Resolution 2025-004 Related to Utilizing Complete Streets Principles in Transportation Planning and Community Design
- Approved Payment No. 3 (Final) – Arden Manor and Floral Park Improvements Project – Peterson Companies, Inc. (\$35,658.36)
- Approved Renewing Shared Service Agreement with Ramsey County for 2025 Grading and Erosion Control Inspections
- Approved Payment to Ramsey County for Right-of-Way Acquisition Costs through December 2024

(\$277,460.80) – County Rd E/Old Snelling Avenue Roundabout Project; and Payment for Construction Engineering Fees and Costs (\$1,354,707.10) – Mounds View High School Trail on Lake Valentine Road

- Approved Met Council 2025 Private Property I/I Grant Agreement (City awarded \$41,000)
- Approved Hiring a Permit Technician/ Office Support Specialist
- Accepted Resignation of Senior Communications Coordinator
- Approved Resolution 2025-010 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Ad for Bids – 2025 CIPP Lining Project (\$475,000 – budgeted)
- Approved Resolution 2025-005 Appointing Jessica Daniels to the Economic Development Commission
- Approved Purchase of 2025 F550 Regular Cab Diesel Truck (\$114,626.54 – after estimated auction of 2013 plow truck)
- Planning Cases 24-015 and 24-018 – 1700 Highway 96 W – Trident Development, LLC
 - o Approved Resolution 2025-006 PC 24-015 - Rezoning for Subject Property (*motion passed 4-1, Weber opposed*)
 - o Approved Resolution 2025-007 PC 24-018 – Master Planned Unit Development, Final Planned Unit Development, Conditional Use Permit, Site Plan Review, and Final Plat for Lot 2, Block 1, Arden Heights Addition (*motion passed 4-1, Weber opposed*)
 - o Resolution 2025-008 PC 24-018 Vacating Drainage and Utility Easement
- Approved Resolution 2025-009 Relating to the 2025 City Council Liaisons for Commissions and Committees and Mayor Pro-Tem (*motion passed 4-1, Holden opposed*)
- Tabled Recruitment of Senior Communications Coordinator

For a complete listing of recent City Council actions, visit cityofardenhills.org and click on “View Agendas and Minutes.”

City Adopts Budget and Approves Tax Levy

The annual Truth in Taxation hearing was held on December 9 at City Hall. City staff presented information regarding the 2025 budget and tax levy. The City Council adopted a 2025 property tax levy of \$6,028,012. This sets the City's property tax levy increase for 2025 at 13.50 percent, which is 2.0 percent lower than the preliminary levy rate set in September 2024. The result of a 13.50 percent levy increase translates to a \$177.60 increase in annual City taxes paid by resident owners of median-valued homes.

Arden Hills continues to have one of the lowest tax rates in Ramsey County. In Arden Hills, the levy is split between the General Fund (\$5,418,012), the Equipment/Building Replacement Fund (\$100,000), and Capital Funds (\$510,000). The Council adopted a 2025 City budget of \$18,990,523, which includes the General Fund, Capital Funds, and Utilities.

General Fund Budget

Revenues

- General Fund revenues in the 2025 budget are set at \$6,639,270.
- The property tax levy and associated revenues account for approximately 80.7 percent of the General Fund revenues and will be increased by 15.5 percent (\$718,248) over the previous year.

Expenditures



General Fund expenditures for 2025 total \$6,761,279, with Public Safety accounting for almost half of overall General Fund expenditures.

Public Safety costs overall are set to increase by 7.9 percent (\$229,179). This is an increase of 11.1 percent (\$176,048) for the Ramsey County Sheriff contract, 8.7 percent (\$72,391) for the Lake Johanna Fire Department, 4.5 percent (\$3,180) for the Ramsey County Dispatch contract, and a decrease of 5.5 percent (\$22,440) for Protective Inspection and Emergency Management costs.



Personnel costs are increasing by 15.4 percent (\$311,540) due to a 2024 compensation and class study, cost of living adjustments, step increases and health insurance premium increases.

The property tax levy does not cover the City's overall budget and will use existing fund balance reserves to cover the budget deficit.

The approved budget and tax levy information can be viewed in detail in the December 9 City Council agenda at cityofardenhills.org/agendacenter.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the 2025 budget information concerning the City of Arden Hills for interested citizens. This Budget Summary is published in the format prescribed by Minnesota Statutes Section 471.6965.

This report is not the complete City budget. The complete City budget may be viewed at Arden Hills City Hall, located at 1245 West Highway 96, or online at cityofardenhills.org/176/Budget-Financial-Planning. The City Council approved this budget on December 9, 2024.

What Your Arden Hills Tax Dollar Buys You

DESCRIPTION OF TRANSACTION	BALANCE
Public Safety	\$47.06
General Government	\$24.52
Parks and Recreation	\$15.28
Street Maintenance	\$14.29
Capital	\$8.48
EDA	\$0.00
TOTAL per month	\$109.64

A \$480,900 home (median value in Arden Hills) generates \$1,316 in annual City property taxes, or \$109.64 per month, for 2025.

Enterprise Funds & Utility Rates

Revenues

The City has four enterprise funds that finance business-type activities. A rate study was completed in 2018 for the Water, Sewer, and Surface Water Management funds. The recommended rate increases are reflected in the revenue budgets and are included in the 2025 Fee Schedule for the City. The proposed increases are as follows:

- **Water** – 0%
- **Sewer** – 9%
- **Storm** – 3%

2025 Utility Charges		2024	2025	% Change
WATER		\$79.16	\$79.16	0.0%
Base	\$44.69	\$44.69	\$44.69	0.0%
Water Test	\$2.43	\$2.43	\$2.43	0.0%
Usage	\$3.56 / 1,000 gal	\$32.04	\$32.04	0.0%
SEWER		\$129.06	\$140.68	9.0%
Base	\$72.99	\$66.96	\$72.99	9.0%
Usage	\$7.52 / 1,000 gal	\$62.10	\$67.69	9.0%
STORM		\$17.39	\$17.91	3.0%
Per Lot	\$17.91	\$17.39	\$17.91	3.0%
TOTAL		\$225.61	\$237.75	5.4%

This chart shows a comparison of utility fees for 2024 and 2025 based on proposed rates and for a household using 9,000 gallons per quarter with a ¾” meter size or smaller. This is a 5.4% (\$12.14) increase over 2024 rates.

EyeOnWater: Monitor Your Water Usage and Prevent Surprises



EyeOnWater®

Are you looking for an easy way to monitor your water consumption and avoid unexpected charges from a leaky toilet or sprinkler system? EyeOnWater is here to help!

This online tool empowers residents to track their water usage, identify potential issues, and conserve water.

EyeOnWater provides clear, easy-to-read consumption graphs that allow you to understand your water usage throughout the billing cycle. You can even set up alerts to detect high usage, helping you address leaks or other issues early.

How to Get Started

EyeOnWater is accessible online or through a mobile app. Follow these simple steps to sign up:

1. Visit eyeonwater.com/signup.
2. Enter your service or billing postal code and your nine-digit account number (found on your utility bill, with no dashes).
3. Provide your email address and create a password.

Note: Only one email address can be associated with an account. Access is prioritized for property owners over tenants.

For additional information, visit cityofardenhills.org/228/water. If you need assistance with EyeOnWater, visit helpeyeonwater.com.

Save Money with Residential Water Efficiency Rebates

Arden Hills residents can save money and help conserve water through the City’s Residential Water Efficiency Rebate program. Rebates are available for upgrading to water-efficient toilets, washing machines, irrigation systems, and more. These upgrades not only reduce your water usage but can also lower your utility bills.

Learn more and apply today at cityofardenhills.org/WaterGrant. Rebates are available on a first-come, first-served basis.



Winter Roads in Arden Hills

Snow Plow Reminders

Winter is here, and with it brings snow plow season to Arden Hills. Whenever snowfall reaches two inches or more, City snow plow crews will be out clearing the roads. To ensure streets remain safe and accessible for everyone, please keep the following tips in mind.

- **Mailboxes & Fire Hydrants:** While snow plows aim to clear as much as possible near mailboxes, residents are responsible for removing snow in front of and around mailboxes and fire hydrants.
- **Trash & Recycling Cans:** Place bins behind the curb to allow plows to clear the entire roadway.
- **Street Parking:** Avoid parking on the street until it has been fully plowed. Remember, parking is prohibited on all Arden Hills streets between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. year-round.



Brine vs. Salt

Did you know that Arden Hills uses salt brine to improve road safety during winter storms? This process involves pre-wetting rock salt with a solution of salt and water, allowing it to work more effectively in melting snow and ice.

Why does the City use brine-treated salt?

- **Faster Melting:** Brine accelerates the melting process by helping salt dissolve and activate immediately upon contact with precipitation.
- **Anti-Icing:** Applied before a storm, brine prevents ice from bonding to the pavement, making roads easier to clear.
- **Reduced Salt Usage:** Pre-wetting reduces the total amount of salt needed while still achieving effective results.
- **Better Adhesion:** The brine solution helps salt stick to road surfaces, minimizing loss from wind or traffic.

By combining traditional methods with techniques like brining, the Public Works crew ensures efficient and environmentally friendly snow and ice management throughout the winter.

Stay Updated with the City's Weather Hotline



Winter brings unpredictable weather, which can disrupt outdoor plans and recreational activities. To help you stay informed, we encourage you to use our reliable Weather Hotline. It provides timely updates on any changes to scheduled activities due to inclement weather.

The hotline also shares the status of the City's warming houses. Whether you're planning to ice skate or enjoy our parks, it's the go-to resource for knowing if warming houses are open or closed.

City of Arden Hills Weather Hotline: 651-792-7841

Ice Rinks Still Open

The City's ice rinks opened in early December and are still open for you to enjoy! Rinks are located at Cummings, Freeway, Hazelnut, and Perry parks, offering fun opportunities for outdoor winter activities.

Rinks are tentatively scheduled to close on February 17, 2025, so be sure to visit soon. For exact locations and hours for the rinks and warming houses, visit cityofardenhills.org/1060/Ice-Rinks-and-Warming-Houses, or scan the QR code.





HIRING

PARKS & RECREATION

Are you interested in a seasonal Parks & Recreation job? Contact the City's Recreation Supervisor, Matt Johnson, at **651-792-7848** or email **mjohnson@cityofardenhills.org** for more information!



OPEN POSITIONS:

- Playground Leaders (*\$13.80/hr. & up*)
- Youth Soccer Officials (*\$19.25/hr. & up*)
- Evening Sports Instructors (*\$14.90/hr. & up*)
- Tennis Instructors (*\$16.10/hr. & up*)

Minimum Requirements: Applicants must be 16 years or older.

Desired Qualifications: Completion of a minimum of one year of college or other high-level training preferred. Should have some related experience in youth work. First Aid/CPR certified.

PUBLIC WORKS

Contact Public Works at **651-792-7850** or email **publicworks@cityofardenhills.org** for more information about seasonal Public Works openings!

OPEN POSITION:

Seasonal Maintenance Worker
(*\$18.70/hr. & up*) depending on experience

Minimum Requirements: Applicants must be 18 years or older with a valid Class D driver's license and the ability to pass a drug test.



Visit **cityofardenhills.org** to complete a job application. The application deadline will be **Friday, May 2, or until all positions are filled.**



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Make a Difference: Volunteer on a City Commission or Committee

The City of Arden Hills is calling on community-minded individuals to help shape the future of our city by volunteering on a commission or committee. There are vacancies on the Economic Development Commission (EDC), the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee (PTRC), and the Planning Commission.

The **EDC** supports economic growth by advising the City Council and Economic Development Authority on development, redevelopment, and community initiatives. Members facilitate positive interaction with the business community to strengthen Arden Hills' economic landscape.

The **PTRC** evaluates parks, trails, and recreational services, recommending ways to improve and enhance these amenities. It's a chance to make a lasting impact on the outdoor spaces and services that bring our community together.

The **Planning Commission** provides input to the City Council on development by reviewing land use applications, considers zoning changes, and makes recommendations on zoning code updates. This work helps shape Arden Hills' growth and character.

If you're ready to get involved, visit cityofardenhills.org/125/Commissions-Committees to learn more and apply today!

A Big Thank You to City Volunteers!

The City Council and staff extend a note of gratitude to the many individuals who generously give their time and talents to serve Arden Hills. From commission and committee members to sports coaches, park beautifiers, and countless others, your dedication plays a vital role in making the City a great place to live, work, and play. Your contributions, often behind the scenes, are appreciated.

A special thank you goes to those who have recently completed their terms or will not be returning to a commission or committee: Jonathan Wicklund, Arlene Mitchell, and Shelley Blilie from the Planning Commission; Jill Anderson and Tim Nelson from the PTRC; and Frank Cupery from the EDC. Your efforts have made a meaningful and lasting impact on our community, and we are truly grateful for your service!