

President:
David Grant

Commissioners:
Brenda Holden
Emily Rousseau
Tena Monson
Kurt Weber



Agenda

October 27, 2025

Address:
1245 West Highway 96
Arden Hills MN 55112

Phone:
651.792.7800

Website:
www.cityofardenhills.org

Economic Development Authority

5:30 p.m.

City Vision

Arden Hills is a strong community that values its unique environmental setting, strong residential neighborhoods, vital business community, well-maintained infrastructure, fiscal soundness, and our long-standing tradition as a desirable City in which to live, work, and play.

Members of the public may attend a meeting in-person at City Hall or they may view the meeting remotely on the City's website using the below link. Meetings are also broadcast on Cable Channel 16 for those that live in Arden Hills.

<https://cityofardenhills.org/320/Watch-City-Meetings>

CALL TO ORDER

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 22, 2024 EDA

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Gateway Signs Discussion

Jessica Jagoe

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5. EDA MEMBER COMMENTS

6. ADJOURN



DRAFT

Approved: October 27, 2025

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING
APRIL 22, 2024
5:30 PM
CITY HALL**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, EDA President Grant called to order the Economic Development Authority meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Present: EDA President David Grant; EDA Commissioners Brenda Holden, Emily Rousseau, Tena Monson and Tom Fabel

Absent: None

Also present: EDA Secretary Dave Perrault; Community Development Director Jessica Jagoe; Public Works Director/City Engineer David Swearingen; and Assistant to the City Administrator/City Clerk Julie Hanson

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: EDA Commissioner Monson moved and EDA Commissioner Fabel seconded a motion to approve the EDA meeting agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 23, 2023 EDA

MOTION: EDA President Grant moved and EDA Commissioner Rousseau seconded a motion to approve the October 23, 2023 Economic Development Authority Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Development Tools Discussion

Secretary Perrault referred to the memo provided in the meeting packet, noting the EDA President and Commissioners were being asked to provide direction on the use of available development tools. He specifically referenced the Pace site and stated that while proposals for redevelopment have been submitted, for one reason or another, the site was still sitting vacant today.

Secretary Perrault described the various tools that could be utilized which include engaging directly with the Pace site owner, its representative or developer, and financing options such as TIF. He asked if the EDA would like City staff to be proactively involved regarding pursuing redevelopment of the site and noted the Comprehensive Plan calls for a small area plan to guide future development. He then indicated that City staff did not have the bandwidth for a large-scale project due to other workload but conversations regarding smaller scale tactical projects could be had. He stated he could work with the City's financial advisor to provide options for the EDA to consider.

Commissioner Holden indicated there is a white paper that was adopted by the City Council which outlined options, and she asked if there was a copy of that available.

Secretary Perrault stated he did not have a copy of that document in front of him.

Commissioner Holden asked if he knew of such a document.

Secretary Perrault stated yes, he believed there was such a document.

Commissioner Holden commented about why recreate the wheel if that information already exists?

President Grant said since there is already a document in existence, that should be distributed to the Council.

Secretary Perrault replied he certainly could do that. He stated also the point of tonight's discussion was to possibly take a more proactive approach by having City staff engage with the site owner or developers to spur development on the site, or did the EDA wish to wait for requests to be submitted to the City from an outside party.

Commissioner Holden reiterated the white paper referenced the different tools available to the City, noting the problem with the Pace site was the property's ownership. She asked when the current lease with Pace was going to be up because right now the owner was collecting monthly rent from them. She noted the lease ending could be as early as this fall and said the property owner has no incentive to fill the site as long as they are receiving monthly rental payments from Pace. She stated there would be more opportunities once the lease expires because right now, the owner will not let anyone perform a study to see how much pollution was on the site that needs to be remediated. She said it would be irresponsible to send interested parties in that direction without knowing what the remediation costs are as that would be like a bait and switch. She agreed this was a wonderful project location but it seemed irresponsible to her to move forward until the Pace lease was done.

Commissioner Rousseau noted the parcel was 2.3 acres and she stated that she also was interested in knowing the lease end date. She said the EDA could then come up with a plan and see if there was greater interest and also the City could see if the owner or developer would be interested in working with the City. She stated that in the meantime, the white pages could be reviewed.

Commissioner Monson commented that the timeline seemed to line up well for the EDA to catch up on the white paper. She noted there were questions such as does the EDA want to be proactive? What do they want and how can they incentivize and figure out how to work with the landowner? She understood decisions made by the property owner are driven by economics, which was very normal. She said she would like to come up with ideas or plans that the EDA would like to see and if development could be incentivized, they should do this before the lease runs out. Once the lease runs

out then the incentive for the landowner to find the most economic choice may not align with what the EDA may want to see at this location, being a prime location in the city. She was in favor of figuring out what vision the EDA has.

Commissioner Holden said the Comprehensive Plan says what can go in the site. If the EDA does not want something particular going there that is a listed use in the Comprehensive Plan, then the EDA should address zoning and remove the use now so there is no problem later.

President Grant stated he does not want to incentivize the landowner especially prior to the expiration of the lease because then there is no incentive. He indicated that the owner still pays taxes and he agreed with **Commissioner Holden** that if there is something the EDA does not want to see there, the use should be taken out of the zoning.

Commissioner Monson commented that she understood that zoning and the Comprehensive Plan are tools and that exclusionary zoning is not always the greatest tool. She suggested incentivizing a certain use with a better vision and plan could result in having something there that the residents want, that the Council likes, and that also brings in taxes. She was in favor of using tools to try to create something the EDA wants to see happen there.

Commissioner Rousseau used the example of multiple carwashes based on a study about automotive in a certain area and asked if a specific area could be considered or would the zoning need apply to the entire zoning district (in this case, the B3 district).

Secretary Perrault replied that the City cannot “spot zone” and the zoning needs to be applicable to an entire zoning district.

Commissioner Holden agreed with **Commissioner Monson** about wanting something nice in the Pace site. She referenced the Comprehensive Plan and noted people complained they did not want two carwashes next to each other. She noted that the City does not own the land rather the owner is an out-of-state owner that is not going to be hungry until after not making a profit on the site. She used Split Rock as an example of a property that is still empty due to an out-of-state owner that charges New York rates instead of Minnesota rates. She wanted to be careful that decisions are made based on areas in Minnesota and not just on something someone wants.

President Grant noted the case study regarding Trader Joes in Shoreview. He said that the City of Shoreview paid for that and it was a substantial figure. He indicated that it is not inconsequential to do something like the EDA is proposing but the first step would be to distribute the white paper for review in order to understand what the options are. He said he does not see doing anything before the lease expires.

Commissioner Fabel said that he may have more confidence in the free market than others do. He offered that the City could advertise the property amongst the development community and see what kind of inquiries the City receives in order to gauge the real market.

Commissioner Holden stated that generally between two and four brokers market the commercial area in Arden Hills and while limited, they do try to heavily broker this property. She then stated that Bruce Carlson gave one of the first proposals and later said that he would not ever try to do business

again with this particular owner. She said the bottom line is there are brokers out there that are very aware of what is for sale in Arden Hills and they also know the vacant commercial properties in the area.

Commissioner Rousseau asked if the EDA wanted to revisit this topic once it knows when the lease is up.

President Grant commented there will be a more motivated seller at that time.

Commissioner Holden stated the white paper could be updated as it is probably 5 or 6 years old.

President Grant indicated the financing options could then be better understood by as the EDA and as a Council.

Commissioner Holden asked if there would be anything else done on Lexington Avenue where the retail and commercial businesses would suffer?

Public Works Direct/City Engineer Swearingen stated he did not foresee any traffic impacts other than final restoration of the green areas and confirmed that no major construction was planned.

Commissioner Holden asked what about Lexington on the north side of 694?

Public Works Direct/City Engineer Swearingen stated that area was redone in the late 2000's so should be okay for a while yet.

Commissioner Monson asked about the Snelling Avenue/Highway 51 project and was it happening in 2025.

Public Works Direct/City Engineer Swearingen stated Highway 51 was planned for 2026.

President Grant concluded the discussion and asked for a copy of the white paper, noting that once the Pace lease was up the EDA could revisit the issue.

B. Gateway Signs Discussion

Community Development Director Jagoe stated this was a topic discussed in 2022 and 2023. She noted that previously 7 locations were identified for potential gateway sign locations and that in 2018 there was a design put together for the Highway 96/Lexington location. She indicated that in 2023, City staff was asked to put together a list of additional locations for Council to consider. She noted information was compiled that included the 7 previously identified locations as well an assessment of new locations using information previously provided by WSB. She said the data also included information about the CIP and the 5-year projection for signs.

Community Development Director Jagoe stated City staff was seeking direction from the EDA Commissioners for next steps regarding the future installation of gateway signs. She noted if this was a low priority for the EDA due to budget impacts, gateway signs could be discussed at a later date and the City would reserve the amount previously allocated for the Hwy 96/Lexington Avenue location.

Commissioner Holden asked how realistic the current budget estimates were considering the initial estimates were provided 5 or 6 years ago.

Community Development Director Jagoe confirmed that a small amount was added to the initial 2018 budget amount.

Commissioner Rousseau asked when the City last rebranded its logo and if there was some kind of schedule for such.

President Grant replied the last rebranding was in approximately 2002.

Commissioner Holden stated she thought it was possibly even after that. She noted the topic has come up before but considering the projected cost of rebranding at \$200,000, it was decided to build a trail with those funds.

President Grant noted he does not remember the old logo being associated with the new City Hall location which was built in 2002.

Commissioner Rousseau indicated she just wanted to make sure a planned rebranding did not conflict with new gateway signs.

Commissioner Monson said she did not have a strong feeling about gateway signs but she would like to read the white paper before making any decisions.

Commissioner Holden discussed how it was important to the businesses to be associated with Arden Hills, especially since some have a Shoreview zip code. She said that she personally thinks smaller signs in certain locations are more important than a larger sign at Highway 96 at Lexington Avenue as Arden Hills would not do something near the scale of the Shoreview sign. She also said that when by the Dairy Queen on Lexington Avenue people do not know they are actually in Arden Hills.

Commissioner Rousseau asked if the EDA thought the EDC should review this topic and make a recommendation whether or not the City should move forward with a sign at Highway 96 and Lexington Avenue. She acknowledged the budgeted amount for a sign at that location would be half the size of the Shoreview sign and noted she had spoken with someone that said they did not realize Lexington Avenue at Highway 96 (on the west side) was Arden Hills.

Commissioner Monson stated she would not mind if the EDC reviewed this matter and would defer to that group as many are business owners in the city. She stated that she does not know if she can support putting all this money into signs and wanted to understand the financial tools available for the Pace site.

President Grant agreed it was fine for the EDC to look at this topic but noted the EDC needs to realize how important it was and still is to the businesses to be associated with being in Arden Hills. He briefly discussed water tower painting that occurred related to the previous rebranding that put our name a little bit on the map when you drive by, but said that does not suffice for the businesses who want to define that they are in Arden Hills.

President Grant commented that the 2025 budgeted amount of \$270,000 was for a sign on Highway that was designed for TCAAP in order to give a presence that people are in Arden Hills. He stated that the EDA may not want to give a portion of that budgeted money away to a business that would

probably come to Arden Hills anyway, noting we are in a corridor where businesses want to be. He stated that it is not hard to attract businesses as our location is the incentive.

Commissioner Holden pointed out that the City street signs have the City logo on it as well. She said this helps people recognize they are in Arden Hills, though the signs of course are not on the major streets. She said that small signs are okay as signs do not have to be giant or \$100,000 worth.

Community Development Director Jagoe stated she would follow up with EDC and bring this topic back to the EDA for discussion at a future meeting.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

5. EDA MEMBER COMMENTS

EDA Commissioner Rousseau noted that in Shoreview, some businesses such as the Churchill and Winkin' Rooster restaurants, have a sign in their business that says City of Shoreview along with their business name. She said that other cities have these little details so that when people walk into the businesses, they know what city they are in.

Commissioner Fabel stated that other signage would be more useful than gateway signs, such as at the start of a trail so that people know where they are. He wanted signage that identifies parks better than they currently do, as well as other signage that helps people use the resources in Arden Hills. He said this was better use of money in his opinion than advertising the city. He then noted that he could go along with **Commissioner Holden** and would be okay with smaller signs.

6. ADJOURN

MOTION: **EDA President Grant moved and EDA Commissioner Rousseau seconded a motion to adjourn the Economic Development Authority meeting. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

EDA President Grant adjourned the Economic Development Authority meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Julie Hanson
City Clerk

David Grant
EDA President

AGENDA ITEM – 3A



MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 27, 2025
TO: EDA President and Commissioners
FROM: Jessica Jagoe, City Administrator
SUBJECT: Gateway Signs

Budgeted Amount:
N/A

Actual Amount:
N/A

Funding Source:
N/A

EDA President and Commissioners Should Consider

The EDA President and Commissioners should discuss and provide direction to City staff on next steps for the potential future installation of gateway signs.

Background

At the April 22, 2024 meeting, the EDA President and Commissioners discussed the future installation of gateway signs. Commissioner direction was given to bring this topic to the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to receive their feedback on discussion items such as smaller versus larger gateway signs and sign location(s). This feedback would be considered by the City Council as part of their review of the 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan for budgeting purposes in 2025 and 2027.

Staff presented this topic to the EDC at their meeting on July 31, 2024. At that time, the EDC was in the early phases of developing strategies for business outreach which included a survey and in-person business visits to connect with business owners and representatives within the City. The EDC members felt these conversations were crucial ahead of creating a work plan that would prioritize future work tasks such as business outreach and support, and communications/marketing. Given the business engagement efforts that were underway, the EDC felt there was information that could be gathered from the businesses on community identity and needs of the business corridors. They requested to table this topic and add it to their work plan for future discussion. They also recommended that the City Council not prioritize this for budgetary purposes in 2025.

Discussion

Staff requests direction from the EDA on gateway signs for the proposed 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects. The proposed 2026-2030 CIP includes \$180,000 in 2026 and

\$130,000 in 2027 with a benchmark for the construction of gateway signs to be completed in 2027. This is a large expense, \$310,000, in the CIP and will have implications for the budget if the EDA wants to pursue this or not. The EDA could consider delaying the consideration of gateway signs another year to allow the EDC time to review this topic in 2026. Upon direction, staff would shift timing of project within the proposed 2026-3030 CIP. Additionally, the proposed 2026 budget includes \$100,000 programmed in the levy for EDA, which equates to 1.6%. This is consistent with previous budgets to primarily cover operating expenditures for personnel costs. The EDA could give direction to reduce or remove the \$100,000 levy in 2026.

Budget Impact

N/A

Attachments

A. Proposed 2026-2030 CIP

Attachment A

2026 thru 2030

Capital Improvement Plan

Arden Hills, MN

Project # 25-EDA-001
 Project Name Gateway Signs

Total Project Cost	\$310,000	Department	Economic Development
Type	Improvement	Category	Economic Devl Improvement
Priority	n/a	Status	Active
TCAAP	No		

Description

Install gateway signs at major entry points to the City. Potential locations for signs include: (1) Highway 96 at Round Lake Road, (2) Highway 96 at Lexington Avenue, (3) Lake Valentine Road at 35W, (4) County Road E at Lexington Avenue, (5) Lexington Avenue at County Road F, (6) Lexington Avenue at County Road D, and (7) County Road E at Highway 51. Potential sign locations are not listed in order of priority and are subject to change. There are three existing gateway signs in the following locations: (1) County Road E2 at I-35W, (2) County Road D at Cleveland Avenue, and (3) Lake Johanna Boulevard at the Roseville border. Staff has budgeted for the completion of an additional gateway sign in 2027 at a location to be determined.

Justification

Advance the economic development goals in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Implement the Guiding Plan for the B2 District. Work to better identify the entrance points to the City for businesses and visitors. Foster civic pride and community identity.

Expenditures	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Total
Construction/Maintenance	180,000	130,000	0	0	0	310,000
Total	180,000	130,000	0	0	0	310,000

Funding Sources	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Total
EDA General Fund	180,000	130,000	0	0	0	310,000
Total	180,000	130,000	0	0	0	310,000

Budget Impact

Annual maintenance costs for sign cleaning and care of landscaping is estimated by the Public Works Department at \$500 per sign annually.