

8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

Goal: Promote the development, redevelopment, and maintenance of a viable, innovative, and diverse business environment serving Arden Hills and the metropolitan area.

To achieve this *economic development and redevelopment goal*, the following policies are proposed:

- Work to create and strengthen existing partnerships between public and private agencies and institutions.
- Engage the private sector to encourage development and redevelopment projects that are beneficial to the City and identify incentives or programs where applicable that promote private sector investment.
- Encourage communication and cooperation between businesses, educational institutions, and the public sector.
- Promote business retention and expansion to enhance the existing economic base and provide applicable and appropriate resources.
- Capitalize on existing community strengths, such as location, freeway access, and a well-educated population.
- Identify marketing and promotion tools and techniques to attract commercial, office, residential, and industrial uses.
- Identify incentives or programs that provide housing choice.

Arden Hills has a strong local economy supported by a mix of size and types of businesses with an educated population, desirable residential neighborhoods, a central location in the north part of the metropolitan area, and relatively easy access to the freeway system. With more than 11,000 jobs in 2017, Arden Hills has more jobs than residents. While the City places a high value on its residential neighborhoods, the business community is an important component to the City's long-term success.

The long-term economic health of Arden Hills is not without its challenges. While the City's economic base is relatively strong, the City recognizes the need to maintain and enhance the economic base over the long-term. Except for the TCAAP redevelopment, the City has few vacant commercial or industrial properties remaining. Furthermore, some of the commercial and industrial buildings may not be cost-effective to convert to other uses and consequently may be nearing obsolescence. Redevelopment in certain parts of the City is almost certain to occur.

Economic development and redevelopment is linked to the other chapters of this Comprehensive Plan. Land use, housing, transportation, and public amenities impact the City's ability to retain its economic base and attract desired development.

8.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA)

In 1996, the City established the Economic Development Authority (EDA) with the following mission:

- Preserve and create jobs;
- Enhance the City’s tax base; and,
- Promote the general welfare of the people of Arden Hills.

Minnesota State Statutes guide the powers of the EDA; however, the EDA is generally able to purchase property, redevelop property, create economic development districts, study economic development needs, and perform other duties related to economic development. The members of the City Council make up the full EDA.

The EDA is an important tool in projects where the City seeks to take an active role in purchasing property, redevelopment, and/or public financing of projects.

8.2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

The Economic Development Commission is a nine member body that advises the City Council on economic development activities. The Commission was established to facilitate positive interaction with the business community and to advise the City Council and Economic Development Authority on economic development, redevelopment, and related community development issues. The Commissioners may be residents or non-resident business representatives; however, at least four of the Commissioners must be Arden Hills’ residents.

8.3 GUIDING PLANS AND REDEVELOPMENT

Guiding Plan for the B2 District

In 2008, the City accepted the “Guiding Plan for the B2 District.” This Guiding Plan provides a vision for the entire B2 Zoning District, which generally includes those properties along County Road E between Highway 51 and Lexington Avenue, Connelly Avenue, and Pine Tree Drive. The City seeks to promote high-quality redevelopment in this district as the market allows to enhance its value for the overall community. The City and Ramsey County completed infrastructure improvements along County Road E in 2015, including streetscape enhancements and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

TCAAP Master Plan

The TCAAP Master Plan was approved by the City in July 2015 and amended in December 2016. The Master Plan will guide the redevelopment of the TCAAP site to achieve the City’s goals of high development and design standards, defined residential

neighborhoods and commercial districts linked by streets, trails, and sidewalks, energy resiliency and sustainability, and ample parks and open space.

Commercial, Industrial, and Higher Education Study

In September 2017, the City accepted the “Commercial, Industrial, and Higher Education Study” report. The study examined the existing commercial and industrial climate in the community, the plans of Bethel University and the University of Northwestern, the existing zoning regulations for higher education uses, and how other communities regulate higher education uses. The findings included:

- That the existing commercial and industrial markets are strong in Arden Hills;
- There are few sites available for redevelopment;
- A mix of employment and consumer uses are important; and,
- That Arden Hills has more higher education students per capita than any other community in Minnesota.

The result of the study was the creation of an INST – Institutional zoning district for the higher education institutions and the removal of the higher education use from all other zones in Arden Hills.

Chapter 6 (Land Use) identifies several other areas where the City may benefit from completing small area plans or reviews of existing zoning regulations. These efforts would also help in improving the economic competitiveness of the City. The following list is not intended to be all inclusive and other opportunities may arise over time:

- A Guiding Plan for the Red Fox/Grey Fox/Lexington Avenue Area;
- Review of B-4 Retail Center Zoning District regulations;
- Establishing vision for the developable Gateway Business properties;

Review of existing industrial and commercial zones to ensure correct balance of employment versus consumer uses.

8.4 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In order to advance the policies and ideas identified in this chapter, the following implementation strategies could be used:

- Identify the desired long-term mix of businesses.
- Identify and promote the market strengths of Arden Hills.
- Use the small area planning process or a similar planning process to develop more detailed long-term plans for the business areas to better manage redevelopment as it occurs.
- Develop design standards to encourage the construction of high-quality buildings and designs.

- Work to strengthen and encourage communication and collaboration between businesses and institutions, such as Bethel University, Northwestern College, and other significant hiring establishments.
- Promote community education for residents of all ages and utilize the skills of residents where feasible.
- Identify infrastructure deficiencies and work to resolve deficiencies.
- Identify potential partnerships and/or developments that could enhance the City's infrastructure and/or quality of life.
- Identify constraints to development, redevelopment, and retention.
- Evaluate the City's existing Business Retention and Expansion efforts and establish long-term goals for the program.
- Encourage the creation of a pedestrian friendly environment--link major roadways, destinations, and businesses to transit, pathways, and neighborhoods.
- Evaluate the land use regulations in the commercial zones to provide flexibility for economic development while requiring high-quality and mixed-use buildings and uses with minimal impact on residential areas.
- Develop a database to assist businesses in identifying appropriate and available locations within the City.
- Provide information for businesses and developers on the City web site.
- Assess the Business Subsidy Criteria and City Public Financing Guidelines as needed to ensure the adopted policies are aligned with community goals.

The above strategies should not be considered all-inclusive. New opportunities and strategies should be identified to further advance the City's economic development and redevelopment goal and policies.