

CITY NEWS

MAY 2025
ISSUE 26

City Fees: Investing in Services

Like many Oregon cities, Ashland is facing a challenge: the cost of running the City—everything from police and fire to parks and trails—is rising faster than the money coming in. This is due to a mix of caps on revenue, rising healthcare and pension costs, and increasing service demands.

To help maintain services in the face of rising costs, the City of Ashland relies on fees to pay for specific programs. These fees show up on your monthly utility bill. City Council has unanimously supported adopting specific fees this year, recognizing that the programs the fees support have gotten more expensive over the years.

What's changing?

If Council adopts these fees, you will start seeing it on your utility bill after July 1:

- **Public Safety Fee:** Increase from \$1.50 to \$5 per month on your electric bill. This fee funds our Emergency Medical Service programs (our ambulance 911-response).
- **Wildfire Risk Reduction Fee:** Increased from \$3 to \$7 per month on your water bill. This fee supports year-round wildfire mitigation efforts and two wild fire-specific employees.

Both fees are proposed to include an annual inflation adjustment, meaning the fees will increase every year based on how much inflation has occurred. This helps ensure we don't fall behind again.



Photo Bob Palermi

What about Parks?

To help fund some of our Parks Recreation programs, including the North Mountain Park Nature Center, Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool, Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink and the Ashland Senior Center, staff proposed adding a \$5 monthly Parks Fee to your utility bill. City Council did not support this fee, so, starting in July, these services will likely have reduced hours or may no longer be available. *This fee may be discussed again during the Citizens' Budget Committee process.*

Why It Matters

It costs money to provide city services and, like you're facing with grocery bills, insurance costs and other daily needs going up in cost, the City has seen a significant increase in how much it costs to provide services. Increasing the fees that pay for these services helps us provide these services now and into the future.

Want to learn more?

Check out our **"Better Together"** series and **"Show Me the Money"** OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Southern Oregon University) presentations at ashlandoregon.gov/OLLI to get a deeper dive into how our city works, where your money goes and how we're working to keep Ashland a great place to live. Information on the Budget Process is available at ashlandoregon.gov/BudgetProcessResources.

Adoption of the Budget

City Council is slated to adopt the Budget on June 3, 2025. Information on City Council meetings at ashlandoregon.gov/Council.

What's Inside...

- City Council
- Office Hours
- Coffee & Conversation
- Be Better Prepared this Fire Season
- Tree of the Year Nominations
- June Events
- Mercury Awareness
- Walkable Ashland



Better Together | ashlandoregon.gov | 541.488.6002
As of July 1, 2025, the City Newsletter will be digital only



Tonya Graham
Mayor



Dylan Bloom
Councilor



Jeff Dahle
Councilor



Gina DuQuenne
Councilor



Eric Hansen
Councilor



Bob Kaplan
Councilor



A new Councilor will be appointed at the June 3 City Council Meeting.

CITY COUNCIL April 2025 outcomes/highlights

- Unanimously approved the amendment of Ordinance 3257 (AMC 9.04) that relates to weeds and noxious vegetation. The amendment will extend the fire season to May 1 to October 15 (previously May 15 to September 30), and updated the time frame for weed abatement to May 1 to June 1 (previously May 15 to June 15).
- Approved the Capital Improvements Program for years 2025 to 2031.
- Unanimously supported to increase the Public Safety Fee from \$1.50 to \$5 for each electric meter and to increase the Wildfire Risk Reduction Fee from \$3 to \$7 for each 3/4 inch water meter. A new fee for Parks was not unanimously supported.

For more information on meetings, agendas, minutes and how to contact our elected officials, visit ashlandoregon.gov/PublicMeetings.

Info on the upcoming **2025–2027 Biennial Budget** at ashlandoregon.gov/BudgetProcessResources.

Council Office Hours

All City Councilors meet with their constituents from time to time. In addition to impromptu meetings, some have opted for regular meetings or **office hours in City Hall**.

- Councilor **Jeff Dahle**: 3rd Monday of each month from 2 to 3:30 p.m.
- Councilor **Bob Kaplan**: 1st Monday of each month from 1 to 2:30 p.m.
- Councilor **Gina DuQuenne**: 1st Thursday of each month from Noon to 1:30 p.m.

These office hours provide an additional opportunity for residents to voice concerns, ask questions and engage with their City Councilors on important issues. City Hall is located at 20 E Main St in Ashland. The front door to City Hall will be open during the times listed above.

Your City Manager, **Sabrina Cotta**, is also available for office hours each week on Thursday, from 8:30 to 10 a.m.

COFFEE & CONVERSATION Connect with City Elected Officials & Staff

Join us for an informal gathering with City elected officials and staff! There’s no set agenda – just an opportunity to get to know each other, ask questions and enjoy a cup of coffee on us! Here’s the upcoming schedule:

- May 13, 1:30 to 3 p.m. at Oak Knoll Golf Course
- July 16, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Garfield Park
- Sep 10, 3:30 to 5 p.m. at Enders Shelter
- Jun 17, 1 to 2:30 p.m. at Railroad Park
- Aug 12, 5 to 6:30 p.m. at Hunter Park
- Oct 14, 1 to 2:30 p.m. at North Mountain Park Pavilion



Be Better Prepared this Fire Season!

ashlandoregon.gov/BetterPrepared



Protect Ashland: Weed Abatement Starts Now!

The **Weed Abatement Program** begins in May, and it's crucial to reduce fire risks in our community. Cutting grass and weeds and removing flammable plants and debris near your home can greatly improve the chances of your property surviving wildfire. The deadline for compliance is June 1, 2025.

Ensure your property is safe by cutting grass and brush to a height of four (4) inches or less and removing invasive vegetation such as blackberry, thistles, broom and ivy. Timely weed abatement helps protect your home and the surrounding community.

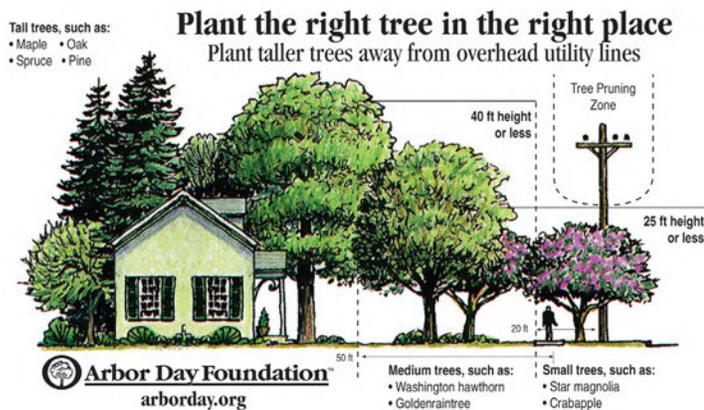
If you see overgrown vegetation in your neighborhood, report it through SeeClickFix under "Weed Abatement Concern." (Scan the code to report!) For more details on requirements, visit ashlandoregon.gov/WeedAbatement. Take Action today—help make Ashland safer for everyone!



 Mark your calendar for the final event in our **Better Prepared Wildfire Series** on Wednesday, July 16—**What's Your Plan? When every second counts: Evacuation Planning & Practice**. This event is hosted by Ashland.news and supported by Ashland Climate Collaborative, Ashland Together and the City of Ashland. More at ashlandoregon.gov/BetterPreparedSeries.

Right Tree—Right Place

The Arbor Day Foundation promotes planting the right tree in the right place to boost tree health, lower maintenance and reduce wildfire risk. Proper tree selection and placement—especially in fire-prone areas—can create defensible space and help slow the spread of fires. This also includes preventing trees from growing into power lines. More info at arborday.org.

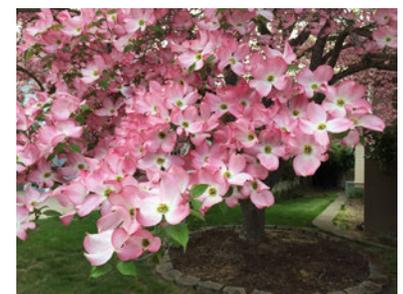


Nominations are open for the 2025 Tree of the Year

Do have a tree in Ashland that you love? Now is the time to nominate your favorite! Nominations will be open through May 31, 2025.

Here's what to include in your nomination email:

- Send your nomination to planning@ashlandoregon.gov
- The subject line should say, "Tree of the Year nomination"
- Include one or two photos of the tree
- List the location of the tree—address of nearest house or cross streets.
Note that the tree must be visible from the street or sidewalk, and may not be located in a city park.
- List the common name or the species of the tree, if you know it.
- Please help us by writing a sentence or two about why you think the tree is worthy of being our Tree of the Year, but that is not required.



2017 Tree of the Year—Dogwood

Ashland has chosen a Tree of the Year since 1988*. View the previous winners via our [StoryMap](#). This and other StoryMaps can be found via our home page, ashlandoregon.gov, and view maps.



*A tree was not selected in 2016

June Events

Real-Life Training Ops for Local FIREFIGHTERS

Southern Oregon Wildfire School offers hands-on wildland firefighting training for structural firefighters June 20–21, with live fire drills and air ops practice in the Ashland area.



This training opportunity allows local structural firefighters to gain firsthand experience in wildland firefighting in a controlled environment.

Registration information available at orrita.com/classes.



Ashland Airport Day

Celebrate the world of flight at your **city-owned** airport! This annual event will take place on June 7, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., with free admission and parking!

The event offers a unique opportunity to explore and connect with your airport community. The Airport is located at 403 Dead Indian Memorial Rd.

Here's what to expect: Skydivers, Smokejumpers, Ashland Robotics Club, ScienceWorks presentation, Radio controlled plane exhibitions, Airplanes on display, Food trucks, Kid's activities, Drones & more!

More on your airport at ashlandoregon.gov/Airport.



The Summer PlayGuide is out

Visit AshlandParksandRec.org to view summer programs and register TODAY!

Help Protect Our Environment: Mercury Awareness Matters

As part of standard environmental practices, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) requires cities to help spread awareness about **mercury**. It's important that we all do our part to minimize exposure and prevent mercury from entering our environment.

The City of Ashland will now share information once per year to help raise awareness. Please take a moment to view the current information provided by the DEQ and scan the QR codes* for helpful resources and additional information—ashlandoregon.gov/MercuryAwareness.

If you have items containing mercury, such as thermometers, fluorescent bulbs or batteries, please dispose of them properly at a hazardous waste drop-off site.

Through education, awareness and responsible action, we can make our environment better, together!

*QR codes for additional information can be found in the reference brochure on the City website.

Creating a more WALKABLE Ashland



Ashland's zoning rules support walkable, people-friendly places—but there's room to grow. New updates will help make every neighborhood safer, healthier and better connected, with design that supports walking, biking and transit.

Learn more and get involved at ashlandoregon.gov/walkabledesign.

What's Next: The project team will present draft code amendments

City Council Study Session—5:30 p.m. on May 19 | Planning Commission Study Session—7 p.m. on May 27