



From the departing President of the STL Hills SBD Board

by Tom Bene, President, St. Louis Hills SBD

As my term as President of the St. Louis Hills Board of Commissioners for the St. Louis Hills Special Business District comes to a close at the end of this year, I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to our community for your support and engagement over the past two years for the successful roll out of the St. Louis Hills Special Business District.

Board member service is voluntary, and each member serves staggered terms. There will be at least two openings each subsequent year for Board positions. This is key for new voices and perspectives to join the Board. Thomas Bené, President, and Brian Hoeltge, Treasurer, will be rolling off and Kevin Kozminske and Chip Kastner will be taking over those two Board openings. The Board will then elect new officers in early 2026.

There is still an open Board "Rental Representative" seat for anyone who leases or rents a business or home within the boundary. Please send any inquiries to taxingdistricts@pcd-stl.org if interested in learning more. It is the Board members who ultimately vote on presented proposals for use of SBD dollars.

Since our inception from August 2023 through October 2025, we have hosted the following:

- 29 Board Meetings (held in person on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Buder Library)
- 26 Security Committee Meetings (held the 2nd Wednesday of each month via Zoom at 5:15 p.m.)
- 22 Executive and Finance Committee Meetings (held the 2nd Thursday of each month via Zoom at 4:00 p.m.)

All meeting information, Zoom links, and agenda materials are posted online at www.stlhillssbd.com.

Since the last newsletter, I wanted to take a moment to update you on status of other projects recently funded by the SBD:

- Chess table umbrellas installed at Willmore Park to provide shade over chess tables donated by St.

Louis Chess Club. 50% SBD funded / 50% funded by Alderman Ward Capital. Completed in September 2025.

- Francis Park Handball Courts restoration. Project led by Friends of Francis Park. Fully funded by the SBD. Completed in September 2025.
- Francis Park crosswalk improvements. Project led by Alderman Oldenburg. Project 25% funded by SBD / 75% funded by Alderman Ward Capital. Expected completion in Spring 2026.
- Issuance of the 2024 audit report for the SBD.

As always, the focus of the SBD is providing an overnight security patrol and supporting neighborhood security initiatives. Funds available after covering security programs can then be used to supplement improvements and projects within the boundaries of the district. The SBD tax for 2025 will remain capped at \$250 per parcel and generates around \$500,000 annually. The cap roughly equates to 2% of your Real Estate tax bill.

The SBD was set up for a 7-year life and 2025 will be its third year of tax collection. As that end date approaches, the SBD will go away unless the community elects to renew the SBD; thus, by no means is this a permanent tax.

I am grateful to all who have assisted in this process and extremely proud of everything we have contributed back to the neighborhood. Please visit our website at www.stlhillssbd.com as that is the main source of information and plenty of links to past projects, financials, and meeting information can be found there. Thank you for taking a chance on the SBD and thank you for allowing me to serve you in this capacity.

Are you a renter in the neighborhood?

The St. Louis Hills Special Business District is looking for a Rental Representative on its board. If you are interested, please email taxingdistricts@pcd-stl.org.

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SLHNA

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Tom Oldenburg

82nd State Representative

Nick Kimble

Streets & Property update

by Sal Easterley

The Streets and Property Committee began convening in July and promptly collaborated with St. Louis Hills groups and municipal offices to address problematic properties. With valuable input from local owners, a comprehensive list of nuisances was assembled, leading to measurable improvements; several yards have been cleaned and a rental property with prior police involvement is now seeking new tenants and may soon change ownership.

In partnership with the Security Committee, flyers were distributed requesting camera installations at strategic locations, resulting in three new Awarenet sites that will be operational shortly. An additional camera has been restored to service, enhancing support for a property requiring attention.

Late this summer, our team worked alongside several city offices to provide assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness who appeared in significant numbers in both parks. Municipal officials, together with the city police, engaged these individuals and offered available services. The prompt response and commitment to addressing the issue were greatly appreciated.

Moving forward, we encourage residents to report any concerns regarding their streets or neighborhoods through the Citizens Service Bureau, which serves as the primary channel for officially tracking properties and facilitating subsequent follow-up and resolution. They can be contacted at csb@stlouis-mo.gov or 314.622.4800 (Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)



Area resident Lynn Venhaus shared this photo with us, saying:

“I sometimes take early evening walks near twilight.”

“I took this lovely photo of St Raphael statue (one of my fave spots)... I liked how the landscaping looked.”

Have a photo of a favorite neighborhood spot you'd like to share? Email us at newsletter@stlhills.com.

Art in the Park: A Celebration of Community

by Amanda Lovelace

Francis Park was alive with color, music, and community spirit as Art in the Park 2025 drew another record crowd of neighbors, families and visitors on the last Sunday in September. More than 80 talented artists showcased their work, from painting and ceramics to jewelry and photography, while live music, local food vendors and a lively kids' creation station made the day one to remember. Volunteers once again proved to be the heart of the event, keeping everything running smoothly from setup to tear-down.

Art in the Park continues to thrive thanks to the dedication of neighbors, volunteers and sponsors who believe in celebrating creativity close to home. We extend sincere thanks to our generous sponsors for investing in local arts and community, and to the Friends of Francis Park and our incredible volunteer team for making the day shine.

The 2026 co-chairs, Sidney Cleveland, Amanda Lovelace and Claire Pannhavong, are already building on this year's success and incorporating community feedback to make next year's event even better. Event updates and artist applications will be available in early 2026.



Booths along the Francis Park Lily Pond during Art in the Park. Photo provided by Amanda Lovelace.

Thank you to everyone who created, volunteered, sponsored and attended for making Art in the Park 2025 another unforgettable celebration of art and community in St. Louis Hills. We can't wait to see you back in Francis Park on Sunday, September 27, 2026.

Jefferson City update

I hope you all have had a great summer and fall. As always, our district has put its best foot forward these past few months, showcasing all that City living has to offer. From parish picnics to pickleball tournaments, the return of Art in the Park, summer concerts, and so much more, South City has shined. It is the countless volunteers giving their time, talent, and energy that make all of these events possible. Thank you to everyone who contributed in ways big and small to the success of these events. Our area showing what the city can be, and in many cases is, to tourists and our entire region is incredibly important to stabilizing and growing St. Louis' population.

In early 2026 I will report back to Jefferson City for what is sure to be an interesting session. After the second special session in September, countless lawsuits, and many petitions being gathered to attempt to undue the Governor's priorities, along with looming budget cuts, emotions are running high in the capitol. As always, my goal is to represent the people of the 82nd district, our shared values, and work to get meaningful things accomplished for the City of St. Louis. There are several bills I am looking at pre-filing to build on the momentum

by Nick Kimble, 82nd District State Representative

of last session where I was able to work in a bipartisan manner to bring meaningful change to laws affecting the city. Ensuring that our government entities can function efficiently to deliver progress, which I believe will help grow the region, is always my number one priority. We must think regionally and row in the same direction in order to reverse the population loss our City has suffered in recent decades.

As we approach a new year and new session in Jefferson City, if you have ideas on legislation you think would help, or have comments on legislation that is filed, please feel free to contact me. I am happy to talk through anything or answer any questions.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at Christmas parties, tree lightings, and at neighborhood events over the next few months. Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve St. Louis Hills and the broader 82nd District.

I hope you all have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year with family and friends!

In service,
Nick

Alley recycling has shifted to drop-off recycling locations

by Priscilla Buehrlen DeGuire

If you have seen St. Louis City refuse trucks combining trash and the contents of the blue recycle bins, the drivers are following the City's revised recycling plan which became effective in August 2025. Residents with alley dumpsters are now being asked to take their recycling to drop-off locations. The Drop-Off Recycling locations are collected separately from trash routes and are taken directly to Republic Services (MRF) for processing. Recycling has not changed for residents who use a recycling roll cart.

The City cited the reasons for this change as high costs, ineffectiveness and extreme high levels of contamination. According to Operation Brightside during the fiscal year 2025, over half of recycling collected was rejected at the Republic Services Material Recovery Facility (MRF). Rejected materials are rerouted to the landfill, yet the City pays full recycling costs without receiving the environmental benefits or economic returns. This is especially detrimental as recycling costs the City almost five times more per ton than trash.

"We are reviewing [the new recycling method] and it seems very successful," says Kathryn Jamboretz, a member of Mayor Cara Spencer's team. "We saved \$100,000 in the first month alone, while still recycling 80% of what was recycled during the same month last year. So nearly the same results with huge cost savings. This provides refuse crews extra capacity to do the basics." Drop-off locations are listed by zip code at <https://www.brightsidestl.org>. There are currently 38 drop-off location sites; every resident is supposed to have a recycling drop-off within one mile of their home.

St. Louis Hills area locations include Fire Engine House 31, 4408 Donovan at Sutherland, 63109; 4227 Clifton, 63109, Ward 2; and 5000 South Kingshighway, 63109, Ward 2.

Elysia Russell, Sustainability Director, stated the current blue recycling bins will not be removed from alleys. All blue alley dumpsters are now collected as trash/landfill waste. "We're in the process of adhering new trash stickers for the blue alley dumpsters," Russell said.

STL City Recycles has an outreach plan to keep residents updated about added drop-offs, reductions in contamination, and what to/not to recycle, saying: "We are developing a FAQ page

which will be available soon. Operation Brightside houses STL City Recycles. Please encourage neighbors to follow @STLCityRecycles on social media and sign up for the Recycle Coach App. Visit stlcityrecycles.com for more information."

For convenient transport to drop-off sites, consider using an in-home recycling bin to keep your recyclables loose, clean and dry. Pick up your free bin at the Saint Louis City Recycles office. If transporting recyclables in a plastic bag, please reuse or dispose of the bag in a nearby trash can. Plastic bags are not accepted in drop-off recycling bins. If in doubt, leave it out. Here are some helpful recycling hints:

Always recycle common household items like paper, cardboard, and food or beverage bottles;

Never put plastic bags, Styrofoam, food waste or sharps in your blue bin;

Keep recyclables loose, clean and dry;

Always flatten cardboard.

The Operation Brightside Recycling Center, operated by Earth Circle Recycling at 1660 S. Kingshighway, is no longer in operation as of November 30, 2022. The drop-off location at the old Earth Circle site is open M-F 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Drop-off locations will have information posted on the sides of the blue bins stating what items are recyclable.

At this time, the \$14/month flat rate bill will not change. This fee covers comprehensive waste services, including trash, yard waste, recycling, bulk pick-up, and 12 annual drop-offs at a City transfer station.



These bins located in alleys are no longer utilized for recycling. Photo by Tim Putnam.

St. Louis Hills hosts first annual Halloween decorating contest

by Sarah Seger

This October, St. Louis Hills residents brought out their spooky side for the neighborhood's first-ever Halloween Decorating Contest — and what a frightfully fun success it was! From creepy creatures and haunted graveyards to creative themes and glowing pumpkins, neighbors showcased their Halloween spirit in spectacular fashion.

After reviewing all the entries and tallying votes from our community, we're thrilled to announce this year's winners:

- Scariest: 6051 Bishops Place
- Best Theme: 6258 Walsh
- People's Choice: 5809 Delor
- Best Business: Southside Wine

Each of these winners brought something unique to the neighborhood — from bone-chilling details to clever, cohesive themes and plenty of community engagement.

A huge thank you to everyone who decorated, voted, and helped make this first year such a success. The enthusiasm and creativity truly captured the spirit of the season and brought neighbors together in the best (and spookiest) way possible.



Why we love living in St. Louis Hills

by Teresa Turin-Lis

I like living in St. Louis Hills because I can walk everywhere, including to shops and restaurants. And on a walk with my dogs I like to talk to my neighbors. It's the best. And it's beautiful! -Kathy Benoit

I like the community and the niceness of all the neighbors and how everybody's willing to help. -Kristin M

I like the community we have here and how close we are to Francis Park. They always have all kinds of good events going on over there. I like how they use the area around the pond. And, of course, it's great to have the pickleball courts and Rockwell Beer Garden. I like just how nice it is here. -Eric Miller

We love living in St. Louis Hills because of the strong sense of community, esteemed history, and beautiful architecture! -Michael and Lainey

I was born in LA and lived there for 31 years before I moved here and bought a house with my fiancée, who has started a bakery business. I just love how everybody is so nice;

it really feels like a great community here. I've gotten to meet all my neighbors up and down the street. You really do feel like you're in a beautiful place. -Robert Varga

This is my neighborhood. This is my park. I walk it every day and I try to keep adding to its beauty. -Janet Mannhard, who lives in St. Louis Hills and tends the gorgeous gardens in Francis Park

The best part of living in St. Louis Hills is our awesome neighbors. They were so welcoming from the first day we moved in. We also love walking our dog through the neighborhood up to Francis Park. -Pete and Bobbie

I love living in St. Louis city. We raised our family here. It's just such a nice feeling of community in St. Louis Hills. I also love it because our daughter bought our first house and my husband and I moved to a ranch house in this area. So now our grandson is experiencing the same good things our daughter experienced growing up here. -Debbie Russo

We like living in St. Louis Hills because we can walk anywhere. We've got lots of places to eat up on Hampton. It's just the ideal location for us. -Barb and Tom L

St. Louis Hills has great architecture on every block. And it's all different. You have little ranch styles and enormous ranches like the one Stan Musial lived in. It's great living here for the parks alone. Both Francis Park and Wilmore Park are amazing. And the area is so quiet. -Jim & Terry Dolan

My neighbors are great. We all know each other. They all come out for events, like my fire pit on Halloween. Everyone is considerate and keeps an eye out for each other and our property. And it's a very well-maintained neighborhood. -Shawn Richter

Most every day, rain or shine, hot or cold, I walk Francis Park. It's beautiful. I bring my grandkids here, too. There's always so many things to do and see. So you know those who don't live in St. Louis Hills want to be a part of it, too. -Sandy Brady from Affton

2025 St. Thomas Orthodox Romanian Festival

by Fr. Tiberiu Opris, Rector, St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

The 2025 St. Thomas Orthodox Romanian Festival was a resounding success—thanks be to God! Held on October 4-5 on our parish grounds at 6501 Nottingham, this year's festival brought together hundreds of guests from across the St. Louis area for a weekend filled with faith, fellowship, and authentic Romanian hospitality.

Visitors were treated to a rich celebration of Romanian culture, featuring traditional foods such as sarmale (cabbage rolls), shish-kabob, and homemade desserts like baklava and cheese pita. The delicious aromas filled the air as guests enjoyed the food and joyful atmosphere.

Live music from Carmen Feraru kept the spirit high throughout the weekend, while children enjoyed face painting and fun games. Smiles and laughter filled the church yard, creating memories that will last well beyond the festival weekend.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who made this event possible — the volunteers who offered their time and talents in countless ways, and all those who contributed through donations and sponsorships toward our parish's most important annual fundraiser.

Special gratitude also goes to our supporters and friends from sister Orthodox Churches throughout the St.



Louis Metro Area, who helped spread the word and joined us in celebration.

By God's grace, the Romanian Festival once again served as a joyful witness of our faith, heritage, and community spirit. We are deeply grateful to everyone who joined us and look forward to welcoming you again next year!

St. Raphael the Archangel celebrates 75 years

by Lucas Pendry

St. Raphael the Archangel held its annual school picnic on September 12-13. This picnic was uniquely special, as the SRA community celebrates its 75th anniversary this year.

Despite scorching temperatures, hundreds of our neighbors came together to partake in food, fun, and fellowship. The festivities started on Friday evening with carnival rides and copious amounts of pulled pork sandwiches, nachos, and funnel cakes (and maybe a beer or two). JigJam – who the Riverfront Times called one of the best Irish bluegrass bands in the world – capped off the first night with an amazing performance on the main stage. Saturday kicked off with nearly 200 SRA students parading through the neighborhood followed by celebration of Mass outdoors on the parking lot. The heat could not keep the picnic down! After another wonderful afternoon of games and rides, the picnic crew served over 250 Hodak's chicken dinners—an SRA tradition that satisfies year after year. After dinner, Well Hungarians put on a spectacular show that had the entire crowd on its feet. And just like that, SRA picnic 2025 was a wrap!

The picnic would not be possible without the work of an army of volunteers, to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude. You know who you are! Thank you also to our wonderful sponsors. If you or your business have an interest in

sponsoring next year's picnic at any level, please reach out to Lucas Pendry at (309) 368-9373 or lucas.pendry@gmail.com. And finally, a heartfelt 'thank you' to everyone in the neighborhood for your patience and support as we transform our little corner of South City into a rocking good time one weekend every Fall. We hope you'll join us next year! SRA School Picnic 2026 is tentatively scheduled for next September 18 & 19.

ST LOUIS HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD

HOLIDAY PARTY



JOIN US

BUFFET DINNER, 3 HOUR OPEN BAR, MUSIC, & DANCING





Publication of the
St. Louis Hills
Neighborhood Association

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To view all past newsletters, and
for information on upcoming events,
visit www.stlhills.com.

Visit the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association
on Facebook at www.facebook.com/stlhills

Want to edit this newsletter?

We are looking for a new editor for
this newsletter. Responsibilities
include soliciting and proofreading
articles, laying out the newsletter and
coordinating distribution. Ideal
candidates will be proficient in
Adobe InDesign.

Email newsletter@stlhills.com
if interested!

Christmas Tree Lighting

Join us for the annual
Christmas tree lighting in
Francis Park on Sunday,
November 30th!

Keep Our History Alive



The SLHNA History Committee
is collecting and preserving
historical records of
our neighborhood



If you have photos,
newspaper clippings,
correspondence,
newsletters...

Please contact
Rick Palank
rpalank@gmail.com



Saint Louis Hills
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Tree Planting Program

🌿 Street Tree Planting in St. Louis Hills: Growing a Greener Future

Urban trees play a vital role in enhancing the character and livability of our neighborhoods. They improve the quality of streets and public spaces, boost property values, reduce stormwater runoff, and support the health of our environment, residents, and local wildlife. However, factors like aging, severe weather, and climate change can threaten the vitality of our urban canopy. That is why investing in tree replacement, reforestation, or planting programs is essential to preserving and expanding our green infrastructure for generations to come.

🌿 Why Trees Matter

Trees offer a wide range of benefits:

- Increase safety and walkability by shading sidewalks and calming traffic
- Lower temperatures and reduce the urban heat island effect
- Improve the appeal of parks, plazas, and public spaces
- Raise adjacent property values and provide direct benefits to homeowners
- Absorb stormwater, helping to prevent street and property flooding
- Capture carbon dioxide, cool the air, and support biodiversity by providing habitat for urban wildlife

🌿 Street Tree Planting in St. Louis

The City of St. Louis Forestry Division plants street trees in the public easement—typically the grassy area between the curb and sidewalk, known as the tree lawn. Planting new trees in this space is a public good, contributing to the health, comfort, and well-being of all St. Louisans. As older or hazardous trees are removed, new plantings are necessary to maintain and grow the city's tree population.

🌿 St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association Partnership

The St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association is proud to partner with the City's Forestry Division through the Street Tree Planting Program. This initiative offers residents the opportunity to have a tree planted—free of charge—in the tree lawn or easement adjacent to their property.

🌿 Tree Selection & Care Guidelines

Residents are welcome to request a preferred tree species and planting location. However, final placement will be decided by a certified Arborist from the City's Forestry Division to ensure the right tree is planted in the right spot for long-term health and safety.

The residents are asked to support the growth of newly planted trees:

- Watering regularly, especially during the first 2–3 years
- Applying mulch to retain moisture and protect roots

For detailed watering and mulching tips, please visit the Forestry Division webpage.

🌿 How to Request a Tree

To request a street tree, email trees@stlhills.com with the following details:

- Your name
- Address and zip code
- Email and phone number
- Specific location for planting (e.g., front or rear of property) *
- Tree species request*

*Residents can request a tree species and planting location, but a Forestry Division Arborist will ensure that the right tree is placed in the right location.

City residents can also request a street tree at no charge for the tree lawn adjacent to their property by contacting the Citizens' Service Bureau.

Important Neighborhood Contact Information

**St. Louis Police (SLMPD) Non-Emergency
Number: 314-231-1212**

Commander, 2nd District SLMPD:
Captain Tom Zipf, 314-444-0100

Police Officer Liaison, 2nd District SLMPD:
Officer Gus Karagiannis, 314-444-0161
gkaragiannis@slmpd.org

Problem Properties Officers:
Anna Biondolillo, ambiondolillo@slmpd.org
Dave Krapf, dekrapf@slmpd.org

Crimestoppers: 866-371-TIPS

City Fraud Hotline: 314-641-8600

Citizens Service Bureau: 314-622-4800

Refuse Division: 314-353-8900

Neighborhood Improvement Specialist:
Andrew Hernandez, 314-657-1377
hernandez@stlouis-mo.gov

SBD Website: www.stlhillsbd.com

SLHNA Website: www.stlhills.com

SLHNA Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/stlhills/>

Friends of Francis Park Website:
www.friendsoffrancisark.org

Friends of Francis Park Facebook:
www.facebook.com/FriendsOfFrancisPark/

Friends of Willmore Park Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3275363809382426/>

2nd Ward Alderman:
Tom Oldenburg, 314-896-0204
oldenburgt@stlouis-mo.gov

82nd State Representative:
Nick Kimble, 573-751-4220
Nick.Kimble@house.mo.gov