REPORT / RECOMMENDATION

To: Edina Transportation Commission

Agenda Item #: VI. A.

From: Karen M. Kurt, Assistant City Manager

Action ☐
Discussion ☐
Information ☒

Date: March 19, 2015

Subject: Vision Edina Update

Action Requested:
Review draft Strategic Vision and Framework Report and share feedback with City Council.

Information / Background:
Vision Edina is a broad-based and inclusive community visioning process. The Vision Edina initiative worked with local residents, organizations and businesses to explore:

- What is unique and important about living in Edina?
- Where is there opportunity or need to evolve or change?
- How can we continue to progress to keep the city relevant and attractive to current and future residents and businesses? What is our competitive edge?

Vision Edina will serve as an important foundation for other strategic efforts, such as the City's Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plans. When finished, Vision Edina will replace Edina Vision 20/20, which was developed in 2000 and updated in 2003.

The City Council is seeking feedback from Board and Commission members prior to their work session on April 21. Members can share feedback 1) individually using Speak Up Edina or email at mail@edinamn.gov or 2) as a group by submitting comments or meeting minutes to the Assistant City Manager.

The goal is to approve the draft Strategic Vision and Framework Report during the month of May.

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VISION EDINA

CITY OF EDINA
DRAFT STRATEGIC VISION and FRAMEWORK

This vision and framework is an outcome of the broad-based community engagement and visioning process, conducted between September and December 2014

January 2015

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PARTNERS

VISION EDINA

Vision Edina represents a fresh look at the future for the City of Edina. This work builds on the previous Edina Vision 20/20 planning work that was undertaken 15 years ago. Since that time, the world has changed. We are subject to stronger external trends and forces, and we face renewed pressures with increasing population and developmental growth. The future we face is one filled with greater uncertainty, more rapid pace of change and emerging new opportunities. Vision Edina allows us to step back and look again at the big picture, and decide how we continue to evolve to remain a relevant, competitive and progressive city.

Vision Edina is a long-term strategic framework that helps our community understand and guide the important decision-making that will impact the City's future. This framework lays out the key issues identified by our community, which we need to be focusing our attention and resources on, over the coming years. The Vision Edina work and publications have been developed through a broad-based and inclusive community visioning process conducted in 2014.

It is proposed that the current City of Edina mission statement remains unchanged. This is a potent and relevant mission statement that has, and continues to, serve the City well.

> **"Our mission is to provide effective and valued public services, maintain a sound public infrastructure, offer premier public facilities and guide the development and redevelopment of lands, all in a manner that sustains and improves the uncommonly high quality of life enjoyed by our residents and businesses."**

EDINA'S VISION STATEMENT

Edina holds a well-earned reputation as a city of choice. It is the model of a successful, mature, and progressive urban community, which remains relevant in a modern and evolving world. We maintain our heritage and attractiveness, and afford our residents the highest quality of life, while actively embracing the future. Within the context of North America and the Twin Cities, Edina is known as a distinguished location that provides the ideal environment to raise families, run businesses and simply enjoy life.

The features that define our future community include:

Inclusive and Connected

- Our community embraces diversity and cherishes the contributions of all residents and stakeholders, whatever their background, age or interests.
- The community offers an enticing mix of residential development that retains and builds upon our strong foundation of single-family housing, but also includes a dimension of higher density multi-family options, especially for the young and the old.
- Edina strives to promote a healthy demographic mix that builds on the tradition of multi-generational families, and also provides entry opportunities for new people seeking to raise families, start businesses, and join our quality community.
- Transportation options of all kinds are available, allowing residents to be connected via a network of transportation modes that fosters mobility for people and connects the community together.
- Our cohesive neighborhoods are able to retain their unique individual character, while being linked seamlessly together into the broader fabric of our city, and beyond to the larger metropolitan area.

Built-to-Scale Development

- The community has worked hard to create an innovative and long-term comprehensive development policy, which strikes the right balance between renewal and progress, and protection and preservation. This has allowed the City to navigate the period of intense redevelopment and create a richer more vibrant city, without losing our historic neighborhoods.
- Our development policy promotes and encourages innovative ideas, and we have formed a working partnership between the community and the developers where creative solutions are found to create the best long-term outcome from new developments.
- Our community's commercial and retail base has been significantly enhanced through the creation of more mixed-use locations, sympathetically woven throughout our neighborhoods. These small nodes enhance our neighborhood feel and quality of life, and provide important community gathering points.

- We have proactively developed planning procedures and policies that allow the character of our neighborhoods to be protected and enhanced, and that local development reflects the aspirations of the neighborhood associations and residents.

Sustainable Environment

- Edina has taken its responsibility for the environment seriously. As a community we have focused and invested in world-class citywide resource management systems, built around the leading principles of environmental sustainability.
- We have implemented sophisticated systems, including recycling, energy efficiency and management of water, to the point where we have substantially reduced our overall environmental impact and significantly increased the efficiency in our resource use.
- Our planning has integrated the best-proven standards of sustainable building and environmental stewardship into all aspects of our city planning and building codes. We are regarded as a leader in the integration of environmental management into city management and function.
- Our community continues to treasure and protect our public spaces and parks, and these have been further enhanced to build biodiversity and natural ecosystems, which in turn support and purify our natural environment.

A Community of Learning

- Edina has continued to evolve as a highly engaged community, where residents share the responsibility for decision making and working collectively toward the common vision.
- We recognize and appreciate the significant value of our education system, and we continue to work and invest to strengthen and grow this key community asset.
- As technology and society has evolved, so has our prized education system. We have a high quality, future orientated education system, which undeniably prepares our students to thrive in an increasingly competitive and globalized world.
- As residents, we never tire in our pursuit of knowledge and understanding. We collectively promote the value of engagement and education, and we ensure that we have the capacity as a community to understand and remain agile in a fast changing and complex world.

Future-Oriented

- As a community, we continually look forward and are always working to remain competitive, relevant and innovative. We stand on the foundation of our traditions, but are not afraid to adapt and change as the city evolves.
- Our city leaders and organizations are actively engaged in regional leadership and in ensuring the interests of Edina are represented at the level of the Twin Cities metropolis, but also beyond. Our City's priorities and interests are fundamentally integrated into the broader regional planning.
- Edina is willing to use its privileged position, resources, and expertise to apply new ideas and technology, and we actively invest ourselves in finding and creating innovative solutions to the emerging challenges of living in a major city.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA, ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Eight key strategic focus areas have emerged through the Vision Edina process. These areas are built from the key drivers and issues identified early in the Vision Edina process, and have carried through the extensive community and stakeholder engagement process. These focus areas, and the attendant issues and actions, represent emerging priority areas that can both leverage and guide the future evolution of our city. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, and in no way displaces the underlying foundational work that continues on our key areas of infrastructure, community services, governance, and fiscal management. Rather, these strategic focus areas represent key emerging priorities, and reflect the core drivers of our future that can be summarized in the categories of '**Balancing Edina's Redevelopment**', and '**Enhancing Our Community Fabric and Character**'.

1. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT MIX

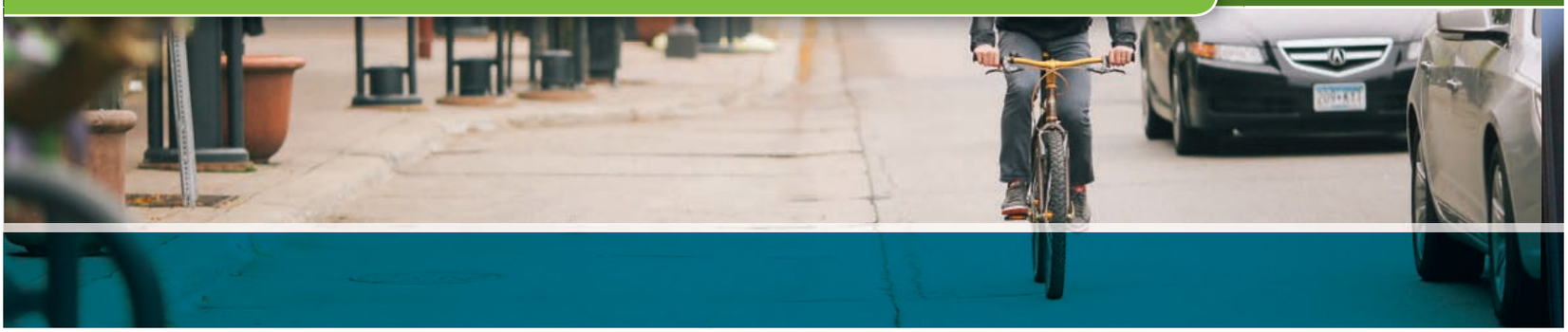
The issue of residential property development has been repeatedly raised throughout the Vision Edina process. The City has been faced with a number of redevelopment pressures and challenges across numerous areas of the city. Residents strongly favor a continued focus on the single-family housing nature of the majority of the city neighborhoods, but there is increasing concern about the trend and impact of so-called 'teardowns' on the community. There is also recognition of some need to develop more multi-family options in order to serve the needs of young professionals and our senior citizens, and create some diversity in housing affordability.

ISSUES

- Residential neighborhoods continue to serve as the defining characteristic of the city, and there is a high desire to protect and enhance such neighborhoods.
- Residents take a great deal of pride in their homes, and express concern about the escalating redevelopment pressures facing some neighborhood areas.
- Edina continues to face competition from neighboring communities that claim to offer a similar quality of life while also offering more available land for development.
- The community must balance the needs of the families that have defined its character, with an aging population that desires to 'age in place.'

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Further encourage the development of the neighborhood associations and the overall neighborhood concept. Define the unique character and brand of each of the well-established neighborhoods, and explore innovative planning guidelines to allow preservation and enhancement of the desired neighborhood visual appeal.
- Pursue further planning and development options that protect and locate key amenities, such as parks and community facilities, within the neighborhood framework to allow neighborhood centers and focus points to further evolve.
- Continue to explore options and opportunities for new multi-family development opportunities in the Southdale, Pentagon Park, and Grandview areas, and on the appropriate fringes of other mixed-use areas and public spaces.



2. TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

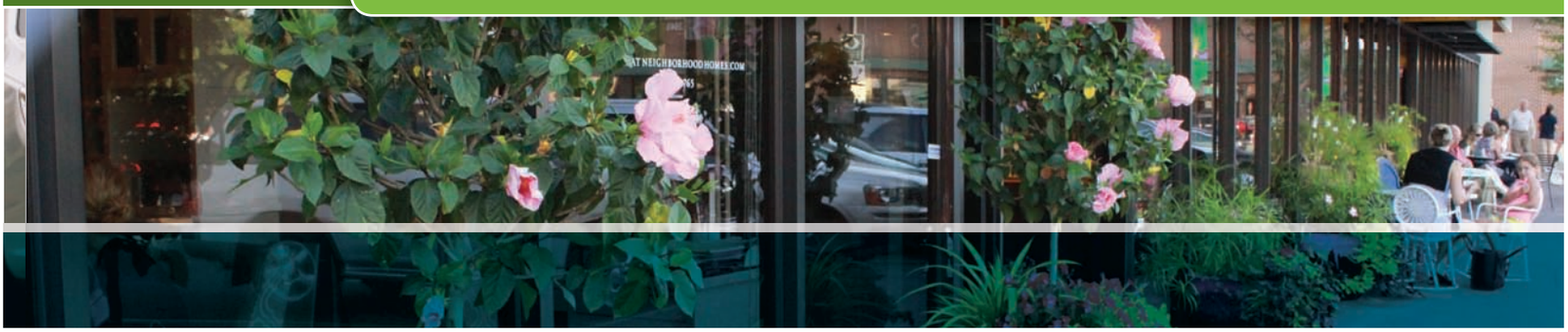
Participants in the Vision Edina process expressed a strong desire to continue to expand a variety of transportation options to both reduce the dependency on automobiles, but also to enhance the community's ease of connectivity. Access to a variety of biking and walking trail options is a key amenity that helps residents feel connected to their community, and improve the overall quality of life. A diversity of transportation options is also highly preferred among younger residents. However, such options have met resistance in some areas, largely in response to concerns about immediate local impacts. The larger community sentiment of support should be highlighted to advance policies and developments deemed to be in the larger public good.

ISSUES

- The community's infrastructure continues to age and be stressed by increasing traffic volume.
- The majority of Edina's employed population works outside of the City and is therefore reliant on the connectivity and maintenance of the roadway system for their livelihood.
- The community overall is highly supportive of increased diversity and integration of transportation and local access options, but has a lesser appetite for a transit-forward strategy.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Undertake community education and promotion, to highlight the broad support and benefits of more diverse transport options, and particularly to highlight the support expressed across multiple age demographics.
- Continue to work actively with Metro Transit to expand transit options to Edina, and ensure that Edina residents do not become further isolated from the larger transit infrastructure.
- Continue to develop an integrated long-term plan that lays out a future orientated and ambitious transport network that covers multiple modes of transport and takes into account potential impacts of future technology on transport modes and corridors.
- Continue to promote and develop the sidewalk, trail and bike lane networks to improve accessibility and connectivity throughout the City, and beyond.



3. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT MIX

Edina has traditionally embraced commercial development along a relatively narrow corridor along France Avenue, and originally anchored by Southdale Mall. While this practice has been successful and has led to additional growth along France Avenue and elsewhere, Vision Edina participants have expressed a desire for easier and more proximal access to small retail options and other amenities. Many participants of the engagement process highlighted the unique and appealing experience of the 50th and France precinct. New development opportunities can build upon this example to develop neighborhood nodes of an appropriate scale, in other locations across the City.

ISSUES

- Edina has historically favored large-scale commercial development. Best practice and community desire has moved towards also including smaller-scale models.
- Some residents currently feel somewhat disconnected from common amenities, including banking, dry cleaning, groceries, and pharmacies – and this is an issue likely to be exacerbated with an aging population.
- The community has a significant once-off redevelopment opportunity in Pentagon Park and other areas key areas, but as of yet, there appears to be no clear community consensus as to the best and most appropriate uses and ultimate outcome.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- In light of the escalating developmental pressures facing the Council and City, the City should as a priority renew its broader land use plan. This plan should examine and consider the future broad fabric of the community, and begin to define key nodes of higher density mixed use, and potential nodes of small-scale commercial opportunity, embedded in more of a neighborhood context.
- More consideration of scale and appropriate mixed use could be used in the review of new commercial development proposals, especially to take into account the compounding impact of numerous developments in close proximity, and the concerns about this overall impact on streetscape, environmental aspects, transportation and utilities and services.
- The community should further examine and consider the viability of developing small neighborhood-based business nodes, to provide a range of local amenities and services.
- Edina should continue to explore strategies that promote the continued vitality of existing core retail zones around Southdale Mall, and also actively pursue economic development strategies targeting specific professional services clusters. These approaches could enhance the core economic underpinning of the local economy.

4. LIVE AND WORK

Edina's community has a large number of high wage earners, most of who commute to areas outside the city for work. Therefore, Edina is highly dependent on the vitality of the regional economy to maintain prosperity. At the same time, the community also recognizes a growing desire, especially among young professionals to both live and work in the same location. There is evidence to suggest this represents part of a larger societal trend, and could have important implications to the future location appeal of Edina. The City currently offers limited opportunities to do so, as a mismatch exists between the wage-earning potential of many of the employment opportunities in the community and the relatively high cost of quality housing. However, the City is very well endowed with recreation facilities, which offers excellent outdoor and sporting amenities.

ISSUES

- Many of the city's residents commute outside of the city for work. This creates a disincentive to young professionals who may aspire to live and work in Edina.
- The community does not possess significant spaces for collaborating, start-ups or telecommuting.
- Many key staff in organizations across Edina cannot afford to live in the community, creating a potential service disconnect.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Edina should support the development of a start-up or entrepreneurial climate in the city, and bring together key stakeholders to develop an integrated economic development strategy.
- The community should consider the inclusion of incubators or co-working spaces in any new redevelopment projects and in mixed-use proposals.
- The City should promote the development of a mix of commercial amenities, including restaurants and cultural amenities, which are attractive to young families and professionals and can further act as connection points or hubs within the fabric of neighborhoods and development areas.

5. EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

Edina Public Schools are recognized as one of the principal assets of the community. The school district and its institutions are routinely recognized as among the best in the state and nation. Participants in the Vision Edina process routinely singled out quality education as one of the defining characteristics of their preferred future. However, respondents also expressed a desire for the greater use of technology in the classroom, expansion of cultural and 'globally-focused' learning opportunities, and the promotion of lifelong learning.

ISSUES

- Education policy and funding are largely the responsibility of other entities, placing the City in an advocacy and partnership role.
- Respondents desire an educational system that maintains high quality while also embracing new techniques and technologies.
- While Edina Public Schools and other local institutions adeptly provide K-12 education, the community is largely responsible for providing lifelong learning and other cultural education opportunities.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- The community should promote a culture of learning among all of its residents, and continue to find ways to explore, understand and present best practice across a range of topics. In particular, it is important to expand the scope beyond regional expertise and explore best practice and emerging trends on a global scale.
- The City should continue to foster their productive working partnership with Edina Public Schools. These two entities represent some of the key leverage points in the City, and combining their influence could accelerate the progress on key initiatives.
- The City and school district should continue to explore future opportunities for expanded partnerships between the school and existing employment opportunities within the city, thereby helping develop career paths and local workforce development.

6. POPULATION MIX

The demographics of the Twin Cities are constantly changing as new residents are attracted by strong regional employment prospects, economic tailwinds and quality cultural and public amenities. Edina is well positioned to attract many of these new residents because of its high quality of life. Edina's population is also undergoing a generational transformation as its population continues to age, creating a new group of active retirement senior citizens with different housing and amenity needs. Developing an effective balance in each of these areas is critical to ensuring future sustainable growth.

ISSUES

- The perception of an 'Edina Bubble' carries with it the stigma of being an exclusive and exclusionary community.
- The relatively high cost of housing is also viewed as a perceived barrier to entry into the community, especially for younger families.
- The needs of an aging population are often in conflict with the preferences of the younger residents the community seeks to attract.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Edina Public Schools should continue to expose students, and parents, to a variety of cultural experiences. This will serve to foster a global mindset, while also cementing the education system as a key population draw.
- Edina's civic organizations should promote a welcoming image of the city. These efforts should be equally directed towards new residents and new businesses. These organizations should also take a lead role in publicizing the City's cultural amenities.
- The City should continue to prioritize amenities that meet the needs of residents of all ages. The City should continue discussions about the effects of an aging population, as referenced in the Vision 20/20 process. Similar efforts should be used to engage young adults, including high school students.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

There is a growing awareness of the impact that the built environment has on the natural environment, and the individual and collective responsibility we all have towards good environmental stewardship. Community residents and stakeholders believe that Edina can take an active and ambitious internal and regional leadership role in promoting more comprehensive recycling, smart building, and energy efficiency practices. These themes couple well with the parallel benefits in smarter urban planning, increased transportation options, and application of technology.

ISSUES

- Residential and commercial developers have little incentive to balance environmentally friendly building practices with market pressures, or in fact to provide leading edge examples of energy efficient and environmentally sensitive construction.
- Currently, residential waste removal and other environmental services are poorly coordinated, and in some cases resulting in multiple providers serving the same streets, contributing to noise, environmental impact and inefficiencies.
- The need for green spaces is well recognized, but the use of these areas currently follows more traditional 'green lawn' approaches rather than integrated habitat zones.
- Developmental pressures are likely to continue to place increased demands on the City's infrastructure and contribute to concerns about decline in environmental quality in the city.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Develop a comprehensive citywide environmental management plan, that explores and includes best practice in terms of water management, biodiversity, green space management, street scape preservation and waste management.
- Partner with energy and utility service providers to educate residents on the importance of energy efficiency in their daily living, and promote energy efficiency and smart building practices at all City-owned properties. This could include well established practices such as publishing data on the carbon emission, waste levels and recycling levels.
- Identify a series of environmental flagship pilot projects to bring stakeholders together and begin exploring creative solutions. Examples could include: waste collection and management across the city; recycling and green waste management; environmental overlays on development projects such as Pentagon Park; and, utilization of available areas such as Fred Richards Park as community gardens and biodiversity spaces.
- Develop incentives for individual households to take an active part in the overall city responsibility to environmental management, including reducing nutrient loads in run-off, local recycling and efficient resource usage.

8. REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

Edina has long been recognized as one of the premier communities in the Twin Cities. It has also historically assumed a leadership role as it served as the home to many influential individuals. The City has also been historically viewed as somewhat progressive in its policies and practices. Recently, this reputation has somewhat faded as other neighboring communities have jumped to the fore, and Edina has approached a 'fully built out' phase. The existing phase of redevelopment, and the expanding pressures from the surrounding metropolis offer the need and opportunity for Edina to once again emerge as an innovator, seeking and implementing creative solutions to local and regional issues.

ISSUES

- City leadership has generally focused on local issues, in large part driven by community needs and expectations and the trend towards conservatism that comes with an aging population.
- The city's size limits its relative influence when compared to larger neighboring communities. This fully built nature constrains the city to internal redevelopment and forces it to deal with new issues, previously not encountered.
- The community has regional economic importance, but its cultural importance has been somewhat more limited. However, there is potential for Edina to have some destination value, beyond just as a residential abode.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- City leaders should actively advocate for Edina's interests in the Metropolitan Council and other regional bodies. In addition, the City should form particularly close functional connections with the immediately neighboring cities, as they share many aspects and challenges.
- City leaders should continue to inform residents on the impact of issues of regional importance, and work to better integrate an understanding of the importance of being an active participant, and leader, in the larger regional system
- City leaders and residents should collaborate to discover, develop and apply new best practices in environmental sustainability, aging in place, educational quality, and other broad areas of consensus. These efforts will ensure that Edina builds the future intelligence capacity to retain a future-focused worldview, and act as an example and role model to other cities in North America.

CONCLUSION

The Vision Edina process has presented an opportunity for the community to come together and explore the longer-term future. The current period of intense redevelopment, which is occurring within Edina, represents an important juncture in the community's history and evolution. This is coupled with a more gradual generational shift, as the predominant Baby Boom generation moves through the demographic tiers. The resultant situation is where Edina stands poised before some significant choices about future trajectory and outcomes. This has been well articulated in the Vision Edina process.

The community has chosen a path forward that represents some significant change and reinvention, but without losing touch with the important family values and rationale that has always defined Edina as a community. The path ahead is not without its challenges and will require careful balancing of differing priorities, aspirations and desires. The collective decision making process required to move forward will set Edina apart as an intelligent, engaged, thoughtful and forward looking city. It will require maturity and patience on behalf of the citizens and leadership, and recognition that the complex resident mix, which makes Edina interesting, also brings with it differing opinions and perspectives. Understanding the importance of the common good over personal self-interests will be critical to build alignment around important future shaping decisions and actions.

The population and leadership of Edina possess and exhibit more than sufficient knowledge and experience to guide the City toward the vibrant and balanced future desired by the residents and stakeholders.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISION EDINA

The Vision Edina initiative has aimed to define a shared vision for the City of Edina. The vision and strategic framework is an outcome of a broad-based and inclusive community visioning process. The engagement portion of this important planning process ran from September to December 2014, and gathered significant community input.

From a strategic planning perspective, Vision Edina examines the issues that have been identified as having the highest priority within the community. The initiative examined future trends in cities across North America and the world, and how generational values are changing. This was also linked to local aspirations, values and desires for the future. This process enables a clearer understanding of what people might be looking for in Edina in 2030 and beyond. Vision Edina has represented an opportunity for all residents to have a say and contribute to creating the shared future vision. Vision Edina is part of the overall community process to update the long-term vision for the City of Edina, and will also serve as an important foundation for other strategic efforts, such as the City's Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plans.

The City of Edina partnered with Future iQ Partners, an international consultancy company, to design and facilitate the process.

For more information on the Vision Edina project and the City of Edina, please contact:

Karen Kurt, Assistant City Manager

City of Edina
Tel: + 1 952-826-0415
KKurt@EdinaMN.gov
www.EdinaMN.gov

VISION EDINA

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