



**To:** Mayor and Council

**Agenda Item #:** V. A.

**From:** Jordan Gilgenbach, Communications Coordinator

**Action**

**Date:** March 17, 2015

**Discussion**

**Subject:** "Speak Up, Edina" Report

**Information**

### **Action Requested:**

Receive report on February 2015 "Speak Up, Edina" discussion about drive thrus.

### **Information / Background:**

Since June 2012, the City of Edina has used the online engagement website, [www.SpeakUpEdina.org](http://www.SpeakUpEdina.org), to collect ideas and opinions from residents. One of the City Council's six strategic priorities for 2014-2015 is Communication and Engagement: "To clearly understand community needs, expectations and opinions, the City will consistently seek the input of a broad range of stakeholders in meaningful and interactive communication." A goal of that is to host a monthly discussion on [www.SpeakUpEdina.org](http://www.SpeakUpEdina.org).

In February 2015, the discussion topic centered on Edina's drive thrus. In this discussion, the City posed the following questions:

- Should the City consider prohibiting new drive-thrus? What are your general opinions of drive-thrus?
- What types of businesses work best with a drive-thru?
- Cars can often idle in a drive-thru line for several minutes. Do you have any environmental or health concerns over idling cars?

The discussion was open for comments between Feb. 2 and March 5, 2015. During that time, 31 comments were made. Additionally, 760 users visited the site 1,039 times, garnering 3,982 page views. Note, during this same period, a discussion on the Redevelopment of the Former Public Works Site, Vision Edina and the Wooddale/Valley View Small Area Plan was also active. All but three commenters in this discussion were from Edina.

Attached are the comments for both discussions.

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# Speak Up, Edina!

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## Discussion: Drive Thrus

Drive-thrus are allowed in Planned Commercial Districts (PCD) and have different regulations depending on the use, according to City Code Sections 36-613 and 614. There are more than a dozen drive-thrus in Edina for businesses such as restaurants, banks and pharmacies.

What do you think about drive-thrus?

3 Topics 31 Answers Closed 2015-03-05

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Prohibit](#)

Should the City consider prohibiting new drive-thrus? What are your general opinions of drive-thrus?

13 Responses

### 13 Responses



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer 29 days ago

The case for prohibiting them should only be made if they are creating problems - e.g. litter at drive through fast food places, security issues at bank drive thrus or pedestrian safety issues where car and pedestrians are crossing paths. One cannot really imagine a new bank being put in without a drive through - it would be too much of a competitive advantage, and certainly would be likely to provoke law suits suggesting a pattern of favoritism toward "grandfathered in" businesses, which I don't think the city would want to deal with.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Joel Stegner



[Sean Hayford Oleary](#) 22 days ago

Drive-throughs have a lot of costs to the community -- low-value land use from extra parking/driving aisle space, aesthetic concerns, additional access points to public streets, and pollution from idling cars. I think they should be prohibited, except when there's a really compelling case for their inclusion.

That said, this seems like a relatively low-level problem, when Edina still allows major projects to go in separated from the street by parking (like the Westin hotel or the Wickes furniture redevelopment). Although idling is only an issue from a drive-through, parked cars right against the sidewalk are just as much an eyesore and as low-value a land use as (slowly) moving cars through a drive-through.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Sean Hayford Oleary



[Stacy Solow](#) 22 days ago

We live in a city that is very cold for more than half the year. For people with small children, being able to do errands without getting out of the car is a wonderful benefit. I think they should be encouraged to the extent they don't interfere with traffic, etc.

3 Supports



[Francy Matson](#) 21 days ago

Also necessary for our Handicapped population. We could use lots of drive through ideas.

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to Francy Matson

comment...

Reply to Stacy Solow



[Bonnie Guari](#) 22 days ago

Drive-thrus make life in our cold climate much more bearable. Where I bank and where I get my prescriptions are based on whether or not they offer the

convenience of drive-thrus. When I had young children, drive-thrus were essential. Now, I often have a dog with me in the car and I would prefer not to leave him in the car on very hot or very cold days.

Traffic patterns around drive-thrus should always be considered before installation. The morning line for the drive-thru for the Starbucks on Gus Young Drive often spills out onto Eden Avenue, blocking traffic.

3 Supports

Reply to Bonnie Guari



[James Wotipka](#) 22 days ago

I believe that drive-throughs are acceptable as long as they do not exit onto a city street.

1 Support

Reply to James Wotipka



[Jim Schedin](#) 22 days ago

I'm not opposed to drive thru's as long as there's an acceptable minimum setback from any residential district and they don't impede normal street traffic (such as the previously mentioned circumstance that frequently occurs on Eden Ave).

1 Support

Reply to Jim Schedin



[Kathy Sandy](#) 22 days ago

I'm sure Edina's elderly and handicapped appreciate being able to stay in the safety of their car in the winter to get a Starbuck's, pick up a prescription, or perhaps in the future, pick up a healthy meal (hint hint) without having to nervously shuffle over crusty snow and ice. Minnesota winters aren't getting any shorter, and baby boomers are not getting any younger! As far as exhaust fumes and idling in long lines, how about any new businesses take advantage of technology and phone apps to do pre-orders and even eventually pre-pay. In and out with efficiency.

4 Supports

Reply to Kathy Sandy



[Harriet Busdicker](#) 18 days ago

The elderly seem to be taking a back seat in plans for Edina. Some of us can't ride our bikes any more or walk to stores. Drive throughs make life easier.

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to Harriet Busdicker



[Jim DeSimone](#) 18 days ago

They are a positive thing for many uses. Allow them.

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to Jim DeSimone



[Dianne Latham](#) 14 days ago

comment...

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Dianne Latham



[Dianne Latham](#) 14 days ago

Drive throughs should not be allowed near residential areas due to the traffic and pollution. They should only be allowed in commercial districts with substantial setbacks

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Dianne Latham



[Julie Risser](#) at February 26, 2015 at 9:03pm CST

The manner in which this issue is presented to citizens is not particularly helpful - it does not promote informed discussion. At minimum people should have a map that shows the districts where drive throughs are now legally permitted - many might be surprised to learn they are legally allowed in places such as the Wooddale and Valley View area - a location where houses and relatively small businesses are compatible. As the ordinance exists we could have entities with drive through windows go into neighborhoods that really are not well-suited for them. As it exists drive through windows can be constructed 20 feet from a residential property. The City should post the ordinance and a zoning map.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Julie Risser

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## Discussion: Drive Thrus

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What do you think about drive-thrus?

3 Topics 31 Answers Closed 2015-03-05

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Best Uses](#)

What types of businesses work best with a drive-thru?

10 Responses

10 Responses



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer 29 days ago

Banks, pharmacies and food establishments. A rapid lube store or car wash is essentially a drive thru, but I don't know that it is looked at it that way. It could be a good thing for a day care center particularly if there was someone at the door to receive the child. I'm not sure that it would work as well for picking up a child - given the security issues.

2 Supports

comment . . .

Reply to Joel Stegner



**Bonnie Guari** 22 days ago

We are accustomed to banks, pharmacies, and fast food restaurants that have drive-thru lines. There may be a greater push from retailers to add drive-thru facilities to accommodate shoppers who like to purchase items on line and pick them up at a local store. It would not be surprising to see grocery stores and stores like Office Max, Staples, Best Buy, Target, Walmart, etc. looking at drive thru options for pickups and returns.

2 Supports

comment . . .

Reply to Bonnie Guari



**James Wotipka** 22 days ago

I think it would be best to limit drive-throughs to those businesses that are situated on their own property thus eliminating interference with other business owners.

1 Support

comment . . .

Reply to James Wotipka



**Kristan Frend** 22 days ago

I think about drive-thru every week, wishing there was a healthy fast food and drug store drive thru (I use the Walgreens drive-thru for Rx's, but I wish I could purchase a few things without having to go into the store). I have a 1 & 3 year old, and it's such a hassle to get them in and out of the car for a gallon of milk. I refuse to take them to traditional fast food drive-thrus like McDonalds, but am annoyed that healthier fast food options like Chipotle do not have a drive-thru. Lately I drive out to Eden Prairie's People's Organic because they have a drive-thru with healthy organic food available. I wish we had something similar here. I'm sure there are many of moms and dads like me wondering why establishments like this aren't more common.

1 Support



**Kathy Sandy** 22 days ago

I agree completely, Kristan. We need more healthy food establishments with drive-thru access. Or perhaps even a service where a designated employee brings out pre-ordered and pre-paid food to your car. You leave a much bigger carbon footprint having to drive out to Eden Prairie....not to mention Edina is missing a potential market as well as an opportunity to make life easier for the young families we want to attract.

1 Support



[Kristan Frend](#) 22 days ago

I agree with you Kathy. I feel guilty driving out there especially when there is a People's Organic at the Galleria less than 2 miles from my house. But when the kids are sick, dad is out of town, and it's freezing outside, I make the drive. This gets me thinking - I wonder if People's Organic at the Galleria would offer takeout delivered to your car? I go there weekly and will ask about the possibility...

1 Support

Reply to Kathy Sandy

Reply to Kristan Frend



[Kathy Sandy](#) 22 days ago

This got me thinking about our grocery stores that have drive-thru's for loading groceries. These appear to be very underutilized. Jerry's and Byerly's might want to consider offering an on-line pre-order/pre-pay service for purchasing and picking up grocery items utilizing their drive-thru lanes. They could limit it to a manageable number of items to prevent over-utilization. It would not require much more than a simple and inexpensive on-line application, with maybe 1 or 2 extra employees, in exchange for a lot of company good will and a potentially sizable increase in revenue.

1 Support

Reply to Kathy Sandy



[Diane Greig](#) 19 days ago

I like having the option to drive-thru at the pharmacy, coffee shop and maybe add the library as a drop-off.

1 Support

Reply to Diane Greig



[Jim DeSimone](#) 18 days ago

I think if a business can increase business, create jobs and in turn create a greater tax base, then allow a drive through. In many parts of the U.S. and other countries liquor stores offer drive through sales. Good. If there is a market for drive thru health food then a business will meet that demand.

0 Supports

comment . . .

Reply to Jim DeSimone



[Jon DeMars Victorsen](#) 17 days ago

The extent of idling time is so insignificant when compared to waiting at a traffic light, I do not see the issue. I use drive-thru's extensively, because I do not want to leave items in our car which could be stolen. I have used the pharmacy drive thru, especially after surgery and unexpected ER visits...and when I am sick and do not want to expose other people to a cold or virus. Finally, at what point do we end the definition of a drive thru, would not gas stations and library book drops be included?

1 Support

comment . . .

Reply to Jon DeMars Victorsen

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What do you think about drive-thrus?

3 Topics

31 Answers

Closed 2015-03-05

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Environment](#)

Cars can often idle in a drive-thru line for several minutes. Do you have any environmental or health concerns over idling cars?

8 Responses

8 Responses



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer 29 days ago

Obviously that concentrates pollution, particularly if the drive through is covered. In terms of pollution, the experts would have to tell me whether turning off and restarting the car might in some cases be equally polluting. Also, without the drive through, if one person stays in a car that is left running while the other person goes in, the car actually might be in the idle position for longer. Every business could have an electric sign showing the waiting time for the drive through (estimated - just like the waiting time for a table at a restaurant) and with that information, some people would 1) turn off their cars and wait or 2) park their cars and go in, to reduce their expected waiting time. Both would reduce congestion/pollution. In other words, business owners have some responsibility to share estimated waiting time with their customers.

## 2 Supports

comment...

Reply to Joel Stegner



[Tim Hutchens](#) 22 days ago

Turning off and restarting a car will cause greater pollution due to the engine flooding with gas at start and oil, it is also harder on the car and in the long replacing cars is more taxing on the planet than idling (but that is outsourced outside of Edina so I am guessing the readers are not worried about that), why not mandate clean cars/EV's city wide and quit worrying about such unimportant issues? Seriously signs? as if people in MN are going to turn their cars off while they wait and freeze to death or sit in silence? and all of this is as if current traffic congestion, poorly maintained roads, car stalls, poorly timed street signs or the ever present buses idling around town, or parents waiting to pick their kids up from sports or school do not cause more idling and pollution than this quick drive through transaction, I would rather suggest design solutions to expedite the process for everyones benefit. Design drive thru for speed and ease of use, train staff to multi-task and put personel on drive through only activities, automate or prepare things in heavy demand in drive thrus, and quit trying to hinder business with needless discussions and regulation. No wonder Edina is so stale.

## 1 Support



[Sean Hayford Oleary](#) 19 days ago

The rule of thumb that I've always heard is 10 seconds (see [http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/the\\_green\\_lantern/2008/05/is\\_an\\_idle\\_car\\_the\\_devils\\_workshop.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/the_green_lantern/2008/05/is_an_idle_car_the_devils_workshop.html), which references a more formal study). For fast food, it's probably not worth it to shut on and off, since a line like that moves quite quickly. But for pharmacy, and especially for car washes, I think it's worth shutting off, unless there's some compelling medical or weather reason you need to leave it running. It's crazy that people routinely leave their car idling for 20+ minutes a long car wash line.

## 0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Sean Hayford Oleary

comment...

Reply to Tim Hutchens



[Sean Hayford Oleary](#) 19 days ago

One note: Richfield recently made a change to encourage businesses with drive-thrus to allow bicycles to use the drive-thru. This is especially important for some businesses that keep their drive-thru window open greater hours than the main establishment. If drive-thrus are to continue to be permitted, they should at least be open to all vehicles, including non-motorized ones.

## 0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Sean Hayford Oleary



**Jim DeSimone** 18 days ago

Pollution is a factor with any car. But the leap to poisonous levels is pretty huge, and the alarmist reaction to idling is overstated. I think allowing bicycles to use drive throughs is problematic at best. Like bike lanes being painted onto streets to create hazzardous passage this should be avoided.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Jim DeSimone



**Dianne Latham** 14 days ago

Idling presents a significant pollution problem, which is reduced if more drive electric or hybrid cars, or turn off their engines as they wait.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Dianne Latham



**Paul Juhl** at February 27, 2015 at 7:39am CST

While pollution is certainly created while idling in a drive thru, the overall effect has to be minimal compared to other times cars are idling. For example, the needless waiting at left turn lanes when there is no oncoming traffic. Edina and the whole metro area are way behind other parts of the upper midwest in failing to convert most of these green arrow only lanes to plain green, or blinking yellow arrows. Another is roundabouts. Wisconsin is way ahead of Minnesota in this area. Although roundabouts can take some getting used to, they cut down waiting/idling and serious accidents. They also save electricity and maintenance costs. Another way to decrease idling is to improve traffic flow, often by better timing of traffic lights. Have you ever traveled north on France Ave through 50th St in evening rush hour? It's usually way backed up with traffic. Seems as if Edina could do a much better job of improving the traffic lights in the 50th and France area to quicken this flow of traffic. Other major areas are France and York Aves near Southdale. At one time the lights on France seemed to be timed fairly well so one could travel many blocks without stopping. These days, perhaps due to the increasing businesses, condos and apartments, there is more traffic on these major thoroughfares so drivers are stopping and waiting at many more traffic lights, often unnecessarily. I don't believe the city and county have kept up with the analysis of traffic counts in this area to keep lights timed appropriately.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Paul Juhl



[Julie Risser](#) at March 02, 2015 at 6:26am CST

I looked at the manner in which this question was pitched. Not particularly impressed by the information for people - or the manner in which it is presented. It would be really helpful to provide a map so people could understand that as the ordinance exists we could have entities with drive through windows go into neighborhoods that really are not well-suited for them. We are talking about places that are currently really walkable - places with small business development that has residences 20 feet away!

1 Support

Reply to Julie Risser

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