



**City Hall** • 4801 W. 50th St., Edina, MN 55424  
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**Date:** April 21, 2015  
**To:** City Council  
**From:** Karen M. Kurt  
**Re:** Strategic Vision and Framework Draft

Attached you will find the following documents for our Vision Edina discussion:

- A copy of the original consultant draft
- A marked-up version (text-only) of the consultant draft with suggested edits. Since the vision statement will be used extensively in our other documents, staff have recommended edits to make the content more concise. Other edits are based on feedback from the Boards and Commissions and Council Member Brindle.
- Correspondence received related to the Vision and Strategic Framework, as well as staff notes from the Board and Commission meetings.

A scenic photograph of a park. In the foreground, there is a body of water with reeds. A blue kayak with two people is on the water. In the middle ground, a dark brown arched bridge with a lattice railing spans across the water. People are walking on the bridge. The background shows a green lawn, trees, and a brick building.

**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

# CITY OF EDINA DRAFT STRATEGIC VISION AND FRAMEWORK

## VISION EDINA

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

**January 2015**





## 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

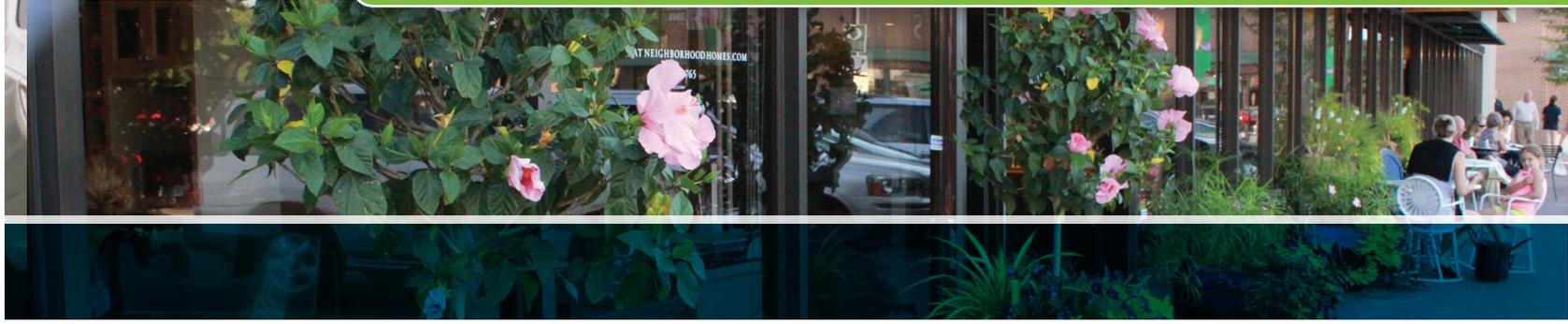
Participants in the Vision Edina process expressed a strong desire to continue to expand a variety of transportation options to both reduce the dependency on automobiles, but also to enhance the community's ease of connectivity. Access to a variety of biking and walking trail options is a key amenity 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.

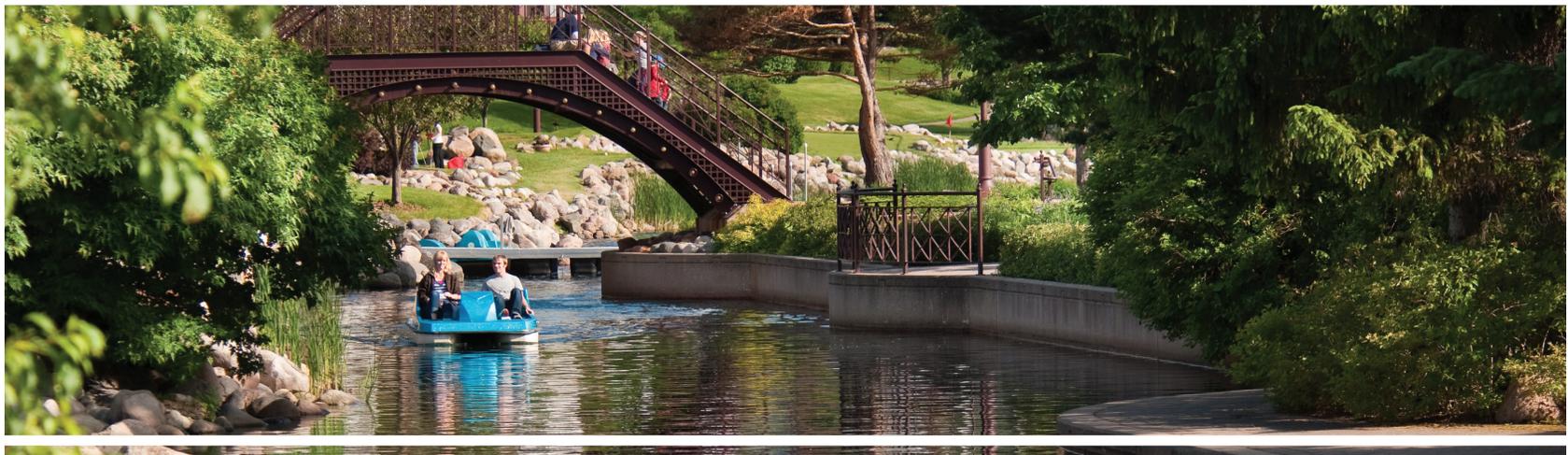
The City of Edina partnered with Future iQ Partners, an international consultancy company, to design and facilitate the process.

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



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VISION  
EDINA

future*→*iq  
PARTNERS

# **Vision Edina**

## **CITY OF EDINA**

### **DRAFT STRATEGIC VISION and FRAMEWORK**

This report is a summary of the DRAFT Strategic Vision and Framework for the  
City of Edina.

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

January 2015

*Add logo's for FiQ and City of Edina*

## **Vision Edina**

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## EDINA'S VISION STATEMENT (double page spread)

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- ~~We~~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.
- ~~Our residents enjoy a wide range of transportation options that foster mobility and interconnectedness. 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.
- ~~Our residents benefit from close access to parks and other gathering spaces where they can regenerate, connect with community members and enjoy nature.~~
- ~~, and beyond to the larger metropolitan area.~~

### Built-to-Scale Development

- ~~Our~~The community has worked hard to create an innovative and long-term comprehensive development policy, ~~which that~~ 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.~~
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~~working partnership between the community and the developers where creative solutions are found to create the best long-term outcome from new developments.~~

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### A Community of Learning

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- 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.
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## **STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA, ISSUES and ACTIONS**

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## Balancing Edina's Redevelopment (header text for this section 1-4)

### 1. Residential Development Mix

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#### 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.
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- 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 work and life balance, and ease of connectivity. ~~Access to a variety of bikability and walkability~~ Walking and biking options ~~is represent~~ 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 a reflection of a 'not in my back yard' reaction. 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 transportation 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.
- Develop an integrated long-term plan that lays out a future orientated and ambitious transportation network that covers multiple modes of transportation including pedestrian, bikeways, and takes into account potential impacts of future technology on transportation 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, 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 50<sup>th</sup> and France precinct. New development opportunities can build upon this example and model 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.
- 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 opportunities in the Pentagon Park, Grandview, and Southdale areas and other areas key areas, but as of yet, there appears to be no clear consensus vision as to the best and most appropriate uses and ultimate outcomes.

#### 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 development of 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. **Work and Life Balance**

Edina's community has a large number of high wage earners, most of whom 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 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.

## Enhancing Our Community Fabric and Character (header text for this section 5-8)

### 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 a state matter, 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. A balance needs to be struck.
- 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 requires leadership from a variety of community institutions.-

#### 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. Similar partnerships should be established with the Richfield and Hopkins school districts.
- The City and school district should continue to explore future opportunities for expanded partnerships between the schools 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~~ **The City should expand its work with local school districts 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

Participants in the Vision Edina process were more supportive of environmentally responsible policies and practices than any other issue area. 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.
- ~~While The the city's size may limits its relative influence when compared to larger neighboring communities, -its popularity with respect to redevelopment has presented a unique set of challenges and the opportunity to lead on some issues previously not encountered in the larger metropolitan area. 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 Met 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 system. 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

*(back page - Add City of Edina Logo and FiQ)*

### Vision Edina

The Vision Edina initiative has aimed to define a shared vision for the City of Edina. Hosted by the City of Edina, the vision and strategic framework is the 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, and the survey results included in this report, 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. Vision Edina 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  
952-826-0415  
[KKurt@EdinaMN.gov](mailto:KKurt@EdinaMN.gov)  
[www.EdinaMN.gov](http://www.EdinaMN.gov)



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**Date:** April 14, 2015  
**To:** City Council  
**From:** Karen M. Kurt  
**Re:** Vision Edina Comments from Boards and Commissions

Over the last two months, I shared the Vision Edina survey results and draft Strategic Vision and Framework with each of our Boards and Commissions. Board and Commission members were encouraged to share feedback as a group through their meeting minutes or an advisory communication and/or individually via email or Speak Up, Edina! During the discussion, I mostly received questions with respect to the process or survey data. I have summarized some of the additional comments below.

#### Park Board

- Solicit feedback from school district on Education section
- Change language to future tense
- Missing park component in vision statement and defining features
- Environment stewardship, including water resources, is good but it needs references to Parks in environmental section
- Emphasize connections to parks not just in transportation but throughout the City of Edina

#### ACC

- Vision doesn't include learning or education
- Vision statement isn't crisp enough

#### ETC

- Concerned about "randomness" and "either/or" nature of the survey
- Liked small group input sessions
- Why was statement "lesser appetite for transit forward" statement included given strength of survey response? Issue is connected to regional leadership – are we slipping in that regard?
- With respect to Education Focus, liked last sentence and first strategic action. Are their enough resources to support this effort?
- Define diversity of transportation – what does that mean?
- Transportation – third bullet under issues – what does "local access options" mean?
- Transportation – in the first section – should it be "variety of biking and walking options"
- Break out local transportation options
- What is definition of local?
- Check use of orientated on p5 and p8

#### HRRC

- Is there anything can be gleaned from the school district vision document?

## Karen M. Kurt

---

**From:** Heather Branigin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 14, 2015 12:31 PM  
**To:** Karen M. Kurt  
**Subject:** FW:

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**From:** Doscotch, Matthew A [<mailto:Matt.Doscotch@zimmer.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 13, 2015 1:15 PM  
**To:** Karen M. Kurt  
**Cc:** Jeff Brown  
**Subject:**

Karen,

I really like the draft Vision Edina. I think the emphasis and any additional emphasis that can be included on community connectedness (through transportation options (car, bus, bike, walk) and community gathering opportunities) is a great way to promote the "physical, social, emotional well-being" (the Health) of those that live and work in Edina. A couple places to consider adding more on a "connected" community are the Built-to-Scale and Residential Development Mix headings. I also think there can be more focus on the prioritized maintenance, development, and creation of accessible public meeting and gathering places.

I have one additional comment. In reading the draft Vision documents, I noticed an inconsistency related to the concept of inclusiveness and the tone of some of the document. For example on page 5 under the 3 bullet of Future-Oriented there is reference to "privileged position". I am not sure the phrase adds anything and may in fact be a negative. Also, I think deleting it and keeping "resources and expertise" conveys the same thing. I would be cautious about overstating our "status" as it may be at odds with the inclusive theme.

Matt

---

**Matt Doscotch**  
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**Karen M. Kurt**

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**From:** Heather Branigin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 14, 2015 12:33 PM  
**To:** Karen M. Kurt  
**Subject:** FW: Feedback on plan

**From:** Joel Stegner [<mailto:joel.r.stegner@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 10, 2015 5:20 PM  
**To:** Heather Branigin  
**Subject:** Feedback on plan

Hi Heather,

I've submitted extensive comments on the plan via Speak Up Edina. I guess that I feel the interest in embracing change reflected in the large group discussion (with the two top positioning positions reflecting moving the city forward) has been to some degree lost in the documents. The words about preserving what we have are quite detailed, while those about embracing future are somewhat vague and non-committal.

I had expected to see some change in the mission statement - given that my commission, Community Health, found it somewhat stilted and limited - but saw that didn't change - with no real explanation why making no change was necessary. If the vision statement is in any way viewed as an change in direction from the past, it is hard to understand how the city thinks it can achieve it without rethinking how it approaches its work.

If you have any questions or concerns about my feedback, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Thanks,  
Joel

Joel Stegner  
6312 Barrie Road 1C  
Edina, MN 55435  
952-843-3440

## Karen M. Kurt

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**From:** Heather Branigin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 14, 2015 12:31 PM  
**To:** Karen M. Kurt  
**Subject:** FW: Nice job on your presentation tonight

**From:** Joel Stegner [<mailto:joel.r.stegner@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 04, 2015 3:22 PM  
**To:** Karen M. Kurt  
**Subject:** Re: Nice job on your presentation tonight

Hi Karen,

Please feel free to include my comments in what you share with the Council. As there were personal elements to my communication, please feel free to remove those as you wish. I sort of acknowledged that you admitted to being somewhat at a loss in terms of explaining certain concepts, although since they were confusing, being in consultant speak, that wasn't the issue you made it out to be - those points could be taken out.

It is unfortunate that the Council did not inform our Commission that it was not going to be using our feedback and suggestions regarding vision and mission, as I think we were previously assured that would be happening - and that we should be patient and trusting on the issue. Frankly, the Council continues to not routinely consult with its Boards and Commissions as frequently as it could or should. A current example is medical marijuana. That got turfed off as a zoning issue, with feedback not gathered from Community Health before the moratorium was put in place. Some of us have been closely tracking this issue - not just in Minnesota, but in other places, and also in places which have legalized recreational use, which is something that will come up sooner rather than later. Marijuana has replaced alcohol as the drug of choice at the high school, just as e-cigarettes are replacing the real variety. Research is suggesting that while marijuana has adverse effects, its current classification as a drug with no redeeming value (like heroin) is simply not justified by the research. In terms of actual harm to health and well being, alcohol and tobacco, both unregulated by the drug laws, are far more harmful. At the same time, research is finding clinical benefits for illegal drugs such as LSD, information that I suspect very few in city government have any awareness of, just as they are unwilling to deal with how deeply binge drinking is embedded in the Edina youth and adult culture.

My belief is that among our outwardly successful population, we have a lot of "walking wounded" - people who are struggling with all sorts of physical and mental health issues that are not immediately apparent and are so contrary to the vision of success and happiness most people who live here want to project. We have great parks, but how many people use them? We couldn't have much more or better medical care, but how many people are overweight, have type 2 diabetes, are fighting anxiety, depression and addiction (or all three), have unhealthy diets and suffer from preventable chronic

disease. Without health, there is no quality of life, regardless of how dishonest people are about their situations.

When I criticize the city for not reexamining and changing its mission statement, it is because it is only through government intervention, working with health advocacy groups, that we can improve our local health indicators. Right now, we aren't even able to size the problems adequately. We believe up to half of the adult population is overweight, and the city by doing things differently, could encourage its citizens to be more active and consume fewer calories.

We advocate things that undermine our best efforts. We say we want more restaurants, but we know that restaurants serve quantities of food that go well beyond any individual's daily needs, increasing the level of exercise needed to keep weight reasonable far beyond what people are able to commit to doing on a regular basis, assuming that they actually have a place to exercise. We also will shortly remove the 60-40 rule, which means more people drinking more alcohol away from home, probably in most cases driving after drinking.

A community center used by a substantial portion of the population, particularly those not affluent enough to belong to a health club, is a key tool for impacting adult health - but our preoccupation with making individuals solely responsible for their health and expected to pay their own way is self-defeating. The City is engaged in social engineering whatever it decides to do, and continuing to do what it does today will mean that our adult health indicators will not improve, driving up healthcare costs to a point that few will be able to afford care.

A preeminent city does things differently - smarter actions to achieve much better than average results. In terms of preeminence, I'd like Edina to be the healthiest community in the state and one of the healthiest suburban cities in the country - measurably better. It won't happen without focus and sustained effort. We are committed to the prosperity of our citizens - but if we don't have the same commitment to health, all the money in the world won't do people any good.

Thanks,  
Joel

PS Please feel free to share these comments with the council as well. Not everyone is going to like what I have to say, but sometimes difficult messages need to be communicated and understood, even if people are unhappy about it. I am tempted to go through the plan and suggest specific action steps to strengthen each of the goal areas - and will do so, if you tell me that it will be looked at favorably. The consultant has laid out some broad ideas, but only through actions that local residents wholeheartedly buy into doing something about, will anything be accomplished. For example, I believe that we need a system of sidewalks in 10 years not 30. I'm not talking about a complete network, but a network that enables one to take a sidewalk to walk between any two points in the city. This means no walk of more than two or three blocks in the street to get to a sidewalk - and sidewalks on all heavy traffic corridors

within the next five years. That is the kind of stretch goal that gets away from business as usual thinking.

Joel Stegner  
6312 Barrie Road 1C  
Edina, MN 55435  
952-843-3440

On Wed, Mar 4, 2015 at 2:32 PM, Karen M. Kurt <[KKurt@edinamn.gov](mailto:KKurt@edinamn.gov)> wrote:  
Thank you Joel for your comments. Can I include your message with the other comments we gather for the Council?

With respect to the previous work done by the Health Commission, early on the Council decided not to update Vision 20/20 but to start over with a community-based process. Because of this, the consultant was not given any specific direction with respect any items that should (or should not) be included. Now that you've seen the draft, it certainly appropriate to push for a more direct health focus if you feel that the current draft does not go far enough.

Karen Kurt, Assistant City Manager  
[952-826-0415](tel:952-826-0415) | Fax [952-826-0390](tel:952-826-0390)  
[KKurt@EdinaMN.gov](mailto:KKurt@EdinaMN.gov) | [www.EdinaMN.gov](http://www.EdinaMN.gov)  
...For Living, Learning, Raising Families & Doing Business

-----Original Message-----

From: Joel Stegner [<mailto:joel.r.stegner@gmail.com>]  
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2015 1:15 AM  
To: Karen M. Kurt  
Subject: Nice job on your presentation tonight

Hi Karen,

Although I had lots of questions, your presentation provided much more insight than the planning document itself, which looks good, but doesn't necessarily have strong actions. I had surgery for a detached retina last week, so I wasn't at my best, but tried to carry on - but probably seemed pained (it is a tough recovery. You shouldn't be too concerned about being confused by some the language in the document or wide range of responses. The things that more people agreed with (e.g. sidewalks) just need greater attention than the rest.

People want to live in Edina in housing affordable to an average income. The single family housing stock is for most unaffordable for people with household incomes below \$100,000 per year, which means that to get people here before they are earning that, we need more multiunit development. If people's first move is elsewhere, they are increasingly unlikely over time to pull up roots and move here.

Although the plan does not have a population target, I believe 75,000 residents is attainable if we make the SE quadrant an urban node. In other words, virtually all the growth is multi unit, with some growth with 4-6 person families (a hallmark of affluent families is more children) moving into large homes now occupied elderly couples or singles.

The education section needs to flesh out how to retrain older workers, as everyone age 50+ is now subject to layoff and replacement by younger, cheaper workers. Many will never gain regular employment, but will work

as contractors or consultants out of their homes. If they cannot sustain most of their income, many will be forced to leave the city - a huge loss. If people think an excellent HS takes care of our education needs, they aren't paying attention to the national economy.

I consider health a key quality of life indicator, at least on a personal level. Serious physical or mental health issues literally destabilizes individual and family life. Simply having affluence and wonderful healthcare resources cannot overcome obesity, chronic physical illness, lack of exercise and a sidewalk free environment that actively discourages walking. We have wonderful parks filled with youth sports, but our parks are empty most of the time, because we don't have the programs and lifestyles for adults to regularly use them. Our workforce has sedentary jobs and sedentary leisure pursuits.

If we asked people about how often they walk to do errands, exercise regularly enough to be fit and height-weight appropriate, manage stress, depression and substance abuse, have a network of people they can rely on in a pinch, I think we would find that people are taking these things on individually with very uneven success. Instead, we ask about community quality of life. Obviously, the resources and opportunities here are pretty great, but are people happy with what they are making of them? If we were to ask, I think we would be surprised by the concerns people would express.

One problem with city considering itself preeminent already is that we aren't looking at the things the city needs to make itself a much better place - the weaknesses and threats of the traditional SWOT analysis. We have a great HS, but it isn't consistently rated in the top 100 in the country. It has problems with educational disparities (by income and race), has a significant bullying problem, and binge drinking and marijuana use are high. Our city is very lacking in affordable housing and has very poor connectivity in terms of sidewalks. It tends to do one off development projects - and can add lots of congestion without strong plans to reduce it.

Removal of barriers and bottlenecks to moving forward and putting in missing pieces perhaps is mundane, but it tends not to happen if not in the plan. So what I hope the next step involves identifying more of the must dos and putting in stretch goals (e.g. 30 years to have a more complete system of sidewalks is not a stretch goal).

One fundamental issue is that the city's defined mission is unchanged. What cities do and how they do it is evolving and it is hard to believe much innovation will occur if the city does not have a fresh take on what it is trying to accomplish.

Our commission found it very easy to rewrite the mission statement - and were told to wait for the planning process for our thoughts to be considered. That seems like a promise that was made, but perhaps forgotten or never communicated to the consultant. We spent a lot of time thinking about how health could be included - and how the work of the city could be extended by community partnerships, giving up some control for greater impact on city issues. There is no evidence that was considered.

Of course, the city can reject ideas, but not to acknowledge that they were made and providing reasons for rejecting them - that comes off as dismissive and not really valuing volunteer contributions. That might be unfair, but understand the basis.

I look forward to seeing what is next.

Thanks,  
Joel

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## Discussion: Vision Edina Strategy

A draft Strategy Vision and Framework is now available for Vision Edina! [Click here to review the draft](#), and give your feedback to the draft vision below.

4 Topics 4 Answers Closed 2015-03-07

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Vision Statement](#)

What do you think of Edina's vision statement and the features it defines?

1 Responses

### 1 Responses



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer 2 months ago

First, I'll note that the Edina mission statement is unchanged. There is really no justification provided for this. The commission on which I serve, Community Health, suggested substantial changes in the mission statement almost 2 years ago and were told to wait until the new planning process was done. There is no evidence whatsoever that the points that we brought up were even considered by the consultant. Having a new mission, but approaching it (through the mission) in an unchanged way would seem likely to undermine any results one might want to achieve.

One of the points that we brought up was related to the importance of physical, mental and spiritual health to individual and community quality of life. In other words, if an individual or family is struggling with an issue and isn't receiving the right kind of health, the fact that general community of life rates high does little for them. Serious problems can be triggered by many things - loss of a job, a business or one's housing, loss of spouse through death or divorce or a significant health issue. We do not know to what degree Edina residents are experiencing each of these problems, so it is a bit presumptuous to suggest people have excellent quality of life when these factors are in play, particularly if the city doesn't provide opportunities for people to address their challenges.

During the large group discussion, it seemed that the majority of people were expressing a desire for a significant change in direction from the city. When one reads through the documents, this attitude is not readily apparent. More talk is about heritage items that must be preserved, versus new

things that we might want to consider. There is also a level of self satisfaction in thinking that is likely to get in the way of being more inclusive and accepting of people who look and think differently from our older residents..

Now the 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.

As I suggest, while there is talk about embracing the future, the emphasis is clearly on preserving what we consider to be our exalted position in the metro area, perhaps neglecting to ask whether people who don't live here share our viewpoint. Their opinion matters more, because they are the people who will choose to move here or to another community. Particularly the under age 40 group (the millennials) are known to have very different attitudes and behaviors from their elders. We might instead suggest we want to be the preferred destination for millennials who want a suburban lifestyle, as the older generations always have shown their preference for Edina. That generation is much more diverse and has more serious economic challenges than older generations did at the same age - and if our vision doesn't build a community where they feel at home, Edina's strengths (such as its schools and neighborhoods) will deteriorate. There is very little in the plan that is designed to appeal for them. Also, it might be pointed out that more people than ever are past the place where they are raising children. Many of them are leaving the suburbs to move into the city, which has more amenities that appeal to them. There is also a need to match the community with the needs of the empty nesters as well as the very large single population. This vision statement needs to be reworked to better fit the future that Edina needs to embrace - and the vision needs to be as progressive as it claims the city to be. It isn't as though the city's high income neighborhoods are going away, or that the institutions like the country clubs are lacking for members, but really making the city more inclusive is the key to its future success.

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## Discussion: Vision Edina Strategy

A draft Strategy Vision and Framework is now available for Vision Edina! [Click here to review the draft](#), and give your feedback to the draft vision below.

4 Topics | 4 Answers | Closed 2015-03-07

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Topic: [Focus Areas](#)

What do you think of the issues and actions outlined in the strategic focus areas?

Strategic focus areas include: residential redevelopment, transportation, commercial redevelopment, live and work, education, population, environmental stewardship and regional leadership.

1 Responses

### 1 Responses



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer 2 months ago

No real problem with the themes, although I'd suggest that quality of life be added . . . and that for quality of life, it is made very explicit what is meant. by quality of life and that the quality of life of every residents and worker is equally important. In the last quality of life survey, the question that asked about quality of life in the community received a significantly lower score (in terms of "excellent") compared to the study done two years, which I suspect was directly related to what was going on with the national economy - lots of hurt, even for people who were previously very economically secure. There was no question that asked people to rate their personal quality of life and if it was less than perfect, what was the reason. Edina is due to do another quality of life survey in 2015. It is my hope this time that the second question will be asked, so we get a better understanding of how life in Edina is impacting people at a personal level, as this is something that the city and other community organizations can impact. For example, Edina now has a substantial international/minority community. Are they feeling as well served as Edina's white residents? In the last survey, the community quality of life survey was rated lower by younger, single people - with younger and single people becoming more the norm in many communities. If we are not doing the best job with these populations today, will we be able to attract their peers who have the interest and financial means to live here. The real population growth in the city will be in the Southeast sector, where large multi-unit residential

developments are concentrated. Is the quality of life in that part of the city equal to the rest of the city? If not, perhaps the city might want to focus there.

Within each of these issues, I think that there is a burning topic. For residential redevelopment in single-family neighborhoods, the issue is teardowns/remodels that make the house's footprint much larger than its neighborhood. The city has not taken a well reasoned position on the issue of massing, and by not doing so, is undermining the value to preserved housing stock. If an entire neighborhood is going to be redone in this way, that might be acceptable, but if it is one monster house here, overshadowing (literally) all its neighbors, that doesn't reflect a spirit of community planning that will preserve neighborhoods.

Transportation - we have a mature road system, but a very immature system of bike paths and sidewalks, and have some distance to go on mass transit. Younger people have a desire to live in walkable and bikeable neighborhoods, with Edina has in short supply. The level of danger involved in getting around by walking and biking is high enough that not enough people are doing so, increasing traffic congestion beyond what it needs to be. Short trips (under a quarter to half mile) should be doable without a car and longer trips reasonably efficient with transit. Edina passed up the opportunity to be along the SW light rail line, because people were concerned about trains going through their backyards - and in the process lost a lot of economic development and convenience in the process. We need to get away from our total reliance on roads.

Commercial redevelopment. For me, the primary question is what direction Southdale Shopping Center and the area around it is going to take. Will it become a high density urban-like environment (supporting a varied shopping experience) or only really be a destination for those in their cars. Walking and biking around Southdale is very difficult. The whole section from Fairview Southdale to Centennial Lakes need to be rethought.

Live and work. The word here is many options - not just single family on large lots. The community is doing a great job for seniors who want to downsize, but not so well for younger people who want to get a foothold in Edina, without taking on a big mortgage before they have the income and family to justify it. I would personally like Grandview developed as a hub for young adults -- a place to compete with Uptown. There is no evidence that the city is thinking strategically about building housing to attract a new demographic to the community.

Education. Edina Public Schools are great, but frankly in today's work world, where employers have practically eliminated in house training programs and pursuing degrees as a working adult is very difficult and expensive, Edina should be focusing a lot more on adult education - particularly to make sure that the Generation X group doesn't have the same experience as the older babyboomers - age discrimination due to the perceived lack of comfort with technology. Adult education in Edina should become a real focus, with technological literacy being key. We read about robots replacing human workers, but at least for now, it is humans who are designing, programming and building the robots - so do our adult education programs actually keep our adult worker's skills where they need to be to stay employed. I'm not really sure that has even been considered. Most of the student we educate leave the community, never to come back - but it is the education of our adult workers which will determine what household incomes in our community look like in the future.

Population - the key is diversity. For example, Edina is attracting a high number of East Asian skilled workers, many who live in the SE part of the city. Are we a suburb that is welcoming to immigrants? I don't know whether that is true. Younger people are not going to be attracted to communities that actively discriminate against poor and minority populations. When they see housing projects approved by the city consistently reject the idea of affordable housing, it raises questions in their minds. What happens if I have some bad things happen to me? Will I be able to find a way to stay in the community, or will people look down on me as soon as I don't have a high income and a prestigious job? I'm not suggesting putting a big affordable housing project in Country Club or Indian Hills, but frankly there are places in the city where it works - such as the location picked by the Beacon Housing Collaborative. Every large project is a test - and does the city stick up for affordable housing, or simply think "show me the money."

Environmental stewardship. That has some different definitions. Some people, when looking at their neighborhood park, prefer it when virtually no one is using it - it becomes like their private space. On the other hand, when the city makes investments in parks, let them be used. For all resources within the control of the city, the City needs to determine best use.

Finally, regional leadership. What exactly does that mean? Does that mean Edina makes itself better than everyone else, by making other communities deal with the metro area's challenges - or is it the kind of leadership where Edina helps make the entire West metro area one of the best places to live in the country. For example, the Braemar complex is incredibly strong - and a good example to other communities, which also benefit from it being there. In contrast, Edina is one of the few west metro communities without a modern community center - a natural gathering place, something that all communities benefit from. At one point, one could make the argument that Southdale or 50th and France was such a place, but they are so designed for shopping and spending money, that they aren't necessarily financially accessible for local residents. Making our city's services financially accessible for all Edina residents is a community challenge that few suburbs would even attempt - but should Edina?

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Topic: [Other Ideas?](#)

What other ideas should be considered as part of Vision Edina?

1 Responses

1 Responses



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer 2 months ago

Currently, all the statements are quite mushy. What I mean by that is how do we know that we have been successful? I really think that we need to get much more specific about measurable outcomes. Let me use quality of life as an example. One metric that most people would agree on is that the community has little crime. By that statement, I'm talking about very few people breaking the law. Take traffic speeds for an example. Law breaking is very widespread and this, combined with the lack of sidewalks and bike lanes, and our crosswalk situation (often unmarked or barely visible) creates great risk for pedestrians. People are smart enough, given the situation, to adapt. They don't walk or bike when it is dangerous - which is in most situation. Here is a clear example of where lawlessness lowers the quality of life in the community. Our Community Health Commission has identified binge drinking among youth and adults as a key problem. As with speeding, illegal binge drinking is a greatly underreported offense. We know that much more drinking and chronic drug use is going on among our high school students than is ever captured, and that is by intention, because getting caught is the parent's worst fear - as it is a black mark that may keep their child out of their preferred college choice. Rather than trying to prevent it, parents tend to cover it up - and when it happens, to shield their child from the worst consequences. Part of the issue is that the adults themselves can be quite irresponsible about their own drinking and in their willingness to keep their child safe by looking the other way when alcohol is consumed by their child and others in the home environment. While not all binge drinking leads addiction, between 20-25% of the population are having problems generated by consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs. This also lowers the quality of life in the community, in terms of sexual assault, domestic and other violence and traffic accidents. For quality of life, on these other indicators, I believe that the city should have upwards to 20 different indicators that define whether the city is on the right track.

The city is doing strategic planning, but in terms of development, appears to think of projects as one-time things - and deals with only the burning issues. For example, Edina doesn't have a modern community center, but doesn't seem to be considering where one might go at the point where the space controlled by the school is no long available. Likewise, with Granview, the site would be most more developable if the current Edina Schools bus garage were part of the project. It is surprising that the city and the schools aren't talking about a joint project, as the city could undoubtedly find another location for the bus garage, as it did for Public Works. Pretending that there is a partnership when very little comes out of it is being a little less than honest with how things really are.

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Topic: [Feedback](#)

What feedback do you have about the Vision Edina process?

1 Responses

1 Responses



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer 2 months ago

The Edina City Council has established boards and commissions to advise the city on important topics. Let me pick an example of a Commission that I haven't been very involved with - Human Rights - to make an observation. I have suggested that while Edina has mentioned the subject of diversity, there is not a clear suggestion in the plan what role international and minority populations might play in the future of the city.. If one looks at where population growth, in 2050, white non-Hispanic Americans will be in the minority across the country. The US continues to be a magnet for international migration, with Minnesota a surprising popular destination, in large part because our headquarters corporations like Target bring in high skill foreign workers and we have been a haven for many refugee populations. Cities like New York City are making every effort to attract high income, high skill residents of other countries who want to work or set up businesses there. Edina's ability to attract these diverse populations depends on specific actions we take - or avoid - to make our community more attractive to people from many different places. Human Rights is the in-house source of expertise on diversity, but it is not at all evident that they were asked either whether 1) Edina should try to be a magnet for these populations - I suspect they would say by all means yes and 2) what the city should do differently to make it more attractive in the future. However if they are not asked their opinion, it is unlikely to be heard. I understand that the city wanted to reach out widely to all Edina residents, but it seems like that in that process, it may have neglected to ask the opinions of those closest to the actions.

As one reads through the plan, it appears that the Edina business community has had a lot of impact on what issue are a high priority. In the large community group, conservative voices were a small minority of those who participated, but when it comes to public meetings, it seems that those

who prefer the least active role possible for government tend to come out in numbers, suggesting all the things that the city shouldn't be doing. The reality is that those folks tend to be Edina loyalists - older and here to stay, unless they decide to move to Florida or other places to less their income and estate taxes. Very few of them will be here in 20 years, so building a community to suit them is very short sighted. It actually are the people that aren't here yet, but we want to move here, are the people who we need to update the community to better serve. That requires an ability to make a bet on how one perceives the future rolling out - not just same old, same old. The group you might want to talk to would be Edina and other west metro grads from approximately 2000-2010 in terms of what it would take to attract them back to Edina after they have completed their education and found a career direction.

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