

ADVISORY COMMUNICATION



To: City Council
From: Human Rights and Relations Commission
Cc: Karen Kurt, Assistant City Manager
Date: May 6, 2015
Subject: Vision Edina Feedback
Attachments: None

Action Requested:

Consider the following recommended changes to the Vision Edina Strategic Vision and Framework.

Recommendation:

General Statement: There are multiple references in the Strategic Vision and Framework to affordable housing in Edina. However, the Strategic Actions do not specifically address affordable housing. The Human Rights and Relations Commission believes that an overarching housing policy should include an expression of the need for continuously considering the affordable housing component in the exploration of all housing strategies. Creation of a vibrant multicultural community, where people from across the social-economic spectrum live and work together, should be a basis for all further housing policy decisions.

Page 4, Edina's Vision Statement, Second Bullet Point under Inclusive & Connected:

The statement that the community offers a mix of residential development that includes "higher density multi-family options, especially for the young and the old" does not adequately describe the fact that a lot of families with children live in apartments and townhomes in Edina.

Suggested edit: strike the phrase "especially for the young and old."

STAFF COMMENTS: While it is true that families live in multi-family housing, the intent here was to call out the fact that housing options for the young and old are particularly limited.

Page 7, #1. Residential Development Mix

Original Text: "Residential neighborhoods continue to serve as the defining characteristic of the city, and there is a high desire to protect and enhance such neighborhoods." The word protect has connotations of protecting from another, and we think the original intention was to preserve the character of older neighborhoods.

Suggested Edit: Change "protect" to "preserve" and remove the word high.



STAFF COMMENTS: We left the descriptive “high” because we feel that the data supports this conclusion. We changed “protect” to “preserve”.

Page 7, #1. Residential Development Mix

Original phrase: “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.” We are concerned about the words “some” and “young professionals.”
Suggested Edit: “There is recognition of the need to develop more multi-family options in order to serve the needs of Edina residents and to increase diversity in housing affordability.”

STAFF COMMENTS: The latest version, while not the exact wording proposed here, reflects a similar intent.

Page 7, #1. Residential Development Mix, Last Bullet Point under Strategic Actions:

Mentioning neighborhoods is unnecessarily specific and limiting. Additionally, should / could the document utilize a different word than “fringes” (which has a negative connotation) for describing exploration of multi-family development opportunities on the “fringes” of other mixed-use areas and public spaces? Is this an issue of zoning?

Suggested edit: “Continue to explore options for new multi-family development opportunities throughout the City of Edina in mixed-use areas and public spaces.”

STAFF COMMENTS: We think it is beneficial to identify key areas where multifamily housing could be appropriate. We replaced with “Continue to explore options for new multi-family development opportunities throughout the City of Edina in mixed-use areas and near public spaces, including areas such as Southdale, Pentagon Park and Grandview”

Page 7, #1. Residential Development Mix, Strategic Actions:

There is no action that references how to manage the teardown issue. Should there be something else in the action plan to address this issue?

STAFF COMMENTS: The Framework only suggests a few strategic actions but does not attempt to be inclusive of all issues or actions. This type of detail is more appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan.

Page 10, #4. Live and Work, Introductory Paragraph and First Bullet Point under Issues:

Identifying “young professionals” as the ones who want to live and work in the same area misses the larger issue that many different people would like to live and work in the same area. The “relatively high cost of quality housing” as noted in the introductory paragraph impacts more than “young professionals.”

Suggested Edit: Remove both uses of the phrase “young professionals.”



STAFF COMMENTS: While it is true that many people may want to live and work in the same area, this trend is especially documented in the millennial generation.

Page 10, #4. Live and Work, Third Bullet Point under Issues:

Original text: “Many key staff in organizations across Edina cannot afford to live in the community, creating a service disconnect”. First, the issue is broader than “key staff in organizations” across Edina and includes employees who work in Edina who cannot afford to live in the community. Second, the phrase “service disconnect” is vague and should be omitted. Finally, there is no action to address this issue of the lack of availability of affordable housing.

Suggested edit: “Many people who work in Edina cannot afford to live in the community.”

STAFF COMMENTS: Changed.

Page 12, #6 Population Mix, Second Bullet Point under Issues:

The high housing cost isn’t a *perceived* barrier...it is a barrier. There isn’t much housing stock in certain cost ranges, and teardowns are exacerbating this issue. There is no action to address this issue of the lack of availability of affordable housing.

Suggested edit: “The high cost of housing is a barrier...”

STAFF COMMENTS: Changed. Also added a strategic action related to affordable housing under Residential Mix.

Page 12, #6 Population Mix, First Bullet Point under Strategic Actions:

The first strategic action should remove the reference to the school district because this is a community-wide issue.

Suggested edit: The City of Edina, in partnership with Edina Public Schools, should continue to expose students, parents, and other residents 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.

STAFF COMMENTS: Changed.