

# Council Connection



## Upcoming meetings:

- Heritage Preservation Board, 7 p.m. Aug. 13
- Park Board, 7 p.m. Aug. 13
- Transportation Commission, 6 p.m. Aug. 16
- City Council, 7 p.m. Aug. 21
- Planning Commission, 7 p.m. Aug. 22

## City Contacts

**City Manager**  
Scott Neal 952-826-0401

**Assistant City Manager**  
Karen Kurt 952-826-0415

**City Clerk**  
Debra Mangan 952-826-0408

**Engineering Director**  
Wayne Houle 952-826-0443

**Associate Planner**  
Joyce Repya 952-826-0462

**Recycling Coordinator**  
Solvei Wilmot 952-826-0463

## We'd like to hear from you ...

If you have any comments, call Communications & Technology Services Director Jennifer Bennerotte at 952-833-9520. The text of this publication will be available online at [www.EdinaMN.gov](http://www.EdinaMN.gov).



## A summary of the Aug. 6 Edina City Council meeting

### **Council OKs plans for France Avenue pedestrian improvements**

The City will spend up to \$4 million to make it easier for pedestrians to cross France Avenue.

The City was granted a \$1 million federal grant for the construction of pedestrian and intersection enhancements on France Avenue at 76th Street, 70th Street and 66th Street, and provide missing sidewalk segments on the east side of France Avenue.

Based on the review of the existing conditions and the project goals, three intersection design concepts were developed and analyzed. The options were: separated bike and pedestrian lanes with a boulevard, separated bike and pedestrian lanes without a boulevard and a sidewalk with a boulevard.

Members of the City Council agreed with the recommendation of the Transportation Commission, favoring development of a sidewalk with a boulevard and directed staff to move forward with developing the project with a budget of no more than \$4 million.

### **Council asks for further consideration of home design**

The Council asked the Heritage Preservation Board to give more thought to materials proposed for a new home in Edina's historic Country Club District.

Earlier this summer, the Heritage Preservation Board began reviewing plans for a new home at 4524 Bruce Ave. The Board agreed that the size, scale and massing of the proposed home was complimentary to the adjacent homes and voted to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness, necessary for new home construction in the historic neighborhood.

Last month, neighbors of the proposed home appealed the decision, citing concerns with the home's proposed hardboard stucco panels and the front porch. They argued that a covered front entry is not appropriate for the neighborhood and that traditional stucco should be required instead of hardboard stucco panels.

After hearing testimony on both sides, the Council agreed with the appellants that more thought should be given to the home's exterior materials and front porch and referred the matter back to the Board before a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued.

### **Council takes step toward new utility franchise fees**

The Council took the first step toward implementing utility franchise fees to create a new revenue stream. Funds would finance new sidewalk, trail and non-motorized transportation projects around the community. Currently, such projects are funded through the City's annual Capital Improvement Plan or special assessments. The utility franchise fees are estimated to generate more than \$1 million in new revenue per year.

The proposed franchise fee for a residential utility account is \$1.45 per month for both Xcel and CenterPoint customers, for a total of \$2.90 per month. The average residential customer's natural gas bill is \$90.25 dollars per month and average residential electric bill is \$89.17 per month. The addition of the proposed franchise fees raises the monthly bill in each case by approximately 1.6 percent.

There are higher monthly fees for commercial accounts.

If the two new ordinances are adopted by the City Council, the City will create a new fund to account for the new franchise fee revenues. In addition to construction costs of sidewalks and trails, the franchise fee revenues will be used to fund lighting, right-of-way acquisition, consulting and staff costs. One new staff position would be created in the Engineering Department.

The Council granted first reading of the two ordinances. The City will provide a 60-day notice to Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy of the City's impending action. During the 60-day period, the utility companies may comment on the proposed ordinances. After the 60-day period, the Council may proceed with adoption of the ordinances.

### **City amends special assessment policy for roadway projects**

The Council approved an amendment to the City's special assessment policy to make the policy less burdensome on property owners.

City staff hired the public finance consulting firm Northland Securities to study Edina's special assessment policy and develop alternative special assessment financing models. Representatives from Northland and City staff presented the Council with the results of the study and the alternative financing models in June. After considerable discussion, Council directed staff to prepare a revision to the City's special

assessment policy with the following changes:

1. Extend repayment period for special assessments from 10 to 15 years.
2. Restructure the payments from a declining principal formula to a level payments formula.
3. Decrease the spread between the interest rate of the City's project financing and what is added to the special assessments that are financed by the City from 2 percent to 1 percent.
4. Exclude sidewalk, trail and lighting costs from project costs subject to the cost share formula. These costs would be paid from a new revenue fund generated by utility franchise fees.

Taken together, the extension of the repayment period, the restructuring of the payment formula and the reduction of the interest rate spread will have the effect of reducing the annual payment on a \$10,000 special assessment from \$1,375 per year for 10 years to \$868 per year for 15 years. The total repayment under the old policy in this scenario would be \$13,750. Under the revised policy, the total repayment would be \$13,020.

### **Council approves recycling contract**

The Council approved a seven-year contract with Allied Waste Services to provide recycling services in the community.

Though contract negotiations, the total cost of the recycling contract was reduced.

Allied's proposal was for a single-sort program, which allows residents to throw all recyclable materials into one cart without sorting or separating. Allied Waste will distribute the 65-gallon recycling carts to Edina homes in September and will begin collecting recyclables from them in early October. Though residents' service day will not change, the time of day the recyclables are picked up may change and the collection will be every other week instead of weekly.

Some of the new items that can be recycled as part of the single-sort program are plastic food containers, tubs and bowls; yogurt cups; plastic milk jugs and paper milk cartons, plastic shopping bags and juice boxes.