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Fall 2003



Edina's Vision 20/20 Update...
Executive Summary



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Edina's Vision 20/20 is a long-range strategic plan adopted in 2000 to guide decisions that will impact the City's future. In other words, the plan is meant to serve as a map for the City's journey in the years ahead.

Earlier this year, the Edina City Council reviewed Edina's Vision 20/20. Without hesitation, the Council validated the City's mission statement, which articulates Edina's purpose and values. The mission statement is:

“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.”

The Council also upheld the City's vision statement. The vision statement is:

Edina will be the preeminent place for living, learning, raising families and doing business distinguished by:

A Livable Environment

Our residents regard their quality of life in Edina as very high. Many factors contribute to this opinion, including premier schools, exceptional neighborhoods, an advantageous location in the metropolitan area, excellent public facilities and services, safe streets, a clean and adequate water supply, access to new technology and communications systems and a strong sense of community identity.

Effective and Valued City Services

Our customers (we view our residents and businesses as customers as well as taxpayers) have an extraordinarily high regard for city services. They associate an outstanding value with these services. They also distinguish Edina from other places by the quality of our services. These services change as the needs of our customers change, but their effectiveness and value will be the benchmarks of our success.

A Sound Public Infrastructure

Edina streets, utilities, parks and public buildings are the essential components of the foundation of our city. A sound public infrastructure encourages the development of a stable private infrastructure, leading to an enhancement of the sense of quality that Edina has and will enjoy.

A Balance of Land Uses

Edina is a model of urban development: a diversity of land uses, housing choices for all stages of a person's life, outstanding neighborhoods and an extensive network of parks and open spaces all arranged in a manner of development that is pedestrian- and transit-friendly. It also includes the employment of reinvestment and redevelopment strategies to address changing housing and business needs and prudent policies that sustain Edina's enormous investment in its housing stock and neighborhoods.

Innovation

“Innovation” means matching our technological resources with the needs and desires of our residents. “Innovation” means creating value in what we do to serve our citizens. “Innovation” means operating local government in a business-like manner even though we are not a business. “Innovation” means forging partnerships with our schools, community organizations and volunteers to serve our customers. “Innovation” can also mean risk-taking. Although our residents are highly satisfied with their community, we always seek innovative ways to improve their lives.

OBJECTIVES, ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Nine objectives were developed as part of the original Vision 20/20 plan, representing a broad range of observations and findings that became evident during the planning process. Strategies, or goals, provide the road map for implementing the objectives of the City Council. They prescribe a number of courses of action that need to be taken by the City.

Finding that many of the City's goals had been accomplished, the Council updated Vision 20/20 by revising, updating and combining objectives. Today, there are eight objectives. The objectives, issues and strategies are listed on the following pages. Strategies marked in bold are new to the plan.

Objective #1: Maintain strong residential neighborhoods.

Issues:

- Residential neighborhoods are a defining characteristic of Edina. Many Edina neighborhoods have a unique character defined by architectural housing styles, street patterns and extensive landscaping.
- Edina faces increasing competition from other communities that can offer “Edina-like” residential neighborhoods.
- City services (street maintenance, police, fire protection and parks) play an important role in the quality of neighborhoods.
- Neighborhoods are adversely affected by traffic leaving the regional highway system.

Strategies

- **Work with neighborhood associations that wish to enhance the identities or qualities of their neighborhoods through monumentation, communication or other identified means.**
- Maintain and improve the condition of the City’s housing stock through housing maintenance and rehabilitation programs.
- Take a leadership role in encouraging affordable, life-cycle housing opportunities.
- Reduce non-local, cut-through traffic in cooperation with County and State efforts.
- **Work to construct sidewalks adjoining State Aid streets and to promote safe pedestrian travel.**



Parks are a defining characteristic of many of Edina’s neighborhoods. Wooddale Park, at Wooddale Avenue and West 50th Street, is one of 39 parks in the city.

Objective #2: Provide a level of City services that sets Edina apart from other communities.

Issues:

- City services are perceived as high quality. This perception influences how residents view the community.
- The demographics of the City influence the demand for City services and the mechanisms with which they are provided.
- Services make up the majority of the City’s operating budget.
- A key ingredient in providing quality services is an experienced staff with proper skills and knowledge of the community. Attracting and maintaining staff shapes the City’s

ability to deliver services. Budget constraints affect the ability of the City to provide adequate personnel needed for our public facilities.



City services, including fire protection, play an important role in the quality of life in Edina.



A K-9 Unit was added to the Police Department in 2002, providing a new form of public safety service.

Strategies:

- Develop an ongoing method to monitor resident satisfaction with City services.
- Attract and retain competent employees who are key to delivering exceptional services.
- Adapt services to meet the constantly changing demographics of the City.
- **Explore opportunities to expand “enterprise” operations of the City.**
- **Encourage volunteer involvement by City employees.**
- **Establish an advisory commission related to services and facilities for seniors.**

Objective #3: **Provide capital investments that balance need and affordability.**

Issues:

- Public facilities are important elements of both community development and municipal services.
- The age of the City's infrastructure will result in significant capital expenditures in the coming years. Meeting infrastructure needs requires balancing available revenues – utility user charges, special assessments and property taxes.
- The investment in facilities and infrastructure will require additional debt. The sources of revenues used to support debt are more important than the total amount of debt. Revenues used to support debt determine who pays and the degree of affordability. Maintaining the best possible bond rating helps achieve the lowest interest expense for City debt.
- Legislative actions influence the ability of Edina to provide capital investment. The ability of the City to borrow money comes from State. The ability to use tax increment financing for social, cultural and recreational facilities, such as the library and senior center, has been eliminated. This approach will not work for future projects. Lease revenue bonds face the risk of future legislative restrictions or elimination. Levy limits constrain the ability to finance both services and capital investment through the General Fund. Legislative changes will provide a continual series of opportunities and constraints for undertaking capital improvements.

Strategies:

- Conduct an assessment of park and recreation needs.
- Address the community needs for gymnasium space and athletic fields.
- Evaluate effects of the 2003 legislative session on debt issuance, especially authority to issue General Obligation debt for certain public facilities.
- Annually update a five-year Capital Improvement Plan, including analysis of revenue and debt implications.



Photo by Polly Norman

One of the goals of the original Vision 20/20 plan was to expand City Hall. That goal was accomplished through the construction of a new City Hall, scheduled to open later this year.

- Explore other uses of special assessments and update and adopt policies for use of special assessments needed to support capital improvement plans.
- Participate in the legislative process to prevent limitations on property taxes and local government finance that impair the ability to meet Vision 20/20 goals.
- Maintain the City's AAA and Aaa bond ratings with Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investors Service.

Objective #4: **Accommodate the efficient movement of people and goods in and around Edina.**

Issues:

- The shrinking capacity of regional roadway systems forces traffic onto local streets.
- Congestion on the highway system will increase in the years ahead.
- The reconstruction of Interstate Highway 494 (I-494) will significantly impact transportation for an extended period of time.

Strategies:

- Support implementation of Metro Transit's Sector 5 Plan.
- Advocate enhanced transit services for Edina by Metro Transit.
- Work with I-494 Commission to discuss and address intra-city transportation issues, including TDM and highway and bridge reconstruction.
- Explore opportunities for intra-area transit in as part of planning for the Southdale/France Avenue area.
- Establish a Transportation Commission.



Photo by Polly Norman

To relieve congestion in the Minnesota Highway 62 and France Avenue area, the Crosstown ramp at Valley View Road was reconstructed. The new ramp, pictured here early in the construction process, opened in late summer.

Objective #5:

Take an active role in future redevelopment strategies.

Issues:

- Edina's past redevelopment actions addressed specific challenges and enhanced the City's image.
- Tax increment financing cannot be used in the same manner as on previous redevelopment successes (50th and France, Centennial Lakes and Edinborough) due to changes in enabling legislation.
- Tax abatement offers another development finance tool, however, the total use of abatement by the City is capped.
- Redevelopment continues to rely on leadership from the City.
- Regional and state policies that seek to limit sprawl emphasize redevelopment in communities like Edina. This regional and state effort creates local opportunities and possible supporting funding.
- Local retail centers are potential future redevelopment areas including Wooddale and Valley View, Grandview, 44th and France and 70th and Cahill.

Strategies:

- Encourage implementation of redevelopment plans for 44th and France and 70th and Cahill.
- Establish guidelines for further intensification of land uses at 50th and France.
- Pursue redevelopment opportunities for the Wooddale and Valley View neighborhood commercial area.
- Undertake a study in conjunction with Hennepin County to create a plan for land use and transportation in the France Avenue area.
- Advocate legislation creating new development tools.



The City is pursuing redevelopment opportunities in the Wooddale/Valley View commercial area.

Objective #6:

Support Edina Public Schools in maintaining an exemplary public education system for the community.

Issues:

- The quality of the community is tied to the quality of the school system. Edina schools influence the City's ability to attract and retain residents.
- Development plans and demographic changes in the City have a direct impact on the school district.
- Both entities have a common "customer" and rely on funding from nearly the same group of taxpayers.

Strategies:

- Continue to participate in Connecting With Kids.
- Investigate joint infrastructure improvements.
- Optimize recreational opportunities in School and City facilities.
- Explore opportunities for cross utilization of personnel and equipment.
- Maintain a strong working relationship with the school district.
- Explore opportunities for relocation of the existing bus garage to allow continued redevelopment in the Grandview area.



The City is an active participant in the youth asset-building initiative Connecting With Kids.

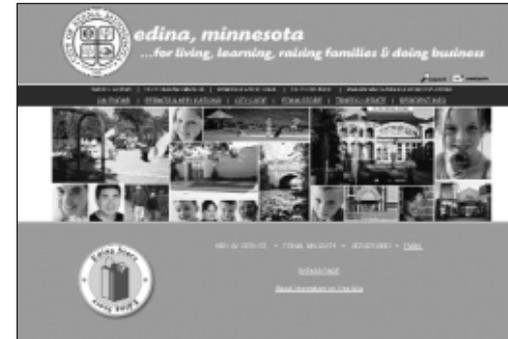
Objective #7:
Evaluate and efficiently employ technological advancements to provide City services.

Issues:

- Computer technology and the World Wide Web have added new means of communications.
- The City periodically receives requests for the placement of new communications technologies within public rights-of-way.
- Cities must continually examine communication tools in order to reach the broadest portion of the constituent audience.

Strategies:

- Continue development of the City’s website to include expanded informational offerings, interactivity and e-commerce applications.
- **Improve communications with residents through the use of technology.**
- **Explore opportunities to create and enhance enterprises through technology.**



Since the City launched a redesigned website in 2002, hits to the website have increased tenfold. E-commerce was launched earlier this year, allowing residents to register for many park and recreation programs, among other things.



Objective #8: Continually update and refine Vision 20/20.

Issues:

- Strategic planning is an ongoing process.
- Assembly of Edina’s strategic plan, 20/20 Vision, is only a first step in a series of steps to attain the City’s vision and prepare itself for the future.
- Edina is a community of leaders.
- An environment that encourages innovation enables staff to seek better solutions.
- Continued innovation will be an essential part of providing quality and affordable services.
- An innovative culture creates a more positive work environment and promotes the retention of staff.
- The demographic make-up of Edina is changing. The characteristics of the community influence the demand for City services and the mechanisms within which they are provided.

Strategies:

- Convene a periodic “futures summit” to identify and discuss trends affecting cities.
- **Leverage the talents of Edina volunteers.**
- Conduct an annual goal-setting, brainstorming retreat.
- **Communicate the 20/20 Vision plan and changes in the plan with the public.**

CONCLUSION

Edina has achieved successes as a community by preparing itself for the future. From a visioning perspective, Edina’s Vision 20/20 examines where our community has been, where it wants to go and how it will get there. From a strategic planning perspective, it examines the challenges and opportunities that have been identified as having the highest priority in the community. As in recent years, once the strategies, or goals, of highest priority are addressed, other items will move into positions of greater prominence. As an ongoing dynamic process, Vision 20/20 will be amended in the future to address these issues.