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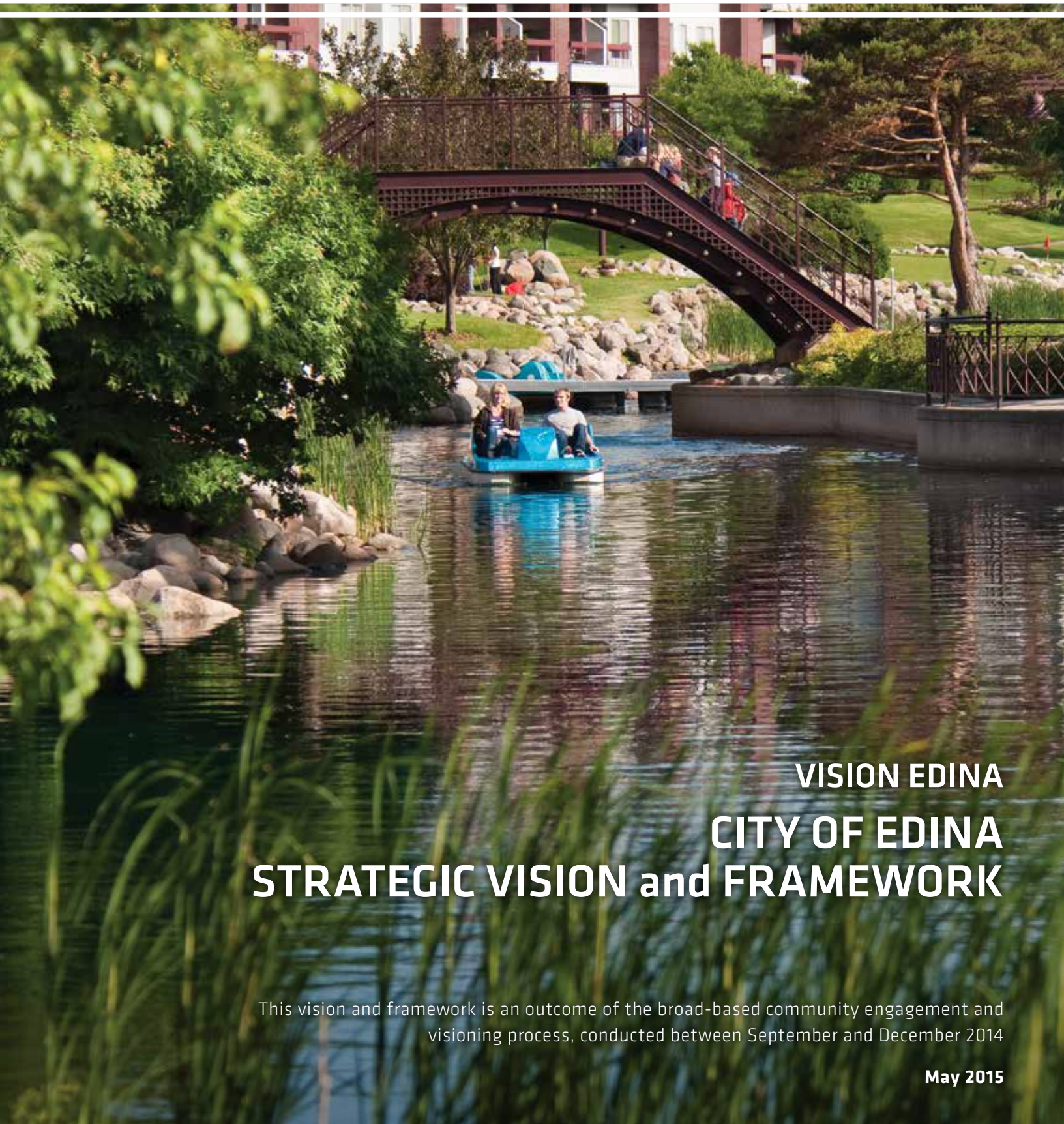

VISION EDINA
CITY OF EDINA
STRATEGIC VISION and FRAMEWORK

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

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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 pressure. 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 Edina'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 remain largely 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 health and 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, that strives to lead 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.

The features that define our future community include:

Inclusive and Connected

- Our community embraces diversity and cherishes the contributions of all residents and stakeholders.
- Our 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.
- We strive 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.
- 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.

Built-to-Scale Development

- Our community has worked hard to create an innovative and long-term comprehensive development policy that strikes the right balance between renewal and progress, and protection and preservation.
- Our development policy promotes partnerships between developers and community members and encourages innovative ideas.
- Our community's commercial and retail base has been significantly enhanced through the creation of more mixed-use locations, carefully woven throughout our neighborhoods.
- We have proactively developed planning procedures and policies that allow the character of our neighborhoods to be preserved and enhanced. Local development reflects the aspirations of both neighborhood residents and the community as a whole.

Sustainable Environment

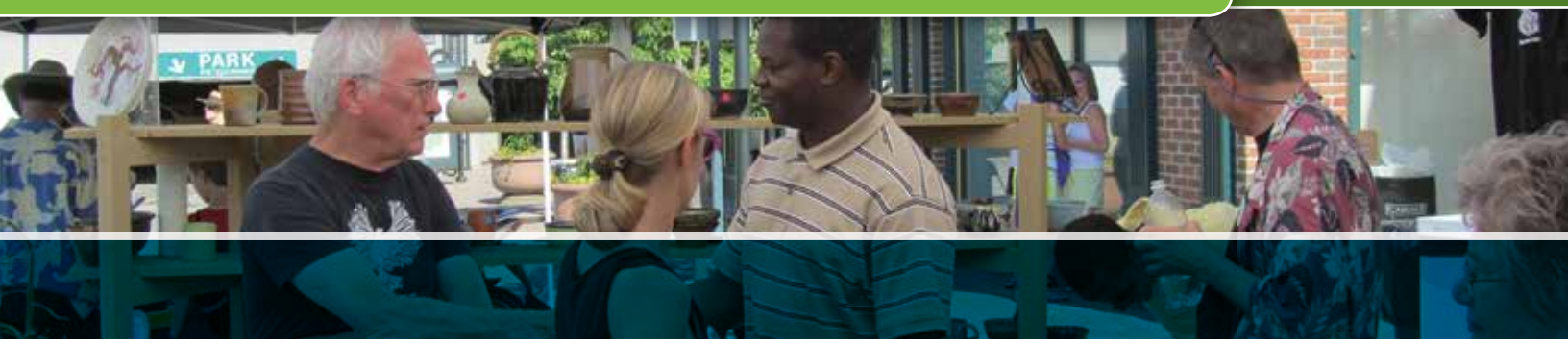
- Edina has focused and invested in world-class citywide resource management systems, built around the leading principles of environmental sustainability.
- We have substantially reduced our overall environmental impact and significantly increased our resource use efficiency.
- Our planning has integrated the best-proven standards of sustainable building and environmental stewardship into all aspects of our city planning and building codes.
- Our community continues to treasure and protect our public spaces and parks. We have enhanced our 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 have evolved, so has our prized education system. We have a high quality, future- oriented 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.
- Edina is willing to use its 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. 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 for additional multi-family options to create more diversity in housing affordability. This would provide increased options at all stages of life and attract younger residents.

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 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 for new multi-family housing throughout the city in mixed-use areas and near public spaces, including areas such as Southdale, Pentagon Park and Grandview.
- Work to create affordable housing options close to transit, shopping and employment centers.

2. TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

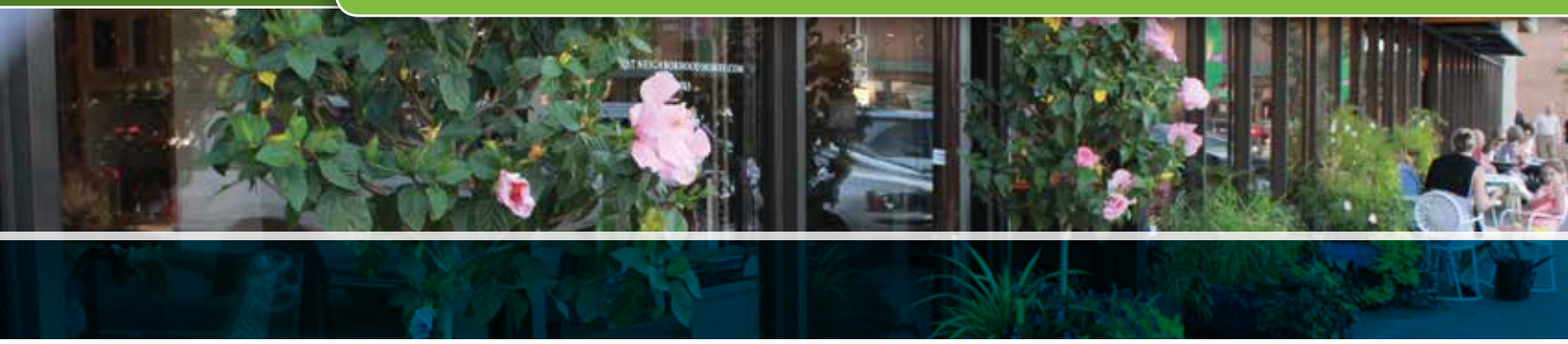
Participants in the Vision Edina process expressed a strong desire to continue to expand a variety of transportation options to both reduce dependency on automobiles and enhance the community's work and life balance, and ease of connectivity. Walking, biking, and transit options represent key amenities that help 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.

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.
- Work 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-oriented and ambitious transportation network that covers multiple modes of transportation, and takes into account potential impacts of future technology on transportation modes and corridors.
- Continue to promote and develop the sidewalk, trail and bike 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 Center. 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 50th & France district. 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 toward 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 significant redevelopment opportunities in the Pentagon Park, Grandview, and Southdale areas, but as of yet, there appears to be no clear consensus 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 Center, 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 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 people who work in Edina cannot afford to live in the community.

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 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, 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 practices across a range of topics. In particular, it is important to expand the scope beyond regional expertise and explore best practices and emerging trends on a global scale.
- The City should continue to foster its 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 community, 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 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 a 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

- The City should expand its work with local school districts 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 toward new residents and 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 toward good environmental stewardship. Community residents and stakeholders believe that Edina can take an active and ambitious internal and regional leadership role in embedding environmental stewardship principles through actions such as 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 multiple providers are 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 community.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Develop a comprehensive city-wide environmental management plan that explores and includes best practices in water management, biodiversity, green space management, street scape enhancement 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 role in the overall city responsibility for 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. The City has been historically viewed as somewhat progressive in its development policies and practices. The existing phase of redevelopment and the expanding pressures from the surrounding metropolitan area highlights the need and opportunity for Edina to continue as an innovator, seeking and implementing creative solutions to local and regional issues.

ISSUES

- City leadership has rightfully focused on many local issues, in large part driven by changing community needs and expectations. In recent years, City officials have also been playing an important role in some significant regional discussions.
- Edina's size may limit its 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.
- 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 as a regional cultural center.

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

VISION EDINA

The Vision Edina initiative has aimed to define a shared vision for 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 provides 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:

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