

Edition:Edina



2016-2017
PRIORITIES



NOVEMBER 2017

Volume 4, Issue 10

City Shies From Further Talks of Passenger Rail Service in Edina

Community Engagement Study Shows Support for Other Transit Corridors

The City will not encourage the development of passenger rail service in Edina in the Dan Patch Corridor at this time.

Over the last few months, the City has been talking to residents and businesses about the possibility of studying passenger rail service through Edina, specifically in the Dan Patch Corridor. The Dan Patch Corridor is a railway that connects Minneapolis and Northfield, running north-south through Edina just west of Minnesota Highway 100. Although transit interest in this corridor was renewed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it is currently

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under a “gag rule” that prohibits the Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Department of Transportation and regional railroad authorities from further study of commuter rail in this corridor.

The Edina Transportation Commission (ETC) conducted a study this year to answer two specific questions:

- Should the City request elimination of the gag rule?
- Should the City dedicate resources to developing a plan to encourage the development of passenger rail service in Edina?

Based on high-level review of the corridor and feedback from the public, the ETC made the following recommendations at its September meeting, which the City Council received last month:

- No, the City of Edina should not request elimination of the gag rule at this time.
- No, the City should not dedicate resources to developing a plan to encourage the development of passenger rail service in Edina in the Dan Patch Corridor at this time.

Although it is not recommended the City pursue passenger rail in the Dan Patch Corridor at this time, there are overall indicators that suggest Edina could support additional transit options.

Previous engagement efforts in the community, as captured in the “Vision Edina” document, have indicated the community’s desire for enhanced transit. The study suggests the City should invest time and resources into looking at other corridors as possible transit corridors. This may also include consideration of other modes of transit in addition to passenger rail.

For more information on the study and to view the final report, visit EdinaMN.gov/Rail.



Photo by Kaylin Eidsness

Neighbors Socialize in the Streets

Edina residents took to the streets at the third-annual Open Streets in late September. The City closed West 50th Street between Wooddale Avenue in Edina and Chowen Avenue in Minneapolis for a day of celebration and community building. The street was open to bicyclists, pedestrians and their dogs to enjoy music, dance, games, crafts, yoga and other creative and active events. Civic, athletic, artistic, creative and neighborhood groups, as well as businesses, participated in this event.

Edina Park Signs Get Upgraded

Signs Will Improve Aesthetics and Visibility of Neighborhood Parks

After an extensive selection process, the City is now in the process of removing and installing new neighborhood park signs. The nearly 40 neighborhood parks in Edina will be outfitted with new signs.

“Our previous signs were installed 30 years ago; they were the original signs to the parks, so they were rotting and in poor condition. This replacement was long overdue,” said Assistant Parks & Recreation Director Susan Faus. “We are very excited to install these new signs. When people see a park sign, they are going to know they are in an Edina park and it’s really going to improve the overall look and feel in our parks.”

All of the signs have been removed from the parks and the installation process is expected to be completed before the snow flies.

Choosing the right material and design of the new signs was a process that weighed the opinions of many people. Input was collected from City staff and the Parks & Recreation Commission and shared with the vendor to develop a design that would look more natural, complement the recently built shelter buildings, was durable and would tie into the City’s brand. Signs will include the park’s address and also be installed at different angles than the old ones so that they are more visible from the roadway.

The previous signs were replaced as needed throughout the years, but recent replacements were halted because the new signs were slated to be installed. The main entrance signs for all the community, neighborhood and mini parks will be replaced, but the bid did not include plans to replace or add wayfinding signage.

“This current bid package did not include wayfinding signs, but we had \$500,000 budgeted for this project and the bid for the entrance signage came in at \$221,022. We have money remaining, so we will be replacing those wayfinding signs and additional directional signage,” said Faus. “We hope that will happen in the spring.”

For more information, contact the Parks & Recreation Department at 952-826-0367.



New park signs will be more visible, improve aesthetics and make it easier to locate parks.

Rich Begins Work as Financial Analyst

Position Serves as Financial Resource for Enterprise Facilities

Financial Analyst Andrea Rich’s wealth of knowledge from the private to public sector will help her define the City’s newest role.

“Based on operations in the City, including Centennial Lakes Park, Edinborough Park, Braemar Arena and the Liquor operations – all the businesses we operate for profit – we needed someone to come in and serve as a financial resource specifically for those facilities,” said Finance Director Don Uram, who hopes the new position lends general managers a hand to improve their operations and profitability.

“Andrea’s experience with large accounting firms, Fortune 500 companies as well as smaller businesses and with a county in Illinois will all be very helpful.”

Rich, who started with the City in September, came from Kane County in Illinois, where she served as the Chief Deputy Auditor. Prior to that, Rich worked for Sprout Creek Farm in New York and served in various roles at Kraft Foods. She started her career after college with PricewaterhouseCoopers. Rich graduated

with a bachelor’s degree in Accountancy from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Besides learning how each facility’s point-of-sale system works and its individual operations, Rich will begin work to create a gift card that can be used across all the enterprise systems and at City Hall, so residents can use the same gift card to pay their water bill, purchase product at Edina Liquor and buy passes to Edinborough Park.

“I hope to get involved in the businesses where they really feel comfortable coming to me with questions,” said Rich. “I like solving puzzles and understanding how things work, so I’m really looking forward to this.”

Other duties of Rich’s job include assisting the Finance Director in managing the City’s investment portfolio, helping manage the daily operations of accounts receivable, coordinating ambulance billing operations, and performing in-depth research and analysis to enhance City operations and effectiveness, as well as managing special projects, such as utility rate studies and policy development.

Rich and her husband have two children. They currently live in Minnetonka.

For more information, contact the Finance Department at 952-826-0366.


Photo by Kaylin Eidsness



Andrea Rich began work in September in the City’s newly created position of Financial Analyst.

BY THE NUMBERS

Edina Art Center

Since 1977, the Edina Art Center has served as Edina's hub for creative expression. The Center, located at 4701 W. 64th St., provides the community with a place to view exciting exhibitions, enjoy artistic and cultural events and express creativity through artmaking. 



401 Members
2017 costs: **\$35** – Individual • **\$50** – Family

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

10%

Discount on classes

10%

Discount on supplies carried in the supply store

\$5

Discount for Edina residents

7,000+ Visitors each year

178

Classes, which are detailed in the *Activities Directory*



– Compiled by Scott Dunnigan

Checks for Utility Bills to be Processed Off-Site

Change Will Save Finance Staff Time

Residents will soon notice a new return address on the remittance stub of their utility bills. Beginning Nov. 10, the City of Edina will use U.S. Bank's payment processing service to process checks for utility billing. The remittance stubs used to submit payments in the reply envelope will show the following address:

City of Edina
PO Box 860586
Minneapolis, MN 55486-0586

The Finance Department estimates using U.S. Bank's payment processing service will save staff roughly 25 hours each month.

"The time saved will allow Finance staff more time to provide better customer service to our 15,500 customers," said Accountant Sharae Sledge, who estimates the Finance Department processes about 1,600 checks each month. "The change will really streamline the process, too."

The decision to use U.S. Bank's payment processing service comes on the heels of the department moving to InvoiceCloud, a new online payment service. In addition to making payments online at EdinaMN.gov/UtilityBilling, residents can also make payments over the phone by calling 844-476-3107.

Checks should be made payable to City of Edina. Residents are also still able to drop off their payments in the drop-box in the entry way of Edina City Hall, 4801 W. 50th St.

For more information, call the Finance Department at 952-826-0366.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, Nov. 1

Braemar Golf Dome opens for the season

Thursday, Nov. 2

Entries due for Human Rights Essay Contest

Saturday, Nov. 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Family Night, Braemar Field

Sunday, Nov. 5, 7 p.m.

St. Paul Police Band, Edinborough Park

Tuesday, Nov. 7, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Election Day

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 7 p.m.

City Council meeting, Edina City Hall

Thursday, Nov. 9, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Grandview Green Open House, Edina City Hall

Thursday, Nov. 9, 7 p.m.

Energy & Environment Commission meeting, Edina City Hall

Friday, Nov. 10

Veterans Day observed; City Hall closed

Friday, Nov. 10, 6:30 p.m.

Friday Family Movie Night, "Sing," Edinborough Park

Saturday, Nov. 11, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Family Night, Braemar Field

Sunday, Nov. 12, 7 p.m.

Heart of a Tinman performance, Edinborough Park

Monday, Nov. 13, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Grandview Green Open House, Edina City Hall

Monday, Nov. 13, 6:30 p.m.

Community Health Commission meeting, Community Room

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 7 p.m.

Heritage Preservation Commission meeting, Edina City Hall

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 7 p.m.

Human Rights & Relations Commission meeting, Edina City Hall

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 7 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Commission meeting, Edina City Hall

Wednesday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission meeting, Edina City Hall

Wednesday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m.

Wine and Canvas, Braemar Golf Course

Thursday, Nov. 16, 4:30 p.m.

Arts & Culture Commission meeting, Edina Art Center

Thursday, Nov. 16, 6 p.m.

Transportation Commission meeting, Edina City Hall

Thursday, Nov. 16, 5-8 p.m.

Up North Holiday Gift Gallery Opening Reception, Edina Art Center

Saturday, Nov. 18, 10 a.m.

Town Hall meeting, Edina Senior Center

Saturday, Nov. 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Family Night, Braemar Field

Meet Edina's Newest Building Inspectors

Their Job is to Ensure Homes and Buildings are Safe

Armed with little more than tape measures and extensive knowledge of the building code, Edina's Building Inspectors are tasked with ensuring construction and remodeling are done correctly to keep all residents and the buildings they use safe.

"We make sure everybody is building to Code," said Building Inspector Nate Borwege. "We make sure residents have the proper safety compliance in their homes."

Borwege recently joined Edina's Building Inspections division after years of experience working for a home building company in New Prague. Another new Building Inspector is Scot Jandro, who previously worked as a framing subcontractor and performed inspections. They now spend their days visiting homes across Edina to make sure builders and construction crews are meeting Code.

"My favorite part of the job is the variety of projects being built, the quality of homes being constructed and working with the contractors and subcontractors," said Jandro, which is pronounced with a hard "J." His siblings have first names with four letters, so his parents dropped a "t" off "Scott" to make his name match.

They both credit other Building Inspections staff with helping them quickly get up to speed. That includes Stephen Kartak, who was recently promoted from Building Inspector to Field Supervisor. He supervises the inspectors plus reviews residential building plans. His phone rings a lot with calls from contractors and builders who have questions regarding Code.



Scot Jandro, Stephen Kartak and Nate Borwege are part of the City of Edina's Building Inspections Division. Jandro and Borwege are Building Inspectors who joined the City in 2017; Kartak was recently promoted to Field Supervisor.

"The best part of my job is working with our department," Kartak said. "We've got a knowledgeable, experienced department."

If they come visiting your house, they aren't checking to see if the furniture has been dusted or the carpet vacuumed that day. Borwege and Jandro chuckle at how they often arrive at homes to find people frantically trying to clean up or apologizing for children's toys in the middle of the floor or a pile of laundry.

"I have kids," Borwege said. "I understand."

"We've seen worse," Jandro said in reassurance.

Other inspectors in the division, led by Chief Building Official Dave Fisher, are Peter Akmenkals, Sam Anderson, Tom Eisert, Jim Hall, David Mickelson, James Ruffin, Tedd Nelson, Mike Rice and John Schweitzer.

Learn more about Building Inspections at EdinaMN.gov or call 952-826-0372.