



## II. Human Rights and Relations

### Chapter Highlights

This Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan describes Edina’s goals and policies that have been developed by the Human Rights and Relations Commission to ensure that City departments, programs, officials and staff are working to “Build a Human Rights City with Race Equity For All.” Before outlining these specific goals and policies, the chapter discusses the important difference between achieving “equality” and striving for “equity” in all aspects of City governance.

This chapter:

- Describes the public policy of Edina to secure for all residents freedom from discrimination in all aspects of city life, and the City’s establishment of the Human Rights and Relations Commission to further its public policy of nondiscrimination
- Discusses Edina’s commitment to reduce discrimination, inequality and racism through Resolution No. 2016-72 that established the City as a “Human Rights City”
- Describes the City’s participation in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity and explains the differences between the concept of equality and the goal of advancing race equity
- Discusses the current state of human rights and relations in Edina
- Outlines areas of concern where work needs to be done to achieve race equity, and to advance opportunities and ensure a welcoming community for all

One of the aims of this chapter is to ensure that steps are taken to ensure that the City looks at its departments, program, services, and practices through the lens of race equity and thus reinforces the City’s status as a “Human Rights City.” Of particular concern is equity in the areas of: housing, community services and facilities, parks and recreation, and environment. Goals discussed in this chapter are focused on:

- Establishing a race equity plan,
- Ensuring equal access and opportunities for all residents,
- Ensuring that the City welcomes all members of the community to participate in its social, employment, economic, political, and recreational activities,

### Human Rights and Relations Commission

#### Themes

The Edina Human Rights and Relations Commission identified seven themes to consider when developing policies.

1. Race equity
2. Gender justice
3. Social inclusion
4. Economic justice
5. Education
6. Environment
7. Police and justice system reforms

The Commission has identified the following ten social capital/social well-being indicators to consider when making policy decisions:

1. Race
2. Age
3. Ability
4. Sexual orientation
5. Gender identity
6. Ethnicity
7. Religion
8. Health
9. Poverty/socio-economic status
10. Education



- Ensuring that the City supports and fosters economic equity and justice for all residents, students and visitors, and
- Ensuring that economic harm should not be an intended or unintended consequence of City programs, initiatives, or activities.

## Introduction

The City of Edina has long been recognized as an exceptionally livable and desirable community. Livability is best described by Bruce Appleyard in *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board* (2014), as “an individual’s ability to readily access opportunities to improve personal quality of life for living, working, playing, shopping, learning, worshipping, resting and moving within [a] city, town, or neighborhood.” However, not all Edina residents, students and visitors experience these opportunities in the same way, nor with the same degree of success.

It is the public policy of the City of Edina to secure for all residents of the City freedom from discrimination because of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, or national origin in connection with employment, housing and real property, public accommodations, public services, credit and education [Edina City Ordinance 15.01]. In 1970, the City of Edina established the Human Rights and Relations Commission (Commission) to promote and help implement its public policy of nondiscrimination. The Commission is charged with the responsibility to advise the City Council on matters relating to discrimination and human relations and to implement programs of education and community action designed to advance public policy regarding human rights [Edina City Ordinance 1501.02]. The Commission advocates for human rights and needs in the community and promotes responsibility and integrity in human relationships by providing service, information and recommendations, cooperating with other communities and governmental organizations, and sponsoring forums and community events.

In 2016, the City of Edina became a Human Rights City. This is a commitment to “reducing discrimination, inequality, racism, and xenophobia in all aspects of civic life: housing, education, economic opportunity, religious and cultural expression, access to public institutions and opportunities, and safety and security” [City of Edina Resolution No. 2016-72 Establishing Edina, Minnesota as a Human Rights City].

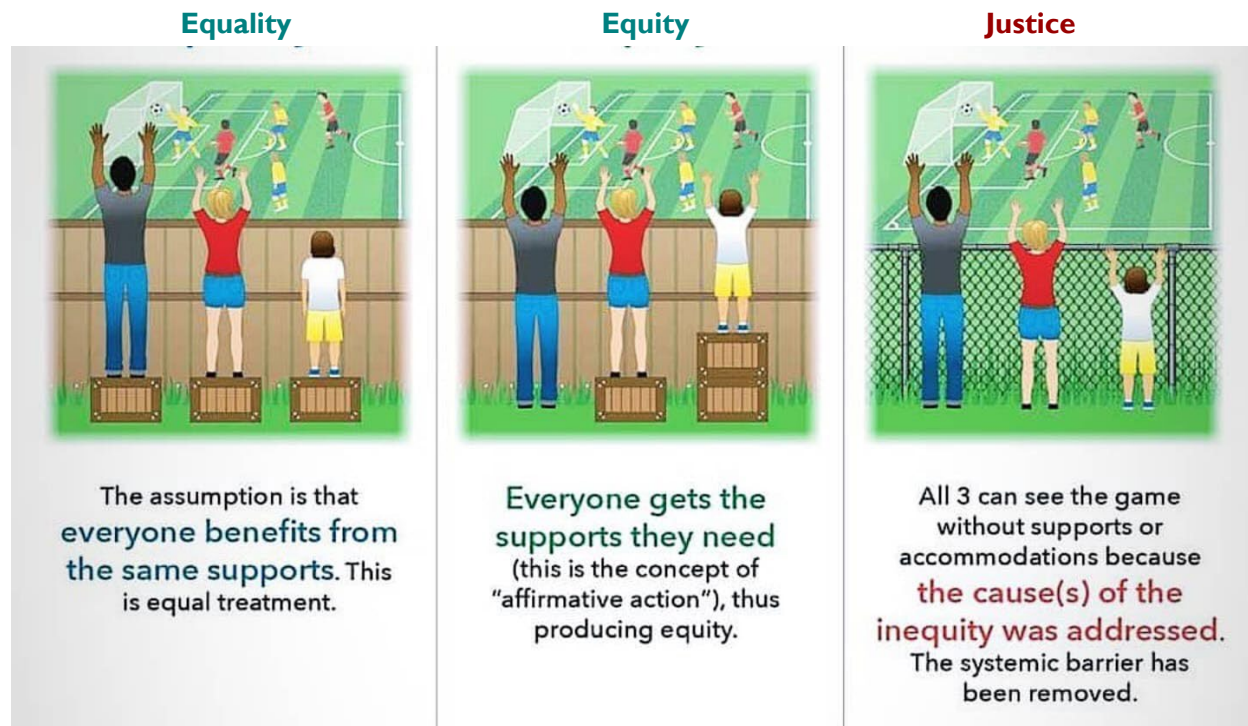
In 2017, Edina joined the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), which is a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. The work involves using a race equity framework to create long-term sustainable results on race equity in all aspects of government. Achieving race equity means that race will no longer predict a person’s success, while also improving the outcomes for everyone.

This Comprehensive Plan chapter outlines goals and policies that will foster an inclusive and engaged community, i.e., a welcoming community where every person can contribute, thrive, and enjoy the benefits that the City of Edina has to offer.

The Commission recognizes in its work that there is a difference between equity and equality and that it is critical that this difference is taken into account when addressing human rights and relations. Equality implies that the same resources are provided for everyone regardless of background or circumstance. Equity implies that everyone is given the resources needed to have an equal chance of succeeding, with



those facing more obstacles to success receiving the resources needed to overcome them. This concept is illustrated below on Figure 11.1.



**Figure 11.1: Food for Thought: Equality Vs Equity Vs Justice**

Source: The InclusionSolution

In 2015, the City of Edina formally adopted a Vision Statement that describes Edina as “a ... preeminent place for living, learning, raising families and doing business.” In order for Edina to live up to its adopted vision and reputation for livability, discriminatory acts and inequities that might be experienced by residents and visitors to Edina should be prevented. Moreover, efforts should be made to ensure that when such acts occur, appropriate action will be taken. These efforts require an understanding of current demographic and socio-economic information.

The Edina Community is made up of families and individuals of all ethnicities, but a majority of residents are European Americans (85 percent). Additionally, 7.1 percent are Asian Americans, 2.2 percent are African Americans, 2.1 percent are more than one race, 1.8 percent are other races, and 0.2 percent are Native Americans. African-American families played a prominent role in settling Edina, but European-American families became dominant during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was in part due to restrictive covenants which prevented people of color from owning or leasing property in entire neighborhoods. Parts of Edina were subject to these covenants, which have been outlawed since the *Shelly v. Kramer* United States Supreme Court ruling of 1948.

**Negative Race-Related Experiences in the City of Edina**

Discrimination and inequities may be experienced by residents and visitors in an array of contexts. In recognizing the unwelcoming dynamic experienced by some community members, including people of color, the City began a race and equity initiative in 2017 to “identify and eliminate race-based disparities in Edina city government facilities, services and institutions” [City Manager Scott Neal, in December 6, 2016 Staff Report to City Council on Establishing an Edina Race & Equity Task Force].



The initiative was led by a task force of Edina residents who oversaw the collection of data and the development of recommendations for the City Council, with the objective “to determine what changes could be made to ensure that Edina is a welcoming community for all people” [Race & Equity Initiative Final Report & Recommendations, Version 2.0, Finalized June 26, 2018, (“Report”) *Purpose and Objectives*, page 18].

As set forth in the Report, “[t]o understand the scope of race-based discrimination and feelings of being unwelcome, data was collected from a range of Edina community members during the summer, fall, and winter months of 2017.” The Report found that “20 themes consistently emerged surrounding experiences, observations, and awareness of race-based discrimination” including the following.

- Parks: “Edina parks are places where community members have experienced racism primarily through racial slurs and race-based vandalism.”
- Other Facilities: “There are observations and experiences of race-based harassment and race-based violence at various city facilities....”
- Lack of Representation / Decision Making: “Many observe that there are few or no people of color that represent the city of Edina in government leadership, nor in government-appointed groups.”
- Hiring Practices and Procedures: “There is uneasiness and suspicion around how race plays a role in government hiring practices.”
- Responsiveness to Race-Based Concerns: “Many feel the city responds poorly to reports of race-based discrimination, or that the city does not respond at all.”
- Police Department: “There is significant concern about police conduct with people of color.”
- City Housing Programs: “Perceptions exist that city-based housing programs and policies are contributing to the lack of people of color in Edina.”
- Other Services: “There is a perceived lack of inclusion in the process for how city services are designated and delivered.”

Report, *Community Findings*, pages 25-30. See [Report](#) for more complete findings.

As Edina prepares for the next two decades, addressing these experiences will be essential to ensure that Edina is a welcoming, inclusive, and engaged community.

**Edina: A Community of Learning.** Edina has a prized education system of high-quality public schools. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of extending the benefits of education to the entire community by increasing multi-generational learning through expanded mentoring and tutoring opportunities that involve school-age children, and their parents, senior citizens, local businesses and institutions, and health care facilities.

Collaborating with the Edina public schools, Edina’s Human Rights and Relations Commission can play an important role in the community by engaging students and educating them on the City’s programs and initiatives that address equality and equity for all. Opportunities exist for the Human Rights Commission, in partnerships with the Arts and Culture and Heritage Preservation Commissions, to expand residents’ understanding of equality and equity by recognizing and honoring people of color and other marginalized groups who have contributed to Edina’s growth and prosperity.



## Trends, Challenges, and Themes

To grasp the policy implications of current and future human rights and relations issues, it is essential to know the demographic composition of Edina and how those demographics relate to income and other factors. The Human Right and Relations Commission notes that national data collection is based on categories that may not reflect the same demographic composition of our community; for example, recent immigrants from African may or may not be included in a category, i.e., African American.

### Trends

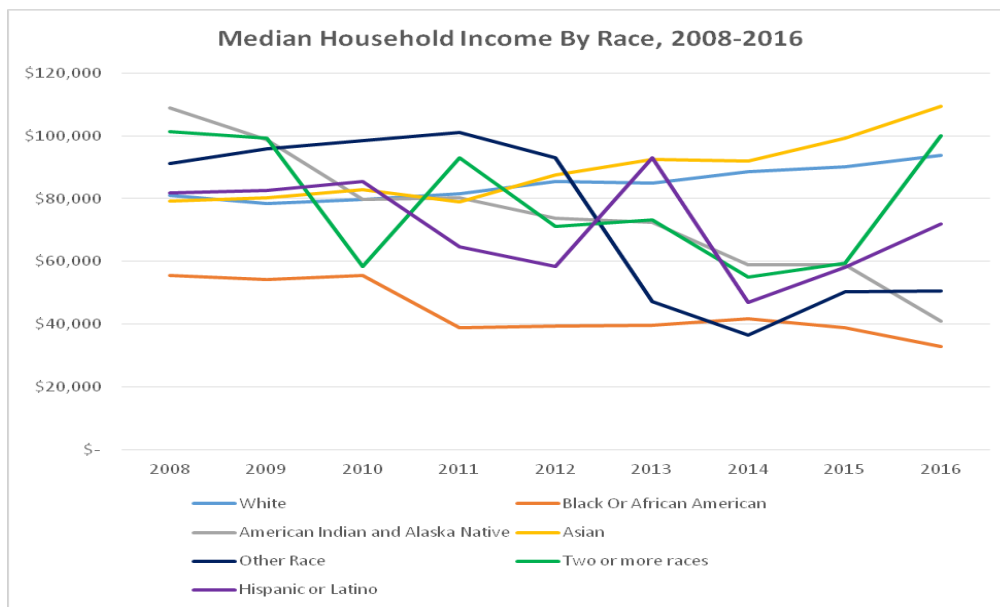
The population of Edina grew from 45,569 in 2009 to 49,976 in 2016. Population growth by race between 1980 and 2016 can be seen in detail below in Table 11.1. While the white population of Edina has grown since 1980, the proportion of Edina that is white has decreased from 98.4 percent in 1980 to 86.5 percent in 2016. As Table 11.1 indicates, there has been a trend toward racial and ethnic diversity in Edina. The largest increase in population share was the Asian American population, which grew from nearly 1 percent in 1980 to 7 percent of the City’s population 2016, with 4 percent of that growth occurring since 2000.

<b>Table 11.1: Percent of Edina Population by Race, 1980-2016</b>					
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2016
White or European American	98.4%	97.2%	94.3%	88.1%	86.5%
Black or African American	0.5%	0.7%	1.2%	3.0%	2.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Asian American	0.8%	1.7%	3.0%	6.1%	7.1%
Other Race	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.7%	1.8%
2 or More Races	n/a	n/a	1.1%	1.8%	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino	0.5%	0.7%	1.1%	2.1%	3.0%

*Source: US Census Bureau*

### Challenges

In the past ten years, median incomes of most racial and ethnic groups have broadly diverged. American-Indian/Alaska-Native and African-American residents have seen significant reductions in median household income throughout the past ten years: Native-American residents by roughly two-thirds and African-American residents by about one-third. African-American residents have also had the lowest median household incomes through nearly the entire 2008-2016 period. By contrast, the median household incomes of European-American and Asian-American residents have steadily increased by roughly one-quarter. Hispanic/Latino, Two or More Races, and Other Races have had fluctuating median household incomes in the same period.



Source: US Census Bureau

**Figure 11.2: City of Edina Median Household Income by Year and Race**

Through participation in GARE and the City’s Race and Equity Initiative, the Commission recognizes that the City’s policies and practices may currently work better for white people than for people of color who live, work, or study in Edina, even though unintentionally and inadvertently. The impact of such policies, combined with the recognized history of discriminatory practices such as Edina’s restrictive covenants, creates a system that can negatively impact communities of color. Making race equity a priority will help close the gap on race as a predictor of a person’s success. This will improve outcomes relative to all social capital/social well-being indicators.

## Goals and Policies

### Goal 1: Establish Race Equity Plan

Eliminate any disparate impact of City policies and operations caused by race. Ensure city policies, practices and programs are equitable for all community members. The five policies below are based on the Edina Race and Equity Task Force’s five thematic recommendations.

- Policy 1: The City will develop accountability measures to monitor, assess, and evaluate progress toward race equity goals.
- Policy 2: The City will build relationships with communities of color.
- Policy 3: The City will gather and analyze data in a way that provides an understanding of the difference in experiences of people of color.
- Policy 4: The City will take steps to address inclusion in city staffing, communications, and appointments.
- Policy 5: The City will focus on eliminating policies that create and maintain inequities based on race.



**Goal 2: Ensure equal access and opportunities for all residents regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.**

- Policy 1: The City will ensure that all public policy decisions account for the differential impacts on women and LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Policy 2: The City will use the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), passed in Edina in 2016, as a framework for improving the conditions of women and girls in Edina.
- Policy 3: The City will support efforts to ensure equal pay and fair employment practices for all people regardless of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- Policy 4: The City will promote preventive education about gender-based violence, sexual assault, and sexual harassment in schools.

**Goal 3: Ensure that the City welcomes all members of the community to participate in its social, employment, economic, political, and recreational activities.**

- Policy 1: The City will create an intentional community engagement plan.
- Policy 2: The City will continue to improve transparency and access to local government for all.
- Policy 3: The City will ensure accessibility to city facilities, services, and programs for residents with physical and other disabilities.

**Goal 4: Ensure that the City supports and fosters economic equity and justice for all residents. Economic harm should not be an intended or unintended consequence of City programs, initiatives, or activities.**

- Policy 1: The City will support social and economic policies that make human rights a primary objective.
- Policy 2: The City will explore policies that support the development and success of minority-run and minority-owned businesses.
- Policy 3: The City will promote access to affordable and nutritional food for all residents.