

# Opportunities to Increase Access to Healthy Eating Edina, Minnesota

**Local policy initiatives** play a pivotal role in promoting the health of a community, including supporting healthy eating. A variety of policy options are available to provide opportunities for all residents to access and eat healthier foods. This document provides an overview of Edina municipal ordinances impacting the local food system, and provides recommendations to support integration of healthy food policies into Edina's comprehensive plan update, as well as future plans and code amendments.

The review of Edina's policies identified the following key areas related to the food system and corresponding opportunities to enhance current municipal policies and create new policies where gaps exist:

- Growing and Producing Food
- Processing Food
- Distributing Food
- Getting Food
- Making Food
- Surplus and Waste Management

## STATE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

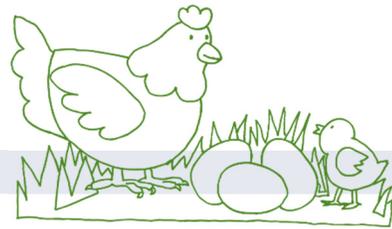
A number of Minnesota state laws impact the food system and the authority municipal governments have to regulate a certain area. Areas impacted by state law include, but are not limited to:

- Building construction standards
- Sale of personally grown, unprocessed agricultural products
- Licensing and inspection of food establishments
- Food safety standards
- Sale of Cottage Food products, and
- Food sampling at farmers' markets and other community events.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

### Growing, Producing, and Processing Food



#### Local Vegetable and Fruit Production

Edina has a limited number of ordinances that address gardening, farming or food production activities and there are no ordinances that address community gardens. It does allow greenhouses, which is a type of growing structure used to extend the growing season. Other types of growing structures include hoop houses, low-tunnels and cold frames, which are effective tools to increase food production.

Opportunities to improve local food production include:

- Assess how ordinances and zoning can support personal and community gardens.
- Determine need for additional community garden sites on public property and ensure garden sites are available and accessible to all residents, especially renters and those without access to land.
- Allow other types of local food production, such as urban farms, market gardens or indoor aquaponics.
- Offer gardening opportunities as an amenity in mixed-use or planned unit developments.
- Allow alternatives to zoning standards if Planned Unit Development [PUD] includes site amenities, including active transportation and food production.
- Allow structures that extend the growing season and develop ordinances addressing these structures.
- Consider allowing greenhouses on lots primarily used for food production, such as community gardens.
- Assess if growing structures would be better regulated under their own ordinance rather than fall under the general classification of an accessory structure or building.

#### Beekeeping and Pollinator Protection

Edina allows residents to keep bees and their ordinances address the key elements of beekeeping in an urban environment. In recent years, the populations of honey bees, bumble bees, and other important pollinators have been decreasing. Pollinator health is important, as pollinators support both ecological health and agricultural production. In Minnesota, pollination from honey bees for food production is valued at \$17 billion annually and pollination from other pollinators is valued at \$6 billion annually. There are two main contributors to the decrease in pollinator health that can be addressed through local government action in Minnesota: the loss of pollinator habitat and the use of neonicotinoid or other systemic insecticides.

Opportunities to improve pollinator protection and beekeeping include:

- Expand prohibition of spraying fruit trees and other flowering trees.
- Assess need to register hives.
- Add beekeeping as a principal, conditional or accessory use to the zoning districts where it is allowed.
- Develop a pollinator policy to address use of pesticides and increase native landscaping on public land.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of neonicotinoid and other systemic insecticides on public lands and their use on private land, as well as educate residents to discourage use on private land.
- Increase pollinator friendly habitat.

- Amend city law to decrease setbacks for restoration areas and planned landscape areas to increase the amount of lawn cover that can be native prairie and long grasses or other pollinator friendly plants.
- Encourage the use of pollinator friendly plants in landscape designs.
- Planting pollinator friendly plants in rights of way.

### Farm poultry and farm animals

Edina’s ordinances do not allow any type of farm animal or farm poultry other than female chickens.

Opportunities to improve keeping farm poultry in Edina include:

- Provide definitions for types of farm poultry and animals.
- Clarify shelter requirements and allowed locations for chickens.
- Assess if other farm animals or farm poultry, such as ducks, could be permitted.

### Processing Food: Cottage food preparation and sale

Cottage Food is a term used for specific types of foods that can be prepared outside of a licensed kitchen, often in a person’s home, and sold to the public. Cottage food vendors are often local food entrepreneurs that sell their product at farmers’ markets or other small-scale local retail settings. Edina does not allow residents to operate a cottage food home business.

Opportunities to improve Edina residents’ ability to pursue cottage food activities include:

- Consider permitting cottage food as a *customary home occupation as an accessory use*.
- Evaluate need and create opportunities for licensed kitchens in Edina to support local food entrepreneurs.



## Distributing, Getting and Making Food

### Farmers’ Markets and Agricultural stands

Edina permits farmers’ markets on city-owned property, but they appear to be restricted to Centennial Lakes Park. The City also allows the sale of locally grown produce at produce stands in a small number of zoning districts.

Opportunities to support the sale of locally grown produce include:

- Consider promoting and expanding farmers’ markets and allowing them in other parks or public spaces.
- Consider accepting payment methods such as EBT cards, FMNP coupons or WIC vouchers.
- Assess if locations of current markets are accessible to residents with fixed/low-incomes or limited mobility.
- Consider adopting ordinances that would be less restrictive of outdoor sales of farm produce.
- Provide guidelines as to whether a person can set up an agricultural stand at either a home or community garden and sell the produce that they grew.
- Clarify how zoning restrictions and licensing fees impact location and occurrence of agricultural stands.

## Grocery stores

As Edina is currently zoned, grocery stores are not allowed in primarily residentially zoned districts. This affects the development pattern, location, frequency and accessibility of grocery stores.

### Opportunities to increase access to healthy food include:

- Assess if grocery stores are located in areas that are easily accessible, especially for people without a car or who have other mobility issues.
- Allow grocery stores to be a principal use rather than as a provisional or conditional use.
- Consider development of an overlay district, or allowing small grocery stores in other districts, that would allow for more even distribution throughout the residential areas of Edina.
- Adopt a healthy corner store initiative to increase access to healthy food at small convenience stores.

## Restaurants

In Edina, restaurants are not allowed in primarily residentially zoned districts. Edina primarily uses the term food establishment in place of restaurant, which are classified based on risk level to prevent food-borne illnesses. Other municipalities provide classifications for restaurants that differentiate between certain types of restaurants, such as full-service or fast food/drive-through. Making distinctions between different types of restaurants allows a municipality to better regulate the location and density of different types of restaurants.

### Opportunities to increase access to healthy restaurants include:

- Clarify how the City use the terms Restaurant and Food Establishment
- Include the health impact of different types of food establishments as part of regulatory framework.
- Use zoning to influence location of healthier restaurants.



## Surplus and Waste Management

### Organic waste and food packaging waste

Organic matter and food packaging waste make up a significant portion of the waste stream being thrown into landfills. Many of these materials ending up in landfills could be reduced, recycled, or composted. Edina currently does not offer an organics recycling program or regulate food containers or carryout bags. Edina's organized waste and recycling pickup service, which is coordinated through the city, may provide some opportunities for a more coordinated city-wide organics recycling effort.

### Opportunities for recycling organics and reducing food packaging waste include:

- Involve Edina's Energy and Environment Commission in developing comprehensive plan language to address expanded waste reduction strategies and organics recycling.
- Include strategy for Edina to meet the 2030 state and county goals for waste reduction in the 2018 comprehensive plan update.
- Include recommendation in comprehensive plan to identify opportunities to expand organics recycling for city services and facilities, single and multi-family residential buildings, and businesses.
- Consider revising the maximum size of compost containers to comply with cubic feet rather than square feet.

- Assess if current size limitations and location inhibit effective composting at community gardens.
- Assess feasibility of a city-operated solid waste collection, similar to Hopkins, St. Louis Park or Minneapolis.
- Evaluate opportunities to regulate take-out containers from food establishments, like the [Green to Go: Environmentally Acceptable Packaging Ordinance](#) adopted by Minneapolis in 2017.<sup>i</sup>
- Promote educational opportunities for Edina’s residents, businesses, schools, and non-profits on how to separate organics from trash for pickup.
- Explore possibility of imposing fee on single-use bags or incentivizing use of reusable bags.

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<sup>i</sup> Minneapolis, Minn., Code § 204.30 (2017).