

WHY I AM RUNNING FOR MAYOR OF EDINA

My name is Dan Azar, and I am running for Mayor of Edina. My wife, Lee, and I were born and raised in Edina where we learned early on to take pride in the strong, unique, and vibrant community in which we lived. Wanting the same high quality of life for our children, Lee and I are following in our parents' footsteps and are raising our family in Edina. Responsible spending and responsible growth are my top priorities for our great city.

Safe neighborhoods, excellent schools, and thriving businesses make Edina a great place to live and work. Our city is renown throughout the country for its public parks, golf courses, and public works services. Careful planning and development have created a city whose hallmarks are community spirit and civic pride. As Mayor, I intend to keep Edina, EDINA.

Edina schools consistently receive superior ratings in state and national rankings. Let's maintain that excellence and keep irresponsible urban development from overcrowding our classrooms. Keeping class size low is a priority of mine. Just imagine the strain on public school buildings and resources if Edina were to add thousands of new students by constructing low income housing as our current city government is contemplating.

Communication between city officials and its residents needs improvement. There is a break down in the process whereby city officials and city engineers communicate with residents. The engineering department has an agenda of its own and keeps taxpayers from having legitimate input during the planning stages of neighborhood projects. As Mayor, I will open up the lines of communication and will guarantee that taxpayers are treated with honesty and integrity and that their input is heard. The culture of city hall must change, where-as, residents' voices should steer projects and policy. The voice of the people will be placed first.

Property taxes are on the rise. As Mayor, I will decrease property taxes by ensuring that expenditures are kept proportional to city needs and are not continually rising to keep up with unnecessary expenditures. Even though the housing market is in turmoil and home values are declining, city officials want to raise your property taxes with a permanent mill rate increase. I will change the "tax and spend" tactics of the current administration that simply are not prudent economic policy.

Fiscal irresponsibility will not be tolerated. Edina's population (single family dwellings) and land size have not grown in 30 years, yet the public works fleet has outpaced the city's growth. The plan for a new public works complex is a good example of wasteful spending. A new facility in a less convenient location will cost millions in building costs, additional fuel costs, and the cost of wear and tear to city vehicles. The location of the current building, near city hall, the police station, and the highway system were part of the original city plan to optimize convenience and productivity. The current facility can be expanded in its present location to satisfy future needs.