

# 2015 Prior Lake Business Mixer

## EDAC Action Items

The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) hosted the Prior Lake Business Mixer on October 29, 2015. The primary purpose of the event was to provide an open forum for business leaders, property owners and developers to gather with local elected and appointed officials to share opportunities, express concerns or offer ideas to make Prior Lake a stronger business community. The EDAC has reviewed and discussed each comment received at the event. The committee has also developed a list of 2016 EDAC action items, which can be reviewed below, to address many of the business owner and resident comments that were shared at the Business Mixer.

1. Evaluate the Prior Lake Sign Ordinance to determine if there is an opportunity to provide more visible signage for businesses without highway frontage, specifically for properties located in the Deerfield Business Park and Welcome Avenue Industrial Park.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

Subdivision Identification Signs are regulated in Subsection 1107.820 of the Prior Lake City Code. Subdivision identification signs are freestanding, on-premises, permanent signs permitted in the Commercial 'C' and Industrial 'I' Use Districts and may be used to identify a commercial development, business center or industrial park. City staff has offered to work with property owners who wish to have signage along CSAH 21 toward an ordinance amendment which would allow property owners to add business identification signage to these subdivision identification signs.

Potential issues may include where to locate the sign, private sign easements or property purchases that may be required, as well as who will maintain the sign and which businesses will be eligible to place signage on the freestanding sign.

2. Engage the Prior Lake Area Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to explore opportunities to coordinate the purchasing agencies of the City of Prior Lake, SMSC/Mystic Lake and Prior Lake businesses to lower costs for all.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

The EDAC considered this comment and discussed it at great length. The EDAC will encourage the SMSC and Prior Lake Area Chamber of Commerce to establish a preferred vendor list which encourages local spending and supports the 'shop local' theme.

3. Work with the Communications and Technology Advisory Committee and the Prior Lake Area Chamber of Commerce toward the development of a Prior Lake Business Directory, which may be hosted on the City of Prior Lake website.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

The Prior Lake Area Chamber of Commerce keeps a listing of traditional and home-based chamber member businesses on their website and a Chamber of Commerce link is available on the City of Prior Lake website. The EDAC decided the best strategy is to support the business listings provided by the Chamber, rather than to duplicate their efforts, and identify additional opportunities for businesses promotion.

Many residents and business owners rely on social media and search tools to market their business or find services and products. The EDAC and city staff will work to explore opportunities for all Prior Lake businesses to develop low cost websites and promote available assistance/classes to market their businesses through websites, Facebook, Twitter and other social media sources. There are a number of technology classes offered through the Scott County Library system which are taught by the Twin Cities Media Alliance to assist businesses with marketing and website development.

6/13/16 – [Best Social Media Platforms for Your Business or Organization](#) - Social media tools allow you to connect with your customers, community and members, but when you run a small business or organization, time is valuable - where do you start? Attend this session and learn what social media platforms would serve your business or organization best, where to start and how to leverage them for the greatest benefit. Prior Lake Library, 1:00-2:30pm.

6/22/16 – [Search Engine Optimization for your Business or Organization](#) - Ever wonder how some websites rise to the top in Google search results based on key terms? This class will give you a peak behind the curtain at the factors Google looks at, and help you refine your strategy for appearing in search results. Shakopee Library, 6:00-8:00pm.

8/10/16 – [Facebook 201 for Your Business or Organization](#) - This Facebook class is for businesses and organizations that have a Facebook presence but want to optimize it further. We'll cover strategic approaches for marketing on Facebook based on audience and organizational or business goals. This class will also cover Facebook advertising and promoted posts. Jordan Library, 6:00-8:00pm.

8/22/16 - [Create a Free or Low-Cost Website](#) - Discover how to use open source resources such as Word Press to develop a free or inexpensive website for your small business, community organization, nonprofit, or blog. Web developers explain how to set up a site, how to navigate settings, and offer tips on how to generate traffic. Jordan Library, 6:00-8:00pm.

To register for any of these workshops and classes, contact your local Scott County library, or visit their website at [www.scottlib.org](http://www.scottlib.org) and search under Events.

4. Work with Scott County and existing businesses who may wish to have their property reevaluated for tax purposes.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

The Scott County Property and Taxation Services Department employs eleven licensed professional assessors who are responsible for estimating the market value and determining the classification of approximately 58,000 parcels located in Scott County for property tax purposes. Valuations must meet the standards established by Minnesota Statutes and the Minnesota Department of Revenue. This department appraises all property at actual market value, determines the current classification/use of the property, informs property owners of their estimated value, conducts public meetings to discuss those values, applies appropriate classification rates, and compiles taxable values for each taxing authority.

The Scott County website has a list of [Common Questions About Estimated Market Values](#) and information related to [How Estimated Market Value is Established](#).

If property owners disagree with the valuation of their business, it is recommended they first contact the Scott County assessor listed on their valuation notice; likely Liz Vatsaas, [evatsaas@co.scott.mn.us](mailto:evatsaas@co.scott.mn.us) 952-496-8468. The Scott County assessor will provide information related to the process and timeline for appeal; i) informal appeal; ii) local board of adjustment; iii) county board of appeal; iv) tax court, etc.

5. Compile compelling success stories about the City of Prior Lake and local businesses to market the city and its businesses through social media.

**STATUS: COMPLETED/CONTINUOUS**

EDAC commercial area liaisons will attempt to identify compelling stories about Prior Lake businesses during their site visits. Stories will be provided to staff who will work with the City of Prior Lake Communications Coordinator to share these stories via social media, local newspapers (PL American / Savage Pacer), city website, Prior Lake Business Pages, Scott County SCENE, Wavelength, etc.

6. Work with the Prior Lake Farmer's Market to ensure there is a sufficient number of portable restrooms available to alleviate the demand for restrooms in private businesses along Main Avenue.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

The Prior Lake Farmer's Market is not operated by the City of Prior Lake, it is operated as a private business. During 2015, the City of Prior Lake provided two portable restrooms near the Prior Lake Library for use during the Farmer's Market to lessen the demand for restrooms in the downtown commercial properties. The EDAC has verified that moving forward in 2016, the operator of the Farmer's Market will provide adequate signage to notify attendants of the restroom availability and location.

7. Work with City staff to develop a plan to provide better communication and notice to residents about future development or construction plans that may affect their neighborhoods.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

Although the primary focus of the EDAC is on business retention, the committee felt communication with residents about future development and construction plans was very important and should be addressed. There are already a number of sources for information about upcoming construction projects, developments, and future street improvement plans, however, the committee felt residents may not know where to look for that information.

The EDAC has provided direction to city staff to look at options to either develop an interactive map on the City of Prior Lake website showing upcoming street and construction projects on the City's Capital Improvement Plan, pending commercial and residential developments, and additional signage to notify residents of future commercial areas and street extension plans or create a FAQ section on the website to direct residents to the appropriate source for the information they are looking for. The EDAC will also utilize the EDAC commercial area liaisons to provide notice of upcoming projects and developments in specific areas of the community.

8. Work to identify and provide better communication with home based businesses.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

The EDAC has assigned a commercial liaison (Celina Byers) to be another point of contact for home based businesses. In addition, city staff is evaluating amendments to the Prior Lake City Code related to Home Occupations and will propose amendments to the Planning Commission and City Council in the summer of 2016 which relax current requirements to allow for and encourage more home based businesses. The EDAC will encourage chamber membership and community engagement from home based businesses and will include information in future publications to help make home based businesses feel welcome in Prior Lake.

9. Work with City staff, Scott County staff and property owners in the Deerfield Business Park and Welcome Avenue Industrial Park to address access/turn lane concerns.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

A meeting was held in May 2016 with Deerfield property owners to discuss access and turn lane concerns at the Adelmann St. / CSAH 21 intersection. The City of Prior Lake Traffic & Safety Committee will consider the comments provided at this meeting to evaluate options to improve the access and turn lane movements at the Adelmann St. / CSAH 21 intersection. At this meeting, staff also provided information related to the Revere Avenue / CSAH 21 intersection improvement plans which will improve access to and from the Waterfront Passage and Deerfield Business Park area.

10. Assist the City Council in the evaluation of hourly parking restrictions along Main Avenue and Dakota Street in Downtown Prior Lake.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

The Downtown Parking Study, recently completed by the City of Prior Lake, recommended the evaluation of hourly parking restrictions along Main Avenue and Dakota Street. The City Council will discuss hourly parking restrictions on Main Ave. and Dakota St. during the summer of 2016. The EDAC will offer assistance to the EDA and/or City Council related to the evaluation of hourly parking restrictions and EDAC members will assist in notifying downtown property owners and businesses of the timing and proposed City Council action.

11. Schedule meeting with Adelman Building owners, EDAC liaison and appropriate city and county staff to discuss parking, access and other issues specific to the property.

**STATUS: COMPLETED**

A meeting was held in May 2016 with these property owners to discuss parking, access and specific property issues.

Let us know how we can help you. If you have any questions about how the EDAC may be able to provide assistance to retain or expand your business, if you would like more information about the activities of the EDAC or the action items above, or if you would like to schedule a meeting to share your thoughts and ideas to make Prior Lake an even more business friendly community, please contact Dan Rogness, City of Prior Lake Community & Economic Development Director, at [drogness@cityofpriorlake.com](mailto:drogness@cityofpriorlake.com) or 952-447-9813.