

**Ramsey Long-Term Road Maintenance Program**  
**Draft Survey Questions**  
*Revised, May 2, 2011*

**Goals**

The following survey questions are recommended to:

- ✓ Test community attitudes/satisfaction with current city roads/services
- ✓ Learn what residents know/perceive about the city's road maintenance needs and potential policy solutions
- ✓ Identify information gaps and what information residents need or want to make informed decisions about road maintenance
- ✓ Better understand how to communicate that information to residents

**Draft survey script**

*[Intro text provided by survey caller]:*

- ✓ The following survey is being conducted on behalf of the city of Ramsey by Decision Resources Ltd of Minneapolis.
- ✓ The purpose of the survey is to better understand city residents' attitudes toward city services and road maintenance, and to discuss with you potential options for a long-term maintenance program.

1. Approximately how many years have you lived in the city of Ramsey?

- Less than two years
- Two to five years
- Five to 10 years
- 10 to 20 years
- 20 to 30 years
- More than 30 years
- Don't Know/Refused

2. What do you like most, if anything, about living in the city of Ramsey?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you think is the most serious issue facing the city of Ramsey?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How would you rate the quality of life in Ramsey?

- Excellent
- Good
- Only Fair
- Poor
- Don't Know/Refused

In Ramsey, local property tax revenues are distributed to the city of Ramsey, Anoka County and either the Anoka/Hennepin or Elk River school district. In 2011, the percentage of your local property taxes going to the city of Ramsey is 38 percent.

5. When you consider the property taxes you pay and the quality of city services you receive, how would you rate the value of those city services — excellent, good, only fair or poor?

- Excellent
- Good
- Only Fair
- Poor
- Don't Know/Refused

I'd like to get your feedback about Ramsey city streets and roads. Since we are interested in your views of streets built and maintained by the city of Ramsey only, you should exclude county roads such as County Road 83/Armstrong Boulevard or County Road 56/Ramsey Boulevard, as well as state highways such as 47 and Highway 10.

Using a rating of Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor, how would you rate the following?

6. The overall quality of city-maintained streets and roads
7. The width of city streets and roads
8. Safety features such as street lighting, sidewalks and signage
9. The quality and condition of Ramsey's roads and streets compared to neighboring cities
10. The responsiveness of the city to road maintenance and repair needs

Nearly half of the city of Ramsey's 178 miles of city roads were constructed between 1976 and 1985. With routine maintenance, the average expected life of these roads is 40 years, which means that between 2016 and 2025, about \$90 million or more in road reconstruction will be necessary to repair or replace city streets. The majority of the cost of this work will be the responsibility of local taxpayers. Currently, the city's street reconstruction policy funds reconstruction projects by assessing adjacent property owners.

Knowing this information...

11. Do you believe the city of Ramsey needs to develop a long-term street reconstruction and funding policy? Do you feel strongly that way?
  - Yes, Strongly
  - Yes
  - No
  - No, Strongly
  - Don't Know/Refused
  
12. Would you favor or oppose an increase in your city property tax if it were dedicated to the long-term maintenance and reconstruction of city streets? Do you feel strongly that way?
  - Favor, Strongly
  - Favor
  - Oppose
  - Oppose, Strongly
  - Don't Know/Refused

Let's consider three different options the city might consider to pay for long-term road maintenance and reconstruction. For the following three options, please tell me if you would favor or oppose the proposed funding options.

13. Option 1: The city could use the road improvement assessment method that is typically used for general maintenance projects. This means that the city would assess your property for your portion of the total project amount, based on the lineal footage of your property. For a typical two-acre lot size, this could amount to an assessment of \$27,000

total or about \$225 per month for 10 years. For a quarter-acre lot size, the assessment could be \$9,000 total or about \$75 per month for 10 years. Would you support or oppose this option? Do you feel strongly?

- Favor, Strongly
- Favor
- Oppose
- Oppose, Strongly
- Don't know/Refused

14. Option 2: The city could initiate a citywide property tax levy that charges all property owners for the total cost of a long-term maintenance and reconstruction program. Your portion of the citywide tax would be based on your property value. For an average \$150,000 home, this could amount to \$24 per month and \$51 per month for a \$450,000 home. The tax would be added to your property tax bills and would be payable for the next 40 years. Would you support or oppose this option? Do you feel strongly?

- Favor, Strongly
- Favor
- Oppose
- Oppose, Strongly
- Don't know/Refused

15. Option 3: The city could initiate a citywide franchise fee that charges all customers, including tax exempt properties, an equal amount of the total cost of a maintenance and reconstruction program. In other words, the franchise fee would be the same whether you own a \$150,000 home, a \$450,000 home. This could amount to about \$28 per month for every residential customer and \$54 per month for commercial customers. The fee would be payable for the next 20-40 years. Would you support or oppose this option? Do you feel strongly?

- Favor, Strongly
- Favor
- Oppose
- Oppose, Strongly
- Don't know

16. Of these three options — a standard assessment of just affected property owners, a citywide property tax based on the value of the property, or a standard citywide franchise fee charging everyone the same amount — which do you most prefer?

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The following are statements that some have cited in support of city-wide long-term road maintenance and funding program. Please tell me if you find these statements very convincing, convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing.

17. The road maintenance and reconstruction program will spread out the cost over a long period of time so property owners are not burdened by large annual assessments.
18. This program more fairly distributes the cost of a road maintenance program to all property owners, all of whom benefit from well-maintained roads.
19. A long-term road maintenance program and dedicated funding source are needed to ensure road projects are not delayed and ultimately cost us more.
20. We need this program to ensure our local roads and streets are safe for pedestrians and drivers.
21. Ramsey's streets are a citywide asset. Investing in them is necessary to attract new residents, businesses and jobs.

The following are statements some critics have cited in opposition to a long-term road maintenance and funding program. Please tell me if you find these statements very convincing, convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing.

- 22. Ramsey's streets are in fine condition; they don't need more investment.
- 23. In the current economy, our residents cannot afford to spend more.
- 24. The city needs to put the money it already has to better use.
- 25. By instituting a long-term road maintenance and funding program, the city is taking away taxpayers' power to petition against or stop a road project.
- 26. We should be focused on other priorities right now, like lowering local government spending and attracting new jobs.

Moving on to just a few final questions for demographic purposes...

27. What is your principal source of information about Ramsey city government and its activities? \_\_\_\_\_

28. Could you please tell me which of the following ranges includes your age?

- 18-30
- 31-40
- 41-55
- 56-65
- 65 or older

29. How many school-aged children or pre-schoolers live in your household?

- None
- One
- Two
- Three or More
- Refused

30. Do you own or rent your residence? If you own, what is the value of your current residence?

- Under \$100,000
- \$100,000 - \$150,000
- \$150,000 - \$200,000
- \$200,000 - \$250,000
- \$250,000 - \$300,000
- Over \$300,000

31. Gender (by observation)

- Male
- Female