

**City of Ramsey**  
**Agenda**  
**City Council Work Session**  
**Tuesday September 6, 2011**  
**Immediately Following Special City Council**  
**Lake Itasca Room 7550 Sunwood Drive NW**

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Topics for Discussion**
  1. Review Clothing Donation Box Requirements
  2. Review Rail Station Funding and Schedule
3. **Future Topics for Discussion - *See Attached Calendar***
  1. Review Future Topics/Calendar
4. **Mayor/Council/Staff Input**
5. **Adjournment**

**Meeting Date:** 09/06/2011

**By:** Tim Gladhill, Community Development

---

**Title:**

Review Clothing Donation Box Requirements

**Background:**

A resident of Ramsey contacted the City to suggest the City consider prohibiting clothing donation drop boxes that are placed in parking lots of area businesses. These boxes are often placed in parking lots of local businesses to serve as a mechanism to donate clothing. Some vendors may choose to use this as a mechanism to donate clothing to those in need while others may use this as a mechanism to recycle or re-sell donated clothing.

**Notification:**

Notification not required at this stage.

**Observations:**

Staff is looking for policy direction from the City Council as to the level of regulation it is comfortable in placing on these units. A review of adjacent communities shows there is a broad range of approaches ranging from no regulation to prohibiting this type of use.

There are certain positive effects for allowing these types of units, regardless if the vendor chooses to donate the clothing or sell. By utilizing these collection boxes, clothing remains out of area landfills rather than being disposed of through traditional waste hauling services. However, the attached letter notes concerns of USAgain units, a vendor that places these units in the area, including Ramsey. The letter states that the information provided by USAgain is misleading, in that clothes dropped in these boxes are not being donated, rather re-sold as recycled clothing. Staff notes that in either case, these units do provide an opportunity for re-use of clothing that may not otherwise be accepted by more traditional recycled clothing stores. Many of these traditional type stores will only accept donations of clothes that are only a couple years old.

However, there are also certain negative effects by allowing these types of collection boxes. On occasion, these units can create an issue with the City's existing public nuisance ordinance when the unit is not frequently or adequately emptied in a timely manner. This results in some donations simply being placed outside the unit. Furthermore, some individuals will use this as an opportunity to donate items other than clothes, such as furniture. Staff has responded to a handful of complaints that did require follow up with property owners.

Many cities are considering these units as outside storage, which thereby prohibits their use in many zoning districts. Also, certain communities have made the policy decision that these units shall be allowed, provided they do not become a public nuisance as noted above. Some of these communities utilize their public nuisance ordinance to address issues with outside storage when the units are full or furniture is placed next to them. In many of the communities that allow these units, the Conditional Use Permit process appears to be an effective tool. In this case, the City can have the opportunity to review the site conditions to ensure adequate space, impose reasonable conditions to mitigate identified adverse secondary effects, and provides a tool for enforcement in the event the user does not comply with applicable ordinances and/or agreements.

In reviewing the request, Staff noted the need to ensure that these units were defined separately from other transient type units. For example, DVD/Blu Ray rental kiosks such as 'Red Box' could be inadvertently interpreted to be included in any ordinance developed.

**Recommendation:**

Based on discussion.

**Funding Source:**

Review of the request is being handled as part of regular staff duties.

**Council Action:**

Provide staff with policy direction in regards to regulating donation boxes.

---

**Attachments**

Request from Resident

**Form Review**

<b>Inbox</b>	<b>Reviewed By</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chris Anderson	Chris Anderson	08/30/2011 10:03 AM
Heidi Nelson	Heidi Nelson	09/01/2011 03:17 PM
Kurt Ulrich	Kurt Ulrich	09/01/2011 04:02 PM
Form Started By: Tim Gladhill		Started On: 08/25/2011 10:51 AM
Final Approval Date: 09/01/2011		

Mr. Ramsey

I would like to bring to your attention this article published in the Gate County Leader newspaper, out of Grantsburg, Wis. My hopes are that you would publish it and make our Community aware of the deception these "Red Boxes" placed in our Community are projecting.

They, in fact, are a profit making business. They sell the donations in the boxes to third world countries.

Let's send USAgain "packing" and keep our donations in our own Community. We know they will help people caught in the economic crunch - and the disabled.

Please consider doing what you can to get these boxes out of our Community. We can donate to local Churches and other charitable organizations.

Thank You

Jon Marie  
15333 Barium N.W.  
Ramsey Mn  
55383

763-421-8415

Follow  
the Leader

INTER-COUNTY  
**Leader**

# Giving to the needy? Not at all, says USAgain

Company fills a need, says  
spokesperson, by  
recycling and reselling  
clothes that would  
otherwise end up in a landfill

by Gary King  
leader editor

FREDERIC - Some would-be donors have been stymied by the large red clothing collection boxes that appeared this past year in the village.

There's one at a convenience store on Hwy. 35 and another at the grocery store on Main Street.

A sign on the boxes says, "Let your used clothing get a second life and be reused - that makes good sense!"

Another says, "We are a commercial company doing something good for the environment."

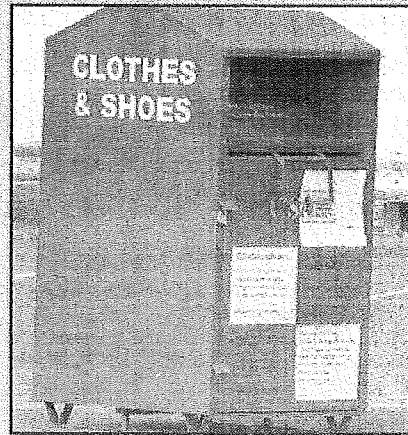
Yet another claims, "We cooperate with schools, nonprofits, city recycling programs and local businesses to bring this recycling option to your community."

So where do the clothes and shoes placed in the boxes end up?

Not here. And likely not in the United States.

In fact, the JSAgain (pronounced 'use again') company is not a charity but a clothing-recycling business that sells the bulk of these donated items

See Donation boxes, page 3



USAgain donation boxes showed up this past year in Frederic, puzzling some would-be donors who have wondered where their donations end up. -

Photo by Gary King

cooperative-owned newspaper • 5

## Donation boxes/ from page 1

to Third World countries such as Bulgaria and Nicaragua where few can afford to buy clothes and the market for secondhand clothing is huge.

USAgain has 9,000 such boxes in 16 states and collects millions of pounds of clothing for resale and recycling every year.

And why should someone donate to the boxes so a company can resell it to make money?

"To keep clothing out of landfills," said Margaret Sullivan, a USAgain spokesperson. "And in the end most clothing doesn't go to a good cause, it ends up in

the trash. We're helping out the environment and recognizing a business opportunity."

She said USAgain, based in Elgin, Ill., has never presented itself as a charity.

What about the sign stating they cooperate with schools and local businesses?

"We have a program where schools can request to have a bin on their property and we give them a percentage of the clothing sold," Sullivan said.

Such an agreement does not exist with a local school at this time.

According to some news reports, some towns have sent USAgain packing.

"This wasn't about goodwill for the community," says Frank Bergman, mayor of Cahokia, Ill. "This was about making money."

At least one Frederic woman agrees with that sentiment.

"I believe these bins are hurting our local economy," she said in a letter to the Leader. "I believe we need to get them out of here."

The woman said people should donate their old clothing

to a local thrift store instead.

"While so many businesses are struggling, let's not just give away what little we have to a giant like this," she wrote.

USAgain spokesperson Margaret Sullivan agreed that people wanting to give clothing to help the local community should not put their donations in the USAgain boxes.

"If you're doing that, give it to your church," she said.

**CC Work Session**

2. 2.

**Meeting Date:** 09/06/2011

**By:** Jo Thieling, Administrative Services

---

**Title:**

Review Rail Station Funding and Schedule

**Background:**

A number of items will be finalized in the next 30 days in regard to the Ramsey Rail station project. This item is to provide an update to the Council on the project and upcoming decision points, and to answer any questions or address any concerns at this time.

**Observations:**

Use of CMAQ Funds for Parking Ramp and Rail station skyway connection - Attached is a memo outlining the results of a meeting held with staff from Mn/DOT, FHWA and the Metropolitan Council on August 31, 2011 regarding the status of the City of Ramsey CMAQ Grant.

Rail Station Schedule - Attached are minutes from the Ramsey Station PMT meeting of August 18, 2011 outlining a schedule of events for the station.

Metropolitan Council Role - The City of Ramsey will need to consider terms of a Master Agreement with the Metropolitan Council at their regularly scheduled City Council meeting on Sept 27th. Included will be consideration of an agreement to enter into the transit taxing district and a maintenance agreement for the station.

The Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit:

\* will request permission from our Metropolitan Council for the threat of condemnation to BNSF. Scheduled for Transportation Committee on Monday, September 12 and to the Council for approval on Wednesday, September 28. Following Council approval, Metro Transit would be able to threaten condemnation to BNSF.

\* Following the same schedule as above, the Metro Council will consider approval for the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement.

\* will consider concurrent budget amendment, requesting authorization to spend the \$1.3 million RTC for Ramsey Station.

\* The Metro Council will provide construction oversight to the project.

**Funding Source:**

N/A

**Council Action:**

Based upon discussion.

---

**Attachments**

CMAQ Memo

Rail Schedule PMT

## Form Review

**Inbox**

Kurt Ulrich

Form Started By: Jo Thieling

**Reviewed By**

Kurt Ulrich

Final Approval Date: 09/01/2011

**Date**

09/01/2011 04:54 PM

Started On: 08/31/2011 03:31 PM



LSA Design, Inc.  
Northwestern Building  
219 North Second Street  
Suite 302  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
T. 612.339.8729  
F. 612.339.7433  
www.lsadesigninc.com

Planning  
Architecture  
Urban Design

# Memorandum

**To:** Brian Olson, Dir. Of Public Works  
**From:** James B. Lasher  
**Project:** Ramsey Municipal Parking Facility  
**Subject:** CMAQ Grant Authorization  
**Date:** September 1, 2011

The purpose of this memo is to outline the results of a meeting held with staff from Mn/DOT, FHWA and the Metropolitan Council on August 31, 2011 regarding the status of the City of Ramsey CMAQ Grant.

## BACKGROUND

The City of Ramsey applied for and was approved to receive a Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Grant (CMAQ) from the Metropolitan Council in 2005 for a total of \$5.6 Million. This grant is composed of 80% federal and 20% local funds and the use of the funds was programmed for 2009 implementation. The funds were allocated to two projects:

1. Ramsey Star Express Bus Service \$1.5 Million
2. Ramsey Parking Ramp Expansion \$4.1 Million

In 2007 the City request and was granted the ability to “pre-fund” the Ramsey Star Express Bus Service portion of the grant. This basically allows the City the right to start running bus service before the federal funds were available for that use. The agreement with the Met Council included that if the City did incur costs to run the bus prior to 2009, those costs could be re-paid to the City once the federal funds were available in 2009. To date, the City has been running this bus service and Met Council has begun the process of repaying the City that federal portion of the CMAQ grant.

In 2010, the City completed necessary plans for the Ramsey Parking Deck Expansion. Due to issues of potential winter construction costs along with various issues regarding land development and available parking within the current ramp, the City elected to delay the bidding and construction of the parking improvements until spring 2011. In June 2011 the City took bids for the parking ramp and subsequently awarded a Contract for Construction to Knutson Construction Co. on August 9, 2011. Due to an extremely competitive bidding climate, the Knutson Construction Co. bid was \$1.3 Million dollars under the available funds of \$4.10 Million.

Concurrent to this project award, the City of Ramsey was notified that the Governors Bonding Bill from the 2011 Legislative Session included funds for the construction of the Ramsey Rail Station. This was the culmination of years of work and effort by many parties to successfully provide a rail station at “The Core” on the Northstar Commuter Rail.

### Excess CMAQ Funds

As a result of the balance remaining in the CMAQ account due to highly competitive bids, I requested a meeting with Mn/DOT to begin discussions on how the City may utilize these funds within the limits of the approved CMAQ grant application. Through internal discussions with city staff, it was agreed that the highest priority improvement for the use of these funds would be a skyway connection to the new train station from the parking deck.

I requested a meeting with Mn/DOT State Aid staff on August 2, 2011 to begin discussions about this issue. Initially, Mn/DOT was supportive of this idea of use of funds but they did reserve judgment until they could discuss the issues with Met Council and FHWA staff. As a result of these discussions, a second meeting was called to bring all parties together to continue to review this issue.

On August 31, 2011 at meeting was held with MnDOT State Aid staff, Kevin Roggenbuck from the Met Council staff and Susan Moe, the local FHWA representative assigned to the Met Council.

The meeting began with my making a simple presentation and request that would allow the City to use excess CMAQ funds for a skyway connection. Without addressing this issue, the discussion turned to a potential problem using any of the CMAQ funds for parking improvements as a result of the recent approval of the rail station. The original CMAQ grant was for bus service and park and ride – the questions brought by FHWA and Met Council staff representatives were if the transit service were converted to rail from bus, would the original grant have scored well enough to be approved?

All agreed that at this point, the City is completing the project as originally approved and from MnDOT's position, this issue is not a cause for concern. However, the City Council should be aware that there may be a question upon the conversion of the transit service from bus to rail and how this impacts the original CMAQ grant. No recommendations or conclusions were reached at this meeting and all agreed to continue to discuss the issue.

I will be available to discuss this issue with your City Council at their September work session.

C: JoAnn Olsen – LSA  
William Fossing – LSA Design  
File

Key Tasks	8/18/11 Update	Next Steps
1. Form Project Organization		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish PMT and Regular Meeting Date</li> <li>b. Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Discuss Draft</li> <li>ii. Finalize and Schedule Approvals of Agreement</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Update Project Budget</li> <li>d. Update Project Scope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a.) 3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs. of Month, 10:00 a.m.</li> <li>(b.) Final draft to be sent out for approval by entities.</li> <li>(d.) City of Ramsey is planning a pedestrian bridge as a stand-alone project. Ramsey staff working to see if CMAQ funds can be used for bridge.</li> </ul>	
2. Secure Funding: \$14,300,000		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. State Bonding: \$4,000,000</li> <li>b. Metropolitan Council: \$1,300,000                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Source of Funding</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. CTIB: \$3,000,000                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. ACRRA Approval of 2011 Grant Agreement (\$1M)</li> <li>ii. Apply for 2012 Grant of \$2M</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. City of Ramsey: \$3,000,000 - \$4,700,000</li> <li>e. ACRRA/County: ACRRA \$1.3M/County \$1.7M</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(b.) Goes to Met Council 9-28-11.</li> <li>(c.i.) \$1M Approved 2011.</li> <li>(c.ii.) ACRRA will submit 2012 Grant request of \$2M by 9-9-11.</li> <li>(d.) City Council meets 9-13-11.</li> <li>(e.) ACRRA Board approved 8-9-11.</li> </ul>	
3. Negotiate and Finalize BNSF Agreements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Update Schedule</li> <li>b. ROW Acquisition Process/Threat of Condemnation</li> <li>c. Modify cost estimate</li> <li>d. Negotiations Update</li> <li>e. Review Draft Agreements                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Purchase and Sale of Easement (see BNSF draft)</li> <li>ii. Amendment #1 to Joint Use Agreement (see BNSF Draft)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(b.) Mary, Kathryn Timm, Dan Klint to meet with Don M. to discuss threat of condemnation.</li> <li>(d.) Mary, Tim, and Cliff Greene continue BNSF negotiations. BNSF indicates engineering will take 5-6 weeks.</li> <li>(e.) Mary and Kathryn to work on agreements, and review with Don M. Agreements will be worked</li> </ul>	

Key Tasks	8/18/11 Update	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. Amendment #1 to Commuter Service Agreement</li> <li>iv. Platform Lease Agreement</li> <li>v. Overpass Agreement</li> <li>f. Approve and Execute Agreements</li> </ul>	<p>on after negotiations are completed. Goal is to have them approved and completed in November 2011.</p>	
4. Environmental		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Update document/SHPO/DNR</li> <li>b. Agency Review/Approval</li> <li>c. FTA Review/Approval</li> </ul>	<p>(a.) Environmentals are completed.</p> <p>No FTA funds.</p>	
5. Construction		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Update schedule</li> <li>b. Metro Transit Plan Review</li> <li>c. Prepare bid documents</li> <li>d. Permit Acquisition</li> <li>e. Let Bids</li> <li>f. Select Contractor</li> <li>g. Award Bids</li> <li>h. Start Construction</li> <li>i. Complete Construction (Fall 2012)</li> </ul>	<p>(a.) Metro Transit bidding process is very long - could Anoka handle bidding process to save time? Lindsey S. to follow up. Bids should be let in December.</p> <p>Award bid in March 2012.</p>	<p>Met Council approved ACRRRA to bid project. New schedule to be presented at next meeting.</p> <p>Pedestrian bridge engineering must start very soon.</p>
6. Project Schedule		
	To be revised.	
7. Communications		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Build Ridership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Bus Riders</li> <li>ii. Fares</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Other Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Plan Groundbreaking Ceremony</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>(a.) Communications meeting this month - try to sync with PMT.</p> <p>(b.) Groundbreaking tentatively in October???</p>	
8. Other Tasks?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Professional Services Agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Design Support</li> <li>ii. Transit Tax District Agreement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>(a.i.) Support contract must be designed; depends on who is letting bids. City of Ramsey Council will act on Transit Tax District Agreement 9-13-11.</p>	

**CC Work Session**

**3. 1.**

**Meeting Date:** 09/06/2011

**By:** Jo Thieling, Administrative Services

---

**Title:**

Review Future Topics/Calendar

**Background:**

Attached is the list of future work session topics for Council review.

**Funding Source:**

N/A

**Council Action:**

No formal action necessary - for Council review

---

**Attachments**

Future Topics/Calendar

**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Kurt Ulrich

Form Started By: Jo Thieling

**Reviewed By**

Jo Thieling

**Date**

08/31/2011 04:21 PM

Started On: 08/31/2011 04:19 PM

Final Approval Date: 08/31/2011

**Work Session Calendar  
2011**

Month	Date	Topics for Discussion
<b>September</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discuss ISO Rating and Program to Improve (HN)</li> </ul>
Others on List – including 2011 Strategic Planning Items		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Look at pilot programs (e.g. volunteer programs – low maintenance)</li> <li>● Proactively recruit residential development and seek builders input</li> <li>● Review development fees and standards regarding construction</li> <li>● Develop TIF tracking plan with regard to fiscal disparities impact</li> <li>● Establish fund reserve policy</li> <li>● Review City-owned lands and create plan for it – <i>scheduled for July 12 agenda</i></li> <li>● Review park programming and potential reallocation of parks – <i>scheduled for July 12 agenda – included in Review City owned land . . .</i></li> <li>● Construct boat landing at River’s Bend – <i>was reviewed with Council and determined it was not a priority at this location.</i></li> <li>● Build on outdoors/sportsmen’s market (e.g. stock pond/lake)</li> <li>● Coordinate COR marketing and City marketing</li> <li>● Create Master Plan 167<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Highway 47 – plan for redevelopment – <i>Discuss after Joint Meeting between CC &amp; EDA</i></li> <li>● Develop community center/indoor sports complex</li> <li>● Old Town Hall relocation</li> <li>● Review &amp; revise Development Management contract and manage COR expenditures</li> <li>● Consider creation of a Transportation Taxing District</li> <li>● Seek grant funding for transportation projects and service delivery</li> <li>● Complete US 10/ County Road 83 interchange design – pursue funding</li> <li>● Establish position on TH #47 South of Bunker to Highway #10</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Public Works</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review plan for US Highway #10 pedestrian overpass and connection with Municipal Center ramp</li> <li>● Review Dirt Road Elimination Policy (DREP)</li> <li>● Create opportunities for snowmobile, four-wheeler &amp; golf cart use</li> <li>● Review sidewalk plowing policy</li> </ul>