

The COR (Formerly Ramsey Town Center)  
City of Ramsey

**THE**  
**COR**  
**AT RAMSEY**



The COR Master Plan (Amended)

Original Master Plan: 2003  
Revised 2012

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## Introduction and Background

Encompassing over 400 acres of commercial, residential, and recreational venues, The COR is becoming the most active development in the north metro with over \$80m in active projects. In addition to being the largest TOD development assemblage on the Northstar Commuter Rail Line, The COR is located on one of the fastest growing corridors in the Midwest. Existing structured parking and infrastructure positions The COR to attract development that makes sense, grows jobs, and expands the regional economy. Whether you are enjoying The COR's many parks and trails, shopping at the farmers market, commuting to downtown Minneapolis, or just relaxing in your home, The COR offers residents and visitors an authentic lifestyle that comes with living in a city that reflects those who call this area home.

### Project Highlights:

- Immediate exposure to approximately 40,000 ADT on Highway 10
- Over \$80m in new projects under construction or contract: Over 60,000 S.F.
- Medical, Over 300 residential units, 200 additional structured parking stalls
- Existing transit station with 800 structured parking stalls
- Construction commenced on Ramsey Station  
Scheduled to begin Fall 2011
- Armstrong Overpass currently in design phase
- \$65m TIF in place for funding infrastructure and development

In 2003, groundbreaking occurred under the original Master Plan. In 2011, the City approved The COR Development Plan to replace the original Ramsey Town Center Master Plan. In addition, in 2012 the City approved a new document entitled The COR Design Framework. This document incorporates specific design elements and site plan information from both the original Master Plan document as well as the former Ramsey Town Center Design Guidelines. Rather than having two (2) separate documents specifying private and public design components, the City chose to merge these two (2) documents into one (1) concise document for ease of administration.

## Transit Oriented Development

The COR is a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) along the Northstar Commuter Rail. The Ramsey Station is the key node of the development. With the revised Development Plan, the energy of the development was refocused towards this center, as well as within a half-mile radius of this node. A portion of the development fall outside the official TOD Area (half-mile radius from the Ramsey Station). A portion of the land use designation and zoning district extend further beyond these limits, located west of Armstrong Boulevard.

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## **Land Use Designation and Boundary Clarification**

The original Master Plan draft established a boundary of approximately 322 acres. The forecasts were derived on a unit-count instead of a density range, and included a population of 2,500 households. However, upon implementation of the Master Plan through the establishment of the Zoning District, the boundary was revised to include an area west of Armstrong Boulevard and an area north of Bunker Lake Boulevard. This area was established as a 'Mixed-Use' District within the Comprehensive Plan. Upon completion of the Zoning District and Alternative Urbanwide Area Review (AUAR), the expanded boundary area forecasted a total of 2,400 households. The intent of this document is to clarify the official project boundaries and zoning boundaries to clear confusion on previous forecasts.

Today, in order to work within the forecast methodology of the Metropolitan Council, a density of ten (10) units per acre was established to assist in forecasting purposes. This assumption alone supports the City's analysis that the revised Development Plan is consistent with previous forecasts. Residential densities range from 76 units per acre near the Ramsey Station, to approximately 15 units per acre in the middle portion of the development, to approximately four (4) units per acre on single-family areas adjacent to existing development. These progressively lower densities, or transects, are consistent with the original Master Plan contemplating much higher densities within the development, balanced by appropriate transitions to remain compatible with existing, surrounding development.

The area is guided as Mixed Use to allow flexibility in design and promote a mix of uses. The Development Plan, as well as the original Master Plan, were not intended to serve as an approved site plan, but to guide potential future development. The Mixed Use designation allows the City the flexibility to shift land uses without the need for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment or Zoning Amendment, provided that the requirements of Minnesota Statute 473 are maintained and consistent with Metropolitan approval and jurisdiction. The analysis shows that based on revisions found in Development Plan 6.0, that the amendment is consistent with the City's System Statement and approved Comprehensive Plan.

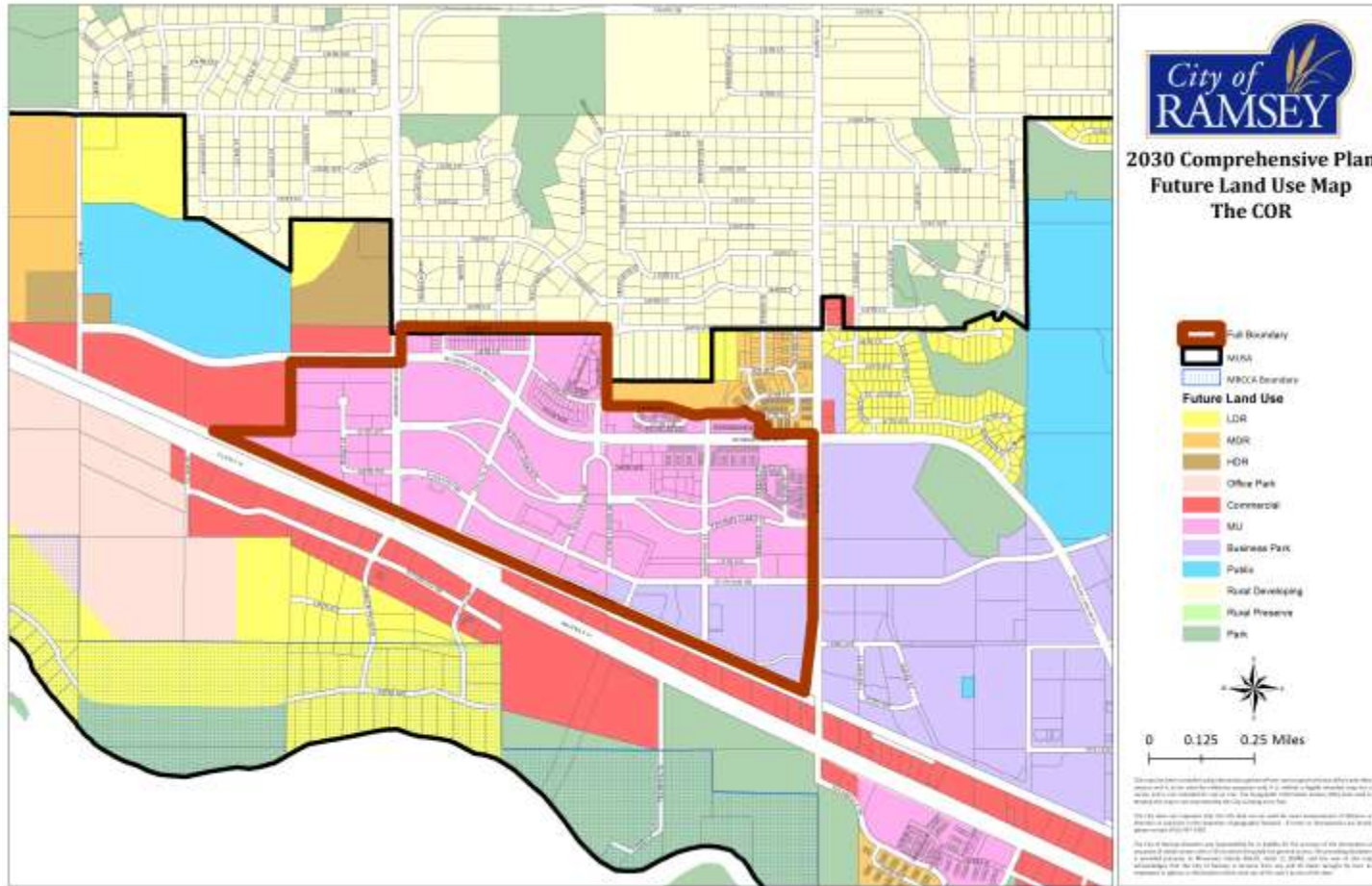
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## Boundary Comparison Map



# Future Land Use Map



## **Built Environment within the TOD Area**

The COR is located along the Highway 10 and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad corridors. This built environment creates lack of opportunity for connectivity to the area south of Highway 10 that would ultimately allow the City to achieve a full half-mile radius representing a TOD area. Multiple pedestrian connections are difficult and cost prohibitive at this time.

In addition, much of the area south of Highway 10 within the half-mile radius is a regional park known as Mississippi West Regional Park. This regional park has a Metropolitan Council approved Master Plan. The site itself was gifted by the original property owners and is deed-restricted for park uses. The site does not have the potential for future development other than park.

Due to the factors above, the area south of Highway 10 has been excluded from calculations related to the TOD Area.

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# Built Environment Map



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## Quarter Mile Radius

The quarter mile radius surrounding the station, north of Highway 10 and the railroad tracks, is commonly referred to as Transit Village. This area will have the highest density, most pedestrian connections, and connectivity of multiple land use types within walking distance of the Ramsey Station. For purposes of this analysis, if the quarter-mile boundary intersected a sub-TAZ, the entire sub-TAZ was calculated for the analysis. The forecasts within the quarter-mile radius are as follows:

| Households | Population | Employment |
|------------|------------|------------|
|            |            |            |

Projects within the quarter-mile radius include.

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**Quarter Mile Radius Map**

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## Half Mile Radius

The half-mile radius is commonly known as the TOD Area or Transit Improvement Area (TIA). The City has submitted an application to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for a TIA designation. For purposes of this analysis, if the half-mile boundary intersected a sub-TAZ, the entire sub-TAZ was calculated for the analysis. The forecasts within the half-mile radius are as follows (includes quarter-mile forecasts from above:

| Households | Population | Employment |
|------------|------------|------------|
|            |            |            |

Projects beyond the quarter-mile radius, but within the half-mile radius include:

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**Half Mile Radius Map**

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## **Development Plan 6.0**

The City has also completed a revised site plan for that encompasses the entire original Master Plan boundary. The City had previously applied for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Development Plan 5.03. After discussion, the City approved an amendment to Development Plan 5.03 that focused on that portion of the development that is located within the TOD area. As previous section indicate, the net result is an increase of the number of households forecasted for the TOD Area, while maintaining the overall original forecasts of the development.

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# Development Plan 6.0 Exhibit



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## **Re-Visioning Process**

The Development Plan is a revision of the original Ramsey Town Center Master Plan. As it relates to the Comprehensive Planning requirements of Minnesota Statute Chapter 473, the City is not requesting amendments at this time.

However, the Development Plan does represent an amendment to the conceptual site plan of the original master plan. The original Design Guidelines have been amended and now known as the Design Framework. The Design Framework included as Exhibit A to this document.

The re-visioning process began in 2009, and included an extensive public process. The City hosted a Visual Preference Survey as well as an Open House to review the original master plan and chart a course to set the development in a position for success. The following exhibits illustrate the various steps that were a part of the re-visioning process.

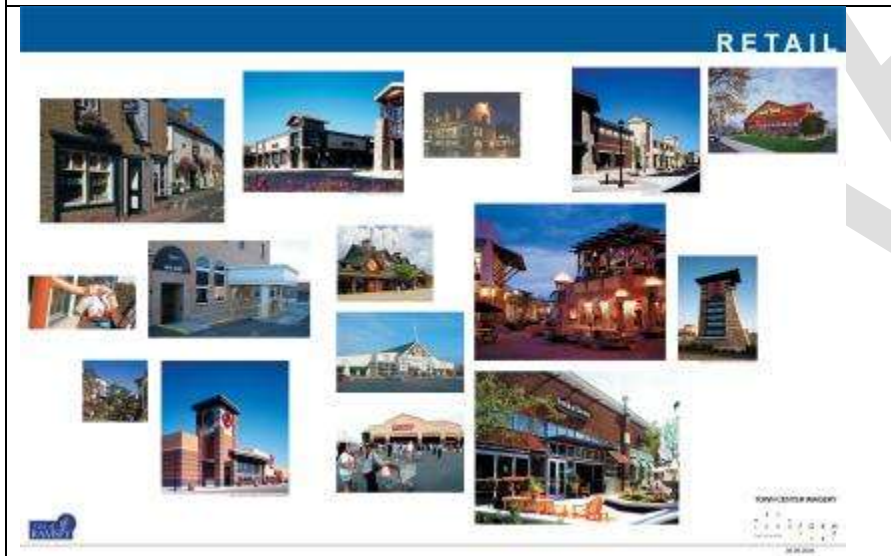
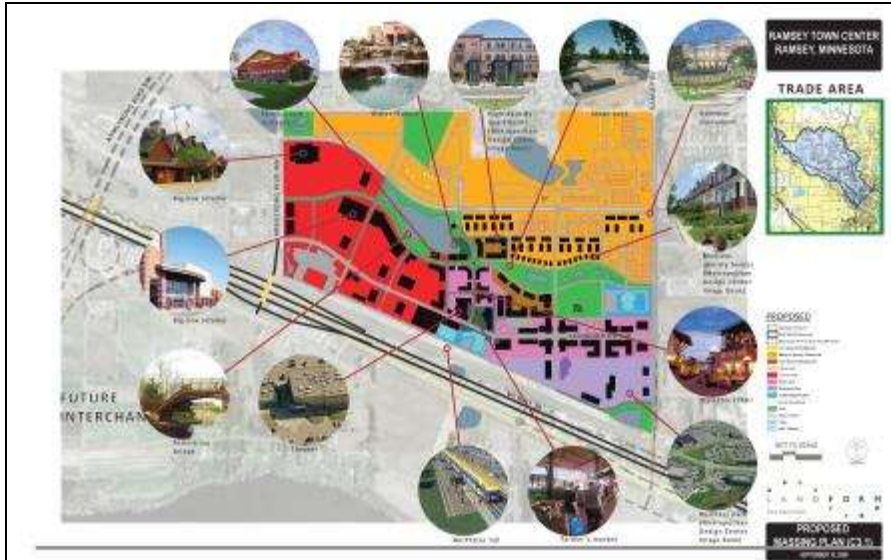
The re-visioning process began following the decision by the City's Housing and Redevelopment Authority to purchase the remaining 150 acres of the development that had been stalled due to foreclosure actions and the death of the Master Developer. The decision was made to purchase the development in order to protect the investment previously made by the City in infrastructure, recoup unpaid taxes, and position the development to become a successful development.

The outcomes of the re-visioning and re-branding process can already be seen in recent developments. The new plan has helped attract developments such as the Allina Medical Clinic, the VA Outpatient Clinic, the Falls Restaurant, the Residence at The COR, and the Northstar Commuter Rail.

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# Re-Visioning Exhibits



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## **Transportation System and Sunwood Drive Realignment**

As part of the AUAR review, it was determined that only one (1) access on Armstrong Boulevard between Highway 10 and Ramsey Boulevard would be permitted, which was included in a Joint Powers Agreement for regional roadway improvements. This had a dramatic effect on the future built-environment on the western edge of the development.

The transportation system capacity is a key element of the success of The COR. The City has reviewed several iterations of land use scenarios that maximizing the existing and planned transportation system improvements. Improvements to Armstrong Boulevard and Highway 10 are key to the success of The COR.

With the construction of the Northstar Commuter Rail – Ramsey Station underway, the internal capture rate should assist in providing for acceptable levels of service on the transportation network. However, future roadway improvements will still be necessary in order to support the capacity of the development.

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# Sunwood Drive Scenarios



**RAMSEY TOWN CENTER  
RAMSEY, MINNESOTA**

-  TRANSIT
-  INTERSECTION (FULL ACCESS)
-  INTERSECTION (LOW-MODERATE ACCESS)
-  TRAILS

NOT TO SCALE



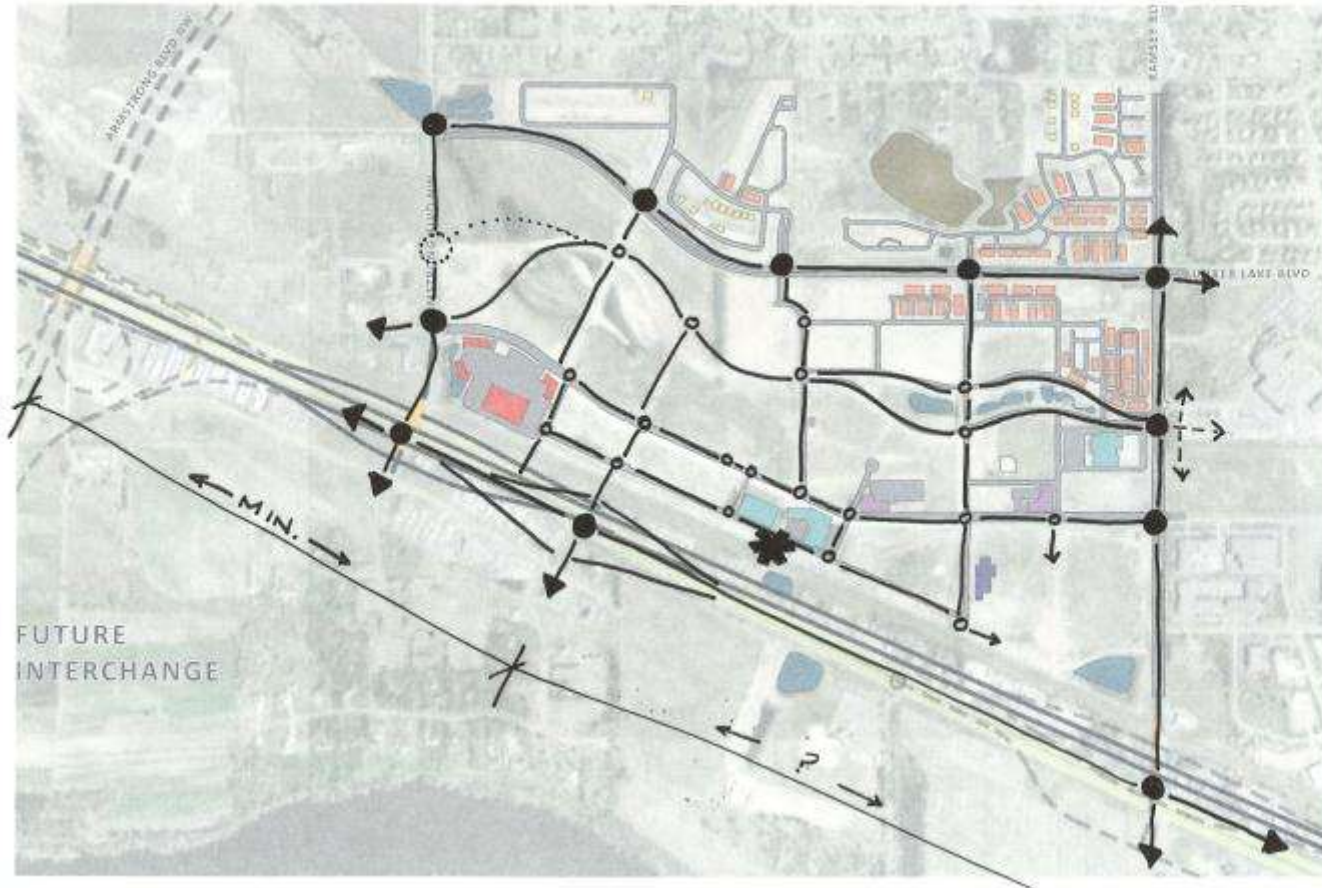
LANDFORM

From Sky to Street

**EXISTING ACCESS  
ANALYSIS (C2.3)**  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2009

## Alternate Sunwood Drive Scenario

RAMSEY TOWN CENTER  
RAMSEY, MINNESOTA



NOT TO SCALE

LANDFORM

PROPOSED ACCESS ANALYSIS (C3.0)

SEPTEMBER 2, 2009

## **Comparison to former Ramsey Town Center Master Plan**

Although the revised plan does not impact the City's System Statement in terms of growth forecasts, it does represent a change to the conceptual site plan to illustrate the potential for future development.

The City of Ramsey is not requesting an amendment to the approved forecasts for ultimate build-out of the development. The City is requesting to replace the original Site Plan from the Ramsey Town Center Master Plan and amendment to the Design Framework (original Design Guidelines).

The revised Development Plan is a marketing tool to illustrate what development may look like through 2030. The site plan illustrates that the original forecasts can be achieved with the revised site plan through high floor area ratios, densities, and shared parking within the TOD Area.

## **The Vision**

The revised Development Plan maintains much of the original vision for a transit-oriented, pedestrian-scale development, now refocused in the center.

## **Transit Village**

The area immediately surrounding the Ramsey Station is commonly referred to as Transit Village. It currently includes the Ramsey Municipal Center, Municipal Parking Ramp, the VA Outpatient Clinic, and the Ramsey Office Plaza. Currently under construction is the Residence at The COR, a 230-unit apartment complex.

## **Office Park**

The office park remains unchanged from the original plan. Currently completed are the PACT Charter School, NAU Country Insurance, Allina Medical Clinic, and the Midwest Medical Examiner.

## **Residential Development**

There are several projects completed and under construction, totaling nearly 300 existing units. Within the original 322 acre boundary, nearly 1,900 housing units are forecasted. Floor Area Ratios and structured parking requirements will allow the City to exceed this forecast beyond the current planning period. With the clarified boundary, the original 2,500 household forecast is met or exceeded within the current planning period.

## **West Retail Area**

The previous Master Plan did include medium-to-large scale retail on the western edge of the development. As part of the re-visioning process, the City determined that a solid anchor was necessary to support the desired land use within the TOD Area. The expanded large-scale retail anchor lies largely outside the TOD Area, and additional residential units within the TOD area have been added to off-set the shift in land uses.

## **Adjacent Development**

There are several areas of adjacent development that have been a direct result of the energy surrounding The COR, maximizing value-capture potential of the Northstar Commuter Rail.

### **Legacy Christian Academy**

In 2010, the City approved a site plan and subdivision request for 90 acre private school campus. Upon ultimate build out, the Legacy Christian Academy proposes to serve approximately 1,400 students and is expected to break ground in Spring of 2013. The site is located approximately ¾ mile from the Ramsey Station. Not originally part of the City's Comprehensive Plan, this high-quality development not only changed the landscape of future land use on the site itself, it changed the dynamics of the surrounding area as well. It is anticipated that some adjacent residential, not currently shown within the Comprehensive Plan, may be desirable as support for the success of Legacy Christian Academy. As Legacy Christian Academy and the rest of the area west of Armstrong Boulevard are truly connected and an extension of The COR, the future land use planning of this area, explained in more detail below, may continue to add additional energy and capacity to The COR and potentially include additional households. This area will be re-evaluated as part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update.

### **Town Center Gardens**

Another private development has been spurred as a result of The COR. This development, known as Town Center Gardens, began developing in 2004, and consists of approximately 300 housing units. Much of this area is located with the TOD Area, with the remainder being within ¾ of a mile from the Ramsey Station. A portion of this development is part of the expanded boundary of The COR previously mentioned.

### **West of Armstrong**

The area west of Armstrong, also part of the expanded boundary of The COR, was traditionally thought to be exclusively retail. This was the City's first attempt to create a retail anchor for The COR, but complications in redevelopment causes the previous development, known as Ramsey Crossings, to not become a reality. The Future Land Use of this area is COR Mixed Use, consistent with the same designation of The COR itself. Given this fact, the Comprehensive Plan would not only allow retail, but residential uses as well. As stated above, as part of the Legacy Christian Academy, this area will be re-evaluated as part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update.

## **Maximizing Investments Previously Made**

Numerous entities have invested in the success of The COR. Without these private and public partnerships, the success of the development would not be possible.

### **Northstar Commuter Rail**

With approximately 2,500 households within walking distance of the Northstar Commuter Rail – Ramsey Station, the investment made by the various partners continues to be consistent with the new

Development Plan. The area around the Ramsey Station, referred to as Transit Village, provides a mix of uses including residential, public, and commercial.

The investment made to attract a 230 unit apartment complex is planned to attract a high return on ridership use on the Northstar Commuter Rail, with direct connections to the rail station. This development also includes a retail component, intended to serve as an amenity to the residents of the building, the broader community, as well as ridership for the Northstar Commuter Rail.

The Ramsey Municipal Center is located adjacent to the rail station, and provides a wide variety of services to residents and riders, including the Anoka County License Center.

The Municipal Parking Ramp was recently expanded to ensure capacity of surrounding uses (to maximize density and development potential) and ensure capacity for ridership on the Northstar Commuter Rail.

### **The Draw Park and Amphitheater (formerly East Meandering Commons)**

The City received a grant from the Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) of the Metropolitan Council. The investment was made in amphitheater and bridges for The Draw – Park and Amphitheater. This project was recently completed, and already has been shown to be a large success. This site is the location of the weekly Farmer’s Market and Draw Event Series during the summer and has even been the location of multiple weddings. This area is unchanged in the new Development Plan, and is consistent with the investment made.

*Insert Photo Here.*

### **Sunwood Drive**

The City received a grant from the Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) of the Metropolitan Council for construction of Sunwood Drive to create a connection to the Ramsey Station. The impacts of the new Development Plan and realignment of Sunwood Drive are not of impact to the scope of this grant.

### **Municipal Parking Ramp**

The City received funding to construct portions of the Municipal Parking Ramp from both the LCDA program as well as a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant. The Phase I of the ramp was completed a number of years ago and Phase II (CMAQ grant-funded) is in the final construction phases. This project was intended to serve the surrounding development, including the Northstar Commuter Rail.

### **Ramsey Star Express**

The City of Ramsey has shown its commitment to continued funding of a pilot program for Northstar Commuter Rail-Ramsey Station. Investment built ridership base to support Ramsey Station.

*Insert Grant Improvement Map Here.*

## Document Comparison

With an amended master plan, many of the documents have been revised. The table below shows the location of the previous documentation.

| <u>Previous Document</u>          | <u>Current Location</u>    |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Master Plan                       | Design Framework           |
| Site Plan                         | Development Plan           |
| Design Guidelines                 | Design Framework           |
| Zoning Code-Permitted Uses        | Zoning Code-Permitted Uses |
| Zoning Code-Dimensional Standards | Design Framework           |

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