

Duckor & Associates, Inc.  
3141 Dean Court  
Suite 804  
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Phone **612. 285-1033**  
Fax 612. 285-1044  
E mail anita@duckor.com  
Web duckor.com

Duckor & Associates



January 1, 2013

Mayor Sarah Strommen  
Kurt Ulrich, City Administrator  
City of Ramsey  
7550 Sunwood Drive NW  
Ramsey, MN 55303

Subject: Request for Proposal: Three-Year Strategic Action Plan, Governance Plan, and Organizational Assessment

Dear Mayor Strommen and Kurt:

Duckor & Associates is pleased to submit this proposal to facilitate a comprehensive and structured strategic planning process that effectively ensures the city's governance and operations are working toward a common shared mission and vision - thereby meeting the needs of its community members today and tomorrow.

The proposal consists of 11 parts:

1. Background
2. Objective
3. Purpose
4. Approach
5. Key Duties
6. 14-Step Methodology
7. Project Schedule
8. Key Benefits
9. Key Deliverables
10. Project Budget
11. Professional Service Fee and General Provisions.

The proposal articulates a comprehensive strategic thinking and planning process that ensures a higher degree of success because of candid and open discussions. The proposal is highly interactive with the mayor, city council, appointed commission members and staff. The delivery schedule is dependent on the availability of all of you, and on timely access to information.



The City of Ramsey will benefit from an integrated and aligned three-year strategic action plan, governance plan and organizational development plan because it will:

- Achieve a shared vision and strategic direction
- Achieve a shared understanding of clear roles, responsibilities and deliverables for elected officials, appointed commission members and staff
- Help build trust among elected officials, appointed commissions and staff
- Achieve goal consensus and directs the City of Ramsey's work efforts
- Energize the organization and enhances team results

Duckor & Associates is uniquely qualified to assist in this critically important project and offers:

- More than 30 years of in-depth and multi-disciplinary corporate and business experience – as both an executive and consultant;
- More than 20 years of effective coalition-building among diverse and competing interest groups in the public and private sectors;
- More than 15 years in successful community building, economic development building, including strategic partnerships; and
- More than 12 years of working with all levels of business, nonprofits, and government entities, enabling organizations to achieve all that they envision.

What makes me unique as a consultant is that I have worn many hats, resulting in a wide range of insights and perspectives. I've been a business executive and consultant, an effective board member (serving on 20 boards), an elected official, executive director of a nonprofit organization, and a member of a capital campaign that raised more than \$16 million. For the past 12 years, I have worked as a consultant on a variety of projects in the private, nonprofit and government sectors.

I look forward to helping the City of Ramsey establish a solid foundation and framework -- to truly have "A New Beginning.. A New Day."

Enclosed are two copies of the proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Anita S. Duckor  
President

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## **BACKGROUND – CHALLENGING TIMES**

Our complex and dynamic world creates new challenges for all types of organizations. The City of Ramsey is no exception. 2012 was a tumultuous year for the city – a highly contested city election; the mayor’s attempt to terminate the city administrator and three key staff positions; and a major development, *The COR at Ramsey* that continues to be a drain on the city’s resources.

The City of Ramsey cannot afford to continue governing and operating as it has – and it is imperative that the elected officials and staff develop an effective working relationship. The City of Ramsey, its community members, elected officials and staff, deserve “A New Beginning, a New Day.”

In 2006, the City of Ramsey formed Ramsey3, a grassroots organization dedicated to imagining the future of Ramsey and providing the visionary framework for the city. It also states: “The Goals and Strategies were compiled before the final completion of the Vision and Values, so it is the intent of the City that where conflicts arise the Vision and Values will guide city policy decisions.”

To build on this significant body of excellent community-driven work, the City of Ramsey desires to develop a Three Year Strategic Action Plan, assess the overall governance structure of the city, and build effective working relationships among elected officials, commissions, and city departments.

Tumultuous financial times create the opportunity to think conventionally or unconventionally. The planning partners (City of Ramsey elected officials and city departments and the consulting firm) will need to do both. Challenging times give us the gift of opportunity to assess our organizations – candidly and thoroughly.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The City of Ramsey wishes to ensure that the city’s governance and operations are working toward a shared vision and mission – effectively meeting the needs of its community members today and tomorrow. The following is a proposal from Duckor & Associates, Inc. The principal working on this project is Anita S. Duckor.



## **PURPOSE**

The underlying goal is to create an open, transparent working environment among the elected officials and staff that restores the faith and confidence in the City of Ramsey, builds an effective elected governing body, and helps build staff morale.

The specific goals are to:

- Develop a shared vision by reviewing and refining, if required, the Ramsey3 visionary structure that includes vision, values and goals;
- Develop a Three Year Strategic Action Plan including measurements;
- Develop measurable goals and a tracking system that is monitored monthly;
- Develop clear roles, responsibilities and deliverables for elected officials, appointed commission members, and staff;
- Design a transparent governance structure for both elected officials and staff that includes: guiding and operating principles, code of conduct, conflict of interest policies, etc.;
- Determine current staff structure's capacity to deliver high-quality services, and
- Develop a common understanding of what a healthy community looks like.

## **APPROACH**

Meeting your objectives requires a collaborative, integrated, and dedicated project team striving toward a common purpose. An important feature of Duckor & Associates approach is the involvement of the elected officials and staff throughout the process. This method ensures a clearer understanding of your objectives, timely access to needed information, and it also positions City of Ramsey to implement the work and plans that are developed.

The process envisioned is highly interactive. While the time schedule is somewhat dependent on the availability of the City Council and staff, Duckor & Associates is committed to meeting the project deadline in a timely and efficient manner.

The process will include the organization's co-champions for the project, Mayor Sarah Strommen and Kurt Ulrich, City Administrator, six council members, the administrative team (Administrative Services, City Clerk, Community Development, Engineering, Finance, Fire, Police, and Public Works), and the consultant.

The process begins with clear roles and responsibilities for both parties.



## KEY DUTIES

### City of Ramsey will

1. Appoint and ensure availability of the Project Team (City Administer, Community Development, Finance Director, Fire Chief, Police Chief, Engineering, and Public Works);
2. Provide all relevant City of Ramsey's strategic and operation plans, research, and any other relevant enterprise information;
3. Provide a 2012 report that identifies accomplishments and challenges to date;
4. Approve the one-on-one interview instrument; schedule one-on-one interviews (Mayor, and City Council)
5. Approve and conduct two on-line internal surveys (staff and appointed commission members);
6. Be open, responsive and forthcoming in interviews and planning sessions;
7. Arrange for meetings, provide meeting space and take meeting notes, if desired;
8. Provide administrative, printing and graphic design support, if needed;
9. Provide on-going internal communications for the project; and
10. Ensure the final work reflects the City's best interest.

### Duckor & Associates will direct and manage the planning process including

1. Provide the (strategic planning, program/service evaluation, and organizational) planning process, plan format, templates, worksheets and tools;
2. Articulate clear roles, responsibilities and milestones for Project Team;
3. Coach participants;
4. Prepare for, lead and facilitate all meetings;
5. Design one-on-one interview surveys;
6. Conduct one-on-one interviews (on-site);
7. Design two Monkey Survey instruments;
8. Analyze research and present findings;
9. Draft and present work to mayor and City Council, and
10. Meet with the mayor and City Administrator on an on-going basis.

## 14-STEP METHODOLOGY

The strategic thinking and planning (refined strategic plan, governance structure, and organizational plan) will comprise of three key phases:

- I) Building trust including commitment and buy-in of the planning process among the City of Ramsey's elected officials, appointed commission members, and administrative team;
- II) Strategic thinking, direction, and planning; and the
- III) Development of a Three Year Strategic Action Plan, Governance Plan, and refined department operations plans.

### PHASE I (BUILDING TRUST: COMMITMENT AND BUY-IN)

1. **Review the current organization's success to date** and review the organization's history.
  - Review Strategic Plans and Operation Plans.
  - Review and analyze the City of Ramsey 2030 Comprehensive Plan.
2. **Interview elected officials and conduct online surveys of appointed commission members** to conduct a self-assessment (7 one-on-one interviews)
  - Identify Strengths, Challenges and Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and Concerns (SWOT Analysis).
  - Summarize the council, commissions, and staff's hopes and dreams for the City of Ramsey,
  - Solicit: "What do you think the community members expect from you?"
  - Solicit: "Identify what do the community members think of you?"
  - Develop an online survey for commission members
3. **Conduct two (four-hour) planning sessions** with elected officials and administrative team
  - Conduct first four-hour planning workshop; present rules of engagement, clear roles and responsibilities for all participants, the process and schedule, solicit expectations of the group, define customers and respective requirements, and success indicators (what makes a city great) that will be vetted by the group.
  - Conduct second (four-hour) planning workshop focused on governance; identify needs/requirements of city officials and staff; refine roles and responsibilities of elected officials, appointed commissioners, city administrator, and department heads, rules of engagement, desired behavior, guiding principles, conflict of interest policy, etc.
4. **Develop and launch an internal communication plan** that manages staff's expectations, achieves buy-in and reduces internal anxiety surrounding the project.



The City of Ramsey Commissions that will be included in the process are:

- Board of Adjustment
- Charter Commission
- Economic Development Authority (EDA)
- Environmental Policy Board (EPB)
- Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA)
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission



## PHASE II (STRATEGIC THINKING AND PLANNING)

5. **Conduct two (three-hour) planning sessions** with elected officials and administrative team
  - Conduct first (three-hour) planning workshop: present interview and online survey reports that will be vetted by the group, and to discuss and determine the strategic direction including refinement of mission, vision, and values.
  - Conduct second (two or three-hour) planning workshop to review, refine and approve strategic framework.
  
6. **Design and implement an employee feedback process** about the work environment e.g., culture
  - Design and solicit an on-line/print survey for all staff to complete that is approved by the Project Team.
  - Assess findings and develop report.
  - Present findings to Project Team.
  - Review and ensure alignment of job descriptions, professional development plans, and performance measurements of department heads.
  
7. **Direct administrative staff to conduct** a self-assessment of their respective programs/services
  - Present and achieve approval for the template to Project Team.
  - Be available for questions and clarifications.
  - Review and refine findings with staff and respective Commission members.
  
8. **Meet with administrative staff** to present findings and brainstorm on how to work more effectively and efficiently
  - Meet with Project Team to present findings.
  - Conduct the first three-hour planning workshop with administrative staff: present employee survey results; discuss feedback and opportunities for improvement.
  - Conduct a second three-hour planning workshop with administrative staff: identify customer requirements; opportunities for work improvement, set priorities, and identify skills and tools to better serve customers.



### PHASE III (PLANNING)

9. **Conduct meetings with administrative team** to evaluate and prioritize the recommended changes to move forward.
  - Conduct first three-hour planning workshop to assess and re prioritize the Three Year Action Plan.
  - Conduct second two-hour planning workshop to refine operations plans.
  - Meet with project team to ensure alignment and agreement.
10. **Conduct a check-in meeting** to review the work to date.
  - Conduct a two-hour meeting with elected officials: administrative staff to present their work for review and direction.
  - Determine if the Ramsey3 needs to be initiated in 2014.
11. **Incorporate feedback and refine** Three-Year Strategic Action Plan that includes a mission, vision, guiding principles, goals and measurements for program and service plans e.g., department plans.
12. **Develop a three - year implementation plan**, which outlines action steps, resources requirements, timelines, and responsible parties.
13. **Present Plans to the mayor and City Council** at a council meeting.
14. **Meet with the mayor and city administrator** on an on-going basis.

### PROJECT SCHEDULE

The project schedule will be determined after the scope of work and methodology is agreed to. This project will probably take 4 months, and should be designed to ensure that the organization's resources are not strained and the staff is not overburdened.



**“A NEW BEGINNING...A NEW DAY FOR THE CITY OF RAMSEY”**

**Key Benefits**

- ★ Achieves a shared vision and strategic direction for the City of Ramsey with performance measurements.
- ★ Achieves a shared understanding of clear roles, responsibilities and deliverables for elected officials and staff.
- ★ Builds trust among the elected officials and staff.
- ★ Achieves a shared understanding of how culture impacts performance and trust.
- ★ Ensures a transparent process in which all staff members will be heard.
- ★ Achieves goal consensus and directs the City of Ramsey' work efforts.
- ★ Articulates doable objectives.
- ★ Maximizes effective use of resources.
- ★ Energizes the organization and enhances team results.

**DELIVERABLES**

The deliverables of the project are:

- Three - Year Strategic Action Plan
- Refined Visionary Structure (Mission, Vision, and Values)
- Governance Plan (Code of Ethics, Guiding Principles, Roles and Responsibilities)
- Strategically developed department plans (programs and services)
- Organizational assessment and recommendations
- Three - Year Implementation Plan including performance measurement strategy and tools



**PROJECT BUDGET**

| STEPS   | COST                |
|---|---------------------|
| Step 1<br>Review all relevant information to date   | INCLUDED IN PRICING |
| Step 2<br>Conduct one-on-one interviews (7) elected officials at their business location and conduct online survey of commission members (Preparation, interviews, two summary reports and follow-up)   | \$5,000             |
| Step 3<br>Conduct two (four-hour) working sessions: present rules of engagement, customer requirements, success indicators, and governance – roles, responsibilities and deliverables (Preparation, facilitate, present, and follow-up)         | \$5,500             |
| Step 4<br>Help draft internal communications (Draft, review, edit)  | \$400               |
| Step 5<br>Conduct two (three-hour) working sessions with elected officials and administrative team: SWOT Analysis, Hopes and Dreams Report, strategic direction – mission, vision, values (Preparation, facilitate, present, and follow-up)     | \$5,500             |
| Step 6<br>Design, implement and report findings on staff's on-line survey. Review and refine, if required, job descriptions and development plans (Preparation, facilitate, present, and follow-up) Meet with Project Team.                     | \$3,500             |
| Step 7<br>Direct administrative staff to assess their respective programs/services; working one-on-one with staff; meet with Project Team   | \$2,500             |
| Step 8<br>Conduct two (three-hour) working sessions with administrative staff to present findings and brainstorm on how to work more effectively and efficiently (Preparation, facilitate, present, and follow-up) Meet with Project Team.      | \$5,500             |
| Step 9<br>Conduct two meetings (three-hour and two-hour) with administrative staff and respective commissions to evaluate and prioritize the recommended changes of the department plans (Preparation, facilitation, redrafting, and follow up) | \$5,500             |
| Step 10<br>Conduct a two-hour check-in meeting with elected officials/administrative staff (Preparation, facilitation, and follow up)   | \$1,200             |
| Step 11<br>Incorporate feedback and edit final documents  | \$1,200             |
| Step 12<br>Develop a three-year implementation plan   | \$1,200             |
| Step 13 and Step 14<br>Present plans to the Mayor and City Council; meet with the Mayor/City Administrator on an on-going basis.  | \$500               |
| Total   | \$37,500            |



Tax Identification #41-1932625  
**Total Professional Service Fees**  
\$ 37,500

General Provisions

Payment Schedule

- \$ 9,375 due upon initiation of project
- \$ 9,375 due upon thirty days after initiation of project
- \$ 9,375 due upon sixty days after initiation of project
- \$ 9,375 due on completion of project

Invoices are payable upon receipt

Expenses for travel, lodging and related items will be billed in addition and shown separately on Duckor & Associates, Inc. invoice.

Duckor & Associates, Inc. work will be a best effort and it is expected that the results will meet the objectives sought. The recommendations and the written material we provide will be our best judgment based on the information available to us. In any event, Duckor & Associates, Inc. assumes no liability for this project.

This offer shall remain open for a period of 30 days from the date of letter, unless extended in writing.

Acceptance

We appreciate the opportunity to work with you on this important assignment. Please sign and return the enclosed copy of this proposal to authorize the agreed to work.

Presented by

Accepted by

Duckor & Associates, Inc.  
By: Anita S. Duckor

City of Ramsey  
By: \_\_\_\_\_

President

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_