

Meeting Date: 06/11/2013

Submitted For: Patrick Brama

By: Patrick Brama, Administrative Services

Information

Title:

15153 Nowthen Blvd Property Development: Consider Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application

Background:

**General Background**

This site was vacated by the City when the City moved its operations to its new municipal campus in 2006, with the exception of Fire Station Number 2, and some storage. Since that time, the City has explored various options for selling the land in conjunction with the construction of a new fire station on an adjacent site to the east. In 2012, the City was approached by Connexus Energy regarding the development of City owned land located at 15153 Nowthen Boulevard; known as the Old Municipal Center Site (“Subject Property”). The Subject Property is 21.24 acres in size and is currently zoned Public/Quasi-Public.

The City is considering two general development scenarios for the Subject Property: data center and single family residential. The City completed a feasibility study on said development scenarios in early 2013.

The next step in the process to develop the Subject Property is to consider the appropriate land use and zoning. Staff was directed to conduct a public open house regarding a potential Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Amendment for Subject Property in April 2013.

**Purpose of Case**

Consider SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to allow for [data center and/or residential development]. Please note: this application will also need to be approved by the Metropolitan Council, if approved by the City Council. Upon completion of that process, the City would need to update its official controls (Zoning Code and Official Zoning Map)

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Council must remain objective when reviewing a Comprehensive Plan Amendment application; therefore, the Council must not take a POSITION ON APPROVING a Comprehensive Plan Amendment as part of this case. The Planning Commission must hold a public hearing, establish a findings-of-fact and submit a recommendation to the Council before consideration.

**Detailed Background**

Connexus Energy identified the Subject Property as the best available data center site in the entire County of Anoka in the fall of 2012; and, proposed the City partner with their organization to pursue development of the Subject Property for a data center user(s).

Previous to receiving Connexus Energy’s proposal, the City Council identified the Subject Property as surplus City owned land; as it is unneeded for current or future City functions (summer of 2012).

Both the EDA and City Council directed Staff to pursue the proposed partnership with Connexus Energy in the fall of 2012. However, a number of key development issues would need to be resolved before either the EDA our City Council were able to pledge their full support for a data center development. Major items included: a feasibility study (cost-benefit analysis) and Comprehensive Plan/Zoning Amendment for the Subject Property. The EDA and City Council were both interested in exploring how the proposed data center use might fit in with surrounding properties.

**Feasibility Study**

In early 2013, the EDA and City Council reviewed a feasibility study for the development of the Subject Property. Said study compared three general development scenarios: a single data center user, two data center users and a single family residential development. In summary, said study identified a data center development to be considerably more beneficial to the City than a single family residential development. Additionally, a data center development provided the City with a significant funding source for the City's new Fire Station #2. NOTE: Fire Station #2 is temporarily located on Subject Property.

Upon review of said feasibility study, Staff was directed to move forward with identifying a zoning solution for the Subject Property. Staff was directed to conduct an open house prior to formally bringing forward a Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Amendment for the Subject Property; as the EDA and City Council were interested in feedback from surrounding property owners. The purpose of this step was to identify any issues the neighborhood would have with a Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Amendment.

#### Public Open House

On April 18, 2013 the City hosted an ("Open House") regarding the future development of the Subject Property. Nearly 250 surrounding property owners were contacted via direct mailings.

##### -Summary-

Comments were received from Open House attendees; additionally, Staff received written and verbal comments outside of the Open House. In total, the City received twenty-six (26) comments. Twenty-four (24) were in opposition of a data center development (92%) and two (2) preferred a data center development (8%). Additionally, Staff received a petition in opposition of a data center development, and in support of a residential development, from surrounding property owners on April 26. Said petition included 69 signatures and has not been reviewed or analyzed by Staff.

##### -Inquiries-

Common public inquiries included, but were not limited to, the use of the site as a school, park, or renovated Fire Station. There were also multiple inquiries as to whether the data center could be sited elsewhere in the community.

##### -Opposition to Data Center-

For those opposed to the data center concept, common comments included concerns with decreased property values, presence and view of a data center being undesirable, compatibility with the character of surrounding properties, noise, and long term risk/potential re-use of the site.

##### -Support of Data Center-

For those in opposition of a residential development, common concerns were centered around the high traffic impact of a residential development and the negative effect a residential development would have on the privacy of surrounding property owners (when compared to a data center).

Attached to this case is extensive information attained through the public input process.

#### Data Center Market Interest

Over the past few months, Staff has received inquiries from national builders and commercial real estate agents, Connexus Energy and the State of Minnesota regarding the development of the Subject Property for a data center user(s). Staff has *not* worked directly with any data center prospects (i.e. end users). However, it is Staff's opinion there is a strong market for data centers and the Subject Property would attract development.

NOTE: the City will not work directly with end users interested in utilizing the Subject Property until the City's Comprehensive Plan and Official Zoning Map is amended (data center or residential).

Observations:

Upon completion of the public open house in April, Staff analyzed input received from surrounding property owners and attempted to address common concerns raised in relation to the proposed data center development. The purpose of the information below is to (A) identify concerns that were raised; and, (B) attempt to provide the Council with a options to mitigate said concerns.

This information is broken down into two sections. The first section (open house) outlines specific concerns with specific mitigation options. The second section (revised feasibility and concept maps) includes updated analytical information based the mitigation options presented by Staff.

## **SECTION 1: OPEN HOUSE**

Concerns listed below were raised at the public Open House regarding the development of the Subject Property for a data center user(s).

### **Noise**

A number of residents raised concerns regarding the noise data center generators and air conditioning units would create.

Data centers do require significantly sized backup power generators. Additionally, data centers do create a significant level of heat due to the extensive use of computer servers; therefore, significant use of air-conditioning units is required. Both types of equipment, generators and air conditioning units, do create noise pollution. However, it is important to note, generators will only be operational in situations where regular power supply is lost/threatened and during monthly testing. Generators are not run regularly.

Noise pollution concerns can be mitigated with proper land use regulations. For example, increased building setbacks, requiring enclosed/indoor storage of generators, requiring air conditioning units to be located at the center of building rooftops and establishing noise restrictions on the Subject Property.

For example, the Cities of Anoka and Chaska have noise decibel (dB) restrictions; 65Db and 55dB respectively. The City of Ramsey could consider adopting a noise decibel (dB) restriction on the Subject Property of 55dB. 55dB is often compared to office noise, normal conversation, living room in suburban area, typical business office, library, moderate sound and a quiet house.

It should be noted that the City currently has dB restrictions within the existing City Code that are fairly close to the above samples. The City could choose to establish site-specific noise regulations through a number of tools.

### **Visual/Aesthetics**

A number of residents raised concerns regarding the “look” and “presence” of a data center facility. Further, it has been stated a data center building would be an "eye sore."

At full build out, a data center structure would be significantly sized when compared to surrounding single family residential structures. It is staff’s estimation the site could sustain a maximum 195,000 square foot building.

Visual/Aesthetic concerns can be mitigated through land use regulations. For example, the City could require larger building setbacks, dictate a maximum building height, require a high standard of building materials and mandate proper screening (e.g. landscaping, berming plantings, etc.). In addition, the City has the ability to establish architectural standards in addition to the above bulk standards to make the architecture more conducive of a residential surrounding. Regarding the view of generators and water tanks, the City has the ability to require said units be enclosed or even located indoors.

It is important to note, the City can mitigate the visual/aesthetic effect of a data center development; however, it cannot not eliminate said concern.

### **Traffic**

A number of residents raised concerns regarding traffic. Some residents were concerned that busy data center employees would drive carelessly through surrounding neighborhoods and decrease safety.

At full build out, a data center development would have significantly lower traffic impact on surrounding properties than would a residential development. It is estimated a data center development would create 64-96 vehicle trips per day and a residential development create 470 trips per day (at full build out). It is proposed, a data center development would attain road access exclusively from Nowthen Boulevard; and that a residential development would attain road access to Helium Street.

The City did receive a response from the Anoka County Highway Department on the preliminary sketches. Anoka County's response was that they desire to eliminate the access onto Nowthen Boulevard, as the current alignment interferes with future turn lanes and restricted turn movements. Staff is working with County Staff to clarify and explore all options. Staff would have a more formal answer as part of the formal amendment process.

### **Spot Zoning**

Several residents indicated using the Subject Property for a data center would be considered "spot zoning." NOTE: "spot zoning" is not addressed in State Statute; it is a part of case law and planning literature.

Staff had a chance to review the Subject Property with the League of Minnesota Cities, the City's Planning Division, and the City Attorney. Considering the follow factors, Staff does not believe the City is in violation of "Spot zoning": large size of the Subject property, the City is using the property for a rational use, there is a public purpose for developing the Subject Property, the previous/anticipated use of the Subject Property was for either a school/municipal center complex, the City would enforce strict land use regulations to ensure a data center use would transition/be compatible with surrounding properties and the City would pass a Comprehensive Plan Amendment before moving forward.

### **Property Values**

Nearly all residents indicated the establishment of a data center development would reduce the value of their homes; and therefore is undesirable.

It is possible the establishment of a data center development would reduce the value of surrounding properties. However, it is also possible the establishment of a data center development could sustain or even increase the value of surrounding properties; depending on the quality of the project and the required screening/land use regulations (when compared to the alternative). This item is subjective.

Staff had a chance to review this item with the League of Minnesota Cities and the City Attorney. Most case law indicates this conclusion is subjective and unclear.

Staff would recommend the City update their comprehensive plan to reflect the desired zoning before moving forward with either development scenario (residential or data center).

### **Risk/Market Failure**

A number of residents are concerned that a data center development will eventually fail; and, that another type of user would eventually take over. Said user may not work well with surrounding properties.

Like any business, the risk of a data center development failing is real. The City does not have the ability to mitigate this risk. However, in the event a data center user failed, the City does have the ability to regulate the next user. It is likely, an office type reuse would fit in best with surrounding properties. The City has the ability to control the use of the Subject Property through land use regulations; in this case, a Planned Unit Development (PUD) or an Overlay District.

### **Use of Subject Property for a Park**

Several residents indicated the City should develop the *entire* Subject Property into a park.

If a data center project was located on the Subject Property, Staff would recommend the Council consider dedicating a piece of land for public open space (programming to be determined). Staff has reflected this recommendation in the revised site concept plans.

When considering dedicating the entire Subject Property for a public park, Staff has the following comments: over the course of the last decade, as new single family homes and town-home developments have been platted near the Subject Property, the Park and Recreation Commission has examined the need for recreational amenities and associated trail connections. Finding that there is adequate recreation and open space in the larger vicinity of the former Municipal Center, the City has focused on trail development; and, this part of Ramsey now has the most comprehensive trail and connected trail system within the entire City.

A summary of park amenities nearby the Subject Property includes the two community parks of Elmcrest and Alpine; and play equipment at Alpine, Woodland Green, Solstice and the school. Athletic fields at Alpine, Elmcrest, the school, Solstice, Woodland Green and Bear Park. Open space at all of the above, plus Sunfish Lake Park and the scout camp as well as other city-owned lands. In addition to the common recreational amenities at these parks, at Alpine there is a concrete skate park, free canoes and kayaks at Sunfish Lake, and ice skating and a warming house at the 60-acre Ramsey Elementary immediately west of the former Municipal Center.

### **Better Locations**

Residents at the public open house indicated there are "better locations" for a data center in Ramsey; and that the Subject Property should not be considered.

Considering the requirements of a data center development, the Subject Property is the only substantial available site in the City of Ramsey. Requirements include: redundant fiber, redundant electricity, city utilities, minimum distance from city services, minimum distance from train tracks, minimum distance from a river, minimum distance from an electrical substation and a substantially sized site.

It was suggested by an attendee of the Open House that the site at the north east intersection of Saint Francis Boulevard (Highway 47) and Alpine Drive should be explored. This site is adjacent to Bill's Superette and Evergreen Pointe Townhomes. Staff did review the feasibility of this site. The site may be able to sustain some sort of data center development; however, it would not sustain the size or scenario being discussed with the current concepts and would be much smaller, if at all. The physical conditions such as site criteria, setbacks, wetlands, and actual property boundaries limit these opportunities.

### **Anoka Hennepin School District Use**

Several residents indicated the Subject Property should be used for an Anoka Hennepin School District school campus. Staff made contact with the School District and has received word their organization is not interested in the Subject Property now or into the foreseeable future.

### **Fire Station Use**

At the public Open House, a number of residents questioned why the City's Fire Station #2 needed to be moved from it's current location. The City's Fire Department has examined said possibility. It has been concluded the configuration and condition of buildings located on the Subject Property are inadequate for a permanent fire station.

## **SECTION 2: REVISED FEASIBILITY STUDY/CONCEPTS**

As a result of the public input process, staff made a number of revisions to the proposed data center development scenarios as follows:

### **Building setbacks**

Building setbacks are proposed to be increased from 125' to 200'; which is over three times the distance normally required by City Zoning Code. Increased building setbacks help mitigate noise, safety, visual/aesthetics and compatibility concerns. Attached to this case are examples of setbacks for data centers in other communities.

### **Placement of generators and air conditioning units**

It is proposed all generators be enclosed or placed within a data center facility. It is also proposed air conditioning units be enclosed or located at the center of data center facility roof tops. Proper location of generators and air conditioning units help mitigate noise and visual/aesthetics concerns.

### **Establish 55dB noise regulations**

It is proposed the City establish noise regulations making 55dB the maximum decibel of noise allowed from the Subject Property (similar to Chaska). Noise regulations help mitigate noise concerns.

### **Provide public open space**

It is proposed the City utilize land located in the northeast corner of the Subject Property as public open space. Various options exist for utilization of the proposed open space. Public open space mitigates safety and compatibility concerns.

### **Updated Feasibility Study & Concept Maps**

As a result of revisions to the site map concepts (reviewed above), and a recent market value appraisal for the Subject Property, Staff made a number of revisions to the feasibility study for the development of the Subject Property.

In summary, results of the revised feasibility study are similar to the the original feasibility study: a data center development is significantly more beneficial to the City (financially) than a residential development. Estimated City tax revenues from a data center development range from \$124,807 to \$118,596 annually; whereas, a residential development is estimated to produce \$28,263 annually.

Other taxing jurisdictions would also benefit from a data center development. Estimated TOTAL tax revenues from a data center development range from \$968,336 to \$920,150 annually; whereas, a residential development is estimated to produce \$92,013 annually.

Considering land only: The appraised value of the Subject Property for data center is \$1,275,000; and, the appraised value of the Subject Property for a residential development \$650,000.

Considering the estimated market value of an entire project: the value of data center is \$24,150,300 (one user) and \$22,950,300 (two users) and the value of residential development is \$7,632,941.

### **EDA Input**

On May 16 the EDA reviewed information collected from the April public input meeting and the revised (mitigated) site plan concepts and feasibility study. The EDA had the following comments to provide the City Council:

- Considering the mitigated data center site plan, the EDA is in favor of pursuing a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to allow for a data center user.
- The mitigated site plan is a compromise with surrounding property owners; it addresses most concerns raised during the public input process.
- The EDA believes the data center concept is in line with Council and EDA goals.
- The EDA would like to remain transparent and open with surrounding property owners. The EDA would like a mailing sent to surrounding property owners before the City Council directs Staff (and the Planning Commission) to either move forward/not move forward with a Comprehensive Plan Amendment; said letter would be an invite to submit comments and attend said Council meeting.
- The EDA would like a webpage set up for this project.
- The EDA is also in favor of the residential site plan concept; and would be in favor of pursuing zoning to allow for said use. However, the EDA would recommend the City pursue a data center user first.
- In general, the EDA is not interested in a nonprofit entity utilizing the subject property. However, if the data center and residential concepts do not gain traction, they would be willing to consider.
- Considering the data center concept, the City Council should strongly consider the proposed open space; as it would be very important to surrounding property owners.
- *One* EDA member was opposed to moving forward with a data center development.
- *One* EDA member indicated it would be wrong to push something through given the current level of opposition. Said member later indicated the mitigated data center site plan was sufficient.

Staff had previously noted a potential second open house due to poor weather conditions (snow event) during the original open house. Staff has not suggested a second open house to date, however would note ample opportunity for public input through two (2) separate processes (1. Comprehensive Plan Amendment and 2. Zoning Amendment). Staff would support providing time on the evening of the Planning Commission Meeting prior to the Public Hearing to have Staff available to provide background on the concepts.

**Funding Source:**

There is no funding required at this time to consider submitting an application to begin the Comprehensive Plan Amendment process. However, there will be personnel time required to prepare the necessary materials for the amendment. Staff may need to supplement Staff resources with contracted services under the existing contracted planner.

**Staff Recommendation:**

In order to move forward with either development scenario, the City must pass a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Staff would ask the City Council provide direction on which development scenario to pursue. Listed below are a number of recommendations for Council consideration. NOTE: attached to this case is a "Development Scenarios Comparison Chart."

**EDA INPUT:** Submit a Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application to the Planning Commission to allow for a data center user on the Subject Property. Specific comments are included in the observation section of this case.

**PUBLIC INPUT:** Based on public input *received*, Staff would summarize the direction of surrounding property owners to be: Submit a Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application to the Planning Commission to allow for a residential development on the Subject Property. Specific comments are included in the attachments to this case.

**STAFF INPUT:**

(A) Based on public input received, it is clear there is a strong desire for the Subject Property not to be developed for a data center user. When considering existing surrounding land uses, a residential development is the most compatible use for the Subject Property. Staff would be in support of developing the Subject Property as a residential neighborhood.

(B) Based on the cost-benefit analysis, EDA/Council strategic goals and the need for a new Fire Station #2, a data center development is more beneficial to the community as a whole. With proper land use mitigation practices, and a proper public input process, Staff would be in support of a data center development.

**Action:**

Submit a Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application to the Planning Commission to allow for a **data center user** on the Subject Property.

-and/or-

Submit a Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application to the Planning Commission to allow for a **residential development** on the Subject Property.

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Attachments

OLD Concept Maps

NEW Concept Maps

Cost Benefit Analysis (June 5)

Site Location Map

Development Scenarios Comparison Chart

REF MAP

Council Meeting Invite (letter 2)

Public Open House Invite Letter

Public Open House Petition

Public Open House Attendees Maps All

Public Open House Phone Calls and Emails Received

Process Timeline 06062013

Example Data Centers (Building Set Backs)

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### Form Review

<b>Inbox</b>	<b>Reviewed By</b>	<b>Date</b>
Bill Goodrich	Bill Goodrich	06/05/2013 05:19 PM
Tim Gladhill	Tim Gladhill	06/06/2013 11:48 AM
Patrick Brama	Patrick Brama	06/06/2013 01:34 PM
Kurt Ulrich	Kurt Ulrich	06/06/2013 03:42 PM

Form Started By: Patrick Brama  
Started On: 06/05/2013  
Final Approval Date: 06/06/2013

















## Cost/Benefit: Annual Cash Flow

	Concept 1 One Data Center User	Concept 2 Two Data Center Users	Concept 3 Sing. Fam. Resd. Devel.
<b>VALUATION (market value)</b>			
Data Center Building(s):			Single Family Homes
Square Feet	\$ 190,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	Average Valuation of Land \$ 30,000.00
Valuation (per sq ft)	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00	Average Valuation of Homes \$ 153,153.00
Total Building Valuation	\$ 22,800,000.00	\$ 21,600,000.00	Average Valuation, before MVE \$ 183,153.00
			(Market Value Exclusion) \$ (20,750.00)
Land:			Average Valuation, after MVE \$ 162,403.00
Northern Parcel	\$ 810,300.00	\$ 810,300.00	
Southern Parcel	\$ 540,000.00	\$ 540,000.00	Number of available lots 47.00
Total Land Valuation	\$ 1,350,300.00	\$ 1,350,300.00	
<b>VALUATION (market value)</b>	<b>\$ 24,150,300.00</b>	<b>\$ 22,950,300.00</b>	<b>VALUATION (market value) \$ 7,632,941.00</b>
<b>REVENUE (taxes/city only)</b>			
Tax Capacity Rate (commercial)			Tax Capacity Rate (residential) 1.00%
First \$150,000	1.50%	1.50%	
Sub total	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 2,250.00	
After \$150,000	2.00%	2.00%	
Sub total	\$ 480,006.00	\$ 456,006.00	
Total Tax Capacity	\$ 482,256.00	\$ 458,256.00	Total Tax Capacity \$ 76,329.41
<b>TOTAL TAXES</b>	<b>\$ 968,336.00</b>	<b>\$ 920,150.00</b>	<b>TOTAL TAXES \$ 92,013.00</b>
Fiscal Disparities*	\$ 306,816.00	\$ 291,547.00	
Local (City/County/School)	\$ 340,390.00	\$ 323,450.00	
Other (State/Mkt. Val. Ref./etc.)	\$ 321,130.00	\$ 305,153.00	
			City Taxes (44.19%) \$ 33,729.97
City Taxes (share of 'Local')	\$ 124,807.40	\$ 118,596.18	
<b>REVENUE (City Taxes Only)</b>	<b>\$ 124,807.40</b>	<b>\$ 118,596.18</b>	<b>REVENUE (City Taxes Only) \$ 33,729.97</b>
<b>EXPENSES (&gt; residential development)</b>			
Operating Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	<b>EXPENSES (&gt; commercial development)</b>
	\$ -	\$ -	Operating Expenses
	\$ -	\$ -	Snow Removal \$ 1,000.00
	\$ -	\$ -	Street Sweeping \$ 383.00
	\$ -	\$ -	Seal Coating (\$10,600/12yr) \$ 883.00
	\$ -	\$ -	Future Overlay (\$64,000/20yr) \$ 3,200.00
	\$ -	\$ -	Annual Operating Expenses \$ 5,466.00
Increased Demand for Services (> residential development)			Increased Demand for Services (> commercial development)
Police	\$ -	\$ -	Police NA, likely higher
Fire	\$ -	\$ -	Fire NA, likely higher
Other	\$ -	\$ -	Other NA, likely higher
	\$ -	\$ -	Services Subtotal NA, likely higher
<b>EXPENSES (&gt; residential development)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>EXPENSES (&gt; commercial development) \$ 5,466.00</b>
<b>NET ANNUAL CASH FLOW (City)</b>	<b>\$ 124,807.40</b>	<b>\$ 118,596.18</b>	<b>NET ANNUAL CASH FLOW (City) \$ 28,263.97</b>

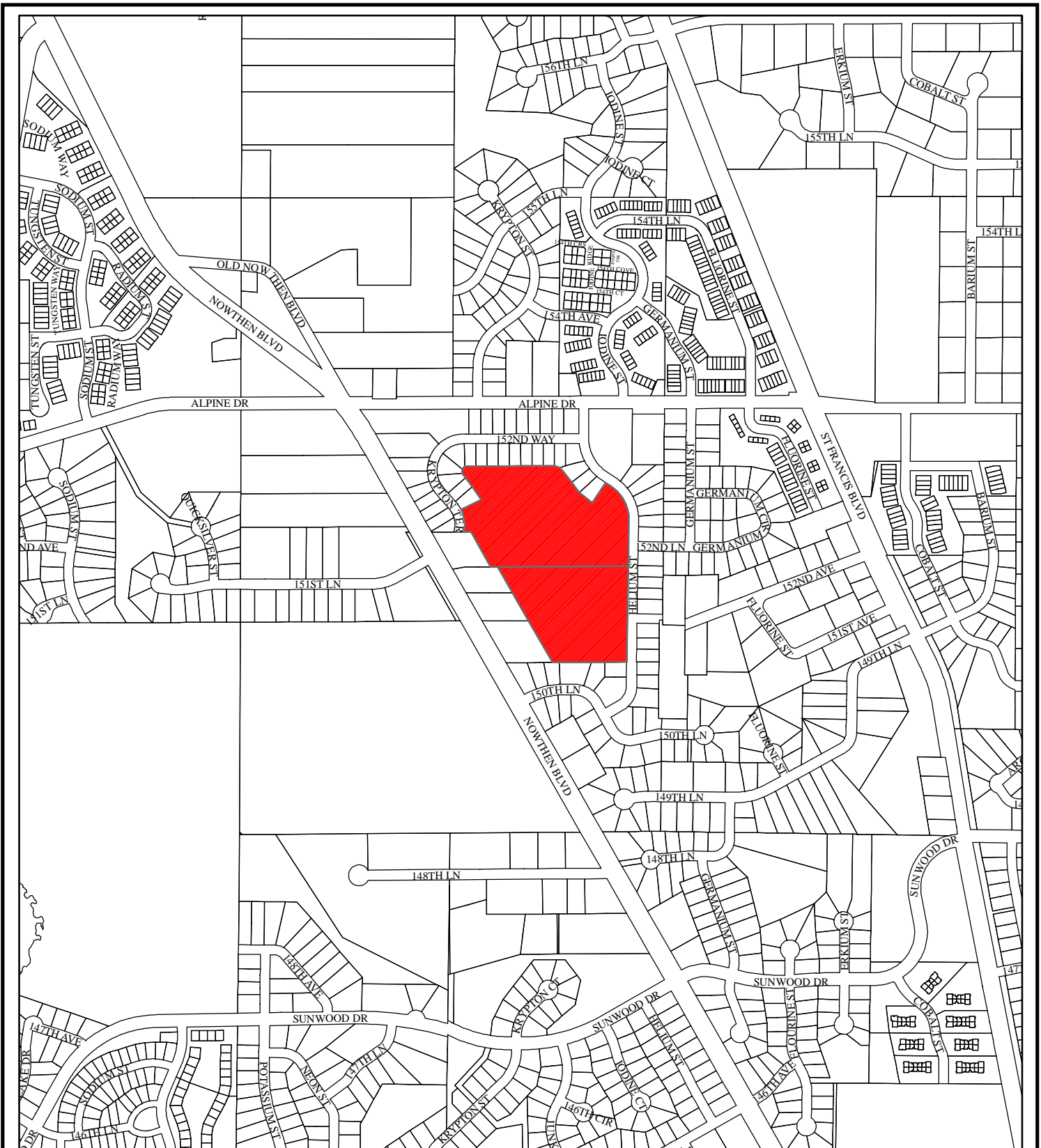
### Fiscal Disparities

Commercial & Industrial taxes are effected by a program known as "fiscal disparities." This program takes a portion of taxes collected from each property in the metro (about 40%), and places them into one pot. Then, said monies are redistributed by the State based on a complex formula. Ramsey typically is a beneficiary of this program. Meaning, the amount of money that is taken away from the City through fiscal disparities is returned (with additional monies).

When issuing debt, cities are not allowed to include fiscal disparities as a revenue source for debt repayment; as the amount annually received is undetermined from year to year and is not controlled by the City.

## Cost/Benefit: Land

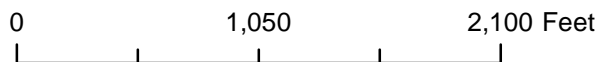
	Concept 1 One Data Center User	Concept 2 Two Data Center Users	Concept 3 Sing. Fam. Resd. Devel.
<b>Land Proceeds</b>			
Land Value	\$ 1,275,000.00	\$ 1,275,000.00	\$ 650,000.00
Expected Sale Price	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 650,000.00
<b>Total Land Proceeds</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 650,000.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Business Subsidy, Land Write Down			Business Subsidy, Land Write Down
Total Value of Subsidy	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	Total Value of Subsidy \$ -
Annual Pay Back Capacity	\$ 124,807.40	\$ 118,596.18	Annual Pay Back Capacity \$ -
Pay Back Period (years)	<b>8.01</b>	<b>8.43</b>	Pay Back Period (years) \$ -



15153 Nowthen Blvd. NW

**Legend**

- Site
- Parcels



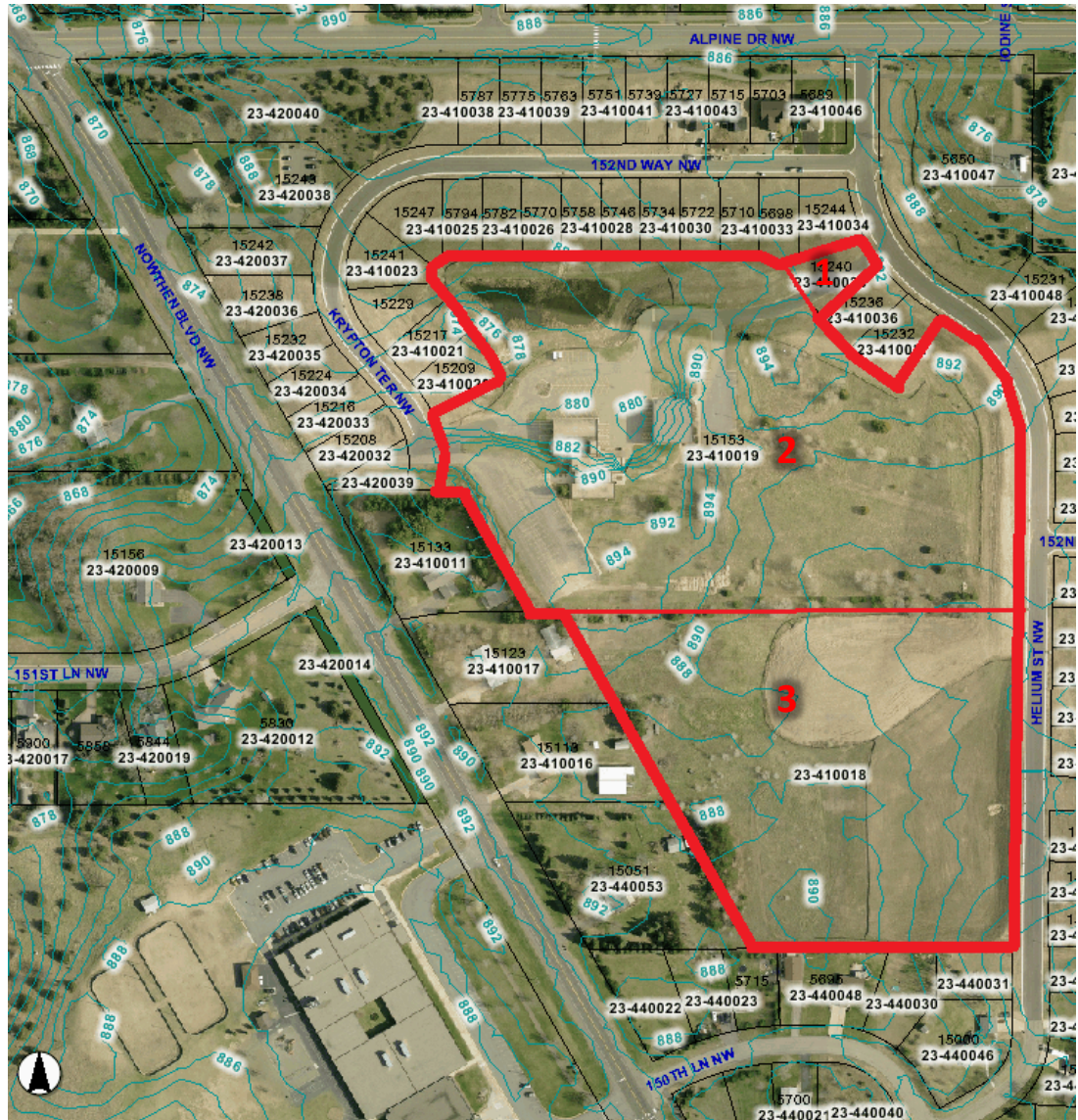
# Development Scenarios Comparison Chart

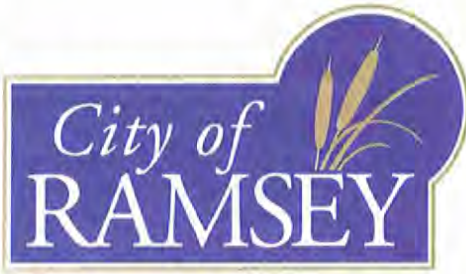
**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Information displayed below includes estimations only; and is subject to change.

	Residential Development	Data Center Development
<b>Maximum Size</b>	47 Single Family Homes	One (1) 190,000 square foot or two (2) 90,000 square foot buildings
<b>Residential Population</b>	Approximately 150 persons	---
<b>Employees</b>	---	16-24 persons
<b>Based on zoning, does this scenario fit the character of surrounding properties?</b>	Compatible	Compatible with appropriate transitions and zoning regulations
<b>Traffic</b>		
<b>Primary entrance</b>	Helium Street (from Alpine, Krypton Terrace, 150 LN NW)	Nowthen Boulevard, subject to approval of Anoka County
<b>Road type</b>	Public	Private
<b>Weekday traffic per day</b>	Medium (estimated 470) based on 10 trips per household	Low (estimated 64-96) based on 12-24 employees, 4 trips per
<b>Weekend traffic per day</b>	Medium	Very Low
<b>Minimum Setbacks Distances (from your property line)</b>	10-30'	200' (175' Eastern Border) (pending comp. plan and zoning amendment as proposed)
<b>Screening or berming to block view of neighboring use.</b>	---	Required (vegetation and/or berming)
<b>Noise and light pollution risk</b>	<u>VARIABLE</u> Depends on individual property owners.	<u>LOW</u> Data centers have backup generators and like any business, have security lights. City would require strict light and noise pollution standards to mitigate/ minimize effect on surrounding properties. For example, a 55dB restriction and proper location/screening of all equipment.
<b>Effect on overall tax levy for the City; and ability to contribute to a new fire station.</b>	<u>MINOR</u> Provides an incomplete funding solution for a new fire station (15 year bond).	<u>SIGNIFICANT</u> Provides a significant funding solution for a new fire station (15 year bond).
<b>Market Failure Risk: development fails and a new user steps forward</b>	<u>LOW</u> If a single family residential development failed, that would mean a majority of buildable lots remain vacant. Given Ramsey's population growth trends and projections, it is unlikely a single family residential development would not succeed.	<u>SHORT TERM: LOW</u> There is a strong interest in the market today to use the subject property for a data center.  <u>LONG TERM: UNKNOWN</u> Data centers, or this specific site, could conceivably become obsolete someday. Meaning, no market demand for a data center. In which case, the City would be requested to make this site compatible for a different low impact user (office, warehouse, etc.).
<b>Open Space</b>	---	The City is proposing dedication of public open space to be a requirement for a data center user. See concept map.

# PROPERTY PROFILE: CITY OF RAMSEY

**NUMBER:** 06  
**ADDRESS:** 15240 HELIUM ST NW, 15153 NOWTHEN BLVD NW, NA  
**PID:** 233225410035, 233225410019, 233225410018 (Three separate parcels—listed from the top down).  
**LEGAL:** Lots 4, 5, 21, Block 1, Meadow, Anoka County, Minnesota  
**ACRES:** 20.86  
**VALUATION:** \$1,501,769  
**ZONING:** Public/Quasi Public and PUD (Planned Unit Development)  
**MUSA:** Yes  
**GIS IMAGE:**





7550 Sunwood Drive NW • Ramsey, Minnesota 55303  
City Hall: 763-427-1410 • Fax: 763-427-5543  
[www.cityoframsey.com](http://www.cityoframsey.com)

May 29, 2013

Name, Name  
Address  
City, MN

Resident Name:

You are being contacted regarding the property known as the *Former Municipal Center Complex* described below. The City is in the process of considering the future development of the Subject Property.

*Old Municipal Center Complex*: (the "Subject Property"): 15153 Nowthen Boulevard, two parcels, PID 23-32-25-41-0019 and 23-32-25-41-0018, 21.28 acres, City of Ramsey ownership.

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide the following information.

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| • Development Background Information       | Fact Sheet 1 |
| • Open House/Public Input Process Feedback | Fact Sheet 2 |
| • Mitigated Data Center Concept Maps       | Fact Sheet 3 |
| • EDA Review & Recommendation              | Fact Sheet 4 |
| • Development/Process Timeline             | Fact Sheet 5 |

The City Council encourages residents to attend meetings, provide additional feedback and ask questions.

Please visit the City's website for more information on the future development of the Subject Property; including the revised data center site plans: [www.cityoframsey.com/formerrmc](http://www.cityoframsey.com/formerrmc)

If you would like assistance, or have questions, I am available to help.

Best regards,

Patrick J. Brama  
Assistant to the City Administrator, City of Ramsey

OFFICE: (763) 433-9903 EMAIL: [pbrama@ci.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:pbrama@ci.ramsey.mn.us)  
ADDRESS: 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, MN 55303  
WEBSITE: [www.cityoframsey.com](http://www.cityoframsey.com)

## **FACT SHEET 1: Development Background Information**

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The City of Ramsey completed a municipal owned land inventory exercise in in early 2012. The purpose of this exercise was to identify a list of surplus City owned properties no longer needed for current or future City functions. The City reviews said list of surplus properties for consideration of sale. The ultimate goal of this process is to reduce the number tax exempt properties in the City of Ramsey.

The Subject Property was identified as unneeded for current and future City functions; and therefore has been determined surplus City owned land. The Subject Property is currently zoned Public/Quasi Public; and will need to be rezoned in order to allow for future development.

Generally, two options are being considered for the future development of the Subject Property: a data center development and a single family residential development. The City is targeting a data center development.

Historically, the City anticipated developing the Subject Property as either the Ramsey Municipal Center Complex or a middle school. Both proposed uses are no longer being pursued by the City. Anoka Hennepin School District does not have interest in utilizing the Subject Property now or in the foreseeable future and the City relocated the Ramsey Municipal Center to The COR in 2006.

## **FACT SHEET 2: *Open House/Public Input Process Feedback***

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On March 27, 2013 the City notified 250 surrounding property owners of the development scenarios being considered (data center and residential). Said property owners were invited to attend a public open house on April 18. Below is a summary of input received:

Public comments were received from open house attendees; as well as non-attendees. In total, the City received twenty-six (26) public comments. Of those, twenty-four (24) opposed a data center development and two (2) were in favor of a data center development.

Staff received a public petition in opposition of a data center development, and in support of a residential development, from surrounding property owners, on April 26. Said petition included sixty-nine (69) signatures.

General public inquiries included, but were not limited to, the use of the Subject Property as a school, park, or renovated Fire Station #2; and, inquiries as to whether a data center could be sited elsewhere in the community.

Public comments in opposition of a data center included: concerns with decreased property values, presence and view of data center being undesirable, compatibility with the character of surrounding properties, noise, and long term risk/potential re-use of the site.

For those in favor of a data center development, common public comments included concern with the high traffic impact of a residential development; as well as, concerns that a residential development would reduce the privacy of surrounding property owners (compared to the low impact and hours of operation of a data center).

### **FACT SHEET 3: *Mitigated Data Center Concept Maps***

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Upon receiving feedback from the public open house process, the City revised and updated the proposed data center site concept maps. The purpose of revising the proposed site maps was to respond to inquiries/concerns raised by surrounding property owners; and to provide the City Council with a 'mitigated' version of the data center site concepts.

*In summary the revised site concept maps include the following changes:*

- Establishment of public open space (programming to be determined)
- Increased building setbacks from 125' to 200' (175' on eastern property line)
- Establishment of noise restrictions (55 decibels maximum). 55dB is often compared to office noise, normal conversation, living room in suburban area, typical business office, library, moderate sound and a quiet house.
- Requirement to enclose all generators, mechanical equipment, water tanks, etc.
- Requirement to place all air conditioning units near the center of buildings
- Maximum building height, 25' clear ceilings
- Required screening: berming, plantings, larger setbacks.
- Required quality building materials/design
- City confirmation of various details:
  - One data center (regardless of size) will employ an estimated 8-12 people. Therefore two data centers will employ an estimated 16-24 people total.
  - A data center development will create an estimated 48 vehicle trips per day to Nowthen Boulevard only; versus a residential development (estimated 480 vehicle trips per day to Helium Street).
  - Data centers are a 24/7 operation. However, data centers do not warrant full staffing on site during nights and weekends. Typically, there may only be one person on site during nights and weekends (inside of building).
  - Data center generators do not run 24/7. Generators run 1-2 times per month for testing. Additionally, generators are turned on for severe weather events.

**FACT SHEET 4: *Economic Development Authority (EDA)***  
*Review/Recommendation*

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The EDA is a recommendation making board that oversees the City's economic development functions. The primary goal of the EDA is to create jobs and tax base for the community. On May 16 the EDA reviewed information collected from the April public input meeting and the revised data center site concepts and feasibility study. The EDA had the following comments to provide the City Council:

- Considering the revised data center site plan, the EDA is in favor of pursuing a comprehensive plan and zoning amendment to allow for a data center user.
- The EDA is also in favor of the residential site plan concept; and would support pursuing a comprehensive plan and zoning amendment to allow for said use. However, the EDA would recommend the City pursue a data center user first.
- The mitigated data center site plans address most concerns raised during the public input process.
- The EDA believes the updated data center concepts are in line with Council and EDA goals; and, provide a financial solution for Fire Station #2; and, are more beneficial for the community as a whole; and, have a low impact on surrounding property owners (when compared to other business users).
- *One* EDA member is opposed to moving forward with a data center development.

## **FACT SHEET 5: *Development/Process Timeline***

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At this point, the Subject Property is zoned Public/Public Quasi Public. In order to allow for either proposed use, data center or residential, the Subject Property must be rezoned. Said process includes a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and a Zoning Amendment. It is the final decision of the City Council to move forward with rezoning the Subject Property; and for what use.

Upon receiving direction from the City Council to rezone the Subject Property (data center or residential), the City's Planning Commission will conduct another public input session.

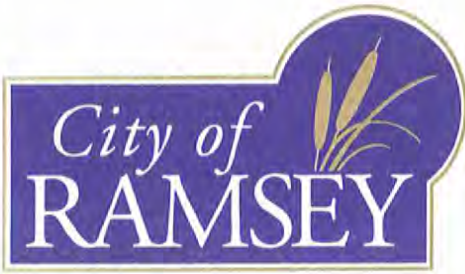
The City has not, and will not, work directly with any users interested in the Subject Property until the City Council provides direction on rezoning.

### *Proposed Timeline (subject to change\*)*

1. City Council Direction: Consider submitting an application to the Planning Commission to amend the City's Comprehensive Plan and rezone the Subject Property.
  - 06/11/2013 7:00 p.m., Council Chambers
  - With this step, the City Council will provide direction on what Permitted, Conditional, and Accessory Uses shall be included in the proposed Zoning Amendment to be forwarded to the Planning Commission.
  
2. Planning Commission Review: Public Hearing
  - Timing to be determined: likely July 11
  - With this step, the Planning Commission will review the Council's application to amend the Comprehensive Plan and rezone the Subject Property.
  - Includes a formal public hearing
  - The Planning Commission will provide a formal recommendation to the City Council.
  - The primary objective of the Planning commission is to *advise* the City Council on land use concerns.
  
3. City Council Adoption/Introduction
  - Timing to be determined: likely late July/early August
  - Includes Comprehensive Plan Amendment resolution adoption; and, Zoning Amendment introduction.
  
4. City Council Adoption
  - Timing to be determined: likely mid/late August
  - Includes Zoning Amendment adoption.

\*NOTE: the Council may choose to change the date of any meeting listed above. For the most up to date meeting information, please visit the City's website:

[www.cityoframsey.com/formerrmc](http://www.cityoframsey.com/formerrmc)



7550 Sunwood Drive NW • Ramsey, Minnesota 55303  
City Hall: 763-427-1410 • Fax: 763-427-5543  
www.cityoframsey.com

March 27, 2013

Name, Name  
Address  
City, MN

Resident Name:

You are being contacted regarding the property known as the *Former Municipal Center Complex* described below and outlined in the enclosed reference map. The City is in the process of considering the future development of the Subject Property; and would like to invite you to attend an open house to discuss this potential development.

*Old Municipal Center Complex:* (the "Subject Property"): 15153 Nowthen Boulevard, two parcels, PID 23-32-25-41-0019 and 23-32-25-41-0018, 21.28 acres, City of Ramsey ownership.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of Ramsey completed a municipal owned land inventory exercise in in early 2012. The purpose of this exercise was to identify a list of surplus City owned properties which are no longer needed for current or future City functions. The City reviews said list of surplus properties for consideration of sale. The ultimate goal of this process is to reduce the number tax exempt properties in the City of Ramsey.

The Subject Property was identified as unneeded for current and future City functions; and therefore has been determined as surplus City owned land. The Subject Property is currently zoned Public/Quasi Public.

City offices moved from the Subject Property in 2006. Today, the City's Fire Station #2 is temporarily located on the Subject Property. The size of the Subject Property and the layout/condition of existing buildings are inadequate (or excessive) for the operations of Fire Station #2. The City is planning to construct a new, smaller, Fire Station #2 northeast of the Subject Property on the south side of Alpine Drive.

## **BACKGROUND Q&A**

### **TABLE 1**

**(Q1)** Why does the City want to reduce the number of exempt properties?

**(A1)** Reducing the quantity of tax exempt properties within the City increases the overall tax base; which reduces the tax burden on individual property owners.

**(Q2)** Why does the City want to sell and develop this particular property?

**(A2)** In addition to answer above, the City is in need of a new fire station. The sale of this property may provide a funding source for a new fire station; and will reduce the impact of a new fire station on individual tax payers.

The Subject Property is no longer needed for public works, public safety, administrative facilities, drainage and utilities, public right of way, parks/trails, etc.

## DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

Generally, three options have been considered for the future development of the Subject Property. Please reference the attached development scenarios.

1. **Public Use** (*Public Quasi/Public Zoning District*)

Public use includes parks, trails, facilities, right-of-way, schools, wetlands, etc. The Subject Property is unneeded for any public use now or in the foreseeable future. As indicated, the Subject property has been identified as surplus City owned land.

2. **Single Family Residential** (*R1 MUSA Zoning District*)

Considering the existing parcels surrounding the Subject Property, one option for future development is single family residential. It is estimated the Subject Property could sustain forty-seven (47) single family homes. Said development would require an estimated 1,920 lineal feet of public roadway. The City could also consider a higher density residential development if desired.

3. **Quiet Industrial Development** (*Overlay District*)

Considering surrounding land uses, the Subject Property would be unfit for high traffic or high noise producing retail, commercial or industrial uses. With that in mind, the Subject Property may be fit for a quiet, low traffic, targeted industrial user.

In particular, the City is targeting a *data center development* for the Subject Property. Please see Table 2 for background information on data centers.

The Subject Property could sustain, at a maximum, one (1) 250,000 square foot or two (2) 100,000 square foot data center buildings.

In order to protect surrounding property owners from undesired users (i.e. high traffic, loud or significant noise pollution), the City is proposing a zoning tool known as an Overlay District for the Subject Property.

### OVERLAY DISTRICT

An overlay district is a zoning tool that allows the City to address land use and design standards unique to a particular geographic area, while protecting the compatibility of the surrounding area. Unlike standard zoning districts, an overlay district also allows the City to develop a customized set of land use standards and regulations. For example, larger building and parking lot setbacks from property lines than what is normally required. Or, noise, traffic and light pollution standards.

#### DATA CENTER DEVELOPMENT Q&A TABLE 2

(Q1) What is a data center development?

(A1) A data center is a form of warehouse that is used for the storage of computer servers. In other words, a large building containing a vast number of computers.

(Q2) What product/service does a data center provide customers?

(A2) Computer memory space accessible via the internet. Most major corporations store data (known as computer files) on computer servers; which are often times located in data centers.

(Q3) What does a data center look like?

(A3) Attached are some examples. In general, a data center looks similar to an industrial warehouse.

Considering Ramsey zoning standards, a data center would likely look similar to newer buildings located in Ramsey's industrial parks. For example, Anderson Dahlen, Diamond Graphics and MultiSource

(Q4) In comparison to a residential development, how will a data center development effect my home and my lifestyle?

(A4) Please see the attached development scenarios comparison chart.

Finally, and overlay district allows the City to establish appropriate screening and transition requirements.

Considering the parcels surrounding the Subject Property are single family residential, the City is committed to developing a set of zoning standards that best fit neighboring properties.

### **MOVING FORWARD**

In order for any development scenario to move forward, zoning on the Subject Property would need to be altered from its existing designation (Public Quasi/Public) to allow for a new use. The Planning Commission and City Council would like your feedback and input regarding the proposed Residential and Data Center Development scenarios. Additionally, the City would like to provide you with time to ask questions and request information to ensure you are informed.

It is important to note, today, the City is considering a data center development for the Subject Property. However, your input and feedback is needed before the City moves forward.

The following options exist for you to provide input, ask questions and gather additional information:

- **Neighborhood Open House**  
On April 18, 2013 the City will be hosting an open house regarding the proposed development scenarios. The open house will be located at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Council Chambers, 6:00 p.m-9:00 p.m. This is an opportunity to meet with various City Staff, to view illustrations and figures, to ask questions and gather additional information.
- **Contact the City Outside of Open House**  
If you cannot make the open house, the City is still interested in your input and would welcome your comments. If you are interested in setting up a meeting, sending an email/letter or having a phone conversation, please contact Patrick Brama, [pbrama@ci.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:pbrama@ci.ramsey.mn.us), 763-433-9903.

The City appreciates your time, input and consideration regarding this manner.

Best regards,



Patrick J. Brama

Assistant to the City Administrator, City of Ramsey

OFFICE: (763) 433-9903 EMAIL: [pbrama@ci.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:pbrama@ci.ramsey.mn.us)

ADDRESS: 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, MN 55303

WEBSITE: [www.cityoframsey.com](http://www.cityoframsey.com)



Enclosures (5)









## Development Scenarios Comparison Chart

*Information displayed below are unofficial estimations only.*

	Residential Development	Data Center Development
<b>Maximum Size</b>	47 Single Family Homes	One (1) 250,000 square foot or two (2) 100,000 square foot buildings
<b>Residential Population</b>	Approximately 150 persons	---
<b>Employees</b>	---	30-80 persons
<b>Based on zoning, does this scenario fit the character of surrounding properties?</b>	Best Fit. Most compatible; and anticipated.	Acceptable. Partially compatible with appropriate transitions.
<b>Traffic</b>		
<b>Primary entrance</b>	Helium Street (from Alpine, Krypton Terrace, 150 LN NW)	Nowthen Boulevard, subject to approval of Anoka County
<b>Road type</b>	Public	Private
<b>Weekday traffic per day</b>	Medium (estimated 470) based on 10 trips per household	Medium (estimated 240) based on 60 employees
<b>Weekend traffic per day</b>	Medium	Very Low
<b>Minimum Setbacks Distances (from your property line)</b>	10-30 feet	150 feet (pending zoning amendment as proposed)
<b>Screening or berming to block view of neighboring use.</b>	---	Required (vegetation and/or berming)
<b>Noise and light pollution risk</b>	<u>VARIABLE</u> Depends on individual property owners.	<u>PRESENT</u> Data centers have backup generators and like any business, have security lights. City would require strict light and noise pollution standards to mitigate/ minimize effect on surrounding properties.
<b>Effect on overall tax levy for the City; and ability to contribute to a new fire station.</b>	<u>MINOR</u> Provides an incomplete funding solution for a new fire station (15 year bond).	<u>SIGNIFICANT</u> Provides a complete funding solution for a new fire station (15 year bond).
<b>Market Failure Risk: development fails and a new user steps forward</b>	<u>LOW</u> If a single family residential development failed, that would mean a majority of buildable lots remain vacant. Given Ramsey's population growth trends and projections, it is unlikely a single family residential development would not succeed.	<u>SHORT TERM: LOW</u> There is a strong interest in the market today to use the subject property for a data center.  <u>LONG TERM: UNKNOWN (FAIR)</u> Data centers, or this specific site, could conceivably become obsolete someday. Meaning, no market demand for a data center. In which case, the City would be requested to make this site compatible for a different user (office, warehouse, etc.).

## Data Center Images (1 of 2)



Target Data Center, Brooklyn Park

Source: ReliableResources.com

Retrieved March 19, 2013 < <http://www.relres.com/case/59/target-technology-center> >



Target Data Center, Elk River

Source: Ryan Companies

Retrieved March 19, 2013 < <http://www.ryancompanies.com/projects/target-technology-center-ttce/> >

## Data Center Images (2 of 2)



Involta Data Center, Duluth

Source: Minnesota Power, An Allete Company

Retrieved March 19, 2013 < <http://mnpower.com/Company/EconomicDevelopment> >



United Health Group, Chaska

Source: Finance and Commerce

Retrieved March 19, 2013 < <http://finance-commerce.com/2012/11/after-the-election-businesses-may-still-get-some-love/> >

JoDell Seaman Dropped these off on 4-26-13 Callahan

**Petition to reject the City of Ramsey's plan to rezone the former Municipal Center Complex at 15153 Nowthen Blvd. and then sell the property and allow 1 or 2 Data Centers to be built on the property.**

<p><b>Petition summary and background</b></p>	<p>The City of Ramsey notified several residents via mail on March 27, 2013 that they are considering a data center development for this property. This area is surrounded by single family homes. Data centers consume an enormous amount of energy. They generate a lot of heat requiring constant air conditioning, which in turn causes noise pollution. In addition they require constant energy supply- resorting to diesel powered generators in the event of power outage- thus increasing air pollution. Light pollution is also a concern due to the requirement of security lights. Traffic on County Road 5/Nowthen Blvd. will also increase with the addition of a data center(s). Traffic is already an issue on this road in front of the elementary school.</p>
<p><b>Action petitioned for</b></p>	<p>Industrial buildings in a residential area lower property values. Homeowners do not want to lose value on their property.</p> <p>We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to remove this development scenario from their plans. If this property must be developed we agree with the city's own statement in their comparison chart that residential development of 47 single family homes is the "best fit" and "most compatible."</p>

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Emily Woodward		15521 Basalt St. NW Ramsey	Need more parking	4-22-13
Craig Woodward		15521 Basalt St. NW Ramsey	No Energy Data Center	4/22/13
Ellen Butorac		14310 Tungsten St. NW Ramsey	we do not need the traffic	4/22/13
JoDell Seaman		15131 Helium St NW Ramsey	we don't need the traffic noise	4-22-13
Annette Grabowska		15170 Oneida St NW Ramsey	No Data Center No Traffic, low Property value	4-22-13
Leigh Scarborough		15170 Oneida St NW Ramsey	No Data Center	4-22-13

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Lois Bach	Lois Bach	14801 Radium ST NW		4/22/13
Frank DeMan	Frank DeMan	18069 Helium St NW		4/22/13
Dawn Rusled	Dawn Rusled	15091 Helium St. NW		
hell Giesche	hell Giesche	15247 Germania St NW		4/22/13
Nicole Jansen	Nicole Jansen	51031 140th AVE NW	MORE PARKS!! We do not need more traffic, Low, value down	4/22/13
Michele Belenovich	Michele Belenovich	15221 Helium St. NW		4/22/13
Kimberly Jacobs	Kimberly Jacobs	Works at Ramsey Elem.		4/23/13
Leslie Bure	Leslie Bure	15201 Helium St NW	Keep Residential	4/23/13
Stew Bure	Stew Bure	15201 Helium St. NW	This is a neighborhood. Let's keep it that way!	4/23/13
Stacey Cunningham	Stacey Cunningham	15211 Helium St NW	Keep Residential!	4/23/13
Leah Van Gorp	Leah Van Gorp	5689 152nd way NW	Absolutely <u>no</u> data center	4/24/13
Andy Kilsyth	Andy Kilsyth	15225 Helium St NW		4/25/13
JENNIFER KUSNER	JENNIFER KUSNER	15225 Helium St NW	No Data Center! Parks <sup>not</sup> Residential	4/25/2013
Tiffany Pearson	Tiffany Pearson	5710 152nd Way NW	NO!!! Property value!	4/25/13
AIME LEAVELL	AIME LEAVELL	5096 152nd way NW	NO!!! Traffic	4/25/13
DAVID WALTERS	DAVID WALTERS	5763 152nd way NW	NO PROP VALUE	

703-218-8826

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
SCOTT MERR	<i>Scott Merr</i>	5787 152 <sup>nd</sup> NW		4/25
Johnnie Jamkowski	<i>Johnnie Jamkowski</i>	15209 Krypton Terrace NW		4/25/13
Peter Jukawski	<i>Peter Jukawski</i>	15209 Krypton Terrace NW		4/25/13
Donna McLain	<i>Donna McLain</i>	9		4-25-13
Jeff McLain	<i>Jeff McLain</i>	15133 NORTHERN BLVD NW		4-25-13

Jeffery McLain *Jeffery McLain* " " 4-25-13  
 Chad Chapman *Chad Chapman* 15051 Northern Blvd  
 Diane Dalby *Diane Dalby* 5435 152<sup>th</sup> St  
 David Hickey *David Hickey* 5635 150<sup>th</sup> Lane NW  
 David Hickey *David Hickey* 5590 150<sup>th</sup> St  
 Aundrea Peterson *Aundrea Peterson* 5570 150<sup>th</sup> Lane NW  
 Aundrea Peterson *Aundrea Peterson* " " " " 4-26-13  
 Jennifer Nissen *Jennifer Nissen* 5600 150<sup>th</sup> Lane NW 4-26-13  
 Jennifer Nissen *Jennifer Nissen* 5550 150<sup>th</sup> Lane NW 4-26-13  
 Greg Nissen *Greg Nissen* 5550 150<sup>th</sup> Lane NW 4-26-13



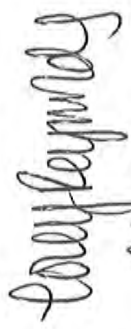

JoDee Saman Dropped these off on 4-26-13 Colleen Laaker 04-26-13

## Petition to reject the City of Ramsey's plan to rezone the former Municipal Center Complex at 15153 Nowthen Blvd. and then sell the property and allow 1 or 2 Data Centers to be built on the property.

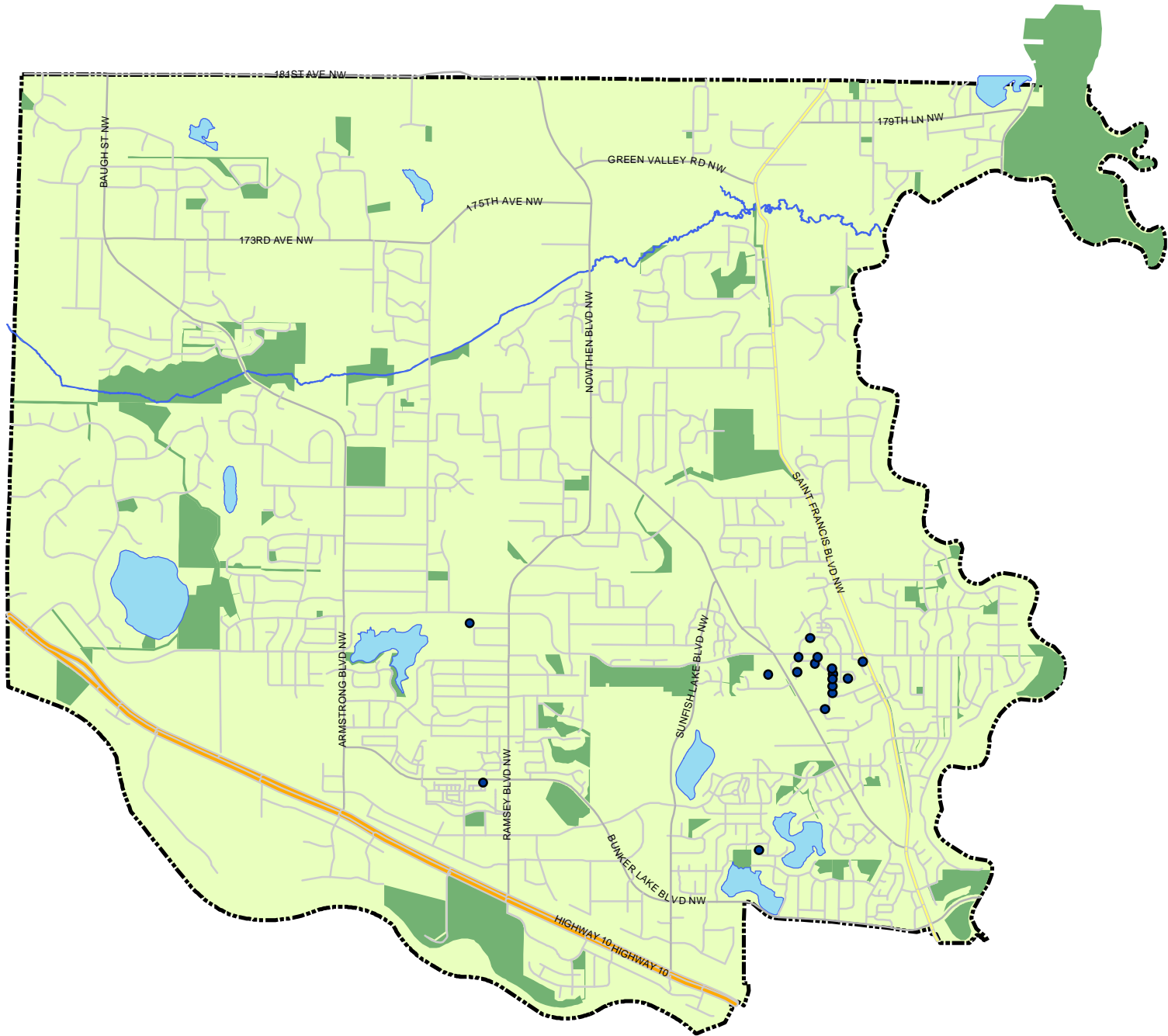
<b>Petition summary and background</b>	<p>The City of Ramsey notified several residents via mail on March 27, 2013 that they are considering a data center development for this property. This area is surrounded by single family homes. Data centers consume an enormous amount of energy. They generate a lot of heat requiring constant air conditioning, which in turn causes noise pollution. In addition they require constant energy supply- resorting to diesel powered generators in the event of power outage- thus increasing air pollution. Light pollution is also a concern due to the requirement of security lights. Traffic on County Road 5/Nowthen Blvd. will also increase with the addition of a data center(s). Traffic is already an issue on this road in front of the elementary school.</p> <p>Industrial buildings in a residential area lower property values. Homeowners do not want to lose value on their property.</p>
<b>Action petitioned for</b>	<p>We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to remove this development scenario from their plans. If this property must be developed we agree with the city's own statement in their comparison chart that residential development of 47 single family homes is the "best fit" and "most compatible."</p>

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Michele Murphy	<i>Michele Murphy</i>	15228 Germanium Cr. NW Ramsey	agree w/ above statement. Not a good fit for area.	4/22/13
Susan Trombicy	<i>Susan Trombicy</i>	15143 Helium St. NW Ramsey	agree with above state- ment, the value of a 47 unit, of our properties is good	4/22/13
Rick Helmsick	<i>Rick Helmsick</i>	15224 Germanium Cr. NW Ramsey	I Agree	4/23/13
Barbara Gaudier	<i>Barbara Gaudier</i>	15337 Germanium Circle Ramsey, MN 55303	I agree	4/23/13
Melissa Hill	<i>Melissa Hill</i>	15337 Germanium Circle NW Ramsey, MN 55303	I agree	4/23/13
Brian Wilson	<i>Brian Wilson</i>	15337 Germanium Cr. NW Ramsey, MN 55303	I agree	4-23-13
Melissa Hornell	<i>Melissa Hornell</i>	15337 Germanium Circle NW Ramsey MN 55303	AGREE!	4-23-13
Richard Mylan	<i>Richard Mylan</i>	15123 Nowthen Blvd NW Ramsey MN 55303	Agree	4-24-13
Sheryl Fischer	<i>Sheryl Fischer</i>	15113 Nowthen Blvd Ramsey MN 55303	Agree	4/25/13

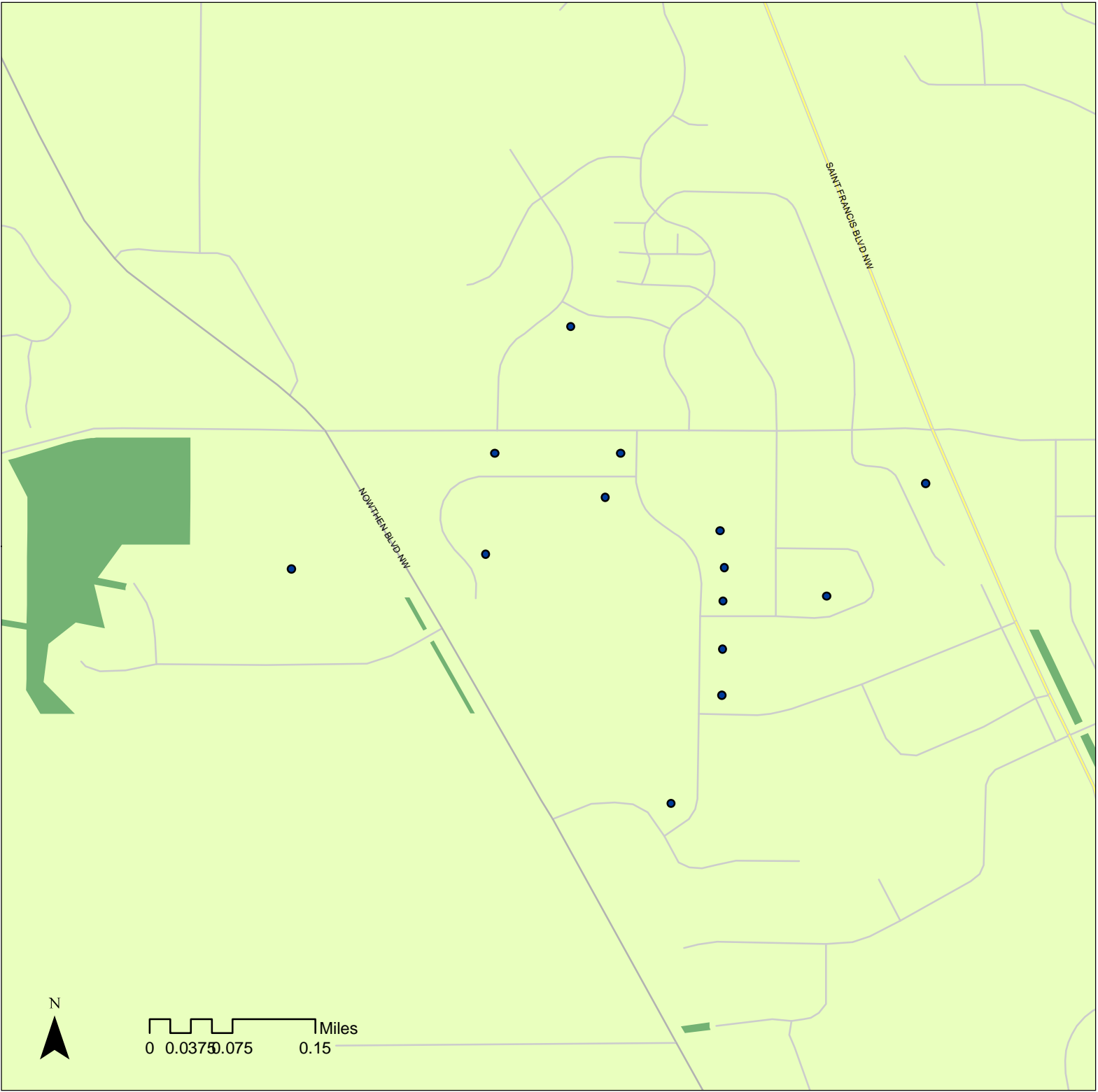
Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
ASHELY STANBURY	ASHLEY STANBURY	15237 Germanium Cir NW CIRCLE	1524 went it	4/23/13
Lance Soby	RSoby	15241 Germanium Cir NW	Against it	4/23/13
Phil Kolver	Phil Kolver	15240 Germanium Cir NW		4/23/13
Joel Klover	JKlover	15248 Germanium Cir NW	Against	4/23/13
Amy Klover	Amy Klover	15248 Germanium Cir NW	Against	4/23/13
Jana Tait	JTait	15227 Germanium Cir NW	Against	4/24/13
Ron Prosper	Ron Prosper	15220 Germanium Cir NW	Against	4/24/13
Jana Rife	Jana Rife	15220 Germanium Cir	Against	4/24/13
Jeremy James	JJames	15221 Germanium Cir	Against	4-24-13
Rt O'Connell	ROConnell	15590 152nd Way NW	Against	4-24-13
Christina Byrne	Christina Byrne	15210 Germanium St NW	Against	4-24-13
Lisa Dahlager	Lisa Dahlager	15251 Germanium Cir NW	Against	4/24/13
Mike Dahlager	MDahlager	15251 Germanium Cir NW	Against	4/24/13
Nonnie Murrup	NMurrup	15208 Germanium Cir	Against	4/24/13
ZATEK YANG	ZATEK YANG	5715 152nd Way NW	Against	4/25/13
Jo Van Stanbury	Jo Van Stanbury	5751 152nd Way NW	Against	4-25-13
William A. Romeo	William A. Romeo	5758 152nd Way NW	Strongly against	4/25/13
Susan Romeo	Susan Romeo	5758 152nd Way NW	Strongly against	4/25/13

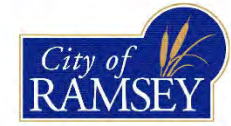
Matthew Krohn  5698 152nd way NW | Agree 4-25-13  
Phillip Van Corp  5689 152nd way NW NO DATA center 4/25/13  
Torey Reynolds  5098 152nd way NW NO Data Center! 4/26/13  
 15131 Helium st NW No Data Center  
Parks, Residential 4-26-13

**Former  
Municipal Center**  
*Land Use Open House  
Attendees*






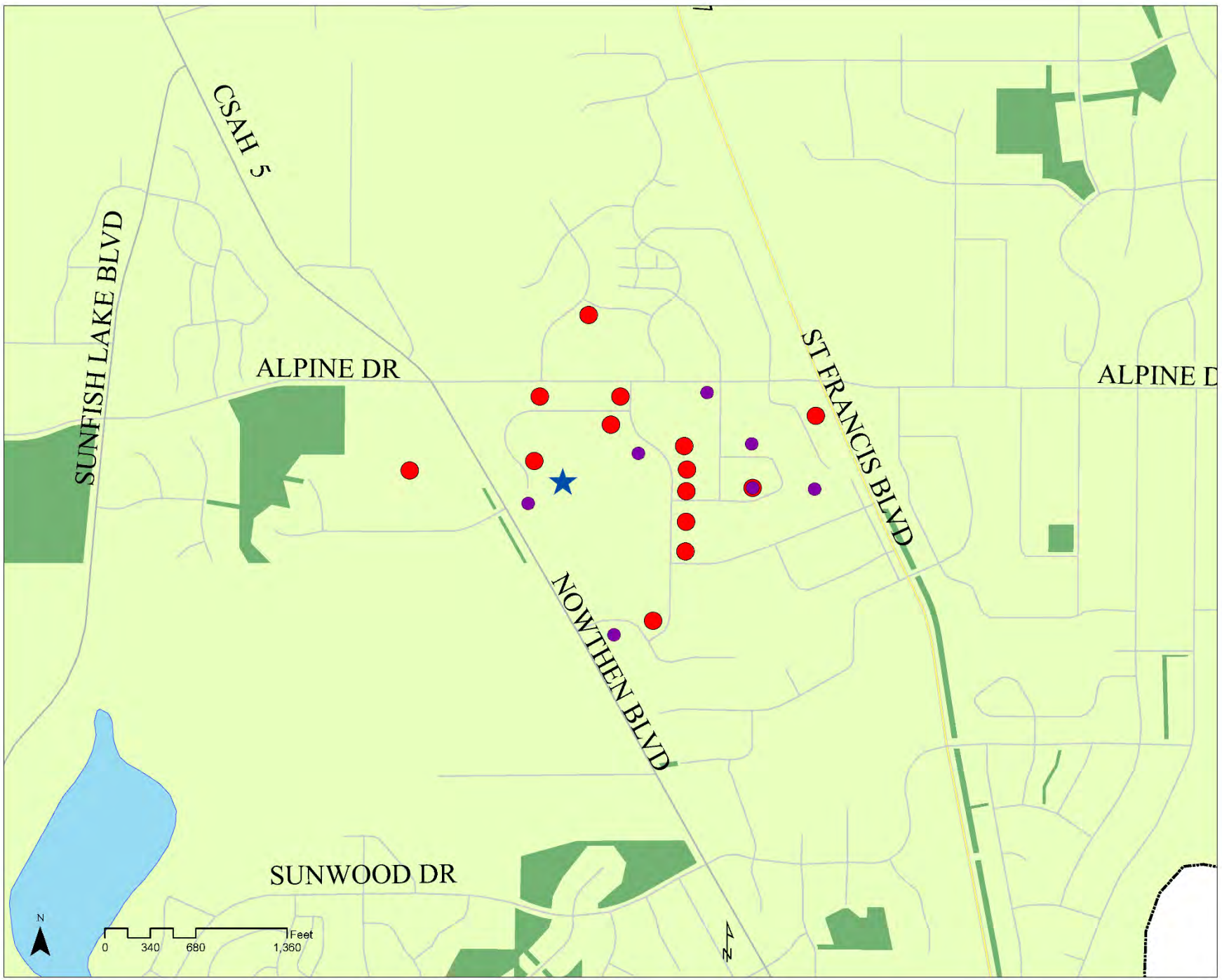
**Former  
Municipal Center**  
*Land Use Open House  
Attendees*





**Former  
Municipal Center**  
*Land Use Open House  
Attendees*

-  Former Municipal Center
-  Submitted Comments
-  Attended Open House



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## PUBLIC VERSION: CONTACT INFORMATION HIDDEN

**EMAIL: 01**

Good Afternoon,

I am contacting you on behalf of a letter I received from the city regarding Old Municipal Center Complex off of Nowthen Blvd and the possibility of building a data center on this subject property. I will be unable to make the open house meeting, but wanted to address a few concerns/inquiries I have.

My knowledge of data centers is fairly more extensive than the average consumer as my employer treats data centers, specifically the cooling towers which are imperative to data center operation. My concerns surround where the cooling towers will be placed and the treatment of those towers.

In some situations, the cooling towers can be placed at ground level surrounded by concrete parameters or inside the facility itself, which would render my concern invalid if this is the case. However, should the cooling towers be placed on the roof of the data center and be improperly treated, the risk of Legionella and Legionnaire's disease, though minimal since it is rare, would be a concern that I have. This disease has the potential to be lethal and can be carried over small distances by wind if the cooling tower(s) is placed on the roof of the building – putting the surrounding homes at risk for exposure. If properly treated, the risk can be monitored and diminished substantially. However, with some facilities that are newly built, the belief is that since the cooling towers are new, they will not need to be treated. This is a falsehood. All cooling towers should have some level of water management, new or old.

I am not opposed to the data center project, but I do urge you to address these two issues with the firm that may be building this facility on the subject property should this project move forward for the safety of the current residents.

Thank you for your time, and should you have any information or questions, please do not hesitate to let me know. I can be reached at the below information, or on my mobile phone at 763-221-2479.

## EMAIL: 02

My first comment regarding the subject property notice is that there is a major error in all the drawings and photos. They all fail to show the extension of 152nd Avenue to Helium Street. That has a major impact on what to do with the property in question.

The idea of housing in that area would put an unbelievable amount of pressure on the 152nd Avenue entry onto Hwy 47. There is a stop sign on 152nd at the frontage road which nobody coming down 152nd stops for now. I can see traffic backing up from 47 totally blocking the intersection at the frontage road. I see cars now pulling out into traffic on 47 when they shouldn't even be thinking about it. It would get much worse after they have waited to get to the highway. Besides that, home coming traffic would all have to use the south entrance to the frontage road which isn't wide enough to handle that kind of traffic. When someone parks a vehicle on the roadway now it barely leaves room to get by. Sometimes vehicles park on both sides which really makes it difficult.

I am definitely in favor of the data center plans. There would be lots fewer vehicles and they would all be contained in the development area. The photos show an attractive campus for the data centers.

Unfortunately I won't be able to attend the April 18th meeting. We will be out of town.

## EMAIL: 03

We received the letter about the property known as the Former Municipal Center Complex and its possible future development. We will not be able to make it to the open house, so we are sending an email.

Our opinion and what we would strongly support and recommend is for the land to be used for public use, specifically a park, and a nice park that is. When we go to other cities, we see that they have beautiful, colorful, big parks in actual neighborhoods. We've always wished there was a great park that Ramsey was known for.

For example, Eden Prairie has many trails and parks. Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, and Maple Grove have many parks. Andover is known for the park on Bunker Lake. What about Ramsey? Ramsey is like a city for business, buildings, and warehouses.

We would even prefer residential homes over a data center. There are other lands where a data center can be at in Ramsey, not in this neighborhood please. The neighborhood is surrounded by homes and town homes. A park would fit right in the neighborhood, not quiet industrial development or a data center. It just doesn't go together. Put the data center elsewhere where it would fit in with other big buildings.

There are many children living in the area. We see children walking around every day and see many school bus stops around our area. We think a park would be great for the community and children here.

There is no close park nearby. We would love a park within walking distance for the neighborhood children as well as our children.

## EMAIL: 04

TO: City of Ramsey

As a 27 year Ramsey resident, I am appalled to hear that the City is contemplating putting an industrial “data center” in a neighborhood of residential property and in my backyard. I cannot believe that one of you would be happy with this type of development in your backyards!!!! We have lived with the City Hall being behind us for as long as we have lived there. However, after discussing this matter with an appraiser, we have been told that a data center will have a much stronger negative impact on our property. A public building like the Ramsey City Hall that only operates 8:00 to 4:30 every day (and basically not at all now) and other than an occasional fire truck or police car, is generally quiet at night is much different than an industrial data center (or whatever other industrial use it would be in the event of the data center becoming “obsolete”). He compared it to 1 train track by your property and now they want to slap 3 train tracks in with more traffic, more noise pollution, etc. Obviously, he said, it will have an impact on the values of the property and lifestyles of the people in the affected neighborhood. This is a building that the City admits will have “noise pollution” issues. See City Council Work Session on February 26, 2013. “Council member Backous (thank you Randy for bringing that up) noted the buildings will require a lot of cooling, which can include fan noise, and asked how sound will be dampened. Management Analyst Brama agreed that noise pollution will be a major component that needs to be addressed through the planning process.” That certainly does not sound like any guarantee that noise would not be a factor. Values would be impacted significantly not only by the noise pollution, the eyesore of the building, but there would also be an increase of traffic on County Road 5 and an entrance next to my property of 30-80 employees, delivery trucks, etc. on a road that is already probably running at capacity.

The appraiser, who is familiar with the area, also stated that there are plenty of opportunities in the City of Ramsey for industrial type buildings. He also stated if this was a private developer asking to do this, the City would laugh them out of the meeting, but because the City owns it and wants to make a ton of money off of the sale of it so they can pay for their fire department, this seems to be okay. This is a dramatic change in use versus the residential area that surrounds the property. There is no other industrial use like that along the entire corridor of County Road 5 other than the school (which is more public than industrial, as was the City Hall), which has been there for 30 years. There is especially no industrial in the middle of a residential area. We have plenty of industrial sites in the City of Ramsey that I can see!!

He said to show him one published article that states that high intensity property next to a low density property (residential) will not have an impact on the residential. My own research also indicates that data centers should be located in non-residential areas. “Locations should be away from residential neighborhoods or other individuals that may be sensitive to noise.” Noise for these climate controlled buildings includes exhaust fan noise, diesel engines running generators in the occasion of a power outage, increased traffic, especially with a road around the perimeter of the building that would bring the traffic next to the residential areas.

My visit to the Elk River facility portrayed in the letter sent to us, shows a much different scenario there. This building is primarily in an industrial area. Everything to the east of the building is industrial (i.e. the Sherburne County Courthouse, Metal Craft business warehouse, Allina Medical Facility, and another warehouse next to this building that has gated access. Houses nearest to it are on a small golf course (Pinewood) and are across a County Road from the building. It is certainly not surrounded by residential property. Not to mention that it is one very huge building, with small pine trees that are about 20 feet apart from each other which could hardly be considered a buffer by any means. And I don't believe that there would be any amount of trees that would buffer your property from the eyesore and the noise pollution of this building.

In addition, a person that I know that lives in Elk River about a ½ of a mile from the data center says her husband can hear the mechanicals (air conditioners and generators) running in the middle of the night. The Ramsey “data center” would be a heck of a lot closer than that to the surrounding residential properties (many of which have just moved into the neighborhood). The Brooklyn Park facility is also a much different scenario. It is on a main highway and is in the middle of nowhere.

I am very concerned with the impact a data center would have on the value of my property and the properties surrounding this area. From my count, there would be at least 46 properties that would be immediately adjacent or looking at the building, with an additional 15 or so that would also be immediately across the street from the adjacent houses with a large majority of them in a new residential development that Ramsey had the influence on where that was built. Many (if not all of them) were shown a drawing, which I have seen, that said there could be a “future middle school” in this location. Ball fields and close location to your kid’s school is a lot different proposal than a huge, industrial, noise polluting warehouse. If one of you voting on this proposal would like to buy our house and live next to the data center, please feel free to contact us. It would be great to get out before our house loses all of its value!!

We cannot attend the open house meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013, due to travel arrangements. Believe me, if I could be there, I would! I have heard that there are other people in the neighborhood riled up about this, so hopefully they will make a presence. I may try to remind them to do that.

## EMAIL: 05

I am writing to you in regards to this evenings meeting on the proposed Data Center on County Road 5 in Ramsey. I am unable to attend this meeting but still want my opinion heard.

We purchased our home in 2002 on the premise that this was a residential area and a great place to raise a family. With the elementary school only blocks away from our home, and plans for a middle school on the opposite side of Cty Rd. 5 this was the ideal neighborhood for us. I do NOT approve of re-zoning, or 'spot zoning' of this property!

"Spot Zoning" - the illegal singling out of a small parcel of land within the limits of an area zoned for particular uses and permitting other uses for that parcel for the special benefit of its owners and to the detriment of the other owners in the area and not as a part of a scheme to benefit the entire area. (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spot%20zoning> )

I am appalled to see that the city is even considering putting an industrial building in the middle of a residential neighborhood. This is completely inappropriate! From the research I've done on Data Centers I have learned that they take a considerable amount of electricity to run as well as keep cool. I've learned that backup generators used in a power outage typically run on diesel fuel which in turn adds air pollution to our area. Also, I have heard that Data centers put off a considerable amount of noise pollution. In addition to all of this we are all very well aware that this will drop our property values considerably. A residential neighborhood is NOT the place for an industrial building. The proposed site literally has houses around the entire perimeter- and houses are still being built! If the city believes a data center is necessary they need to look into areas that are NOT residential. There is an industrial park on Sunwood- wouldn't looking at an area like that, or an area near highway 10 make more sense?

If Ramsey goes forward with such an absurd plan it will show that Ramsey is NOT a family orientated community- but a community of greed- selling property to make a quick buck with no regard to the families it will negatively effect. To the city this may seem like the ideal plan to generate revenue- but again, this is inappropriate. Property values will fall, families will move out of the area, and ultimately the city of Ramsey will suffer the consequences of such a ridiculous plan. I have already heard of several neighbors meeting with relators as they WILL NOT live near such a property. Additionally, I have heard others talking of simply walking away from their homes and letting them go into foreclosure as they know they will never recover the loss of value to their homes. We all know what happens to an area overcome with foreclosures. The city of Ramsey does not need this! I know personally I will begin planning to sell my home if this plan is not rejected and taken off the table immediately! I live in a great neighborhood, with great neighbors, but that will all be over if this plan moves forward. I will not only leave my current home but I will leave Ramsey completely- I do not want to live in a city that has such ill-regard for the families living here.

Thank you for your time and please let me know what has been decided after this evenings meeting, as I will want to move forward with my plans as well.

## EMAIL: 06

As a new resident of Ramsey, and having just moved into the Meadow Creek neighborhood, I was upset at learning that the proposed use for the fire station property is to build a data center. We were informed when shopping for and purchasing a new house in the area that the City's plans for the fire station were a middle school or residential properties. I strongly prefer and support both of those options to the proposed data center.

It is also my understanding that the proposed re-zoning of the fire station property meets the definition of "spot zoning" (see League of Minnesota Cities Information Memo: Zoning Guide for Cities, 2012, pp. 35-36). It also seems reasonable to expect that the value of my property will significantly diminish if a data center is built. As per state regulations, "substantial diminution of value of property may be considered a form of regulatory taking of private property without compensation. In these rare instances, a property owner may be entitled to compensation for damages related to a legislative rezoning" (League of Minnesota Cities Information Memo: Zoning Guide for Cities, 2012, p. 36). It is hard for me to imagine that city council members would support an illegal practice and face potential legal action over their decision.

It also seems that the primary motivation for supporting this proposal is the funding solution for a new fire station. While on the surface this may seem to justify the re-zoning (i.e., furtherance of public welfare), it is difficult to see how reduced residential property values and the lowered quality of life (significant noise and traffic that will be generated by the data center and the eye sore that the building will be) for those in the neighborhood living next to the data center are in the public welfare. I highly doubt any of the city council members would like to have a data center in their backyard for the same reasons of lowered property values and reduced quality of life. It is also hard to imagine how residential zoning isn't preferable and supportive of the public welfare, particularly over the long term.

We were very excited to move into Ramsey, and were excited about establishing Ramsey as our new community. In less than a week of living here, we are confronted with the possibility of facing reduced property values due to the significant noise and traffic that will be generated by the data center and the eye sore that the building will be in the neighborhood. I therefore ask city council members to vote against the proposed data center and consider zoning the property as residential.

## **EMAIL: 07**

I am unable to attend the meeting this evening regarding the absurd planning of placing a data center in the middle of a residential neighborhood.

Obviously I am against such an idiotic idea. I chose to live in Ramsey because of the NEIGHBORHOOD not to live next to a warehouse or any other type of facility. There is not one resident in this area who believes this to be a good idea. If such planning proceeds you can be assured that we will fight this with every legal means necessary.

Please feel free to take these plans and place them next to your house or the house of any other "decision maker" in our city. What would you do then? Would you enjoy the fact that your property values would drop significantly or that families would be leaving this city in droves in a "get out while you can" mentality? That is exactly what is going to happen.

The only logical plan is to build additional residential housing in what is a RESIDENTIAL neighborhood.

### **PHONE CALL/MESSAGE: 01**

Against a data center due to the long term risk and diminishing effect on property values.

### **PHONE CALL/MESSAGE: 02**

Lives just NE of the site. Does not want a data center. Desires a park—thinks the area is underserved. Would choose residential over data center.

### **PHONE CALL/MESSAGE: 03**

For a data center over residential in general. However, does have concerns about noise; and would like to learn more before making a decision.

### **PHONE CALL/MESSAGE: 04**

Called on behalf of his son who lives on east side of Helium facing the site. His son is opposed to a data center and would be in favor of a residential development.

# TIMELINE

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1. **5/24/2013** Notification letter sent to surrounding property owners
2. **5/28/2013** City Council work session receive information (no action)
3. **6/11/2013** City Council regular meeting discussion (direction requested)
  - Consider submitting an application for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to allow for [data center and/or residential development]. Please note: this application will also need to be approved by the Metropolitan Council, if approved by the City Council. Upon completion of that process, the City would need to update its official controls (Zoning Code and Official Zoning Map)
4. **7/18/2013** July Planning Commission review of comp plan amendment
  - Depending on Council direction, this could be for a data center user and/or residential development.
  - Public Hearing
5. **7/23/2013** City Council adopt comp plan amendment resolution
  - Depending on Council direction, this could be for a data center user and/or residential development.
6. **7/24/2013** City submits comp plan amendment resolution to Metropolitan Council
  - Depending on Council direction, this could be for a data center user and/or residential development.

**7. 7/23/2013**

**City Council direct staff to apply for a zoning amendment**

- Depending on Council direction, this could be for a data center user and/or residential development.

**8. 08/01/2013**

**August Planning Commission review of zoning amendment ordinance**

- Depending on Council direction, this could be for a data center user and/or residential development.
- Public Hearing

**9. 8/13/2013**

**City Council introduce zoning amendment ordinance**

- Depending on Council direction, this could be for a data center user and/or residential development.

**10. 8/27/2013**

**City Council adopt zoning amendment ordinance**

- Depending on Council direction, this could be for a data center user and/or residential development.

--subject to change, please visit City website for updated information:

<http://www.cityoframsey.com/formerrmc>

Elk River and Chaska are perhaps the only two cities in the State pursuing data centers. The purpose of this document is to show how other communities have established minimum building setbacks to residential properties (for a data center development).

**ELK RIVER**  
Zoning: 30' set back (in practice minimum 200')



CHASKA  
Zoning: 300' set back



ANOKA  
140' set back  
(In practice—existing building)

