

July 28, 2008

Dan Bartholomay
Program Officer
The McKnight Foundation
710 South Second St., Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Dear Mr. Bartholomay:

On behalf of the City of Ramsey, I am pleased to provide you the final report of Grant No. 05-1237 to the City of Ramsey.

At the same time our community was feeling the effects of the recent economic downturn and receiving its share of bad press, the McKnight-funded Ramsey³ project was a positive force that gave residents the opportunity and vehicle to contemplate what could be rather than dwell on what might have been.

As you know, Ramsey³ is a unique three-part process designed to assist the community in charting its future course. During Ramsey¹ nationally-renowned experts led a series of four public forums and staff/council workshops organized around four critical issues facing metropolitan communities: transportation, innovative zoning, regional intersections, and community ecology. Ramsey² used the innovative technique of Open Space Technology to allow participants to create and manage their own agenda of parallel working sessions around central themes of strategic importance. Most recently, the City completed the final stage--Ramsey³--which used facilitation tools not commonly used by cities to develop a shared vision and explore unique and cutting-edge tools to implement that vision.

Through this process, we have learned to discuss tough or contentious issues in the open, to tackle challenges together, and to talk about what we want for Ramsey rather than what we don't want.

While we had anticipated submitting this final report to the McKnight Foundation in June, we appreciate your flexibility in extending the timeframe so that we might make this report as robust as we felt it deserved. The attached report describes in detail the activities of the Ramsey³ process and the way in which this process has successfully and fundamentally changed the way the City connects with its residents. In addition to the descriptive portion of the report, we also provided a "Lessons Learned" section. From the beginning it was our hope that our experience might serve as a model or provide information useful other communities facing similar issues as Ramsey. Thus, we believe that some reflection on the project's challenges as well as the elements contributing to our success is essential.

Finally, although this report contains a detailed narrative of the Ramsey³ project, we also are in the process of compiling a supplemental resource book that contains items such as speaker's bios and contact information, community announcements and invitations, OST convening guides, etc. We would

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be happy to make this resource available to the McKnight Foundation upon request.

Again, on behalf of the City of Ramsey, I thank you and the McKnight Foundation for giving us the opportunity to explore new and innovative ways to engage Ramsey residents in planning for the future of our community through the Ramsey3 project.

Sincerely,

Kurt Ulrich
City Administrator
City of Ramsey

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**FINAL REPORT
GRANT No. 05-1237
CITY OF RAMSEY
RAMSEY³**

PREFACE

Six years ago Ramsey³ started in a deserted fire station parking lot after a work session between City Council and the Planning Commission. What grew from that conversation in the dusk near a cornfield became what one consultant has termed “the most extensive citizen involvement process of any community in the metro area working on its Comprehensive Plan.”

What follows is the story of that process, a process that could not have taken place without the collaboration and generosity of the McKnight Foundation. We offer this story in part to fulfill the grant’s requirement of a final report, but also in the spirit of the process which drove the grant and McKnight’s funding decision. We also offer it as a story we believe can help other communities.

Because we wanted the story to be as complete as possible, this report is a bit lengthier than a typical final report. Along with the usual data about results, we include examples of resources used by the process, reference materials we found helpful, and offer a supplemental “scrapbook” of program materials.

The story these materials tell is of a quiet revolution in which a still-in-process dramatic change took place in our community that moved us from a place where there was suspicion of-- and even hostility toward-- city government, to a place where, as a long-time resident put it, “This is the most together I have seen this city and I have lived here since 1944.”

We sometimes referred to this revolution as “Reinventing the Suburb.” When most people think of such a phrase they tend to evoke a mental model that focuses on design and appearance. While these are a crucial part of what we have and hope to accomplish, the most important lesson we learned is that true reinvention is a process that, above all, is about citizen involvement.

Robert Putnam explored this dimension of the American suburb in his book Bowling Alone and in more detailed statistical studies he and his research team have conducted on what they term “associational density,” by which they mean civic engagement. What they have found is an ominous decline in associational density, particularly in suburban America, a development they believe poses a serious challenge for American democracy.

Ramsey³ believes that “Reinventing the Suburb” is not so much about cul-de-sacs as it is about nurturing processes that increase citizen involvement in decision-making. While we have not yet reached the point Putnam would like to see, we believe our quiet revolution has taken a huge step in that direction. The term “paradigm shift” is used too easily these days, but for Ramsey we truly are in the midst changing what Peter Senge terms the “mental model” of community.

The participants in the Ramsey³ process, while of diverse backgrounds and views, all are in firm agreement that the City can no longer go back to the old paradigm. Where the city will be a year or even a decade from now we can not predict, but perhaps the most dramatic outcome of this grant lies in the fact that the community no longer fears or is skeptical about the future. Instead we embrace it.

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We deeply appreciate the Foundation's faith in our community that has brought about this dramatic change. We offer to aid the Foundation in any way we can to help other communities.

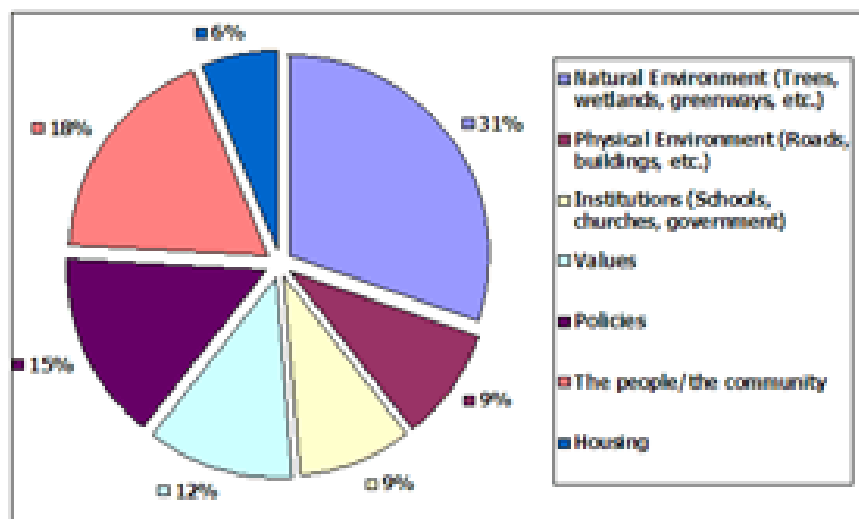
Ramsey¹

The Web Site

Prior to the Forums, the project constructed an extensive website to enable communication between project participants and also to host a community blog that would introduce the project, house a “library” of background documents and also allow for residents to comment on community issues. More than just a repository of information, the web site allowed people to access to information anytime of the day and forums to express themselves when other commitments do not allow them to attend. This technology greatly enhanced the effectiveness, efficiency and overall acceptance of project activities and findings.

Without the website, it is doubtful the early stages of the project would have been successful. By allowing the steering group to exchange ideas and information it became a “virtual meeting” site that greatly reduced the time and inconvenience of scheduling meetings. For example, the website served as the major vehicle for discussions on structuring the forums and identifying speakers. The steering group could easily circulate information about potential speakers, quickly update each other on details such as cost and timing for the speakers, and circulate drafts of the invitations for each session.

The second major effort grew from preliminary online discussions with consultant Michael Herman about the upcoming Open Space Technology sessions. Herman suggested that the starting point for those sessions should be for residents to identify what they thought were the five best things about Ramsey. The web site allowed Ramsey residents to fill out the survey online and also post the results as they arrived. This allowed Ramsey³ to combine survey and focus group methodology in a more open and efficient manner.



The document library housed a variety of resources on community planning that most Ramsey residents had not seen. The site also posted links to the websites of various groups such as the Congress for New Urbanism. Documents included: [Conservation Easements - Guidelines](#), [Environmental Corridors - “Lifelines for Living”](#), [PPS Scoring Guidelines - Maple Grove Scoring Methodology for New](#)

[Developments, MUSA Change Guidelines - Met Council, Natural Resources Systems - Design Models
Natural and Cultural Resources Community Protection Strategies Checklists](#)

The blog came to serve as a place for residents to voice their concerns about the city and the upcoming comp plan process. Although a great many of these issues were widely known in the community, the blog allowed for a freer discussion of them than had formerly been possible.

The Forums

In the spring of 2007, the City of Ramsey hosted a series of four community forums structured around critical issues facing Ramsey and the region. The forums brought in four national experts to discuss Regional Intersections, Community Ecology, Innovative Zoning, and Transportation Alternatives. The city was also quite successful in attracting cosponsors from around the Twin Cities region to help publicize the events and increase regional capacity.

Ramsey³ publicized these events through the web site, through the community newsletter, through appearances by city staff and officials at local meetings, and through a city-wide mailing. The speakers also provided an extensive list of background materials for the forums that was posted on the web site.

Each forum attracted approximately 50 people, who ranged from city commission members to citizens that had not previously been engaged in city affairs. It was especially gratifying to see participation from residents, officials, and policy makers from communities in Sherburne, Hennepin, and Anoka Counties.

Background discussions with all the speakers stressed the use of the term “forum” to describe these events, for the proposal envisioned the forums as an open exchange of ideas between experts and the public. It was extremely important to encourage this dialogue so that those attending could more fully discuss their questions and concerns.

Scheduled with each forum was a minimum of half a day for the guest experts to meet with public works, engineering, public safety and city planning staff, council and commission members for training on the concepts, tools and processes presented by forum leaders.

Finally, staff videotaped each session and broadcast them over Quad Cities TV, a community cable channel serving the cities of Ramsey, Anoka, Andover, and Champlin. These videotapes are available through the City of Ramsey.

The dates and speakers of each forum are:

February 8, 2007	Regional Intersections	Dan Marckel, CURA, Minneapolis, MN
February 22, 2007	Community Ecology	Douglas Farr, Farr Associates, Chicago, IL
March 29, 2007	Innovative Zoning	Leslie Oberholtzer, Farr Associates, Chicago, IL
April 12, 2007	Transportation Alternatives	Dan Burden, Walkable Communities, Orlando, FL

The following pages recap the proceedings of each forum.



Forum: Regional Intersections
Date: February 8, 2007
Speaker: Dan Marckel, CURA, Minneapolis, MN
Cosponsor: Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
Attendance: 49

Dan Marckel of the Center of Urban and Regional Affairs led off the forums with an engaging discussion of current trends facing communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan region and ways that communities can balance their local needs with these regional demands. Marckel first reviewed regional growth trends and the forces that drive them, illustrating his presentation with data and examples from the Edge Project. Using examples from communities in the region that face the same issues as Ramsey, he then moved on to describe possible future scenarios for the Twin Cities region, reviewing how cities can address these trends through the use of innovative development principles and zoning alternatives.

The discussion with participants focused on the inevitability of growth, the pros and cons of urban and rural living, and the role of Met Council in determining Ramsey's future.

Forum: Community Ecology
Date: February 22, 2007
Speaker: Douglas Farr, Farr Associates,
Chicago, IL
Cosponsors: Embrace Open Space
Minnesota Land Trust
The Trust for Public Land
Attendance: 52

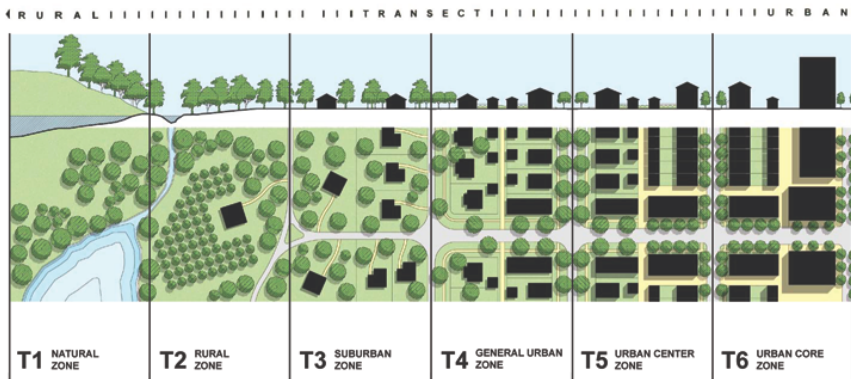


Douglas Farr, a nationally known architect and leader in green design, headlined the second forum. Farr prompted a spirited discussion by suggesting that Ramsey's current development patterns, namely large-lot development, can not be sustained because of their long-term impacts on the environment. Farr reviewed the impact of sprawl and offered alternatives such as New Urbanism's transect model, as well as the concepts of trading density for open space and walkability. Using examples from communities around the country, Farr introduced the group to the concept of LEED-ND, which utilizes the principles of green building design and applies to them to neighborhoods and communities to reduce their environmental footprint.

Mr. Farr also met with City staff to demonstrate the use of LEED-ND principles by reviewing recently approved subdivisions and discussing design alternatives.

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Farr’s purposely provocative presentation created a lively and sometimes contentious discussion of growth, automobile dependency, global warming, density policy, and the legacy we will leave for future generations.



Forum: Innovative Zoning
Date: March 29, 2007
Speaker: Leslie Oberholtzer,
 Farr Associates,
 Chicago, IL
Attendance: 46

The purpose of this session was to introduce the Ramsey community to

new tools and techniques related to community design. Ms. Oberholtzer’s presentation focused particularly on the concept of transect zoning and form based codes. After touring the city, Oberholtzer offered transect zoning as a means to grow while preserving the community’s rural areas. Form based codes offer a way to plan for a certain visual aesthetic rather than focus solely on numbers of units per acre.

Like her colleague Doug Farr, Ms. Oberholtzer’s presentation evoked strong reactions from the audience. Several felt uncomfortable with the tenets of New Urbanism. Others believed that not enough of the presentation focused on rural lifestyles as an alternative. This led to a larger, more important discussion of Ramsey’s future land use and design.

Forum: Transportation Alternatives
Date: April 12, 2007
Speaker: Dan Burden, Walkable Communities,
 Orlando, FL
Co-sponsor: Transit for Livable Communities
Attendance: 44



The final speaker, Dan Burden of Walkable Communities, gave a passionate and more informal presentation that was well-received by the participants. The picture to the right captures Burden’s style which involved sitting with the audience rather than merely speaking from a podium. Burden took a holistic approach to transportation, discussing the intersections between transportation, neighborhood design and community vision. In this sense, Burden’s presentation book-ended well with that of Marckel because both speakers used local examples and an interdisciplinary approach. The more informal style of both speakers also resonated well with those attending, resulting in some important and lively discussions. Burden truly energized those who attended, forming an excellent transition to the next phase of the project.

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On his own, Burden arrived a day early in order to tour the city and gather local information and photos for use in his presentation. These Ramsey-based examples powerfully illustrated potential traffic access and mobility solutions, links between transportation and land use, and the importance of a multi-modal approach towards transportation. His method involved taking existing examples from Ramsey, then presenting several alternatives to how they could be improved using either overlays on the Ramsey slides or examples from other communities. This allowed residents to actually see the possibilities of alternative transportation plans for their own city.

Burden also spent several hours with City staff, including the Public Works Director, to review the current state of Ramsey's transportation infrastructure and offer specific suggestions for improvements.

RESULTS:

Participants: The forums more than met the goal of introducing residents to new ideas along with encouraging frank discussions. Dan Marckel commented that in his experience, the heated debates that the sessions aroused are probably the best indication of the success of the forums. Ramsey³'s goal for these sessions was to open a window to trends and ideas from around the country, setting the table for a true smorgasbord of innovations. People found some of these appetizing and others not to their liking. The most important result was for residents to see that they are not alone-- communities throughout the country are wrestling with the same questions and issues as Ramsey. They also learned that other communities are not afraid to dream innovative ideas. One resident was so encouraged that she even remarked at the end of one of the forums that she would never look at Ramsey the same way again.

The city also learned which presentation formats and speaking styles worked best for our community, which should help us to choose speakers for future community events and forums. A more informal style with content grounded in local examples proved to be the best combination.

Staff:

While the project proposal had anticipated the forums would prove valuable for staff, the results far exceeded expectations. Staff believed the forums gave them new energy and desire for innovation. For Ramsey's staff this extra time provided extensive professional development and training that would not have been possible without these forums.

An even more unexpected benefit was that the forum speakers took an active interest in the community, with several of them touring Ramsey with city staff and providing specific comments about community development and ideas for future possibilities. Marckel, Farr, Oberholtzer and Burden made suggestions that Ramsey expects will grow into more innovative plans.

Ramsey truly thanks the Foundation for funding these forums, for they allowed the community to explore areas few communities have had an opportunity to visit. The forums provided Ramsey with the opportunity to enlist some of the world's best urban designers to serve as consultants to our city.

As a result, Ramsey feels an obligation to share what we have learned. The final report will be one vehicle, but city staff have already begun to share ideas with other cities at conferences and professional meetings. Ramsey will be considering other vehicles to share ideas as part of the project's final phase.

Ramsey²

Open Space Technology

The four forums fostered discussion and debate that prepared the community for a series of community-wide discussions using Open Space Technology. Michael Herman of Chicago, IL, internationally-known teacher and practitioner of Open Space Technology (OST), served as the consultant for this phase of the project.

Successfully employed for over 20 years in a variety of settings, OST has proven particularly valuable in situations where participants need to have ownership of the process. Herman, for example, came to Ramsey not long after conducting OST sessions between the warring factions in Nepal that had resulted in a cease fire to a long-standing civil conflict.

The success of OST hinges on the “invitation” that is extended to potential participants. These invitations are framed as open-ended questions that require community consensus which is reached through small group discussions that focus on creating consensus. Because of the importance of the initial invitation, several phone conversations were conducted with Herman to carefully frame the Ramsey² invitation. In addition Herman provided staff and the Ramsey³ steering committee with a guide and checklist he has developed for planning OST sessions. The extensive checklist included everything from audio/visual needs to the number of marking pens and flip charts. Without this checklist, planning would have been a great deal more difficult.

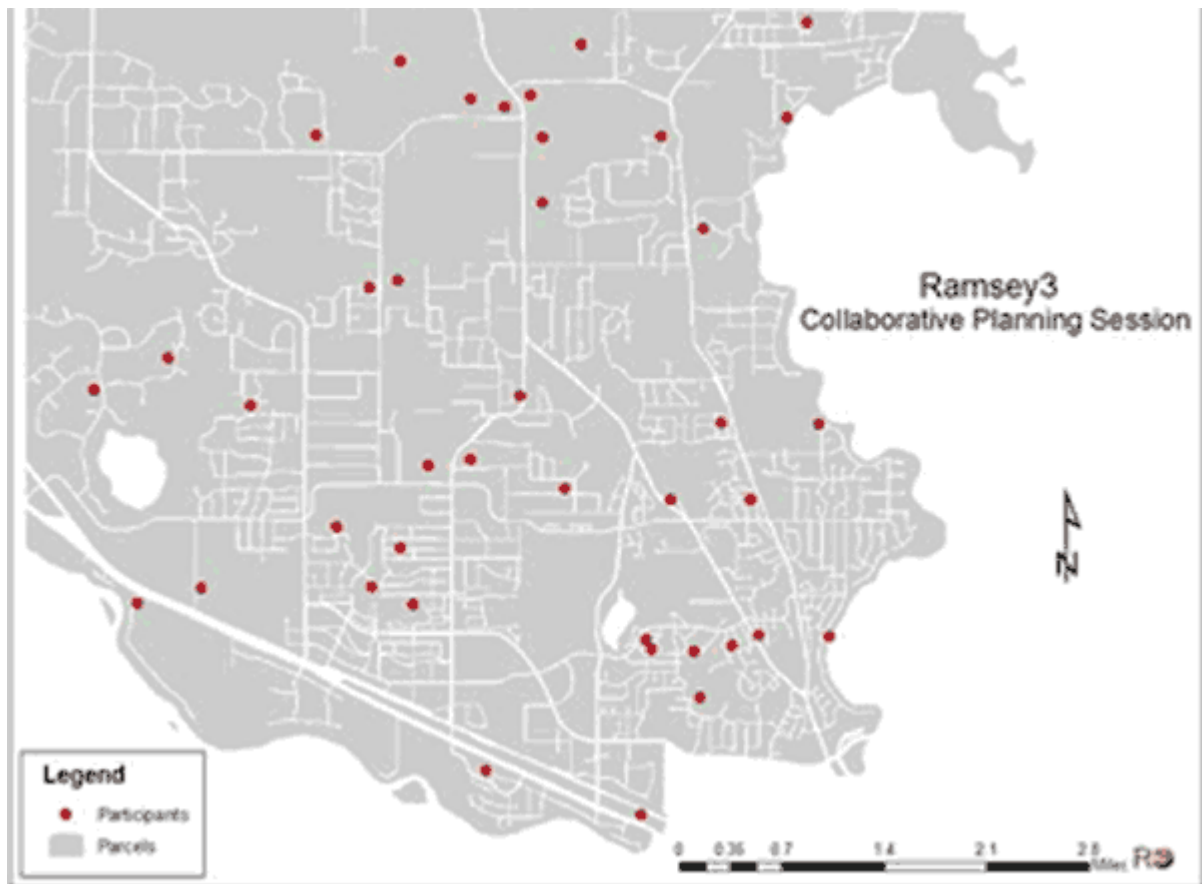
In the preliminary conversations with Herman, the project planning group discussed timing, topics and even the proper place to hold the sessions. OST has proven particularly effective when participants have a large block of time to address a problem. A major concern was how to balance the need for this uninterrupted time with how many hours residents could reasonably commit. The final decision involved opening with a Friday evening, all-day Saturday event followed by a series of evening events. This initial session would serve to define the topics for the further sessions.

Another issue centered on the timing of these follow-up sessions, which involved a compromise between scheduling them so closely that it curtailed attendance and so far apart that energy was lost. Minnesotans’ uncertain summer schedules made this difficult.

Michael Herman convened the initial OST session on Friday evening, May 4th and Saturday, May 5th to discuss the invitation question: “What do you want in our backyard?” The invitation is attached to this report. More than sixty people attended the two-day session. They included city staff and Council members, Planning and Park Commissioners, city residents who had attended the forums, and people who had not attended the forums. The session even attracted people from neighboring communities. Many of those attending were city activists who had been involved in various community issues, while others had never attended a single city meeting.

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The graphic below shows the wide distribution of city residents participating in the initial OST sessions:



After the participants framed the agenda by identifying critical issues, citizen-led small group discussions took place over the two days. These produced a draft of guiding principles. The OST event was so successful that the steering committee decided to hold a second session on June 22 and 23rd. On Friday, June 22nd, Mr. Herman conducted “OST training” for interested Ramsey residents and staff to utilize in their own neighborhoods and for dealing with contentious issues. On the following day, the community continued the discussion begun in May. From the two discussions, the community created a draft of eight key issues that will guide the City during the Comprehensive Plan update.

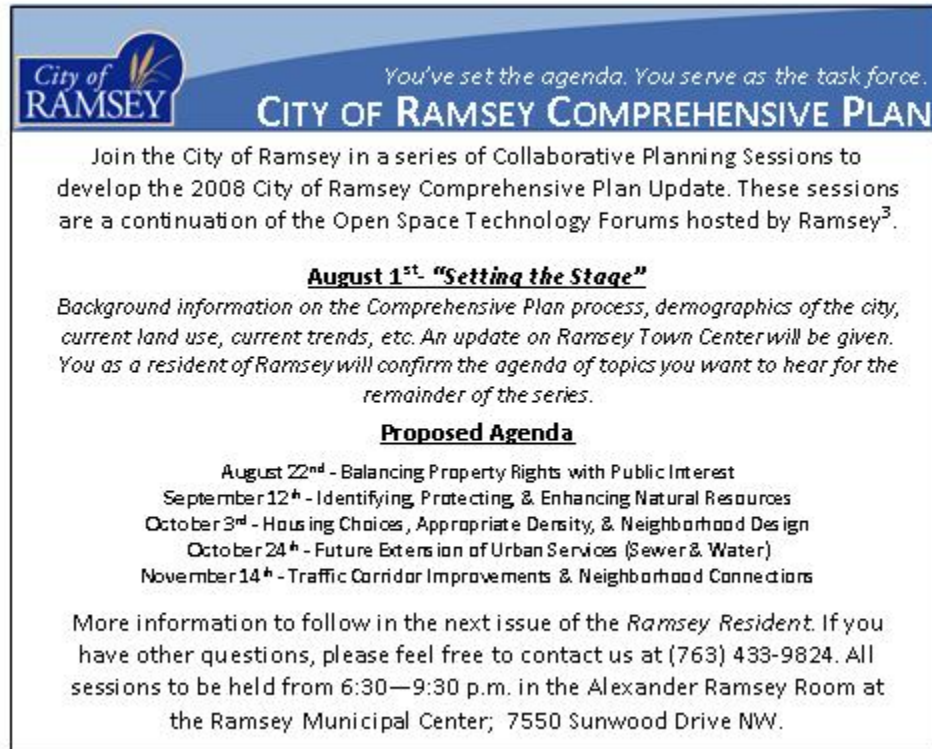
Seven OST events designed around one or more of the issues, followed the initial sessions. These events were facilitated by the City staff employing the techniques learned as part of the May and June OST sessions conducted by Michael Herman.

Below is a listing of the OST Visioning sessions:

- August 1st – Introduction to Community Planning
- August 22nd - Balancing Property Rights with the Public Interest
- September 12th - Identifying, Protecting, and Enhancing Our Natural Resources
- October 3rd - Housing Choices, Appropriate Density & Neighborhood Design

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October 24th - Future Extension of Urban Services (Sewer & Water)
November 14th - Traffic Corridor Improvements & Neighborhood Connections
December 5th - Visioning and Marketing of Ramsey



The flyer features the City of Ramsey logo on the left and the slogan "You've set the agenda. You serve as the task force." on the right. The main title is "CITY OF RAMSEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN". The text invites residents to join collaborative planning sessions for the 2008 plan update. It highlights the August 1st session, "Setting the Stage", which provides background information and allows residents to set the agenda for the remaining sessions. A list of proposed agenda items follows, including balancing property rights, natural resources, housing choices, and future urban services. Contact information and session details are provided at the bottom.

City of RAMSEY You've set the agenda. You serve as the task force.
CITY OF RAMSEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Join the City of Ramsey in a series of Collaborative Planning Sessions to develop the 2008 City of Ramsey Comprehensive Plan Update. These sessions are a continuation of the Open Space Technology Forums hosted by Ramsey³.

August 1st - "Setting the Stage"
Background information on the Comprehensive Plan process, demographics of the city, current land use, current trends, etc. An update on Ramsey Town Center will be given. You as a resident of Ramsey will confirm the agenda of topics you want to hear for the remainder of the series.

Proposed Agenda

- August 22nd - Balancing Property Rights with Public Interest
- September 12th - Identifying, Protecting, & Enhancing Natural Resources
- October 3rd - Housing Choices, Appropriate Density, & Neighborhood Design
- October 24th - Future Extension of Urban Services (Sewer & Water)
- November 14th - Traffic Corridor Improvements & Neighborhood Connections

More information to follow in the next issue of the *Ramsey Resident*. If you have other questions, please feel free to contact us at (763) 433-9824. All sessions to be held from 6:30—9:30 p.m. in the Alexander Ramsey Room at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW.

RESULTS:

Perhaps one Ramsey resident, who has long been an opponent of many initiatives, put it best during the conclusion of one of the latter OST sessions. "I feel we have our city back." While the proposal had envisioned the OST process would serve as a more open and empowering method than the usual focus groups, public hearings and other typical planning methodologies, its impact went far beyond that. It is safe to say, Ramsey will never be the same again. The community has discovered a way to allow for citizen input that truly is respectful of ideas and imposes no preconditions or structure.

As an example of how important the process has become to the city, Engineering staff considering the routing of a city street used OST to facilitate the discussion. Thus, the City now has a format for citizens to understand the complexities of issues and contribute to any discussion and solution in a positive way. Staff and Council are committed to using OST routinely for future development and policy discussions. This is not to say that Ramsey does not have more to learn about the process. One particularly vexing issue was that some residents viewed OST as a "brainstorming" process rather than a process designed to reach consensus. Several groups fell into a process of voting that is counter to the principles of OST.

Ramsey³ also needed to deal with the issue of expertise for the sessions, because residents sometimes felt they did not have enough knowledge to fully deal with an issue. Michael Herman pointed out that much of

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the reason for this lies in the framing of the invitation: you only ask people to do what they are capable of doing. Another concern was that some residents took advantage of the openness of the format to confront staff and council about other issues. Facilitators had to announce ground rules that prohibited such discussions. The OST sessions also had an issue with urging people to keep proper notes that reflected the discussions. This became less of a problem as participants came to understand that the notes functioned as the action documents for the sessions.

Michael Herman generously offered to debrief the planning group by phone after each session which greatly helped us to deal with these issues. He assured us that the issues the process had encountered were common with communities learning OST and in fact healthy signs that the process was working.

Ramsey's pioneering of OST for community planning has elicited great interest in the area and the city looks forward to being able to help other communities use the process. Quite frankly, the city feels it is the best way for communities to deal with contentious issues because it allows everyone a voice—even to the point of organizing the agenda—and also is designed to move people towards consensus rather than contention.

Ramsey³

Scoping Process

The Process:

The final step in the R³ project was a scoping process, the outcome of which was a workable vision and framework for the City's future development.

This final step was overseen by a working group of 25 participants appointed by the City Council and including members of city staff and City Council, commission members and others representing major stakeholders in the city. Specifically, the group consisted of:

- The four members of the R3 Steering Committee:
- Two city staff
- One additional Council member (chosen by Council)
- One additional Planning Commission member (chosen by the commission)
- Two members from Parks and Environmental Policy (one chosen from each)
- One Developer who lives in the city chosen by staff and council.
- Six Neighborhood Representatives: These were chosen by staff and council from a list of neighborhood activists who have organized neighborhood efforts.
- Four OST Group Leaders: These were chosen by council from participants at the OST sessions and leaders of OST discussions to represent diverse points of view.
- Two Local Business Owners: These were chosen by Council from a list prepared by staff and the Ramsey³ group.

The City identified Dan Marckel as the main consultant to help with the final phase. Dan's knowledge of planning and the Twin Cities area proved invaluable for this final step. Marckel already had established an excellent rapport with city residents who attended his forum session, which received the highest ratings. Marckel also continued to attend the OST sessions and so had first-hand knowledge of what occurred in these discussions and who attended.

The final evaluation of Marckel's efforts probably was best expressed by a Working Group member who, at the final session, suggested Ramsey offer him the "key to the City."

Refine the OST-based Vision Statement

Due to changes in city staff and scheduling conflicts, the scoping sessions began in April, a bit later than we initially expected. The Working Group, however, chose to schedule extra meeting and work long hours in order to get the work done on time.

The results of the OST process were in notes recorded by the discussion leaders for each session. In order to turn these notes into a clear and concise vision, the scoping used AtlasTI, a hermeneutic analysis program developed in Germany and generally acknowledged as one of the main programs used by researchers for qualitative analysis.

In an article in Sociological Research Online, “Choosing Quantitative Data Analysis Software,” Christine Barry notes AtlasTI’s strength is “its simplicity of operation. It is easy to grasp what it does and how it works.”

Using the Atlas list, participants culled down the almost 200 codes groups into code families and what were termed “components” of the vision. To accomplish this we initially used a process known as “rapid OST” which allows for participants to come to consensus in a relatively short time. However, this method proved too cumbersome and we switched to using a variation of Nominal Group Technique using weighted voting to prune down the components and their ingredients.

To help participants visualize the process we used the following visual.

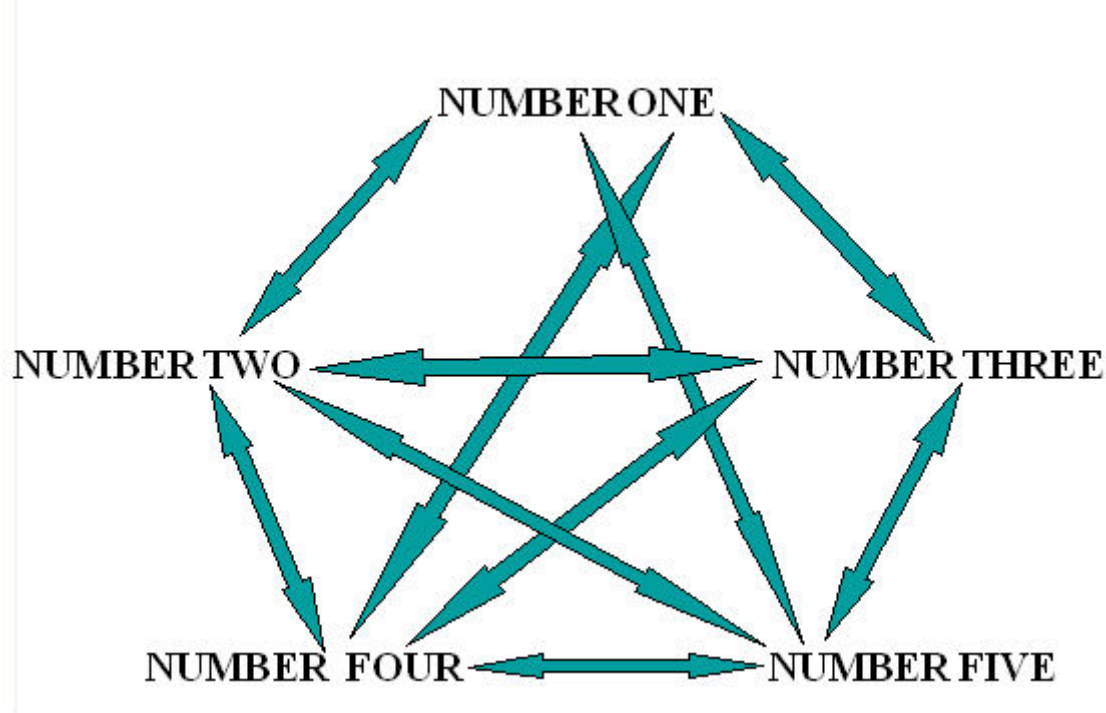
The Ramsey³ Visioning Process Graphic Representation



This graphic illustrated the process as a pyramid in which we moved from the broad base provided by the extensive citizen participation in the OST process, to the code families that were identified using Atlas, to the vision components the group gleaned from the Atlas analysis, to the visioning process, the affirmation of share values by the group and the community, and finally evaluation and the vision itself.

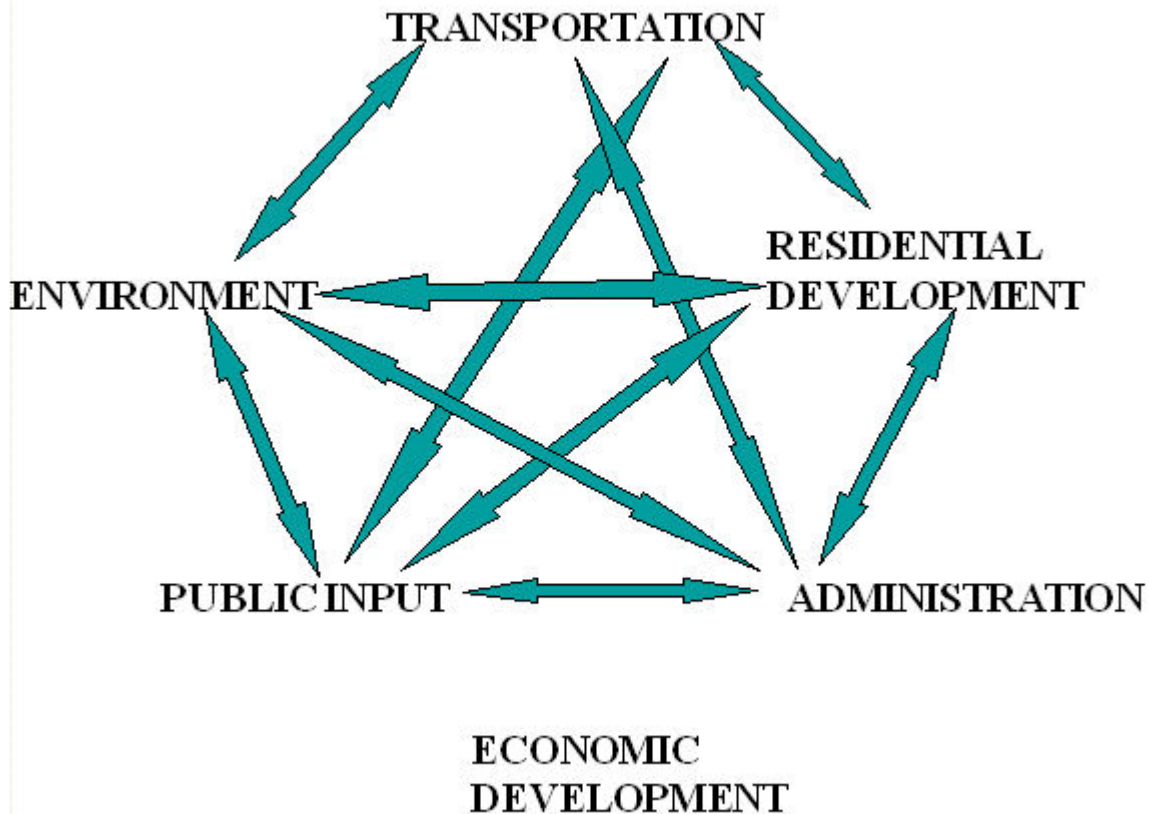
The circular arrows beside the final two steps reflect our view that visioning is an ongoing, organic process in which the City constantly will be reexamining the relevance of its vision and refining it. We realize that in this rapidly changing world, that while the core of the vision must serve as a “North Star” to guide the City through these changes, we also must be prepared to alter the course of journey when necessary.

To explain the components of the vision we used the following diagram.



This diagram emphasized that the vision components needed to be interrelated. We also initially strove to limit the number of components to five to prevent the generation of a lengthy list and to force people to both prioritize and, when possible, combine components.

The group worked using stacks of cards with the original codes and families to class them into five components. After the first session the group produced the following diagram, which shows the components the group identified. As became our practice, all decisions were made by consensus. Everyone in the group had to agree with the final choice of components.



You will notice we added economic development as a sixth component. There was some discussion about whether residential and economic development should be separate or together, with the group finally deciding to leave them separate to emphasize the importance of economic development.

Similarly some group members wanted to merge administration and public input, but after some discussion the consensus was to leave them as separate components.

Vision Value Statements

Under each component group members then brainstormed the various possible value statements that could be used to describe them. We first used the Rapid OST process for this task, but later moved to using a program called Inspiration.

The original list of value statements is included in the Appendix. As those documents demonstrate, the brainstorming produced a wealth of good ideas. In fact, our initial problem became trying to reduce and prioritize these. The Inspiration program was useful to enable the group to see that each list basically broke down into two large areas—philosophy and strategy or implementation.

Using weighted voting, we narrowed down the list of value statements over several meetings. This was difficult work for the participants, but their dedication was truly remarkable as they worked through three-hour meetings to get the list refined to one the entire group could agree on. This list also is attached in the Appendix.

Create a checklist of the specific core objectives

The next task became to refine these value statements into specific checklist. The group was able to take this quite far, but in the end, we ended up designating a smaller group of staff, Dan Markel, and Steering Committee member Will Thompsen (who has considerable experience with city planning) to refine the vision statements into a checklist.

Create and Refine a City Vision Statement

The group also agreed on a vision statement for the City. While it is still in the process of final wordsmithing, it reads:

Without compromising private property rights and the needs of future generations, Ramsey will evolve through citizen driven, collaborative processes that respect the balance and connectivity between its unique urban, rural and natural environments.

This statement is supplemented by a list of supporting values that also are included in the Appendix.

Explore Alternative Zoning Practices

Dan Marckel guided the group through this part of the process, outlining the alternatives available and their strengths and weaknesses. The components and vision statement served to focus the discussion, while the evaluation process will assist City staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council in future land use policy decisions.

Marckel brought the participants a variety of examples of current practices in the Twin Cities region and elsewhere. He began with the Euclidean zoning that has governed city codes for more than three generations, then explained some of the alternatives that have emerged in recent years including Smart Growth, the New Urbanism, Formed-Based Codes, and the points system used by cities such as Maple Grove. Marckel outlined what analysts have seen as the strengths and weaknesses of each method, doing so in such a way that did not bias the presentation towards one method or another.

The Work Group then discussed what they saw as the strengths and weaknesses of each method. The results of this discussion are summarized in the following table.

Zoning Option	Advantage	Disadvantage
Euclidian	Separates (compartmentalizes) noxious uses	Too restrictive
	Consistent/reliable	Not exhaustive
	Known/have it -----	----->
	Common sense	
PUD	More flexible	Less rigor
Smart Growth	Consider regional role/place	Have to be dense
	Encourage collaboration	All or nothing

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		Mandated
New Urbanism	Neighborhood, high standards	Can be expensive
	Community, walkability	Elitist
	Place, amenities	More restrictive
	More restrictive	No space for boat/toys
	More planful-efficiency/benefits	Need to be planful/takes effort
	Can be used w/conventional development	
Form-based Codes	Emphasis on form	Requires up front work
	Could be part of PUD	Too rigid to accommodate underlying changes

In the end, the group concluded that Ramsey needed a combination of these approaches to avoid something too proscriptive and inflexible.

What they favored was a “smorgasbord” approach that took from the best of each of the new alternative zoning ideas and applied them to parts of the city where they might best work. For example, a New Urbanist development might be appropriate in some area of the City but not necessary in all. In articulating this, the group affirmed the transect concept that is gaining much attention among planners. Ramsey may prove a particularly fertile ground for this concept because we range from the New Urbanist concept of the Town Center to the rural farming areas north of Trott Brook.

Review By a Larger Group of Citizens Using OST.

In a three-hour evening session lead by Michael Herman Ramsey invited all citizens to attend an OST session to review the draft vision document drawn up by the Work Group. Most of those attending this session had attended one of the earlier OST sessions held the previous summer, reinforcing that this method of collaborative decision-making is one trusted by citizens because it is citizen lead.

Herman began the session by having the Work Group review what it had accomplished and presenting the draft to them. A “library table” at the rear of the room also contained preliminary drafts from the Work Group sessions as well as key City documents such as the current Comprehensive Plan, City Code Book, and a map of the city. A staff member served as a resource for the “library” for those who had questions. Because of experiences the previous summer when citizens sometimes used this as an opportunity to address personal issues not related to OST session, citizens were asked to defer these questions to discuss with staff privately.

Herman then “opened the space” to those who wished to raise issues or comment on the draft document. Two of these sessions were held within the three-hour time limit.

At the conclusion of the evening the entire group met to review the draft document and comment about the issues raised. Perhaps the most gratifying aspect of this final evening was the dramatic change from a year ago. While there were still differences among participants, the atmosphere of the session was one

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of discussion and respect rather than sometimes antagonistic and even disrespectful interchanges that had occurred before.

As each participant in the talking circle made their comments, many of them reflected on the changes that Ramsey³ had brought to the city. Some talked of a new spirit of collaboration and respect that had developed. Others mentioned how they no longer saw staff as adversaries or “tools” of developers.

Final Thoughts by Participants

Several key themes ran through that final meeting. First, as several people openly commented Ramsey will never be the same again. While it is obviously still too early to evaluate the long-term impact of the project, its short term impact was clear to many. As one put it, “We have our city back.”

A second theme was that citizens are learning to communicate as opposed to pontificate. The public hearing process and many routine city functions such as Planning Commission and Council meetings dealing with specific issues or projects tend to encourage people to use the microphone as a soap box to advance personal agendas. Others come with a “not in my back yard” attitude. This tends to encourage confrontation rather than collaboration. This project proposed and nurtured an alternative means of communication. This is a profound cultural shift in the way cities normally do business, but the comments of the participants in this project and, more pointedly, their own behavior, suggests that an alternative paradigm exists, one that is based on collaboration, not conflict, one that is based on communication not confrontation. In short, Ramsey citizens are learning to talk with one another.

We harbor no illusions that this paradigm shift will instantly transform the city or even that over the long term that it will succeed, but those who attended that last evening told us that they had seen an alternative to “business as usual” and that they embraced it.

A third theme that emerged was that citizen involvement is meaningless unless it truly has a process to involve citizens. There is not a city in America that does not honestly harbor a belief in citizen involvement. Our democracy began at the local level, with hundreds of “liberty trees” and community groups. Yet, in the past few decades, for various reasons, there is little doubt that city government and citizen participation have become problematical.

Harvard professor Robert Putnam, the author of the best-selling *Bowling Alone* has studied what he terms civic engagement for several decades and has found that over the last few decades it has steadily deteriorated. One of the major findings of this project is that the old processes no longer work. So-called public hearings, for example, have deteriorated into public confrontations. While OST and some of the other processes used by this project may not be THE answer, they suggest that this country needs to explore new way of empowering citizens at the local level. If democracy began at the local level, then that is where democracy will be preserved and even reborn. In the end this project reminds us that democracy is nurtured one citizen and one community at a time; that there are no formulas, no consultants’ quick fixes and packaged methodologies. One participant at the final session put it well, “I hope I never see any more of those silly dots again!”

Final Steps: Comp Plan

Based on the experience of this project, when the Comp Plan is reviewed by the community three types of groups will emerge, each with a different set of concerns. The first, and probably the major one, will be individuals and neighborhood groups that will object to a particular proposed land use, transportation corridor, or city sewer and water which will directly impact their neighborhoods.

This project has taught Ramsey that the City needs to be proactive about this possibility so that each of these neighborhood issues can be resolved using more collaborative decision-making. This will mean writing invitations, publicizing them for the entire community (so that neighborhood "A" sees what neighborhood "B" is doing and draws some connections and also sees the city is being proactive) AND publishing the notes of those conversations.

These neighborhood discussions will not only speed up the comp plan but also plant the seed of collaborative decision-making throughout the City. In the coming weeks Ramsey will explore the possibility of facilitating these local sessions.

The final OST session generated some ideas for how to facilitate this including the Ramsey Resident which is mailed out to all households, the city web site, and the mass transit stop. One resident suggested moving the City's electronic sign from the Old City Hall site to a more convenient location near the City's new Municipal Center.

There will also be larger comp plan issues that cross neighborhood lines, but fall under general areas of the comp plan (for example sewer and water). The City also needs to be proactive about these issues. Finally, there is the most difficult task of all--integrating the metrics of the checklist, the results of the visioning sessions and the comp plan.

Certainly the comp plan will generate enough discussion that it will provide a real window of opportunity to accomplish the kind of citizen involvement everyone envisioned at the end of the project.

In the long run this "trio" of invitation types then becomes a template for future discussions. The City will have a process for dealing with neighborhood issues, task forces/groups working on larger issues such as Town Center and perhaps a third, visionary group.

Lessons Learned

1. Have the Right Team: A good planning team is like a team in any sport, it needs a variety of people with a variety of skills. These include: writing and communications, technology, planning methodologies and experience, team building. The team should have between 3-7 members as the core group. Any fewer and the work does not get done; any more and there are too many voices. We found that as team members' schedules tended to get overwhelmed having five members on the team meant that someone could always be free to pick up whatever needed to be done.

2. Have the Right Tools: There are a variety of planning tools and techniques out there, but the most important part of the process is to match the tool to the task. Too many consultants or groups operate with a set methodology or approach which may work at some times, but not others. As someone put it to the consultants working on the comp plan, but not this project, "Don't ever show me any of those dots again." A subrule might be to "use the Internet." Our web site enabled us to collaborate much more effectively.

3. Have Collaboration with City Staff and Council: This project would have never succeeded without the blessing of both staff and council. Council allowed staff to serve as the City's voice in the project. There was little micromanaging. Staff could not have been more supportive. They worked overtime many nights on project meetings and always made sure that whatever was needed was made available.

4. Don't Be Afraid to Fail or Change Course: In the third part we had planned on using more open methods such as rapid Open Space, but the group preferred the structure and speed of weighted voting with Nominal Group Technique. This puts more of the pressure for success on the facilitator, but does move the process faster.

5. Have the Right Experts: The consultants who worked with this project all had one thing in common—none of them were preachers. The difference between consultants who preach and those who teach is extremely important for the success of a project like this. Our consultants all saw their role as teaching the community about planning ideas and then letting them make the choices.

6. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate: More projects fail because of lack of communication than any other reason. Looking back on the times when this project had the most difficulty, almost all of those problems could be traced back to imperfect communication.

7. Meet Frequently and "Git Er Done": Originally we did not want to burn out community members by scheduling meeting too close together, but we found that especially in Part 3, we made the most progress when we met once a week with the idea of getting done what needed to be done. To ask for commitment on this level requires a very detailed agenda with explanations of why tasks are necessary. The Open Space Sessions last Summer may have suffered from being held too far apart. Momentum had to be rebuilt if the time between sessions was longer than two weeks.

8. Honor Everyone: As fans of the famous Henry Fonda movie, "Twelve Angry Men" can testify, sometimes it is the holdout, the lone voice who may be the voice of reason. This is why trying to work

towards consensus is important. Even when we used weighted voting, those who had voted for items that did not end up on the final list were allowed to present their case. The jury analogy is not a bad one to follow.

9. Make Blockers Play By the Rules: All projects have blockers and this one was no exception. One example was a person whose tactic was to try to monopolize the floor and talk everyone to death. We had in place rules that limited the ability of one person to dominate the floor.

10. Use the Talking Circle: Michael Herman taught us to end each meeting, by passing a talking stick to each person seated around a circle, giving everyone a chance to comment on what had happened.

11. Estimating Time and Resources: It is easy to underestimate the amount of time, effort and resources that will be required. Critical considerations include: people turnover WILL happen and there is an associated lag time for learning curves and differences in personal perspectives, the more volunteer time used for project execution the more time is required (vs. contracting), stakeholder (eg., city staff, council, project steering team, and consultants) alignment for project objectives and tasks is key and requires more time than anticipated.

12. Developing a Working Process is VERY Different than an End-Use Document: The objective of this grant, essentially creating a process for developing working tools for strategic development and analysis of a town is very different and much more complex than creating an end use document. By its nature, this process must be able to incorporate a myriad of factors both in its development and for continued use and modification.

Future Steps

1. Refinement of Checklist Matrix: Staff, members of Ramsey³, and consultant Dan Markel all would like to take the final results of the project to their next logical step which is to generate a matrix based on the final visioning documents that will refine and quantify the checklist items into a document that can be used to evaluate how well potential projects or policies fulfill the vision. Since this is a task suited more to professionals than the citizen group that formed the core of Ramsey³ it will be undertaken by staff and others with city planning expertise.

2. Combining the Vision with the Comprehensive Plan: Private consultants have been proceeding with the Comprehensive Planning Process on a parallel track with Ramsey³. In August the visioning and checklist documents will be combined with the draft comp plan and discussed in a work session with Council and the Planning Commission. This will be followed by a series of public hearings.

3. Providing for a More Permanent Citizen Involvement Process: Among the chief components of the vision document is the provision for a more collaborative citizen involvement process. While Open Space Technology is the logical choice is a major ingredient for this process, staff and Council will need to develop a systematic process for this citizen involvement.

Conclusions

Like many communities, Ramsey faces the difficult task of reconciling the feelings of residents who oppose further development with landowners who wish to sell their large lots for development. We believe the process we pioneered along with the commitment of city residents to it, will not necessarily eliminate these conflicts but they will allow us to deal with them without the rancor and suspicion of the past.

This project helped us to envision our future through a process that no other city in the Metro area has undertaken. That process succeeded well beyond our initial expectations. We believe the process we used could have broad application for other communities in the region. However, we stress that the process needs to be systemic. It requires that city staff and decision-makers commit to processes, methodologies, and tools that are unfamiliar to most of them.

They must understand that what we have come to call the Ramsey³ Process involves a complex and interrelated series of ingredients. Above all, it requires staff who are willing to “let go” of traditional control and open up the process. We in Ramsey were extremely fortunate to have Patrick Trudgeon as the lead staff member through most of this process. It is to Pat and what he represented that we dedicate this final report

Most of all, the City and people of Ramsey deeply appreciate the McKnight Foundation’s assistance in allowing us to reach this vision.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: CODING OF OST SESSIONS

OST CODE FAMILIES AS GENERATED BY ATLAS

HU: OST

File: [E:\OSTanalysis\OST]

Edited by: Super

Date/Time: 01/16/08 05:43:38 PM

Code Families

Code Family: affordable housing

Created: 01/04/08 11:38:23 PM (Super)

Codes (1)

[affordable]

Code Family: agriculture

Created: 01/05/08 12:32:20 AM (Super)

Codes (8)

[buy farm as incubator] [do we allow farm animals] [healthy organic food grown locally] [how do we compensate farmer for land value lost to development] [how do we integrate agricultural land into city] [implement farmers market] [is it important to have agriculture in city limits] [small farms as business developments]

Code Family: attract high income residents/developments

Created: 01/04/08 11:39:17 PM (Super)

Codes (2)

[incentive for high end housing] [upscale housing/business]

Code Family: changes, amendments

Created: 01/05/08 01:04:04 AM (Super)

Codes (2)

[amendment process] [deviation should be hard]

Code Family: commercial/business

Created: 01/05/08 12:50:13 AM (Super)

Codes (8)

[be a destination] [enhance community value through proper commercial] [expand sustainable economic development] [local jobs for youth/seniors] [make it easy to do business here] [needs chamber of commerce] [TIF financing not sustainable] [upscale housing/business]

Code Family: communications technology
Created: 01/04/08 11:40:03 PM (Super)

Codes (1)

[wifi, wimax infrastructure]

Code Family: compatibility with existing neighborhoods
Created: 01/04/08 11:42:09 PM (Super)

Codes (5)

[compatible with existing neighborhoods] [little regard for existing adjoining uses] [match existing neighborhoods] [new development should not change character of existing neighborhood] [preserve integrity of existing neighborhoods]

Code Family: decision making
Created: 01/05/08 10:22:02 AM (Super)

Codes (4)

[development review should include neighbors] [how can I be heard] [inform and include lesser stakeholders in decision process] [residents make decisions on their property]

Code Family: density transition
Created: 01/03/08 01:57:16 PM (Super)

Codes (8)

[density transitioning been perverted] [gradual transitioning] [how do we connect neighborhoods without compromising natural resources] [little regard for existing adjoining uses] [long term density transition plan] [match existing neighborhoods] [screening not density transition] [transition equals size of lots]

Code Family: design standards

Created: 01/04/08 11:44:54 PM (Super)

Codes (3)

[design standards for rural feel] [different architectural designs] [quality construction control]

Code Family: development policy

Created: 01/05/08 09:47:31 AM (Super)

Codes (20)

[allowing growth] [capture best practices] [clustered vs spread out] [covenants should govern first then zoning laws in force at the time land was bought] [create neighborhoods where people can live work and play within walking distance] [density credits to preserve natural areas] [development review should include neighbors] [disclosure made to buyers of future uses] [don't make existing residents pay for sewer and water] [funds available to compensate for taking] [incorporate open space in development] [integrate what already exists] [is Trott Brook a boundary] [new development should not change character of existing neighborhood] [new developments should contain local water] [residents make decisions on their property] [residents should be allowed to petition against sewer and water going past their homes] [two acre lots are good] [urban development should respect rural] [who pays]

Code Family: environment

Created: 01/05/08 12:40:46 AM (Super)

Codes (17)

[attractive high quality natural environment] [density credits to preserve natural areas] [educate landowner on how to protect and maintain natural resources] [evaluate opportunities along rivers] [habitat preservation] [incorporate Anoka county greenway corridor plan] [inventory what we have] [manage invasives] [preserve and protect natural resources] [reduce negative environmental impact] [respect natural features] [respect our waterways] [save natural resources] [tree city] [we are unique in natural resources] [wildlife] [wildlife corridors]

Code Family: get rid of 4 in 40
Created: 01/04/08 11:50:35 PM (Super)

Codes (2)
[get rid of 4 in 40] [no 4 in 40]

Code Family: highway 10
Created: 01/04/08 11:49:13 PM (Super)

Codes (3)
[examples of what not to do highway 10] [wayside rest on highway 10] [we hate highway 10]

Code Family: marketing
Created: 01/05/08 10:27:10 AM (Super)

Codes (7)
[be a destination] [become a destination] [how do we market Ramsey] [image perception of Ramsey] [marketing not a city function] [what is city's motto] [who is promoting Ramsey]

Code Family: Mississippi bridge
Created: 01/04/08 11:41:02 PM (Super)

Codes (1)
[bridge]

Code Family: Northstar
Created: 01/04/08 11:51:38 PM (Super)

Codes (2)
[impact of Northstar] [leverage Northstar]

Code Family: open space
Created: 01/05/08 12:17:34 AM (Super)

Codes (6)
[access to open space] [funding open space] [incorporate open

space in development] [maintain green spaces] [preserve park open space] [wild, open space]

Code Family: parks

Created: 01/04/08 11:52:49 PM (Super)

Codes (5)

[larger park with more diverse activities] [more parking at parks] [passive and active recreational spaces] [preserve park open space] [variety of uses in parks]

Code Family: property rights

Created: 01/04/08 11:48:25 PM (Super)

Codes (5)

[don't infringe on property rights] [must consider others property rights] [property rights not infringed] [respect landowner rights] [zoning to protect current property owners]

Code Family: roads

Created: 01/05/08 12:22:15 AM (Super)

Codes (12)

[all streets have sidewalks on one side] [do we accept higher levels of traffic or lower levels of service] [east-west traffic] [extend 63 west] [get 63 up to par] [how do transportation corridors look] [more four way stops] [Ramsey Blvd at Bunker and Sunwood] [signage and driving aids] [traffic control on Armstrong] [upgrade road standards to 9 ton] [utilize 161st as extension/collector road]

Code Family: rural character of city

Created: 01/05/08 09:48:14 AM (Super)

Codes (12)

[attractive high quality natural environment] [design standards for rural feel] [keep rural] [mix of urban rural] [neighbors not too close] [our rural vision] [rural] [rural feel] [rural feel/lifestyle along with urban planning] [rural landscaping] [space, wetlands uniqueness of Ramsey] [urban development should respect rural]

Code Family: safety/safe neighborhoods
Created: 01/05/08 09:55:31 AM (Super)

Codes (3)

[all streets have sidewalks on one side] [ordinance changes should not threaten public safety, environment, transportation] [safe neighborhoods]

Code Family: sidewalks
Created: 01/04/08 11:40:45 PM (Super)

Codes (2)

[all streets have sidewalks on one side] [better sidewalk system leading to schools]

Code Family: town center
Created: 01/05/08 12:15:37 AM (Super)

Codes (2)

[town center plans and uses] [town center promise of density in highway 10]

Code Family: townhouses
Created: 01/05/08 12:16:09 AM (Super)

Codes (2)

[townhomes not nice] [townhouses seem to be everywhere]

Code Family: trail system
Created: 01/04/08 11:43:56 PM (Super)

Codes (9)

[complete trail system] [connectivity to existing trails] [different trails for different use] [hiking paths four feet wide] [trail growth] [trails] [trails-separate uses] [trails through natural spaces] [update trail system]

Code Family: transportation

Created: 01/05/08 12:26:36 AM (Super)

Comment:

Codes (3)

[how do transportation corridors look] [more transportation options] [reduce transportation impact]

Code Family: variety of housing

Created: 01/05/08 12:36:24 AM (Super)

Comment:

Codes (4)

[diversity] [home ownership reasonable mix] [life cycle housing] [maintain diversity of housing]

Code Family: vision

Created: 01/05/08 10:10:18 AM (Super)

Codes (29)

[attractive high quality natural environment] [be a destination] [become a destination] [comp plan prove benefit for all] [comp plan reflect founding principles of our country] [create neighborhoods where people can live work and play within walking distance] [diversity] [don't chase the carrot] [enable mix of uses] [evoke small town feel] [family friendly neighborhoods] [fine as it is] [I like density] [image perception of Ramsey] [incorporate existing values] [keep rural] [mix of urban rural] [multiple uses] [needs something other communities don't have] [our rural vision] [right mix of developed, undeveloped preserved] [run Ramsey as a business] [rural feel/lifestyle along with urban planning] [space, wetlands uniqueness of Ramsey] [vision of Ramsey natural resources] [walking community] [watch out for the hook] [we need a shared vision] [what is city's motto]

Code Family: walkability

Created: 01/05/08 12:56:28 AM (Super)

Codes (4)

[create neighborhoods where people can live work and play within walking distance] [not enough safe walkways] [walking community] [walking paths]

Code Family: water quantity

Created: 01/05/08 10:07:04 AM (Super)

Codes (2)

[explore water preservation alternatives] [water quantity]

Code Family: wetlands

Created: 01/03/08 02:02:38 PM (Super)

Codes (8)

[allow greater density to make up for nonuse of wetlands] [effect on wetlands] [if wetlands used for public how to compensate] [just compensation to preserve wetlands] [repeal wetland buffer ordinance] [tax wetlands at different rate than buildable land] [wetlands have value and should remain] [wetlands losing quality]

Code Family: zoning

Created: 01/05/08 10:16:06 AM (Super)

Codes (9)

[allow greater density to make up for nonuse of wetlands] [covenants should govern first then zoning laws in force at the time land was bought] [establish method of compensation when restricting property use] [form-based street level] [ordinance changes should not threaten public safety, environment, transportation] [review purpose of PUD] [zoning laws should be fair consistent and reliable] [zoning laws should protect the homeowner] [zoning to protect current property owners]

OST CODES AS GENERATED BY ATLAS

|HU: OST
File: [E:\OSTanalysis\OST]
Edited by: Super
Date/Time: 01/14/08 11:45:34 PM

Code-Filter: All
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access to open space
affordable
affordable housing
agriculture
all streets have sidewalks on one side
allow greater density to make up for nonuse of wetlands
allowing growth
amendment process
attract high income residents
attractive high quality natural environment
back policy with data
be a destination
become a destination
better sidewalk system leading to schools
bridge
buy farm as incubator
capture best practices
changes, amendments
city should pay for existing park or open space
clustered vs spread out
commercial, business
communications technology
community garden
comp plan prove benefit for all
comp plan reflect founding principles of our country
compatibility with existing neighborhoods
compatible with existing neighborhoods
complete trail system
connectivity to existing trails
consistent with environment
contiguous wetlands
covenants should govern first then zoning laws in force at the time land was bought
create neighborhoods where people can live work and play within walking distance
creative landscaping to provide screening
decision making
density credits to preserve natural areas
density should be flexible
density transitioning been perverted
design standards
design standards for rural feel
development policy
development review should include neighbors

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deviation should be hard
different architectural designs
different trails for different use
disclosure made to buyers of future uses
discuss approaches with neighboring communities
diversity
do we accept higher levels of traffic or lower levels of service
do we allow farm animals
don't chase the carrot
don't infringe on property rights
don't make existing residents pay for sewer and water
don't trump individual rights
east-west traffic
educate landowner on how to protect and maintain natural resources
education
education program
effect on wetlands
enable mix of uses
enforce our existing ordinances
enhance community value through proper commercial
environment
establish method of compensation when restricting property use
evaluate opportunities along rivers
evoke small town feel
examples of what not to do highway 10
expand existing corridors
expand sustainable economic development
explore water preservation alternatives
extend 63 west
family friendly neighborhoods
fine as it is
form-based street level
forum to participate
funding open space
funds available to compensate for taking
Future possibilities
get 63 up to par
get rid of 4 and 40
get rid of 4 in 40
gradual transitioning
habitat preservation
healthy organic food grown locally
highway 10
hiking paths four feet wide
home ownership reasonable mix
housing
housing density should be reduced
how can I b e heard
how do transportation corridors look
how do we compensate farmer for land value lost to development
how do we connect neighborhoods without compromising natural resources
how do we integrate agricultural land into city
how do we market Ramsey
I like density
identify best opportunities

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if wetlands used for public how to compensate
image perception of Ramsey
impact of Northstar
implement farmers market
incentive for high end housing
incorporate Anoka county greenway corridor plan
incorporate existing values
incorporate open space in development
inform and include lesser stakeholders in decision process
information
infrastructure for alternative fuels
integrate what already exists
interconnections
inventory what we have
is it important to have agriculture in city limits
is Trott Brook a boundary
just compensation to preserve wetlands
keep rural
larger park with more diverse activities
leverage Northstar
life cycle housing
little regard for existing adjoining uses
local jobs for youth/seniors
long term density transition plan
maintain diversity of housing
maintain green spaces
make it easy to do business here
manage invasives
marketing
marketing not a city function
match existing neighborhoods
Mississippi bridge
mix of urban rural
modify density transition
more four way stops
more parking at parks
more transportation options
multiple uses
must consider others property rights
need more attention to street level
needs chamber of commerce
needs something other communities don't have
neighborhoods
neighbors not too close
new development should not change character of existing neighborhood
new developments should contain local water
no 4 in 40
Northstar
not Coon Rapids
not enough safe walkways
open space
ordinance changes should not threaten public safety, environment, transportation
our rural vision
parks
partner with Kelley farm

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passive and active recreational spaces
plan for community as a whole
preserve and protect natural resources
preserve corridors during development
preserve integrity of existing neighborhoods
preserve long-term resident's rights
preserve park open space
property rights
property rights not infringed
protect those who live here already
quality construction control
Ramsey Blvd at Bunker and Sunwood
reduce negative environmental impact
reduce transportation impact
repeal wetland buffer ordinance
residents make decisions on their property
residents should be allowed to petition against sewer and water going past their homes
respect landowner rights
respect natural features
respect our waterways
review purpose of PUD
right mix of developed, undeveloped preserved roads
roads should have pull outs at scenic spots
roundabouts
run Ramsey as a business
rural
rural character
rural feel
rural feel/lifestyle along with urban planning
rural landscaping
safe neighborhoods
safety/safe neighborhoods
save natural resources
screening not density transition
sidewalks
signage and driving aids
small farms as business developments
space, wetlands uniqueness of Ramsey
spot zoning hurts someone
tax wetlands at different rate than buildable land
thing that contribute to public safety and necessity
TIF financing not sustainable
town center
town center plans and uses
town center promise of density in highway 10
townhomes not nice
townhomes retail centralized
townhouses
townhouses seem to be everywhere
traffic control on Armstrong
trail growth
trail system
trails

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trails-separate uses
trails through natural spaces
transition equals size of lots
transportation
tree city
two acre lots are good
update trail system
upgrade road standards to 9 ton
upscale housing/business
urban development should respect rural
use Ramsey newsletter
utilize 161st as extension/collector road
variety of appearances
variety of housing
variety of uses in parks
vision
vision of Ramsey natural resources
walkability
walking community
walking paths
watch out for the hook
water quantity
wayside rest on highway 10
we are unique in natural resources
we hate highway 10
we need a shared vision
wetlands
wetlands have value and should remain
wetlands losing quality
what is city's motto
who is promoting Ramsey
who pays
wifi, wimax infrastructure
wild, open space
wildlife
wildlife corridors
zoning
zoning laws should be fair consistent and reliable
zoning laws should protect the homeowner
zoning to protect current property

**APPENDIX II:
VISIONING PROCESS
DRAFT SESSIONS NOTES**

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Philosophy/Principles

Walkability

- Ramsey should encourage the development of real neighborhoods where everyone is within walking distance of essential needs—shopping, recreation.

Property Rights

- Land owner rights have to be maintained.

Long Term Perspective

- Residential development should continue with long-term perspective. New developments, when mature, should be aesthetically “timeless” and respect a desire for community, walkability, sustainability.

Balance/variety

- The City of Ramsey should provide a balance in the type of housing within the city. **SIMILAR TO:**
- Important to maintain a balance of high quality, yet diverse housing stock. **AND**
- A justifiable mix of housing that meets the needs of all residents today and tomorrow. **AND**
- Variety of housing.
- A unique mixture of modern convenience along with rural charm.
- High density residential development balanced by larger lot development
- The City of Ramsey should calculate a percentage of low income to high income homes and styling to be allowed, so as to not allow one value to dominate our community.

Strategies/Process/Policy (How do we carry out principles?)

Density

- Density credits to preserve natural areas.
- Focus on high density in “urban” areas and lower density (acreage) in the “rural” areas.

Regulation

- A means or process that allows the community to express advantage and disadvantages for all proposed residential development.
- Residential neighborhoods should fit in with existing neighborhoods.

Other

- Higher value homes
- Better planning

COMMERCIAL/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Philosophy/Principles

- Ramsey should create strong, sustainable economic development by fostering business growth and establishment in the city.
- A business atmosphere that represents the character of Ramsey, both rural and family orientation.
- Commercial development should support the entire community. It should seek to provide good jobs and provide a variety of family friendly entertainment.
- All commercial development must outline and incorporate other component values.
- Attract and retain high-quality industrial and commercial business, which will create higher paying jobs and increased tax base.
- Business establishment and growth will foster Ramsey's place as a destination in the north metro.

Strategies/Process (How do we carry out principles?)

- Try incentives for business. **SORT OF LIKE:**
- Make it easy to do business here.
- Expand sustainable economic development.
- Commercial development is logistically planned for maximal use of rail and highway arteries, with minimal residential, environmental and traffic impacts.
- Commercial development concentrated within the urban service area.
- Ramsey should integrate commercial within residential development.
- Ramsey absolutely needs a Chamber of Commerce to find and develop business! with great diversity
- Ramsey should have a long-term commercial development plan that recognizes the city's one unique commercial asset—the internet backbone on Highway 10.

Other

- Well-planned commercial park.
- Fulfill the original vision of Ramsey Town Center.

ENVIRONMENT

Philosophy/Principles

Preservation/protection

- Our city will have the preservation of the environment as a foundational value for the community, its residents and future developments. **SIMILAR TO:**
- Ramsey should preserve and protect the unique natural resources it has.
- Preservation of natural resources should be a priority as the city works toward responsible development
- Our environmental resources are preserved and enhanced by an ongoing process that involves all the stakeholders.
- Ramsey will be a leader in the preservation of the natural resources within the city and its surrounding communities.
- Maintain and preserve green space and environment is critical to the growth of Ramsey.

Property Rights

- Restrictions of property rights shall be compensated.

Strategies/Process (How do we carry out principles?)

Policy

- Environmental policy must be made through sound peer-reviewed science.
- Public access to the variety of natural resources should be established whenever new development is considered and maintained where it already exists.
- Ramsey should require all developments to preserve at least 20% for open space.
- Develop existing parks and areas for greater community use.
- Environmental efforts should be methodical and deliberate. Don't rush to solve the latest problems overnight. Always seek win-win and respect the need for both environmental sustainability and emotional sustainability.

Compensation

- Just compensation to preserve wetlands. **SIMILAR TO:**
- Compensate property owners for wetland and open space.

Education

- "This city should be well educated and want every environmental effort that is made by the local government." **SIMILAR TO:**
- Educate public on environment.

TRANSPORTATION

Philosophy/Principles

Variety

- Ramsey will be a leader in bringing alternative forms of transportation to the community and surrounding cities.
- The city should plan with multimodal connections as an integral part of every development.
- Ramsey should develop and enhance a variety of transportation.
- Ramsey should provide for life-cycle transportation that provides multiple alternatives to reach a destination. Life-cycle = maintenance.
- Light rail will provide a step in the direction of “un-noticed” transportation. All efforts should embrace the reality of growth and use that opportunity to get it right from the beginning.

Walkability

- Walkability

Safety

- All existing and future transportation will focus on safety.

Roads and Bridges

- Roads and bridges shall be a priority.
- Trails, trains, park(ing?) should be secondary to roads and bridges

Strategies/Process (How do we carry out principles?)

Design

- Focus on Highway 10 redevelopment and Northstar for east-west travel, redesign of Highway 47 for north-south travel, and trails, sidewalks for walkability and connectivity.
- Developments should provide options that encourage non-motorized transportation.
- Design roads that allow free travel of vehicles to and from business to residential. (question written by someone else on this card: “What is ‘free travel?’”)
- Work with mass transit and rideshare programs.

Corridors

- Plan ahead for good transportation corridors.
- Work with adjoining communities to plan for transportation corridors.

Trail connections

- Connections(?) to existing trails.
- Utilize novel approaches to acquire and protect trail lands for the residents.

ADMINISTRATION

Philosophy/Principles

- City code will strive to encompass the majority of issues for the betterment of the whole community.
- Zoning and ordinances should work to guide development responsibly without dictating unnecessarily.
- Administration should be approachable and good at teaching (added by someone else: "...this isn't done.")
- Fair, thoughtful and respectful governance of policy, rights, and code.

Strategies/Process (How do we carry out principles?)

Communication

- City shall provide progress forums and receive feedback.
- Residents should be provided with clear information regarding all aspects of being a citizen – both expectations of them and services for them.
- Keep yourself informed on city assessments. (speaking to the city staff?)
- Get yourself involved. (speaking to the city staff?)

Zoning

- Zoning laws should be made that aren't as flexible to achieve a higher standard of living.
- Zoning laws should be fair, consistent and reliable. **SIMILAR TO:**
- Zoning should be consistent and preserve individual liberty.
- Zoning laws should scrap existing Euclidian zoning..
- Allow greater density to make up for non-use of wetlands.

Enforcement

- Our city will enforce the critical transitions between changes in density, commercial/residential and rural interfaces.
- Any changes to the comprehensive plan shall require a 2/3 majority of council.

PUBLIC VISIONING/INVOLVEMENT

Philosophy/Principles

Involvement/Communication

- Strive to increase public involvement. Embrace – don't fear it.
- All city decisions should actively involve those affected through the use of _____?
- Our public input forums will maintain the rural character on which the city was founded.
- Communicate with residents – give the residents a voice.
- We respect all views and opinions and strive for a process where everyone can be heard (adopt Open Space Technology)

Other

- Be a destination.
- The city should work toward unifying its residents-businesses-neighborhoods-school districts and social classes

Strategies/Process (How do we carry out principles?)

- Regular forums should be provided that facilitate a cooperative interaction between staff, commissions, residents, and council. **SIMILAR TO:**
- The city should hold periodic Open Space meetings to assess the vision and relevance of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Always seek to provide education before weighing input from residents.
- Use technology along with multiple forums to collect opinions while also informing residents.

Visioning

- Need a better way to make visioning of city.
- Develop a plan looking ahead.

Other

- Create neighborhoods where people can live, work and play within walking distance.

**VISIONING PROCESS:
FINAL DRAFT BEFORE OST SESSION**

RAMSEY VISIONING

THE VISION:

Without compromising private property rights and the needs of future generations, Ramsey will evolve through citizen driven, collaborative processes that respect the balance and connectivity between its unique urban, rural and natural environments.

THE VALUES:

- I. Encourage walkability through pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and transportation.**
- II. Maintain land owner rights.**
- III. Employ careful foresight in city planning that includes citizen review, reliance on peer-reviewed science, and comprehensive data collection and analysis.**
- IV. Involve all citizens in decisions that impact their lives, property and neighborhoods through the use of a facilitated process such as collaborative decision-making.**
- V. Embrace a people-centered, long-term perspective that nurtures neighborhood and community interactions and meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**
- VI. Preserve unique natural resources for the community, its residents and future developments.**
- VII. Attract and sustain businesses should serve the whole community.**

CHECKLIST TO GUIDE REVIEW OF ZONING ALTERNATIVES AND FUTURE PLANING

COMPONENT I: COMMERCIAL/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- a) **Attract and retain high-quality industrial and commercial businesses that create higher paying jobs for local residents and increase Ramsey's tax base.**
- b) **Concentrate larger commercial/industrial development within MUSA while encouraging smaller neighborhood commercial nodes in more rural areas**
- c) **Plan business development for maximal use of rail and highway arteries with minimal residential, environmental and traffic impacts**

COMPONENT II: ENVIRONMENT

- a) **Balance protection of environmental resources for future generations with property rights while providing just compensation.**
- b) **Allow for identifying and maintaining open/green space and preservation of unique natural resources.**
- c) **Ensure that residents have access to parks and open space within walking distance.**

COMPONENT III: TRANSPORTATION

- a) **Create vehicular and non-vehicular linkages to neighboring communities and between city neighborhoods, trails, recreation, work and shopping.**
- b) **Emphasize consideration of non-vehicular modes of transportation in the development process.**
- c) **Stress the movement of persons over the movement of vehicles.**
- d) **Place a high priority on transportation safety.**

COMPONENT IV:

ADMINISTRATION

- a) Guide development through reliable zoning that is based on collaborative community input.
- b) Information on zoning and development process should be easily understandable and the available to all.
- c) Regulate transition requirements between changes in density and differing land uses.
- d) Create a monitoring and reporting system on growth, development and other planning data.

COMPONENT V: PUBLIC VISIONING/INVOLVEMENT

- a) Provide for periodic collaborative forums to assess its continuing vision and relevance.
- b) Supplement such forums with other accessible technologies to inform and collect opinions from residents.

COMPONENT VI: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- a) Provide a range of housing types to meet the needs of life-cycle housing that allows people to remain in Ramsey from youth to old age.
- b) Include consideration of and attention to architectural and site planning details.
- c) Allow for the application of appropriate density transition techniques that respect the integrity of existing neighborhoods.
- d) Orient development toward sustainable centers.
- e) Encourage land uses that can meet essential services and recreation needs within walking distance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FOR CHANGES IN RAMSEY
NOT COVERED BY THE GRANT CHARGE**

- a) Any changes to the comprehensive plan shall require a 2/3 majority of council.
- b) Focus on Highway 10 redevelopment and Northstar for east-west travel, redesign Highway 47 for north-south travel, and construct additional trails and sidewalks for walkability and connectivity.
- c) Ramsey absolutely needs a Chamber of Commerce to find and develop diverse businesses.

APPENDIX V: FINAL VISION

RAMSEY VISIONING

THE VISION:

Without compromising private property rights and needs of future generations, Ramsey will evolve through citizen driven, collaborative processes that respect the balance and connectivity between its unique urban, rural and natural environments.

THE VALUES:

- I. Encourage walkability through pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and transportation.
- II. Maintain land owner rights.
- III. Employ careful foresight in city planning that includes citizen review, reliance on peer-reviewed science, and comprehensive data collection and analysis.
- IV. Involve all citizens in decisions that impact their lives, property and neighborhoods through the use of a facilitated process such as collaborative decision-making.
- V. Embrace a people-centered, long-term perspective that nurtures neighborhood and community interactions and with flexibility to meet future needs without compromising the needs and interests of current residents.
- VI. Preserve unique natural resources for the community and its current residents.
- VII. Attract and sustain businesses should serve the whole community.

CHECKLIST TO GUIDE REVIEW OF ZONING ALTERNATIVES AND FUTURE PLANNING

**COMPONENT I:
COMMERCIAL/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- a) Attract and retain high-quality industrial and commercial businesses that create higher paying jobs for local residents and increase Ramsey's tax base.
- b) Concentrate larger commercial/industrial development within MUSA while encouraging smaller neighborhood commercial nodes in more rural areas.
- c) Plan business development for maximal use of rail and highway arteries with minimal residential, environmental and traffic impacts.

**COMPONENT II:
ENVIRONMENT**

- a) Balance protection of environmental resources with property rights while providing just compensation.
- b) Allow for identifying and maintaining open/green space and preservation of unique natural resources.
- c) Ensure that residents have access to parks and open space within walking distance.

**COMPONENT III:
TRANSPORTATION**

- a) Create vehicular and non-vehicular linkages to neighboring communities and between city neighborhoods, trails, recreation, work and shopping.
- b) Emphasize consideration of non-vehicular modes of transportation in the development process.
- c) Stress the efficient movement of persons, goods and services over the movement of vehicles.
- d) Place a high priority on transportation safety.

**COMPONENT IV:
ADMINISTRATION**

- a) Guide development through reliable zoning that is based on collaborative community input.
- b) Information on zoning and development process should be easily understandable and available to all.
- c) Regulate transition requirements between changes in density and differing land uses.
- d) Create a monitoring and reporting system on growth, development and other planning data.

**COMPONENT V:
PUBLIC VISIONING/INVOLVEMENT**

- a) Provide for a periodic collaborative forum to assess its continuing vision and relevance.
- b) Supplement such forums with other accessible technologies to inform and collect opinions from residents.

**COMPONENT VI:
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

- a) Maintain and provide a range of housing types to have a variety that encourages people to choose Ramsey as a place to live.
- b) Include consideration of and attention to architectural and site planning details.
- c) Allow for the application of appropriate density transitioning techniques that respect the integrity of existing neighborhoods.
- d) Orient development toward sustainable centers.
- e) Encourage land uses that can meet essential services and recreation needs within walking distance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FOR CHANGES IN RAMSEY NOT COVERED BY
THE GRANT CHARGE**

- a) Any changes to the comprehensive plan shall require a 2/3 majority of Council.
- b) Focus on Highway 10 redevelopment and Northstar for east-west travel, redesign Highway 47 for north-south travel, and construct additional trails and sidewalks for walkability and connectivity.
- c) Ramsey absolutely needs a Chamber of Commerce to find and develop diverse businesses.