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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Our complex and dynamic world creates new challenges for all types of organizations. The City of Ramsey is no exception. 2012 was a tumultuous year for the city – significant staff transitions and turnover, a highly contested city election, and a major development (The COR at Ramsey) that continues to be a drain on the city’s resources.

The City Council in January 2013 acknowledged that the city could benefit by developing a strategic direction that guides its decision-making in the coming years. The decision was motivated by the lack of trust between the elected officials and staff, the financial challenges, and the need for the city to become a proactive organization rather than a reactive one.

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

Tumultuous times create the opportunity to think conventionally or unconventionally. The planning partners (City of Ramsey elected officials and city departments, and the consulting firm) did both. Challenging times gave us the gift of opportunity to assess the City of Ramsey - candidly and thoroughly.

The City Council hired Duckor & Associates to help develop this Three - Year Strategic Action Plan. The key benefits of the comprehensive planning process were:

- Achieving a shared strategic framework
- Achieving a shared understanding of clear roles, responsibilities and deliverables for elected officials and staff
- Building trust among the elected officials and staff
- Achieving goal consensus that directs the City of Ramsey’s work efforts
- Articulating doable objectives
- Maximizing effective use of resources
- Energizing the team leadership and enhancing teamwork.



PURPOSE

The underlying goal of Ramsey’s strategic planning effort was to create an open, transparent working environment among the elected officials and staff in order to restore the faith and confidence in the City of Ramsey, build an effective elected governing body, and help build staff morale.

The specific goals were to:

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

The following plan establishes a solid foundation and framework to truly have “A New Day...A New Beginning” for the City of Ramsey.

There is a high degree of confidence that the plan will be successfully implemented because the planning process was highly interactive with the mayor, city council, and leadership team, including input from appointed commission members and staff. Candid and open discussions occurred in the workshops and staff meetings, which strategically helped shape the plan. Everyone had a voice in the planning process, which helps achieve buy-in of the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGE

The Three - Year Strategic Action Plan is dependent on the level of funding that is approved by the City Council for 2014 and subsequent years. It is also dependent on the ‘political will’ of identifying and implementing new funding sources. The 2013 budget is not sustainable long-term – the current staffing level is stretched to the maximum, and no long-term financial solution is in place for meeting the road maintenance and reconstruction requirements.



PLANNING PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

Undertakings of the Consultant:

Internal Input and Reporting

- City Administrator identified the internal participants to be interviewed.
- Developed two interview instruments (elected officials and leadership team), which was approved by City Administrator.
- Sixteen interviews were conducted in person, each lasting approximately 60 minutes.
- Developed and submitted the Hopes and Dreams and SWOT Analysis – Interview Summary Reports (elected officials and leadership team.)

Staff and Commission Members Input

- Developed two online surveys that were approved by City Administrator and Human Resources Manager.
- All staff members were invited to complete an online survey; 100 percent completed the surveys.
- All commission members were invited to complete an online survey; 74 percent commission members completed the surveys.
- Developed and distributed the Staff's Survey Summary Report at the all-staff meeting on April 24, 2013.
- Distributed the Commissions' Member Survey Summary Report.

Pre Planning Effort

- Met with City Administrator and other appropriate staff members to review planning materials; met with the City Administrator throughout the planning process.

Planning Workshops

- Conducted five strategic planning workshops with the Strategic Planning Committee members from January through April.
- For each workshop, consultant prepared agendas, included pre-meeting assignments, and identified meeting outcomes. The consultant, who facilitated whole group discussions and smaller group discussions with team electing a spokesperson to report on group's work, conducted workshops.

The consultant worked with the City Administrator's staff at staff meetings and one-on-one meetings throughout the planning timeframe.



It was critical to establish trust and determine how the Strategic Planning Committee could most effectively work together. The group built a solid foundation by establishing principles of engagement, identifying the 'Lessons Learned' from the past, and reviewing and discussing handouts provided by the consultant about the subject of trust, a glossary of planning terms and a city's success profile.

The workshop members developed and agreed-to the following principles of engagement:

We commit to...

1. Coming prepared for each meeting
2. Actively participating in the discussion
3. Staying on topic – using the Parking Lot as a place holder for ideas that are not on topic
4. Staying focused – avoiding the use of cell phones and computers
5. Proactively listening to one another – no cross talking, no side bars
6. Speaking with the “I” voice
7. Honoring the full spectrum of perspectives
8. Asking clarifying questions when we don't understand
9. Ensuring all voices are heard
10. Being part of the solution

To move forward with our planning, we began by examining the past. The Strategic Planning Committee identified the following “Lessons Learned” of the past:

Purpose

- None of us is bigger than the organization; we are here for the residents – they are at the top of the organization chart.
- If it doesn't contribute to the vision, don't do it.

Financial Impacts

- The city's negative image is far-reaching, hard to reverse, and has financial implications.
- Lack of trust has a cost.
- Lack of preparation has a cost.
- Don't throw good money after bad money.



Decision-Making

- Work toward consensus but understand that it isn't critical that you all agree.
- Don't question the motivations behind the decisions because it undermines the trust and respect of one another.

Personal Accountability

- Hold people accountable.
- All voices must be heard.
- Bring issues to meetings.
- Don't take it personally.
- Verify before crucify.
- Don't get too comfortable because things will change.

Communications

- Good communications both internally and externally that are timely and well-distributed will help minimize misunderstandings and mistrust.
- One-to-one communication is best.

At the end of the Three - Year Strategic Action planning effort, the Strategic Planning Committee hoped to accomplish the following:

Tangible Outcomes

- A uniform and agreed-to direction
- Well-defined goals that are obtainable, measurable, and within budget
- Clear expectations between staff and the City Council
- Clearly defined plan; what are we going to do, how are we going to do it, and for whom
- Provide a level of service that is acceptable to the customer
- A process for maintaining the Three - Year Strategic Action plan
- Take care of staff (internal customers) in order to take care of external customers



Policy-making Implications

- Recognize the city's resource limitations (financial and staffing capacity)

Communications

- Create and implement clear and timely messages for residents

The Strategic Planning Committee vetted the Hopes and Dreams for the city and the SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) report that the consultant developed based on the one-on-one interviews. SWOT Analysis is a tool for discovering and learning that lays the foundation of a strategic plan. Please see Appendix A for the vetted City Council SWOT Analysis.

To ensure that the planning process would be driven by customer needs, committee members presented a list of their internal and external customers to the Strategic Planning Committee; the consultant developed a Constituencies/Customer list, please see Appendix B.



VISIONARY STRUCTURE

In 2006, the City of Ramsey launched Ramsey3, an innovative grassroots initiative dedicated to imagining the future of Ramsey. This collaborative process provided the visionary framework for the city. The Strategic Planning Committee determined that it would be helpful to supplement the City's visions with a visionary structure that was focused on a three to five year period to address the pressing issues facing the city.

To address the lack of trust and ensure that the city operates in a transparent and open environment, the following documents were also developed: guiding principles, city's organization values, code of conduct, and roles and responsibilities for elected officials, appointed commission members, staff, and consultants.

Three-Year Working Mission Statement

To work together to responsibly grow our community, and to provide quality, cost-effective, and efficient government services.

Three-Year Working Vision Statement

Achieve economic vitality with strategic infrastructure investments through market-driven growth.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The elected officials, appointed commission members and staff will:

1. Ensure responsiveness to the public (residents, business owners, taxpayers) that fosters an atmosphere of communication within and outside the organization.
2. Ensure alignment of goals and resources.
3. Take personal ownership for the success of the City of Ramsey.
4. Operate with clear roles, responsibilities, authority, and accountability.
5. Operate in a transparent environment.
6. Strive for “win-win” strategic thinking and planning under which interests and objectives of the city, commissions, and departments are considered; avoid personal agendas and department and commission turf protection.
7. Take action based upon objective analysis of the facts.



OUR CITY'S ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

We commit to:

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

We believe that ethics and integrity are the foundation blocks of public trust and confidence and that all meaningful relationships are built on these values.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

We believe that fiscal responsibility and the prudent stewardship of public funds are essential for citizen confidence in government.

COOPERATION AND TEAMWORK

We believe that the public is best served when elected officials, departments, commission members, and employees work cooperatively as a team in a trusting environment.

OPEN AND HONEST COMMUNICATIONS

We believe that open and honest communication is essential for an informed and involved citizenry, to build trust, and to foster a positive working environment for employees.

EXCELLENCE AND QUALITY IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES

We believe that service to the public is our reason for being and strive to deliver quality services in a highly professional and cost-effective manner.

TREATING PEOPLE WITH RESPECT AND FAIRNESS

We believe that all people are to be treated with courtesy and respect and deserve the best service we can provide. Decisions are to be fair and based upon the interest of the whole community.

ADAPTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING

We believe that individuals need to be adaptable to changing environments and circumstances. Continuous learning, education and training of our elected and appointed officials and employees enables us to better recognize current opportunities, anticipate change, and prepare for the future.

The organization's Code of Conduct in Appendix C outlines the behavior we desire. Appendix D articulates the roles and responsibilities of the organization.



MOVING FORWARD: A NEW DAY...A NEW BEGINNING

MISSION-DRIVEN BUILDING BLOCKS

Mission-driven building blocks are what an organization needs to fulfill its vision. Mission-driven strategic imperatives are major areas of focus of an organization that move the organization toward its vision. The mission-driven strategic imperatives for the city are: financial stability, a connected community and a smart, citizen-focused government.

CAPACITY-DRIVEN BUILDING BLOCK

Capacity-driven building blocks are what an organization needs to fulfill its mission. Capacity-driven strategic imperatives are major areas of focus of the organization that ensure the organization has the capacity to deliver its mission. The capacity-driven strategic imperative for the city is: an effective organization.

The following page describes the strategic imperatives and strategic initiatives for each type of building block.

Please see Appendix E for the detailed Three - Year Strategic Action Plan that includes the following by each strategic imperative: strategic initiative, department, tactics, initiation date, completion date, additional resources that are required but are not included in the 2013 budget, additional tools, responsible party and key outcome indicators/metrics.

To ensure that the Three - Year Strategic Action Plan was supported by the staff, department plans were developed or updated that include department's mission, responsible party, service offering description, primary external and internal customers and strategic partnerships with respective requirements, goals, measurements, and resources required. The following departments have updated plans: Administration, Community Development, Economic Development, Engineering, Finance, Fire, Human Resources, Police, and Public Works.



To move forward, the City will invest and build the following blocks, focusing on the four strategic imperatives and initiatives:

Mission-Driven Building Blocks	Strategic Imperative	Strategic Imperative Definition	Strategic Initiatives
	I. Financial Stability	Ensure strategic economic development that complements the City's desired quality of life and builds a stable tax base, all while maintaining a low tax levy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure financial stability • Optimize TIF to support infrastructure improvements • Increase economic growth • Maximize land use • Enhance infrastructure development to meet city's growth
	II. A Connected Community	Ensure that the city is a connected city that is part of a comprehensive regional transportation system that enables all to easily navigate the community and attracts business development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the state, county and city's transportation system • Enhance trail way system
	III. Smart, Citizen-Focused Government	Continue the delivery of quality services to ensure the city will have safe and thriving neighborhoods and business districts, and a clean environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure quality services based on customer requirements • Ensure a safe city • Expand shared services • Improve safety and quality of housing stock • Enhance recreational and cultural opportunities • Build and expand community connections • Enhance the election experience
Capacity-Driven Building Block	IV. An Effective Organization	Maintain a highly functional staff, citizen volunteers, and elected officials and governance structure that meet the ever-changing, increasing needs of the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance governance structure • Enhance organizational structure • Create a high-performance work environment and workforce • Maximize consultants' accountability • Streamline internal processes • Enhance internal/external communications

BUDGET

The investment to implement the Three - Year Strategic Action Plan was estimated based on the following assumptions:

- The budget uses the 2013 General Fund Budget of \$10,293,837 as its baseline for moving forward.
- The current baseline for staff level is \$5,806,331 of personnel costs, including salaries benefits and health insurance.
- Additional staff recommended in the Plan includes 7.5 FTEs (5 in 2014, 2.5 in 2015 – two Police Officers, one Building Official to replace contracted services, one Office Assistant, one Engineering Technician III, half-time IT Technician, and two Public Works positions (one funded from the General Fund and one from Enterprise Funds.)
- Budget does not include adjustment for inflation or cost-of-living adjustments.
- Implementation of the 40-Year Road Construction Plan would cost approximately \$3 million a year.
- The budget suggests an increase of \$579,749 for staffing and \$1,916,500 for the first year of implementation of transportation improvements and escalates accordingly -- \$393,720 for staffing in 2014 and \$572,440 in 2015.

Identifying and securing other funding mechanisms/sources will help fund the Three-Year Strategic Action Plan. The timeframe for implementation will be determined by the City Council's approved budget for the following years: 2014, 2015, 2016.

Other potential funding mechanisms/sources include: selling city-owned properties, implementing a franchise fee or a dedicated transportation fee, or increasing property taxes.

It is critical that the city does NOT rely on one-time sources of money to fund on-going operations of the city.



PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

In order to achieve the goals of the Three - Year Strategic Action Plan, it's critical to focus on results. The City of Ramsey will implement a Balanced Scorecard performance measurement tool that will help the mayor, City Council, and staff be focused on the critical areas of work that must be accomplished each year. The following Balanced Scorecard reflects full funding of the action plan. In addition, the newly designed Department Plans will include appropriate measurements for their respective departments. If the action plan is not fully funded, the goals and metrics will need to reviewed and changed.

Three-Year Working Mission Statement

To work together to responsibly grow our community, and to provide quality, cost-effective, and efficient government services

2013-2015 Balanced Scorecard

Fiduciary Perspective <i>"If we succeed, how will we look to our property owners?"</i>	Customer/Stakeholder Perspective <i>"To achieve our vision, how must we look to our customers?"</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the City's AA+ rating (ongoing) • Maintain a stable tax levy rate • Economic Development Director to initiate economic development efforts in 2013 (ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a 70 percent or higher rating amongst residents' customer satisfaction for overall public services and safety in the community (ongoing) • Achieve 8 minutes, 36 seconds or better for average police response time (ongoing) • Achieve the ISO rating of 5 in serviced areas (ongoing) • Achieve 8 minutes, 39 seconds or better for average fire response time (ongoing) • Achieve city's ratings of 6.5 average of road conditions (ongoing) • Achieve a 70 percent or higher rating for business customer satisfaction with Economic Development and Police Business Services (ongoing)
Internal Perspective <i>"To satisfy our customers, property owners, and mission, what business processes must we excel at?"</i>	Learning and Growth Perspective <i>"To achieve our vision, how must our people learn, communicate, and work together?"</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve 70 percent or higher satisfaction rating of policy makers by providing timely, pertinent, comprehensive information with options and recommendations to policy-makers and staff by 2013 (ongoing) • Monitor Development Review timeline (ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve 100 percent of revised job descriptions, development plans, and develop a performance rating strategy for employees by December 2013 • Achieve a 70 percent or higher rating among employees' satisfaction with Leadership Team (ongoing)

Definition: "A Balanced Scorecard is a management system that can channel the energies, abilities, and specific knowledge held by people throughout the organization toward achieving long-term strategic goals (strategic initiatives.) It is also a measurement system. The Balanced Scorecard uses measures in four categories – financial performance, customer knowledge, internal business (organization) process and learning and growth – to align individual, organizational, and cross-departmental initiatives and to identify entirely new processes for meeting customer and shareholder (community) objectives." (Designed by Kaplan and Norton)



REPORTING PROCESS

The City Administrator will report on the progress of the plan using the Balanced Scorecard at a City Council meeting every month. The progress report will also be shared with the staff. The City Administrator is the gatekeeper of the performance measurement of the Three - Year Strategic Action Plan. The Balanced Scorecard update should be on the last City Council meeting of each month.

If there are internal or external challenges in achieving the plan outcomes, the City Administrator will submit a course of action to address the problem or opportunity for the City Council to review and approve.

The City Administrator will hold each department head accountable for his/her contribution to the implementation of the plan. The Leadership Team will review progress toward goals and adjust course of action, if required, monthly.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The agreed-to Balanced Scorecard goals and metrics will be part of the City Administrator and Leadership Team's performance evaluation each year.



SUCCESS FACTORS

In order to successfully implement the Three - Year Strategic Action Plan, the following key success factors should be an on-going focus and should be monitored at all times:

- Presence of a strategic fit – with the three-year working mission and vision statements, and strategic imperatives;
- Consensus between policy makers and staff on strategic direction;
- Renewed focus on trust by adhering to the Code of Conduct, Guiding Principles and Organizational Values;
- Timely, concise and ‘on message’ communications, internally and externally;
- Well-designed key processes, well-developed policies and documented procedures;
- Smart budgeting for an era of limits; solid budgeting to sustain mission-driven growth, including shifting of resources to meet the Three-Year Working Vision;
- Proactive engagement and full participation at meetings so that all staff members are part of the solution;
- Well-thought-out strategies to address any external factors that impact the success of the organization: economic conditions, political and legal forces, technological trends, social and cultural forces, and regulatory actions.

