



2015 City of Ramsey Legislative Platform

BACKGROUND

Annually, the City of Ramsey drafts and adopts a Legislative Platform. This document includes a list of Legislative priorities specifically related to the City of Ramsey. Upon adoption by the City Council, Ramsey's Legislative Platform will be forwarded to our County, State and Federal elected officials. Additionally, this document will be used internally by Staff as a supplemental workplan for 2015.

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SECTION I: LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, CITY OF RAMSEY

- (1) Implementation of U.S. Highway 10 Access Planning Study Projects
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(1) Implementation of U.S. Highway 10 Access Planning Study Projects*

ISSUE: Highway 10 is a principal arterial roadway providing a significant transportation connections from Minneapolis – St. Paul to the northwest suburbs and Greater Minnesota. The 4-lane roadway (Anoka/Sherburne County line to the Rum River in Anoka) carries average daily traffic volumes ranging from 33,500 to 61,000 vehicles per day.

This corridor is commonly congested and has much higher than average crash and crash severity rates than comparable corridors. In addition, the corridor has five signalized intersections and numerous direct access points (14.5 per mile); which contribute to the degradation of the U.S. Highway 10. Over the past ten (10) years, thirteen (13) people have died in crashes on this 7-mile corridor. Four (4) fatalities were pedestrians; including (3) from 2013 to 2014.

Highway 10 has been studied numerous times over the past decade, each time a full-freeway status was identified as the ultimate solution. However, due to limited funding opportunities at the State and Federal level, full-freeway status would be difficult to achieve within the next 20 years.

As a result of funding constraints, MnDOT and Bolton & Menk completed a study to achieve freeway-like status for U.S. Highway 10 in the fall of 2014. This study is known as: *The U.S. Highway 10 Access Planning Study*. This study achieves 90% of the safety and operational benefits of a full-freeway for 50% of the cost. The intent of this study is to identify high-benefit improvements that are fiscally responsible so that improvements can be funded, programmed, and implemented incrementally. This study has been formally adopted by MnDOT, Anoka County, the City of Anoka and the City of Ramsey.

Information Source: www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/hwy10study/

RECOMMENDATION: Included in the U.S. Highway 10 Access Planning Study is a recommended, prioritized, list of improvement projects. The City of Ramsey recommends State and Federal funding sources be secured to implement both “immediate” and “short-tem” priority projects.

>Topic Generally Supported by: MnDOT, Anoka County, City of Anoka

*This is the City of Ramsey’s highest priority legislative initiative.

(2) Ground Water

ISSUE: A clean and reliable source of ground water is critical to the function of any healthy community. In many cases, communities utilize aquifers as their primary source of ground water. The City of Ramsey is located in a “recharge zone” for aquifers utilized throughout the Twin Cities Metro region, known as the “Anoka County Sand Plain.”

The City of Ramsey is a developing community and anticipates significant growth over the next two decades. As a result, additional water supply will be required to meet the demand of future development. Recently, the City of Ramsey was notified by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that the City ‘MAY’ no longer be permitted to install new wells to utilize aquifers as a water source without first evaluating the ability to use surface waters, such as the Mississippi River. The DNR made this decision in order to protect existing, and future, ground water supplies of communities throughout the entire Twin Cities Metro region.

As a result, the City of Ramsey recently began planning for a new surface water treatment plant, which would draw from the Mississippi River. The City does plan to retain its ground water supply system as a back-up to the purposed surface water supply system. The estimated cost of the proposed surface water treatment plant in Ramsey is significant, at \$36.5 million. Costs for retaining the ground water supply system will be minimal compared to the treatment facility costs.

Clearly, utilization of ground water resources is not solely a local issue, as aquifers and “recharging zones” span across the entire Twin Cities metro region. The need for the City of Ramsey to switch from a ground water system to a surface water system is not a result of development in the City of Ramsey alone; it is the result of demand across the entire Twin Cities metro region.

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Ramsey supports a regional analysis and planning effort to utilize ground and surface water throughout the Twin Cities as a whole, rather than community-by-community. The City of Ramsey opposes actions limiting the ability of Ramsey to develop in order to sustain, or allow new development, in other Twin Cities communities affected by the Anoka County Sand Plain “recharge zone.” The City of Ramsey supports regional solutions to address regional ground water supply concerns; specifically including, regional funding sources.

>Topic Generally Supported by: Anoka County

SECTION 2: ENDORSED LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES ENDORSED BY THE CITY OF RAMSEY
2015 ANOKA COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

(3) Bonding for U.S. Highway 10 Projects*

ISSUE: please reference City priority #1 for background details: Implementation of U.S. Highway 10 Access Planning Study Projects.

The County is seeking bonding for U.S. Highway 10 projects located at Fairoak Avenue, Thurston Avenue, Ramsey Boulevard, and Sunfish Lake Boulevard. This County initiative fits in-line with the City's highest ranked legislative initiative.

RECOMMENDATION: included in the U.S. Highway 10 Access Planning Study is a recommended, prioritized, list of improvement projects. The City of Ramsey recommends State and Federal funding sources be secured to implement both "immediate" and "short-tem" priority projects.

*Similar language as 2015 Anoka County Adopted Legislative Platform

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES ENDORSED BY THE CITY OF RAMSEY
2015 ANOKA COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

(4) Fiscal Disparities*

ISSUE: chief Authored by former Anoka State Legislator, Charles R. Weaver, the Twin Cities Area Fiscal Disparities program, enacted in 1971, was created for the purposes of:

1. Providing a way for local governments to share in the resources generated by the growth of the metropolitan area without removing existing resources;
2. Promoting orderly development of the region by reducing the impact of fiscal considerations on the location of business and infrastructure;
3. Establishing incentives for all parts of the area to work for the growth of the area as a whole;
4. Helping communities at various stages of development; and
5. Encouraging protection of the environment by reducing the impact of fiscal considerations to ensure protection of parks, open space, and wetlands.

Fiscal Disparities affects cities, counties, special taxing districts, and school districts within the seven-county metro area. It has reduced tax base disparity throughout the seven-county metropolitan area to a level of 3-to-1 (instead of the previous 10-to-1).

Historically, the City of Ramsey (and Anoka County) have been a net recipients of fiscal disparities funding. Meaning, the amount of dollars Ramsey receives from the program is greater than the dollars Ramsey contributes to the program (about 1.63 factor in 2014 for Ramsey).

RECOMMENDATION: any future legislation that would modify or impact the Fiscal Disparities program should only be considered within a framework of comprehensive reform efforts of the State's property tax, aids and credits system. Any proposed legislation that would modify or impact the Fiscal Disparities program must be evaluated utilizing the criteria of fairness, equity, stability, transparency and coherence in the treatment of cities and taxpayers across the metropolitan region, and must continue to serve the program's intended purposes.

The Ramsey City Council is in support of the Fiscal Disparities program. The Ramsey City Council opposes future diversion from the Fiscal Disparities Program to fund programs or projects that would contradict the purpose of the program. The City does not support efforts to exempt Ramsey (or Anoka County) from any future Fiscal Disparity program amendment discussions.

*Similar language as 2014 and 2015 Anoka County Adopted Legislative Platform

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES ENDORSED BY THE CITY OF RAMSEY
2015 LMC LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

(5) Public Infrastructure Utilities*

ISSUE: constructing and maintaining an effective roadway system is an essential function of local governments. The City of Ramsey owns, operates and maintains more than 174 miles of roadway. The cost to properly maintain existing municipal roadways in the City of Ramsey is estimated at \$2.5 million annually over the next 10 years.

Proper maintenance of local roadway systems extends the life of roadways and ensures the most effective application of tax payer dollars. For every one dollar spent on preventative road maintenance, local governments save seven dollars on future repairs. In many cases, similar to the City of Ramsey, other Minnesota municipalities are not dedicating adequate funding for proper maintenance on local roadway systems.

Existing road maintenance funding mechanisms, such as Municipal State Aid (MSA), local property taxes and special assessments have become increasingly restrictive and less effective forcing local government to seek new road maintenance funding mechanisms. Alternative funding methods for road maintenance programs are nearly nonexistent.

Historically, the State Legislature has given Cities the authority to operate utilities for essential City functions such as water supply, sanitary sewer and storm water services. The establishment of said utilities has set a precedent for a workable process of charging fees on a utility bill for City services provided through local infrastructure. Today, the authority for Cities to charge a similar utility fee for a road maintenance program does not exist.

RECOMMENDATION: the City of Ramsey supports enabling legislation authorizing Cities to establish roadway utility fees.

NOTE: supporting this initiative does not indicate the City of Ramsey will/shall utilize this tool. Supporting this initiative indicates the City of Ramsey has interest in attaining the opportunity to consider utilizing this tool.

*Similar language as 2015 LMC Legislative Platform, LE-6