

Resilient Communities Project Descriptions

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There are several projects proposed for this program. This is not a full application. This is a project list in order to obtain City Council authorization to complete a final application. Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, February 15. Staff will be working on the final draft leading up to the City Council Meeting on February 14.

Primary Project List

Project No. RCP-01: Protecting Our Investments (Asset Management Plan)

Project Lead:

Bruce Westby, City Engineer
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Project Description

As the community continues to grow, so do the number of assets of the community. Like ensuring regular maintenance of personal vehicles, regular maintenance of these community assets is important to long term sustainability. This is most prominently illustrated in the City's Street Maintenance Program. The City is entering an era of significant street reconstruction. Better understanding the condition of assets such as this is a critical financial planning and quality tool.

As a part of this project, the City desires to pilot a Public Tree Inventory. Over the last decade or so, the City has begun encouraging planting boulevard/street trees as part of new development. As our street tree population grows, both physiologically and in actual number of trees, we are in need of an inventory to manage this often overlooked community asset. A completed inventory would allow the City to utilize tools such as 'i-tree' to inform and educate both the public and policy makers on both the environmental and financial benefits street trees provide.

- How can our community best manage our existing and planned assets to ensure maximum value and return on investment?

Project No. RCP-02: Encouraging Small Business Growth and Expansion (Business Incubator Plan)

Project Lead:

Patrick Brama, Assistant City Administrator/Economic Development Manager
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Project Description

The City continues to have a successful business retention and expansion program. Our economic development success has been focused on small-business growth and expansion. The City looks to capitalize on this success and create new and exciting opportunities for small businesses to get their initial start through policies, financial incentives, and physical space.

- How can we build on our success to foster small business growth from within our community?
- What community-led initiatives have been successful in other examples that would be able to be implemented in our community?

Project No. RCP-03: Every Voice Matters (Citizen Engagement Plan)

Project Lead:

Tim Gladhill, Community Development Director
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Project Description

In 2006, the City embarked on a major overhaul of how it approached policy analysis and public engagement through a grass roots effort known as Ramsey3. Since then, the City has refined its approach, focusing on natural and organic conversations through existing events, gatherings, and neighborhood focus. The City looks for assistance finalizing this citizen engagement strategy in all policy analysis, not simply land use policy, and seeks assistance with its execution.

- What strategies exist at each scale of public engagement to ensure all who desire to have a voice in the decision-making process have an opportunity to do so?
- How can we best capitalize on existing conversations with the community such as community events?
- Should there be different strategies for the policy type (land use compared to street reconstruction for example)?

Project No. RCP-04: A Gathering Place for Community (Community Center Plan)

Project Lead:

Patrick Brama, Assistant City Administrator/Economic Development Manager
7550 Sunwood Dr NW
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Project Description

The community continues to desire a community space to gather year round. Within The COR, the City has set aside a large area for a large community-based user such as a community recreation center or theater. The City needs assistance marketing this asset and building successful and innovative strategies to make this a reality.

- How do we investigate the recreation needs of our community that could be solved with a community center?
- Given opportunities that exist in proximity to Ramsey, what scale of a community-based asset would be appropriate for our community?
- What opportunities and threats exist in terms of the financial stability of the community when implementing this type of facility?

Project No. RCP-05: Highway 10, a Community and Regional Focal Point (Highway 10 Corridor Plan)

Project Lead:

Tim Gladhill, Community Development Director
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Project Description

The City's Strategic Plan identifies an initiative to improve the image of key corridors. The Highway 10 Corridor Plan is a pilot land use study intended to be appended to our Comprehensive Plan to provide a robust strategy that builds from community support to create a positive environment that maximizes land use, maximizes tax base, establishes a proud vision of our community, and has consensus of impacted stakeholders. The City desires to explore sub-districts within the plan, such as gateway districts as users enter and exit our community. In October, 2016, the City will be engaging key stakeholders to kick this project off. The City is looking for incentives the community can provide to invest in building and site improvements.

- Based on current visions for future roadway improvements, what are appropriate land uses in the interim and into the future?
- What incentive-based approaches could the City implement to improve the image of this corridor?

Project No. RCP-06: Simple Tools for Preservation (Environmental Policy Board Communications Plan)

Project Lead:

Chris Anderson, City Planner

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Project Description

The City's Environmental Policy Board desires to develop a comprehensive outreach program across multiple mediums that focuses on environmentally related issues to educate and inform the community. Communications would address a range of topics such as water (conservation, groundwater, stormwater, and how all three interact), invasive species (aquatic and terrestrial), waste reduction, and community forestry.

- How do we best communicate the value to community and individual of resource protection?
- How do we best prioritize high value resources?

Project No. RCP-07: Preventing Damage and Disaster (Floodplain Communications Plan)

Project Lead:

Bruce Westby, City Engineer
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Project Description

The City is blessed to have an abundance of water-based ecological resources. A primary goal of our Comprehensive Plan is to balance our unique natural resources with future development activity. The City sees an opportunity to collaborate with the community as a whole to provide resources for homeowners and business owners to recognize the value of these resources and ways to manage and protect them.

The City's Flood Insurance Rate Maps, which were just updated by FEMA in December of 2015, still include a number of areas identified as floodplain but without detailed analyses to provide a Base Flood Elevation (BFE). This has created some difficulty for various property owners and the City desires to complete modelling of these areas to be able to provide at least an estimated BFE that could be used as part of a Letter of Map Change application to FEMA.

- What strategies exist that are easy for home owners and business owners to implement on their own?
- What programs exist for communities to manage on a larger scale?
- As we update our Comprehensive Plan, what strategies, tools, and plans should we be considering?

Project No. RCP-08: Toolkit for Regional Partners (Funding Opportunity Matrix)

Project Lead:

Kurt Ulrich, City Administrator
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Project Description

The City's Strategic Plan includes an initiative to explore all potential funding partners. Many of our goals are regional in scale, whether it's transportation improvements or water supply. The City often finds itself scrambling with moments left before a deadline putting together funding requests. The City would like to better plan for appropriate funding sources that meet our needs and key goals.

- What funding partners exist that would be good partners in achieving our future vision?
 - How can we better prepare for conversations and requests with these funding partners?
-

Project No. RCP-09: Connecting Ramsey (Ramsey Greenway Plan)

Project Lead:

Mark Riverblood, Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent
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Project Description

The City has identified several key ecological and recreation corridors that are all connected and well integrated. The broader vision, referred to as the 'Circle of Ramsey' duals key ecological corridors with connections to our larger community parks. This concept has helped focus our park dedication discussion. Within this broader greenway vision, is the Lake Itasca Greenway. This corridor connects two of our community focal points, Lake Itasca and The COR, our mixed-use destination for the community.

- How can our Comprehensive Plan best reflect this priority and take an incentive-based approach, versus a regulatory approach?
 - How can the City best communicate the value of integrating these resources within future development, rather than an afterthought?
 - Are there ways that the City can monetize this value?
-

Project No. RCP-10: Creating Housing Opportunities for All Generations (Housing Plan)

Project Lead:

Tim Gladhill, Community Development Director

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Project Description

The City's housing plan was last updated in 2008. Since then, the City's housing goals have had great successes, especially in terms of workforce housing and senior housing. Unfortunately, public support for many of our housing goals continues to drop. The City desires to update its housing plan, as well as a communication strategy about the needs for various housing types and the value they add to our community, especially in terms of economic development.

- What styles of housing are underrepresented and would add value to the community?
- What land use strategies exist to encourage our housing goal?
- What financial tools and strategies exist to encourage our housing goals?

Project No. RCP-11: Integrating Resources into Our Future (Natural Resources Plan)

Project Lead:

Chris Anderson, City Planner
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Project Description

The City is beginning the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan, including the Natural Resources component, and desires to develop innovative strategies to better define how to accomplish our goals.

- How can we best communicate the value of resource protection to the community and future land developers?
- How do we best prioritize resources to protect, acknowledging that we do not have the financial resources to protect each individual resources?
- What incentives can we provide aside from regulatory controls to manage our unique natural resources?

Project No. RCP-12: Reduce Waste, Reuse Resources (Organics Recycling Plan)

Project Lead:

Chris Anderson, City Planner
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Project Description

The City has a successful curbside recycling program for standard recyclables; however, food and paper waste (organics) constitute the largest component of our waste stream. We would like to research, analyze and implement an optional organics program (whether curbside and/or small scale drop-off) for residents.

- What examples exist locally that can reduce demand on local landfills by capturing organic waste?
- What barriers exist to successful implementation?
- What strategies exist to build capacity and support?

Project No. RCP-13: Creating Destination (Retail Market Analysis)

Project Lead:

Patrick Brama, Assistant City Administrator/Economic Development Manager
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Project Description

The City has long had a goal to create destinations for the community that includes places to shop, eat, and entertain. There are several market forces that make this goal challenging. There are areas guided for retail growth, and the City employs financial tools to attract these businesses. However, expectations from our community have fallen short. The City desires to study retail market strategies for both traditional (large-format/'big-box') retail as well as strategies to attract a successful, sustainable retail strategy that will add value to the community.

- What types of retailers are likely to be attracted to Ramsey?
- What marketing approaches could the City consider?
- What tools should the community employ that will attract retailers and other destinations to the community, and provide a sustainable business model?

Project No. RCP-14: Clean Water, Clean Soil (Septic System Communications Plan)

Project Lead:

Rick Jarson, Building Official
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Project Description

The historic development pattern of Ramsey began in the 1970s and consisted of single-family lots with private wells and septic systems. The age of these systems are beginning to experience their planned lifespan. If properly maintained, these systems are a completely acceptable means of treating wastewater. If left unmaintained and/or repaired, these systems present a threat to ground water quality and public health. Our community helps manage some 4,000 individual and private septic systems. We see an opportunity to improve the lines of communication with septic owners and provide resources to extend the useful life of said systems. Simple strategies exist in our everyday life to protect the integrity of these systems, whether it is laundry, bath, dishes, or restrooms to name a few.

- What simple strategies exist for septic owners to maximize the lifespan of these systems?
- How should our community best communicate these strategies to our residents?

Project No. RCP-15: A Gathering Within: An Attraction Beyond (The COR Development Plan Update)

Project Lead:

Tim Gladhill, Community Development Director

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Project Description

The City's Comprehensive Plan includes a Development Plan for The COR, a mixed-use, transit-oriented development along the Northstar Commuter Rail Corridor. The City is in the process of updating The COR Development Plan, and is seeking assistance in reconciling a revised/restated vision with infrastructure analysis. The project will also provide an opportunity to analyze cost-benefit ratio and innovative ways to achieve a unique vision. The project will also include opportunities for retail analysis, parking district strategies and plans, architectural design standards, and strategies to integrate public engagement into policy analysis.

- How do we best integrate public engagement in plan development in a timely fashion?
- Is the current land use plan sustainable from a visionary and economic standpoint?
- How do we best measure market relevance and return on investment?
- How do we best maximize future land use?
- How can we best accommodate incremental improvements without losing the ability for key investments such as parks and parking districts?

Project No. RCP-16: Opportunity to Give Back (Volunteer Program Plan)

Project Lead:

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Project Description

The City participates in a bi-annual statistically-significant citizen survey benchmarked against peer communities. One of the primary findings of this survey continues to be strategies to create additional opportunities for residents to participate in the community.

- How can we provide opportunities for our community members that want to be engaged in community?
- What programs and services would add value to our community?

Project No. RCP-17: Will the Faucet Turn On? (Water Conservation Toolkit)

Project Lead:

Bruce Westby, City Engineer
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Project Description

Our community draws our water supply exclusively through ground water supplies. Our community's soil conditions are very sandy, creating a significant demand for water supply in summer months. Research indicates that our forecasted growth may eventually outpace groundwater supply. Our community continues to explore alternative water supply from the Mississippi River.

Increasing water supply is only one piece of the equation. The City continues to explore opportunities to reduce water demand. The City has created educational and communication pieces. The City has implemented certain land use standards such as required topsoil. These efforts have assisted in reducing water demand, but there are many other opportunities that we would like to explore to provide a menu of options.

- What regulatory controls exist to reduce water demand?
- What incentive-based approaches exist?
- What financial approaches exist?
- When considering implementing new programs and standards, how do we best engage the public in policy analysis before a decision is made?

Alternate Projects

This project list is for projects to be able to swap in the event primary projects are dropped.

Project No. RCP-18: Paying for Future Infrastructure Needs (Development Fee Study)

Approximately every five (5) years, the City updates its infrastructure plans and sources of funding. We desire to balance our vision and goals while remaining competitive with our peer communities. This project will provide an opportunity to research area development fees for new development and compare to peer communities.

- How do different types of development compare to peer communities in terms of local rates and charges?
- Should we be looking at different ways to pay for planned infrastructure?
- Should we be looking at innovative ways to reduce costs?

Project No. RCP-19: Sustaining Team (Employee Development Plan)

As with many employers, recruiting and retaining talented professionals is an important aspect of our human resource strategy. This project aims to create an employee development plan, and is also an initiative of our Strategic Plan.

- What core values do we expect of our employees?
- What training and development opportunities should we be providing?
- What professional development and volunteer opportunities should we be encouraging?
- What are common steps and advancement opportunities for our team members?

Project No. RCP-20: Protecting Future: Remembering Today (Highway 10 Official Map Update)

The City is on its third generation of a plan for Highway 10 improvements. As part of this planning processes, land use controls have been put into place to protect future public need from costly investment that would need to be removed at a future date. Unfortunately, the uncertain timing of Highway 10 improvements creates a difficult situations for corridor stakeholders. Stakeholders have commented that these protections make it difficult to invest or sell. The City desires to clarify future vision and timing, and striking a balance between corridor preservation and interim economic realities.

- Are there other tools other than an Official Map to consider?
- Is there a better way to communicate the intent and benefit of corridor preservation?
- Are there other types of support the community could provide to allow for reasonable use of the property until such time the area is needed for public purpose?

Project No. RCP-21: Sustaining our Legacy (Historic Town Hall Plan)

The historic Ramsey Town Hall is situated on Trunk Highway 47. It was utilized as Town Hall up until the late 1970s, at which time the community outgrew the facility. The structure has been placed on the historic registry, but has become squeezed by surrounding improvements. The facility currently sits empty. For decades, the community has been attempting to create a plan for the future of this facility.

- What opportunities exist for adaptive reuse?
- What unique ideas exist for using the facility in other locations?
- Are there opportunities for shared use with the surrounding users?
- How do we engage the public to create creative solutions?

Project No. RCP-22: Restoring our Edge (Mississippi Shoreline Plan)

The City recently completed a shoreline inventory or soil loss and erosion along the Mississippi River. The results of this study showed significant soil loss and erosion, which equates into loss of property, damage to natural resources, and impacts to water quality.

- Now that the City has quantified the issue, what solutions exist?
- How can we communicate financial assistance opportunities to impacted shoreline owners?
- What partners exist in the solution?

Project No. RCP-23: Employee Benefits for the Next Generation (Employee Benefits Plan)

Employee surveys have indicated a desire to explore new opportunities for employee benefits, ranging from health care to paid time off. The City needs a point to commence the discussion. Currently, a lack of understanding prevents us from taking steps forward to consider new options for our team.

- What opportunities for paid time off exist?
- What opportunities for health care plans exist?
- When introducing new options, how do we transition?
- Success is built on integrated and collaborative decision making. How do we best include the team in the policy analysis?

Project No. RCP-24: Creating Identity (ZIP Code Plan)

The City currently shares a ZIP Code with the City of Anoka. The Post Office is located in Anoka. The Post Office does not plan on adding new facilities in our community for the time being. However, sharing a post office with Anoka creates a lack of identity for Ramsey, as official mail for Ramsey residents often comes addresses to the City of Anoka. The City has long struggled to build support from the Post Office to obtain our own ZIP Code in order to elevate our own identity.

- What strategies are we not currently thinking about?
- What other strategies exist to elevate our own identity?
- How do we build community support to demonstrate the important of this policy to our community?