

**CITY COMPREHENSIVE STEERING COMMITTEE
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee conducted Regular Session on Monday, January 9, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Member Randy Bauer
 Member Jim Bendsten
 Member Shane Bennett
 Member Scott Breuer
 Member Bill Kingston
 Member Leslie Roering
 Member Dan Torgerson
 Member Michael Valentine

Members Absent: Member Mickie Adams
 Member Susan Anderson
 Member Jane Covart
 Member Daniel Franzwa
 Member Christopher Ouellette
 Member Erika Sitz
 Member Wayne Skaff

Also Present: Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill

1. CALL TO ORDER

Community Development Director Gladhill called the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. MEET AND GREET WITH METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that Eric Wojchik and Ed Reynoso from the Metropolitan Council who are present to answer questions and provide an additional perspective from the Met Council. He noted that following the meeting tonight he will provide the Committee with some homework to review in the time between this meeting and the next meeting.

Eric Wojchik, Metropolitan Council Sector Staff Representative, reviewed the duties of his position at the Met Council noting that he assists communities in the comprehensive planning process. He explained the purpose for regional planning, noting that it is important to think of the community outside of the boundaries. He provided the example of water quality and water supply which extend beyond the boundaries of just one city. He reviewed the mission of the Met

Council. He provided a brief summary of the information contained in THRIVE MSP 2040. He identified trends in the region and projected trends for the future.

Member Bennett arrived at 6:15 p.m.

Mr. Wojchik provided information on the regional ten-year planning cycle, noting that the system statements are legal documents that are released to the cities that include forecasts for things such as population and housing. He noted that once the system statements are released, cities then have three years to complete their updated Comprehensive Plan and advised that the deadline for final submission of the local Comprehensive Plans is December 31, 2018. He stated that there are planning assistance grants available to help cities with the cost of updating their Comprehensive Plan, noting that the Met Council just signed an agreement with Ramsey to receive a grant. He provided more details on the system statements that are released and noted that the statement for each city is tailored specifically to that city. He reviewed the role of a Comprehensive Plan, noting that it should act as umbrella for the official controls and policies. He reviewed the elements of the Comprehensive Plan that are required by statute and the additional elements that are recommended. He stated that housing is a required element of the plan and reviewed the different aspects that must be covered under that topic. He displayed the housing forecasts for Ramsey that were included in the system statements.

Member Bauer arrived at 6:22 p.m.

Mr. Wojchik stated that the staff from the Met Council can provide information that will be needed for the housing chapter of the plan if desired. He explained how the threshold is determined for affordable housing, noting that one third of all new households will fall into the affordable need bracket for housing.

Member Torgerson arrived at 6:25 p.m.

Mr. Wojchik explained how the allocation of affordable housing need is determined, noting the different factors that are considered when making those allocations. He reviewed the requirements to fulfill the Metropolitan Land Planning Act. He noted that development does not always have to be affordable housing now and used the example of a market rate apartment building that could be converted to affordable housing in the future. He explained that eight units per acre is the minimum density required to qualify for affordable housing credit, noting that the higher the minimum density, the less land that will be needed to address the allocation. He stated that the unit count for Ramsey currently is 2,190 units and therefore he does not see a problem for Ramsey. He stated that a city can put their own stamp on how they will achieve the goals through the implementation program and the tools they select to achieve the goals. He reviewed some of the tools, policies and practices that cities can use to achieve the goal of affordable housing. He highlighted some of the funds and other new resources available to reach the goal of affordable housing. He noted that while some cities choose to do just the minimum in terms of updating their Comprehensive Plan, this is the opportunity to make the plan more dynamic which will benefit the community. He reviewed some of the elements of value added planning that can be added to the plan, such as community involvement to help create the plan and evaluation of the policies and implementation strategies at the other end of the process. He

noted that some cities have used pop up meetings to engage the community at community events, rather than simply holding traditional meetings.

Member Bendsten arrived at 6:38 p.m.

Mr. Wojchik stated that cities often fall short in the vision and goals section, specifically integrating those goals into the different elements of the plan. He explained that often different staff members are working on different sections of the plans and are not necessarily tying those original goals into the sections. He noted that cities also often fall short in the area of implementation, noting that the implementation strategies should be diversified, rather than placing all the “eggs in one basket”. He also encouraged the City not to plan all the resources for one possible outcome. He noted that each plan element relates to the other elements and can cross reference each other and speak to each other. He referenced the local planning handbook, which is a helpful tool that is updated for each specific city and each city’s community page contains a lot of information that will be needed in the comprehensive planning process. He noted that the community pages also contain the checklist of minimum requirements for the plans. He stated that the Met Council also provides a fair amount of training for City staff, noting that there are many different formats. He stated that the PlanIt webinars are available for anyone to watch and may be helpful for the members of the Steering Committee to watch. He stated that the webinars in PlanIt available this year are focused on the required elements of the plan while next year’s webinars will be focused on value added planning. He stated that Ramsey has been very successful and is a great example for other cities.

Member Bauer referenced affordable housing noting that the mortgage payment is the factor considered rather than the value of the home and asked how they would be able to estimate mortgage payments.

Mr. Wojchik stated that the Met Council does not mandate the number of affordable housing units but simply guiding for the appropriate density and opportunities for affordable housing in the future. He acknowledged that it would be difficult to estimate the amount a mortgage payment would be. He stated that the forecasts for Ramsey in 2008 were not correct, noting that the old forecasting model was not based on economics and was instead based on land availability. He stated that the new model provides a more accurate forecast which will then provide a more accurate forecast for affordable housing.

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed some of the tools that the City has used towards affordable housing and the stock of higher density housing that the City has. He stated that it has been helpful to hear that Ramsey has more than enough on the land use map to guide for affordable housing needs, which will provide further flexibility for the City when reviewing that land use plan.

Mr. Wojchik acknowledged that in the past there may have been a negative opinion towards the Met Council and stated that they are working to develop more collaborative relationships and more face to face conversations rather than simply mailing communication.

Member Bauer asked how comfortable the Met Council is with the population projections, as the forecasts provided by the Met Council are what Ramsey uses when developing the elements of the its Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Wojchik stated that he believes the forecasts are much more accurate than they had been in the past. He noted that they also ask cities for their input as well in order to make the forecast even more accurate. He stated that following discussions with cities they attempt to “meet in the middle”, as there are sometimes issues that the Met Council may not make immediately and staff can provide that input.

Member Valentine thanked Mr. Wojchik for taking the time to provide this presentation. He asked if there is information available from the Met Council regarding changes in technology, specifically regarding transportation and changes to brick and mortar commercial as that market is changing faster than anticipated.

Mr. Wojchik recognized the change from brick and mortar and the difficulty that provides to redevelopment of those sites. He stated that those questions are great to hear because that means that he is thinking in the future in terms of planning elements. He stated that there is a lot of latitude in the plan and the Committee can think of how those elements relate to different portions of the plan.

Member Breuer asked if the cost of land and/or development is considered in terms of affordable housing.

Mr. Wojchik stated that there are a lot of variables as each housing situation is so unique.

Community Development Director Gladhill explained how the affordable housing threshold is determined and confirmed that construction and land costs are accounted.

Member Roering stated that as incomes increase, construction costs also increase and therefore the tables provided from the Met Council are updated annually.

Member Breuer stated that income is often slower to increase compared to other costs and asked how often those projections are updated.

Mr. Wojchik stated that the figures are updated at least annually, sometimes more often.

Member Breuer asked for information on the rental thresholds.

Community Development Director Gladhill provided the affordability thresholds for rentals as of 2015.

Member Kingston stated that he looked at the population forecasts for the City and noted that it did not appear to match the chart that was shown in the chart. He also noted that there was a slight decrease between 2030 and 2040 and asked for the reason.

Mr. Wojchik explained that the chart in the presentation was for the region at large and not simply Ramsey. He noted that the decrease is a result of the smaller family sizes, noting that even though people will be purchasing homes they will have a smaller family size which impacts the population growth.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the Met Council has acknowledged that the previous round of forecasts were not correct but believed that the new round of forecasts were more accurate. He stated that there is no penalty for not meeting those forecasts but helps the City to plan to ensure that the infrastructure will help to support that type of growth.

Member Bendsten stated that it was clear to him that the housing bubble was going to pop because people were being encouraged to purchase homes that they could not afford.

Mr. Wojchik stated that people are hopefully more cautious now.

Member Bennett stated that he accessed the handbook on his mobile phone and was surprised to see the quality and quantity of tools available.

Mr. Wojchik stated that the handbook is an incredible tool, especially for smaller communities that do not have a large number of staff to assist in the process.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the information and tools available in addition to the outreach from the Met Council is much improved over what was available ten years ago. He thanked Mr. Wojchik for attending the meeting tonight.

Mr. Wojchik thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak tonight. He welcomed any additional questions the members may think of and noted that if he does not have the answer he can point them in the right direction.

3. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

3.01: Finalize Vision Statement

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed the draft Vision Statement, noting that although this is not the final draft he wants to ensure that this is the draft the group would like to move forward for more input at the different forums that will be held.

Member Bauer referenced value number two and stated that land owner rights and private property rights seem to be the same thing.

Community Development Director Gladhill recognized that he may have missed an element of that statement and asked that the group assist him. It was confirmed that the statement was redundant and should end at land owner rights.

Member Kingston provided an edit to value number one that was decided at the last meeting.

It was noted that the original values three and four were combined and value five had been stricken.

3.02: Update on Future Land Use Map / Area West of Armstrong Boulevard Along Bunker Lake Boulevard

Community Development Director Gladhill provided a copy of the current land use map and the future land use map, noting that it is a working document that can be updated over time and contains the input from the Committee has given thus far. He highlighted elements on the future land use map including the transformation of the old municipal campus that will be developed into residential as well as information regarding the future business park. He confirmed that he could add the density ranges to the map to make it more clear. He provided more details on the different types of land use and the different types of development and benefits that are received, providing the example of a PUD and the tradeoffs that are done as a part of that process.

Member Roering stated that on the future land use map it appears that the existing homes will be demolished and developed.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that perhaps rural residential would be a better term to use rather than rural developing.

Member Roering stated that perhaps a developable area map would be helpful to identify the land that is available for development within the area marked as rural developing.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that just because something is on the future land use map does not necessarily mean it will occur. He confirmed that perhaps an overlay could be done.

Member Roering stated that it would also be helpful to identify the land that is undevelopable, such as wetland preservations.

Member Kingston asked if there is a definition of areas of interest and it was confirmed that a footnote could be added.

3.03: Discuss Format for February 13, 2017 Public Workshop

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the vision and land use map will be reviewed at the February 13th public workshop.

Member Roering asked if there are expectations that the Committee Members attend the workshops and if so, the level of participation that would be desired.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that staff will be there in an open house format for the public with different stations. He stated that Committee Members are welcome to attend but are not required to attend. He stated that the workshop will run from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Member Roering asked if the documents, once finalized, for the public workshop could be provided to the Committee prior to the workshop.

3.04: Overview and Discuss Next Steps for Transportation Plan

Community Development Director Gladhill distributed the minimum checklist of requirements regarding transportation. He noted that the Committee should review the information in the existing transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan but not get bogged down in details as this section of the Plan will need a complete overhaul as it is outdated. He reviewed the process the Committee will follow for the transportation section of the Plan, as well as other sections of the Plan. He noted that the Committee will focus on the larger picture vision and goals for that section, while the Public Works Committee will then thresh out the more detailed elements of that section. He noted that while not all the goals from the existing Plan have been achieved, the City has made large strides in moving forward and accomplishing a number of those goals.

3.05: Overview and Discuss Next Steps for Housing Plan

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that he originally believed that the transportation and housing plans could be discussed concurrently but after further discussion believed that transportation and parks and trails would be a better fit to be discussed together. He distributed the minimum requirements for the parks and trails section of the plan. He stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission will work on the details of the parks and trails section and reviewed the role the Committee will play in that process.

4. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

4.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed some of the next steps and workshop dates. He stated that the economic development and housing sections of the Plan would be discussed concurrently, noting that the Economic Development Authority may begin work on the economic development section prior to the Committee beginning work on that section.

5. MEMBER / STAFF INPUT

None.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Session of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gladhill
Community Development Director

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.

**RAMSEY 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

On Monday, July 10, 2017, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee met at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minnesota.

Present: Tim Gladhill, Community Development Director
 Mickey Adams
 Jim Bengtson
 Shane Bennett
 Randy Bauer
 Leslie Roering
 Wayne Scott
 Michael Valentine

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Gladhill welcomed the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. He stated he hopes to obtain feedback and comments from the group now that the first phase of the Comprehensive Plan document process has been completed. He added high attendance at the first public meeting provided a lot of feedback from residents. He noted the second phase will focus on goals and strategies for each chapter, as well as draft narratives within the chapters.

Mr. Scott stated residents in the City's rural areas are very concerned about maintaining the rural nature of their neighborhoods, which is one of the features of the City of Ramsey that drew them in the first place. He added many residents have questions about future of the COR, and what will happen there. He noted residents are interested in trails and access.

Mr. Scott stated the public meeting process is a good way to meet with residents and hear their comments and concerns. He added lower attendance at subsequent meetings may be due to the fact that many residents had already provided feedback, and feel that their comments were heard and will be acted upon.

Mr. Bennett stated, based on the workshops and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee's initial meetings, he believes the vision, mission and goals presented in the early drafts of the document are in alignment with what residents want. He added residents' areas of concern and priority were schools, parks and trails, preservation of rural aspects of the community, and more restaurants. He noted the public meeting process affirmed what the Steering Committee and City Staff already anticipated.

Mr. Valentine stated he believes City Staff have a good understanding of what the citizens of Ramsey want. He added residents were generally in agreement with where things are going. He noted the City has a unique opportunity to combine and balance both urban and rural aspects of the community, and City Staff is headed in the right direction so far.

Mr. Bengtson stated many residents expressed support for initiatives that have already been proposed, such as the potential for a community center, which is of definite interest in terms of planning but requires a funding partner. He added the real challenge is the rural/urban mix, as residents say they like the rural feel of the community and do not want to lose it, but generally it is somebody else's property that could potentially be developed. He noted this could be an issue in the north parts of the City, where there is an expectation that land will be developed and utilities installed.

Ms. Adams stated she recently drove by her old house, which is in a rural area of Ramsey. She added she believes the rural area should be defined so that rural properties have guidelines and parameters. She noted people are not taking care of their property in rural areas.

Mr. Gladhill stated many residents have expressed the importance of the City's rural character and how it can be maintained despite urban growth. He added there are areas that will remain rural in character, and some areas identified for development.

2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Review First Drafts of Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Gladhill stated the most significant Comprehensive Plan chapters set the stage for the rest of the document. He added the chapter on the Comprehensive Plan's framework outlines higher level planning goals and strategies and provides a community profile. He noted the very early drafts of the Land Use chapter will be reviewed, as well as planning and zoning districts.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Comprehensive Plan's Vision Statement, as well as the four broad goals, are derived directly from the City Council's Strategic Plan. He added five primary themes are identified, as well as a few secondary themes. He noted the primary themes are: passion for the future of Ramsey; preservation of rural character; Parks and Recreation; Transportation; and increased educational opportunities.

Mr. Gladhill stated secondary themes include the City's vision for and development of the COR, and development of a quality housing plan.

Mr. Gladhill stated drafting a detailed planning document is important as the City prioritizes goals as well as areas where resources are limited, and identifies opportunities for pursuing outside funding.

Mr. Gladhill stated population growth for 2016-2017 has been significantly ahead of forecasts. He added it is expected that this trend will continue.

Mr. Scott asked for clarification regarding decrease in employment rates on the chart showing Forecasted Growth in 2020.

Mr. Gladhill stated estimates are forecasted from Census data, as well as building permit requests.

Mr. Bauer stated areas that are employment-driven, such as industrial/commercial areas and development in the COR, will have higher employment rates.

Mr. Gladhill requested comments and feedback on the opening chapter, which is a brief introduction to the City of Ramsey.

Ms. Roering stated, under Primary Themes, “Parks and Recreation for all ages”, should be more inclusive of people with different abilities, and not just ages. She added she would like to have “age” deleted.

Ms. Roering stated she would increase the population growth numbers for 2020 to make them more realistic.

Mr. Gladhill stated that would have to be amended through the Metropolitan Council.

Ms. Roering asked if there is a benefit to showing higher population growth.

Mr. Gladhill it is speculative, especially when funding sources are being sought and considered. He added, in terms of higher growth rates, community feedback has indicated that more growth is not desirable. He noted, however, that is something that can be discussed.

Mr. Bauer stated there will be an increase in households and population based on the number of approved plats for housing units.

Mr. Valentine asked what the numbers would be corrected to.

Mr. Gladhill stated projected population growth is reviewed every year, based on a Metropolitan Council research forecasting model.

Ms. Roering stated the chart shows a decrease in population, but an increase in households. She stated the population forecasts should be truly reflective of what is happening in the community.

Mr. Gladhill stated the regional model tends to balance itself out, although the City’s household estimates are low and population estimates are high. He added the household size might decrease, but that is not the current trend.

Mr. Bauer stated lower median age is an indication of future population growth. He added this will have an impact on the discussion related to the possibility of a second elementary school.

Mr. Gladhill stated this will be a good topic for discussion at the July 17, 2017, meeting with representatives of the Metropolitan Council. He asked if any of the Comprehensive Plan group planned to attend that meeting.

Mr. Gladhill stated, regarding the Community Profile Chapter, policy decisions and current land use are reviewed, and compared with how land will potentially be used in the future.

Ms. Roering asked how neighboring cities compare in terms of forecasts for population growth.

Mr. Gladhill stated data was obtained from nearby cities for comparison purposes. He added housing stock is aging, jobs are mainly in the manufacturing segment, and the economic development of Highway 10 is an important focus. He noted Oak Grove and Nowthen are of interest due to their similarities and proximity to Ramsey.

Mr. Bauer stated there will be more pressure for residential expansion in Ramsey if other local communities do not support it.

Mr. Bennett stated those communities will also have transportation issues, which will mean that their traffic will be routed through Ramsey.

Ms. Roering agreed, adding the other communities do not have the roadway connections that Ramsey has.

Mr. Gladhill stated, regarding the Future Land Use map, feedback and comments on types of land use was received at the workshop. He added recent amendments included the creation of a Business Park-High Density Residential Zone.

Mr. Gladhill stated changing the designation of Green Valley Greenhouse has been discussed, as they want to double their growth potential. He added they have submitted a Conditional Use Permit amendment request, and City Staff will be working on that over the next 30-60 days, to determine appropriate zoning and land use.

Mr. Gladhill stated the previous Comprehensive Plan provides a good foundation in the Land Use section, which is the most important document within the Comprehensive Plan. He added the development of the area west of Armstrong Boulevard is a focal point, and future utilities in this area should be considered.

Mr. Bauer asked where the location of the proposed bridge will be.

Mr. Gladhill stated that issue will be reviewed with the City of Andover, as the proposed location lines up with a public park in Andover. He added there will be development north of that area that will also be reviewed. He noted blueprints have been provided to Andover City Council.

Ms. Roering asked whether “areas of interest” would stay on the map.

Mr. Gladhill stated those are for planning purposes only, and will not appear on a more detailed layout. He added areas that require future analysis will be reviewed separately.

Ms. Roering stated it might be helpful to have those areas on a separate document, to make it easier to see what is coming in terms of planning, for instance, the areas around Lake Itasca and 181st Avenue.

Mr. Gladhill agreed, adding it is important to estimate where primary growth will occur.

Mr. Bennett stated there was no park dedication for the COR, although a green area was incorporated.

Mr. Gladhill confirmed there is no park dedication for that area.

Ms. Roering agreed that the COR parks should be shown.

Mr. Gladhill stated the COR green spaces can be shown in the Parks and Recreation plan, as part of the primary corridor loop connecting the four major community parks, and the focal point of trail connection. He added Lake Itasca Trail can also be included. He noted the COR’s green spaces have separate considerations in terms of investment and funding, which will need to be noted and protected.

Ms. Roering stated the COR’s green spaces are a primary component and should be included in the City’s green community connections.

Mr. Bauer stated the COR could have its own separate map, identifying specific aspects of its land use.

Mr. Gladhill agreed, adding additional language on the main map can provide direction to separate maps.

Mr. Scott asked whether the landfill will ever be accessible for trails or recreation.

Mr. Gladhill stated the landfill will not be included, although the landfill area is shrinking over time. He added there is a significant area of old savannah natural habitat that is planned for

preservation and recreation. He noted, however the Pollution Control Agency will not allow the landfill to be include in the 20-year Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Land Use chapter has the most number of goals and strategies of any section. He added many of the goals have been achieved, and there was not a lot of comment received either for or against them. He asked the group whether they wanted to review or change any of the goals or strategies.

Ms. Roering asked whether there any merit to the order they are in.

Mr. Gladhill stated they can be arranged in any order.

Mr. Gladhill stated some priority goals are the property rights of existing residents, vision and strategies for the COR, and encouragement of retail use. He added the Land Use section can be an effective tool working through new development proposals, to provide guidelines and assure compatibility.

Mr. Bauer stated the Park and Recreation Commission has been advocating for a continuous trails plan through the community. He added residents have expressed that they do not want trails in their backyard or next to their house. He noted this ties into rights of property owners.

Mr. Bauer stated many communities have trail systems run along people's property lines, and residents can be concerned about what that might look like. He added once the trail is there, everybody uses it. He noted it is important to consider all the options and not let individual property owners dictate where trails can and cannot be located.

Mr. Bennett agreed, adding many neighborhoods are opposed to having a trail, or connecting to a trail, through their neighborhood, but after it is there they use it, and express how glad they are to have it. He added it is not as intrusive as people believe it will be.

Mr. Bennett stated he dislikes the term "walkable neighborhoods", as it does not address the broader primary goal of parks and trails planning, from a land use perspective. He added it only addresses the singular concept of walkability, which is not in alignment with the broad scope of other goals.

Mr. Gladhill stated maybe that section should be set aside and addressed within the Parks Master Plan.

Mr. Bennett agreed. He added it is still an important goal, the strategy of a connected community, but it is singular focused.

Ms. Roering stated the overall community connection piece is important and should be included in the Land Use Plan, but potentially under a different name.

Mr. Bennett agreed, adding the broad goal could be kept in the Land Use Plan, but specific details about walkability and trails could be included in the parks strategy.

Mr. Bennett stated language related detailed strategies will need to be updated from 20 years ago to make the Comprehensive Plan more cohesive.

Mr. Gladhill stated City Staff will review older language and changes in design and use, especially as it pertains to language that is not conservation/focused.

Mr. Gladhill stated, regarding rights of property owners, there are multiple sections that can be rephrased or combined. He added the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) can review this section as well, and the language in the overall goals section, to ensure that it lines up with their strategies.

Mr. Bennett stated he agrees with Ms. Roering that creating an order to the goals - primary goals and secondary goals - will increase consistency within the overall document.

Ms. Roering stated issues that residents raised at the workshops as their most important issues should be the primary goals. She added the issue that received the most comments was preservation of the City's rural character, which should be the top priority.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Highway 10 Access Plan was also a priority that came out of the workshops.

Mr. Valentine requested clarification regarding the EPB's role in reviewing the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Gladhill stated the property rights section can be amended, including consolidating the goals and broadening language related to walkability of neighborhoods. He added City Staff will work on creating a prioritization table.

Ms. Roering stated she supports re-wording the property rights section, and combining property rights goals.

Mr. Gladhill stated the property rights section probably belongs in either the Smart Citizen-Focused Government or Citizen Engagement sections. He added I, H and A can be combined under Citizen Engagement. He noted J can be incorporated into the Natural Resources section.

Mr. Bauer stated there were many questions at the public hearing regarding housing developments. He added it would be beneficial to have the development perspective represented at the workshop.

Mr. Bennett stated the language in the Natural Resources section was something like “to take advantage of Ramsey’s natural resources”.

Mr. Gladhill agreed.

Mr. Bengtson stated people were concerned about property rights 10 years ago, as the language is imbedded several times.

Mr. Gladhill agreed, stating property rights issues are still important, but perhaps over-emphasized here. He added it can be clearly stated without repeating it multiple times.

Ms. Roering stated property rights have been raised at Planning Commission meetings as well, and that is an important issue that will continue to come up.

Mr. Gladhill stated City Staff can try to consolidate and simplify the language in this section. He added there are for strategies for finding a meaningful density transition, strategies for the COR, and protecting the property rights of existing residents.

Mr. Bauer stated current residents will have issues with the way properties look on the 2040 Land Use map and what is proposed in terms of future development.

Mr. Gladhill stated any development proposals will require a Comprehensive Plan amendment. He added there was frustration 10 years ago as the land use plan kept changing, and there was a lack of consistency related to neighborhood planning. He noted public input will be required to determine whether there is a compelling reason for any land use change.

Mr. Gladhill stated City Staff is available to receive feedback and answer questions by email or phone call. He added the group has provided many good ideas for moving forward.

Mr. Gladhill reviewed the first draft of the Land Use chapter, which includes community designation categories assigned by the Metropolitan Council. He added the Land Use chapter addresses ways of accomplishing land use goals. He noted the City of Ramsey is designated as an “emerging suburban edge” community, along with other communities located outside the I-694 corridor that are experiencing rapid growth. He noted the types of land use will be broken down, including Parks, Single-family detached, as well as rural and urban future use.

Mr. Gladhill stated specific areas of importance within the community can be referenced, to include the COR master plan, the Old Town Hall, and the Mississippi River corridor, which includes erosion and water quality issues in shoreline and non-shoreline areas. He added a plan related to the Old Town Hall area has not been formalized.

Mr. Bengtson left the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Mr. Gladhill stated, regarding Garden Farme, it is the owner's intention to leave a legacy in the area, to continue the farm's agricultural practices. He added the City hopes to maintain Garden Farme in its current state. He noted City Staff are reviewing the Land Use Plan to see if there is a way to pursue that opportunity.

Mr. Gladhill stated action items will be added to the Comprehensive Plan that is intended for submission to the Metropolitan Council. He asked whether the group had any comments or feedback in terms of format, layout and content.

Mr. Scott stated he is very satisfied. Mr. Bennett stated the draft document looks good so far.

Mr. Gladhill stated City Staff contracted with the same firm that has created other City documents. He added the layout is simple, straight-forward and easy to understand, with color coded sections for easy reference. He noted individual chapters can be pulled out and used as stand-alone documents.

Mr. Gladhill stated a lot of hard work has gone into the Comprehensive Plan document so far, and City Staff, including the Development team, Public Safety, Engineering, and Planning, have worked hard to reach goals and move the document forward.

Ms. Roering stated she likes the comments and photos along the right margin. She stated there may be some opportunity to solicit citizen remarks and incorporate them in that margin, to bring out the personal aspects of what we hope to achieve as a community.

Mr. Bauer asked whether the draft document would be available to review on Thursday nights in the COR.

Mr. Gladhill stated at least the three chapters that have been reviewed can be highlighted at the community events. He added a "comments card box" is planned, to solicit comments and feedback about the Comprehensive Plan, and those comments could be used in the document margin section.

Ms. Roering stated a request for resident feedback could be posted on the City's Facebook page.

Mr. Gladhill asked whether the group would like to continue meeting every other month, and whether the meeting format is acceptable.

Ms. Roering stated that will depend upon the progress being made by City Staff.

Mr. Gladhill stated he would maintain the meeting schedule of every other month, but planning issues may come up in the meantime.

Mr. Gladhill asked whether any of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee members are available on Thursday, July 13, 2017, to represent the Committee at The Draw Summer Event series. He stated the booth will be open from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Ms. Roering stated if City Staff could send out an email to ensure that residents have access to essential information regarding the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Gladhill agreed.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gladhill
Community Development Director

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Mary Mullen
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.

**RAMSEY 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

On Monday, November 13, 2017, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee met at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minnesota.

Present: Tim Gladhill, Community Development Director
Randy Bauer
Scott Breuer
Christopher Ouelette
Leslie Roering
Dan Torgerson
Michael Valentine
Mickey Adams
Jim Bengtson
Wayne Scott

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

2.1 Review Feedback from October 26 Public Workshop

Mr. Gladhill stated a Comprehensive Plan public workshop was held on October 26, 2017, for the purposes of obtaining public feedback and comment on the community profile and land use plan. He added there was a great turn-out, with 66 participants, and helpful feedback was received by City Staff. He asked the Committee members for their comments and feedback.

Mr. Bauer stated there was some discussion about Highway 47, and how much, if any, control the City of Ramsey has over that Corridor. He added the Railroad crossing in Anoka needs to be addressed and discussions with the City of Anoka are crucial. He noted residents' questions and comments about City parks were well-addressed by City Staff. One comment that was received was a lack of support for multiple smaller parks, as opposed to a few large open areas.

Mr. Bauer stated the most common concern was the railroad crossing and how something needs to be done there.

Mr. Gladhill agreed, adding there has been an emphasis on developing larger parks rather than small neighborhood parks.

Ms. Adams stated there a turn lane has been discussed at the intersection of Bunker Lake Boulevard and Highway 7. Mr. Gladhill confirmed that a turn lane at that location is being planned.

Mr. Gladhill stated one goal is to prioritize the network in the COR – focusing on that priority and laying out a plan, and then decide on a few corridors every few years to focus on developing individual plans. He added Highway 47 and Highway 5 will likely be the first joint project, and then Armstrong or Green Valley Road corridor. The main focus will be on intersection safety.

Mr. Gladhill stated the balance between the City's rural character and its urban strategies is a priority objective, while the overall strategy is the Urban Service Area. He stressed the importance of strengthening that policy and communication surrounding it. He noted there are many areas in Ramsey that are guided for Rural Character, and there is a boundary where urban growth will stop.

Mr. Valentine stated the challenge is communicating the concepts to residents, and getting the ideas out there. He added residents may not feel like they know enough about planning to get involved in maintaining the City's rural character. He noted one resident asked where the City's rural character is it reflected in the plan and on the map, and which rural areas will be preserved and expanded.

Mr. Gladhill stated City Staff is working on compiling a list of illustrations and policies that will help to strengthen that connection.

Mr. Bauer stated many residents who have lived in Ramsey for years are not supportive of more development and feel strongly about maintaining the City's rural character. He added urban development should be encouraged close to Highway 10 and Highway 47, Armstrong Boulevard and other major roads, and draw retailers to the COR. He noted northern areas of the City where there are larger lots will be reserved as rural areas.

Mr. Gladhill stated, with regard to preservation of rural areas, the draft Community Profile has been provided for the Committee members' review, Community profile – 2nd document in your packet. He added City Staff is working on narrative, text and layout.

Ms. Roering stated an interesting concept related to the Parks Map would be to delineate areas within the City based on their closest park, or the park that the residents of that neighborhood use. She added this would show what activities residents are engaging in, and in which areas of the City.

Mr. Gladhill agreed, adding that can be easily done, as park boundaries follow major thoroughfares, and hopefully census data will do the same.

2.2 Review Background and Demographic Data for the Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Gladhill stated visual aids with demographic data has been provided for the Committee's review, including graphs and illustrations, as requested at earlier meetings. He added it will be helpful to break it down into neighborhoods, which is an aspect of demographic data which is currently missing. He noted this data can also be categorized using census boundaries before the deadline, and data related to 6-7 specific demographic categories would be sufficient for supporting the City's policies.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Demographics section begins with a focus on the COR as that is where a concentrated amount of development is occurring. He added, however, that does not have to be the first area of focus. He noted there is some overlap between the Demographics chapter and the Land Use chapter. He stressed the importance of having a history of the COR development at the beginning of this document, followed by overall existing land uses.

Mr. Valentine asked whether rural areas could be broken out into undeveloped land ready to be developed, and undeveloped land that will not be developed. He added that will help further the conversation around rural land use.

Ms. Roering stated, in her opinion, The COR is a subset from total land use, and details regarding its development should come after the main map. She added she does not think it is relevant to include a dollar amount associated with development of The COR, and requested that it be removed.

Mr. ___ stated he does believe it is necessary to include the cost, or the square footage, of the COR. Mr. Gladhill stated the dollar amount could be included elsewhere. He added these are broad chapters, and a more detailed system plan can be put in place later.

Ms. Roering stated she supports using square footage, as other specific areas are referred to using square footage.

Mr. ___ stated the COR has been the subject of controversy for many years, and has not progressed as far as originally proposed. He added there has been significant financial investment. He noted he agrees it would be inconsistent to refer specifically to costs related to the COR but not in other developments areas.

Mr. Gladhill stated an investment document related to The Cor that was drafted by a graphic designer could be included in this section. Mr. Bauer agreed, adding it should be included to provide specific data related to The COR development.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Demographics section shows that Existing Residential is the min type of land use in the City of Ramsey, and provides some background information on commercial and industrial land use, as well as rural character, including parks, recreation and open space. He noted this section includes a table on population demographics, with population forecasts, household sizes and household growth.

Mr. Gladhill stated Ramsey is a relatively young community, but the “baby boom” bubble continues to grow, and desired housing options are changing. Lot sizes are becoming smaller, and there is a need for senior living options. He stressed the importance of keeping this in mind as the housing plan is reviewed and updated.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Demographics data shows a wide variety of income types, housing types, and a large majority of residents, over 90%, are white, non-Hispanic residents. He added minority populations are starting to grow in Ramsey, and demographics will change accordingly.

Ms. Roering asked whether manufactured homes figure into the housing types. Mr. Gladhill stated they are not included on the graph, but they can be added. He added there is one mobile home park with 84 mobile homes.

Mr. Gladhill stated an important factor is the number of households within the urban service area who have private water and septic systems. He added approximately 4,000 residents have their own systems. He noted 86% of housing is owner-occupied.

Mr. Gladhill stated the highest category of jobs in Ramsey is in the manufacturing sector, and all other industries are pretty much balanced.

Ms. Roering asked whether commute times are included in the Transportation Plan.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Census data will provide actual counts that will assist with estimating and forecasting of transportation needs. Mr. Bauer stated that Census data will emphasize the rail station. Mr. Gladhill agreed, adding improvements to Highway 10 will also be more important.

Mr. Gladhill stated it is important for the City’s economic development to make The COR a priority aspect of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Scott asked what would draw people to The COR. Ms. Roering asked what kind of amenities would draw people away from their homes. Mr. Bauer stated the City has tried to get retailers in, and incentives should be considered for retailers.

Mr. Gladhill stated City Staff wanted to highlight accomplishments in the planning process, and provide a review of the achievements of the past ten years.

Mr. Gladhill stated four key land use themes were heard during the open houses, and better ways to phrase them have been considered: “balanced rural character” (rural character); an active community” (parks); “a connected community” (transportation); and a subcategory is planning for schools.

Mr. Gladhill stated an outcome might be consideration of shifting School District boundaries, as Districts fluctuate with Census data. He added the City could review before the Census, due to increased residential development.

Ms. Roering agreed that is an important consideration that should be discussed. She added other learning environments should be considered rather than just schools – libraries, community centers, and other places where kids learn.

Mr. Gladhill stated that theme can be called “positive learning environment” for the time being.

Mr. Gladhill stated planning and allocating takes time and resources, as well as prioritization. He added a 5-year amendment could be considered. He noted City Staff is available for one-on-one conversations if needed, but this process will take a few sessions.

Mr. Gladhill stated development is shifting from traditional-sized lots to lots that are smaller and narrower. He stressed the importance of planning for that type of development, and medium density should be split into detached and attached categories.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Transportation Plan will focus on key corridors and themes.

Mr. Valentine asked how the transition from rural residential to medium density will happen, and how that will be addressed.

Mr. Gladhill stated the land use plan itself can influence what the built environment will look like. He added, for example, the development west of Armstrong Boulevard was planned for 80 foot-wide lots, but the developer is now proposing 60 foot-wide lots. He added the City will need to determine a transition strategy, developing meaningful transitions while sticking to the land use plan.

He noted property outside the urban service boundary is currently guided for rural development, and the Planning Commission is concerned that this is not the right location.

Mr. Valentine suggested a separate color shade between rural and medium density to provide a transition in the color coding between the two areas.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Metropolitan Council has designated levels of community development designation, and the City of Ramsey falls in the high growth category. He added the City has experienced high levels of growth and concentrated areas of development, and a goal is to grow

the City of Ramsey from border to border. He noted economic forecasts show that jobs are being created in Ramsey.

Mr. Gladhill stated it might be a good idea to have a list of Ramsey's Top 40 Employers for the community profile.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Committee has discussed the following consideration points:

- add manufactured homes to housing units;
- the designation of neighborhood categories for land use;
- categorizing undeveloped land that will be developed and undeveloped land that will never be developed;
- how many Ramsey residents work in Ramsey?
- why should I live in Ramsey?
- why should I move my business to Ramsey?
- add a Top 50 Ramsey Employers to the forecast section

Ms. Roering asked whether the City of Ramsey is considering a minimum wage requirement. Mr. Gladhill stated a policy statement has already been made, but that is something the Committee can look into, to be included in the economic development chapter

2.3 Review Draft Land Use Chapter of Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Gladhill gave the Committee members a copy of the Land Use chapter, which is still being revised. He asked them to contact him with any comments or questions after they have had a chance to review the chapter. He added the City Council put together a Mission Statement a few years ago, stressing the importance of working together to responsibly grow the community. He noted six core values were identified.

Ms. Roering stated it would be a good idea to add a disclaimer that priorities are not based on want or need.

Mr. Gladhill agreed. He stated, as an example, the rural character of the area was a main consideration when the Villas at North Fork were planned. He added a checklist or criteria could be required to provide a compelling reason to change the plan.

Mr. Valentine stated the Land Use Map has areas that are color coded for medium density, and rural areas with a distinct color code. He added there should be a color code for transition areas.

Mr. Gladhill stated, about ten years ago, property owners in Green Valley near Highway 5 requested higher density land use, and that was added to the Plan. He added that can be changed. He noted the property owners were concerned about tax implications.

Mr. Bauer stated there was a comment earlier about the increasing demand for narrower lots. He added that a potential zoning change should be considered for lots that are narrower, to cut down on the number of variances that will be required.

Mr. Gladhill stated the establishment of a new zoning district for medium density single family is referenced on Page 5.

Mr. Bauer requested that the medium density single family zone should be incorporated into the Land Use Map. He added there was a new zone added to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan that never went through.

Mr. Gladhill stated City Staff supports a dual community designation, that shows the suburban edge as well as rural residential. He added the ratio is only being used in the urban service area, and it is important to the community.

Ms. Roering agreed, adding there are many local communities that are like Ramsey, which might make a better case for the dual designation.

Mr. Gladhill presented graphics depicting forecasts and community statistics that were designed by the Resilient Communities project. He added City Staff hopes to receive more visual aids from the Resilient Communities project, and this has been a benefit to the City's participation. He noted a graphic showing a wide variety of City statistics, including undeveloped land, trails, protected wetland, shoreline, total number of housing units, types of housing, septic vs. sewer systems, and employment.

Mr. Valentine stated he would like to see something that shows a designation between undeveloped land that is going to be developed, and undeveloped land that will not be developed.

Mr. Gladhill agreed, adding the Land Use Map will indicate areas of future retail, residential, and other uses. He added the map will be revised to layer areas that define rural character as well as areas of intense development.

Mr. Gladhill presented a community map visual aid created by the Resilient Communities project that shows 36% of the land mass in Ramsey is rural residential. He added the map shows that The COR development comprises only 2.3% of the land use in the City of Ramsey.

Ms. Roering stated it is a little confusing to have two different keys for the different maps with the same colors. She added, in addition, zoning in The COR is not defined, and the "TC1" and "TC2" designations are confusing.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Resilient Communities created the visual aids using raw data using older maps provided by City Staff, but a final map will be completed by the end of the Fall Semester 2017.

Mr. Gladhill stated the category of “closed landfill” is a State requirement, that is mandatory for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Gladhill stated regional parks and trails are included under “regional facilities”. He added another map depicts areas of future potential development: north of Brookfield; west of Armstrong; south of Highway 10; The COR; and a potential future development of a portion of Rum River Hills Golf Course.

Mr. Gladhill stated it will be necessary to acknowledge the City of Ramsey’s affordable housing requirements. He added the majority of the City’s current housing stock is at or below 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI). He noted there is no penalty associated with this requirement, as it is a reflection of the Land Use Plan.

Mr. Valentine asked whether there is a housing threshold that the City is striving for that would provide resources for the community. Mr. Gladhill stated there is a need for a wide range of housing types, and assistance comes from the State in the form of tax credits. He added that provides value to the community.

Mr. Gladhill stated local employers are having difficulty finding qualified workers that live in or near Ramsey. He added 75% of tenants at the Common Bond apartment development were current residents of Ramsey or adjacent communities.

Mr. Gladhill stated the City’s staged development plan for future water and sewer extensions must be amended. He added centralized sewer collection is an important consideration for the Metropolitan Council.

Ms. Roering asked whether zoning for high density residential is a consideration, as there are several developments that are above 15 units per acre.

Mr. Gladhill stated high density zoning is mainly in The COR, which allows for much more than 15 units per acre. He added categories could be added specifically for The COR. He noted the Metropolitan Council has requested mixed use designation, but high density can be reflected in both.

Ms. Roering stated, in her opinion, that is acceptable for planning purposes only, but not as something that will provide guidance for developers.

Mr. Gladhill stated land use resources will have a separate section in the Natural Resources Chapter. He added the areas that contain the City's unique resources, including the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area, must be consistent with State rules and Zoning Codes. He noted City Staff have recently received new rules about that.

Mr. Gladhill stated resources planning must be included in the Land Use Plan, and a separate natural resources chapter is planned.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Old Town Hall is the only property on the National Historic Registry in the City of Ramsey. He added the Resilient Communities project is reviewing that property and its potential uses. He noted the Bruce Bakken legacy farm has been taken out of the Comprehensive Plan after Mr. Bakken's recent death.

Mr. Gladhill stated the zoning map and zoning code need to be updated, so that the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code are consistent. He added updates to The COR development plan should be included, and the Planning Commission is working on that.

Mr. Gladhill stated the Committee's recommendations would be reviewed by the Planning Commission at their December 2, 2017, meeting.

Ms. Roering stated she would like to see something more about the area schools – a map of the School District, boundaries, other data related to schools. She added it did not feel like that was addressed in the front of the chapter.

Mr. Gladhill stated there is a School District map, and more demographics could be added about school age children. He added the largest school-age demographic is 5 years – 14 years. He added college-level learning, community learning, and all-age learning has also been discussed.

Mr. Scott asked whether open enrollment at the area's schools has an impact on demographics and population in the area.

Mr. Gladhill stated he would look into getting open enrollment statistics. Mr. Bauer stated that would be a good idea.

Mr. Gladhill asked whether the Committee feels comfortable with the amount of information on parks, recreation and open space, for which there are separate chapters. Ms. Roering stated she feels more should be added, such as a regional parks map.

Mr. Gladhill stated a regional parks and trails map can be added. He added the long-term goal of a circle loop of trails connecting all the parks will be reflected here as well. He presented a natural resource-based planning map, which will have some narrative added to it is reviewed by the Planning Commission.

2.4 Discuss Future Meetings

Mr. Gladhill stated he would like to pursue a more aggressive schedule through the first quarter of 2018, and hold Committee meetings on the second Monday of every month.

Mr. Gladhill reviewed topics for upcoming meetings:

December 11, 2017 – Transportation and Economic Development

January 8, 2018 – Parks Plan

February 12, 2018 - Water Resources and Housing

March 12, 2018 – Chapter Reviews

April 9, 2018 – Workshop

Mr. Gladhill stated a public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan would be held at the Planning Commission's May 3, 2018, meeting, as well as a review at the City Council's May 22, 2018, Regular Meeting. He added City Staff will be prepared to submit the final Comprehensive Plan Document to the Metropolitan Council by the deadline at the end of June 2018.

There were no objections to the schedule from the Committee Members.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gladhill
Community Development Director

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Mary Mullen
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.