

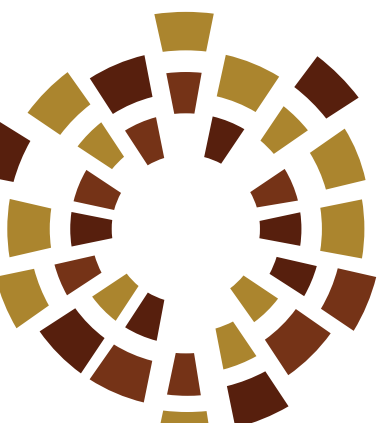


The COR Public Realm Framework

Municipal Plaza

Lake Ramsey Commons

Greenway Trail Connection



The COR Parks + Public Places City of Ramsey, Minnesota

Public Realm Framework + Cost Evaluation
December 2015



Lake Ramsey Commons Rendering (Satoko Muratake, 2016)

Prepared For



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PERFORMANCE
DRIVEN DESIGN.

History & Context

In the late 1990's, following a citizen-led referendum calling on the City of Ramsey to develop a 'town center', Ramsey has forwarded an innovative vision for a new downtown district (The COR, an acronym for City of Ramsey), defined through a sequence of adopted plans that have led to a variety of successful development projects in all categories including; housing, school, medical, office, municipal, commercial and the focus of this study, new additions to the city park and trail system—within and connecting to The COR.

(Excerpts from the 'Mississippi Skyway Preliminary Engineering Report' – SRF et al. 2014)

"The City of Ramsey, with the Metropolitan Council, has envisioned a multi-modal town center, with access via commuter rail, car, bicycle, and on foot. The 'COR' development is a planned 400 acre mixed-use and transit-oriented development site that includes a mix of residential housing choices for people of all incomes.

Establishing parks and creating quality recreational and open space opportunities remains a high priority for the City. The CITY OF RAMSEY 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE identifies the need to "Create vehicular and non-vehicular linkages to neighboring communities and between city neighborhoods, trails, recreation, work and shopping" as a component of their future planning checklist.

The Mississippi Skyway pedestrian bridge will provide a critical direct pedestrian and bicycle connection between the City of Ramsey's pedestrian-oriented 'COR' development, the Ramsey Northstar Station, Ramsey Park & Ride and the resources associated with the Mississippi River and attendant regional amenities. Currently, Trunk Highway 10 (TH 10) and the parallel BNSF Railway Company



Ramsey Town Center Master Plan (CLOSE, 2001)



Proposed Mississippi Skyway (SRF, 2014)



Development Plan 6.0 (Landform 2012)

and Metro Transit Northstar Commuter Rail railroad corridor are barriers to safe pedestrian and bicycle access between The COR and the river.

At its heart, the Mississippi Skyway project is about overcoming boundaries to safe bicycle and pedestrian circulation while expanding and enhancing multi-modal transportation, economic development and recreational options to promote a livable, vibrant region and community."

More recently, The City of Ramsey invited a team of consultants to work with City Department Leadership to set baseline assumptions that would help inform ongoing decisions related to future park and trail projects within The COR. This process outlined expected uses, facilities and features (a very basic design program), that was translated into a preliminary estimate of potential construction costs for each of the primary COR area components. Study conclusions included a summary of possible 'Scenarios + Strategies' available to support project funding and implementation.

Public Realm Framework



COR Public Realm Framework Plan (Jacobson/LHB 2015)

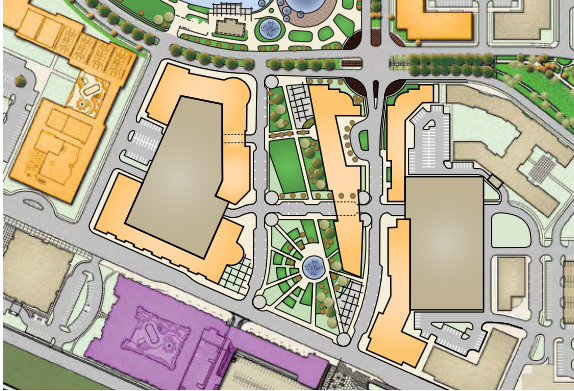
The Public Realm is what gives cities, districts and neighborhoods their identity - their unique sense of PLACE. Typically the public realm includes streets, parks, plazas, trails and other amenities, oftentimes integrating both public and private property. For the City of Ramsey, it is this network of connected spaces (illustrated in the Public Realm Framework Diagram above), that sets the stage for further development, defines the qualities and character (the Brand), and also promotes The COR as a vibrant, dynamic, must-experience local and regional destination.

The COR is designed to put the pedestrian first, by creating a safe and completely walkable environment. Active uses along the street reinforce its vitality, as does traffic-calming measures and accommodations for bicycles. Pedestrian through-block pathways connect destinations, providing equally inviting alternatives to the more traditional sidewalks along the street.

With increasing demand for efficient and innovative design, the public realm is frequently both a working landscape as well as a beautiful one. Water is captured and used. There is potential for energy generation in the form of sun, wind and geothermal to be harvested and distributed beneath parks, streets and pathways to serve projects within the community. Plants are selected to help clean the air and sequester carbon, and urban agriculture creates productive landscapes within available open space.

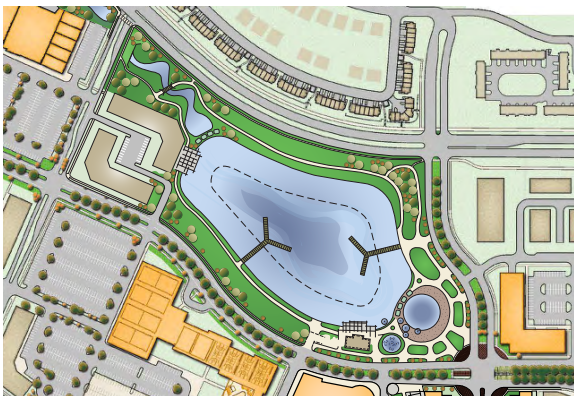
This study values the many contributions made by others, both in previous planning work and completed projects. While this study acknowledges the overall context of these various accomplishments, the primary focus here is on three primary components within The COR including: the Municipal Plaza, Lake Ramsey Commons, and the Greenway Trail Connection.

Framework Components



Municipal Plaza

In each of the many different planning frameworks over the years, the Municipal Plaza has been identified as the primary civic space at the very heart of The COR. Located directly across Sunwood Drive from Ramsey City Hall, this crucial public amenity will serve as the central gathering space for day-to-day activities and will certainly attract heightened private sector interest in development of adjacent properties.



Lake Ramsey Commons

As the major public amenity illustrated in the Development Plan 6.0, Lake Ramsey Commons will become a spectacular water-centric addition to the emerging park and trail system that connects the whole community. It holds a key position as the connecting hub between The Draw to the east, the proposed Greenway Trail Connection to the west, the Municipal Plaza and Commuter Rail Station to the south, with the proposed Mississippi Skyway linking the regional park and trail to The COR.



Greenway Trail Connection

Various scenarios and alignments were studied, and each in their own way serve to illustrate the strategic opportunity to connect amenities in The COR with Lake Itasca to the west via a public greenway trail. The greenway provides visual continuity east-west through The COR, and becomes the preferred access route for the hundreds of residential units between Lake Itasca and the retail destinations within The COR—strengthening the vitality of these commercial enterprises.

Frame of Reference - Examples of Park Construction Costs

The 'Estimates of Potential Construction Costs' included on the following pages are somewhat conservative and general in content. For the purposes of this study, costs will serve as a solid foundation for further discussion/decision as detailed design work proceeds for each component.



Gold Medal Park
~\$15/SF



Bloomington Central Station
~\$50/SF



Target Field Plaza
~\$100/SF

Municipal Plaza



Alternative Plan for Consideration (Jacobson/LHB 2015)

Simply stated, Municipal Plaza is the single most important component of the COR Public Realm Framework. It is the place to meet, the orientation point for wayfinding in The COR, and serves as the gateway to other public amenities and attractions nearby. Sitting at the crossroads of strong civic presence, residential density, transit options and retail storefronts, this location brings together all the elements of innovative and sustainable city-building.

Exploring several possible configurations confirmed the need to fully integrate uses, amenities and materials with Sunwood Drive (Ramsey's Main Street) while creating a clearly visible and accessible connection between the proposed Mississippi Skyway and Lake Ramsey Commons. This vital 'public promenade' along Center Street provides the primary north/south armature through The COR and also links a variety of facilities and amenities such as the Regional Park, The Draw, North Commons and other destinations. (See also the document addressing a realigned Regional Trail through The COR along Center Street, entitled 'Central Anoka County Trail and connection to Mississippi West Regional Park'.)

For the purposes of defining potential costs for future construction, a preliminary list of park elements (or a basic design program) was discussed including:

- Flexible use, paved plaza area to accommodate special events such as Happy Days
- Interactive, decorative, sculptural water feature as a City icon
- Integrated stormwater management and other infrastructure systems
- Formalized planting design representing Minnesota landscapes (lake, prairie, woodland, etc.)
- Lighting, furniture, art and other elements to create unique identity and character

Recommendations

The Municipal Plaza will clearly identify the center of civic life and support a variety of daily activities within The COR. This key public PLACE represents a rare opportunity within the City of Ramsey to encourage vertical mixed-use development, with restaurants (and future retail stores) fronting the plaza. The relationship between The COR's Main Street (Sunwood Drive) and the Municipal Plaza as completely integrated pieces of the whole, is critical for the success of this district.

When completed as envisioned, the combined presence of these two public realm components, The Plaza and Main Street, will create a signature destination, and will leverage additional private-sector investment in this area. 'Restaurant Row', as part of the unique mix of uses within and adjacent to the Municipal Plaza, will contribute to the intensity and vibrant street life that characterize successful placemaking. To realize its full potential at this location (in contrast to sites along Lake Ramsey) will require a solid commitment from both public and private participants to integrate these types of ground floor uses within development projects near the Plaza.

District parking strategies need to be explored and pursued to address issues related to vehicle movement, convenient access, and to provide maximum benefit/support for mixed-use development throughout The COR—and this is true for the park spaces too. While district parking is likely to begin with centrally located surface lots, over time, as new development intensifies, these will be converted to structured parking, either as stand-alone facilities (meeting specific design standards) or fully integrated within creatively designed development sites close to the Plaza. There are many precedent projects, local and national examples, which illustrate the variety of options available, from traditional approaches to the latest advancements in flat floor, flex-use/convertible strategies.

Primary Project Elements



Fountain and open space



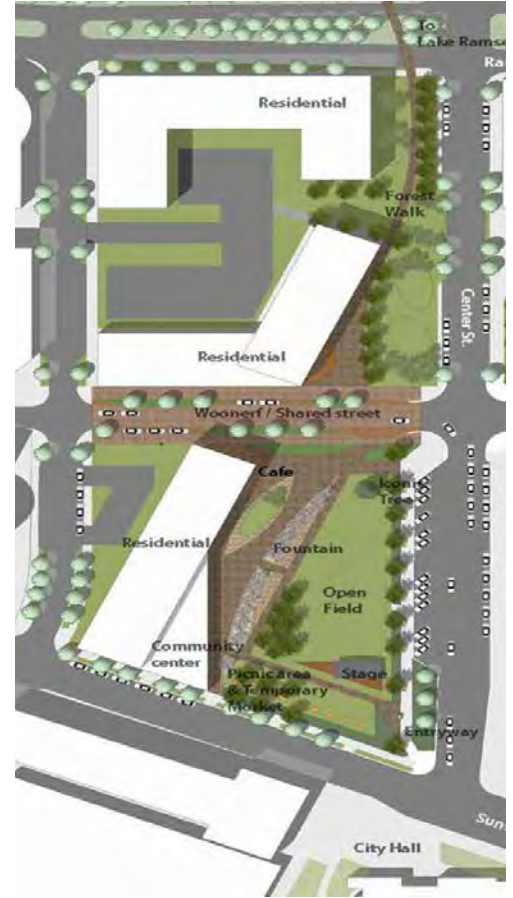
Shared street in commercial district



Welcoming edges, gateway to park



Forest walk to Lake Ramsey



Illustrative Plan (Cunningham Group 2013)

Municipal Plaza

Basic assumptions that support Estimate of Potential Construction Costs:

- Total acres/square footage (approximate): 2 acres/87,120 square feet

Estimate based on park elements illustrated on Concept Studies:

1. pavement (1/2 of total park area) 43,560 x \$15/square foot	\$ 650,000
2. plantings (1/2 of total park area) 43,560 x \$12/square foot	\$ 525,000
3. stage area canopy (space frame/awning)	\$ 250,000
4. lighting 70 pedestrian scale fixtures x \$5,000 each	\$ 350,000
5. furniture i.e. planter walls, benches, bike racks, receptacles, etc	\$ 300,000
6. signage including large monument, information, direction	\$ 100,000
7. water feature (decorative, interactive, sculptural)	\$ 200,000
8. excavation/grading 25,000 cubic yards x \$3/cubic yard	\$ 75,000
9. stormwater (surface / below ground), utilities, infrastructure*	\$ 250,000
Subtotal	\$ 2,700,000
Contingency and Soft Costs	\$ 810,000
TOTAL	\$ 3,510,000
	or \$ 40.29 per square foot

*District systems approach vs. site by site.

Lake Ramsey Commons



Lake Ramsey Commons Plan (Jacobson/LHB 2015)

As a major new public amenity, Lake Ramsey Commons has the potential to fulfill a list of much-discussed objectives related to water-oriented recreational uses in the community. This is an opportunity to integrate natural systems, with a focus on water resources and native landscapes, within an urban, pedestrian-oriented environment. As an added benefit, this will create an inviting backdrop for new development, active and passive recreation venues and other attractions. A destination in and of itself with proposed loop walkways and bicycle trails, The Lake also makes important connections to similar systems at The Draw and to points west as part of the proposed Greenway Trail connection to a proposed new community park at Lake Itasca. For the purposes of defining potential costs for future construction, a preliminary list of park elements (or basic design program) was discussed including:

- Concrete lined wading pond and sand beach
- Splash pad play area / water feature
- 6 to 7 acre lake with fishing pier(s) and other public access locations
- Pavilion/picnic shelter designed as a multi-purpose structure

Recommendations

Prepare a preliminary (schematic design) drawing set for the Lake Ramsey Commons land parcel to guide ongoing, and future excavation in this area. Define a prescribed phasing

sequence that supports both future park construction and the need for fill material in the rest of The COR. Complete a detailed survey of this land parcel; stake out the extent of proposed lake boundaries and other park elements to clearly define the limits of disturbance and the potential for tree planting and other restorative landscape installations relating to the lake and greenway connections.

Survey a specific parcel along the lake edge to be reserved for future food / concession venue; promote the idea of one lakeside restaurant similar to Tin Fish (Lake Calhoun) or Bread and Pickle (Lake Harriet) in Minneapolis. This singular food venue will provide the desired lakeside dining experience without diminishing the level of intensity and street activity needed to support successful mixed-use and restaurant development around the Municipal Plaza.



Lake Ramsey Commons Rendering (Satoko Muratake, 2016)

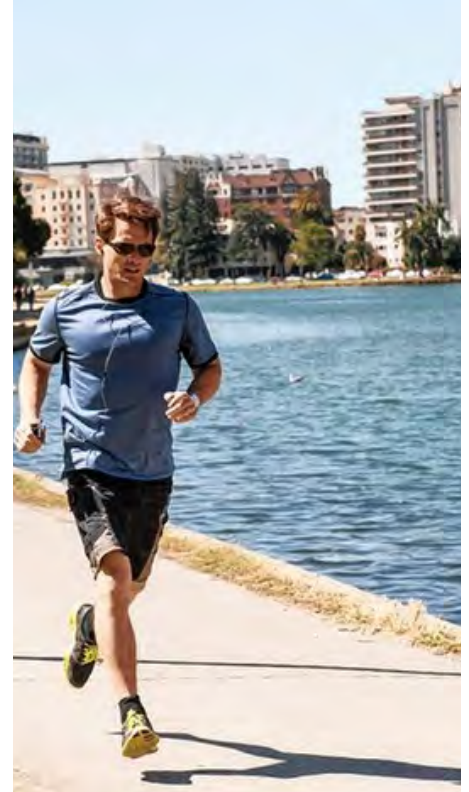
Primary Project Elements



Bike trail and path



Wading Pond and splash pad



Pedestrian paths



Planted, soft edges



Flex use pavilion

Lake Ramsey Commons

Basic assumptions that support Estimate of Potential Construction Costs:

- Total acres/square footage for park area (approx.): 13.5 acres / 588,060 square feet
- Total acres/square footage for lake (surface area approx.): 6 acres / 261,360 square feet

Estimate based on park elements illustrated on Concept Studies:

1. concrete wading pond, overlook; \$6/sf	\$130,800
2. concrete bike trail and pedestrian path; \$5/sf	\$ 270,000
3. plantings ~ 200,000 square feet x \$5/square foot	\$ 1,000,000
4. lighting 70 pedestrian scale fixtures x \$5,000 each	\$ 350,000
5. furniture, signage and lighting	\$ 750,000
6. splash pad play water feature (interactive, sculptural)	\$ 300,000
7. entry plaza including pavement, sculpture	\$ 100,000
8. fishing pier	\$ 30,000
9. pavilion (flex use, picnic shelter, no rest rooms)	\$ 250,000
10. excavation/grading 183,000 cubic yards x \$3/cubic yard	\$ 540,000
11. lake liner 300,000 square feet x \$3.50/square foot	\$ 1,050,000
12. stormwater (surface / below ground), utilities, infrastructure*	\$ 300,000
Subtotal	\$ 4,710,800
Contingency and Soft Costs	\$ 1,413,240
TOTAL	\$ 6,224,040
	or \$ 10.58 per square foot

*District systems approach vs. site by site.

Greenway Trail Connection



Greenway Trail Connection Plan (Jacobson/LHB 2015)

This essential Greenway Trail Connection provides another opportunity within The COR to meet overlapping objectives for multiple use, district systems, wildlife habitat and other desired functional and aesthetic outcomes. While traditional bicycle/pedestrian trails and related amenities will certainly be a key component, the series of ponds, wetlands and other water-resource related features will provide the unique setting and ecological benefit derived from a more innovative approach to greenway design. For the purposes of defining potential costs for future construction, a preliminary list of greenway trail elements (or basic design program) includes:

- Combined bicycle / pedestrian trail
- Multiple locations for rest stops, interpretive / educational elements
- Multiple locations for boardwalk / bridge crossings
- Integrated drainage / stormwater management system to serve this district

Recommendations

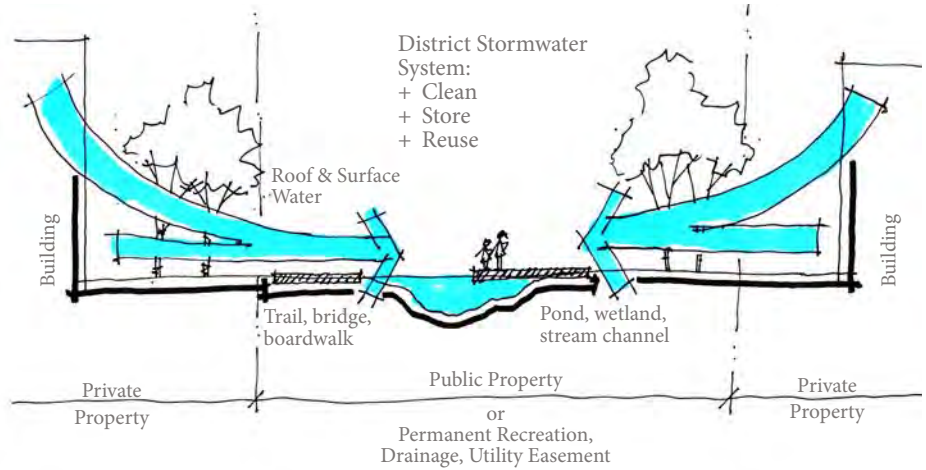
There is an opportunity to explore alignments for this Greenway Trail Connection that might provide greater benefits to the northwest quadrant of The COR – measured in social, economic and environmental value added. With modest enhancements to the existing trail along Bunker Lake Boulevard, and expanded greening initiatives west of the Ramsey Parkway, there is

great potential to frame this quadrant on the north and south with attractive green corridors. Both of these travel routes accommodate multi-modal options, but with heavy emphasis on the automobile.

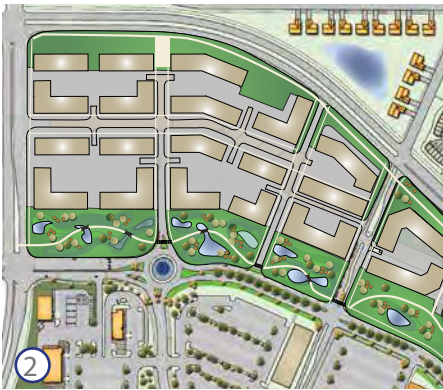
A third option, a meandering Greenway Trail Connection through the center of this quadrant not only provides a much-needed green amenity in this part of The COR, but also creates another valuable development ‘frontage’ to enhance land value and encourage private investment. This centrally located alignment will also provide opportunities for innovative approaches to district systems, particularly water resources – with the added benefit of an off-street, dedicated bicycle and pedestrian corridor linking local and regional trail networks.

The location and alignment of the Greenway Trail Connection will have considerable influence on development patterns in this quadrant of the COR. The various scenarios illustrated on pages 10 and 11 attest to the wide range of land use options; from ‘super block’, car oriented, destination convenience shopping, to finer grained, pedestrian-scaled, residential neighborhoods. This kind of imbedded public amenity will build value across multiple objectives, at individual site and district scale—leading to innovative, economically sustainable outcomes.

Greenway Trail Alternative Alignments



6.0 Plan Greenway Trail Opportunity (Jacobson/LHB 2015)



Alternative: South Greenway Trail Alignment (Jacobson/LHB 2015)



Ramsey Town Center Master Plan (CLOSE, 2001)

Greenway Trail Connection

Basic assumptions that support Estimate of Potential Construction Costs:

- Total acres/square footage for COR Greenway Connection (approx.): 2.5 acres / 108,900 square feet

Estimate based on park elements illustrated on Concept Studies:

1. excavation/grading 2,000'L x 30'w x 10'd x \$3/cubic yard	\$ 100,000
2. concrete combined trail (10') 20,000 square feet x \$5/square foot	\$ 100,000
3. rest stops along trail including pavement, bench, canopy (4)	\$ 120,000
4. pedestrian/bike bridges across stormwater features (4)	\$ 200,000
5. lighting 20 pedestrian scale fixtures x \$5,000 each	\$ 100,000
6. signage including large monument, information, direction	\$ 50,000
7. miscellaneous utilities/infrastructure	\$ 50,000
8. plantings 100,000 square feet x \$5/square foot	\$ 500,000
9. stormwater (surface / below ground), utilities, infrastructure*	\$ 300,000
Subtotal	\$ 1,520,000
Contingency and Soft Costs	\$ 366,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,886,000 or \$17.30 per square foot

*District systems approach vs. site by site.

Funding Scenarios and Strategies

Scenario 1 - Proximity to Parks; Revenue Producing Factors

This Scenario is based on a series of studies conducted by the Trust for Public Land (TPL), and more specifically their 2011 study for the City of Seattle (see attached). Similar calculations for The COR might offer several strategies to capture revenue specifically allocated for park and trail improvements.



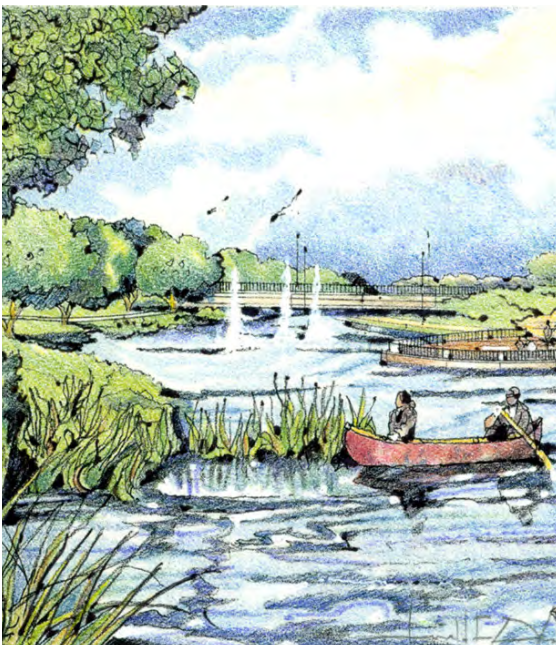
- Value of properties within 500 feet of parks
- Value attributable to parks (4.84%)
- Property tax revenue from properties within 500 feet of parks
- Tax revenue attributable to parks (4.84%)

Strategies:

1. Capture a portion of increased property value – park and trail fees calculated as a percentage of property values attributed to nearby parks (adjusted premium per acre land sale cost)
2. Capture a portion of increased tax revenue – park and trail improvements calculated as a percentage of tax revenue attributed to nearby parks (then defined within the Parks’ CIP)

Scenario 2 - District Stormwater Management System; Shared Costs for Infrastructure

This Scenario is based on recent work with the Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization to design and implement a district stormwater management system for the Prospect North redevelopment project in Minneapolis. Through additional research/design provided by Barr Engineering (and other sources) overall project objectives and design parameters were defined that would yield savings (and produce better overall outcomes) for both the City and property owners/developers. This approach used the following baseline assumptions:



To meet city standards for stormwater management through a traditional site-by-site approach, property owners/developers would typically spend between \$90,000 – 150,000 per impervious acre to be treated.

To meet city standards for stormwater management through a district/shared system approach, costs will typically range from \$50,000 – 90,000 per impervious acre to be treated (depending on the level of detail/intensity of the final design).

A couple things to note: The ranges shown above include both engineering/design fees and final construction costs. Ultimately this demonstrated multiple benefits and project efficiencies that meet functional (permitting) requirements and yield significant cost savings using the district/shared system approach, while at the same time raising the bar in terms of aesthetics, habitat creation, recreational use, increased property values and other positive outcomes.

Strategies:

1. Secure commitments from potential/future property owners/developers to pay to the City, no more than they typically would for site stormwater management components (site-by-site), but discounted per the savings realized for participating in a district stormwater management approach. For example: agreeing to pay \$75,000 per impervious acre instead

of something around \$100,000 per impervious acre – and using the northwest quadrant of the COR to demonstrate how this might work, take the approximately 30 acres (north of the parkway and west of the Lake Ramsey), multiplied by 80% impervious land cover (buildings, parking lots, streets, etc.) equals 24 acres, multiplied by \$75,000 per acre (mid-range cost for shared approach) and the City would receive \$1,800,000 from property owners/developers to design and build the system (see Estimate of Probable Construction Costs – Greenway Trail + Stormwater Management Corridor).

2. Define permanent stormwater/utility/recreation/access easements (that run with the land) that will reserve adequate acreage to accommodate district system design and construction.
3. Draft agreements (we have a successful template/model for this) between property owners/developers and the City to clearly define relationships, roles/responsibilities, timelines and other considerations.

Scenario 3 - Metropolitan Council – Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA)

This Scenario is based on recent success securing grant monies from the Metropolitan Council to support design and construction of public realm improvements. Over the past several years, their project selection/award criteria has changed somewhat to reflect more contemporary and innovative development approaches. Toward that end, they are no longer funding purely infrastructure projects, but are more interested in proposals that link specific development sites with public transit, district systems (stormwater, parking, etc.) and creative design of ‘signature public places’.

For example, in a recent successful application for the Prospect North Redevelopment District, the Metropolitan Council LCDA awarded one million dollars for improvements to Fourth Street (named “Green Fourth”), but also to be shared with the adjacent Cornerstone Development (mixed-use, housing over retail). Basically this one-third, two-thirds split is a mandate intended to thoughtfully integrate design solutions for both projects, including streetscape, stormwater management and other district system elements.

Strategies:

1. Seek willing development partners who will participate in shared-project scenarios similar to the example described above; with a specific focus on joint funding applications to help pay for various elements of your proposed signature parks and public spaces.
2. Carefully blend the interface between public and private property, particularly along the edges of proposed signature parks and public spaces, promoting flexible use, vibrant/inviting destinations and universal access. This will build a strong case for shared funding while illustrating the many shared benefits of an integrated design and project implementation approach.



Funding Scenarios and Strategies, con't

Scenario 4 - 'Pilot Cities' + Demonstration Projects – Renewable Energy Corridors

This Scenario is a bit more complicated and potentially involves the shared efforts of the City, the Metropolitan Council, the McKnight Foundation and the Metropolitan Design Center (University of Minnesota, College of Design). For the next round of Comprehensive Planning (required for all/most cities), the Metropolitan Council and other participants have suggested an updated approach and expanded planning criteria that perhaps better respond to the “Grand Challenges” of our time (U of M President Kaler). These include at the very least; climate change, equity and health.



To support cities, both large and small, already beginning the process to update their Comprehensive Plans, this group of stakeholders have proposed a series of workshops and city-by-city roundtables that will drill down and help address the specific challenges and needs for candidate ‘Pilot Cities + Demonstration Projects’ that meet their criteria. While the specifics of this approach, and the selection criteria/process, are still being resolved, the City of Ramsey might ‘jump the queue’ by expressing interest and beginning to organize your planning steps to take advantage of this opportunity. Benefits include, precedent research and best practice models from around the world, facilitated workshops with specific focus on Ramsey issues, funding support for planning studies to help redefine objectives, and final Comprehensive Plan document preparation that highlights innovation and implementation priorities.

Strategies:

1. Meet with leadership at the University of Minnesota, Metropolitan Design Center to learn more about this opportunity and, if interested, begin to define your commitment and potential next steps.
2. Schedule working session(s) to draft a plan/approach tailored specifically to your needs, including overall process, preliminary task outline, schedule, participants, roles and responsibilities, issues/ideas and other study requirements.
3. Schedule first Ramsey Workshop and Focus Topic Roundtable meetings to officially launch this process.

Scenario 5 - Seek Partnerships – Grants + Loans + Other Funding Sources

While this Scenario may at first glance seem very familiar as a means to secure project funding, there is a much broader playing field and an increasing menu of opportunities across the local, state and federal spectrum. There have been numerous recent successful applications that integrated project objectives with various essential infrastructure and development components including:

- Shared eco/environmental outcomes and benefits
- Energy innovation demonstration projects
- Health initiatives matched with wellness programs
- Affordable/life-cycle housing
- Living-wage jobs and other initiatives

One example: Prospect Park Minneapolis was just awarded a McKnight grant for \$350,00 through their ‘Regional Communities and Energy Program’ to be used for detailed design of a district heating and cooling system (through District Energy Saint Paul) that will eventually serve more than 300 acres of mixed use/‘Innovation District’ development projects. This represents another major step toward sustainability goals, carbon reduction and a shift to renewable energy sources.

It is also important to note that this project is part of a layered approach that concurrently is working to integrate district infrastructure within a variety of proposed public realm improvements (parks, trails and so on). This includes district stormwater management, district energy and district parking, with a long-term view that shared systems will bring us much closer to the realities of living within our ‘resource budget’.

Specifically related to infrastructure, district systems and the public realm, this is an opportunity to take a leadership role in demonstrating how shared corridors (for example: the proposed Ramsey Greenway Trail + Stormwater Management Corridor) could integrate solar hot water, photo-voltaics, geothermal heating and cooling, and other innovative approaches. We can no longer afford to approach these opportunities as ‘single-issue’ projects; it’s not just a greenway with a trail, but it also needs to answer the question - “What else can it do?”

Strategies:

1. Take decisive steps toward creating a comprehensive list of public realm and infrastructure projects needed to support economic development outcomes you envision for the COR (and adjacent acreage).
2. Prioritize this list, seeking projects with overlapping/intersecting missions and objectives from various stakeholder groups, agencies and other funders; i.e. what types of projects fit their criteria that are also ready to move into the next stages of design and implementation.
3. Continue to develop a complete list of grant opportunities including key contact people, timeline, criteria, review process, examples of past applications and other factors that will improve your chances for success.



Lake Ramsey Commons Rendering (Satoko Muratake, 2016)



For additional information
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