

**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL WORK SESSION
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Special Work Session on Tuesday, July 16, 2019, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Acting Mayor Chris Riley
 Councilmember Nadine Heinrich
 Councilmember Mark Kuzma
 Councilmember Debra Musgrove

Members Absent: Mayor John LeTourneau

Also Present: Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill
 Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
 City Engineer Bruce Westby
 Angie Bersaw of Bolton & Menk

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Mayor Riley called the City Council Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Receive Update on Ramsey Gateway Project: Highway 10/169 Plan

Angie Bersaw, Bolton & Menk, provided a high-level summary of the comments received from the property owner meetings that occurred. She noted that perhaps construction of frontage roads occurs first, so those could be open during the Highway 10 construction to help resident's access businesses. She reported that there was great attendance at the open house meeting, with 102 attendees signed in. She reviewed some of the themes and noted that there was a mixed perception on whether a rail crossing should be incorporated. She provided background information on previous studies and estimated costs. She stated that this study has looked at current traffic as well as growing traffic estimates. She advised that four options for Ramsey Boulevard were shared at the public open house, noting that all four options included a rail crossing. She stated that although there was not a strong preference for any of the options from the public, after review of the TAC it appears that the folded tight diamond option is the most preferred option for Ramsey Boulevard, which would have an estimated cost of \$52,000,000 to \$58,000,000. She stated that the cost estimates would be projected 2025 amounts. She stated that the lowest cost option for Ramsey Boulevard would be about \$6,000,000 to \$7,000,000 lower but would include more turn options, which were not preferred by the public.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that as the corridor as a whole is reviewed, MnDOT may come back to the right-in/right-out option as an alternative.

Acting Mayor Riley stated that he would not support that option.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she would like to leave the option on the table.

Acting Mayor Riley stated that option is a “you can’t get here from there” option where it would cause a driver to take additional turns to get to where you are attempting to go.

Councilmember Musgrove provided a similar example off Highway 100 and noted that it works well in practical use, although it is not a direct on and off. She stated that the flow of traffic moves easily. She noted that if MnDOT were to come back with that alternative she may be able to support it.

Acting Mayor Riley commented that option would not be helpful for businesses.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that all of those concepts would remove the businesses on the north side.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that perhaps there is no bridge across at Ramsey Boulevard and just an option to exit off at Ramsey Boulevard with full ramps available at Sunfish and Armstrong.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that was considered as an option but would cause additional pressure at Sunfish and Armstrong. He noted that the option was also considered for Sunfish but added even more pressure on Ramsey Boulevard and Armstrong.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she sees the need for both interchanges being completed and to keep the momentum going. She stated that there is support from Anoka County as well. She asked for additional information on the other option for Ramsey Boulevard and the number of businesses that would be impacted.

Ms. Bersaw noted that all of the options would remove those businesses.

Acting Mayor Riley asked the remaining number of businesses that would be impacted.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that the City did acquire a few businesses previously and reviewed some of the businesses that would be impacted. He stated that this is a high-level planning study and the overall alternative could be chosen. He explained that the frontage road scenario could be added back in the future to the actual design.

Ms. Bersaw stated that she and Community Development Director Gladhill met with MnDOT staff to further discuss the process. She stated that MnDOT reinforced that funding is limited and they are having a hard time reconstructing what is already in place. She stated that MnDOT is supportive of the process and what the City is doing but the more likely the costs can be kept down, the more likely this could occur.

Community Development Director Gladhill confirmed the full support of the Council for the folded diamond option, noting that there are strong mixed feelings on the alternative option.

Ms. Bersaw reviewed the different options for Sunfish Lake, noting that some concepts include a rail crossing while others include an at grade rail separation. She stated that there is not a TAC recommendation for Sunfish Lake. She stated that the first question is regarding the rail crossing and whether at grade rail crossing would be preferred or whether a rail grade separation would be desired. She stated that the roadway network exists for travelers to choose another route for a rail grade separation option. She stated that if there is a rail separation at Sunfish Lake, Highway 10 would also include an overpass, noting that option is the highest cost option. She compared that to a right-in/right-out option which has an at grade rail crossing and explained that Highway 10 could then go over Sunfish Lake. She noted that the two options have a cost difference of \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the Police Chief stated that public safety would prefer a grade separation. He provided additional comments on a possible connection of McKinley Street to the segment in Anoka as well.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would prefer overpasses for both with rail grade separations at both as well.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she does not take cost lightly but when the response time for public safety can be improved that should be a focus. She stated that funding will be gained eventually, and she would prefer to do things right the first time rather than push for part of the solution and attempt to ask for additional funds in the future for additional improvements that the City wished it would have done.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would support for grade separation for the rail and highway. She stated that the rail crossings would ensure that traffic can continue to move, whether or not there is a train.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the grade separation can be recommended but there are models that show the que working.

Ms. Bersaw explained that the models are designed to accommodate traffic 20 years into the future, noting that the at grade rail crossing options would function operationally. She recognized that there is valid concern.

Acting Mayor Riley stated that he would also support the grade separated rail crossing. He stated that he does not like the right-in/right-out option and would like to explore the other options. He felt that the grade separation rail crossing is important. He recognized that saving money is great but not doing things right the first time can be expensive.

Ms. Bersaw stated that the right-in/right-out options are becoming more traditional as funding becomes tighter but recognized that it is still a newer option. She stated that while some of the

other options are different, they may be considered more traditional interchange options, but also have additional cost.

Community Development Director Gladhill confirmed that there is strong support for the grade separation for the rail crossing and highway, with some concern with the right-in/right-out option. He stated that there has been a request from Lano to bring the right-in/right-out closer to their business.

Ms. Bersaw stated that they are still planning for the frontage road between Ramsey Boulevard and Sunfish. She noted that there is a high cost estimated at this time, but that cost could be reduced as time moves forward as that estimate also includes RALF costs. She highlighted another frontage road option along the Tungsten district, which was carried forward from the 2014 study. She stated that there have been discussions with the businesses in those locations on the functionality of that frontage road and the heavy equipment that would be moving on the road. She explained that the cost estimates included for all options are in 2025 numbers because that is when Anoka would be completed and is a more accurate estimate of when work could possibly begin. She referenced the west end plans, which have been on hold until there is further input from Elk River and MnDOT on the future plans for that corridor. She noted that the plan thus far includes an interim safety improvement for a minimal cost that would simply formalize the movements that most people are already making in that area. She stated that she will be providing a similar update to the County Board tomorrow and then there is another TAC meeting later this week. She stated that they are nearing the end of the phase one planning and the next step would be to continue on to phase two, which includes funding strategies.

Acting Mayor Riley stated that this Ramsey portion of Highway 10 is the third piece of three and would complete this section of the highway.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there is room for expansion of Highway 10 lanes, should a third lane continue.

Ms. Bersaw stated that the Anoka project has squeezed enough room where a third lane could be added under the interchanges in the future. She stated that perhaps Ramsey would plan for a similar thing so that option is not precluded in the future.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that the Council consensus will be conveyed to the County Board and TAC this week.

2.02: Staff Update on Water Supply System Request for Proposals

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report.

Acting Mayor Riley asked how the system would be modeled if there has not been a water supply system before.

City Engineer Westby provided additional details on water infrastructure. He confirmed that it has not been done on a system wide basis before.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the wells would be knocked out by a plant.

City Engineer Westby explained that the plant would work in conjunction with the wells. He stated that if it is determined that the aquifer could not adequately supply the City, there would need to be a solution which could possibly include the use of both groundwater and surface water. He noted that part of this process will identify where future wells could be located.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if there would be a review after each stage of the study before moving onto the next.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that would be the process that would be followed, noting that options two and three could be modified or could be stand alone options.

Acting Mayor Riley asked the type of consultant that would complete this type of work.

City Engineer Westby replied that there are a number of consultants that could complete the work using examples of Bolton & Menk, SEH, or WSB.

Councilmember Heinrich asked the other communities around this area that have a water supply model.

City Engineer Westby provided examples of cities that have a water supply model. He explained that the Ramsey system is pretty young and small in comparison and the model would help as that system continues to grow.

Acting Mayor Riley acknowledged that this work needs to be done, especially in response to the City's water issues.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that staff will bring this forward to the City Council for formal action in the near future.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that option two will review supply, specifically groundwater versus surface water and asked for additional details on that and regarding the cities included in the Metropolitan Council study.

City Engineer Westby stated that in the heart of the metro, water is treated in a water treatment plant and as you move outside of the metro many of those communities treat the water similar to Ramsey. He stated that as cities grow, they tend to switch to the water treatment plant option.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.