

SECTION 6 | INITIATIVES & STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to put in place realistic goals and actions that align with the City's vision for the future of recreation programming in Ramsey. The broad goal is to ensure that programming provides valuable services to the community and is consistent with the both the Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan objectives.

The state of Minnesota has released the 2020-2040 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), based upon thorough research from public engagement efforts and a survey of local recreation providers. The City of Ramsey can reference this plan to help prepare for future trends in recreation locally.

Four key elements provide the framework for the Minnesota State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation plan are consistent with Ramsey's goals in recreation. The following four elements from the SCORP and can be seen as overarching themes throughout the following section.

Connect People and the Outdoors:

Develop Minnesota's stewards of tomorrow through efforts to increase life-long participation in outdoor recreation and appreciation for our natural heritage.

Create Opportunities:

Evaluate the creation of new parks, trail and recreation opportunities to satisfy current users as well as to reach out to new ones.

Take Care of What We Have:

Provide safe, high-quality park and trail experiences by regular reinvestment in park and trail infrastructure, and natural resource management. Take advantage of existing infrastructure as multi-purpose

Coordinate Among Partners:

Enhance coordination across the large and complex network of public, private and nonprofit partners that support Minnesota's parks and trails to ensure seamless, enjoyable park and trail experiences for Minnesotans.

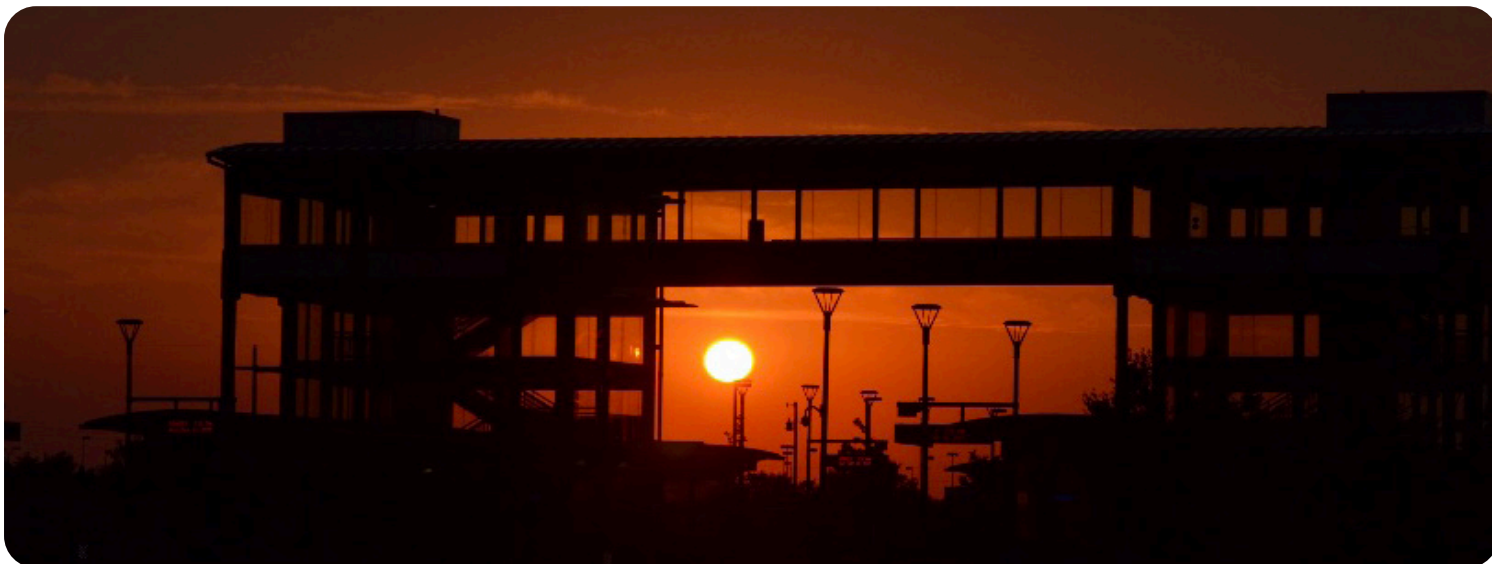




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STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN ELEMENTS:

On an annual basis, the Ramsey City Council meets with staff to review and revise a Strategic Action Plan with the purpose to guide and focus the City's work. The Parks and Recreation Department seeks to support the efforts of the City's initiatives outlined in the approved Strategic Action Plan. With unity in shared goals, the City will be better equipped to work efficiently and provide the highest quality services possible to our residents. Five specific elements from the most recent 2019 Strategic Action Plan have been identified as areas in which recreation programming can specifically support.

Promote economic growth and development:

Recruit new industry and market-ready major retail businesses to Ramsey

- Parks and recreation services and opportunities build community identity, involvement, and approval. These are among some of the key elements that contribute to sustaining value of a community and aspects potential businesses find appealing when determining a location
- Established parks system can be a signal of a higher quality of life and well-being, making the City an enticing place to invest in for potential industries and retailers
- Trails, greenspace and recreation opportunities are valuable assets that can help attract high quality workers to and their families to Ramsey

Seek public and private partnerships:

Optimize use of non-city funding through joint projects, grants, and partnerships

- Seek out available grants for recreation programming. This may include working alongside regional, state and national outdoor recreation providers and their facilities
- Recreation programs can be used as a tool to increase public/private partnerships that further expand programming

Improve and maintain the safety of the community:

Reduce crime and illicit drug activity in the community.

- Recreation programs and facilities provide safe and productive environments for out of school time can reduce risk for risky behaviors
- Youth engagement in recreation programs helps them develop skills needed for a successful adulthood

Strengthen Ramsey's identity and brand:

Create a strong positive image for residential neighborhoods, business districts and key corridors

- Parks often act as the heart of a community or neighborhood, while enhancing a strong positive image of the area for both residents and retailers
- Hosting formal and informal activities and programs in parks shows they are well liked, area is safe, and increases community engagement and connectivity
- Effective recreation programming is a strong tool for community building by creating a sense of shared place and identity. Additionally, those who feel connected to their residential location are more likely to stay and speak favorably of it
- Regular recreation programming or events become embedded in the City as a tradition for residents to look forward to. These types of programs enhance community livelihoods, which is among the key deciding factors for potential residents. Examples of such events are the Annual Tree Lighting, Happy Days, Elmcrest Art Fair and the Summer Concert Series.

Enhance community engagement:

Identify opportunities for community volunteer work and citizen recognition

- Recreation centers, nature preserves, and parks and recreation departments frequently host volunteer programs. As community members find something they are



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passionate about, they more are likely to volunteer for that cause. Recreation programs often provide opportunities for residents to get involved and volunteer within their community in an impactful way.

- When possible, partner and contract with program providers and instructors locally as a way to promote our local economy, talents and further create a connected community
- Offer recreation opportunities that encourage community engagement and recognition, such as the photo contest. The annual photo contest calls for residents to share the beauty of Ramsey, highlight local talents in various City publications and increase resident engagement with City efforts.

2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

By the year 2040, approximately 39,500 people within 13,500 households will call Ramsey home. To account for this growth in population and diversity, it is essential to build a strong foundation in parks and recreation to support the changes to come.

In addition to being aligned with the City's short term goals through the Strategic Action Plan, the Department wishes to plan for the long term success of recreation through support of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan initiatives.

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Park Systems Plan has the vision for Ramsey to evolve through citizen-drive, collaborative processes that respect the balance and connectivity between its unique urban, rural, and natural environment for current and future generations.

A Balance of Rural and Urban Character

- Preserve and enhance continuous open space corridors for conservation, positive effects of nature near-by and opportunities for unstructured play
- Promote use of walking and biking trails for connectivity to neighborhoods and for users to immerse in some of the open space that gives Ramsey its rural character
- Balance a variety of smaller neighborhood parks and larger community parks to provide a variety in recreation opportunities and that also allow for unstructured play
- With a variety of parks, residents can appreciate the amenities of larger facilities, as well as the quietude of natural areas and open spaces



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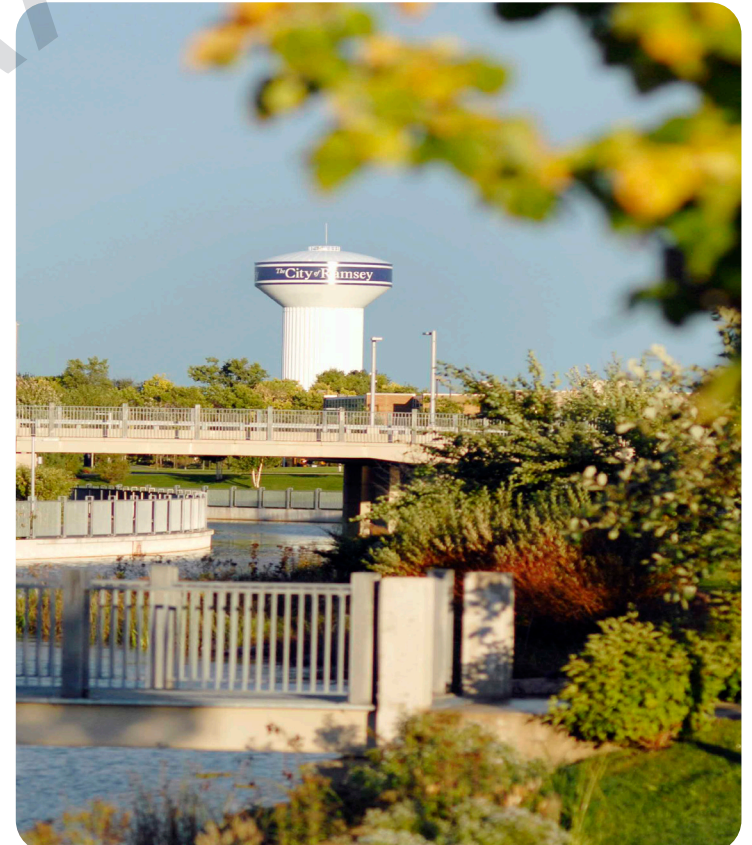
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An Active Community

- Expand opportunities for community recreation programming for all age groups, including low impact offerings
- Ensure equitable access to recreation programs and facilities
- Create a healthy community through a diverse and robust offering of recreation programs
- Provide programs that promote healthy and active living

A Connected Community

- Ensure connected regional and local parks have purposeful open spaces to allow for children to have unstructured play as well as places for community members to gather and create lasting memories
- Coordinated planning efforts across multiple jurisdictions, both within City Departments and local nonprofit and private entities.
- Provide programs and events that act as community builders



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Smart, Citizen-Focused Government

- Maximize joint use facilities and recreation opportunities
- Strengthen relationships with local youth organizations
- Create a positive learning environment for residents to explore their interests and become engaged members of the community

Financial Stability

- Prioritize desired recreation amenities with goal for financial stability in maintaining a Park System Plan
- Establish a well rounded recreation system to increase wellbeing in the city, one of the key markers for potential investors
- Promote engagement in recreation activities that promote overall health and wellness. Healthier communities have decreased costs in health care spending.

RECREATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

The Department created an initiative along with a set of goals and strategies to guide the development of Ramsey's recreation services. The initiative corresponds to City Council's adopted Strategic Plan Strategy to, "connect the community both physically and socially to destinations, services and activities" with the Action item to, "Deliver a diversity of programs that finds a balance of revenue and access". Following the development of the Parks and Recreation Initiative, a set of eight specific goals were developed to support the success of the initiative. Each goal contains a set of realistic strategies to help achieve the goals.

Parks and Recreation Initiative:

To offer appropriately robust recreational opportunities to engage the entire community, while promoting health and wellness.

Goal 1: Offer a diversity of recreational opportunities

STRATEGIES:

- Ensure recreation programming meets Ramsey's unique demographics and changing trends through questionnaires, observation, focus groups, open house events and regular evaluation of the portfolio of services
- Provide a range of formal and informal opportunities for the community to enjoy outdoor space and build connections to their community
- Improve current and future program offerings through detailed planning, implementation, and monitoring of trends
- Offer effective programming to promote healthy living and wellbeing for the cross-section of the community
- Create a diversity of geographic places within the community to recreate as well as programs to participate in [reference PSP. Playgrounds and Essential Elements]



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Goal 2: Create and maintain synergistic partnerships

STRATEGIES:

- Prioritize longterm, valuable partners in serving the community through successful recreation offerings, such as the Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association
- Offer higher quality and more efficient programs through synergistic relationships to area non-profits such as the Ramsey Rotary, Rumriver Art Center, and Ramsey Foundation
- Support the business community through mutually advantageous programming and facility use
- Seek additional partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and private businesses to offer recreation programs in varied facilities
- Engage in longterm planning efforts with established protected areas and recreation providers such as County and National Parks

Goal 3: Ensure pertinent programming opportunities for all ages

STRATEGIES:

- Monitor the dynamics of a growing and changing population to anticipate future trends in recreation for all residents



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- Gather community input for appropriate, targeted recreation opportunities for ages 55+
- Develop multi-faceted groups and clubs to include social aspects, in areas such as the arts, physical activity, volunteering, hobbies, and education
- Offer programming to encourage productive and safe out-of-school time activities
- Create opportunities for youth to engage in unstructured play and receive the benefits of greenspaces
- Provide opportunities for low-impact and family friendly activities to promote health and wellness

Goal 4: Ensure equitable access to recreation programs.

STRATEGIES:

- Ensure reasonable accommodations are available upon request for recreation programs and services, as mandated by the ADA
- Promote awareness for programs with Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association to promote equitable access to youth sports programs
- Seek out additional resources and grants that can help increase access to recreation programs or facilities
- Appropriate funds for scholarships as necessary through park programming, to include: grants, donations, sponsorships, and local philanthropic organizations

Goal 5: Encourage an active and healthy community

STRATEGIES:

- Offer programs that are conducive to active and healthy living, including both higher and lower intensity opportunities
- Invest in a variety of spaces and facilities to allow for multi-use opportunities, open spaces, and general community use
- Take advantage of new technology and implement aspects of advancements into programming, such as geocaching opportunities and enhanced interpretive opportunities through various app resources such as iNaturalist
- *Reference health & wellness of having greenspace within neighborhoods * relevance of circle of Ramsey to park spaces as resource for fitness*



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Goal 6: Promote a positive economic impact

STRATEGIES:

- Create recreation programs that produce significant added value on the community level
- Maintain facilities to allow for larger regional events such as the Minnesota Archers Alliance North Star Open and Voyageur Cup and Soccer Tournaments through the Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association
- When possible, engage local service providers and instructors for programming to further support the community
- Promote locally made products through events such as the Elmcrest Art Fair, Ramsey Resident Day on the Farm, Farmers Market and space for food trucks at larger events
- Establish successful recreation programs to increase benchmarks, such as quality of life, that play a critical role in economic development
- Coordinate with local businesses to provide and promote programs for employee wellness
- Attract employers and employees to the area with established open space, trails and sidewalk system



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Goal 7: Incorporate a diversity of art and culture into recreation

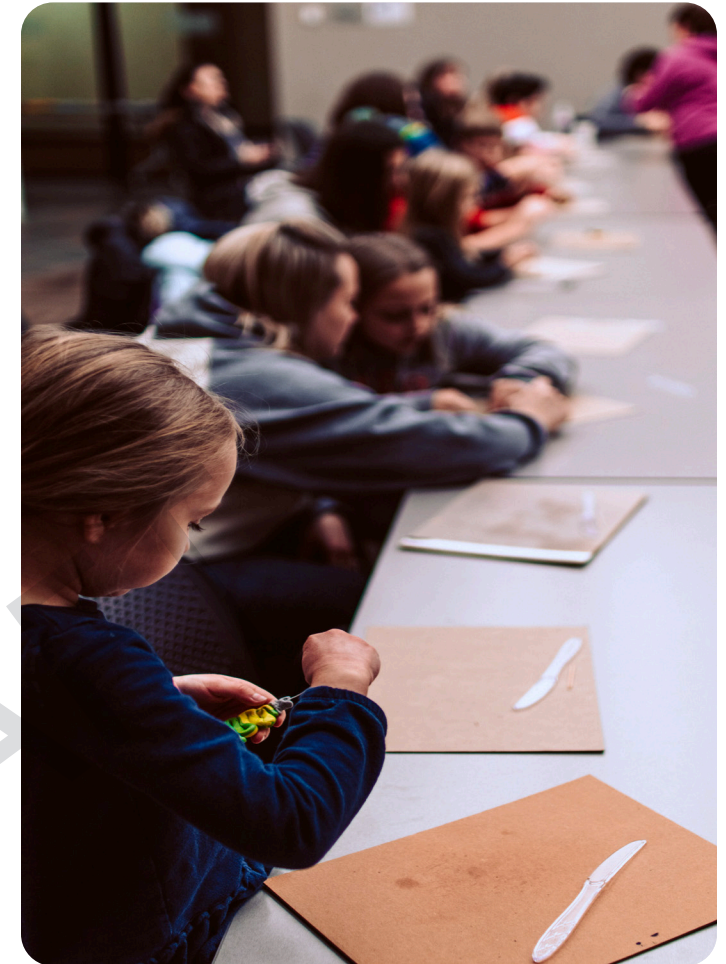
STRATEGIES

- Create a large scope of inclusive community cultural events such as Happy Days, Community festivals, Holiday Tree lighting, Ramsey Resident Day on the Farm to engage larger proportions of the community in events with art and cultural aspects
- Maintain summer concerts at the amphitheater for a family friendly opportunity to be connected with the community, and partake in supplemental partnered programs such as Art in the Park
- Encourage community engagement and create local ties through the annual photo contest. Winner's photos can be seen throughout the community in displays and in publications
- Incorporate art when feasible throughout the City to highlight unique features of Ramsey as well as talents of residents
- Collaborate with area nonprofit Rumriver Art Center to support local art initiatives and expand the scope of program offerings to our residents
- Continue to host the annual Elmcrest Art Fair to highlight members of the community and to provide a way for everybody to participate in art through viewing and introductory classes

Goal 8: Utilize existing infrastructure

STRATEGIES:

- Create multi-use facilities that provide programmable space, opportunities for residents to gather, and free play areas for children
- Maintain what we have and promote use of established trail and park lands through recreation programming and outreach
- Enhance resident communications and provide user friendly, up to date resources on current facilities usage and rentals
- Provide awareness for connectivity in formal and informal ...* reference Circle of Ramsey



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