

# CHAPTER 3 RECREATION PROGRAMMING & PARTNERSHIPS

DRAFT | MARCH, 2020

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# CHAPTER 1 | INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

There are many reasons Ramsey is a remarkable city to reside: agricultural roots which provide a sense of authenticity, growing opportunities spurred by new development, extensive parks and trails system to connect residents, and a sense of community drawn from shared experiences. Uniqueness can even be found in the physical shape of Ramsey. Within the winding boundaries formed by the Mighty Mississippi and Wild and Scenic Rum River, a diversity of residents can be found—each with their own individual identity, background, family, means of living, and interests that influenced their reason for calling Ramsey home.

Parks and recreation agencies offer the ability to positively impact their respective communities through safe and accessible ways to recreate. Departments in this capacity work to increase economic value in their city and simultaneously provide ways to improve quality of life for residents. An established parks and recreation department increases the value of property, attracts business opportunities, and reduces costs of health care, social services, and police departments. On the individual basis, participants in recreation programs gain substantial benefits in both their physical and social health. Participation in Recreation can reduce self-destructive behavior, lower risk of diseases, improve longevity of life, build strong bonds within a community and enhance overall wellbeing (NRPA & American Planning Association Cite, Trust for Public Land). Services from parks and recreation departments are vital to achieve well-balanced human development. Section Three will explore the impacts of a robust parks and recreation system on both the community and individual level.

Ramsey encompasses 29 square miles, and boasts 500 acres of municipal parkland which contain 32 parks, 50+ miles of trails, and 17+ miles of shoreline. With natural spaces as such, Ramsey proves to be an attractive place to start a family, retire, or invest. Businesses are drawn to the opportunities presented from a growing population, while residents are still able to appreciate the quaint roots of Ramsey the and extensive green-spaces provided by protected parks, greenways and open space As Ramsey continues to grow and change, the Parks and Recreation services is placed in an opportune position to establish itself and have a long-lasting effect on the community.



Figure 1.1 Agriculture



Figure 1.2 Natural resources



Figure 1.3 Inviting public places

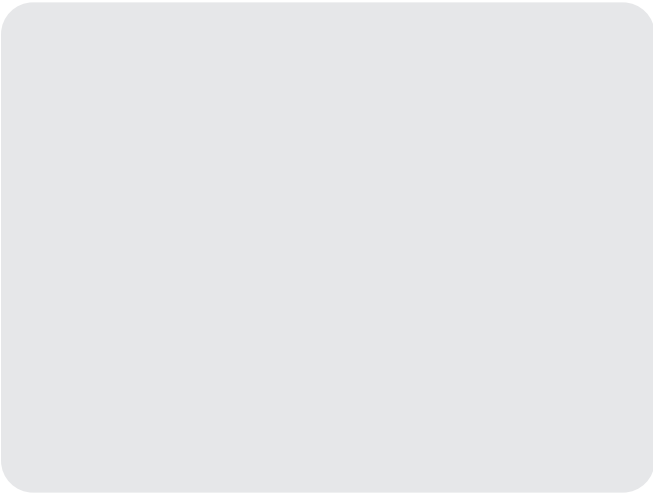


Figure 1.4 Age in



Figure 1.5 History of settlement

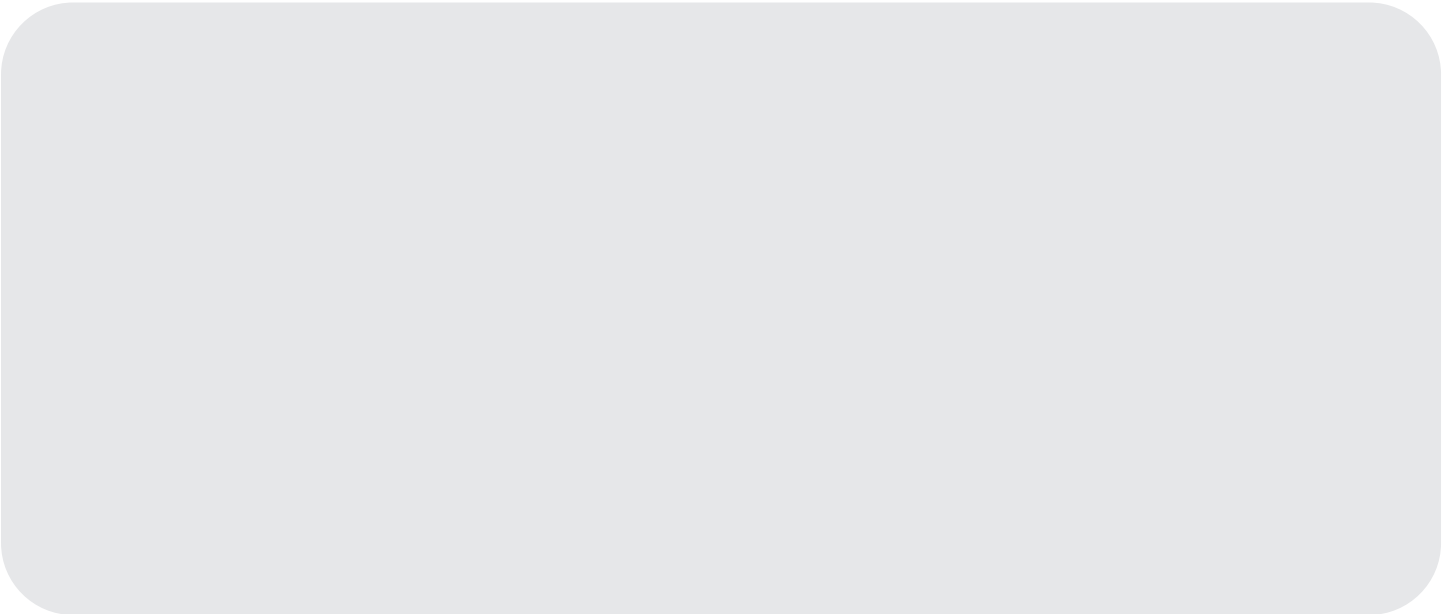


Figure 1.6 Mississippi River

Ramsey’s Park and Recreation department can help solidify positive growth by providing opportunities that promote active and healthy lifestyles to improve the quality and longevity of life. An effective department adds significant value to the City by enhancing its livability.

The purpose of the Recreation Programming and Partnership chapter of the Park Systems Plan is to explore relevant theory in recreation programming, identify a framework for future programs, and put in place realistic goals and strategies to achieve them. In addition, it also emphasizes the significance of valuable partnerships in the City. As Ramsey is relatively new to recreation programming, it is vital to build a strong foundation in recreation to further develop partnerships, create services that are efficient, effective and yield a continuing return on investments. The Recreation Programming and Partnerships chapter is organized into 6 distinct sections. Topics covered are trends, impact of recreation, state of programs, planning considerations, goals, and strategies. This chapter is designed to interconnect with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and approved Strategic Action Plan. Additionally, it will support and respond to initiatives found throughout the Park Systems Plan.

**MISSION AND CORE VALUES**

A mission and core values were identified to guide the Parks and Recreation Department in future development that aligns with the City as a whole. The mission statement defines the overarching mission of Ramsey, with core values for support. Established mission and core values help guide the Department with planning and development to best meet the goals of the City.

**Mission**

The City previously has adopted a mission to *“work together to responsibility grow our community, and provide quality, cost-effective, and efficient government services.”* [insert visual of mission & core value]. This section describes how the Parks and Recreation Department will instill the City mission throughout the Park System Plan and various aspects of recreation programming.

**Core Values**

The Parks and Recreation Department will reflect all of the City’s Core values in program development, with a focus on the following:

**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY** The Department will evaluate parks and programs with cost efficiency in mind. Fiscal responsibility can be achieved through careful planning to ensure services offered are beneficial and relevant for residents. Parks and recreation services aim to strike a balance between accessibility, financial stability and overall community benefit. Added community value from parks and recreation can be carefully analyzed and considered when planning for the future of parks and programming. **page x** will highlight the framework for recreation program funding and fee setting theory.

**COOPERATION AND TEAMWORK** The Parks and Recreation Department takes great pride in partnerships. Mutually beneficial relationships are formed with local entities when possible. Healthy partnerships are essential to build a strong community and help provide higher quality programs for residents and simultaneously promoting the local economy. **page x** provides details and examples on partnerships.

**EXCELLENCE AND QUALITY IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES** Services provided by the Parks and Recreation Department aim to be responsive to residents to ensure programs create added value on the individual and community level. Open communications and feedback from residents are valuable tools in recreation programming. **Framework for how these services will be provided can be found in section X.**

**ADAPTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING** Parks and Recreation services take pride in promoting continuous learning for all. Programs aim to be adaptable to meet the trends in Ramsey and recreation overall. A variety of services can be offered to keep regular participants engaged as well as encourage new users. The impact of parks and recreation on continuous learning can be **found X.**



Figure 1.7 Health/iving



Figure 1.8 Urban agriculture

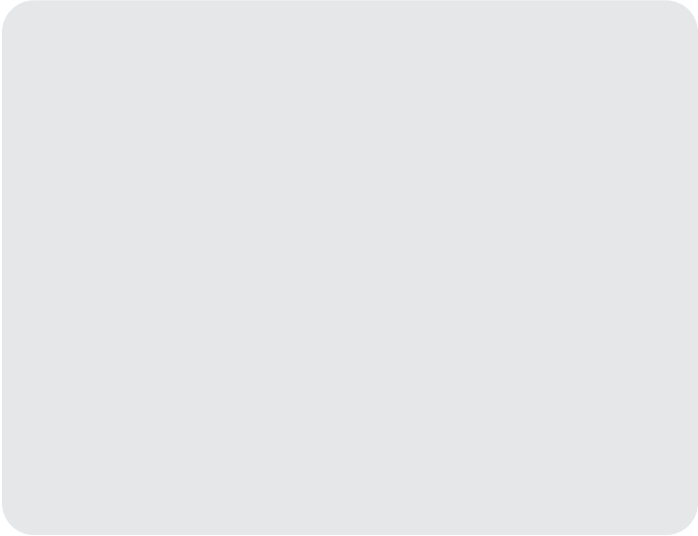


Figure 1.9 Green infrastructure



Figure 1.10 Green infrastructure

## HISTORY OF RECREATION IN RAMSEY

Specialized and more comprehensive recreation programming is a new service for residents, heretofore there was only an occasional event, and certainly not anything that was purposeful in terms of reaching Ramsey’s broad demographics and span of age ranges. As Ramsey matures as a community, it is understood that an appropriate diversity of offerings is something that residents may appreciate, or even expect as a foundational city service. In the following examples, one may begin to witness both the progression of recreation services in the community—and the unique value and opportunity of working together.



## WHY PROVIDE RECREATION IN RAMSEY?

Parks and Recreation services are not only an important aspect of life in Ramsey, but are among the essential elements to the quality of life. Residents interact with the Parks and Recreation Department on a daily basis—walking paths witness footsteps year round; residents reserve park buildings to celebrate life milestones with loved ones; an amphitheater filled with families enjoying live music; and a growing list of recreation programs to participate in.

Parks and recreation programming promote active living through facilities and services provided. They can enhance the wellbeing of residents by providing safe spaces to spend time in nature, foster hobbies through program participation and build community bonds through shared experiences and understanding.

Well established recreation programs create an inviting atmosphere and become intertwined in the lives of residents. In summer months, live music is welcomed at The Draw. Residents know to gather every Thursday evening to enjoy a new band. As the program has become established, partnerships have grown stronger, further expanding the scope of the concert series. Supplemental aspects such as Art in the Park, Car Show and sponsorships have become an important piece concerts at the Draw. [See page X for more details on the Concert Series over time.](#)

The Concert Series is one example of the components which create a deeper value to what it means to reside in Ramsey. Programs as such offer a space to come together, immerse in art and culture, socialize, and spend time outdoors. Residents from all parts of the City come together in an informal setting to build connections -- [other added values to community, briefly mention before next chapter elaborates]

Section 3 will discuss in detail the overall impact of engagement in parks and recreation and how a strong recreation program can impact the City of Ramsey.



Figure 1.12 Green infrastructure



Figure 1.11 Green infrastructure



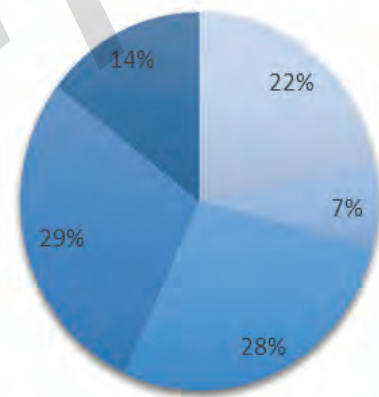


# CHAPTER 2 | TRENDS

## INTRODUCTION

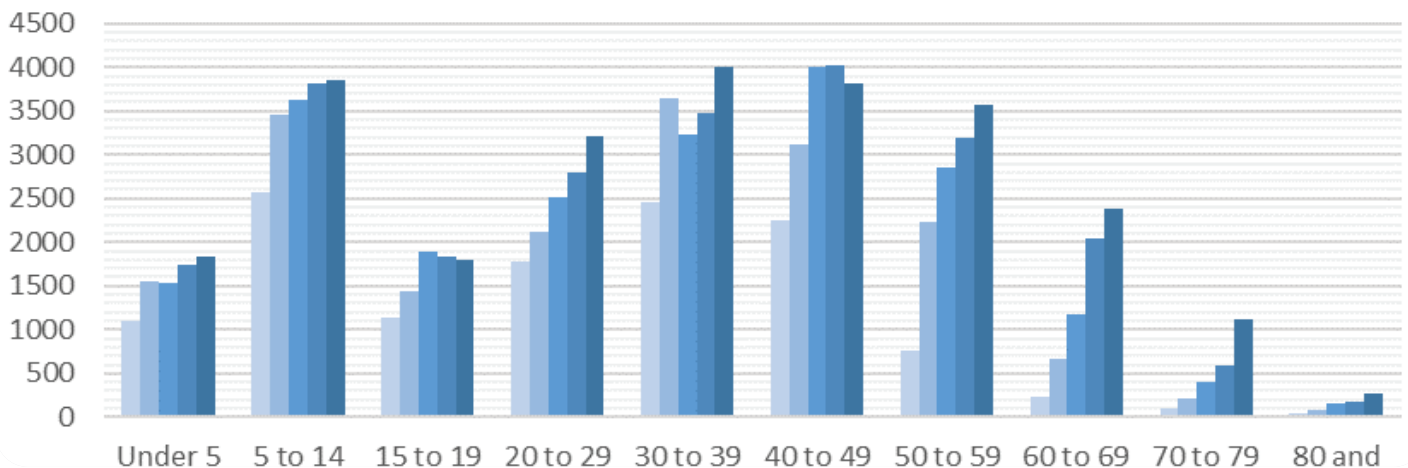
In an effort to enhance community engagement, be cost efficient, and offer services of quality, trends have been analyzed to provide targeted and relevant services to the residents of Ramsey. Demographic and economic factors have an impact on what recreation services are valuable for a community. Statewide trends in recreation can help predict the direction that outdoor engagement is headed.

ACS 2017 age breakdown

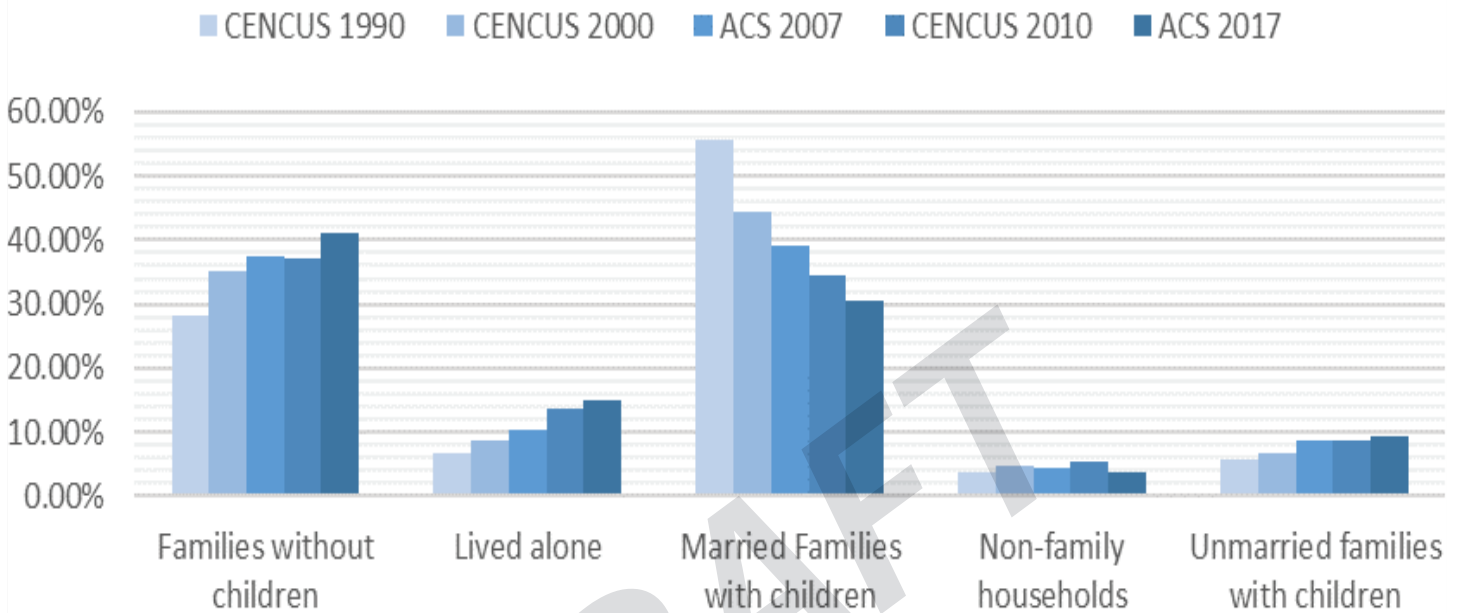


## Population Age Trends

CENSUS 1990 CENSUS 2000 ACS2006 CENSUS2010 ACS 2017



# Family Type Trends



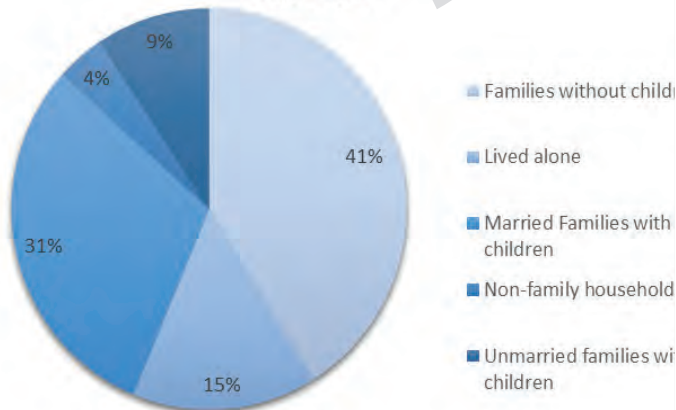
## TRENDS IN RAMSEY

### Demographics

As of 2018, 27,051 people in 9,211 unique households called Ramsey home. Steady growth is seen from the year 2000, when the population was under 15,510, to now ([Metropolitan Council, 2018](#)). This growth in our population is projected to reach 39,500 residents living in 13,500 different households by 2040 (2040 Comp Plan).

Alongside population trends, household dynamics have shifted. Within Ramsey's 9,211 households; 30.45% are married families with children, 9.34% are unmarried families with children, 41.17% are families without children, 15.11% lived alone, and the remaining 3.93% are non-family households ([The American Communities Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017](#)). In comparison to the 2000 data, notable changes are seen. The most significant change is a decrease in married families with children. A portion the reduction can be attributed to the increases of unmarried families with children, families without children, and in those who lived alone. Household types can give a glimpse into life in Ramsey however, additional population information is necessary to gain a more encompassing look.

ACS 2017



It is essential to understand how population age changes in order to offer appropriate services. Age demographics provide both a dynamic and insightful lens of Ramsey residents. Within recreation, the Department seeks to offer programs that respond to residents. By looking at age an age breakdown, the Department offer relevant programming as well as anticipate future programming. An example of this can be noted with data above- while the proportion of families with children significantly decreased, the total number of children has actually increased. This is primarily due to the rising population. It is essential to look at various factors in the community when planning programs. If the Department just considered household dynamics overtime, it would appear that out-of-school time programming should be reduced. By combining that information with the population, we see the need for youth programs and more diverse households.

**Demographic Influences on Recreation**

Human development is ever-changing. From the point of birth, to the time of retirement, the things required to satisfy interests and wellbeing change. Programs are frequently classified by age groups to account for our changes in development overtime. Age categories can be broken down into the following: 1-5yrs, preschool; 6-12yrs, youth; 13-18yrs, teen; 19-54yrs adult; and 55+, senior. Each group has unique needs and receives different benefits from recreation.

**PRESCHOOL:** Recreational play is a necessity in early childhood development. Playtime develops emotional, social, cognitive and physical aspects of life for children that stay with them throughout their life. Youth today tend to experience more structure and an exponential growth in screen-time, negatively impacting aspects of development. In Ramsey about 40% of households have children. Those under 5 makeup 7.12% of the total population from 2013-2017. (ACS).

**YOUTH:** Time spent outdoors in childhood is rapidly diminishing, as are the benefits children receive from it. Decreased time recreating in nature contributes to a more sedentary lifestyle that often follows youth through adulthood (Bento, Dias/ Porto Biomed Journal Cite). Biologist E.O.Wilson, notes that children are naturally “biophilic”- or drawn towards wildlife and to the outdoors. Children have a natural affinity for environmental education, making it an effective springboard for the inclusion of many other areas of study and the development of critical life skills (Mann & Hensley, 2002). Children between the ages of 5 and 14 represent 14.94% of Ramsey’s population. Recreation opportunities for this proportion of the population can provide positive self-esteem, healthy lifestyles and development of skills for a successful adulthood. Page X will speak more on the impacts of recreation on the development of youth.



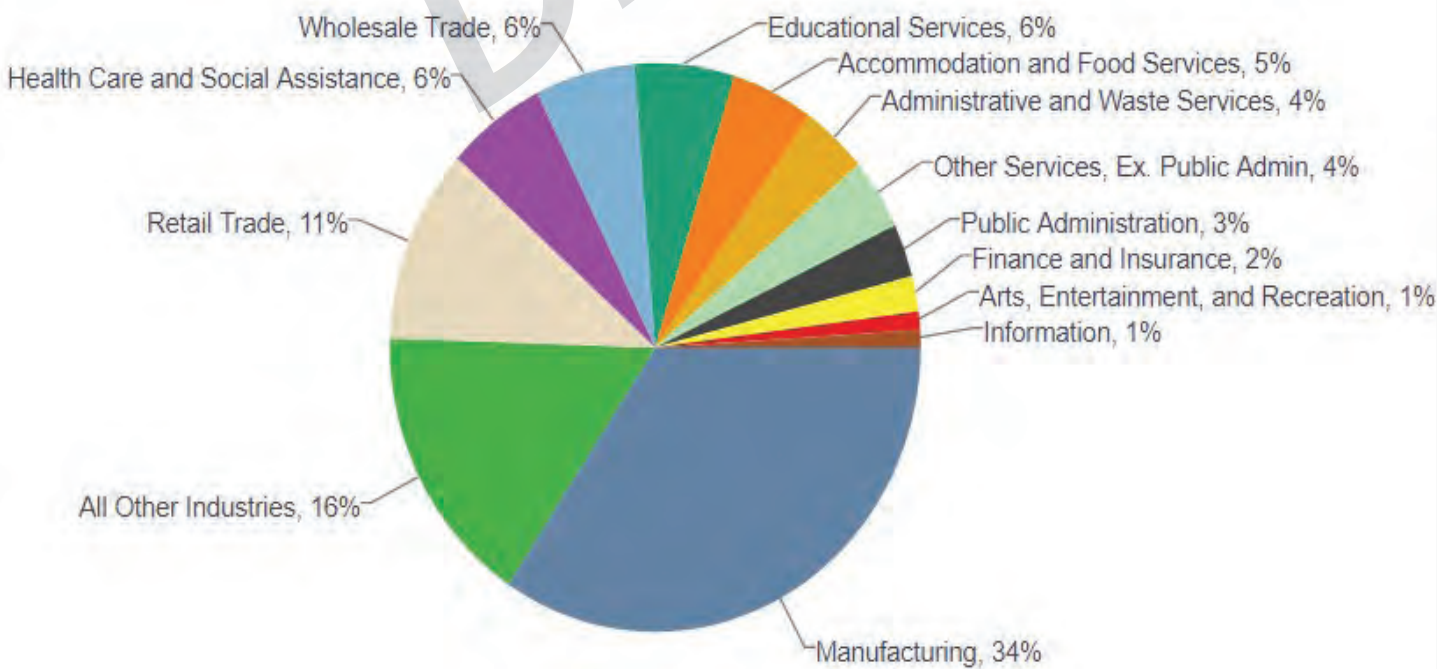
**TEEN:** As youth transition into teenage and early adulthood, they are tasked with developing a sense of self and responsibility. At this point they go through a tremendous amount of biophysical and neurobehavioral changes. Approximately 7% of Ramsey’s population fits this stage of development (note: 7% is an estimate. Available data encompasses 15 to 19, not 13-18). At this time in development, the brain is easily shaped by social learning through experience, direct interaction, self-reflection, education, and interaction with adults and peers. Adolescents are valuable resources to invest in, and not problems to be solved. Adolescents want to develop their capacities, and they need the type of opportunities that recreation programs can provide for them (cite NRPA 3).

**ADULT:** Adult programs are targeted to a range of ages and interests, as these opportunities are typically available to anyone ages 18 years and older. For the sake of clear cut categories, adult and senior programs are separated, even though they may see overlap in participation. While youth and seniors tend to be most targeted in recreation, it is important to not overlook the benefits adults receive from recreation. It is notable that in the United States only 3 in 10 adults are regularly active during their leisure time, and 4 in 10 adults are not active at all (Schoenborn, 2002). In Anoka County, one in four residents meet the CDC recommendations for activity. Beyond physical fitness,

recreation opportunities offer increased well-being for adults, which can be found further discussed in Section 3. Those who are aged 20-54 are 50.1% of the population. Recreation services provide safe and engaging ways for adults to engage in physical activity. In addition to increased physical health, recreation can provide increased mental health/overall wellbeing. [reference latter section on health and wellness]

**SENIOR:** As the Baby Boomer generation ages, there will be a greater need for services for seniors. Recreation can enhance the lives of seniors through providing both lower and higher impact opportunities to promote active living. Seniors who participate in recreation can limit the potential onset of diseases and impairment often associated with the aging process. Engaging in recreational activities that include a physical element can also help the aging population lead independent lives, by providing ways for them to remain mobile, flexible and keep their cognitive abilities sharp (source). Approximately 1 in 5 (20.87%) Ramsey residents fall into the 55+ category. More information on the impact of programs for seniors can be found in section X.

### Employment by Industry in Ramsey



**Economy**

**State of the Economy in Ramsey**

Economic standing can be indicative of an individual's ability to participate in recreation programs, especially offerings with fees. The 2016 average annual wages were \$47,527. This puts Ramsey slightly under the Anoka County average of \$49,918. However, median household income was \$86,800 in Ramsey, compared to \$70,900 in Anoka County. In 2015, approximately 3.5% of Ramsey lived below the poverty level (income of \$24,250 per year for a family of four), 4.5% between 100% and 149%, and 5.2% between 150% and 184% of the poverty line.

In 2018, an estimated 6,864 people held jobs in the City. The job breakdown is as follows (INSERT CHART INSTEAD OF TEXT):

- 34 % manufacturing, 11% retail trade, 6% wholesale trade, 6% health care and social assistance, 6% educational services, 5% accommodation and food services, 4% administrative and waste services, 3% public administration, 2% finance and insurance, 1% arts, entertainment, and recreation, 1% information, 19% all other industries (Metropolitan Council, 2016).

The employment forecast is positive, with an estimated increase to 7,500 by the year 2030, and 8,100 by 2040 (MET Council source) Unemployment rates remain steady around 3.5%. Ramsey falls slightly under the national average of 4% according to the National Conference of State Legislature. Unemployment is projected to steadily decrease over the next few years (Congressional Budget Office, 2017).



Figure 1.13 xxxx



Figure 1.14 xxxxxx



**80%** of home buyers say walking trails are a top community characteristic when choosing a new home.

**53%** of home buyers say they would prefer a home with a small yard close to a park to a home with a large yard but no nearby parks.

**52%** of home buyers say nearby bike trails are an important deciding factor when choosing a new home.

**30%** of homeowners say their neighborhood has too few parks and playgrounds.

### Recreation Impact on Economics

Local and regional public park agencies directly provided more than 356,000 jobs in the United States during 2013 (NRPA 2). In 2015 alone, America's local public park and recreation agencies generated more than \$154 billion in economic activity and their operations and capital spending supported more than 1.1 million jobs. (NRPA) (INSERT MINNESOTA STATS & GRAPHIC) . Local and regional park systems spent an estimated \$22.4 billion on capital programs, leading to about \$59.7 billion in economic activity, a contribution of \$29.2 billion to the GDP, \$19.6 billion in labor income and more than 340,000 jobs (NRPA 2). In Minnesota alone, \$2.8 billion in Economic Activity, and 22,411 jobs created (NRPA 2). The City of Ramsey is fortunate to have two Regional Parks and two Regional trails within its borders.

A University of Minnesota study has found every dollar invested in conserving natural lands nets a return of \$1.70 to \$4.40. During the summer months, Minnesota's state parks generate \$1 million every week from camping, vehicle permits, and sales of wood, pop, ice, and merchandise in state parks. Similarly, Minnesota's non-motorized trail users spend approximately \$2.7 billion annually on trips and equipment, and support 37,000 jobs statewide. Communities located along state and regional trails are the primary beneficiaries of this economic activity. For example, the Paul Bunyan State Trail, Heartland State Trail, and Root River State Trail each generate between \$1.2 million and \$2.2 million for their local regions respectively. The majority of this spending – 90% or more – comes from trail users who reside outside the local economy, and thus are “new” dollars that would not otherwise be spent in the community. A similar study in Wisconsin found biking-related tourism and recreation contributes nearly a billion dollars to the state economy (MN Parks and Trails). While this is applicable directly for state parks, the City of Ramsey has the opportunity to see these impacts on a smaller scale with unique river recreation features.

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## Recreation

### Recreation Trends in Ramsey

The 2018 Community Livability Report (NCS, 2018) studied a sample of residents to better understand their perception of the city and level of engagement [create visuals for this section].

Some of the key findings (2018 NCS Community Survey):

- 85% of residents rated the City as an excellent or good place to live
- 59% rated health and wellness , 64% rated fitness opportunities as positive
  - Both markers are on par with national averages
- Only 50% rated recreational opportunities as positive,
  - Lower in comparison to the national benchmark
- In regards to governance, 76% of citizens rated City parks at positive, and 59% rated recreation centers as positive.
  - There is not a City-owned recreation center in Ramsey. Respondents may have been referring to school facilities or private businesses.
- 50% of citizens stated they had attended a City-sponsored event, up from 42% in 2016.
  - Major City-sponsored events prior to 2017 include Safety Camp, The Draw Summer Event Series, Happy Days, pet clinics, recycling events, Night to Unite, and the spring business expo.
- Only 17% have volunteered in the community
  - Lower than comparable communities
- 87% of residents visited a City park



Overall, ratings in Ramsey for 2018 generally remained stable. Of the 94 items for which comparisons were available, 78 items were rated similarly in 2016 and 2018. An increase was seen in 16 items; no items showed a decrease in ratings.

Notable trends include:

- Survey respondents were more likely in 2018 to favorably rate aspects of government performance such as welcoming citizen involvement and overall confidence in City government.
- In the pillar of Community Characteristics, Ramsey residents were more likely in 2018 than in 2016 to give positive ratings to the city as a place to retire as well as to employment, fitness and cultural/arts/music activities.

The Community Livability Report reveals promising new trends for the direction Ramsey is headed. With no items showing a decrease in ratings, It speaks for itself that residents are excited for the direction Ramsey is headed. The development of parks and recreation services provide further opportunities to enhance the experience of being a resident of Ramsey.

### Statewide trends in Recreation

In 2017, the Minnesota DNR updated a statewide outdoor recreation household survey that was last conducted in 2004. Key findings from the survey included positive news that outdoor activities are an increasingly an important part of most Minnesotan’s lives. Previous 2004, data suggested outdoor recreation participation was declining, causing concern for public agencies charged with providing outdoor recreation. Fortunately, the 2017 survey results indicate that from 2004 to 2017, the percentage of Minnesotans who reported that outdoor activities are very important increased from 57 to 70 percent.

How people spend time at work, with families and in leisure still has seen rapid changes in recent decades , which coincides with technological advances. Although Minnesotans increasingly are finding outdoor activities as an important aspect of their lives, overall trends in recreation and outdoor activities continue to feel new effects. As dynamics shift, a number of the traditional nature based activities are still declining.

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Recreation Plan, outdoor Recreation Participation Minnesota is not escaping this broad trend—evident since the 1990s—of declining per-capita participation in nature-based outdoor recreation in the United States. This is a national trend that impacts national parks, national trails, state parks, state trails and other outdoor recreational facilities. It includes activities such as hunting, fishing, boating, wildlife watching, and wilderness use (Kelly, 2008).

Although the decline in these activities in Minnesota is not as large as the national decline, it is still present. The primary driving factor behind this trend is a decline in involvement among young adults (ages 20–45) and their children. Today’s young adults and youth are not as engaged in traditional nature-based activities as older generations were. Declines in participation reduce the number of Minnesotans who receive the personal and community benefits of outdoor recreation. These include physical activity, social and family bonding, sense of place, community pride and overall quality of life benefits that being active outdoors produces. (MN DNR REC PLAN).

On a promising note, findings also revealed that “Minnesotans see the outdoors as a place to rest and relax, connect with family and friends, and improve their health.” The report suggests a number of interesting possibilities: that Minnesotans prefer activities that require less equipment or advanced skills, and/or that they have not had the opportunity to develop interests and skills to participate in other activities. (cite MN DRN REC PLAN/SCORP) Programs which



provide introduction to the outdoors, access to equipment or help develop skills necessary for outdoor recreation may be an additional area of exploration for Ramsey programs. These types of opportunities may also lead to more engagement from young adults and their children, to rekindle engagement in traditional nature-based activities that older generations experienced.



## SECTION 3 | [NECESSITY/IMPACT OF PROGRAMS]

### INTRODUCTION

**“M**innesota’s outdoor recreation opportunities connect everyone to the outdoors. They create experiences that inspire a legacy of stewardship for the natural world and they provide fun, outdoor recreational opportunities that strengthen friendships, families, health and spirit now and into the future. Minnesotans experience the full range of benefits that outdoor recreation provides, reinforcing our identity as an outdoor culture.”

*MN DNR COMP PLAN*

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## RECREATION NEEDS SURVEY

### Summary

Surveys are used to assess current operations and determined the direction they are headed. In 2015, Ramsey staff conducted a recreation inventory analysis to determine offerings within a 15 minute drive of Ramsey. Public and private entities from the following areas were included: Anoka County Parks, Andover, Blaine, Champlin, Coon Rapids, Elk River, Maple Grove, Nowthen, Ramsey, Rogers, Three Rivers Park District, Elk River School District 728, and Anoka-Hennepin School District 11.

The programs gathered from these groups were separated into 127 categories and entered into a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet was divided by age group and into non-athletic, athletic non-competitive, and athletic competitive categories, and details of each offering were listed in comment boxes. These potential areas to increase opportunities will be evaluated for feasibility and likely interest and then will be put into a community interest survey to find out which of these areas community members would actually like offered through programming.

Following this initial 2015 inquiry, in 2017-2018, Ramsey was selected as one of the University of Minnesota's Resilient Community Partners. There were over 21 projects across 16 different academic departments. Some of which touched on recreation offerings in the City.

### Findings

#### Overall Trends:

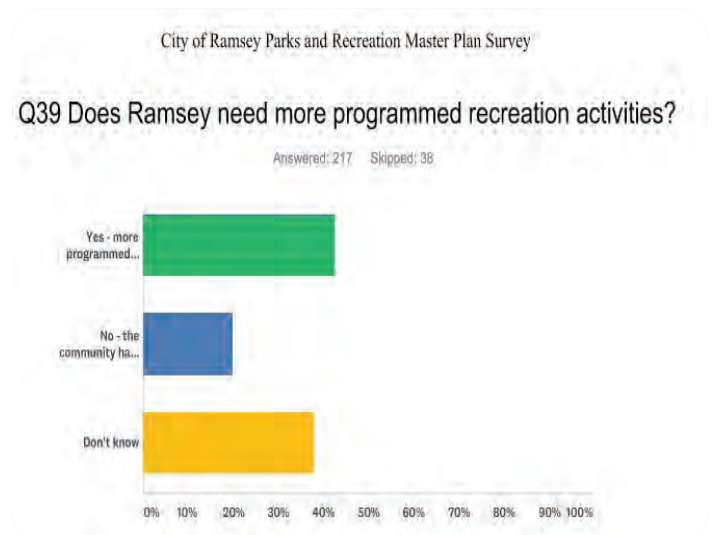
Residents found themselves driving to neighboring cities for recreation offerings, and were excited to see an opportunity to participate and become engaged in what Ramsey had to offer. Some key areas were identified to focus programming:

#### Senior Programming:

- Programming, especially outdoor and athletic programming, for ages 55+

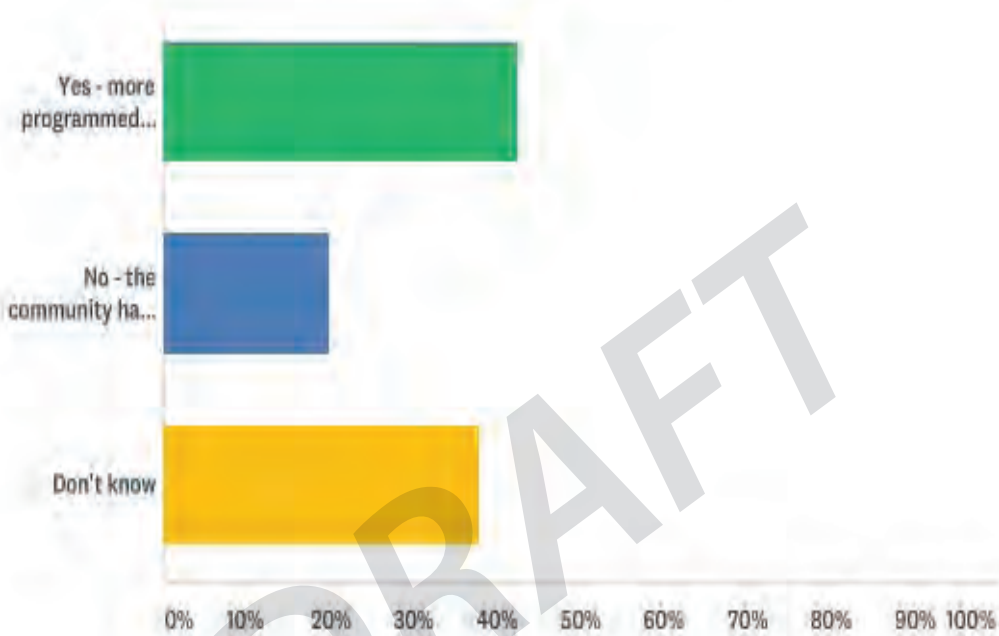
#### Youth Programming:

- A place for teen gathering/teen specific programming
- Programming for children and adults with special needs
- Out of school time programming for youth



## Q39 Does Ramsey need more programmed recreation activities?

Answered: 217 Skipped: 38



### Revamp of traditional programs:

- Programming for all ages and abilities for emerging recreational activities such as stand-up paddle boarding, bubble soccer, ultimate Frisbee, video game programming and gardening
- New twists on common programming like combining wine and cheese tasting with an art class for adults 21+.

Some areas were found to be already be successful and are unlikely to benefit from additional programming:

- Privately operated training facilities for activities like gymnastics, aerobics, dance, and karate
- Athletic activities covered by the Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association
- Activities with many organizations offering them such as ice skating lessons, swimming lessons, and musical instrument class

**80%** of home buyers say walking trails are a top community characteristic when choosing a new home.

**53%** of home buyers say they would prefer a home with a small yard close to a park to a home with a large yard but no nearby parks.

### What This Means for Ramsey

Overall this survey tells us there is room to grow. This is a great opportunity for the City to offer new and unique programs to get all age groups excited and engaged. Additionally, parks and recreation services want to acknowledge areas that are successful to ensure continuation. The survey affirmed the Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association is a valuable partner to offer residents a variety of physical sport activities. [Page X](#) will talk more about partnerships in recreation programming, and [Page Y](#) will outline targeted goals and strategies to expand programming.

## PROMOTING PERSONAL HEALTH

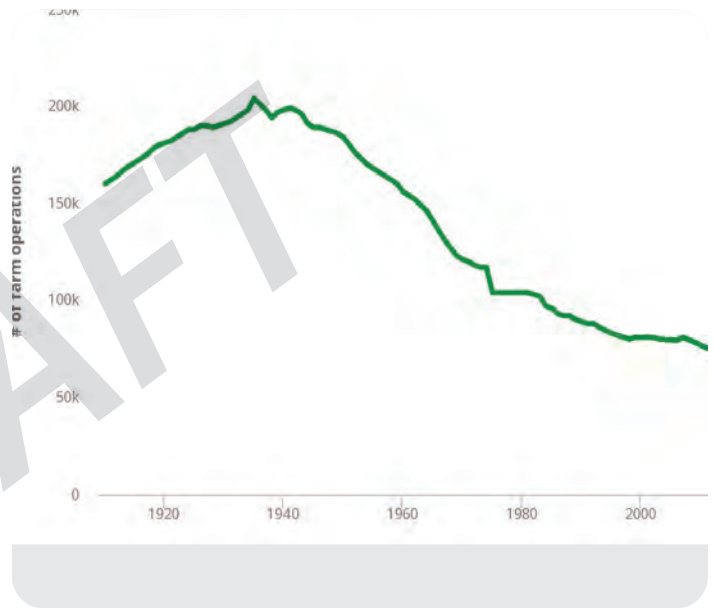
**Minnesota State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan:** As of 2019, there have been over 400 studies that demonstrate the numerous health benefits that nature provides. Most of the research on health and nature has focused on physical health benefits. Many of the benefits discovered are helpful in preventing leading causes of chronic disease, including stress reduction; reduced blood pressure; faster healing; addiction recovery; and reduced cardiovascular, respiratory and long-term illness.

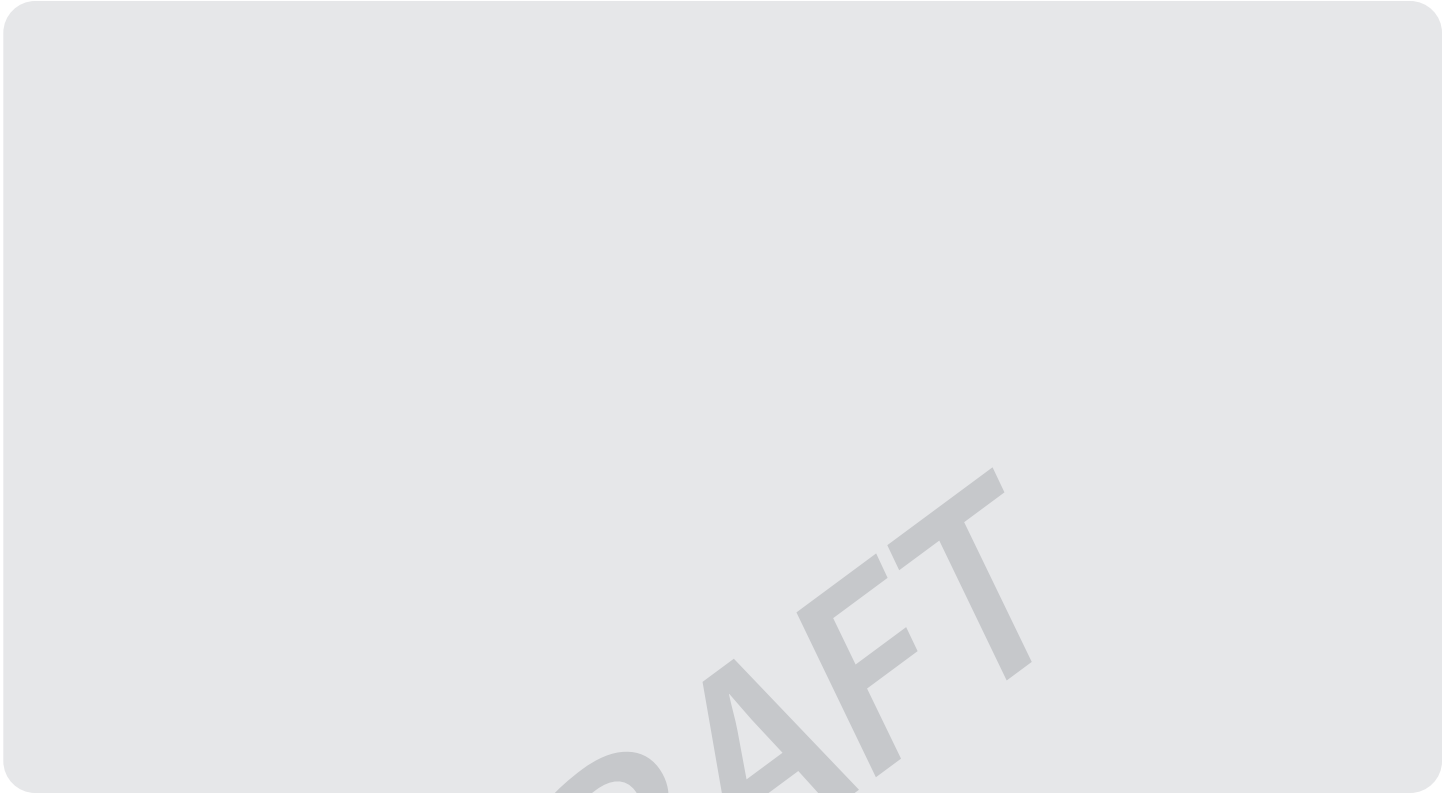
Benefits of nature exposure for cognitive development is increasingly recognized in the fields of education and human development, among others. Studies illustrate nature's positive effects on attentional restoration, reduced mental fatigue, improved academic performance, improved cognitive function in children and improved productivity. Increased self-esteem, improved mood, reduced anger/frustration and reduced anxiety are some of the key examples of the improvements documented by research on nature interactions for mental health.

Finally, a less well-known, but critically important benefit of time outdoors is the positive social effects at an individual or community public health scale. Several articles have found that nature facilitates social interaction, enables social empowerment, reduces crime rates and violence, and enables interracial interaction, among other positive social behaviors

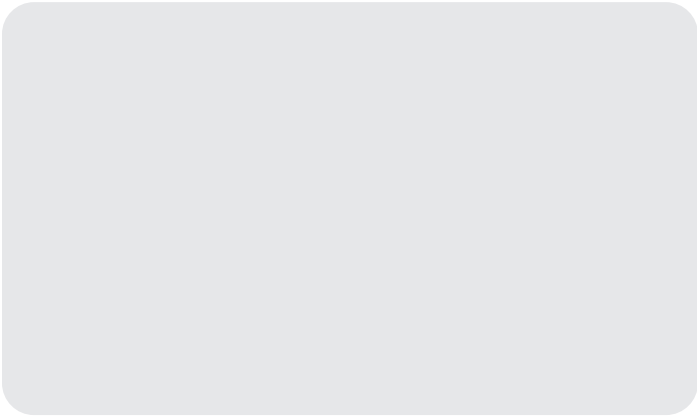
## Physical Health Fitness

Failure to engage in sufficient physical activity may have serious consequences. An estimated 10.8% of all deaths in the United States are considered preventable and attributable to physical inactivity. Physical activity affects multiple systems in the body, particularly the circulatory and musculature systems. One in three U.S. adults over age 20 have hypertension, a cause of both heart disease and stroke. This number is even higher among African Americans, as 44% are affected (NRPA 4).





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Physical activity can reduce the risk of numerous health issues, ranging from diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis ,and obesity as well as provide positive other benefits. Exposure to nature and activity can result in lowered blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels, enhanced survival after a heart attack, and even improved recovery after surgery. The US Centers for Disease Control found that creating places and opportunities for physical activity could lead to a 25% increase in the number of people who exercise at least three days a week ([Recreation Management, 2007](#)).

More than one-third of Anoka County residents are considered obese and another one-third are overweight. These benchmarks are comparable to Minnesotans overall. The CDC recommends 30 or more minutes of moderate activity per day five or more days per week and 20 or more minutes of vigorous activity per day four or more days per week. Only one-quarter of Anoka County Residents met these CDC recommendation for either vigorous or moderate physical activity. Three-quarters of respondents got insufficient or no physical activity. 22% of residents reported they had not participated in any physical activity or exercise in the past 30 days. This is a slight increase from 15% in 2013 15%.

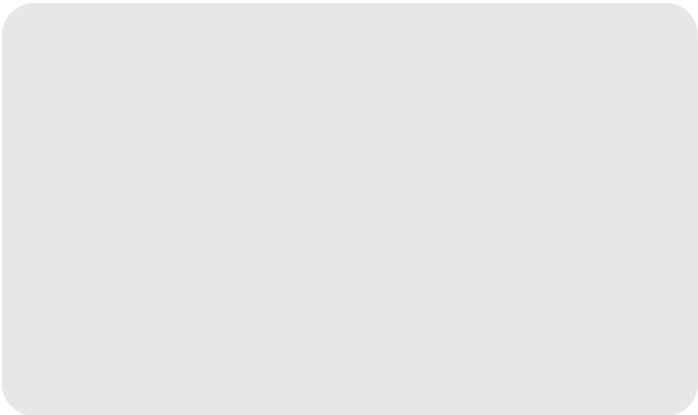
Being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, reduces anger, fear, and stress and increases pleasant feelings. Exposure to nature not only makes you feel better emotionally, it contributes to your physical wellbeing, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones. Research done in hospitals, offices, and schools has found that even a simple plant in a room can have a significant impact on stress and anxiety. (Citation for UMN page <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing>)

### *Independent Living/Life Expectancy*

Recreation services are a valuable asset as we age. Minnesota has consistently been a national leader for various health measures, including life expectancy. Today the average life expectancy in Minnesota is 80.9 years, with Ramsey just about on par with the average at 80.0 years (according to the 2019 County Health Rankings). As much of Ramsey's population transitions into their golden years, the Department wants to ensure adequate resources to live happy and healthy lives.



It is no surprise there are significant benefits of physical activity. Regular physical activity can help protect elderly residents against chronic diseases and improve their daily functioning. Recreation services have more to offer in terms of independent living and overall wellbeing of seniors. As we age, our risk of depression increases. Often, seniors who live on their own can be prone to feel cut off from their mainstream community. Recreation activities provide opportunities to socialize and reduce feelings of alienation and loneliness. With seniors active in the community there is an increase intergenerational understanding and bonding. Older adults involved in an organizational/recreation activity scored significantly better on the happiness scale than those who were not involved (Parks CA Source). Benefits of recreation expand well into the latter years of life. With physically and socially active seniors within our communities, it can help us all live longer, and happier lives.



## Mental Health

### Depression/Stress

Stress has become a major contributor to poor health as society trends towards a faster paced and more demanding environment. Left unresolved, long-term stress can lead to immune system issues and illness.

Local trends are seen, as one in four Anoka County residents have been told by a health care professional that they have anxiety (24%) or depression (23%). Females were twice as likely to have depression than males ([anoka county](#)).

The experience of nature is one antidote to stress, and the body's positive response is remarkably fast, occurring within minutes. Studies show that visual exposure to nature, in the form of trees, grass and flowers, can effectively reduce stress, particularly if initial stress levels were high ([source from file](#)).

Staying physically active is another common and effective way

to live with mental health illnesses. Services provided by parks and recreation can be a powerful tool to help those suffering tackle some obstacles they may face. Programming allows for safe and accepting atmospheres to spend time outside, be physically active, foster social interactions and introduce residents to new skills.

In addition, nature helps us cope with pain. Because we are genetically programmed to find trees, plants, water, and other nature elements engrossing, we are absorbed by nature scenes and distracted from our pain and discomfort.

This is nicely demonstrated in a now classic study of patients who underwent gallbladder surgery; half had a view of trees and half had a view of a wall. According to the physician who conducted the study, Robert Ulrich, the patients with the view of trees tolerated pain better, appeared to nurses to have fewer negative effects, and spent less time in a hospital. More recent studies have shown similar results with scenes from nature and plants in hospital rooms ([UMN Source](#)).

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**Quality of life/self-esteem/growth/satisfaction**

It is becoming more common to identify with the activities we participate in, seeing ourselves as “hikers,” “swimmers” or “soccer players,” rather than with the positions we hold at work. Parks and natural environments also have great spiritual meaning and represent a strong sense of place for many of us. They elicit fond memories of family outings, fun times, bonding with children and freedom, representing the less stressful side of our lives. Personal and Spiritual Growth Self-expression and identity affirmation is positively reinforced through participation in recreation activities. Recreation helps us explore our inner spirit and sense of self, creating new behaviors and a new identity (source from file). This is especially important as newer generations feel effects of social media that have resulted in lower self esteem. It makes it to compare ourselves to others’ online personas. Recreation activities can help subdue these negative effects as improvements are made on physical abilities and socialization.

Recreation activity is important to personal life satisfaction and those who participate in recreation are notably happier. Those who recreate more often are likely to be completely satisfied with their choice of careers, friends, and their perceived success in life. The evidence strongly suggests that participation in outdoor recreation, particularly as a child, leads people to have more satisfying and fulfilling lives. Nine out of ten outdoor recreation participants express satisfaction with their personal health and fitness while the six out of ten who don’t participate are unsatisfied with their personal health and fitness (ARC, 2000). Close to half of those who participate in recreation several times a week say they are “completely satisfied with the quality of their lives,” compared to just one quarter of nonparticipants (ARC, 2000). The enjoyable experiences pursued directly affect quality of life (Source from file).

Parks and recreation services not only promote time spent outside, but create an atmosphere to feel comfortable atmosphere to try things that may be daunting to try on our own.





### *Productivity*

Mental, or cognitive fatigue can occur following periods of intense concentration or directed attention. Symptoms of cognitive fatigue include: irritability, lack of concentration, inability to solve problems, and increased likelihood of making mistakes or causing accidents. Working adults and students alike are prone to cognitive fatigue as there is an increased demand for their concentration for long periods, often without frequent breaks or a changes in scenery. This is especially true at a time where Americans generally tend be overworked . We have more structured activities and tasks that extend far past the end of our workdays.



More than 80% of the United States population now lives in developed cities and towns (cite all of previous). Not long ago, a majority of Americans lived in rural communities where work and learning were activity based, and often associated with the land. Agriculture used to be a common occupation for Americans, whereas now only 1.3% of the population farms for their livelihood (USDA). Even as one of the top agricultural states, Minnesota is no exception. Overall trends categorize this area in unique period of history where it is easier and easier to become disconnected with nature.

In the modern day, work and study involve primarily mental and cognitive processes, and the use of computers has further focused human productivity indoors. The biophilia hypothesis describes an innate attraction that humans have for nature due to a long history of being directly dependent on living things for basic needs. This deep connection persists, and may explain why the experience of nearby nature may help people perform better in the office or at school (source cite in files).

The Attention Restoration Theory, or ART, suggests that certain environments can help individuals recover from mental fatigue. Restorative environments provide time away from tasks that require voluntary or directed attention, which allows the mind to recharge. Natural settings are particularly effective as restorative settings. These environments allow the mind to pay attention with little effort so it can relax and recover. Even brief glimpses or short amounts of time spent in a natural setting can improve brain performance and reduce stress. Visiting parks or engaging in recreation activities can act as a way to be in nature, socialize with others, and gain the benefits from being in a restorative environment.

### PROMOTING COMMUNITY HEALTH

“Parks and recreation departments build communities by providing a place for people to gather, socialize and be around others. Today, we realize that parks are more than recreation and visual assets to communities; they are valuable contributors to larger community policy objectives, such as public health, youth development, job opportunities, social and cultural exchange, and community building.

Parks play a special role for gathering and socialization. They have something to offer everyone from young children and teens, to families, adults and the elderly. They are more than places to recreate and relate to nature; parks also offer a multitude of opportunities to engage in arts and music.

A park can be a community focal point, a symbol of its vitality and character, adding to its overall health, well-being and quality of life. *“Parks and trails provide an outlet for refreshing my spirit and keeping me fit and active” – Parks & Trails Legacy Plan Public Workshop Participant.* Community members near parks value them because they give members a feeling that their community is a special place to live and that it is a natural setting in which the community can take pride” (Minnesota Legacy).



## **Livability**

### ***Safer Neighborhoods***

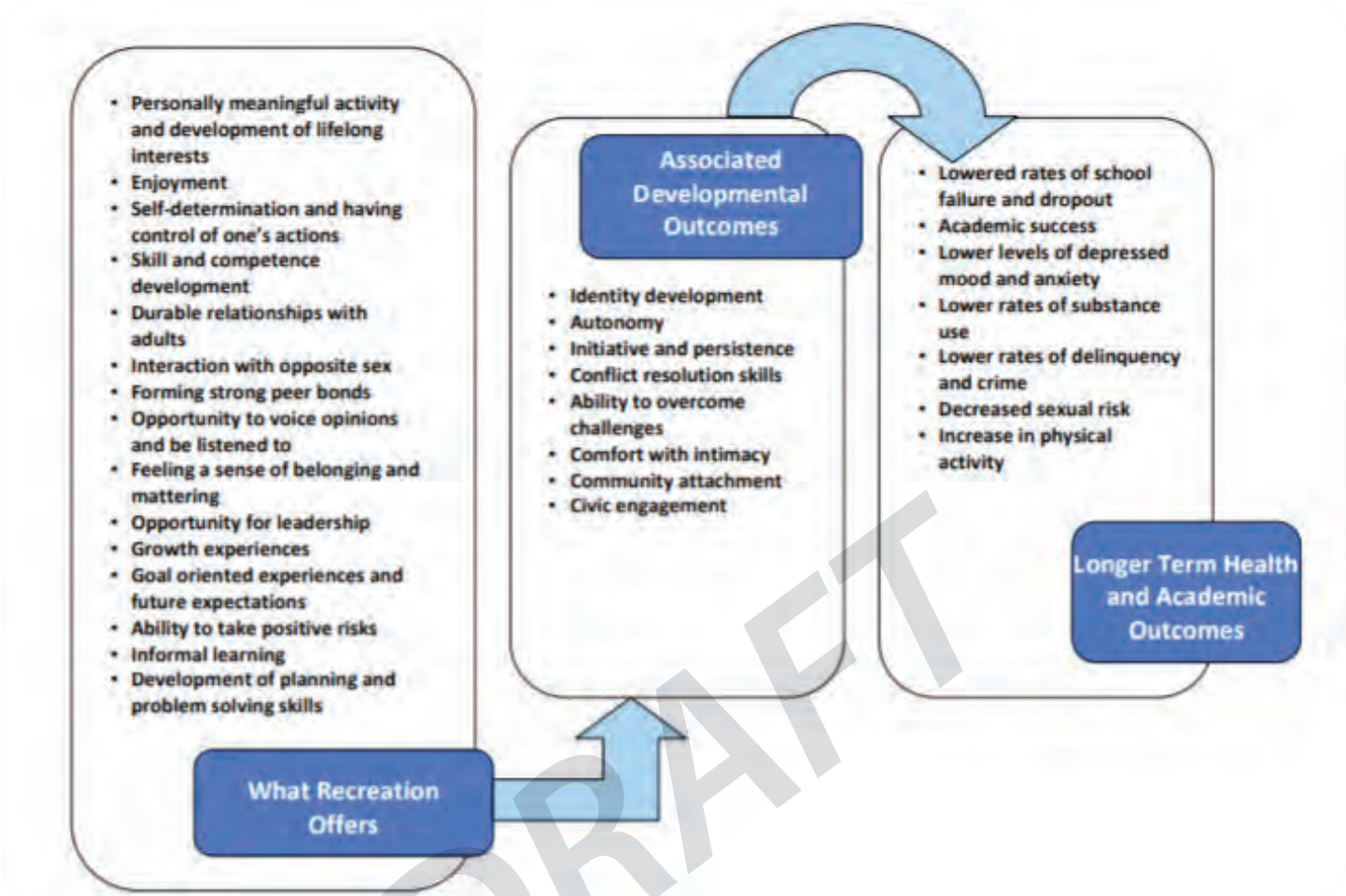
Safety was a top rated concern for residents of Ramsey ([cite survey](#)). Recreation services can be used to provide youth with positive ways to fill out-of-school time and reduce their risk to commit a crime. The department can service students by providing a safe place to go and engage in stimulating activities when school is not in session. Recreation programs can help staff ensure parks and public spaces are properly maintained for safe use and provide an additional figure outside of home and school for developing youth to look up to.

Youth who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely than non-participants to have higher self-esteem, greater academic achievement and in turn, lower incidences of delinquency. Furthermore, at-risk youths have been found to especially benefit from guided recreation programming. Data has also shown that students who reported spending no time in after-school extracurricular activities were 57 percent more likely to drop out of high school, 49 percent more likely to use drugs and 27 percent more likely to have been arrested than students who spend as much as four hours in structured activities. Park and recreation agencies have the ability to provide the programs that can address the root causes of juvenile crime. Because the types of leisure in which youth participate have profound impacts on social development, active and adult-supervised recreation programming available through park agencies are positioned perfectly to equip youth with the tools that develop positive social and cognitive skills, self-confidence and a sense of community (source in files).

In addition to the added value of safety that standard recreation service provide, specific safety oriented programs can be offered to further promote the City's safety initiatives. Examples of these types of programs include partnerships with other City Departments such as offering park space and facilities for Safety Camp and Home Alone Safety classes. Other popular safety-oriented programs include babysitting courses, First Aid and CPR certifications, and water safety classes such as how to kayak.

### ***Community Pride and Identity***

Public parks and recreation agencies ensure community members have equal access to recreation opportunities, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, ability, ethnicity, or age. Agencies have the ability to create community “buy-in” and bring people together through nature ([NRPA, 2017](#)). Parks and recreation systems foster social interactions by providing



gathering places for residents regardless of their age, economic status or ability to pay for access. This in turn aids in developing a sense of belonging across demographics (Bradley, 2013). Whether visiting a neighborhood park or attending an art class, residents have the chance to meet new people in an inviting setting. This can create community ties and make living in the area more desirable.

Engagement in parks and recreation opportunities are vital to maintaining a healthy community and provide significant positive impacts. Other than bringing neighbors together, participation encourages safer, cleaner neighborhoods and creates a livelier community atmosphere. Facilities provided by parks and recreation help improve a community’s image, socioeconomic status and enhance the areas desirability. When individuals move, they seek out a desirable community, when they retire they search for a community that will accommodate their needs. Residents recognize the numerous benefits that well-maintained open spaces and recreation programs can have for a community (source from files).

**Youth Engagement**

The nature of childhood has changed. The amount of time youth today spend outdoors has rapidly diminished in the last two decades. They are spending about half as much time outdoors as they did 20 years ago, which takes a toll on development, mental and physical health (UMN Source).

The negative impact of decreased time outdoors includes a doubling of the childhood obesity rate—accompanied by an incremental hundred billion dollar cost to our health care system—as well as declining creativity, concentration, and social skills (MRPA 3). Connecting children and nature has important health benefits. Studies show outdoor time helps children grow lean and strong, enhances imaginations and attention spans, decreases aggression, and boosts classroom performance. In addition, children who spend time in nature regularly are shown to become better stewards of the environment.



Parks and recreation departments are ideally situated to afford both opportunities and adult guidance through activities that are intrinsically motivating. Adolescents do not need adults to do things “to” or “for” them; rather they need to have opportunities to “develop themselves” through active experience or experiential learning. Services provided by recreation have significant impact in youth development. Parks and recreation departments provide more than just fun and games, or gym and swim programs. When youth participate in these programs, they gain excellent opportunities to develop and gain necessary skills to become fully functioning adults. Participation in these activities is associated with autonomy and identity development, positive social relationships, and learning conflict resolution, academic success, mental health, and civic engagement. (Witt and Caldwell, 2010, p.4, MRPA 3)



When parks and recreation departments invest in youth and provide services such as out-of-school time recreation programs, both participants and community at large gain valuable outcomes such as:

- Contribute to reducing juvenile delinquency
- Contribute to increasing positive and reducing negative behaviors
- Expose youth to less violence
- Improve children’s education performance and thus impact the quality of the future work force and the national economy
- Help decrease health care costs related to childhood obesity
- Increase the economic contributions of young people to society when they become adults
- Help youth develop self-confidence, optimism, and initiative (MRPA 3).



Figure 1.16 Green infrastructure



Figure 1.15 Green infrastructure



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### *Family Development*

Parks often serve as places for families and friends to enjoy public spaces in each other's company (Bradley, 2013). Playgrounds may serve as a meeting place for young families, and as a family develops, they are able to use other park amenities, such as sports fields, trails, and open spaces. Families that recreate together tend to be closer and more cohesive, and have a greater chance of staying together (California State Parks, 2005). A very important aspect of parks and recreation programs is that children and families can create lasting memories in these spaces. By providing the opportunity to create those special memories, recreation agencies create a positive relationship between people and parks and often encourage future participation.

### *Nature Nearby*

"Nature deprivation," a lack of time in the natural world, largely due to hours spent in front of TV or computer screens, has been associated, unsurprisingly, with depression. More unexpected are studies by Weinstein and others that associate screen time with loss of empathy and lack of altruism. And the risks are even higher than depression and isolation. In a 2011 study published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, time in front of a screen was associated with a higher risk of death, and that was independent of physical activity (UMN Source)

The stress of an unpleasant environment can cause you to feel anxious, or sad, or helpless. This in turn elevates your blood pressure, heart rate, and muscle tension and suppresses your immune system. A pleasing environment reverses that. Research reveals that environments can increase or reduce our stress, which in turn impacts our bodies. What you are seeing, hearing, experiencing at any moment is changing not only your mood, but how your nervous, endocrine, and immune systems are working.

Those who live in "greener" areas, with more vegetation around, have reduced risk of mortality. This is due to previously mentioned factors of improved mental health, enhanced social engagement and increased physical activity that come with proximity to green spaces. Those with most vegetation within 800 feet of their homes had a 12% lower rate of mortality from non-accidental causes than those living in the least green spaces. (<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/advpub/2016/4/ehp.1510363.acc.pdf>)





### Economic Development

One thing is clear: the conventional market-based tools we use to value goods like corn, timber and houses don't translate well to public goods like clean air, bird-watching or beautiful views. Special methods are needed that look beyond markets to estimate the true value of these goods and services to society, and new types of institutions are required to manage natural capital resources. (UMN source)

### Economic Growth and Value

Beyond the impact of their expenditures, park and recreation agencies generate even more economic value through their promotion of health and wellness, as well as conservation and resiliency that foster higher property values and increase tourism. Most critically, park and recreation amenities are the cornerstones to improving a region's quality of life, a major factor in enticing employers and workers to an area. The powerful impact parks and recreation has on economic activity, when combined with the ability to deliver healthier and happier communities, highlights the fact that these offerings are not merely a "nice-to-have," luxury government service. Rather, parks and recreation is a critical aspect of what makes a city, town or county a vibrant and prosperous community. (source)

Municipalities with strong parks and recreation systems benefit from improved health and a greater sense of community. This

all may lead to lower healthcare costs, higher property values, and increased standard of living. Research shows that areas with a high quality of life attract businesses, as this also attracts and retains high quality workers (Local Government..., 2017).

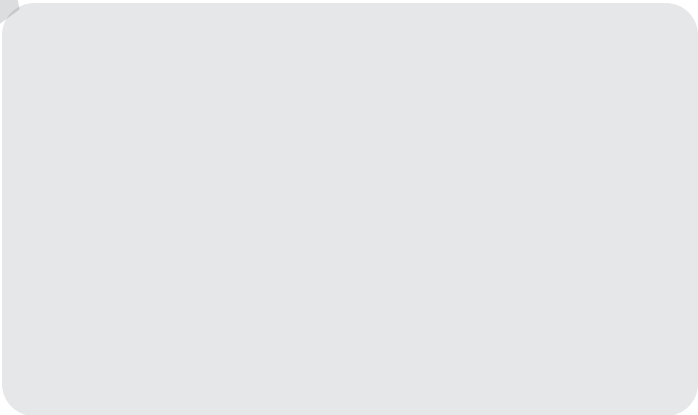
On a broader scale, in 2013, operations and capital spending pertaining to parks and recreation created \$2,834,173,626 in economic activity, and supported 22,411 jobs in Minnesota (*The Economic Impact..., 2015*). Nationally, parks and recreation created nearly \$140 billion in economic impact, added \$68 billion in GDP, and one million jobs. The National Association of Home Builders reports that the presence of parks seriously influences 65% of home-buyers. A 2001 study conducted by the National Association of Realtors found that 50% of survey respondents would be more likely to choose a neighborhood near parks or open spaces, and are willing to pay more to live near a park.



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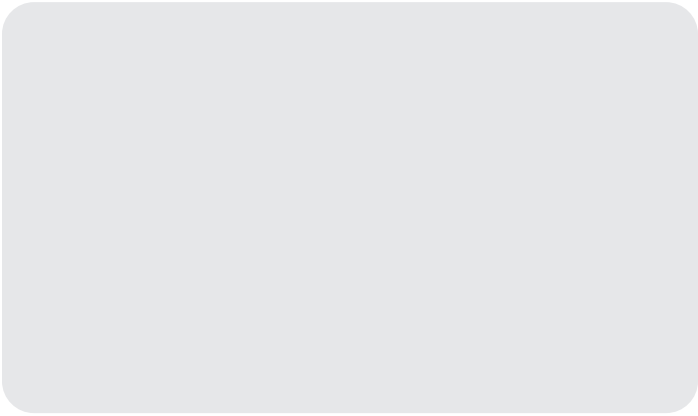
***Volunteering/Stewardship***

[Master naturalist program] [volunteer opportunities lacking in the city] [value volunteers can add to a city] [recreation can be that avenue to create opportunities, but only with a developed system, people will volunteer where they have fun, and see that their time is of impact] [In 2017, Minnesota Master Naturalist hosted events at 12 sites around the state, where 227 volunteers invested over a thousand hours valued at \$27,376.80! --from MN Nat website]



***Local Businesses/partners***

[Through partnerships, we can reach more people, provide more services, and maintain higher quality facilities than we could do on our own. Strategies 1. Build relationships with organizations and community leaders that help us better reach our target markets. • Develop long-lasting, trusting relationships with new immigrant and racial and ethnic minority group organizations and community leaders. Devote ongoing staff resources to these interactions. • Invest in relationship-building with schools, recreation centers, and youth groups in order to reach youth and young adults. Promote opportunities for field trips, site visits, and summer camps. • Reach out to faith-based organizations as a means to reach our target markets. • Reach out to senior centers and group tour operators in order to maintain visitorship by



older adults. • Support interconnections for wildlife watching opportunities (e.g. Minnesota’s birding trails).]-mn DNR

**PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES CAN BENEFIT BY PARTNERING WITH THEIR FELLOW PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES IN NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS TO PRESENT A UNIFIED IMAGE OF A DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE (source)**

[Pearson family farms, kitchen table, scouts, rum river arts, athletic association] [community pride, supports local]

[Section x will talk more about partnerships] [Importance of partnerships within Ramsey]

[Talk about tournaments ARAA]

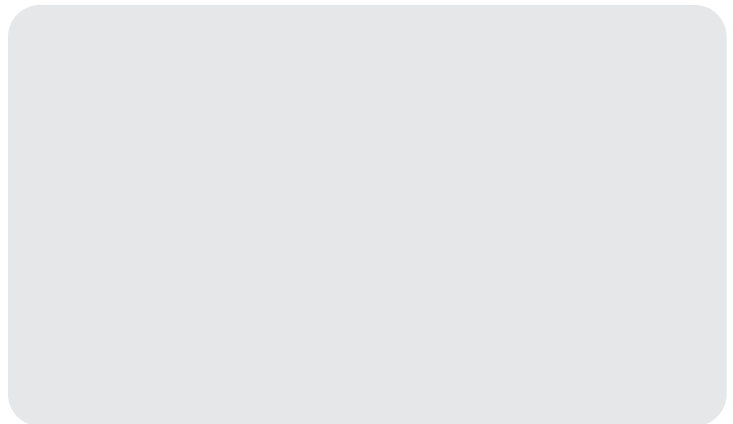
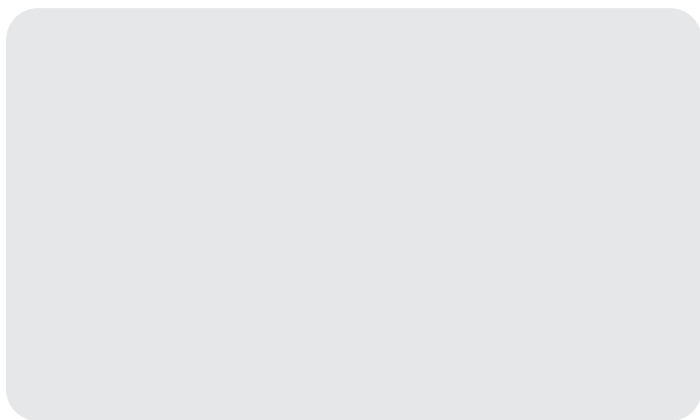
**Encourages Investment**

Opportunities for outdoor recreation can attract new business, talented workers as well as keep established businesses competitive. Small business owners have cited quality of life as a key reason for choosing a location (Crompton, Love & Moore, 2007). Park, recreation, and open space amenities are among the most important components of quality of life. High quality of life makes it easier for businesses to attract and maintain a highly educated professional workforce (Crompton, 2007a).

Furthermore, providing and promoting quality outdoor recreational opportunities can be a more sustainable way of attracting and retaining businesses than offering tax or other cash incentives. Companies that relocate to an area for tax incentives alone will likely continue seeking out other tax incentives and move on when they are able. High-quality outdoor recreational opportunities cannot be so easily replaced (Minnesota Legacy).

**Property Values**

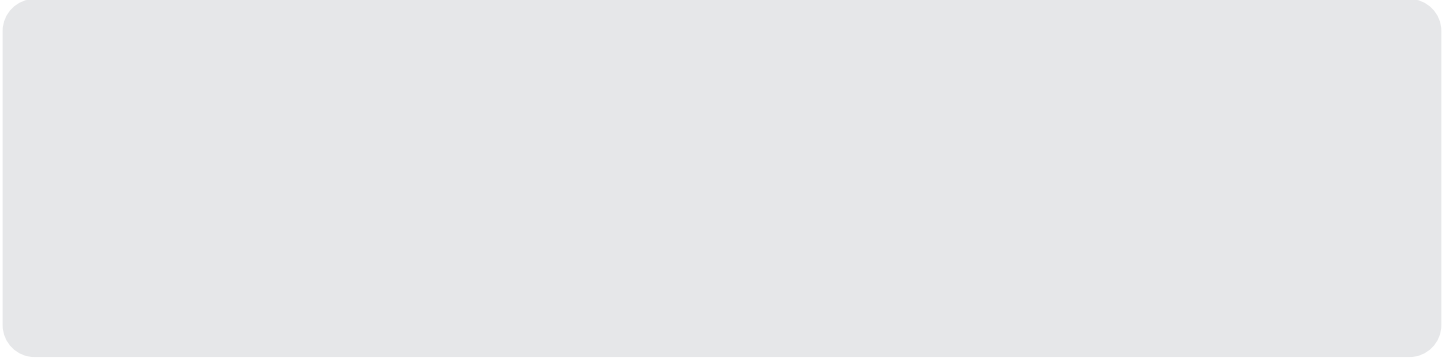
As a general guideline, researchers have found nearby parkland increases home values 5%-15%, depending upon proximity and quality of the park. Trails have a similar effect: researchers estimate homeowners are willing to pay an additional \$4,000-\$9,000 to be located within a thousand feet of a trail. Minnesotans value open space, leading a Wilder Research analysis to conclude: “the additional future tax revenues generated by residential properties near an open space may be sufficient to pay the debt service on funds borrowed to acquire and/or develop a park.” Overall, the message is clear: Minnesota’s economy benefits when we invest in parks and trails (MN Parks & Trails). “The property value added by park areas is separate from the recreational use value gained; property value goes up even if the resident never visits the park.” “For example, a 2009 report from the National Association of Realtors found the premium for homes near parks can extend three blocks and start at 20 percent for those homes directly adjacent (declining as distance from the park increases). The 5 percent premium is the increase in a home’s value due to its proximity to the park system alone. The measurement controls for characteristics of the house as well as other locational characteristics such as proximity to transportation networks and central business districts. Holding all other factors constant, The Trust for Public Land assumes that parks alone increase property values by 5 percent. Other studies have found that value can be measured at distances up to 2,000 feet. Second, these estimates only capture a 5 percent marginal value for parks, though studies have shown higher premiums. One study in Austin, Texas, found that direct adjacency to greenbelts increased average home value by 5.7 or 12.2 percent, depending on the greenbelt. Other studies have found that parks can have up to a 20 percent premium. Therefore, these estimates provide a lower bound estimate of the “true” impact of parks on property values.” (Colorado Trust for Public Lands)





# SECTION 4 | STATE OF PROGRAMS

## INTRODUCTION



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## RECREATION SERVICES IN RAMSEY

The following section provides four classifications for programs in Ramsey, based upon content and community impact. Many programs may meet the description of multiple categories. However, the purpose of this classification is not to create fixed placements of programs, but to ensure

a diversity of programs are offered to residents. Each category includes a set of programs as an example. Program flyers containing detailed information on offerings can be found in the Appendix.

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**Art and Culture:**

Art and culture opportunities simultaneously create character for the City and enhance community bonding. Recreation offerings in Art and Culture can vary from traditional art programs like painting, or be larger cultural events such as the Holiday Tree Lighting or Annual Summer Concert Series. Examples of art and cultural programs:

- Elmcrest Art Fair
  - Art Classes and Demos
  - Sales of Local Art
- Community Events
  - Paint-A-Plow
  - Movies in the Park
- Concert Series
  - Art in the Park paired program prior to concerts
- Rumriver Art Center Partnership
  - Vitality Arts Program
  - Art in the Park
  - Art classes: Wine and Canvas nights, clay ornaments, birdhouse building, painting, drawing, pottery, etc.



## Physical Health and Wellbeing

Enhanced physical health and wellbeing is among one of the largest assets of recreation programming. The United States has seen significant increases in preventable chronic health diseases such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes. As a result, there is a higher focus on overall health and wellness. Recreation programming allows opportunities for all abilities and ages to partake in activities that provide benefits to their health and wellbeing. They can also help break down barriers to healthy living, promote an active community and help residents connect to each other and nature. Programs that promote physical health and wellbeing:

- Athletic Opportunities
  - Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association offerings
  - Archery classes
  - Pickleball
  - Qigong Meditation
  - Line Dancing
  - Yoga: Hatha, flow, candlelight, outdoor
  - Zumba
- Outdoor Recreation
  - Camping partnered with the Boy Scouts of America
  - Canoeing and kayaking,
  - Birding
  - Walking informal weekly group
- Other Healthy Living Activities
  - Nutrition education with Coborn's

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**Enrichment, Education, and Skill-building:**

Recreation programs in this category significantly enhance overall quality of life for residents. They facilitate community building through the development of hobbies , intergenerational understanding, and continuous learning. For youth, these types of opportunities help them develop their sense of self. These programs cover a wide breadth of categories and appeal to a diversity of residents. Programs that provide enrichment, education and skill building include:

- Starwatch Parties with Mike Lynch
- History programs provided by the Anoka County Historical Society
- Summer Adventure Program
- Pollinator Garden
- Gardening Classes with Anoka County Master Gardeners
- Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteers

**Community Events and Festivals**

Community events and festivals may span to accomplish other objectives or department imperatives beyond recreation programming. Many address economic development with one or more partnerships. Programs tend to be centered around a larger themed engagement piece and act as a large gathering for residents to build a sense of community. Due to their encompassing nature, they can often be placed in one or more category. Examples of such are:

- Ramsey Resident Day on the Farm
- RAVE
- Archery tournament
- Dog Park events
- Happy Days
- Safety Camp
- Concert Series [remove from previous]
- Elmcrest [also list here
- Paint-A-Plow



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## PARTNERS IN PROGRAMS

The appreciation for Ramsey’s partners has been emphasized throughout this chapter—and for good reason. Partnerships are essential for maximizing resident’s return on investment through the sharing of talent, expertise and experience, as well as ideas. Partnerships with existing entities eliminate the duplication of certain services and infrastructure, stretching various program costs for the benefit of all. Moreover, these partnerships are often an ideal marriage of each organization’s mission, with the programming outcome mutually synergistic. In summary, working together has resulted in expanding both the depth and scope of the City’s program offerings. Alongside the gains in recreation opportunity, partnerships have facilitated the community’s ability to support the local private and nonprofit sectors. The following are just a few examples of the value of affiliated programs and the partners:



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**Adrenaline Sports**

The City of Ramsey has utilized Adrenaline Sports’ indoor sport courts for various recreation programs, (like Zumba, dance and hard court winter activities) as well as the annual Business Expo. In these examples, the city often simply does not have an indoor venue this large or with specialized flooring and high ceilings. By renting the appropriate space, the city can ‘right size’ the program or event without having to build and maintain a public facility and the private sector derives the rent income and exposure to new patrons.



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**Anoka County Parks**

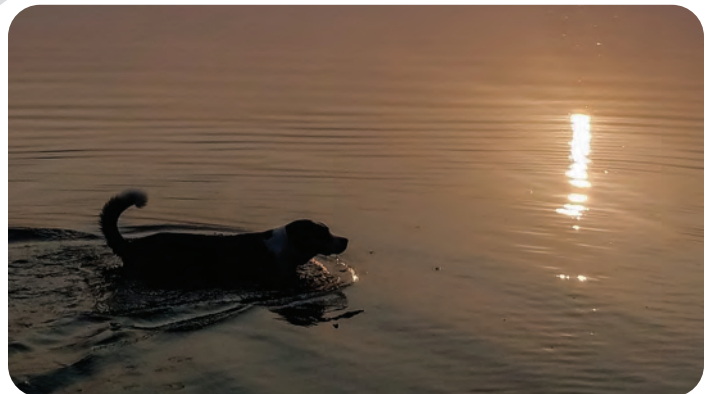
A logical partner with the same mission (and shared constituents) is the county park system with two Regional Parks within the city. Program opportunities may occur in either the municipal or county parks—or at river locations, where in October of 2019, a collaboration resulted in the cross promotion of a Voyager Canoe paddle on the Rum River, using the county owned watercraft.



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**Anoka Historical Society**

Sense of Place is an important aspect of community engagement and the Anoka County Historical Society is well equipped to share resources and programming on site and within Ramsey, like the free Halloween-themed educational programs held at City Hall. Many additional opportunities exist to be developed that facilitate connecting existing and new residents to Ramsey’s past.



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**Anoka School District #11, Elk River #728 and area Community Education**

Ramsey is served by two school districts, [[each with many synergies in serving shared constituents to be explored.]] Anoka High School regularly uses Ramsey’s tennis courts at Rivers’ Bend Park, and Elk River’s Spectrum High School has used Ramsey’s parks since their inception.

**Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association**

The Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association (formally Ramsey Youth Athletic Association) has positively touched thousands of families over the last four decades through youth athletics within Ramsey parks. Their favorable impact simply cannot be overstated. This long-standing partnership has many layers, but at its essence, is a partnership that finds the City building millions of dollars of outdoor athletic facilities, buildings and support infrastructure and maintenance services—with ARAA providing tens of thousands in hours of volunteer contributions every year—all of which are available to every interested youth in the community.



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### ***Anoka Woman of Today***

Bingo has been the subject of a straightforward enterprise with the non-profit Anoka Woman of Today. The City provided the space and promotion, with the Anoka Woman of Today hosting the Bingo event. Residents socialized, enjoyed the recreational outing, with some taking home prize money—with the host group taking the remaining proceeds to apply to philanthropic projects in and around Ramsey.

### ***Coborn's Super Store***

Coborn's store is an excellent example of collaboration between the private and public sector. For many years, they have sponsored a concert at The Draw Summer Event Series, and since 2005 have donated goods and services for many city functions—and even their advertising calls attention to the relationship with the city and their proximity to the Mississippi River Trail. They have been a willing and able partner in specific programs, like staffing the Farmers' Market with a professional Nutritionist, aiding residents and market patrons with advice and tips for healthy cooking and living.

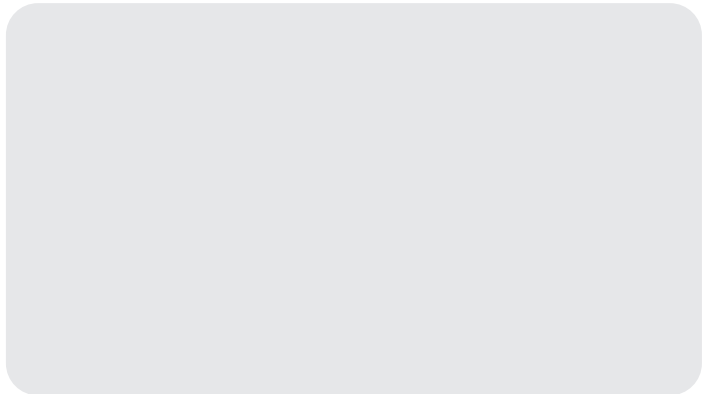
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**The Kitchen Table**

The Kitchen Table is an example of a private business serving as a three-way hub of collaboration. One successful incidence is the reoccurring Wine and Canvas classes held in their community room. Ramsey Parks and Recreation promotes the classes, Rumriver Arts supplies the supplies and artist, with the restaurant providing participants the beverage and snacks of their choice—all of this covered by the class enrollee’s registration fee of \$35 dollars.



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**National Park Service & the Non-profit Mississippi Park Connection**

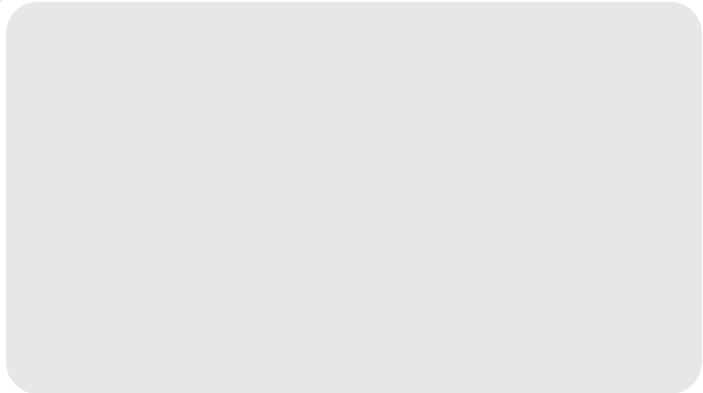
One of the more unique National Parks’ in America celebrates Ramsey as its upstream beginning, with Hastings Minnesota to the South. The 72-mile long Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA), includes a nonprofit partner, Mississippi Park Connection and together are developing programming with the city with significant opportunity for expanding. Canoe RAVEs (RIVER ACTION VOLUNTEER EVENTS) have been popular throughout the Twin Cities Metro, including Ramsey—with volunteers turned away after the maximum participation at the last event. That RAVE had 50 volunteers working on needed maintenance in Mississippi West Regional Park, and learning canoe skills at the same time to reach the two islands for that activity.



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**Northstar Commuter Rail & Metropolitan Transit**

Ramsey residents ride the Northstar train to work, to the airport and also recreation and leisure pursuits like traveling to athletic games and events like the Holidazzel Parade in the cities. Occasionally individuals and groups ride the train to a destination and pedal back on the Mississippi River Trail. Many other recreational partnerships with Metro Transit exist to be explored—including pairing the Northstar and new riders to participate in ‘Bike to Work Week’ and others.

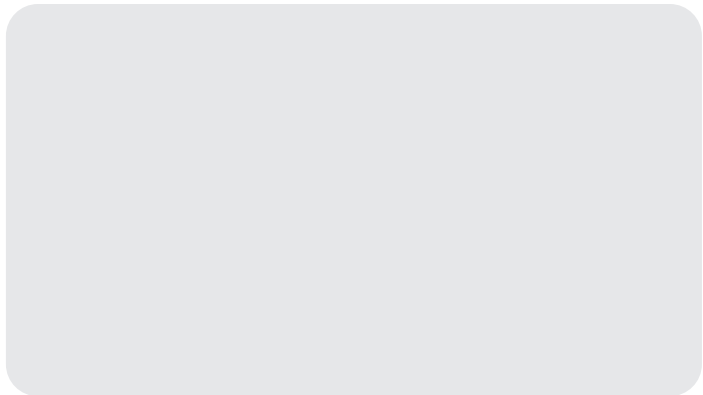


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**PACT Charter School**

One of the first entities to invest in Ramsey’s new downtown was PACT School in 2005, which included the agreement by the city to build and maintain the multi-use athletic field that the school uses as its home field.

The 7-12 grade school also uses the park as part of their phyi-ed curriculum, even in the Winter. The agreement calls for modest maintenance payment to the City by PACT, and the park is utilized by other youth athletic organizations and the public—with all benefiting from the park known as The Draw.



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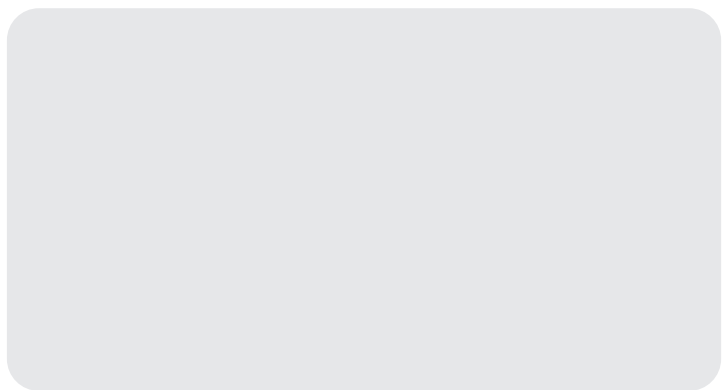
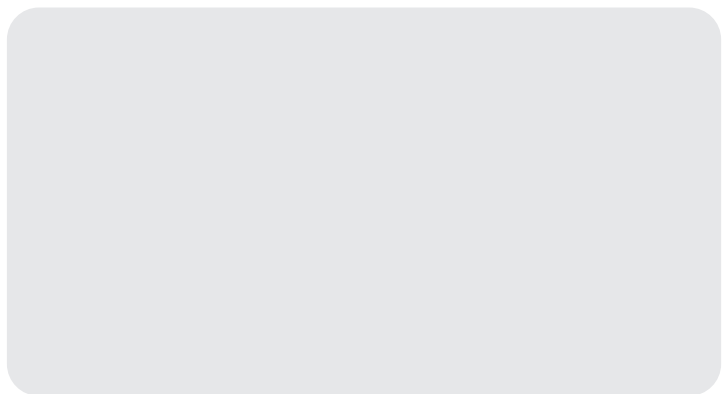
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***Pearson Family Farm***

The Pearson Family Farm is a prime example of a private, family owned partnership, financially benefiting from City advertising for a recreational 'Resident Day at the Farm. In this instance, the Pearson's hosted the event, dozens of residents enjoyed a multifaceted Halloween themed afternoon at the farm, and City costs of co-hosting were almost non-existent.

***Ramsey Foundation***

The Summer Concert Series may be the quintessential partnership, in this case involving the 501c3 Ramsey Foundation, the Park and Recreation Commission, the businesses who help pay for performances, the resident food vendor who offers service to patrons—and Ramsey Lions who dispense beverages, with those proceeds being returned to the community in various philanthropic ways. The last concert of the season is also all about partnerships, with the Trott Brook Benefit Bash raising \$10's of thousands of dollars each year for scholarships and other worthwhile



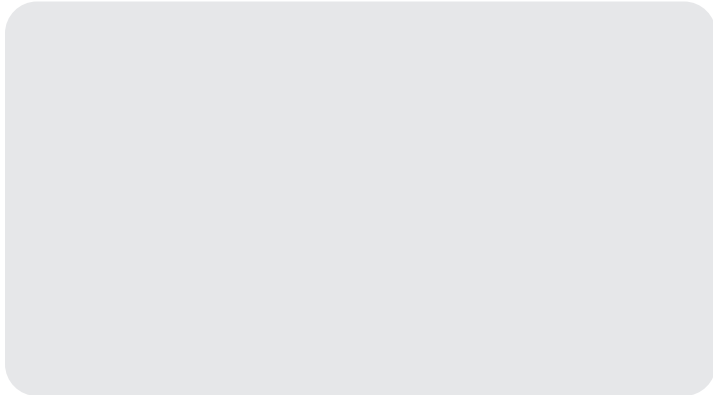
endeavors.

**Ramsey Garden Club**

The City and the garden club have partnered for decades on beautification projects like the entrance monument at Emerald Pond Park and the south entrance to City Hall, as well as the seasonal décor within, each December—with that holiday tree a poignant backdrop to for children’s pictures with Santa at the tree lighting event.

**Rumriver Art Center**

The City’s relationship with the art center is relative new—but growing exponentially, highlights include; Art in the Park, Vitality Art program, ornament making as part of the tree lighting festivities, Wine and Canvas night for adults, and of



**NATIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT**

IN 2015, AMERICA’S LOCAL PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES GENERATED MORE THAN **\$154 BILLION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY** AND THEIR OPERATIONS AND CAPITAL SPENDING SUPPORTED MORE THAN

**1.1 MILLION JOBS**

**THE ECONOMIC IMPACT IN MINNESOTA**

Economic Activity (Transactions)	Labor Income	Employment (Jobs)
<b>\$ 2,520,078,194</b>	<b>\$ 963,778,166</b>	<b>20,338</b>



course the annual Art Fair at Elmcrest Park.

### Scouting

Boy and Girl Scouts' contributions to the City's park and recreation services are almost immeasurable, with partnerships regularly occurring each year. Recent projects included the development and installation of an Osprey Platform at Cottonwood Park with interpretive signage, or the hands-on contributions to the new Nature-based Playground in the western portion of the City. Another meaningful project by Girl Scout Troop # was the fundraising and installation of the GaGa Ball Pit at North Commons park in Ramsey's downtown



### University of Minnesota Extension (Tree Care Advisor, Master Gardener, MN Master Naturalist)

2020 was the second year the City offered the Minnesota Master Naturalist program in Ramsey. This is both a programmed service for residents desiring to professionalize and learn more about Minnesota's ecology and natural history—but also a wellspring in terms of developing a corps of informed individuals who will 'give back' to maintain their Master Naturalist certification. As of this writing, the program is already generating volunteer contributions for the City. In one instance a student of the program is developing a Blue Bird recovery project, and also hosting a seminar at Elmcrest Park for birding enthusiasts to





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learn more about ornithology and habitat conservation locally.

**CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD**

With the synergistic promotion and development of programs, the City can offer ever-more valued programming, bringing to the entire community; Art and Culture, Enrichment, Education and Skill-building, opportunities for promoting Physical Health and Wellbeing, and the special Community Events that are beloved by so many residents.



well in the community when planning for the future success of parks and recreation services in Ramsey.

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN RECREATION

Ramsey has developed a parks and recreation system, that despite being relatively new, has already designed a network to connect people and parks, reached out in the community to create valuable partnerships and established popular programs and events which residents look forward to year after year. Acknowledgment of these strengths help build a strong foundation to provide efficient and meaningful services to residents. The following section provides examples for program planners and city officials to reference what works

**Building a foundation**

The City of Ramsey has taken actions to create opportunities where they were lacking. As the Summer Concert Series took off, seasonal internships were opened to aid the Parks and Recreation Department with logistics of the series along with their initiatives. Council recognized the popularity of these programs and put in place a permanent part time Recreation Specialist position. This position allowed staff to allocate efforts exclusively to recreation programming in an efficient and meaningful way.

**Synergistic Partnerships**

As rightfully emphasized previously, synergistic partnerships are essential to the development of recreation in Ramsey. Parks and Recreation programs have been a commonplace to foster valuable partnerships in the community over shared values and efforts to build an engaged, connected and active community. In addition, partnerships as such help promote the local economy by sourcing locally and creating awareness for vendors in our own backyard.

**Connecting People and Parks**

Ramsey’s 29 square mile park system will be an interconnected one, spanning 10 large, Recreational Districts, linking approximately 32 City parks and 2 Regional Parks—all to be well connected by the Circle of Ramsey — promoting healthy living and active transportation. This extensive trail and park system provides ample room for both formal and informal opportunities. With parks dispersed throughout the City in a way that each area may have unique opportunities to recreate—trails connecting neighborhoods, and parks to each other, together creating a safe and active system that includes non-motorized transportation options. With a system as such, it is no surprise Ramsey residents have a high visiting rate of parks at 87%.

**Art for All**

Art and culture is beyond a nice livingroom painting-- it is integrated in day to day lives and encompass elements that invoke a sense of community. Many established, popular services provided by parks and recreation include some aspect of art and culture. A strong partnership with area nonprofit, Rumriver Art Center, has lead to a variety of successful art programs for all ages, along with the establishment of the annual Elmcrest Art fair to promote local talents and vendors. Other cultural events have become staples of the season for residents, such as the Annual Tree Lighting, Summer Concert Series, and Movies in the Park.



Figure 1.17 xxxxx



Figure 1.18 xxxxxx



## Decade of Summer Concerts

In 2010, a single event concert was hosted. Since then, it has led to a series that continues to grow slowly and steadily, but progressively. Today it has become a popular family outing, serving many thousands over the course of a summer. In the upcoming 2020 series, 11 concerts with sponsors, food trucks, supplemental programs and offerings will take place. The success of this series is a prime example of how establishing a small program can become something grand. Community members and

**FREE** **Ramsey Foundation**  
**Concert Series •2010•**

Join us for the **first ever** concert at Ramsey's new amphitheater in the COR, at the corner of Rhinestone Street NW and Ramsey Parkway E.  
Thursday, August 5, 2010  
5:00 - 7:00 pm

Be sure to check out the brand new farmer's market before the concert!  
The all new Ramsey Farmers Market is open Thursdays from 3:00 - 7:00 pm at Rhinestone Commons, 14455 Rhinestone Street (west of PACT Charter School).

Back by popular demand -  
**Big Walter Smith**

Sponsored by  
**Village Bank**

Brought to you by the  
**CITY OF RAMSEY FOUNDATION**

Member FDIC

For more information, please visit:  
**www.cityoframseyfoundation.org**

businesses alike have seen the value in this offering as attendance and sponsors continue to grow.

## CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT IN RECREATION

As parks and recreation offerings expand, there are ample opportunities for continued development in order to continuously improve efficiency and quality of services. The following section has identified three areas that can further enhance recreation services for the community.

### *Outreach*

Consistent outreach helps to strengthen and enhance Ramsey’s brand and identity as a remarkable place to reside. Marketing and branding is a key component to program enrollment and success. Residents are not able to participate in services programs they are unaware of. An adaptive outreach strategy may be beneficial to reach larger proportions of the community. As programs expand, this will allow information to be accessible and easily found.

### *Program Consistency*

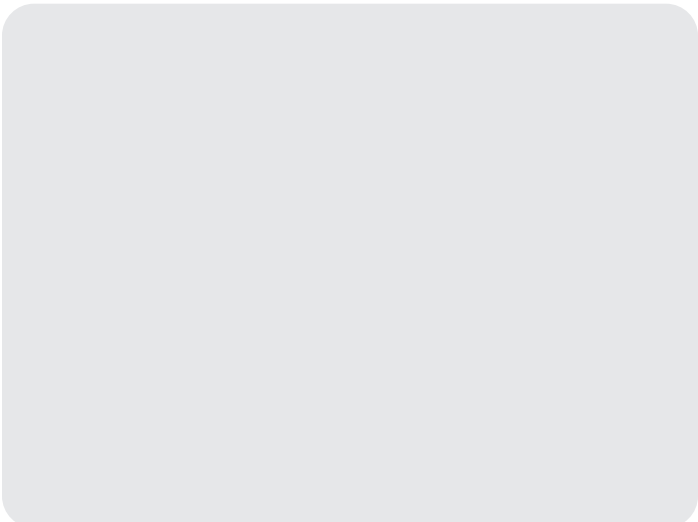
A portion of Ramsey’s start in recreation programming can be attributed to the seasonal interns who helped grow the Summer Concert Series in terms of sponsors and supplemental programming. With a permanent part time Recreation Specialist, more year-round programs can allow residents to get excited about the next season’s offerings and an overall growing program.

### *Regular Evaluation of Return on Investment*

In anticipation of an expanding population, Ramsey may consider increasing the scope and scale of recreation programs based upon resident feedback and desires. This evaluation will take the form of formal and informal surveys, assessments on the success of existing programs and available budgets. In the future, Ramsey leadership and officials may find an allocation of additional resources and services may fully leverage an increased return on investment.

## A FUTURE IN RECREATION

[Section conclusion]





# SECTION 5 | PLANNING FACTORS & CONSIDERATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

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## PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The program philosophy utilizes a variety of factors to best plan recreation services to enhance our community through improving the well being of residents, supporting local partners, and by continuing to take care of what we have. We seek to provide relevant, and quality programs that deliver both community and individual benefits [as mentioned in X]. The following section will acknowledge factors of consideration for recreation programs to aid in future planning.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

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

As the City continues to grow, the Department can provide access to recreation opportunities to help connect residents to the community and Ramsey's abundant natural spaces. To achieve this vision, the department will continuously reevaluate program planning and offerings to create an active and connected community.

[See following section on specific ways that recreation can support the 2040 comp plan goals]



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## PROGRAM PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

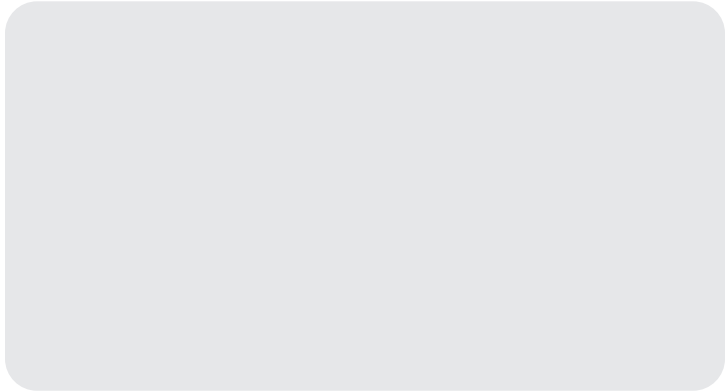
[Introduction Facilities, Staff and Funds -- Program Factors: Demographics and Demand, Community Benefit, Program Categories]

### Facilities, Staff and Funds

**FACILITIES:** *Facilities are one of the base components of programming, as they can limit or expand opportunities. Ramsey has utilized City facilities such as Ramsey City Hall, Elmcrest Park, and Central Park for regular programming. These are high use facilities for both the City and private residential requests. Additionally, local elementary schools and Adrenaline Sports have been reserved for some fitness classes, however there are additional fees and other programs that take priority in these highly desired spaces. In the future, facilities dedicated to parks and recreation programming will improve the quality, quantity and cost of programs. In the meantime, the Department can make improvements on current spaces to allow them to be multi-use for programming, maintain mutually positive partnerships in the community to use other space when necessary. When creating new park facilities, they should be planned with a multi-use mindset.*

**STAFFING:** Staff is another base component of programming, and can [make or break-- capacity to strengthen organization/connections/community building] a program. As Ramsey is still developing recreation programs, t[[here are no full time recreation specific staff. Programs are primarily “outsourced” or offered in conjunction with partners.-- ]continues to develop and refine, staff as well as other resources can be evaluated to be responsive to residents] As a product, strong relationships have been made in the community. When the time comes, city leaders may decide to specialize staff for programming to offer a wider breadth of opportunities to keep up with a growing population.

**FUNDING:** *Funds are the final base component to the foundation of recreation services. As funds are finite, a system may be in place to prioritize program offerings which provide the most community benefit {reference cost framework section}. Services are evaluated in multifaceted terms, which may include overall added value, cost per participant and responsiveness to residents.*



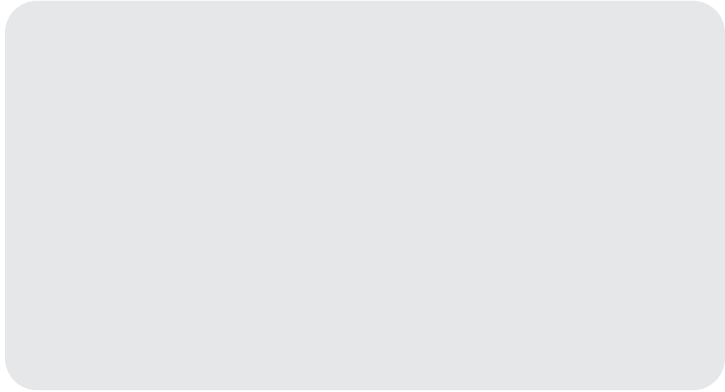
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**Program Factors**

**DEMOGRAPHICS AND DEMAND :** *[use inserts from survey, wanting more recreation offerings] [what programs will people participate in] [what opportunities are lacking in the area]*

**COMMUNITY BENEFIT:** *[Reference values, intrinsic, for building a better future] [number of people served: Pearson family farms example] [Balance of quality of programs, with reaching and benefiting a larger proportion of the population] [can reduce cost per participant]]*

**PROGRAM PROVIDER CATEGORIES:** *determines priority and funding/fee setting (see section X for full pyramid and description)*

- Community events: One-time or annual events, little to no fees, open to the public
- Parks & Recreation Department: *These types of programs are essential to recreation and community needs. They are the typical offerings that people think of with recreation, and direct costs subsidized to residents.*
- Partnership – *beyond basic program offerings and provide more specialized offerings*
- Contracted – *very specialized, typically sought out for a specific program or service that cannot be provided in house*

*Based upon staffing and available resources, programs may change in category. For example, a city with a naturalist on board may offer interpretive programs in house, where as a city without, interpretive programs would fall into the partnership or contracted category.*

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**PARTNERSHIPS AND PROVIDERS:** *Partnerships are opportunities to expand recreation programming while devoting less resources. Partnerships may be with schools, other recreation agencies, or private businesses. However, for any partnership to be successful, both parties must receive equal value in the exchange.*

*In a study done by the University of Minnesota Resilient Communities Project, it found the City of Ramsey may benefit by partnerships and collaboration with governmental agencies, non-profit organizations and businesses in the region for greater effectiveness and efficiency in programming and communication. Recommends to increase and enhance regional collaboration and partnerships include:*

- *Initiate a regional online newsletter*
- *Partner with local and regional business owners to coordinate promotion and outreach to residents*
- *Establish a regional volunteer council for outreach efforts*

*Partnerships are a valuable asset to recreation programming and well-being of residents. See page -- for specific information on partnerships within the context of Ramsey.*



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## Evaluation and Analysis

**PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND INVENTORY:** *An assessment for new and existing programs on an annual or bi-annual basis may be completed to help ensure program quality and catch areas for improvement. They may gather information such as turnout, total cost, cost per participant, community value and participant feedback. This type of assessment can aid in determining appropriateness of the program, value added and funding.*

*Information on demographics, health, safety, and environmental data for the community can be utilized to demonstrate responsiveness to residents to provide relevant programs.*

*An inventory of current parks and recreation opportunities offered in, around, and by the City may be conducted to evaluate what is and what is not being offered. This can help avoid gaps in programming and competition with already existing programs.*



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## INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT

*In order to be successful, the Department must continue to engage those who participate and make it accessible for those who may have not. Traditional programs are a great opportunity as they typically yield high attendance. These types of programs, such as art, yoga, and sports programs through Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association, should continue to be available to all. In addition to inclusion in program offering, recreation programs can utilize community engagement pieces to be responsive to residents.*

**INCLUSION:** Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act outlines program access obligations, which states that recreation programs and facilities must be accessible to people with disabilities (Great Plains ADA Center). How can a public entity meet this obligation? The best way is to have facilities, equipment, and outdoor areas compliant with accessibility standards.

*Unfortunately, this can't always be the case. Limited budgets, lack of resources, and technical in-feasibility can make converting current facilities and equipment into compliance difficult, if not impossible.*



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*The ADA regulations provide flexibility for this reality by providing exceptions for actions that cause “undue hardship.” Public entities are not required to take actions that change the “fundamental nature” of an activity or service. There is no exemption, however, for the obligation to provide program access to individuals with disabilities. This obligation is more than just “getting people in the door.” Program Access requires that use of facilities and services be equal to what other individuals receive, and it must be provided in an integrated setting with other members of the community.*

*While some agencies may have an Inclusion/Adaptive Recreation Specialist who develops access plans for participants with disabilities, there are not many options for adaptive recreation in the cities inventoried. Anoka-Hennepin and Elk River School Districts offer sports leagues for adults with disabilities, and it appears there is a community-based Special Olympics team in Anoka County.*

*A cooperative program between neighboring cities may be an efficient way to begin offering adaptive programs. Adaptive*

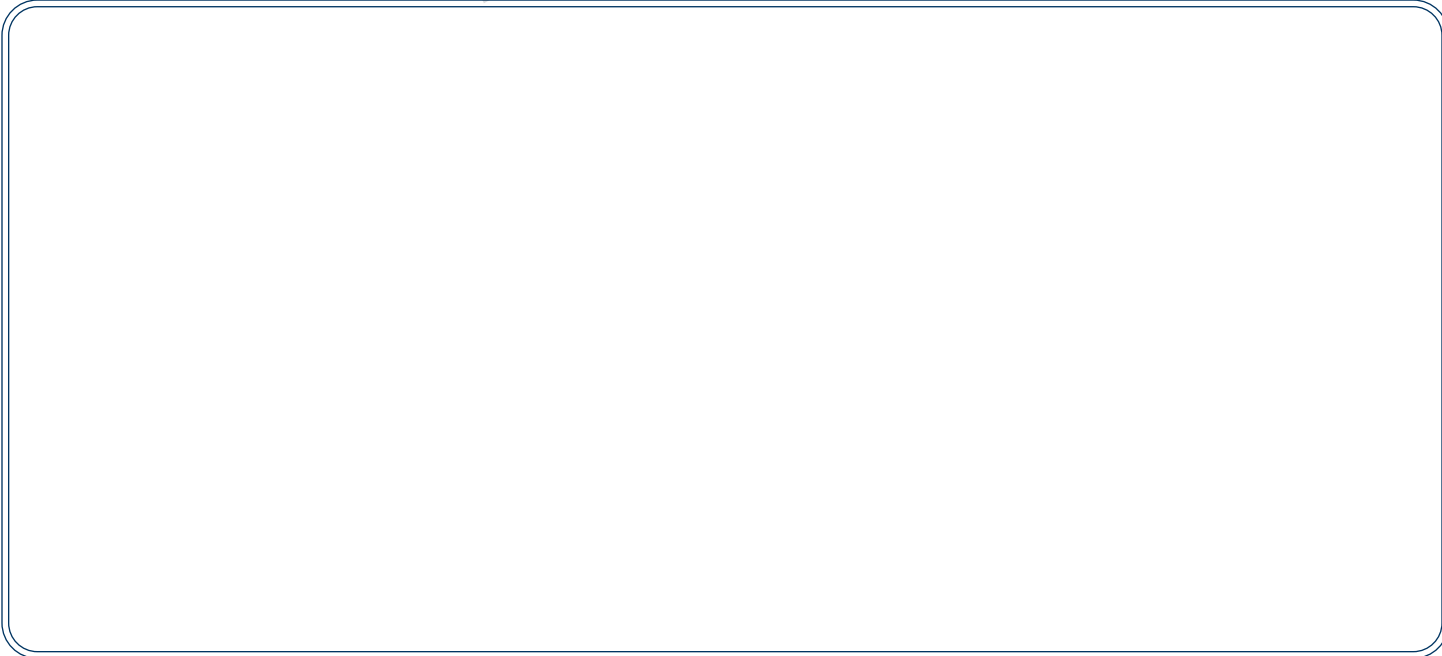
*Recreation & Learning Exchange (ARLE) is a community-based resource for people with disabilities in the cities of Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, and Richfield. The program offers a range of physical activities and sports, social programs, and classes for independent living.*

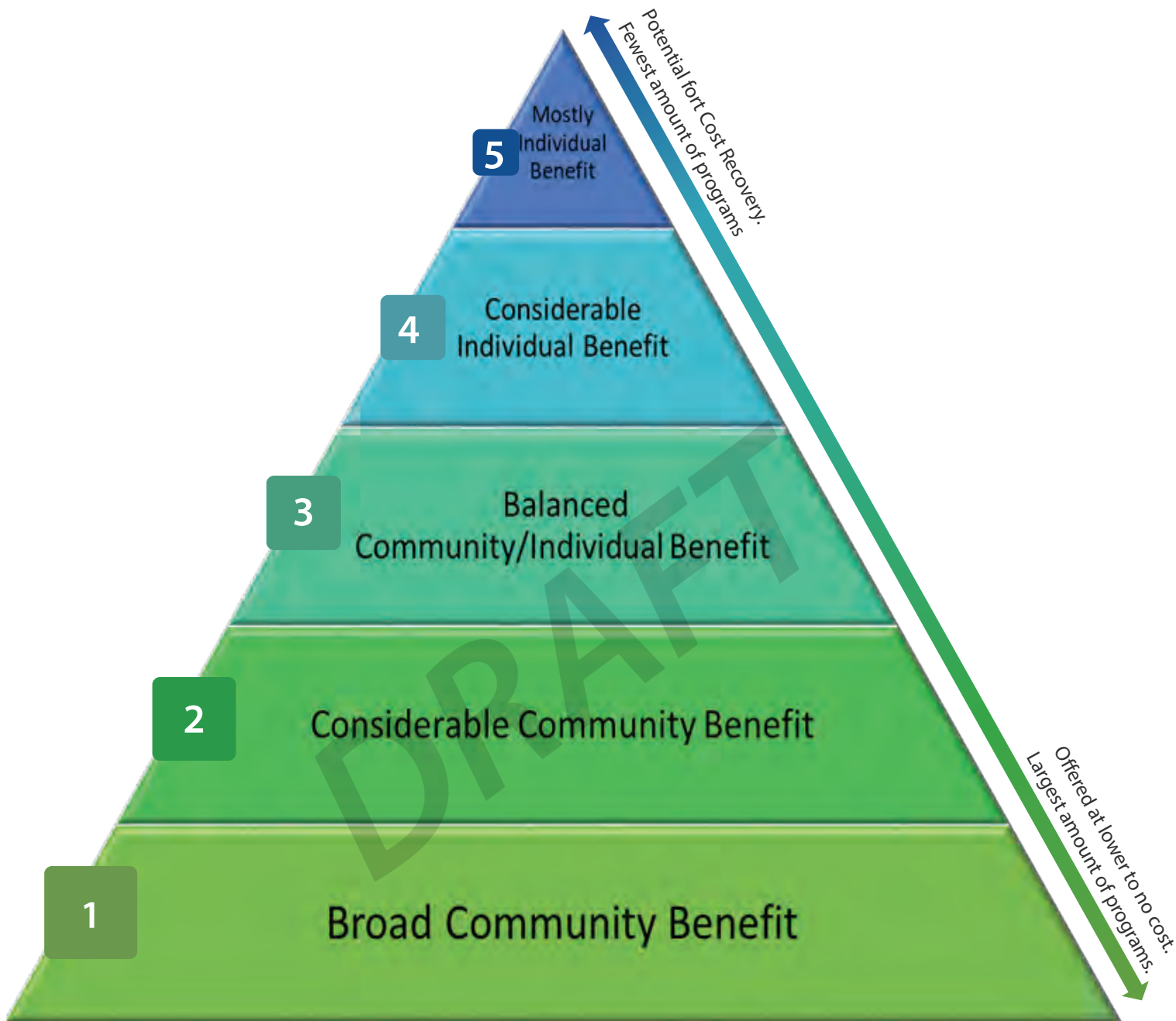
*As Ramsey is in the early stages of recreation programming, the Department can work with partners to provide opportunities, and plan for the future with accessibility in mind. In the meantime, the Department can continue to offer a variety of programs to find something for everybody. [Some examples - seated yoga, working with other organizations, planning for the future to break down barriers in participation.]*

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** *Community input may be gathered through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and workshops. By promoting engagement opportunities, service providers can gain awareness and increase participation. Results can be used to determine what types of programs are relevant, for which age groups, and in which areas.*



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## FEE CONSIDERATIONS

[Introduction about considerations in fee setting], [accessibility , added value to the city, return on investment etc]

1

**Mostly community benefit:** These services are the foundation of the pyramid and include programs and services which mostly benefit the community as a whole. They may increase property values, improve community safety, address social needs, and enhance quality of life. These programs are typically offered for little to no charge.

2

**Considerable community benefit:** The second level of the pyramid includes services that enhance individual well-being. Programs in this category tend to be expected services from the city and are typically catered towards beginner level programs intended for skill development. As they provide considerable community benefit, services are offered for little to no charge.

3

**Balanced individual and community benefit:** The middle of the pyramid represents programs that promote mental and physical well-being, but provide a higher level of skill development. Low fees are set for programs in this category to recover some of the direct and indirect costs.

4

**Considerable individual benefit:** The second smallest category is comprised of specialized services that are generally targeted to specific groups and skillsets. This category may have some programs that are competitive. Fees are set to recover most or all of the cost.

5

**Mostly individual benefit:** These services are found in the smallest portion at the top of the pyramid. They may be in the same market as the private sector. These programs are designed to recover costs, and have the potential to create a profit margin. Programs are often less frequent and smaller due to a niche community of participants and economic factors.

**Fee Setting Framework:**

The Pyramid Methodology (GreenPlay LLC, et al. ) was developed and adopted as a best practice system for program management and funds allocation. The Framework acts as a way to balance financial control, equity in programs, and identify core offerings. The Pyramid Methodology is especially useful because it tailors to the uniqueness of individual communities to help ensure programs provide the most benefit to the community as a whole. The pyramid is structured based upon the “benefit” of services to each community, and not simply “what has been done before”, or “what are others doing”.



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Existing programs can be categorized in the pyramid to easily consider the fee level. As new programs are developed, they can easily be added to a fee setting category. Pricing levels should reflect the community and align with the organizations mission and vision. Programs can be roughly sorted onto the pyramid based upon their added value:



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The foundation of the pyramid is base services that provide broad scale of community benefit. These services tend to be baseline offerings from parks and recreation departments. Programs work their way up the pyramid as departments expand. Programs towards the top to more specific individual benefits and niche groups.

The Pyramid Methodology is an effective starting point to prioritize programs. However, the pyramid exists on a sliding scale and categories are not black and white. Other factors may influence final positioning on the pyramid. Other than the general reach of the program, the following are essential factors to account for as programs are developed:

**BENEFIT** – *what are the benefits to this service? who receives the benefit? what other opportunities to the public provide this benefit?*

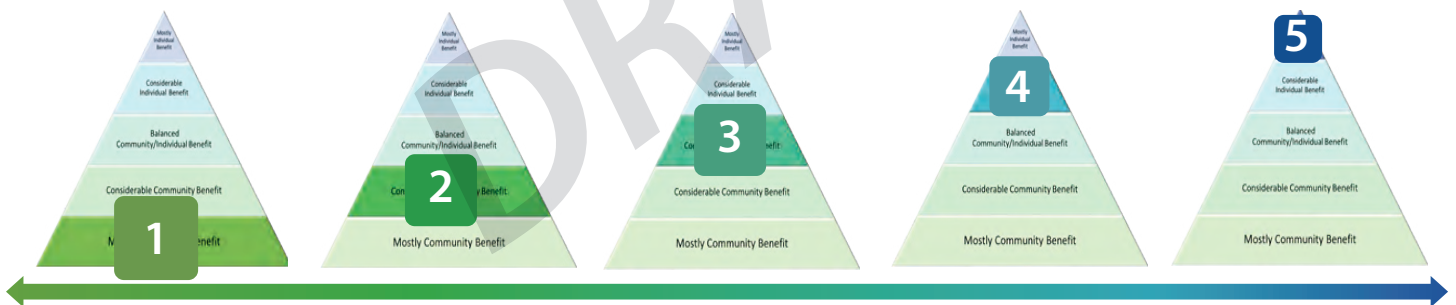
**ACCESS** – *is this service accessible to everyone equally? Does it directly exclude anybody or is it restricted by diversity factors?*

**RESPONSIBILITY** – *is the organization responsible for providing the service, through legal mandates or mission? is this a service that residents have been requesting or that would add considerable value to the community as a whole?*

**SOCIAL VALUE** – *what is the perceived public value by constituents, city staff and leadership, and policy makers? Is it a community builder?*

**ANTICIPATED IMPACTS** – *what is the impact on existing resources, other users, and the environment? What are the benefits added from this service? are they just to the individual or to the community as a whole?*

**RELATIVE COST TO PROVIDE** – *What is the cost per participant? What are the financial realities of the community?*



Examples:

- The Draw Summer Concert Series
- Ramsey Resident Day on the Farm
- Elmcrest Art Fair Farmers Market
- Open Gyms/Informal Fitness Clubs
- Facility accessibility
- Park maintenance
- Scholarship and fee assistance programs

Examples:

- Fitness Classes as:
  - yoga
  - zumba
  - line dancing, etc.
- formal and informal interpretive programs,
- Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteer Program
- General volunteer programs

Examples:

- Adult and youth sports leagues
- Summer day camps,
- Family programs
- Archery tournament and workshop

Examples:

- Starwatch Party
- Gardening Classes
- Wine and Canvas
- Book Clubs
- Specialty classes

Examples:

- Elite sport teams
- One-on-one speciality training
- Food concessions

[example explanation]

### Fee Consideration Theory

This plan’s premise is to engage as many residents as possible and efficiently provide the most added value to the community. Programs that offer significant community benefit may be offered at low or no cost for participation. By offering these types of programs at a lower cost, it helps to ensure added value of participation is maximized. Additionally, it can promote an active community and healthy living for residents. Programs which offer significant individual benefit with less broad community value will aim for higher cost recovery percentages.

### Accounting for the Future

*As Ramsey’s population grows, and Parks and Recreation offerings become established, the demand for recreation services will rise. Ramsey’s fee policy should be structured to adapt along side the City as it continues to grow in the years to come. An increase in residents will coincide with changes in our overall demographics and needs as a city. Adaptations to the fee setting policy may become necessary. As policy makers evaluate municipal services city-wide, the option for a Parks and Recreation Passport system may become a more viable prospect for a future option to balance access and fee setting.*

### Parks and Recreation Passport

*An annual Passport fee helps subsidize costs for programs that promote overall well-being and healthy living to the community as a whole. A Program Passport becomes especially valuable to both the City and residents once programs established with wide variety of offerings. The City will collect a fee for the Passport, while the residents receive the benefits of being a Passport holder. This type of structure allows the necessary flexibility to adapt overtime alongside Ramsey. Pass holders gain access to programs that add significant value to the community as a whole, for little or not cost. Some benefits of being a pass-holder could include:*

- *Reduced or waived fees for programs that promote healthy and active living*
- *Reduced fees for last minute unfilled spaces in classes*
- *Discount for bringing a first time user*
- *Email newsletter with “first to know” about new offerings*
- *Special events for pass holders*
- *Access or discount to services from partnered private providers*



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*To best ensure success of the Passport, programs should be well established and classified to determine qualification. Programs that promote active living and have significant community value should have the largest incentive for passholders.*

*For example, offerings that are under a “group fitness” category may be structured as the following:*

- *Included as part of the Park Passport*
- *\$5 for non-Park Passport holding resident*
- *\$10 for non-residents*

*By structuring programs in this way, passholders are incentivised to engage in additional healthy living activities, yet it does not exclude non-residents or non-pass-holders.*

*For a pass program to be successful, certain benchmarks in programming should be met. The fee setting policy must have adequate time to change and notify residents of their options.*

*There should also be an adequate number of programs offered to make it worth it for residents to sign up. Prior to setting up this system, programs should be categorized for their eligibility in the pass.*

*Other considerations include establishing adequate technological and staff resources to distribute and track passes. This may be in some sort of physical pass or online eligibility code.*

*Recreation passes are popular programs among larger cities as they often incorporate gyms or pool use. A program like this is adaptable to work both on a larger and smaller scale, and can be amended as cities expand. They can be used exclusively internally for programs and rentals, or be expanded to incorporate economic development initiatives and offer discounts to participating businesses that choose to partner. [can extend to economic development type partnerships with the private sector by offering discounts at participating businesses that choose to partner.*

**Examples**

***Minneapolis Parks & Recreation ActivePass***

[Example for one not based around a fitness center. fee paid for activepass, allows access to specific programs exclusively for activepass members. programs provide community value, yoga in the park, basketball (5 on 5, 3 on 3), 500 club ages 50+, computer lab, teen open gym, zumba, [go so far as to have exclusive access]

***Three Rivers Park District***

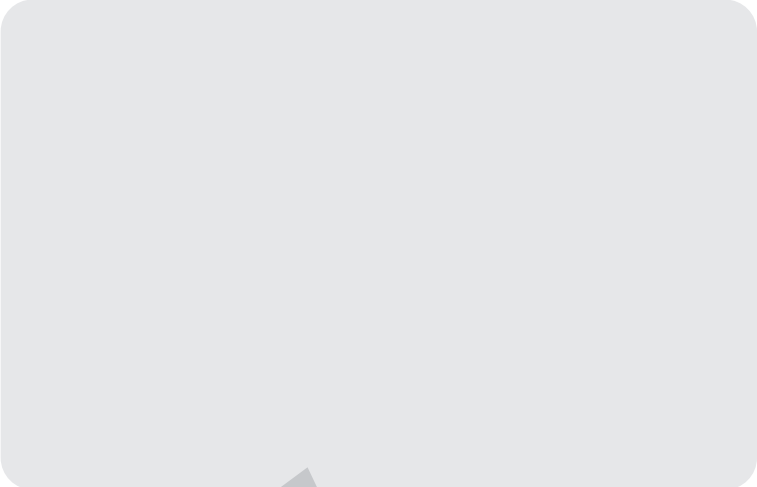
Recreation Pass Plus is a recreation card that offers free equipment rentals, discounts on programs and events, and two free recreation passes per individual family member. These recreation passes include archery, swim ponds, dog off-leash areas, disc golf, boat trailer parking and cross-country skiing.

The Recreation Pass Plus card is available for families and individuals who live in Hennepin County and are experiencing financial difficulty.

***Fitness/Community Center tied Recreation Passes***

[<https://www.cityofeagan.com/fitness-center-passes> eagen

<https://www.ci.inver-grove-heights.mn.us/219/Rates-Definitions>] [these programs are centered around access to a community center, and include wellness and fitness classes offered at the facilities.



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**Snapshot with different pass logos**



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### Fee Assistance

*An added barrier to participation is those who need assistance often have many hoops to jump through in order to apply. Cities offer fee assistance as a means to not exclude populations to participate while encouraging the benefits of recreation to all users, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Some participants may be deterred by the stigma of financial aid. A successful fee assistance policy should be easy for users to find and clearly outlined on online and printed publications.*

*Fee assistance is necessary to allow all users who want to participate in a program do so. Eliminating economic barriers is key to growing an involved community, as well as enriching people's lives through parks and recreation. Ramsey residents may reach out to the Recreation Specialist or refer to the City Website to request fee assistance for a program. The fee assistance policy may be reevaluated as necessary alongside the fee policy as recreation services expand.*

Many agencies offer financial assistance to those who qualify, but there is not a uniform policy as demand and resources vary between communities. Communities may fund these programs through community foundations, grants, sponsors, or other program revenues. Information on fee assistance programs in surrounding communities is as follows:

**ANOKA-HENNEPIN COMMUNITY EDUCATION** – Apply by calling the community education office of the desired program.

- Youth – families who qualify for free or reduced-price meals may request fee assistance.
- Adult – contact adult learning registration line to request assistance and eligibility information.
- Early learners – ECFE activities, classes, and tuition are based on a sliding scale.

**ELK RIVER PARKS & RECREATION** – Fee assistance is available for Elk River residents. Please inquire when registering for more information.

**ISD 728 COMMUNITY EDUCATION** –Fee assistance is available for most youth programs (except childcare, outings, some private lessons, and BTW training).

**MINNEAPOLIS PARK & RECREATION BOARD** – Minneapolis residents must meet the current Income Guidelines, complete an application, and provide additional documentation as outlined. Fee assistance is only for the instructional portion of fees and does not cover extra fees due to supplies, admission costs, or field trips. If the application is approved, register for classes at your local recreation center. Fee assistance is good for the calendar year applied for, and an application must be resubmitted every year. City of Minneapolis proof of residency AND one of the following:

- Copy of the two most recent pay stubs of all income earners in your household
- Copy of your previous year's federal tax return
- If you have no income and do not file income taxes, attach a brief note explaining that you have no income



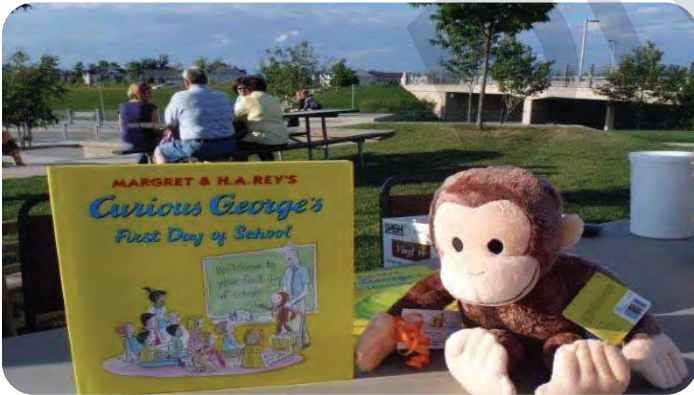
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**SAINT PAUL PARKS & RECREATION** –Helps pay for youth classes and activities. Can be requested by families who meet the following requirements:

- Youth must live in Saint Paul, be 18 years old or younger, and qualify for free/reduced lunches. Proof of residency must be demonstrated prior to final registration.
- Youth who qualify can receive up to \$100 in fee assistance per year. Parents may request up to 50% of the cost of an activity. Refunds will not be issued for unused credits. Cannot be used for facility memberships, season passes, or daycare fees.

**Non-residents:** Parks and recreation agencies often offer a reduced rate for their residents, thus encouraging residents to participate in activities where they reside. Increased local participation can aid in building a community identity and increasing overall engagement. For example:

**ELK RIVER PARKS & RECREATION** adds a \$5 non-resident fee to programs under \$49 and a \$10 fee for programs \$50 and over.

**ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION** adds a 50% surcharge to the regular resident rate, which is much greater than other agencies. St. Paul has such a drastic difference due to the high demand of their programs and the fact they recently began allowing non-residents to participate in youth sports.



## Ramsey Parks & Recreation 2017 Spring and Summer Program Sampler

To register for these classes & more, visit our website:  
CityofRamsey.com/ParkEvents

### Art in the Park

April 14, May 12, June 17, July 25, August 21, and September 26, 6:30—8:00 pm  
Elmcrest Park, meeting room

Rumriver Art Center Instructors will lead participants step-by-step through a different project each month, allowing you to understand the process of each technique and still be able to create your own version. Visit our website to learn more about these monthly classes.



### Performing in the Parks: Theatre and Vocal Workshops

June 26-28, 9:00—11:00 am; July 10-13 and August 8-10, 9:00 am-12:00pm  
Elmcrest Park



**June and July:** Students will work together to create a script through improvisation games. This is a great class for children who love to use their creativity daily.

**August:** An interactive vocal seminar for students to explore singing styles. The workshop will focus on technique for the solo singer and elements of group singing.

### Learn to Kayak with Wahoo! Adventures

June 3, 8:30—10:00 am or 10:30 am—12:00 pm  
Sunfish Lake Park

Join us to kick off summer with a paddle around Sunfish Lake. You will discover why kayaking is one of Minnesota's fastest growing outdoor adventures. From learning how to paddle to packing for a day on the water, you will learn how to have a relaxing day on the lake. Children under 11 must be accompanied by an adult.



### For more information:

tbailey@cityoframsey.com, 763-576-4309



## OUTREACH AND PROMOTION

*Program promotion may be continuously improved as user habits change, to ensure that service offerings are able to reach residents in an effective way. A method to mass distribute accurate and up-to-date information in a reliable, user-friendly method would be beneficial to the success and participation of recreation programming.*

*The Ramsey Resident has been a primary source of information to residents, alongside the City's website. A recent addition to the toolbox of communications has been the utilization of social media and new technology. All of the above have their contributions and limitations.*

*The Ramsey Resident is a city newsletter distributed bi-monthly to every home in Ramsey. It delivers information on community-related announcements. Although it has broad reach to residents, it may not provide the level of detail on services that the website can, and does not allow for registration. While readers are encouraged to visit the Parks and Recreation Events page for more information, it cannot be guaranteed all opportunities reach them.*

*The city website acts as a central hub for pertinent information for residents. Navigating to find information on the website requires the user to seek out the information they are looking for rather than delivering it directly to their mailbox. Hosting a formal city website may require additional resources from staff to ensure we are presenting timely content in a way that is easy to navigate.*

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[blurb about flyers and change over time and general marketing to visually appealing, catch eye for program etc]



Calling all artists to join the City of Ramsey and Rumriver Art Center for the 4th Annual Elmcrest Art Fair! This event features local food vendors, artist demonstrations, introductory classes, and could even your art! Registration fee is \$25 per 10'x10' booth. Youth artists may register for \$10. Visitors will be able to vote on their favorite artists, with a grand prize of \$200 for the "People's Choice Award." This community event is great for kids, it's great for adults, it's great for the whole family! To find more information or to register, please visit: [www.cityoframsey.com/329/Elmcrest-Art-Fair](http://www.cityoframsey.com/329/Elmcrest-Art-Fair)

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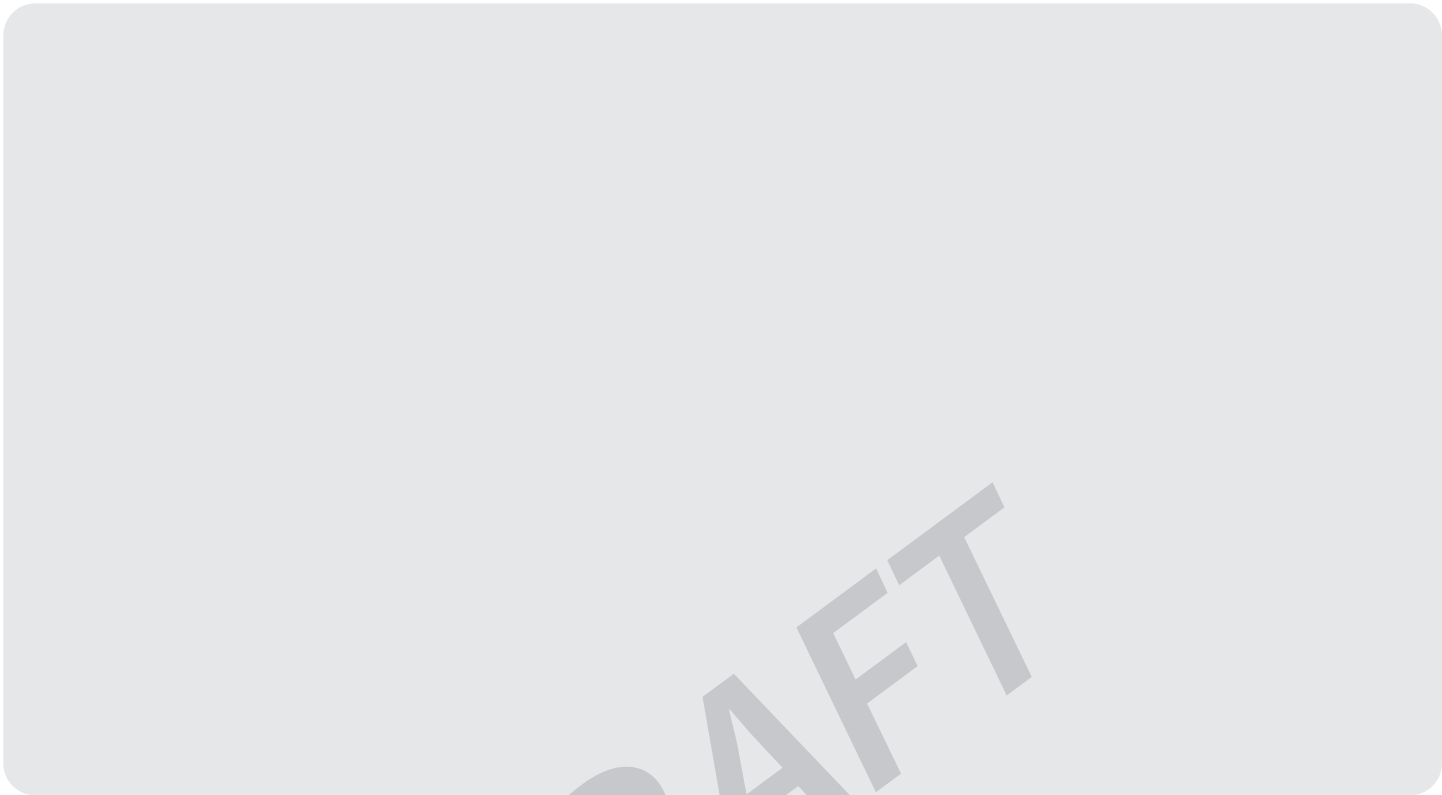
The prevalence of social media in day to day lives is on the rise. Today, a larger portion of the population can access a wide variety of social media sites from their mobile device, tablet or desktop and can use it as a central hub for news, information, and events. This is especially true in the younger populations. The City may utilize this powerful tool to quickly connect residents to opportunities in their area, encourage them to share events with their friends, connect with partners, and reach potential new users. As convenient and useful as social media can be, it is not inclusive of the entire population. According to the NCS survey, 63 percent of Ramsey residents are either very or somewhat likely to engage with the City on Facebook, 38 percent are not likely at all. These proportions will continue to change technology advances. *[[branding strategies for consistency, 'branding enhancing' make us recognizable as a city and as a recreation service provider, make us more reputable]]* *[[important for those outside of the community to see, sense of unity, easily identifiable brand]]*

To be most effective with program promotion, a mix of these services may be used to reach the broadest portion of the community. Publications in the Ramsey Resident can be used to deliver broad information to a large portion of residents, with a notice to look at the website for full listings or programs of interest. Events may be created on social media platforms to quickly spread the word about new offerings and reach new users. For registration and details, the social media event posting may redirect users the City website. As parks and recreation opportunities expand, an automated monthly email

newsletter or text alerts may become beneficial to notify users of new opportunities.

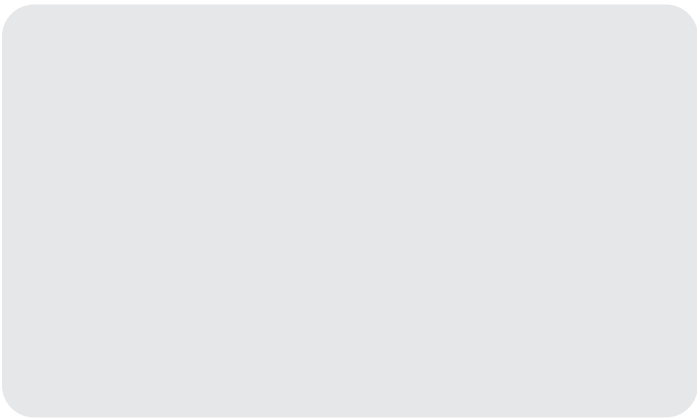
Other methods may include flyers, signs, banners and other public postings. Yard signs have been effective in the past for select events and way-finding for community events. Alternative methods have been used to promote specific events such as outdoor movie nights, the art fair, and the summer adventure program.

## [BUILDING A FUTURE FOR REC]



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*[Conclusion of vision & plan, outcomes if followed. set up for goals and initiative]*





# 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



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**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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**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

- 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



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**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



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**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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# CHAPTER 7 | [CONCLUSION]



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# APPENDIX | CONTENTS

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# REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

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