

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The City of Ramsey Economic Development Authority (EDA) conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, February 11, 2021, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Acting Chairperson Brian Burandt
 Member Scott Cords
 Member Ryan Heineman
 Member Chelsee Howell
 Member Chris Riley

Members Absent: Chairperson Jim Steffen

Also Present: Sean Sullivan, Economic Development Manager
 Tim Gladhill, Deputy City Administrator

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairperson Burandt called the Economic Development Authority meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Member Cords, seconded by Member Heineman, to approve the agenda.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Acting Chairperson Burandt, Members Cords, Heineman, Howell, and Riley. Voting No: None. Absent: Chairperson Steffen.

3. APPROVE MINUTES

3.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated January 14, 2021

Motion by Member Riley, seconded by Member Heineman, to approve the January 14, 2021, minutes as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Acting Chairperson Burandt, Members Riley, Heineman, Cords and Howell. Voting No: None. Absent: Chairperson Steffen.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan alerted the group that Member Howell is participating virtually and therefore motions going forward should be taken in a roll call format.

4. EDA BUSINESS

4.01: Consider Renewal of Anoka County Regional Economic Development Partnership (ACRED)

Economic Development Manager Sullivan presented the staff report.

Jacqueline Hajder, ACRED, stated that the contract is year to year and therefore the City has the option whether it wants to continue participating each year. She stated that the MOU is the five-year document. She stated that all 21 communities in Anoka County contribute towards the program based on their size. She noted that her work with the communities is driven by the needs of each community. She provided background information on the different subcommittees and the tasks that those groups focus their efforts on. She noted that members from the cities participate on either subcommittees or the Executive Committee. She stated that within the case was the year report, recognizing that efforts shifted during 2020 because of the challenges of COVID. She noted that the in-person events were held virtually, and those budget funds were then used for other purposes such as the marketing video for Anoka County. She stated that they also coordinated information related to COVID and possible grant and CARES Act Fund dollars available to communities and businesses. She provided additional information on the partnership with the Minnesota Real Estate Journal and the promotion efforts they complete for the Anoka County. She also provided information on other coordinated efforts she facilitated between the cities and the highway department and other County departments. She stated that there are still planned events for the second part of 2021, and they will continue to plan accordingly to restrictions at that time. She noted that the other efforts will continue in terms of marketing, promotion and providing direction to businesses related to COVID relief. She reviewed different elements included in the budget for 2021.

Member Riley commented that staff believes this is a good relationship and the MNCAR access is beneficial to the City for its City owned parcels that are not marketed through CBRE; therefore, he believes this to be a good partnership.

Motion by Member Cords, seconded by Member Heineman, to recommend to City Council to participate in the Anoka County Economic Development Partnership (ACRED) and to approve of the \$1,506 continued contribution to the partnership.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Heineman	aye
Member Cords	aye
Member Riley	aye
Member Howell	aye
Acting Chairperson Burandt	aye

Motion carried.

4.02: Consider CBRE Real Estate Listing Agreement for City Owned Land

Economic Development Manager Sullivan presented the staff report.

Brian Pankratz, CBRE, stated that during 2020 the retail and office markets basically shutdown as people worked their way through but the industrial and residential markets took off and continued to stay strong. He stated that heading into 2021 industrial and residential continue to stay strong but it appears that retail and office are starting to come back as well. He noted that in the past few months they received more calls related to the commercial and retail parcels within The COR than they did for the entire 2020 period. He noted that the additional residential construction that has occurred in Ramsey is beginning to show in the retail market demographics and increase interest in Ramsey. He stated that he also has a call later today from a national builder looking to construct owner occupied townhomes within The COR. He stated that the improvements at Armstrong and Highway 10 and the addition of Delta ModTech are additional benefits that retailers will look for. He stated that CBRE continues its marketing efforts on multiple platforms as well as cross selling. He explained that sometimes he receives a call from someone looking to develop in another community, but they suggest Ramsey because the available sites would better fit their needs, noting that the business would perhaps have not considered Ramsey otherwise.

Member Riley referenced the comment related to the demographics of Ramsey and asked if there is anything the City can do to ensure that those demographics are updated as quickly as they could be.

Mr. Pankratz replied that retailers use different services to track that type of data and therefore he is unsure if there is a specific action the City could take to ensure all those systems are up to date. He commented that during the past five years he has seen changes in the demographics for Ramsey that have been beneficial in attracting development.

Member Riley stated that perhaps staff could make a note and follow up to determine if there are things the City, County or CBRE could be doing to update that information as soon as it can.

Mr. Pankratz stated that businesses also use traffic counts, noting that those counts are typically updated every few years. He used the example of Armstrong Boulevard and believed that traffic count has dramatically increased since the completion of the interchange and noted that would help to attract retailers that look for drive-by traffic when selecting locations.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan provided background information on the systems the City uses to create its economic development report. He stated that the City could also complete additional traffic counts in the area. He did not feel that now would be the right time to provide an accurate count as some people continue to work from home because of COVID. He stated that CBRE also refreshes its marketing brochures every three to six months with the changing demographics. He stated that Ramsey is approaching 28,000 in population with a median income of \$95,000, which garners respect and interest from retailers and other businesses. He noted that Mr. Pankratz does a great job of focusing potential prospects on Ramsey. He believed that the City, with its partners of the County and CBRE, does an excellent job marketing itself.

Mr. Pankratz agreed that traffic patterns and counts will change in the coming year as more people return to work. He stated that within a three-mile radius of Armstrong and Bunker there is a median income of \$113,000 and that information would be used to market Parcel 46 within The COR.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that he has a great relationship with Mr. Pankratz and believes the partnership to be beneficial to the City. He asked the EDA to support the one-year extension of the contract.

Member Cords asked the sense from the business community related to the construction challenges that Highway 10 could bring.

Mr. Pankratz stated that there is probably talk about it related to local distribution truck routes, but he is unsure that the larger business community understands the scope of the project through Anoka. He stated that once the Anoka portion of the project, it will help to increase the speed and flow of traffic with the removal of those stoplights. He stated that groups are beginning to see the attraction to Ramsey and its workforce with the access to Highway 10, using the example of Delta ModTech and the recent concept proposal from Oppidan. He stated that he has not yet heard direct concerns related to the Highway 10 construction. He noted that when you figure in the entitlement process, plan development and construction, many businesses would not be opening until the backend of that project.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that in the past year staff has met with many businesses to discuss potential impacts from Highway 10. He stated that retail and industrial sectors understand that there is something coming, that it could be painful for a time, but it is necessary and will provide a benefit in the end. He stated that he has not heard many comments from businesses concerned that this would kill their business. He noted that staff is working with an auto part retailer on the site adjacent to Casey's, noting that the business is aware of the project and that has not deterred their desire to come to Ramsey.

Member Heineman commented agreed that questions will arise related to the Highway 10 construction and noted that it will be helpful to have data driven facts available to respond with. He stated that while he would agree that gathering additional traffic counts during COVID may not provide accurate numbers, it could help if those numbers show favorably compared to other communities during that time.

Motion by Member Riley, seconded by Member Cords, to recommend to City Council to approve the Listing Agreement with CBRE from February 1, 2021 through January 31, 2022 as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Riley	aye
Member Cords	aye
Member Heineman	aye
Member Howell	aye
Acting Chairperson Burandt	aye

Motion carried.

4.03: Receive Comments on Concept Level Layout Review for Anoka County's Interim Improvements Proposed to Bunker Lake Boulevard/County Road 116

City Engineer Westby presented the staff report.

Acting Chairperson Burandt asked if these modifications would be temporary to be in place with the Highway 10 construction or intended to be permanent.

City Engineer Westby replied that ultimately the improvements would be permanent and likely more restrictive than shown in the interim design.

Acting Chairperson Burandt commented that he has lived and worked in Ramsey for over 20 years and stated that he can tell that traffic on Highway 10 is bad because of the impact it has on Bunker Lake Boulevard and Sunwood. He stated that people will find Bunker Lake Boulevard as an alternative for Highway 10. He stated that there will be challenges to businesses and encouraged staff to reach out to those businesses and make them part of the discussion sooner rather than later.

Member Cords asked and received confirmation that the bypass lane would be intended for left-hand turns which would allow through traffic to continue to flow. He asked if the flow of small vehicles and large commercial trucks is for the Altron site and what impact this would have on the shipping for that business.

City Engineer Westby replied that those are great questions and are the same questions and concerns that staff and the Council have. He stated that staff made the comment one month ago that the County needs to consider those concerns and have discussions with those businesses. He stated that the County has had discussion with All Seasons but is unsure if the County has met with additional businesses.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that staff is asking for some comments from the EDA and asked if there are key components that the EDA want to ensure are conveyed to the County. He stated that it sounds like the County is in discussion with Altron and has had conversations with All Seasons. He stated that perhaps the EDA would want to ask the County how it intends to communicate with those businesses in a timely manner. He recognized that the City is not the lead agency and therefore staff does not want to overstep boundaries but also wants to ensure that the businesses are involved and there is discussion as to possible mitigation efforts that could be incorporated.

Member Heineman asked if part of the driver in these improvements is the anticipated traffic increase that will travel this route during the Highway 10 project.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that MnDOT anticipates that traffic counts will double in this area during the Highway 10 project.

Member Heineman commented that this would seem to be a proposed permanent solution to a temporary problem.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that Anoka County is proposing interim improvements in attempt to accommodate the additional traffic and capacity and improve safety during that period. He stated that at the same time the County is ensuring that the improvements would last for 10 to 20 years and delay the need to make large improvements, which would be proposed at a later date.

Member Heineman commented that businesses are in their locations for the long haul and therefore it would not seem wise to make improvements that would impact their traffic flow for the long-term when these improvements are only needed for a temporary basis to alleviate traffic during the Highway 10 construction. He did not support these becoming permanent improvements.

Member Cords commented that he recently attended a funeral and there was only one access to the building which required him to make three U-turns in order to find that access. He stated that he would not want to see that type of action needed for large trucks with trailers attempting to access businesses. He agreed that the permanence of these improvements should be limited.

Member Heineman stated that perhaps a compromise could be reached designating primary shipping times during non-peak traffic times in order to mitigate some of the industrial traffic flow.

Member Riley commented that this topic is appropriate for the EDA because these changes impact many businesses. He stated that Connexus, the largest employer in Ramsey already had its access limited on Ramsey Boulevard and this action would further limit the access on Bunker Lake Boulevard. He commented that there is a City Council resolution suggesting strengthened language against certain improvements relating to medians and limiting traffic movements. He recognized that these improvements are necessary to support the traffic during the Highway 10 project but noted that the EDA could make additional comments related to the potential business impacts.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill noted that the EDA could choose to support the resolution adopted by the City Council.

Motion by Member Heineman, seconded by Member Cords, to support the resolution adopted by the City Council outlining the strong concerns with the proposed project.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Heineman	aye
Member Cords	aye
Member Riley	aye
Member Howell	aye
Acting Chairperson Burandt	aye

Motion carried.

4.04: Consider Participation in Riverdale Drive Reconstruction Project: Dolomite Street Removal/Lot Configuration

Economic Development Manager Sullivan presented the staff report.

Member Cords asked if this would count towards any funding the City would be required to contribute to Highway 10 updates.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that is generally the intent of the City but cannot confirm that with certainty.

Member Heineman asked what type of business may desire a location that close to the highway without direct access.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that Highway 10 exposure cannot be underestimated. He provided examples of different destination businesses that have looked at this site, noting that the site could work for a number of different uses. He stated that visibility from Highway 10 is important for many businesses. He stated that the triangular shaped lot and issue of storm water has hurt the marketability of the site and therefore making the site square would make it more desirable.

Motion by Member Cords, seconded by Member Heineman, to recommend to City Council to authorize the Dolomite Street Removal and to allocate \$50,000 from the EDA cash balance to fund the City portion of the project.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Cords	aye
Member Heineman	aye
Member Riley	aye
Member Howell	aye
Acting Chairperson Burandt	aye

Motion carried.

5. MEMBER / STAFF UPDATE

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill advised of the Highway 10 Open House meeting which will be held virtually one week from today. He stated that attendees will need to RSVP and receive an individual link to participate.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority adjourned at 8:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Sean M. Sullivan in cursive.

Sean Sullivan
Economic Development Manager

ATTEST:

Handwritten signature of Wendy Schlueter in cursive.

Wendy Schlueter
Economic Development Administrative Assistant

Draft by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.