

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Joint Work Session on Wednesday May 11, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Mark Kuzma (attending remotely)  
Councilmember Chelsee Howell  
Councilmember Ryan Heineman (attending remotely)  
Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht  
Councilmember Matt Woestehoff (arrived at 6:01 p.m.)

**Planning Commission**

Members Present: Chairperson Randy Bauer  
Commissioner Bruce Anderson  
Commissioner Cheri Gengler  
Commissioner Tom Hunt  
Commissioner Eric Peters  
Commissioner Gary VanScoy  
Commissioner Brian Walker

**EDA Members**

Present: Chairperson Michael Olson  
Member William MacLennan  
Member Shanna Stewart  
Member Scott Wiyninger

Also Present: Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Brian Hagen  
City Engineer Bruce Westby  
Senior Planner Chris Anderson  
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan  
Planning Manager Todd Larson  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Acting Mayor Riley called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: The COR Design Framework Review**

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Kuzma stated that he does not like the word COR. He stated that the sign on Highway 10 was changed to the City of Ramsey. He recognized that funds were spent on developing the logo and brand but believed that the first change they should make is with the name.

Planning Commission Chair Bauer stated that the Commission has been hearing from the EDA that more retail would like to be along Highway 10 for visibility and was concerned with lack of visibility if located in The COR. He commented that there have been multiple variances to sign height to promote the businesses within that location. He believes that Highway 10 and The COR should be discussed together. He recognized that the large draw retail would most likely be along Highway 10, with secondary retail uses in The COR. He wanted to ensure all the groups are on the same page. He stated that planning tends to look long-range, while reviewing the immediate applications, but believes there has been too much deviation in the review of plans. He used the PACT project as an example where they originally proposed their project for the site behind Casey's which is guided for retail/commercial. He stated that there was also commercial development interest in that site but yet it was still being considered for PACT as well. He believed there has been too much reaction to proposals without thinking about the overall plan and best use of the parcels. He agreed that COR is an almost meaningless description. He also agreed that a new name could incorporate the Highway 10 development and the area described as The COR.

Councilmember Heineman agreed that The COR should be renamed as it is very ambiguous. He agreed that discussion should continue at another time and the focus should remain on topic.

Acting Mayor Riley agreed that there should not be much time spent on that and it could be a future topic. He confirmed the consensus of the group to rename The COR.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen stated that there is a specific vision identified within The COR and the question is whether that needs to be changed as it was created in 2005 and revised a few times. He noted that coming out of COVID it would be appropriate to reevaluate and determine if the plan should again be adjusted.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan provided additional details on specific parcels that have been discussed by all groups present and the inquiries that have been received for the parcel. He stated that it is helpful to ensure all groups are on the same page.

Community Development Director/Deputy City Admin Hagen commented that there is future infrastructure needed and asked if the City should look at doing some of that proactively to draw attention and interest.

Mayor Kuzma referenced 2B, which seems to have a very low-lying area and asked the cost that would be needed to make that development ready.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen replied that the EDA and Council have directed staff to create an estimate for that work to make it a shovel ready site and staff is working through that process.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that the Public Works Committee provided direction at its January meeting which included multiple options for staff to investigate. He stated that at least three developers have come forward but paused because of those unknowns.

Planning Commissioner Anderson asked if the site behind Casey's is shovel ready.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that site is close to pad ready.

Planning Commissioner Anderson commented that as the Highway 10 construction goes on, the City should be proactive to make it easily accessible. He referenced 2B, noting that has continued to be a topic of discussion for the Commission. He stated that input was received from the EDA that the intersection of Armstrong and Bunker would provide visibility for commercial/retail development while the northeastern portion of the lot would be available for townhomes. He commented that site is not shovel ready and asked the possibility of having a developer place the fill they are removing from their site to a City owned area that requires fill in order to obtain cost savings. He stated that perhaps fill could be obtained from the Highway 10 project.

Councilmember Musgrove believed that the Council has discussed that at length and believed that the consensus was housing on the Bunker side and retail on the other side. She stated that at the April 12<sup>th</sup> meeting Councilmember Woestehoff mentioned whether the front porches and awning should be required or not.

Acting Mayor Riley stated that the corner has come up multiple times and suggested that the discussion focus on that in an attempt to find consensus.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that the corner has great visibility but lacks access and the County has stated that an access would not be provided on Armstrong and only a right-in/right-out would be provided on Bunker, which does not make it easily accessible for retail. He identified the area that has been identified as more prime for retail and the area that would be more appropriate for housing such as townhomes. He commented that if that arrangement is agreed upon, it would most likely remove the option for a big box retail store. He noted that in the current market there is not a demand for big box retail locations and noted that when those are developed, they tend to cluster, and Ramsey would not have the space for that. He stated that Centra Homes is interested in the site.

Councilmember Specht stated that he thinks it would be good to hear from some more businesses before those decisions are made. He commented that it would be nice to have the space available if a larger store were to desire to come to Ramsey.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen asked how the property is currently being marketed.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that the City is currently accepting interest on both uses. He stated that the property is being listed as retail but is receiving interest from residential as well. He stated that three residential developers have expressed interest.

Acting Mayor Riley commented that the problem with waiting is that there is interest in residential development at this time and not interest from retail. He noted that the question would then be how long the City would continue to wait, as the approach has been market driven thus far.

Planning Commissioner Walker asked how long the property has been marketed as retail.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that the property has been marketed in that manner since 2009.

Councilmember Woestehoff arrived.

Councilmember Heineman commented that he is not a fan of having big box retail in The COR and would instead envision high quality retail, restaurants, perhaps a brewery. He stated that he would rather see big box south of Highway 10, if there is interest and focus on more boutique use in The COR. He stated that anything that will draw people into The COR will be helpful. He stated that Lake Ramsey Commons is of high interest to him as he would picture young families coming to that. He stated that bringing families into The COR to shop would be of high value. He preferred recreational opportunities, shops, and retail as that would create a place people would want to live because of the amenities. He stated that he can drive 15 minutes to get to a Walmart in neighboring communities and therefore that is not needed in Ramsey. He stated that he would prefer to see six restaurants in the space a big box retailer would occupy.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for clarification on a photo of homes and asked if the developer would be anticipating that product or whether that was a vision of the City.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that the concept was presented by Centra Homes for that parcel. He stated that Centra would be interested in residential development but not the retail component. He provided additional details on the grade of the site and wetland, noting that there are a lot of questions on that development cost of that parcel.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she likes that housing product and provided suggestion for retail locations within that overall site.

Planning Commissioner Anderson commented that this parcel has been talked about a lot and asked staff to provide an image from within The COR Framework.

Mayor Kuzma stated that the North Metro Mayors Association has provided him with the opportunity to hear about what is going on in the other communities in this area. He stated that the greenway and park concept is important to set Ramsey apart. He asked if putting townhomes in that area would impact the plan for the park.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that the greenway could be narrowed to a trail through that portion.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen recognized that there seems to be general support for the park and perhaps it would be helpful for staff to put some numbers together to develop an estimate for that cost.

Mayor Kuzma commented that will be an important piece to drawing retail to this area.

Planning Commissioner Gengler agreed with Councilmember Heineman on the desired type of retail, focusing more on local trade rather than big box retail. She asked the zoning across Armstrong and whether that would also be retail.

Interim City Admin/Community Dev. Director Hagen replied that the west side of Armstrong would likely be retail while west of Ferret would be low impact industrial.

Planning Commissioner Gengler commented that the retail could mirror each other, and housing could mirror itself as well.

Community Development Director/Deputy City Admin Hagen stated that perhaps staff comes back with a few exhibits to show the separation of retail and housing on parcel 2B.

Acting Mayor Riley confirmed the consensus of the group with that direction.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that there is a critical mass required for housing which is modeled in the Centra proposal that could be impacted if a third retail area is added.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he agrees with the comments of staff thus far. He referenced the Centra plan and stated that although he agrees with a desire for more retail in that area, he believes that the major thoroughfare line should be the dividing line for retail and residential. He believed it would make sense to leave that separation as proposed in the Centra Plan with the City roads being the divider. He agreed that walkability is incredibly important, including the trail structure. He stated that one of the items that continues to receive several variances is related to the entrance to a building from Sunwood. He believed that should not continue to deviate if the desire is walkability.

Acting Mayor Riley commented that the park comes with a large price tag and while everyone would like the park, the cost is a challenge.

Planning Commission Chair Bauer commented that the pond and park can create a good environment to attract restaurants, retail, and people. He stated that there could be a combination of retail and park around the pond.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that the greenspace and amenities are well mapped out on the east side of Zeolite. He stated that the park would serve those that live downtown and would also be a destination for the residents of Ramsey at large as well as drawing in people from other communities that will frequent the shops and restaurants. He noted that he continues to hear a desire for the splashpad and stated that would be a draw from

other communities as well. He agreed that the improvement has a large cost, but there are funds that have been contributed to the park trust fund from the residential developments in The COR. He stated that the residential apartments invested into the downtown in support of this park vision as well. He believed the City was well situated to begin mapping this out.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen commented that because this will be a community park that will be used by all residents, park dedication would come from all developments in the community, not just those in The COR.

Councilmember Musgrove recalled that some elements of this plan are moving forward, using the example of the pumphouse and streetscape. She noted that she believes this will move forward incrementally.

Acting Mayor Riley commented that when the lake is dredged, it would be believed that fill could be used in another area.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that staff is working on those calculations. He noted that previous borings have shown the fill will be desired.

Councilmember Heineman commented on the amount of traffic that was generated to use the beach and splashpad within the Lakeside Commons development in Blaine. He estimated about 1,000 people per day used those amenities. He agreed that tying together EDA and parks would be a good idea.

Acting Mayor Riley commented that there is support for the park and making preparations to determine the costs to move the dirt.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood highlighted some of the elements that would be proposed within different phases of the plan.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if TIF 14 funds could be used for park improvements.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that park improvements could not be funded through that method.

Councilmember Specht commented that Apple Valley has a nice splashpad amenity and believed that could be used as an example.

Planning Commission Bauer commented that there is a constant stream of traffic of people coming and going from Adrenaline dropping off and picking up kids. He stated that if there was a place for those parents to go while they wait for their kids, that would be a benefit to the parents and the City and its businesses/amenities.

Planning Commissioner Walker commented that if the parcel has been marketed for retail for over ten years and it has not sold, he would believe it would be time to switch gears. He stated that

developing the residential side would bring money in that could be used for additional improvements that could spark the retail side.

Acting Mayor Riley confirmed that there was agreement that about two thirds of that site should be residential.

Planning Commissioner Walker stated that he likes the Centra concept but would also like to see retail at the corner of Armstrong and Bunker.

Acting Mayor Riley noted that the issue with that would be lack of access.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that there is some flexibility in the layout.

Planning Commissioner Walker suggested running a north/south road using the western portion as housing and eastern portion as retail.

Councilmember Specht commented that if the sports dome comes to fruition that could be a game changer in bringing more interest.

Mayor Kuzma commented that the Armstrong interchange took several years, and Highway 10 has been an issue as well. He believed that once Highway 10 is completed, the property would be more attractive for development. He stated that he is not opposed to the townhomes.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that the more density there is in The COR, the better it is for rural Ramsey in order to meet the required three units per acre across the city.

Planning Commissioner Anderson stated that there were other layouts for that site that showed different options for retail, aside from the Centra proposal. He stated that the City needs to look into it to see what works best.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that this was discussed about five years ago as well. He noted that every concept proposed included a greenway corridor to make the desired connection.

Acting Mayor Riley commented that there is consensus that residential would work on the site with a greenway corridor, while there is some question as to where the retail would go.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen highlighted the next topic of discussion for the southeast corner of The COR and reviewed the questions that were posed to the group within the staff report. He stated that staff is working with the County related to the right-in/right-out access and asked whether that would be a cost the City would want to incur if the Java project does not move forward.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan provided details on the proposed location for a right-in/right-out.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he agrees with the right-in/right-out concept but questioned if the City should do anything without a developer involved as their desired layout may change from what is proposed by Java. He stated that he also has concern with the potential for a vehicle to take a U-turn at the railroad tracks.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen replied that the developer would want as much space as possible, therefore they would attempt to come as close to Veterans Drive as possible.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he would be in favor of not expanding Peridot as there are plenty of roads and access.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that Peridot was brought up through the review of O'Reilly's from police and fire. He agreed that they do not know what Peridot will be, but something will be needed to relieve the development in that area.

Planning Commission Chair Bauer commented that he would prefer to be proactive in order to assist potential developers.

Acting Mayor Riley commented that his concern would be if this does not occur during the construction, the County may not approve it in the future.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan agreed that would be important in order to take advantage of the opportunity.

Acting Mayor Riley confirmed the consensus of the group to support that action.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if TIF dollars could be used for that purpose.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that would be a TIF eligible cost, but they would need to check with finance to determine if funds are available.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen moved to the topic of building aesthetics and confirmed that the vision remains true. He moved to residential versus retail, noting that uses do support each other.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that a developer recently completed a market study and found there was not enough desired housing within the three-mile trade area. He stated that more residents are needed in order to support some of the business proformas.

Planning Commission Chair Bauer suggested that perhaps the City look at the temporary freeze for apartment buildings within The COR, noting a low vacancy rate within the existing buildings in The COR. He stated that perhaps they also look at smaller lot sizes within the ring outside The COR in order to increase that density.

Councilmember Specht stated that he is not opposed to more homes. He noted the new development coming in near Bowers Drive as well. He stated that when Highway 10 is complete and if the sports dome came, that would change the views and desire of the land, therefore he would not want to make too many changes at this time.

Councilmember Woestehoff references south of Riverdale, near Armstrong, which is zoned B2. He asked if there are any open parcels or whether those are County owned.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan identified the County owned properties, as well as the property owned by the Pearsons. He also identified the area that is being developed by Capstone Homes.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that perhaps there would be an opportunity for R-3 in that area as well.

Councilmember Heineman agreed with Councilmember Woestehoff. He stated that a lot of residents have concern that the urban sprawl continues to occur in the north. He stated that most residents agree that if there is going to be development, that should occur south of Highway 10. He believed that if more housing is needed, it could be concentrated in that area south of Highway 10 to build density while leaving space in The COR for business.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that it would also provide businesses along with Highway 10 a great opportunity for redevelopment, which would help to eliminate some of those auto uses along the corridor. He believed that a new apartment building would look better than another car lot.

Councilmember Heineman agreed. He stated that if there is a car lot that does not want to sell, having more residents adjacent would bring more customers and increase the value of the property.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented on a parcel that he believes would be very marketable if changed to R-3.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the intentions of the County with their parcels.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that the property was acquired when the bridge crossing was anticipated in that area. He believed that the County would be willing to sell the property now that the bridge crossing is not going to be in that location.

Planning Commissioner Peters referenced the Nathe property and noted that the resident has expressed concern that he cannot get his farm equipment across the road because of the Pleasure Land vehicles parked along the road. He stated that there would then be apartment buildings next to farm equipment.

Acting Mayor Riley confirmed that the desire is to hold retail/commercial land but there is an understanding that additional residential development is needed, and guidance was provided on where that could occur.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there should be discussion on awnings and front porches. She stated that she likes the look as it lends to the character but would like to hear comments from planning and developers.

Planning Commission Chair Bauer stated that the Commission recently reviewed a proposal that included something other than porches. He asked why porches were originally required and whether that is something they want to hold onto.

Acting Mayor Riley asked if that review should start with the Planning Commission and could then move forward from there.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood provided details on the intention of requiring front porches as it creates a more walkable area and sense of community. He believed that the porches add value to the homes and neighborhood and provide the opportunity for residents to interact.

Planning Commissioner Gengler stated that one of the plans they reviewed had more of a patio/social area out front that would provide the intention, but it was not truly a porch.

EDA Chairperson Olson asked if the intention is function or look.

Senior Planner Anderson displayed a proposal of something the developer was looking to bring to The COR that did not necessarily meet the criteria of a front porch. He noted that front porches are not high on the wish list of buyers in the current marketplace.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he struggled with the fact that the porch would not provide the desired intention as he would access his home from the garage and his kids would play in the driveway, therefore a community space would make more sense in the interior. He stated that while he understands the essence of the standards and the intent, the point of community is along the interior streets rather than what the City considers to be the front.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that some of the properties owned by the elderly have flat entrances and therefore functionally it may be better to have a slab in the front with more community space on the interior of the site.

Planning Commissioner Walker stated that the City sometimes tries to nitpick on how things will be done but ultimately the developers are investing to build these products and are aware of what will sell. He did not believe that porches is something the City should require.

Acting Mayor Riley suggested that the Planning Commission develop a policy that could be reviewed by the City Council.

Councilmember Howell liked the idea of suggesting but not requiring.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that it is nice from time to time to have a breakup in the façade and not have the entire community look the same.

Acting Mayor Riley suggested that they move to the parking structures that were planned at City cost. He stated that if there were something that would make the concept work, he would entertain that.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that some of the maps she has seen show four parking structures and was unsure how that has been reduced and what the current number is within the framework.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen provided additional details on the most current adopted design within the framework, identifying the structured parking within the plan.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that the parking ramps would be dictated by the density of development that occurs. He stated that there may be a developer driven project that would require a parking ramp at some point. He noted that perhaps the City could provide TIF financing to assist with the parking structure. He did believe four parking structures would be too much and that the demand would be market driven.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if those areas should be rezoned for retail, housing, or business.

Planning Commission Chair Bauer commented that the intention of The COR is to be pedestrian driven and there is not a lot of parking available. He stated that there is a need for at least one parking ramp, perhaps with more height, to provide the parking and encourage a pedestrian nature.

Planning Commissioner Anderson stated that he agrees with that. He stated that there are vehicles parked in the existing ramp that are being stored by apartment residents. He stated that as they develop the Main Street concept, they may need another ramp.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted that presently on street parking is not allowed overnight during the fall and winter but that could be an option in the future. He noted that there was an intention to have additional parking for the park use which would primarily be used in the evenings and weekends and therefore could be shared by others during the days. He stated that there could also be surface parking that could eventually be covered parking. He commented that large parking lots generate very little taxable income.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that the Council discussed the parking ramp including appropriate and inappropriate uses, with direction to City staff for enforcement to ensure appropriate use of those spaces.

Acting Mayor Riley confirmed the consensus to remove two parking structures with a suggest versus require method.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed with the market driven approach to having a parking structure. He commented that south of Highway 10 could be another good location for a transit ramp, noting

that a bridge would be required for crossing. He recognized that would be more to consider in the future.

### **Recess and Reconvene**

The meeting was briefly recessed.

The meeting reconvened.

### **2.02: MUSA Boundary Review**

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she looks forward to a discussion on the concerns raised by residents and how they could look at zoning.

Acting Mayor Riley asked if the map within the case is the currently zoned MUSA and whether that matches the guiding in the Comprehensive Plan.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen confirmed that the map within the packet was pulled from the 2040 Comprehensive Plan which is the adopted MUSA boundary and different types of uses. He stated that generally speaking the Metropolitan Council regulates density to be three units per acre and it is his understanding that the City currently does not meet that. He noted that there is however a slight cushion in the actual density. He stated that the consequence of not meeting the three units per acre would be that the Metropolitan Council could deny sewer connections.

Acting Mayor Riley asked the process that the City could go about for rezoning.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen provided details on that process. He stated that the Metropolitan Council would look at the overall density as well in determining whether to allow the amendment. He confirmed that not all properties within that MUSA boundary are connected to sewer and water at this time, but that opportunity spreads with the opportunity of development.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced previous discussion involving the property south of Riverdale which is currently zoned commercial. She asked if that is the property that was discussed to be rezoned as high-density housing.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen reviewed the current zoning in that area. He confirmed that there would be opportunity to reguide that property, but the City would still need to follow the process of a public hearing, decision, and consideration by the Metropolitan Council.

Councilmember Heineman asked if the Metropolitan Council calculations count what is developed or planned to be developed. He stated that if proactive measures can be taken now to rezone some

of that area into high density perhaps it would offset the calculations to the point where they could focus on keeping northern Ramsey rural.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that he could not give a specific number but explained that the Metropolitan Council would look at how land is guided and not whether it is built out yet.

Planning Manager Larson commented that the Metropolitan Council does track what is built each year, as well as what is left and whether things are being balanced.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that the Linwood subdivision sparked that discussion related to the minimum of three units per acre as that parcel was changed from high density to medium density.

Councilmember Heineman stated that if they are going to look at shifting density in the Comprehensive Plan to meet requirements, it would make sense to continue to focus on adding that south of Highway 10.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that it was his understanding that if the actual number is not met that would impact the ability to receive grants or programs like Livable Communities and the planned number would result in the ability to deny permits.

Senior Planner Anderson confirmed that the Linwood project did make the City ineligible for the Livable Communities program. He also confirmed that if the planned number is under the threshold, sewer permits could be denied.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced a splash of medium density near Green Valley Road. He noted that the greenhouse takes up a large piece of property and perhaps it would be advantageous to zone the parcels so that they would not impact the residential calculations.

Interim City Admin/Community Dev. Director Hagen commented that if the greenhouse is guided as low density residential, they are not forcing the use to change.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that it would seem more appropriate to guide the land to match what is actually occurring on the property.

Acting Mayor Riley asked why medium density is shown in that area.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that his assumption would be that the decision was based off input from the property owner in perhaps the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmember Specht asked if changing the greenhouse to agricultural would help in the calculation.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen replied that would actually hurt the calculation as commercial and agricultural development does not count. He noted that there would likely be pushback from the neighborhood if that property were rezoned to commercial. He stated

that the City looks at the MUSA area for its infrastructure to determine where trunk lines should be located and how they should be sized to address the future capacity need.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the infrastructure is laid out parallel to the roads. She noted sections that appear to be missing the infrastructure and would seem to make more sense to be included in the MUSA rather than extending infrastructure further north. She commented that the MUSA area does not seem to be thoughtfully drawn out.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen stated that as Ramsey became a city many of the homes already existed in the township. He stated that as infrastructure is added throughout the years, it often tends to follow the developable opportunities on large tracts of land. He stated that it would not seem to make sense to identify an area for connection that was already constructed with homes on wells and septic on two plus acre lots. He explained that it makes more sense to identify areas that could be developed that could meet the density requirements of the Metropolitan Council.

Planning Commissioner Walker asked why a property would be placed in a MUSA district when there is no available infrastructure.

Community Development Director/Deputy City Admin Hagen provided an analogy noting that someday that property could be developed on City services. He noted that the first step would be to identify the property for City services and then zoning would follow that would guide how the property could be subdivided in the future.

Planning Commissioner Walker stated that if someone were to purchase a property on Green Valley road that were 40 acres in size and realized the cost to run infrastructure, that may deter the decision to purchase the property. He asked if it would make more sense to zone the property as future MUSA as the infrastructure is not available in that area.

Planning Manager Larson reviewed the staging plan, which dictates where energy should be focused now, in the near future, and in the longer-term future. He noted that staging would allow for the infrastructure to be extended in that manner.

Planning Commissioner Walker commented that in the case he is speaking of the Commission granted a variance which did not require the resident to connect to City services which were still 1.5 miles from his property.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen stated for that case, a variance was required because of the way the City Code is written. He stated that the Code could be amended to determine what would be considered accessible in terms of connecting to City services for large acre parcels.

Planning Commissioner Walker commented that if there is service available within a reasonable distance, it would make sense to require the connection. He did not believe it was appropriate to require connection if the services are not available.

Planning Commission Chair Bauer stated that if that area is not designated as MUSA, the infrastructure would not be sized appropriately, and the appropriate planning would not occur. He explained that utility planning looks not just at what is needed now, but what will be needed in the future as well in order to appropriately size the lines and provide appropriate capacity.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that in the scenario raised by Commissioner Walker, it was an existing lot of record and perhaps the Code could be amended to eliminate the need to go through the variance process for that type of request. He did not believe it would be wise to allow for a subdivision to go along that same path.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that if all the land designated MUSA were to develop, would the Metropolitan Council then require the City to designate additional property.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that they are currently on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the next version would be 2050. He stated that if additional acreage were required to be designated, the City could do that with a parcel such as the game fair property that is close to MUSA but is not connected. He identified additional large parcels along Highway 47 that could possibly be designated as MUSA. He stated that if higher density is focused towards The COR, that would result in less density being required in the northern portion of the city. He stated that input from landowners will help to guide those discussions.

Planning Manager Larson commented that the Metropolitan Council does not dictate development occurring, only the possibility of development occurring therefore any land could be designated whether or not it developed.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen stated that a developer will bring forward a request to develop a large property and they will have done their due diligence in the cost to connect to infrastructure if that is desired. He noted that would give the City the highest level of discretion in whether it would want to allow the change of use.

Acting Mayor Riley commented that it comes back to being market driven.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the process for redrawing MUSA boundaries, using the example of a property wanting to come out of the MUSA and if another area can be identified to replace that.

Senior Planner Anderson noted that would occur in the planning for the next version of the Comprehensive Plan.

Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen stated that an individual property owner can make a request as well. He stated that if a large acre property wanted to get out of the MUSA, the line would likely be adjusted in that area because the infrastructure has already been sized to support connection in that area. He explained that it would not make sense to remove a portion from the MUSA in the north and add it in the south.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Brian S. Hagen  
Interim City Administrator/Community Dev. Director

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
Deputy City Clerk

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*