



 RAMSEY COUNTY

2040

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A vibrant community where all are valued and thrive.

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## FOUNDATION

*Ramsey County is centrally located in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan region and is home to striking landscapes, a diverse population, and is the heart of Minnesota's state government. The county is the densest and second-most populated county in the state. 18 cities and 1 township comprise the county. Saint Paul is the largest city and is known for its walkable neighborhoods, the state capitol, and expansive views of the Mississippi River Valley. The city is a hub for transportation, health care, education and government. The 17 suburban municipalities to the north are nestled amongst lakes and wetlands. Regionally important colleges, retail hubs and corporate campuses help define suburban Ramsey County. The diversity of Ramsey County's landscape and population is one of the region's greatest strengths.*

## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE: RAMSEY COUNTY 2040

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update, Ramsey County 2040, describes the county's unique role in addressing regional prosperity, equity, livability, stewardship and sustainability over the next 20 years. Prepared in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 473.851 through 473.871 under the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, this plan establishes the county's role in regional planning. Ramsey County 2040 is an official document and will be adopted by the County Board and approved by the Metropolitan Council. The plan will present the current efforts of Ramsey County to address regional goals, as well as introduce broader themes that reflect the population and employment projections provided by the Metropolitan Council.

In 2015 the Metropolitan Council issued a "[System Statement](#)" for Ramsey County laying out the requirements for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update. Ramsey County 2040 will go above and beyond the requirements and include the following topics:

Topic	Required of Ramsey County	Included in Ramsey County's Comp Plan
FOUNDATION	No	✓
LAND USE	No	✓
TRANSPORTATION	✓	✓
WATER RESOURCES	✓	✓
PARKS AND TRAILS	✓	✓
HOUSING	✓	✓
RESILIENCE	No	✓
ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS	No	✓
IMPLEMENTATION	✓	✓

Each chapter will use the Metropolitan Council's projections for Ramsey County to develop key themes for the future. Ramsey County expects substantial growth to occur in Ramsey County between 2018 and 2040.

	2010 Census	2020 Forecast	2030 Forecast	2040 Forecast
<b>Population</b>	508,640	548,220	570,610	593,320
<b>Households</b>	202,691	223,460	236,090	246,050
<b>Employment</b>	316,937	356,130	375,220	393,070



Each chapter of the comprehensive plan update was written with three important lenses in mind:

- **Health in All Policies**
- **Resiliency**
- **Racial Equity**

*In some chapters where the lenses are not called out specifically, work is needed to embed these concepts into all county operations.*

### ► **Health in All Policies**

Ramsey County believes that the health and wellbeing of its residents should be considered in all policies, programs, projects and planning processes. Health is a lens that each chapter of the comprehensive plan can be viewed through. [Active Living Ramsey County](#) and the [All Abilities Transportation Network](#) are important programs and policies that will connect health to infrastructure planning.

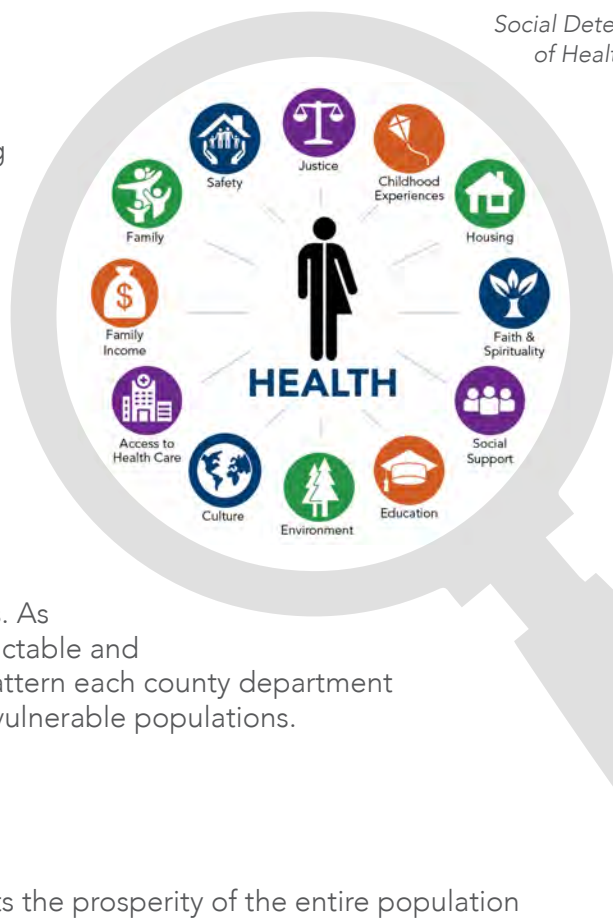
### ► **Resiliency**

Ramsey County defines resiliency as the capacity to respond, adapt, and thrive under changing conditions. As the county's climate becomes more and more unpredictable and changes are amplified by a fully urbanized land use pattern each county department will need to consider how this affects operations and vulnerable populations.

### ► **Racial Equity**

Ramsey County has large disparities by race. This limits the prosperity of the entire population and creates barriers to achieving our countywide goals. Substantial work to integrate racial equity into county operations has begun, but every department will need to embed this lens into their daily work and the countywide budget. The Metropolitan Council's study on Areas of Concentrated Poverty provides a foundational framework for the geographic distribution of inequity.

Social Determinants of Health



## COUNTYWIDE GOALS

These Ramsey County 2040-specific lenses align with the countywide vision, mission and goals that were adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 2015. These goals drive the county's budget, planning and operations.

### VISION

*A vibrant community where all are valued and thrive.*

### MISSION

*A county of excellence working with you to enhance our quality of life.*

## COUNTYWIDE GOALS



### WELL-BEING

Strengthen individual, family and community health, safety and well-being through effective safety-net services, innovative programming, prevention and early intervention, and environmental stewardship.



### PROSPERITY

Cultivate economic prosperity and invest in neighborhoods with concentrated financial poverty through proactive leadership and inclusive initiatives that engage all communities in decisions about our future.



### OPPORTUNITY

Enhance access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses through connections to education, employment and economic development throughout our region.



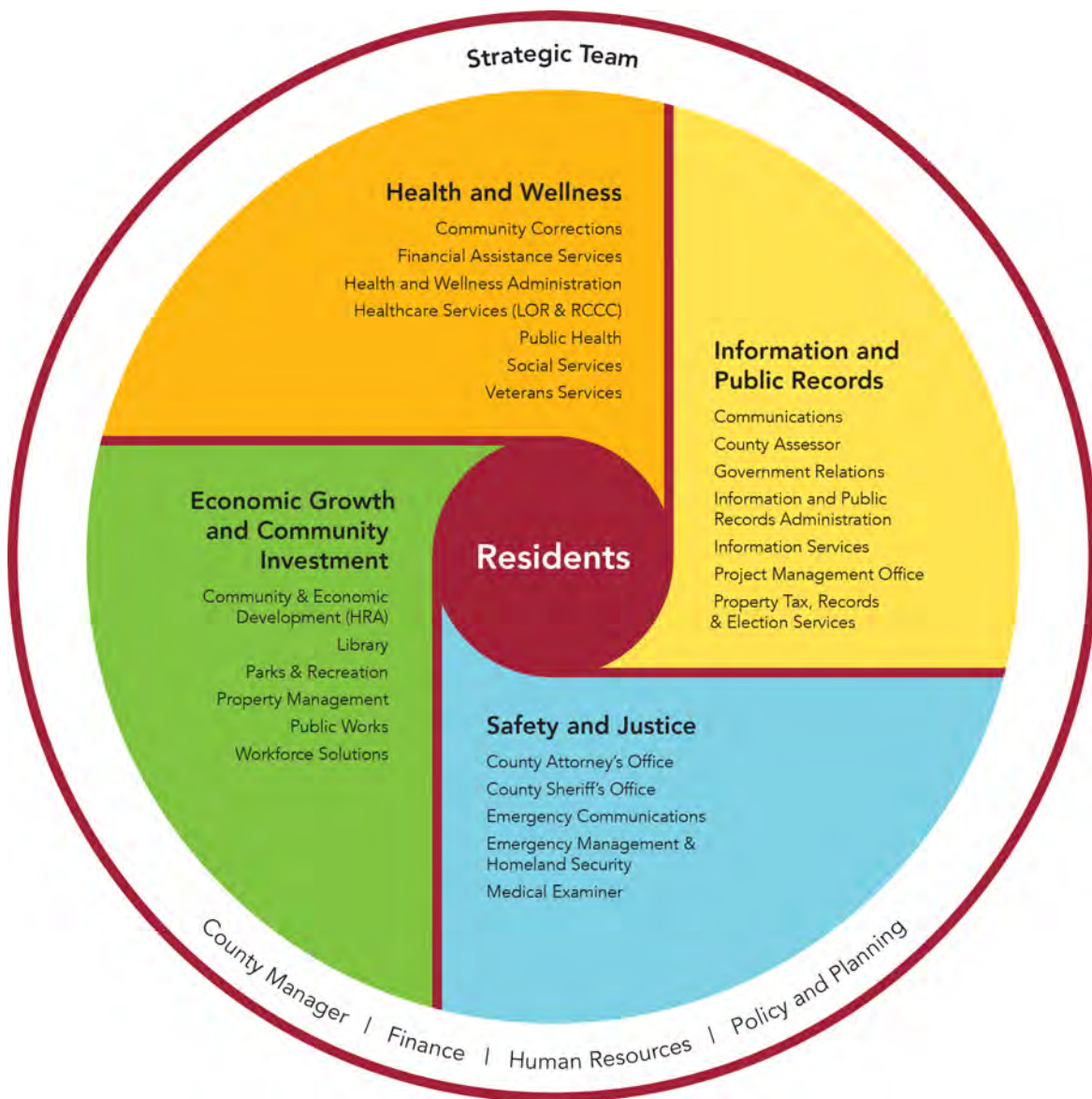
### ACCOUNTABILITY

Model forward-thinking investment, fiscal accountability and transparency through professional operational and financial management.



## COUNTY ROLE

County governments do not have jurisdiction over land use and zoning, instead county governments provide essential social services to their residents. In Ramsey County services are arranged under four service teams; Health and Wellness, Economic Growth and Community Investment, Safety and Justice, and Information and Public Records. The county's scope of services is expansive and immersive. Most of the required topics in *Ramsey County 2040* are administered within the Economic Growth and Community Investment service team.



## THE CREATION OF THE PLAN

Ramsey County's Policy & Planning Division within the County Manager's Office coordinated *Ramsey County 2040*. An interdepartmental workgroup comprised of 11 county departments was created to write chapter content. Each chapter was assigned a lead author who was responsible for meeting the Metropolitan Council's requirements, incorporating feedback from the required public comment period and editing the document. Many chapters were influenced by previous county planning processes and community outreach and engagement, such as the Parks System Plan, the Community Health Assessment and the Active Living Plan.

### Public Comment Period

The draft version of *Ramsey County 2040* was released online in May 2018 for the required six-month public comment period. Over this period the county sought public comments via an interactive online comment box, a variety of social media outlets, conversations with local community groups, held a required public hearing, and partnered with two community partners, Move Minnesota and the Kitty Andersen Youth Science Center, to engage with communities underrepresented in the planning process. The draft plan was also sent to each municipality, school district, and watershed district within Ramsey County and each county and city that adjoins Ramsey County. Feedback was shared.

### DURING THIS PERIOD RAMSEY COUNTY RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING NUMBER OF COMMENTS:

- 22 comments from the online comment box
- 3 comments and 227 interactions from social media
- 8 community conversations with:
  - District One Community Council
  - Westside Community Organization (WSCO)
  - St. Paul-Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission
  - St. Paul-Ramsey County Health Services Commission
  - MN350
  - Center for Economic Inclusion
  - Heading Home Ramsey
  - Minnesota Climate Adaptation Conference
- 2 contracts with community engagement partners





### Community Engagement Partners

In late 2018 Ramsey County contracted with two community engagement partners, Move Minnesota and the Kitty Andersen Youth Science Center to intentionally incorporate voices that were underrepresented in the creation of the draft plan. Move Minnesota focused on highlighting the community engagement findings of previous planning processes, including FESTAC and engagement from Riverview Corridor planning. With a targeted focus on Saint Paul's Eastside Move MN also subcontracted with another community group called Horn of Africa. Horn of Africa hosted 2 community sessions in the predominately East African communities of the Battle Creek/Highwood Hills neighborhood of Saint Paul. The team provided recommendations on how Ramsey County could improve community engagement practices, the overall planning process and the transportation chapter.

Kitty Andersen Youth Science Center (KAYSC), a program within the Science Museum of Minnesota, focused their engagement efforts on incorporating youth voices into the plan. By 2040, today's youth will be adults and living with the impact of this generation's decisions. KAYSC first focused on building a foundational base of knowledge on the role of the county government and its service. This included a tour of county facilities where youth were introduced to staff and their work. Workshops were held with you to dig deeper into the issues presented in *Ramsey County 2040*. The youth focused on Parks, Housing and Economic Competitiveness. Recommendations included improvements to the planning process, the desire to include social justice concepts into the plan, and youth-specific feedback on their chapters.

The Board of Commissioners had the opportunity to hear directly from the engagement partners and youth on their findings during two workshops. Many of the recommendations highlighted topics that Ramsey County plans to improve, but have not operationalized yet. Staff have incorporated feedback from the community partners and public comment period into the final version of *Ramsey County 2040*.



*Ramsey County commissioner's, staff and youth from Kitty Andersen Youth Science Center and Move MN.*





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## LAND USE FORECASTS AND COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

### Purpose

*Ramsey County supports land use and zoning that encourages inclusive, resilient and healthy communities. All land use and zoning decisions occur at the city-level, however Ramsey County will partner with cities and state agencies to support land use that encourages transit ridership, affordable housing and stewardship of natural resources. This chapter will focus on natural resource protection and the required elements of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA).*



## KEY THEMES:

- ▶ Land use and zoning decisions are made by municipalities rather than the county.
- ▶ Encourage greater intensity of use, infill and development through partnerships with cities.
- ▶ Prioritize the protection of Primary Conservation Areas via conservation-minded management decisions on county-owned property as well as coordination with local government units.
- ▶ Improve conditions and restore habitat on county-owned land within Primary Conservation Areas.
- ▶ Encourage the creation, connection and maintenance of open space, recreational facilities, and public access to the river.

## LAND USE

### VISION FOR LAND USE

Land use decisions are made by municipalities located within the county. Forecasts of population, housing and employment support Ramsey County in encouraging communities to maintain zoning flexibility and drive greater intensity of use as appropriate given community designations.

### GOALS

- Well-Being through livability, walkability and protection of open space;
- Prosperity through economic development.

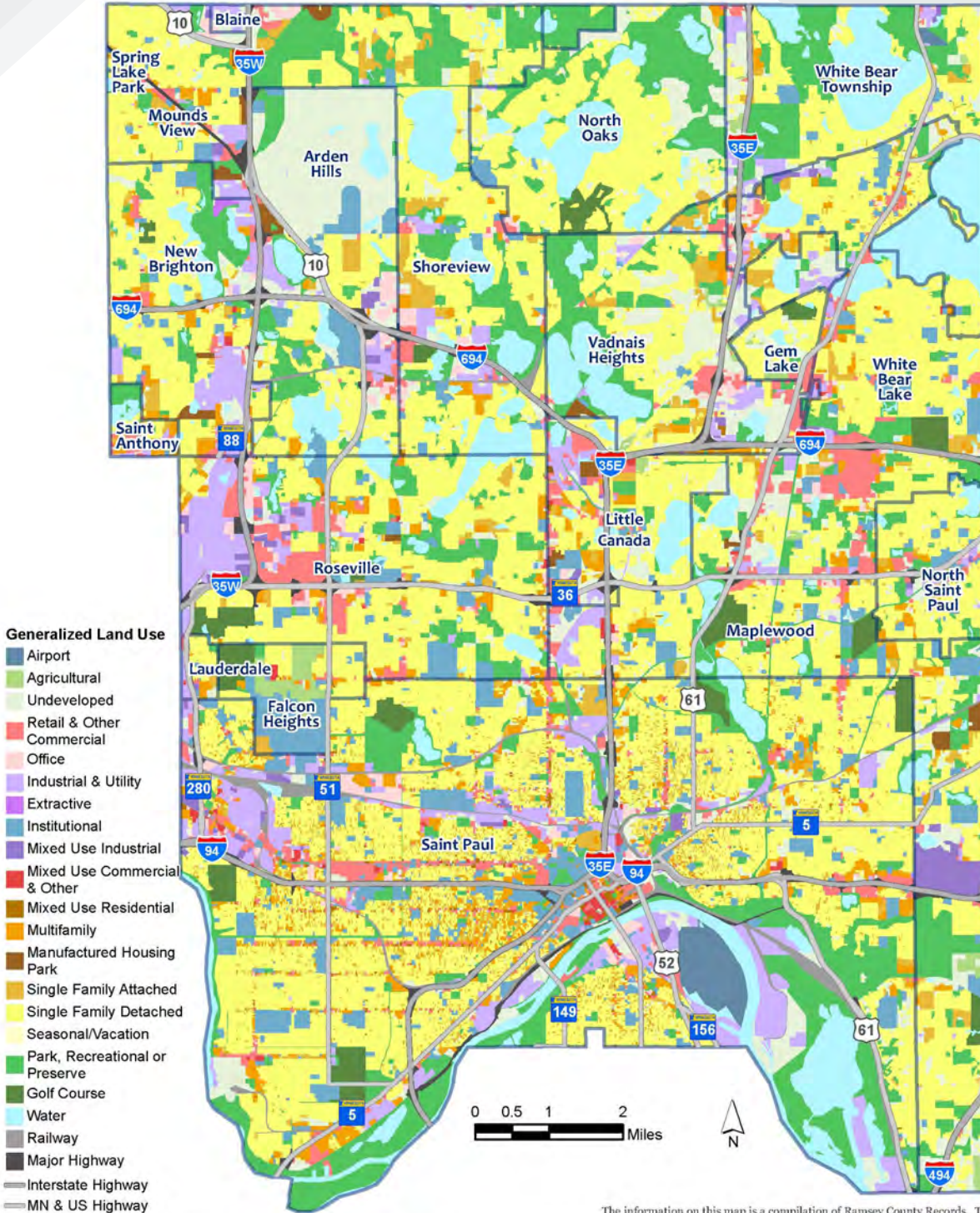
### POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Partner with municipalities to support and encourage greater intensity of use, infill and redevelopment.

Figure 4

Land Use	Acres	Total Acres	Percent of Total
Agriculture	601	108,673	1 %
Seasonal/Vacation	13	108,673	0 %
Single Family Detached	39,895	108,673	37 %
Single Family Attached	4,021	108,673	4 %
Multifamily	3,360	108,673	3 %
Manufactured Housing Park	441	108,673	0 %
Retail and Other Commercial	4,180	108,673	4 %
Office	1,414	108,673	1 %
Mixed Use Residential	280	108,673	0 %
Mixed Use Industrial	848	108,673	1 %
Mixed Use Commercial and Other	244	108,673	0 %
Industrial and Utility	5,457	108,673	5 %
Extractive	27	108,673	0 %
Institutional	6,256	108,673	6 %
Park, Recreational or Preserve	14,754	108,673	14 %
Golf Course	1,846	108,673	2 %
Major Highway	4,125	108,673	4 %
Railway	1,007	108,673	1 %
Airport	567	108,673	1 %
Undeveloped Land	9,053	108,673	8 %
Open Water	10,285	108,673	9 %

EXISTING  
LAND USE

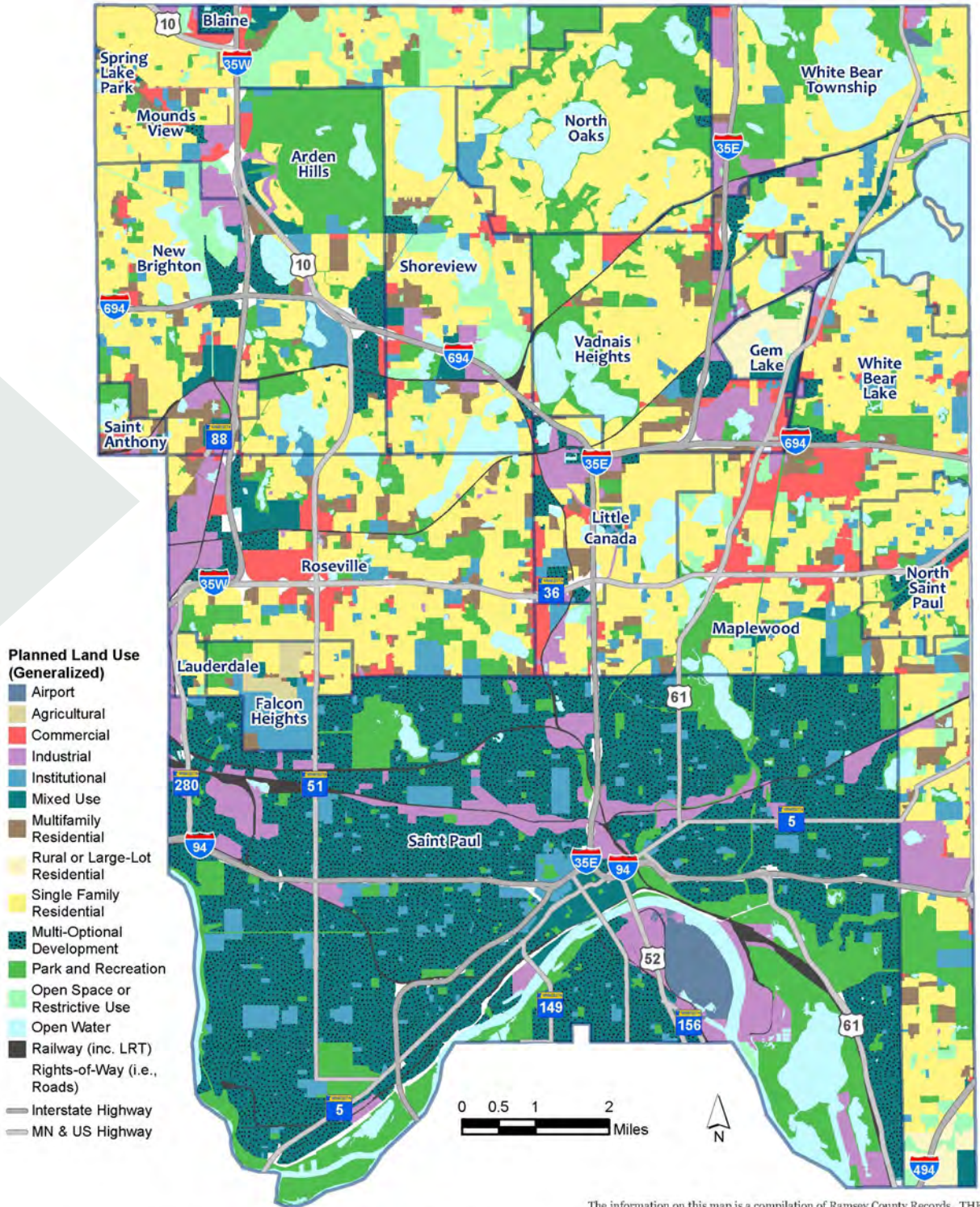


The 2016 Generalized Land Use Inventory dataset encompasses the seven county Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul) Metropolitan Area in Minnesota. The dataset was developed by the Metropolitan Council, a regional governmental organization that deals, in part, with regional issues and long range planning for the Twin Cities area. The data were interpreted from 2016 air photos, with additional assistance from county parcel data and assessor's information, internet information, field checks, and community review.

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FUTURE  
LAND USE



This dataset is the result of the compilation of interpreted planned land use for each community in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Although the data is based on the locally adopted land use designations of each community, they represent those designations that have been submitted to the Metropolitan Council per the Metropolitan Land Planning Act of 1995 (Minn. Stat. 473.864, Subd 2 and 473.175, Subd 1). Locally adopted planned land use designations and corresponding regional interpretations are subject to modification through comprehensive plan amendments. Amendment information will be updated quarterly. For more information regarding any locally adopted planned land use designation, contact the individual community.

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2040ComprehensivePlan\_plannedlanduse

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LAND USE

Forecasts

The Metropolitan Council has prepared population, housing and employment forecasts for the region which suggest that Ramsey County will continue to grow and the density of its population and economic activity will continue to intensify. The table below shows actual population, housing and employment counts from Census 2010 and Metropolitan Council forecasts for each decade to 2040.

	2010 Census	2020 Forecast	2030 Forecast	2040 Forecast
Population	508,640	550,120	572,510	595,220
Households	202,691	224,260	236,890	246,850
Employment	316,937	356,130	375,220	393,070

Ramsey County relies on population, housing and employment projections to ensure development patterns meet the expected needs and plans for increased pressures growing populations put on land, open space, public facilities and infrastructure. Although the accuracy of Metropolitan Council forecasting has improved considerably over the years, previous predictions of the county's resident population have overestimated by as many as 32,000 residents. Conservative estimates indicate Ramsey County can expect a population in 2040 of at least 583,772 residents by 2040.

COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

Purpose

*The Metropolitan Council assigns a community designation to each city and township informed by existing development patterns, common challenges, and shared opportunities. Although the characteristics of a community designation may not apply to every part of every community, the designation represents the dominant character of each community and may evolve as development patterns change.*

Figure 4 shows the council's current community designations for the cities and townships in Ramsey County.

SAINT PAUL

is home to an estimated  
**56 percent**  
of Ramsey County's  
population.

Saint Paul is the seat of state government and is well-connected to export markets by river, railroad, highway, and air travel. Investments in transit and amenities have strengthened Ramsey County's urban center as an attractive place to invest, live, work, learn, and play.

Ramsey County encourages development patterns which focus on infill development and redevelopment with forward-looking, innovative approaches to land use and public facility design. By supporting pedestrian-scale, walkable, mixed-use, mixed-income development, residents and businesses benefit from proximity by reducing environmental, safety, and road and vehicle maintenance cost impacts of short, frequent trips between employment centers, parks, and homes. Community designations provide communities in Ramsey County a guide to support resident-centered visioning of a healthy, equitable, prosperous, future.



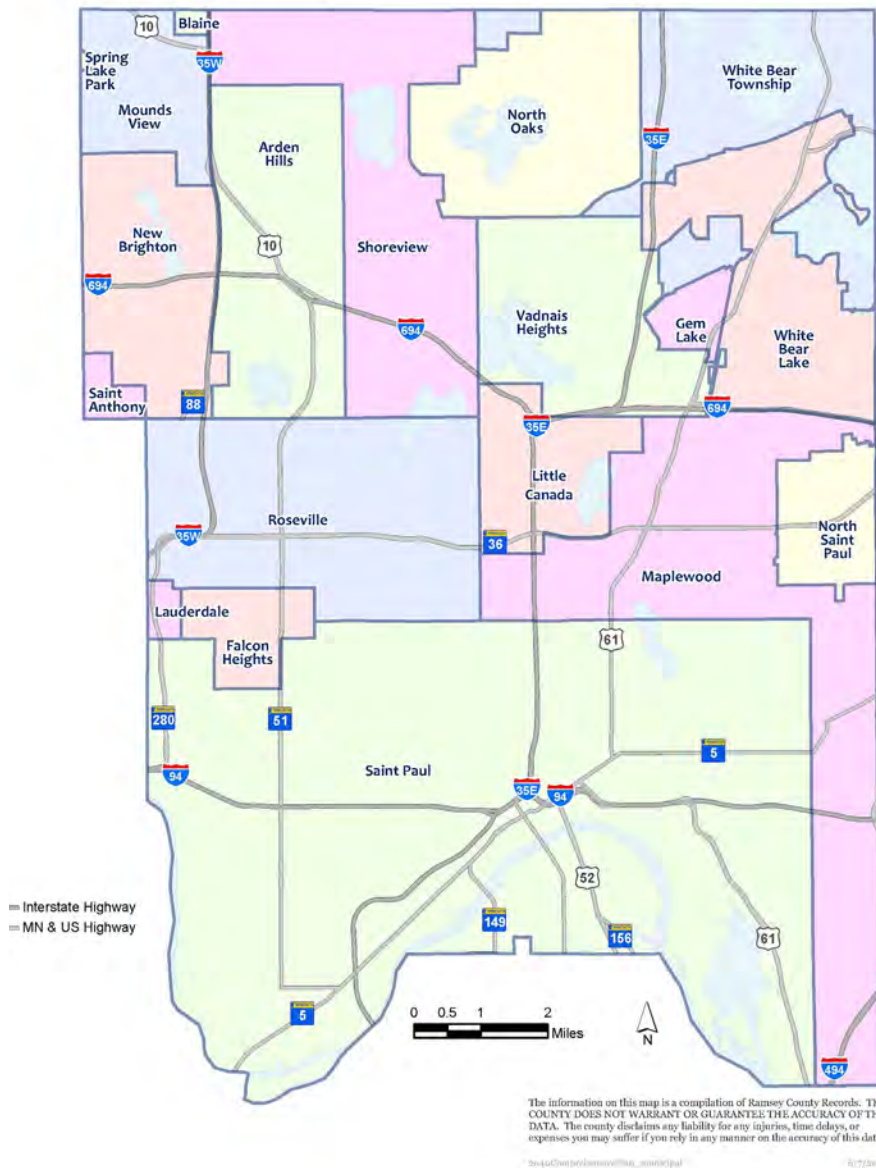
LAND USE

Municipalities

Ramsey County is home to all or part of 19 municipalities, including the following cities and towns:

- ARDEN HILLS
- BLAINE (PART)
- FALCON HEIGHTS
- GEM LAKE
- LAUDERDALE
- LITTLE CANADA
- MAPLEWOOD
- MOUNDS VIEW
- NEW BRIGHTON
- NORTH OAKS
- NORTH ST. PAUL
- ROSEVILLE
- SAINT ANTHONY (PART)
- SAINT PAUL
- SHOREVIEW
- SPRING LAKE PARK (PART)
- VADNAIS HEIGHTS
- WHITE BEAR LAKE (PART)
- WHITE BEAR TOWNSHIP

Figure 3 shows each municipality within the county's geographic borders.



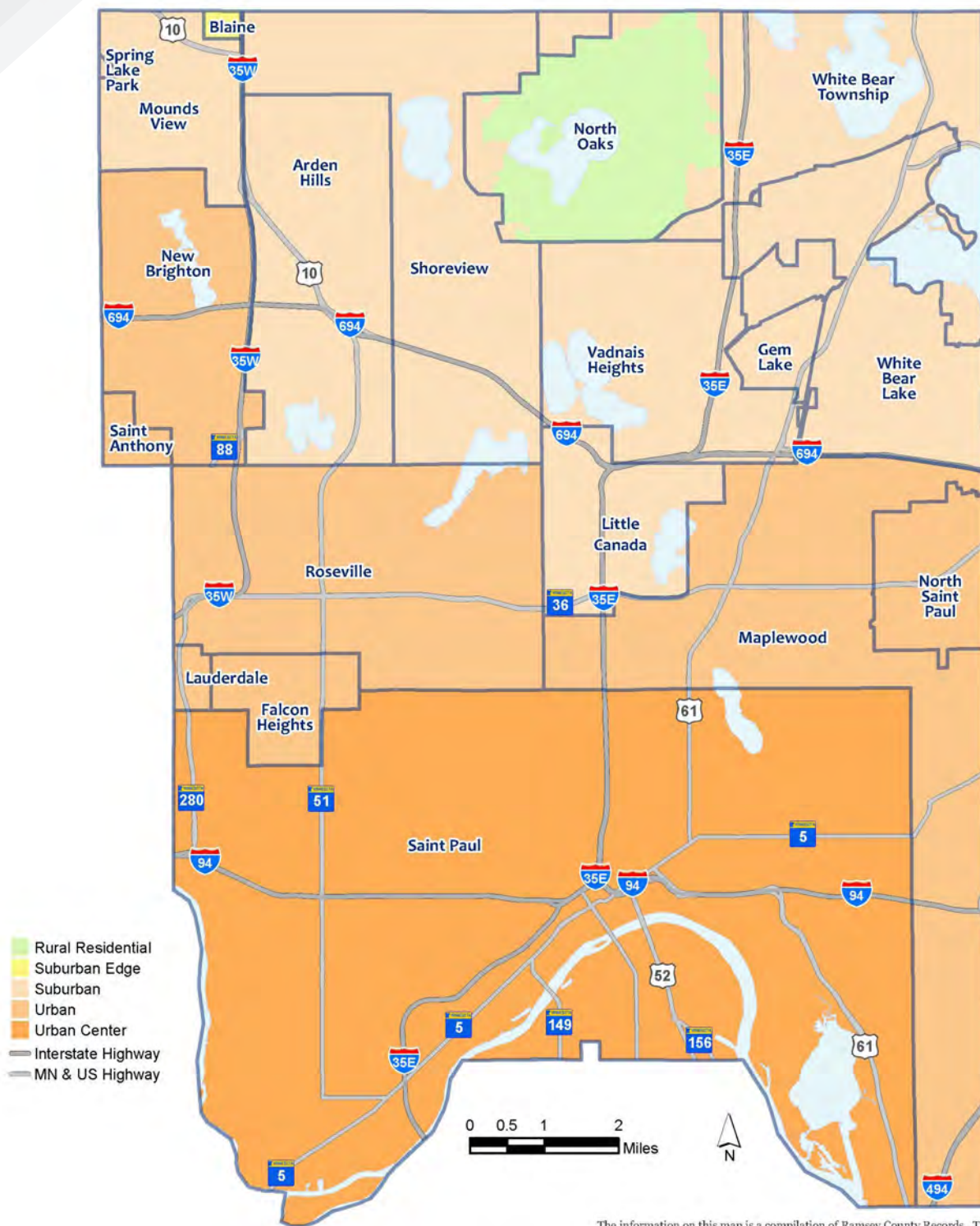
Land use jurisdiction falls within the domain of the municipalities within Ramsey County. Since Ramsey County has no land use planning authority, the comprehensive plan will have a section on land use which is brief compared with other jurisdictions with more descriptive than prescriptive content.



Table 4 compares population and household data from the 2010 Census with 5-year estimates from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

<b>POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD ESTIMATES, 2015</b>				
	<b>POPULATION</b>		<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>	
	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>2015 estimate</b>	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>2015 estimate</b>
Arden Hills	9,552	9,797	3,053	3,024
Blaine (part)	0	0	0	0
Falcon Heights	5,321	5,484	2,254	2,170
Gem Lake	393	465	161	161
Lauderdale	2,379	2,468	1,202	1,176
Little Canada	9,773	10,120	4,689	4,479
Maplewood	38,018	39,775	15,561	15,137
Mounds View	12,155	12,584	5,221	4,838
New Brighton	21,456	22,080	9,479	9,032
North Oaks	4,469	4,715	1,868	1,757
North St. Paul	11,460	11,966	4,822	4,809
Roseville	33,660	34,948	15,490	14,747
St. Anthony (part)	3,070	3,256	1,779	1,488
St. Paul	285,068	295,043	120,795	112,988
Shoreview	25,043	25,951	10,826	10,940
Spring Lake Park (part)	178	243	80	100
Vadnais Heights	12,302	12,968	5,243	5,505
White Bear township	10,949	11,270	4,409	4,518
White Bear Lake (part)	23,394	24,278	10,265	9,988
<b>Ramsey County</b>	<b>508,640</b>	<b>527,411</b>	<b>217,197</b>	<b>206,857</b>

Community Designation in Ramsey County.



The ThriveMSP 2040 Community Designations was adopted on May 28, 2014. This dataset reflects the agreed upon community designation between a community and the Metropolitan Council and is intended to supplement ThriveMSP 2040 - the planning guide for the 7-county Twin Cities metropolitan area of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota.

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## SPECIAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

### MISSISSIPPI RIVER CRITICAL AREA PLAN

#### Introduction

For thousands of years before Ramsey County was established in 1849, the Mississippi River had been central to Native Americans who lived along its shores and recognized the spiritual significance of its provision. The river offered a transportation corridor and sustained a diverse and plentiful native plant community, which in turn provided habitat for abundant fishing and hunting.

The importance of these natural resources remain and the Mississippi River is one of the most treasured resources in Ramsey County. The Mississippi River is the source of most of the drinking water supply for Ramsey County and the two most populated cities in Minnesota—Saint Paul and Minneapolis. This great river winds through Ramsey County, allowing for transportation, recreation, and energy production for the community. It has striking limestone bluffs and provides a flyway for millions of birds. These elements add to the health and well-being for all in Ramsey County.

#### HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF THE MRCCA

The Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) was originally designated a critical area for the state in 1976, and it comprises 72 miles of the Mississippi River and 54,000 acres of surrounding land through the metropolitan area. This designation allowed for increased efforts to protect and preserve the unique natural, recreational, transportation, and cultural features of this section of the Mississippi River. In 2017 the MN State Legislature adopted the permanent rules for MRCCA under Minnesota Rule 6106. Statutes were then passed under Minn. Stat. 116G.15, Subd. 1 in order to:

- (1) protect and preserve the Mississippi River and adjacent lands that the legislature considers unique and valuable state and regional resources for the benefit of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the state, region, and nation;
- (2) prevent and mitigate irreversible damages to these state, regional, and natural resources;
- (3) preserve and enhance the natural, aesthetic, cultural, and historical values of the Mississippi River and adjacent lands for public use and benefit;
- (4) protect and preserve the Mississippi River as an essential element in the national, state, and regional transportation, sewer and water, and recreational systems; and
- (5) protect and preserve the biological and ecological functions of the Mississippi River corridor.

In Ramsey County, the MRCCA is comprised of 17 miles of river with just over 7,000 acres of surrounding land and includes the cities of Saint Paul and Maplewood.

Within MRCCA lies a national park – the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA), which was created in 1988, several years after MRCCA was established. The geographic areas associated with these two designations are identical.

An updated State of the River Report was released in 2016 by MNRRA and the Friends of the Mississippi River, where 14 indicators of river health were identified. The report noted that populations of healthy bald eagle, native mussel, and fish populations have increased to indicate the river is providing a healthier habitat. Conversely, increased river flows were noted, which destabilizes the river system and continued impairments for excess sediment, bacteria and phosphorus, among other indicators, that press the need for continued water quality improvement efforts. The full report is linked in the Planning efforts and initiative section at the end of this chapter.

**PROGRESS ON 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS**

Goals in the Ramsey County 2030 Comprehensive Plan have been achieved or are continuing to progress.

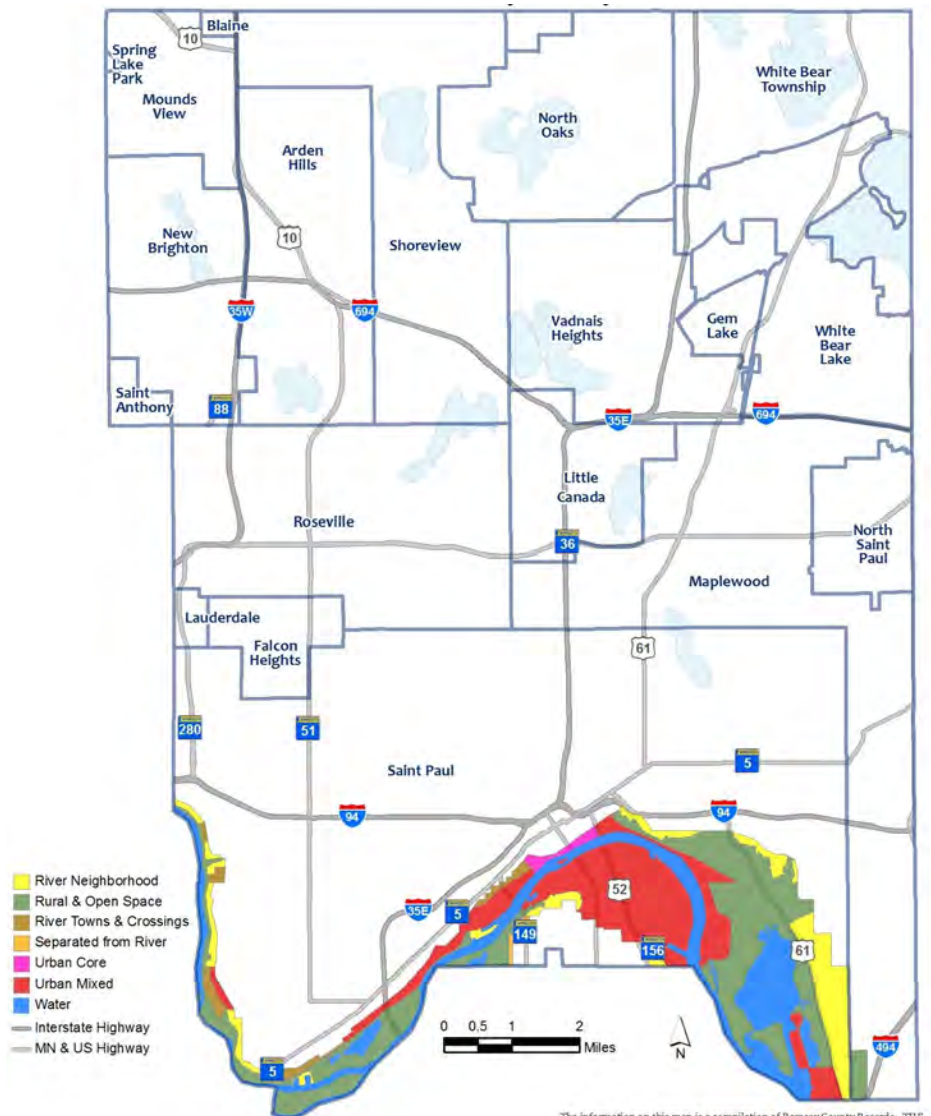
**Complete projects include:**

- Sale of the Ramsey County Government Center West building and Adult Detention Center
- Purchase and revival of the Union Depot as a regional transit hub following guidelines of the MNRRRA at the time of rehabilitation
- Connections for the Bruce Vento Trail continue to improve connectivity to the MRCCA
- Multi acre habitat restoration projects have been completed or continue along Battle Creek within Battle Creek Park
- Construction of 1.5 (.9 paved) miles of new trails at Battle Creek (2011-2013) is complete
- Fish Creek Trail was acquired and restored within Fish Creek Open Space (2017)
- Repaving and enhanced rip-rap on the Ford Parkway Bridge (2017) is complete

**In progress projects include:**

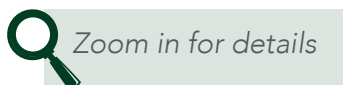
- Additional winter sports areas (snowmaking/ski trails) at Battle Creek Regional Park
- A new Battle Creek play area (set to be complete 2019-2020)
- Bike trail additions at Battle Creek set to be phased in (talks began spring 2018, no timeline)
- Pig’s Eye Lake habitat (2019) enhancement appears to be in the next stage of development with anticipated construction in 2020
- Plato Boulevard (2019) is to be resurfaced

*Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area  
Location within Ramsey County borders.*



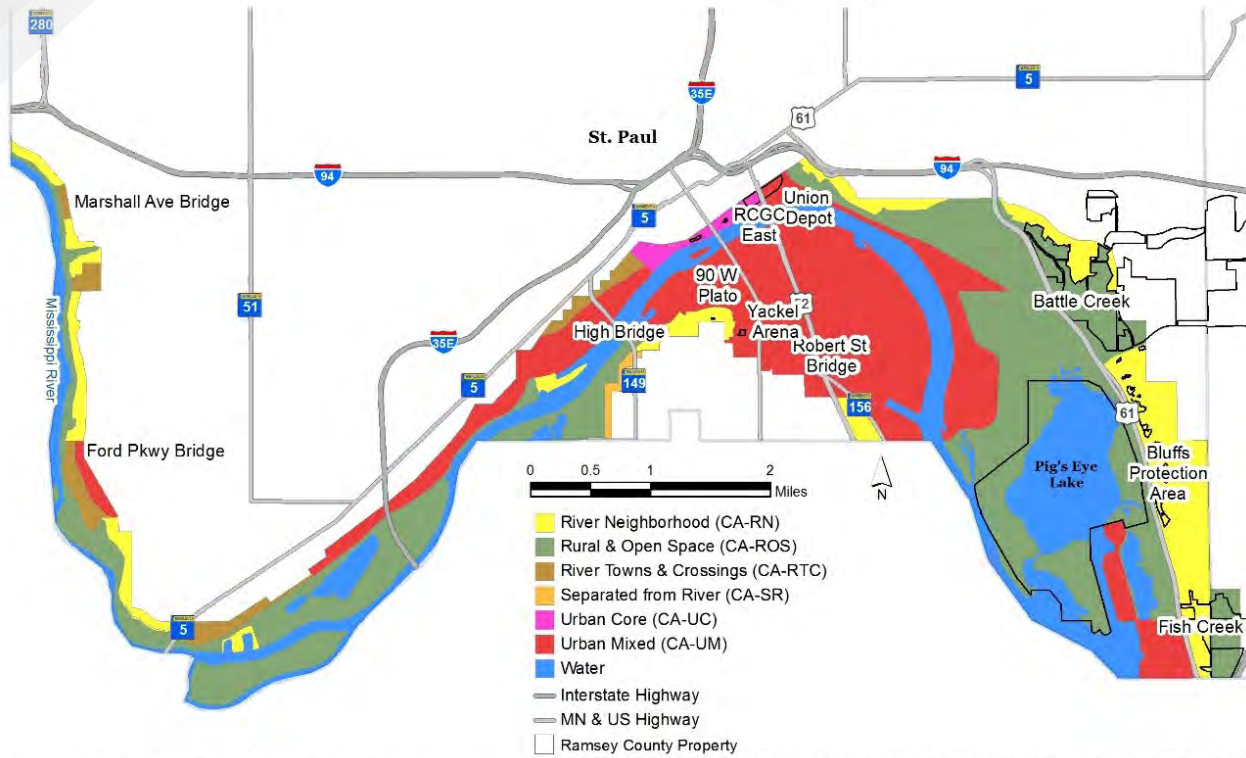
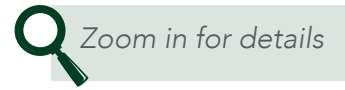
This map shows the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area in the southern part of Ramsey County. The Districts were delineated as provided in Minnesota Rules, part 61.05.010, subp. 3 to distinguish between areas subject to different development restrictions. This spatial data was provided by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 1/04/2017.

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MRCCA Districts in south Ramsey County.



The MRCCA Districts Map utilizes data from the MNDNR dated January 4, 2017 to represent the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) districts as provided in Minnesota Rules, part 6106.0100, subp. 9

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### Districts

The MRCCA rules (Minn. R. 6106.0050, subp. 53) identify six districts to assist with development of and set minimum standards for land use. Practically the districts will determine set back distances for structures from the water and bluffs and to regulate structure heights for new development. All six districts are present in Ramsey County.

Table 1: Acreage and Area for MRCCA Districts in Ramsey County

Ramsey County MRCCA		
District	Acres	Area %
CA-RN	1187.87	12.53%
CA-ROS	3172.26	33.45%
CA-RTC	232.71	2.45%
CA-SR	38.52	0.41%
CA-UC	93.68	0.99%
CA-UM	2568.42	27.09%
Water	2188.97	23.08%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9482.43</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## LAND USE

### MRCCA Districts

**Rural & Open Space District (CA-ROS)** – This district contains rural undeveloped land that is riparian or visible from the river and often contain tracts of high-quality ecological resources. Land in this area must be managed to protect and enhance habitat, parks and open space, public river corridor views and scenic views. This district has the most total area for Ramsey County and includes the sites listed below.

- Battle Creek Regional Park (including the Pig’s Eye section).
- Fish Creek Open Space.

**River Towns & Crossings District (CA-RTC)** – This district includes historic downtown and river crossing commercial areas, as well as existing institutional campuses are included in this district. Improvements to county owned or operated bridges and roads in this district are detailed in the transportation section of this chapter. The major river crossings included in Ramsey County are:

- Ford Parkway Bridge .
- Marshall Avenue Bridge.
- High Bridge.

**Urban Mixed District (CA-UM)** – This district includes commercial, institutional, and industrial mixed-use areas as well as existing/planned parklands. Ramsey County owned properties in this district include:

- 90 West Plato Building.
- Ken Yackel-West Side Arena.

**Urban Core District (CA-UC)** – This district includes Minneapolis and Saint Paul. For Ramsey County, this would represent all land from Kellogg Avenue to the river and east of the Lafayette Bridge and west of Eagle Parkway. This district relies on underlying zoning for MRCCA requirements to river setbacks and bluff impact zones. Bluff setbacks are 40’ unless the building is on the face or abutting the bluff in the CA-UC between Chestnut Street and Highway 52. Land north of Kellogg Avenue is outside of MRCCA, and development is excluded from MRCCA rules. Ramsey County properties included in the district are:

- Ramsey County Government Center-East.
- Union Depot / Concourse.

**These lands and facilities enhance the purpose of each district through:**

- Continued invasive plant removal and native species reestablishments in CA-ROS.
- Additional habitat redevelopment in the Pig’s Eye section in CA-ROS.
- Property acquisition in CA-ROS to maintain the low-density development patterns.
- Maintaining connections in CA-RTC, allowing for continued growth while ensuring walkable routes and public views.
- Providing office space, government services, and recreational spaces, adding opportunities for growth in CA-UM.
- Creating vital connections through a multi-modal transportation hub and government services critical to the commercial vitality in CA-UC.

**These lands and facilities could potentially cause negative impacts or conflict by:**

- Contributing to stormwater runoff through impervious surface in CA-ROS, CA-RTC, CA-UM, and CA-UC.
- Limiting public views of the river in CA-ROS, CA-RTC, CA-UM, and CA-UC.
- Future development and maintenance could impact Primary Conservation Areas in all districts.

Table 2: Dimensional Standards (from the DNR MRCCA Summary Report, October 2016)

	CA-ROS	CA-RN	CA-RTC	CA-SR	CA-UM	CA-UC
Height	35'	35'	48'*	Underlying zoning	65'*	Underlying zoning
River Setback	200'	100'	75'	NA	50'	Underlying zoning
Bluff Setback	100'	40'	40'	40'	40'	40'

\*Greater height may be allowed with a local Conditional Use Permit.

Because the county is exempt from the land use planning requirements, it does not have a role in regulating land use by other jurisdictions or entities, nor does it have the ordinances, regulations or other authorities associated with land use planning. Ramsey County is a landowner within MRCCA and is subject to current MRCCA ordinances and will be subject to MRCCA ordinances established by the cities of Saint Paul and Maplewood once their respective plans are updated. The development of MRCCA is subject to review by the Metropolitan Council and final approval by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It must be submitted for review by September 2018.

### PRIMARY CONSERVATION AREAS (PCAS)

Primary Conservation Areas are key natural and cultural resources and features that are important because of scenic value, flood protection, ecological/habitat value, erosion and landslide prevention, and cultural and historic significance (Minn. R. 6106.0050, subp. 53). These diverse areas are known collectively as PCAs throughout this section to highlight their priority consideration for protection per proposed rules as well as in local ordinances. Each category of PCA as it pertains to MRCCA within Ramsey County is mapped and described in further detail below.



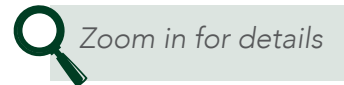
**Shore Impact Zones (SIZ)**

Eroding shorelines can lead to landslides and potential damage to buildings and infrastructure. Following erosion events, ecological and water quality concerns arise in water bodies due to increased turbidity and nutrient levels. Environmentally sensitive SIZs are protected buffer areas between the water’s edge and the area where development is permitted.

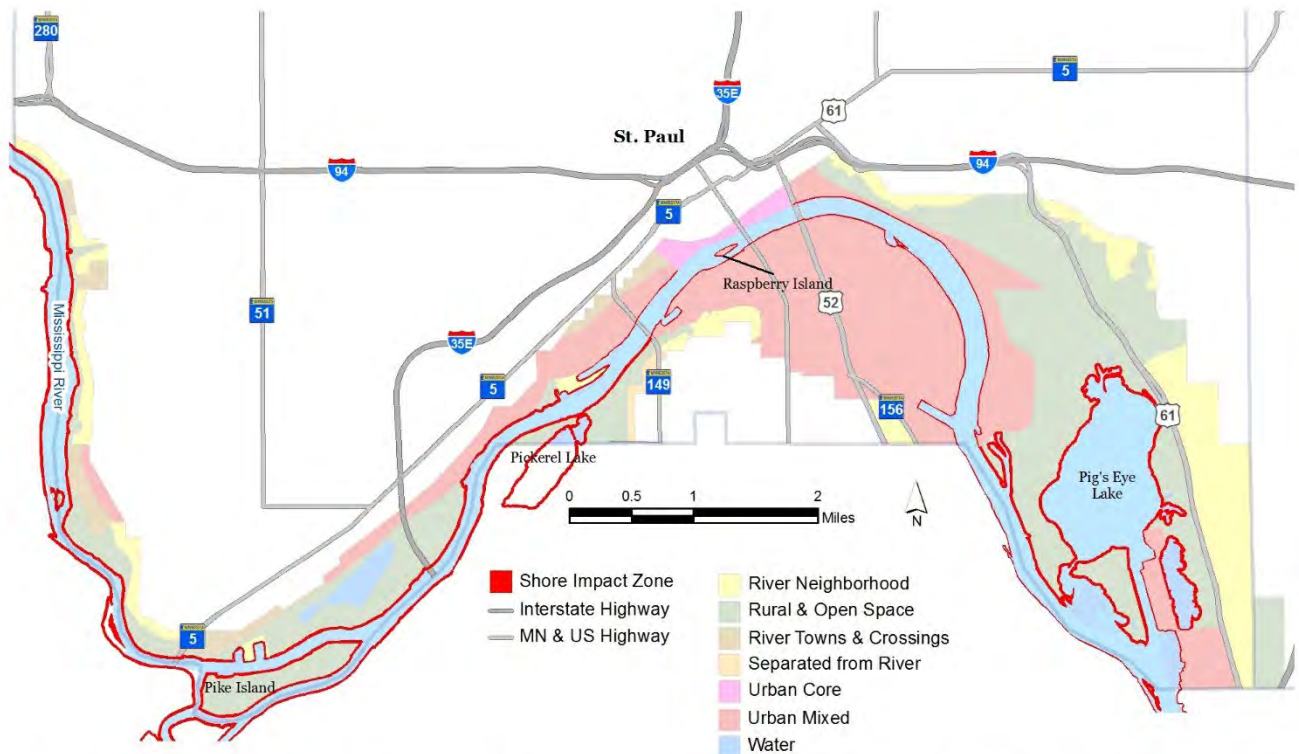
**In Ramsey-County owned and operated areas of MRCCA, SIZs occur along:**

- Mississippi River
- Pig’s Eye Lake

SIZ’s also occur around the islands and along the MN River and the water body south of Pig’s Eye. SIZs are defined as the protected land between the ordinary high water level of public waters and a line parallel to it at a setback of 50 percent of the required structure setback. The required structure setback varies depending on the MRCCA District (Table 2). For instance, in an CA-UM, where the river setback requirement is 50 feet, the buffer width is 25 feet from the high-water line. In an area districted as CA-ROS where the river setback requirement is 200 feet, the shore impact zone is 100 feet wide. No river setback distance is required for the CA-UC district in downtown Saint Paul, as reflected in the map (Shore Impact Zones).



Shore Impact Zones within MRCCA Districts in south Ramsey County.



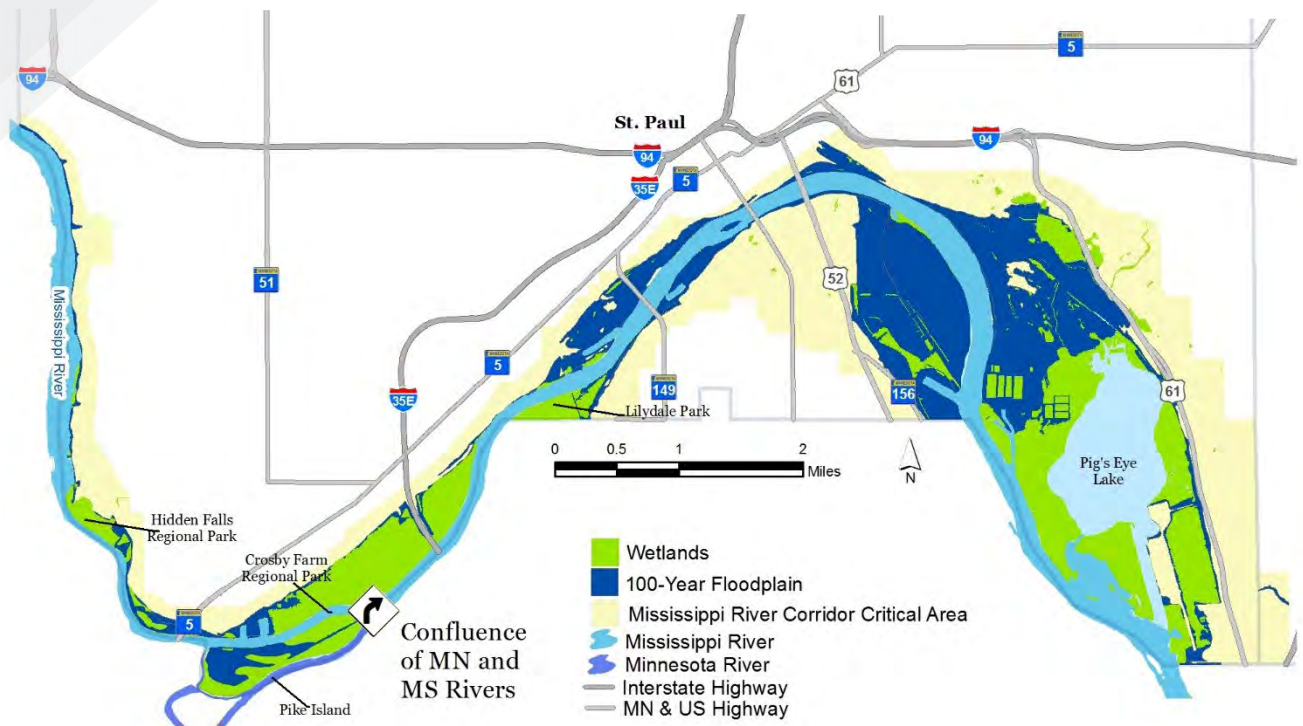
This Primary Conservation Area map utilizes data from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources dated 1/4/2017. This shapefile delineates the Shore Impact Zones (SIZ) of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 6106.0050, subp. 68. The SIZ is defined as the land located between the ordinary high water level (OHWL) of public waters and a line parallel to it at a setback of 50 percent of the required structure setback.

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2040 ComprehensivePlan\_ShoreImpactZones

11/2/2017

## Wetlands, Floodplains and Areas of Confluence in south Ramsey County.



This Primary Conservation Area map is composed of Q3 Flood data derived from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s 4/9/2015 Flood Insurance Rate Maps and the National Wetland Inventory's Circular 39 2009-2014 spatial data (ECMN\_NWI\_UTM dated 4/30/2015) from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

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2010 ComprehensivePlan\_Wetlands,Floodplain,andRiverConfluence

10/30/2017

## WETLANDS, FLOODPLAINS, AND AREAS OF CONFLUENCE

### WETLANDS

Wetlands are vital areas that act as natural sponges, absorbing and filtering runoff in times of heavy rain. If left intact in strategic areas, they reduce or prevent widespread flooding of nearby developed areas. Wetlands also provide numerous ecological benefits such as wildlife habitat, water quality improvement, and trapping sediment. Within this area of MRCCA, the largest wetland areas appear in and around Pig's Eye Lake and Battle Creek. Under MRCCA rules, permits will be required for development or vegetation removal within 50 feet of wetlands. Wetlands are also protected under the Wetland Conservation Act, the Buffer Law, and local government ordinances.

### FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are low-lying areas adjacent to the main channel of a river into which it periodically spills over during or following heavy rain events. Floodplains collect sediment loads and nutrients from swollen rivers and filter pollutants as they recharge groundwater when the water level recedes. The floodplain of the Mississippi River in Ramsey County is relatively narrow in the gorge northwest of Pike Island, but expands to a couple thousand feet in width around Pike Island and reaches its maximum width in the county of over 7,000 feet near Pig's Eye Lake. There, the floodplain encompasses much of the Pig's Eye section in Battle Creek Regional Park. In this map (floodplain), the floodplain was delineated by FEMA for flood insurance rate mapping and includes numerous developed areas, including housing and businesses in addition to the areas described above.



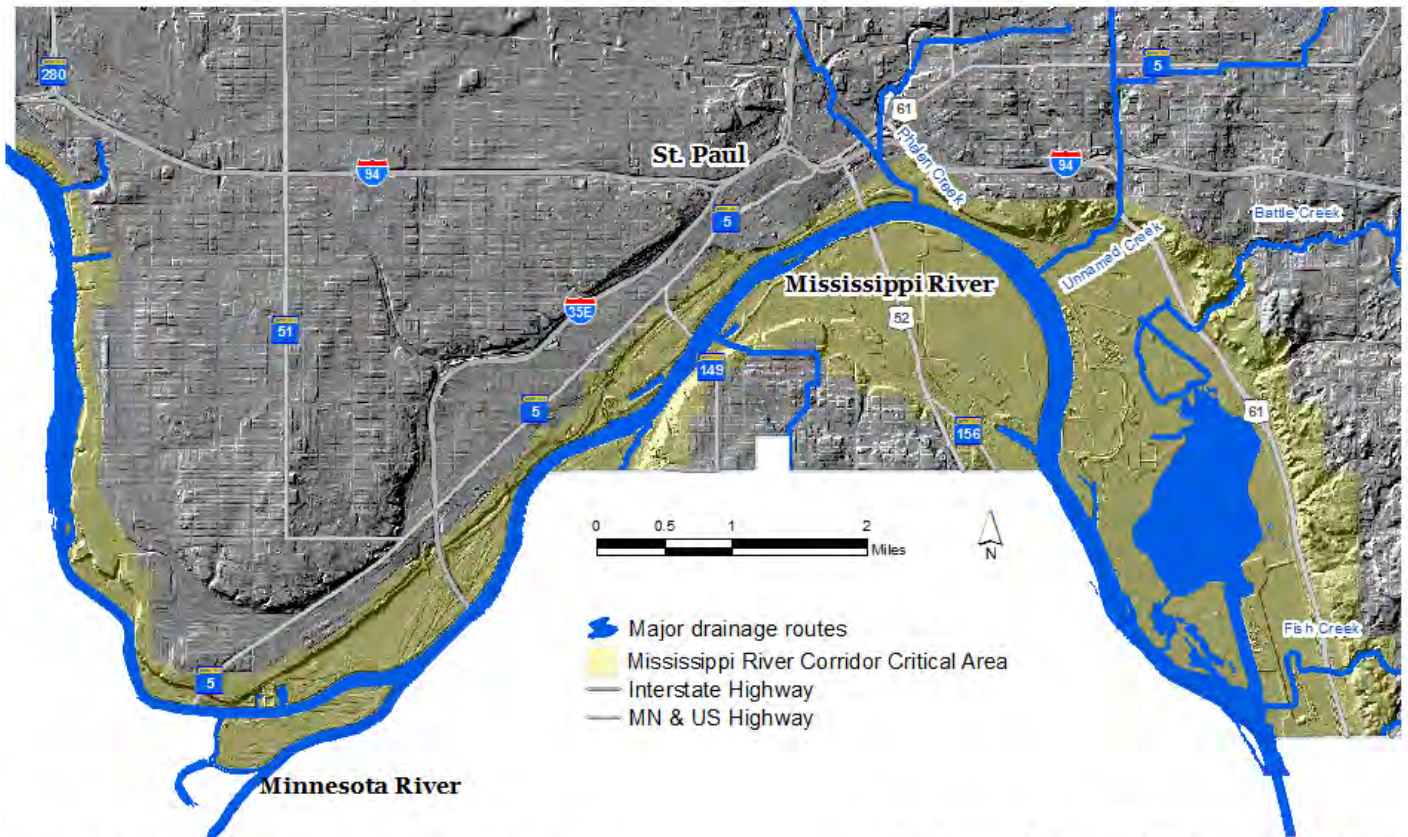
**CONFLUENCES**

At the border of Ramsey County and Dakota County, the Mississippi River and the Minnesota River converge, merging their respective water quality parameters such as temperature, chloride content, turbidity, nutrient loads, and contaminants, as well as species, including invasive species, for the rest of the reach of river passing through MRCCA.

**DRAINAGE ROUTES**

The major drainageway for Ramsey County is the Mississippi River, which forms much of the southern border of the county. The drainageway map shows hillshading which illustrates both the width of the floodplain and the steepness of the gorges and bluffs in MRCCA.

*Natural Drainageways in south Ramsey County.*



This Primary Conservation Area map is composed of "major river centerlines" and "stream routes" from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Fisheries, dated 11/01/2013, Ramsey County water bodies, and the municipal boundaries of the cities within Ramsey County. The LIDAR hillshade layer is "dem\_3m\_hs" from MNDNR, published 6/26/2014.

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### Bluff Impact Zones (BIZ)

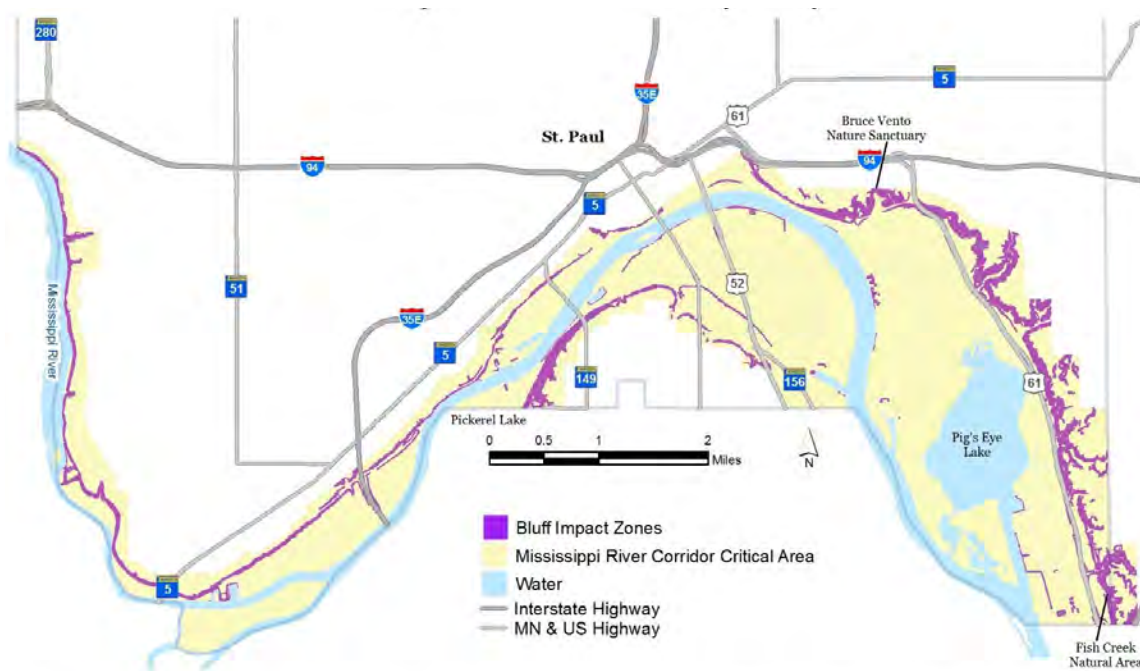
Bluffs are identified as natural topographic features with a vertical rise of at least 25 feet and an average slope of 18 percent or greater. Bluffs provide wildlife habitat and support native plant communities – there is a greater occurrence of native flora and fauna along bluffs and steep slopes than in surrounding areas. Due to their steepness, bluffs are prone to erosion and instability, and failure is a significant concern. Protection of bluffs is important to reduce erosion and slope failure within MRCCA, as well as to maintain habitat and native plant communities.

#### In the Ramsey County region of MRCCA, large ranges of bluffs are located:

- Along the east side of Hwy 61, including Fish Creek Natural Area and Battle Creek Regional Park.
- Between the river and Mississippi River Boulevard/Shepard Rd.
- In the Mississippi River Bluff Protection Open Space Area and the west portion of Fish Creek Open Space.

BIZs, as defined in Minn. R. 6106.0050, subp. 9, includes the bluff and a 20-foot buffer around it. The construction of structures, impervious surfaces, land alteration or vegetation removal within this highly sensitive area is prohibited. The bluff setback area extends 40 feet back from the bluffline which is the top of the bluff in all MRCCA districts except for CA-ROS, which has a setback distance of 100 feet from the bluffline. Development between the BIZ and the bluff setback line is restricted but does have exemptions such as for trails and water access facilities. Restrictions within the BIZ are important to protect the public and property from erosion of steep and potentially unstable slopes, to maintain the scenic quality of bluffs, and to protect the habitats and ecosystems of the corridor.

Bluff Impact Zones in south Ramsey County.



This Primary Conservation Area map is composed of bluff impact zones within MRCCA boundaries from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, with a content date of 1/04/2017. Bluff impact zones include bluffs and land within 20 feet of bluffs, as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 6106.0050, subp. 8 and 9. Bluffs are identified as natural features with an average 18% or higher slope over a horizontal distance of 25 feet.

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Source: Computer-generated from GIS data provided by Ramsey County.

12/2/2017

## Native Plant Communities

MRCCA rules include restrictions against removal of vegetation. It is important to identify significant vegetation stands and native plant communities for reference in the permit review process. Native plant communities provide habitat for fish and wildlife and protect against erosion and runoff-related water pollution while maintaining the scenic nature of MRCCA. Identification of plant communities was conducted by the Minnesota Biological Survey. Significant vegetation communities exist throughout MRCCA except for the immediate downtown area and the adjacent industrial sector, including Xcel Energy, the Saint Paul Downtown Airport and the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant as well as a fringe of residential and mixed-use areas east of Mississippi River Boulevard.

### Major Native Plant communities in Ramsey County-owned land were identified in:

- Pig's Eye Island Heron Rookery Scientific and Natural Area
- Fish Creek Natural Area
- Battle Creek Regional Park

The "Significant Existing Vegetation Stands" spatial data, as mapped in 2012, was provided by the National Park Service. The following vegetation classes were considered "significant" in the survey: Central Great Plains Tallgrass Prairie, Central Riverine Wetland Vegetation, Eastern North American Freshwater Aquatic Vegetation, Eastern North American Freshwater Marsh, Eastern North American Temperate Cliff, Eastern Temperate Wet Shoreline Vegetation, Laurentian & Acadian Pine - Oak Forest & Woodland, Laurentian-Acadian-Allegheny Alkaline Swamp, Midwest Wet Prairie & Wet Meadow, North-Central Beech - Maple - Basswood Forest, North-Central Oak - Hickory Forest & Woodland, Northern & Central Native Ruderal Flooded & Swamp Forest, Northern & Central Native Ruderal Forest, Northern & Central Ruderal Wet Meadow & Marsh, Riverine Mosaic Vegetation, Sand & Gravel Tallgrass Prairie, Silver Maple - Green Ash - Sycamore Floodplain Forest.

The "Native Plant Communities" spatial data was provided by Minnesota's Department of Natural Resources. The areas identified represent the highest quality native plant communities remaining and include recognizable units, such as an oak forest, a prairie, or a marsh, that tend to repeat across the landscape.



This Primary Conservation Area map is composed of the Minnesota DNR "Native Plant Communities" spatial data from 7/11/2014 and the National Park Service's Vegetation Inventory Program "MRCCA Significant Existing Vegetative Stands" spatial data from 9/14/2012. Vegetation was identified using the U.S. National Vegetation Classification System.

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Zoom in for details

Native Plant Communities and Significant Vegetative Stands in south Ramsey County.



### Cultural/Historic Sites

The Saint Paul Union Depot is the lone Ramsey County-owned historic building in the National Register of Historic Places as designated by the National Park Service.

### Gorges

The scenic gorge is located along the Mississippi River between downtown Saint Paul and Saint Anthony Falls of Minneapolis – the only natural waterfall along the Mississippi River. Thousands of years ago, the waterfall was located in Saint Paul, but as rushing melted glacial water eroded Saint Peter sandstone, it undercut and caused the collapse of the overlying Platteville limestone, which caused an upstream migration of the falls almost ten miles until they reached their present location. The NPS video “Disappearing Waterfall” illustrates this migration as the Mississippi River carved out the gorge (<https://www.nps.gov/miss/learn/nature/twingeol.htm>).

The gorge affords scenic views along this heavily-visited area, adding to the unique attractions of the Twin Cities. Pedestrian and bike trails along the top of both sides of the gorge are very popular for exercise, recreation, and non-motorized transport. The gorge area requires protection because the Saint Peter sandstone remains susceptible to erosion, particularly in the steepest areas, and the gorge is home to native vegetation communities and wildlife.



This Primary Conservation Area map was created by delineating the gorge as shown in the National Park Service video graphic “Disappearing Waterfall” which shows the migration of the St. Anthony Waterfall from St. Paul upstream to its present location. For more information, visit: <https://www.nps.gov/miss/learn/nature/twingeol.htm>

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**Unstable Soils and Bedrock**

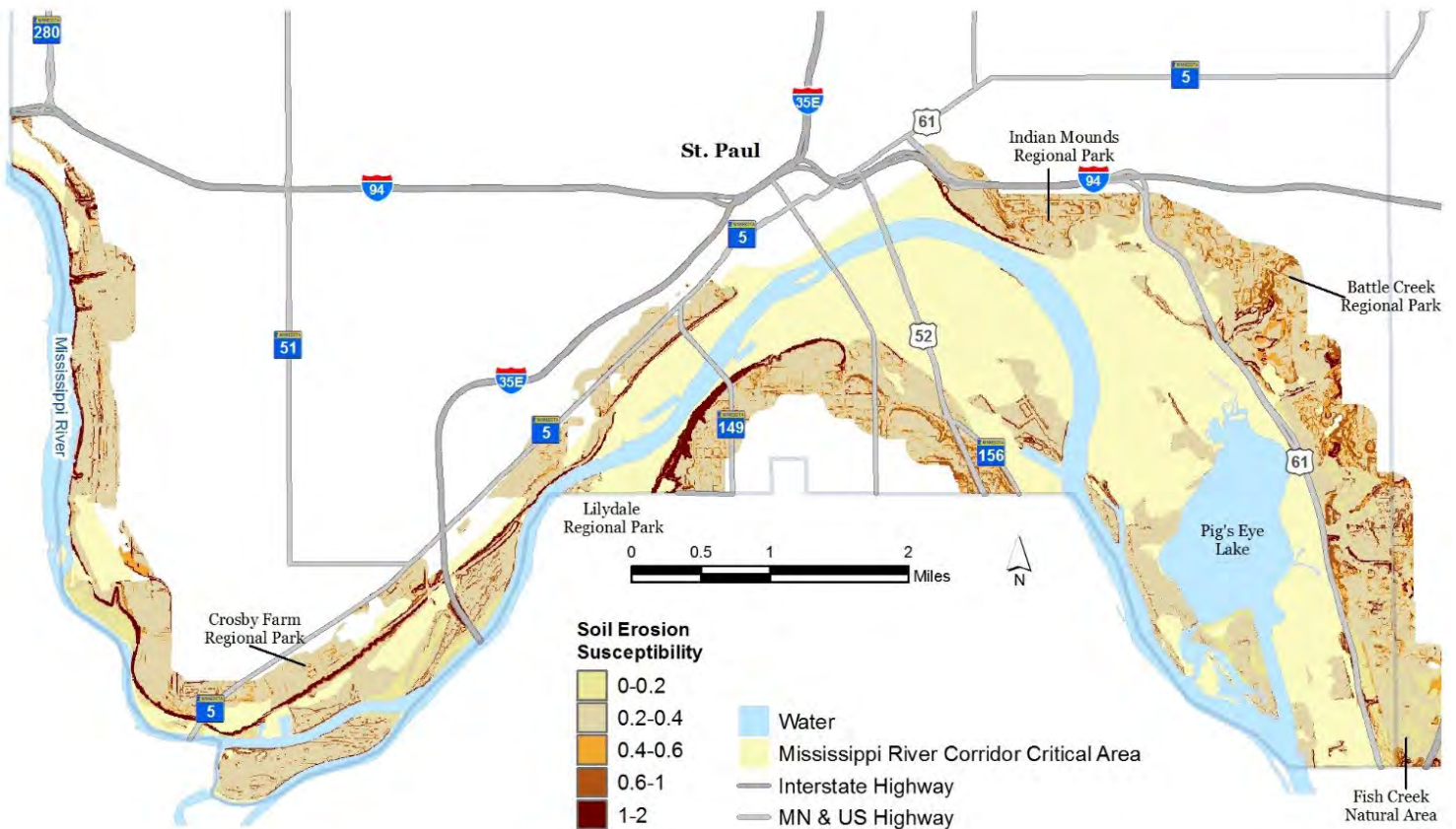
The geologic stability of an area is dependent on a combination of factors including steepness, soil texture, rock integrity, and level of disturbance. The map (Unstable Soils) of Soil Erosion Susceptibility is an indication of the potential for soils to erode based on the K-factor of the soil and the land's steepness, as of 2011 LiDAR elevation data. The map identifies high risk of erosion throughout the length of the gorge.

**Some areas of observed landslides and/or ground instability in Ramsey County-owned land include:**

- Battle Creek Regional Park
- Fish Creek Natural Area

While some of these areas have experienced relatively harmless gully formation or rockfalls, some have had more drastic landslides.

*Unstable Soils and Bedrock in south Ramsey County.*



This Primary Conservation Area map utilizes data from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources dated 6/30/2017. This shapefile uses a soil erodibility index combining the K-factor (erodibility of a soil type) with the slope of the land. The K-factor is derived from the USDA-NRCS Soils Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO), and the slope is from a 2011 10-meter LiDAR Digital Elevation Model. The unitless index ranges from 0.02-1.96, with the highest number reflecting more erodible soils. It is sorted with Jenks

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**POLICIES**

Ramsey County strives to prioritize the protection of Primary Conservation Areas (PCAs) via conservation-minded management decisions on county-owned property as well as coordination with local government units over shared goals in the preservation of natural resources under their jurisdiction. In areas of known degradation within county-owned land, Ramsey County will work to improve conditions. Priority will be given to projects restoring PCAs, especially those which threaten public safety, such as unstable soils. MRCCA restrictions will be followed in future development on county property with consideration given to long-term conservation potential.

**IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**

Since Ramsey County does not have jurisdiction over land use policies in the cities of Saint Paul or Maplewood, implementation actions taken by the county will be with respect to enacting the above-mentioned policies on Ramsey County property.

**PUBLIC RIVER CORRIDOR VIEWS (PRCV)**

Residents and visitors alike, seek and enjoy the high-quality river environment. Communities along the corridor actively reorient their relationship with the river by welcoming vibrant opportunities, while at the same time work to preserve the legacies of those which already exist. The river corridor and areas primarily in southern parts of the county, contain some of the most iconic and appreciated views unique to Minnesota. The visual qualities of these communities provide a sense of individuality and ownership, setting them apart from other places, thereby contributing to their desirability, livability and value.

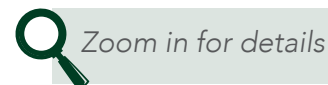
PRVCs pertain to scenic resources identified for their significance of place, unique visual quality and importance to residents within a community. It serves as a basis to develop community goals, policies and objectives for the preservation and protection of the visual and natural resources identified.

Ramsey County’s role stems from its ownership of property and its provision to enhance the management, use and protection of visual resources within the corridor for public use.

This section highlights a brief visual resource inventory, focusing on a few special views and visual features throughout the corridor for which preservation should be sought and maintained for public benefit – due to their significance within the corridor.

The examples illustrated include photographic documentation of site conditions and a description of the distinguishing aesthetic characteristics that contribute to the visual quality or experience of the viewer.

Each view is shown and described below, with numbered views corresponding to the mapped locations and angles of observation shown on the map (PRCV). Other communities may identify PRCVs on county property.



Public River Corridor Views in south Ramsey County

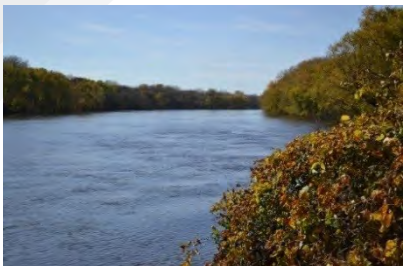


This map shows scenic views within the MRCCA as well as the direction of the photo. Numbers correspond to the section of the text where the photo is located, with descriptions. Photos were taken in October of 2017.

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## VIEWS TOWARD RIVER FROM PUBLIC PLACES

### Crosby Farms Regional Park:



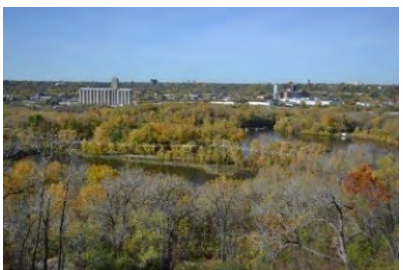
Located in a tranquil setting along the east bank of the Mississippi River in Saint Paul, guests are provided with access to Mississippi River shoreline views. One of the more prominent views spans the Mississippi's confluence with the Minnesota River. Crosby Farms Regional Park is the largest natural park in the Saint Paul parks system.

### Hidden Falls Regional Park:



Situated below the Mississippi River Boulevard, the sheer contrasting elements of the exposed limestone bluffs frame the unique character of the post-glacial river system. Hidden Falls Regional Park is in the Saint Paul system of parks.

### Lilydale Regional Park



The dichotomy of the county's landscape is expressed in this overlook from atop the bluffs, as utilitarian landmarks which reflect a proud urban history juxtapose the strong natural scene of the Mississippi River corridor. Lilydale Regional Park is in the Saint Paul system of parks.

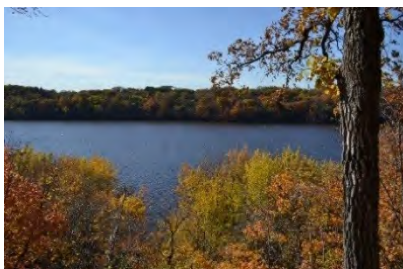
## VIEWS TOWARD BLUFFS FROM RIVER

### Mississippi River Gorge Overlook



An overlook along the Mississippi River Boulevard affords views of the Mississippi River gorge and limestone bluffs, while offering unobstructed views north toward downtown Minneapolis and south to the Ford Parkway bridge.

### Mississippi River Overlook



Bluffs dominate this view through all seasons and remind us at each crossing, that we are located within the Mississippi River corridor. As with this view, many are accessible to pedestrians and motorists along the corridor.



LAND USE

**Ford Dam Overlook**



The Ford Dam, officially known as Lock and Dam No. 1, is a utilitarian icon. This scenic overlook provides residents and visitors alike with a unique piece of history situated between the bluffs of the Mississippi River corridor. Maintaining access and visibility to this icon is of significance to community residents.

**IMPORTANT VIEWS**

**Fish Creek Open Space – Fish Creek Segment:**



**Fish Creek Open Space – Fish Creek Segment:**

The entire 1.5-mile length of Fish Creek flows through the open space area. The downstream segment of the creek has a large drop in elevation as it flows through a deep wooded valley with very steep side slopes. Continuing to maintain and manage this area as parkland is critical to securing its benefit in the long-term for public use.



**Fish Creek Open Space – Fish Creek Bluff Segment:**

There are dramatic topography changes throughout sections of the open space area, including the steep wooded bluff line of the Mississippi River parallel to Highway 61, and the 0.5-mile of bluff line south of Fish Creek. This site is located adjacent to the Mississippi River Bluffs Protection Open Space area.



**Battle Creek Regional Park – Battle Creek Bluff Segment:**

This section of the park includes approximately two miles of bluff land along the east side of the Mississippi River Corridor. One of the most prominent visual characteristics of this section of the park is the expansive view atop the wooded bluffline of the Mississippi River parallel to Highway 61, which offers panoramic views of Pig’s Eye Lake and the approximately 1,100 acres of floodplain habitat and river valley.

**Battle Creek Regional Park – Battle Creek Segment:**

Battle Creek flows through a steep, wooded valley that varies in depth from 25 feet to over 150. The bluffs are significant in the development of the park as they provide a corridor and barrier, immersing park-goers into a splendor of natural seclusion. Battle Creek flows from east to west through the park on its way to the Mississippi River, exemplifying its essence as it cascades over several natural and man-made waterfalls. Continuing to maintain and manage this area as parkland is critical to securing its benefit in the long-term for public use.

*The regional parks are important components in the greenspace network that protects the diverse resources of the 17-mile Mississippi River corridor through Ramsey County. For more developed areas, thoughtful re-zoning for future land use and restrictions on building heights should help prevent adverse impacts to public views along the river. Encroachment of high-rise commercial advertisements, water towers and powerline structures rising into the sightline above the horizon would degrade the panoramic quality of these scenic viewsheds.*

**Policies**

The Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission, Parks and Recreation Department, and the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners coordinate on matters relating to the planning, development and operation of county-owned land utilizing Minnesota Rule Chapter 6106.0130 – General Development Standards for Public Facilities. These rules for development include:

1. Dimensional and minimal visibility standards for building and trail development
2. Avoiding PCAs, managing vegetation consistent with Chapter 6106.0150, leaving natural vegetation in place and replanting it where feasible, and minimizing the use of chemical control for vegetation where practical
3. Minimizing disturbance during spawning or nesting seasons
4. Giving priority to provision of scenic overlooks, safe pedestrian crossings, and access to public riverfront property

Ramsey County's planning process is also committed to accurately reflecting community desires and needs. It is hoped that the depth of participation and collaboration in the planning process continues to be an ongoing occurrence between the county, local government entities, communities and property owners. The identification of visual resources of significance will be a constant process of engagement in this important decision-making process. Public opinion surveys, open house meetings, committee meetings, work sessions and forums are tools utilized throughout planning processes. Also, Ramsey County encourages planning between all levels of government in the discussion of land that is open to the public, when evaluating the preservation of current and future visual resources, where feasible. Furthermore, Ramsey County supports the collaboration amongst partners and with adjacent communities to identify, plan for, and protect PRCVs and other visual resources that cross boundaries.

## THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR CRITICAL AREA (MRCCA) PROGRAM PRIORITIES FOR RESTORATION

### General Overview

Restoration of degraded areas is an important strategy to avoid the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services valued by communities. Due to large amounts of degraded areas, as well as the time and cost necessary to restore them, there is a crucial need to prioritize areas and set realistic restoration goals to optimize restoration efforts throughout Ramsey County. It is also necessary to identify constraints at the site, landscape, and regional scales when planning and prioritizing restoration actions. This maximizes efforts toward improving ecosystem services and benefits for natural resources in the long-term. In 2017, Ramsey County updated the natural resource management plan for the county. This plan works with local and regional partners to reclaim, conserve and enhance vital resources county-wide. However, for this section, the restoration priorities addressed will focus on the county-owned parkland and open space within the MRCCA.

### County Restoration Priorities

MRCCA's goal is to protect and preserve the biological and ecological functions of the corridor. Restoration priorities set forth by the county are to sustain the unique oak savanna and woodland ecosystems, as well as to stabilize the steep hillsides along the county-owned bluff land within the MRCCA for the benefit of wildlife and public use. Over time, the bluff land areas have become highly degraded by invasive vegetative species. These introduced and undesirable species are out-competing native species, thereby reducing habitat quality and creating barren soil conditions which cause problems of slope instability and soil loss. Restoration of these areas will promote the desired regeneration of oak woodland species, improving the biodiversity of habitat, while also increasing the integrity of the soil conditions in areas with dramatic topographic relief.

### Importance

The identified priorities are important to mitigate direct and adverse impacts to the county's natural resources. If conservation action is not taken, the environmental risks and cost of restoration will only increase. Furthermore, encroachment of invasive species will continue to degrade the desired ecosystems and their functions. In addition, prioritization promotes public stewardship for specific resources and their unique significance within the corridor, highlighting their value for public use. Public stewardship helps to strengthen citizen's relationships with the river corridor, as a direct part of our quality of life and legacy. The map (Veg Restoration) highlights in orange the restoration priorities for MRCCA. The map was derived by showing PCAs such as wetlands, erosion-susceptible zones, bluffs, and shorelines that are not covered in significant or native vegetation. are not covered in significant or native vegetation.

Vegetation Restoration Priorities.



The Vegetation Restoration Priorities map highlights Priority Conservation Areas without vegetation that could be prioritized for restoration. It is composed of the Minnesota DNR "Native Plant Communities" spatial data from 7/11/2014 and the National Park Service's Vegetation Inventory Program "MRCCA Significant Existing Vegetative Stands" spatial data from 9/24/2012 (both in green) overlaid on the following Priority Conservation Area layers in orange: 100-year floodplain (FEMA, 2014); Geop (DPS, 2015); Wetlands (DNR NWI, 2015); Bluff Impact Zones (DNR, 2017); Shore Impact Zones (DNR, 2017); and Soil Erosion Susceptibility (DNR, 2017).

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Zoom in for details



### **Policies**

Ramsey County's role stems from its ownership of property and its provision to enhance the management, use and protection of natural resource quality within the corridor for public use. Ramsey County owns over 7,000 acres of parks and open space and manages it as a natural resource based park system. Furthermore, Ramsey County will continue to implement planned and on-going restoration projects within the identified priority areas, as well as survey other areas for inclusion. Identified areas will be included in the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation System Plan, Natural Resource Management Plan, and other relevant guiding documents. The county does not have a role in regulating land use by other jurisdictions or entities, nor does it have the ordinances, regulations or other authorities associated with land use planning. However, Ramsey County will assist in creating evaluation criteria for protecting PCAs when site contains multiple PCAs categories and the total area of PCAs exceeds the required set aside percentages. This evaluation criteria will be used in development of Ramsey County administered property. Furthermore, Ramsey County will evaluate and require restoration at proposed development sites under its administration for erosion prevention as well as bank and slope stabilization issues. Other policies Ramsey County will adopt include prioritizing restoration of removed vegetation of Native Plant Communities and natural vegetation in riparian areas and use of permanent protection measures such as public acquisition, conservation easement, and deed restrictions.

## **SURFACE WATER USES**

### **General Overview**

Once a bustling fur trading post, the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers continues to be a hot spot for shipping goods in the modern industrial and commercial sectors. Much of the area's economy stems from local companies involved in river transport in this strategic location. Barges can carry larger loads using less fuel than trains or trucks, saving fuel, money, and carbon emissions. The Saint Paul Port Authority operates four barge terminals in Ramsey County, and there are dozens of barge fleeting areas in the corridor.

While Ramsey County does not own or operate any surface water uses, the river area also provides numerous surface water recreational opportunities in Ramsey County, including rowing clubs, a yacht club, a marina, a boat launch, riverboat tours, fishing, and park and historical spaces.


To maintain navigability for larger watercraft, water depth is managed through dredging and water level alteration using locks and dams, as managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The environmental impacts of these alterations to the natural landscape to the river and its banks are documented by the Environmental Department of the Army Corps of Engineers, and management falls under federal jurisdiction. Little conflict between recreational users and commercial barges is reported, since large watercraft follow a designated channel, and most barge fleeting occurs east of the Robert Street Bridge, whereas recreational activities are largely west of the bridge. The U.S. Coast Guard regulates no-wake zones. The next section describes the surface water use in greater detail.

Surface Water Uses in south Ramsey County.



This map is compiled from various sources including the Port Authority of St. Paul (October 2017), Google Maps, and the 2010 Metro River Guide. Though it is not a comprehensive account of current surface water users, it attempts to convey the breadth and diversity of main surface water users in the Ramsey County section of the MRCCA.

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 Zoom in for details

### **Policies**

Ramsey County's section of the Mississippi River is controlled by Lock and Dam number two, whose authorized purposes are navigation under the river and Harbors Act of 1930 (PL 71-250) and recreation under the Flood Control Act of 1944 (PL 78-534). To maintain a minimum depth of nine feet in the navigational channel, the Army Corps of Engineers artificially maintains water elevations that expose some natural shorelines upstream while flooding natural shorelines downstream, with occasional dredging where needed. While Ramsey County does not have jurisdiction over the river and its use, it promotes:

- Stabilization of shorelines that are impacted by wave action, especially in Pig's Eye Lake
- Environmentally sensitive management of the channel's dredging process and materials
- A working balance between commercial and recreational uses of the river
- Allowance for barge fleetings at levels that do not have significant negative impacts on other river users or the environment
- Enforcement of personal watercraft regulations, which states that personal watercraft must travel a maximum of 5 mph within 150 feet of shore, docks, moored boats, or non-motorized watercraft.

### **Water-oriented Uses**

#### **General Overview**

Ramsey County does not own or operate any water-oriented land uses although Infrastructure does exist for water-oriented uses including barge terminals and recreational marinas. The city of Saint Paul was established in great part because of the shipping of freight along the Mississippi River. Ships have now been replaced by barges and the industry has experienced ups and downs, but currently five million tons of commodities are moved through the metro area annually (per the Port Authority).

In the Great River Passage Master Plan, the city of Saint Paul identified the potential to expand opportunities for tourism and river-oriented recreation such as developing a river trail for canoes and kayaks, as well as holding historical/cultural events. Although activities could greatly increase tourism and recreation in Saint Paul, they also present a challenge and potential conflicts in managing water-oriented uses. It will be essential to balance the industrial and commercial uses of the river with the recreational uses to ensure the safety and well-being of all river users.

#### **Open Space and Recreational Facilities**

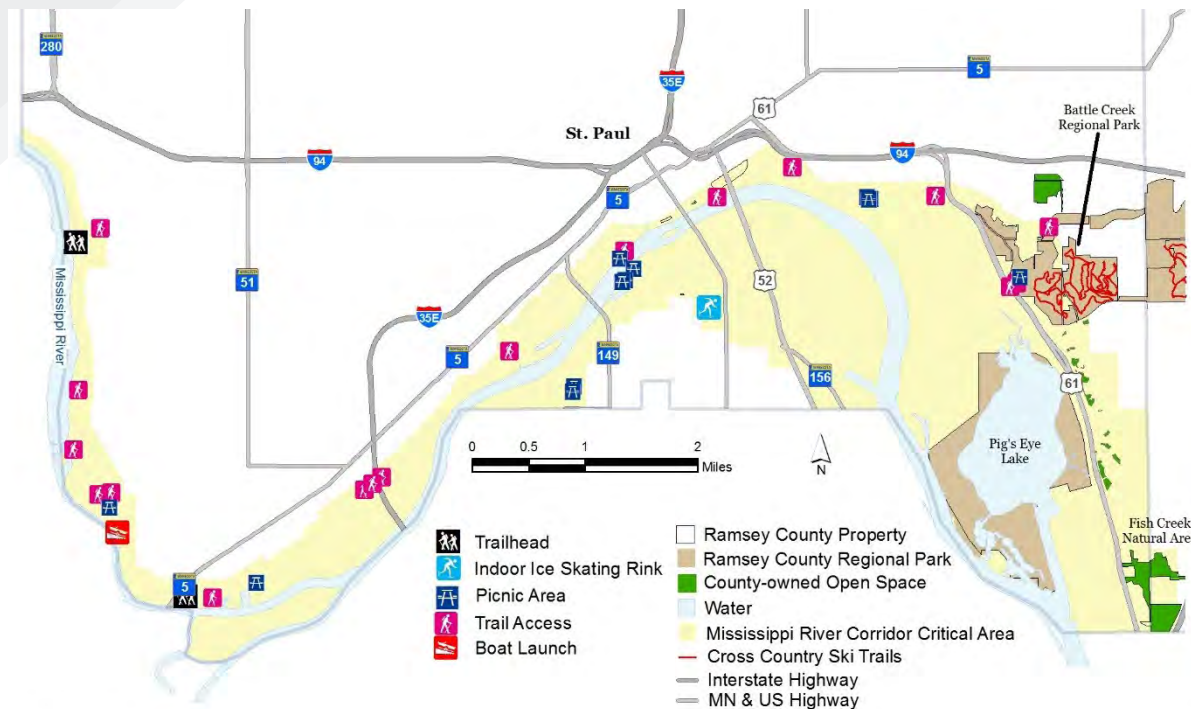
Vibrant cities require open space for quality of life. The scholarly research establishes that mental and physical health of citizens depends on access to outdoor spaces. Equity of access is key to ensuring Ramsey County is competitive in attracting a diverse citizenry. Federal, state, regional, and local governments have already made gains in ensuring that much of the MRCCA has a respectable level of accessibility. Ramsey County's role has been to focus on connecting greater Ramsey County to the MRCCA.

#### **Description of Existing Facilities**

Parks and Recreation areas in the southeastern area of the county include the Battle Creek, Pig's Eye sections of Battle Creek Regional Park, and Fish Creek. For a detailed description of these and all Ramsey County Park facilities see the Parks and Trails Section of this plan. The county has also acquired several properties for the Mississippi River Bluff Protection Open Space between Battle Creek and Fish Creek. MRCCA policies will be considered in developing activities within these areas.



## Open Space and Recreational Facilities in south Ramsey County.



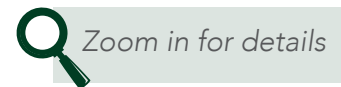
The Open Spaces Map was adopted in 2017. This map utilizes data from Ramsey County to represent existing Ramsey County public lands and designation of the land.

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2040 ComprehensivePlan\_OpenSpaceRecreationalFacilities

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### ► Battle Creek Regional Park—Battle Creek segment



This is an 846-acre segment of the regional park whose most prominent visual characteristics are the steep, wooded slopes paralleling the Mississippi River and Battle Creek. The park includes approximately two miles of bluff land along the east side of the Mississippi River Corridor. Battle Creek flows through a steep, wooded valley that varies in depth from 25 feet to over 150 feet. The bluffs are significant in the development of the park as they provide a corridor, barriers, and panoramic views of the river valley. Battle Creek flows from east to west through the park on its way to the Mississippi River. Although the creek has been degraded and altered due to run-off from the surrounding development, it still maintains an overall positive aesthetic impact on the park. Improvements to the creek and upstream watershed area by the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District have corrected some erosion problems and restored the creek as an asset to the park. Continued effort does need to be made on washouts caused by aging stormwater pipes. The existing development includes (Map open space):

- A large group picnic area and water park at the intersection of McKnight and Upper Afton Roads
- A system of paved pedestrian and bicycle trails throughout the park;
- Parking in the lower end of Battle Creek near Highway 61 and trails connecting to regional trails along the river (Map bicycles);
- Multi-purpose cross country skiing and mountain bike trails (Map bicycles);
- Non-development areas will be maintained and managed in a natural state including efforts to restore areas degraded by landfills, erosion, borrow pits or other intrusions.

A master plan amendment for Battle Creek Regional Park is planned for 2018, which will to identify additional recreation development opportunities throughout the park. Potential future improvements

to Battle Creek Regional Park may include but are not limited to:

- Picnic Area Improvements within the large group picnic area
- Improvements to the existing Waterworks family aquatic center
- Development of a bluff top visitor center with interpretive/educational facilities
- Expansion of picnic facilities within the regional park
- Improvements and expansion of existing paved and natural surface trails
- Improvements and expansion to existing parking lots
- Improvements to the existing off-leash dog area
- Expansion of the Winter Recreation area such as snow-making equipment for cross-country, downhill skiing, snowboarding, sledding, and building infrastructure.
- Improvements and expansion on the existing off-road bicycle/cross-country ski trails.
- Habitat restoration of non-developed areas
- Other recreational opportunities addressed in the master plan update

### ► **Battle Creek Regional Park—Pig’s Eye Lake segment.**

This area of the regional park lies entirely within the floodplain of the Mississippi River. The lake covers approximately 500 acres and averages less than 10 feet of depth. The park includes 610 acres surrounding the lake. The area includes a major heron/egret rookery, bald eagle nesting, and extensive areas of floodplain habitat. The rookery is currently managed as a scientific and natural area (SNA) by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Future improvements to Pig’s Eye Lake segment are reflected in the Great River Passage plan. Conceptual designs include additions of parking areas, toilets, trails both within Pig’s Eye and between adjacent parks, and access to Pig’s Eye Lake. Improvements to natural areas include marsh and wetland restorations. Currently RCPRD and the United States Army Corps of Engineers are in the feasibility stage of creating islands for habitat and shoreline erosion mitigation. The goals of these improvements are to create access to the river while improving the ecological function of this area.

### ► **Fish Creek Protection Open Space**

This 130-acre site includes the entire 1.5-mile length of Fish Creek as it flows from Carver Lake west under Highway 61 and then into Pig’s Eye Lake. I-694 separates the area into two segments. The segment downstream of I-694 is a deep wooded valley with very steep side slopes. The creek has a large drop in elevation through this three quarters of a mile segment. The area also includes the steep wooded bluff line of the Mississippi River parallel to Highway 61 and half of a mile of bluff line south of Fish Creek. The segment upstream of I-694 has a much flatter creek gradient and lacks the deep valley. This part of the creek corridor includes a variety of wetlands, wooded slopes and grasslands.

Future improvements planned include trail system expansion to extend connections within the Fish Creek and Battle Creek Corridor interpretive/educational viewing overlooks, and a potential interpretive/education programming facility for additional recreational opportunities. Removal of invasive species with restoration of native plant communities will also be a priority. In relation to restoration activities, Ramsey County’s participation in a bluff restoration project with the Great River Greening Program is typical of the type of activities that are envisioned. This restoration project is a cooperative activity funded by MN Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources and MNRRA.

### ► **The Mississippi River Bluffs Protection Open Space**

This site is a 2-mile long narrow strip of steep sloped bluff line, paralleling the east side of Highway

61 between Battle Creek Regional Park on the north and Fish Creek Protection Open Space on the south. The site is a steep, wooded slope with an incline of more than 30 percent, and lies between residential properties at the top and bottom of the bluff. Ramsey County has acquired 69 platted lots in this area totaling 12 acres—about 25 percent of the total site—through tax-forfeiture or donations. The county will continue to acquire lots in this area through tax-forfeiture or donations. Due to the designation and environmental sensitivity of Ramsey County open space in the MRCCA, facility upgrades would be limited to bluff top trail connections. No other facility upgrades are planned at this time.

### ► Ken-Yackel Ice Arena

Ramsey County operates this facility in Saint Paul's West Side neighborhood. The arena, erected in the 1970's, continues to be a recreational asset. As it is the only Ramsey County owned ice arena in the MRCCA, it has the visibility to champion policies within the entire MRCCA. In the future, this arena is a candidate for repurposing to a use that will be determined through an extensive public process.

## POLICIES

### Maintenance of existing facilities

Ramsey County will encourage the creation, connection, and maintenance of open space and recreational facilities, including public access to the river. Ramsey County will provide continued funding to capital improvement and maintenance funds for the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department (RCPRD) to achieve MRCCA objectives. RCPRD will also seek regional funding opportunities through Metropolitan Council and other entities. RCPRD will continue to act as the Metropolitan Council's regional park operations and maintenance fund implementing agency at Battle Creek and Pig's Eye Segment. This includes maintaining the level of service currently available, restoration of ecosystem services, and exploring options for access to the river on county managed land in MRCCA.

### Connections

A critical process in ensuring cost-effective development is encouraging planning between all levels of government and private organizations when acquiring land for parks and trails. Ramsey County will encourage continued regular meetings between all entities with public access in MRCCA. RCPRD will evaluate options for access to the river and pursue those where feasible. Ramsey County will also identify land holdings in the CA-SR District that have potential connections to existing and future open space. This includes right-of-way (ROW), easements, and current park space.

### Land acquisition

It is currently a stated goal that RCPRD "builds, promotes, and improves pedestrian bike and trail systems that are accessible to all residents of Ramsey County and connect the county to other regional systems." (2016-17 budget: Goal 3, strategy B. P. 321).

When possible, Ramsey County will acquire land as park, open space, or trail corridors. The county will also partner with other government units, especially the city of Saint Paul, city of Maplewood, Metropolitan Council, and the State of Minnesota, to leverage adjacent lands. The county will encourage that land dedication requirements be used to obtain public river access.

RCPRD will continue to work with the Cities of Saint Paul and Maplewood to acquire land adjacent to existing open space parcels through subdivision requirements under their jurisdiction.

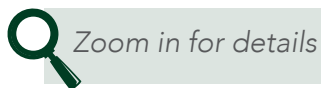


## TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

Transportation and utilities provide vital connections to communities. Infrastructure does not need to be a burden on environmental processes. When utilities and transportation do not consider effective siting concerns arise including excessive damage to the MRCCA with multiple construction sites, inappropriate obstructions of the viewshed, and continued clearing to maintain ROW. Proper siting and alternative routing can keep these out of view and limit their footprint in MRCCA. Impacts to public river corridor views and primary conservation areas must be avoided by adoption of policies that protect ecosystem services.

### Description of Existing Facilities

The MRCCA within Ramsey County is heavily urbanized. Manmade infrastructure transects the area in many places. This offers unique challenges and opportunities to meeting requirements of MRCCA ordinances.



Air, Rail and Road Transportation in south Ramsey County.



The Rail, Air, and Road Transportation map utilizes "StreetSimple", "Railroad" layers from Ramsey County. The airport shapefile is derived from MNGeo's "Airports" file created in 2010. Roads represent existing Ramsey County maintained roads. Rail and air transportation infrastructure not maintained or governed by Ramsey County are also shown as they affect Ramsey County.

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### Roadways

The MRCCA corridor has numerous roadways that travel through or intersect it. Ramsey County has responsibility for many roads in this corridor (Table 2; Map transportation)

Table 2: Ramsey County roads and bridges within MRCCA

County Road Number	Road Name	River Crossings
35	Marshall Avenue	Marshall Avenue Bridge
35	Upper Afton Road	
36	Warner Road	
37	Shepard Road	
38	Randolph Ave	
39	Lower Afton Road	
40	Plato Boulevard	
42	Ford Parkway	Ford Parkway Bridge
46	Edgumbe Road	
43	Carver Avenue	
68	McKnight Road	

**LAND USE**

Improvements to these facilities are included in the Ramsey County Transportation Improvement Program documents.

- The concrete leading to the Ford Parkway Bridge was removed and replaced in the fall of 2017, along with riprap replacement.
- The Marshall Avenue Bridge will see repairs, with the deck milled and overlaid.
- Warner Avenue Bridge number 62531 will have maintenance completed in 2018.

Other potential projects under initial discussion may affect the MRCAA and should be evaluated in the feasibility analysis.

- A Direct connection of Lexington Parkway to Shepard Road, via Elway Street is in early planning
- Access from Shepard Road to northbound I-35E and from southbound I-35E to Shepard Road via alteration of the I-35E/Shepard Road interchange is being studied.
- The joint MnDOT/Met Council Intersection Conversion Study identified Warner Road and Burns Avenue intersections as candidates for conversion to interchanges.

**Utilities**

Overhead powerlines, generation facilities, and even underground utilities have a visual impact on PRCVs. As can be seen in map (elec gen and utility infra) and Map (PRCV), there are many points of potential conflict, such as the electrical transmission lines bisecting Pig's Eye and the large number of Minnesota Pollution Control Agency permitted sites near Ramsey County Open Space. The confluence of infrastructure and natural areas has the effect of blocking views. Less often calculated are the issues of noise and light pollution from utilities. While it can be mitigated, sensory pollution is still of concern in siting new utilities and addressing existing ones. It should be recognized that underground infrastructure can have much of the same visual impacts and long-term evidence of disturbance. Construction requires disturbance of vegetation, continued ROW clearing, and maintenance which leads to visual scars on the viewshed of PRCVs. A balance must be struck in PCAs between the need for infrastructure and the preservation of key ecosystem services. Areas of existing conflict are readily present when comparing map (elec gen and utility infra) and maps associated with the several PCA designations. Several concerns arise when utilities intersect PCAs including utility corridors being well known conduits for invasive species, the fracturing of habitat in critical areas, silting in of wetlands from erosion, and disturbance of soil structure. Infrastructure such as water outflows from both stormwater and sewer can be points of concentrated pollution that impact the quality and enjoyment of the river

*Utility Infrastructure.*



*Electric Generating Facilities and Infrastructure.*



Zoom in for details

**Bicycle Routes**

Ramsey County and the surrounding metro have been recognized as leaders in creating a safe and scenic bicycle network. Ramsey County in coordination with other municipalities in Ramsey County developed the Ramsey County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan to provide an expansive pedestrian and trail network. Ramsey County maintains striped bike lanes on county roads. These bike lanes include portions of Marshall Avenue, Plato Boulevard, Warner Road, Upper Afton Road, and Lower Afton Road. The Mississippi River Trail travels through Ramsey County’s portion of the MRCCA. Ramsey County may have jurisdiction over these future bicycle routes; however, it is dependent on final agreements. Map (bicycle) shows the existing, proposed, and search corridors. Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) corridors represent search areas for future connections while alignments represent existing and proposed routes. Bike trails are discussed in Battle Creek Regional Park paragraph in the open spaces section.

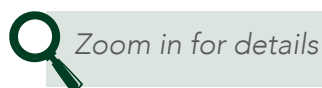
While there are no specific plans for updates or new bicycle lanes within MRCCA now, Ramsey County supports continued partnerships to connect this world class bicycle network. The Ramsey County-Wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan identifies areas of potential improvement in the MRCCA.

*Existing and Proposed Bicycle Routes.*



The Bicycle Routes Map was adopted in 2017. The map utilizes data from Ramsey County and Metropolitan Council to represent existing and planned Ramsey County bicycle trails. The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) spatial data from the Metropolitan Council dated 8/19/2015 includes "Alignments", which represents existing and proposed bicycle paths and "Corridors", which represents search areas for future expansion. "Bikeways," from Ramsey County data, are all bikeable routes - proposed and existing. There is some overlap with MetCouncil-identified RBTN Alignments. "Ramsey County Bicycle Routes" includes only those routes managed by the County.

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**Rail Transportation**

Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) has a highly visible presence within MRCCA (map Transport). In 2012 RCRRA's Union Depot transit hub was opened to the public. This serves several transit modes including Regional rail and bus, local bus and light rail, as well as bicycle. The Union Depot and many of the transit routes lie within MRCCA.

Expansion of mass transit opportunities is a central focus of RCRRA. Several transit corridor studies would have potential impacts within MRCCA. These impacts and potential mitigation will be discussed in feasibility studies. Projects specifically affecting MRCCA include the Riverview Corridor, Minnesota High Speed Rail, and Second Intercity Passenger Train.

**Air Transportation**

The Saint Paul Downtown Airport is located entirely within MRCCA boundaries (Map transportation). While the county maintains a limited role in airport matters, its MRCCA policies and goals will continue to encourage mitigation of any harmful impacts resulting from the airport's infrastructure and operation.

**POLICIES**

Ramsey County will adopt policies to site new trails, roads, and facilities outside of PCAs and PRCVs. If it is necessary to build transportation corridors, impacts will be minimized. This includes:

1. Mitigating stormwater discharge from impervious surfaces
2. Replacement of non-native vegetation with native plants
3. Designing for minimal visual impact in the landscape

Where Ramsey County has permitting or oversight authority, it will encourage utilities to site outside of PRCVs or mitigate the visual impact with all feasible remedies.

Policies outlined under Minnesota Administrative Rules Chapter 6106.0130 shall be adopted for work done by Ramsey County or work done by or for Ramsey County.

**Protective Measures**

Currently the RCPW's 2016-2017 budget has a stated goal of creating a "transportation program that is developed and implemented with the full engagement of communities to ensure transportation infrastructure optimizes a wide array of friendly, safe, accessible, environmentally sensitive mode alternatives for users of all abilities and incomes." (goal 1, strategy A. P.343)

RCPW shall utilize the voluntary utility coordination committee as set forth in section 1.05 of the Ramsey County Ordinances to enhance awareness of siting and disturbance mitigation guidelines in MRCCA.

RCPW shall not issue any permits that violate MRCCA policies for utility siting under the authority of Section 1.06 subd. 1. Of the Ramsey County Ordinances without a variance approved by the RCPW Director.

## General

### KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Battle Creek Regional Park, Fish Creek Protection Open Space, and Mississippi Bluffs Protection Open Space have many vegetation efforts in progress. Continual efforts to control invasive species, support native plant communities, and protect the health of Battle and Fish Creeks will need funding. This is especially true of stormwater infrastructure that requires upgrades within Battle Creek Park. Furthermore, land purchases on all three sites have been identified and funding should be made available as sales are negotiated. These sites are opportunities to showcase MRCCA policies in practice. As sites are developed for use, such as the Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area, attention will be paid to modeling best practices that balance use with natural resource protection.

### IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

#### Education and Outreach

The city of Saint Paul and Maplewood will coordinate communication with landowners within MRCCA as Ramsey County has no zoning authority. Ramsey County may assist where necessary.

#### Capital improvements

- [BATTLE CREEK REGIONAL PARK MOUNTAIN BIKE SYSTEM](#)-Concept Master Plan. July 2017. Ramsey County Parks and Recreation.
- [Capital Improvement Program-2016-2017 Approved Budget-2016-2021 Plan.](#)
- [2016-2017 Biennial Budget.](#) December 15, 2015. Ramsey County.
- [Thrive MSP 2040-Transportation Policy Plan V 1.0. May 2014.](#) Metropolitan Council.
- [2015 System Statement-Ramsey County.](#) September 17, 2015. Metropolitan Council.
- [Regional Parks Policy Plan. Metropolitan Council.](#)
- [Ramsey County Public Works Department 2017-2021. Transportation Improvement Program.](#)
- [Alternative Transportation Plan-Mississippi River National River and Recreation Area.](#) National Parks Service.
- [RAMSEY COUNTY RIGHT-OF-WAY ORDINANCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF UTILITIES IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY.](#) Section 1.05. Ramsey County.

#### Planning efforts and initiatives

- [Ramsey County-Wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.](#) Ramsey County, 2015.
- [Ramsey County Natural Resource Management Plan.](#) Ramsey County Parks and Recreation. September 2008.
- [Great River Passage Master Plan.](#) City of Saint Paul. April 10, 2013.
- [State of the River. Friends of the Mississippi River and National Parks Service-Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.](#) 2016.
- [Ramsey County 2030 Comprehensive Plan.](#) November 2009. Ramsey County
- [Crosby Farm Park: Bluff Stabilization / Restoration Feasibility Study - St. Paul, MN. August 7, 2007. Soil and Water Conservation District of Scott County.](#)
- [Brickyard Area of Lilydale Regional Park Stormwater Management and Slope-Stability Study. City of St. Paul.](#)
- [Brickyard Area of Lilydale Regional Park.](#) City of St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation. January 28, 2015.
- [Cherokee Heights Culvert Analysis and Erosion Control Feasibility Study.](#) Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization. April 8, 2015.



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## TRANSPORTATION



## KEY THEMES:

### ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

- ▶ Implement the county's "All Abilities Transportation Network" Policy.
  - ▶ Transportation and land use planning should be linked to ensure development that encourages transit ridership.
  - ▶ Collaborate with municipalities on service delivery, right of way and access management issues.
- ▶ Planned capacity expansion of I-94, I-35W and Highway 36 by MnDOT.
- ▶ Reclassify Lexington Parkway to a Class A Minor Arterial and extend to Shepard Road in partnership with the City of Saint Paul.

### TRANSIT, BIKING AND WALKING

- ▶ Riverview Corridor, a modern streetcar line between Mall of America, the Airport and Downtown Saint Paul, will be in operation.
  - ▶ Rush Line, a bus rapid transit line between Downtown Saint Paul and White Bear Lake, will be in operation.
  - ▶ Gold Line, a bus rapid transit line between Downtown Saint Paul and Woodbury, will be in operation.
- ▶ The B Line, an arterial rapid bus line, between Saint Paul's Midway and Minneapolis' Uptown neighborhoods will be in operation.
  - ▶ Add additional service at the Union Depot, including a second daily Amtrak trip to Chicago.
- ▶ Prioritize multi-modal transportation, including bicycling and walking.
  - ▶ Trails will be coordinated at municipal, local, regional and state levels in order to form a comprehensive, All-Abilities system.

## VISION

Transportation decisions will be guided by the county's All Abilities Transportation Network Policy. The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners is committed to creating and maintaining a transportation system that provides equitable access for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual preference, health, education, abilities, and economics. This is broadly defined as an "All Abilities" Transportation Network. Transforming this commitment into reality requires consistent leadership and collaboration, and must incorporate the best ideas from across the region, state and country. The policy unifies county transportation efforts under a shared vision and implementation strategy to create an integrated and fully interconnected, multimodal transportation system.

### **Ramsey County's core transportation principles are:**

- Ensuring equitable access to people of all abilities to use the county's transportation network.
- Ensuring safety for all when using the county's transportation network.
- Implementing an integrated and fully interconnected transportation system using a variety of modes.
- Aligning transportation network principles with comprehensive planning.
- Incorporating sensitivity to environment and context in all transportation planning.
- Incorporating meaningful engagement with communities.

These principles are to be applied to a hierarchy of prioritized transportation system users that ensures that the most vulnerable users of the transportation network are always considered first during transportation planning and implementation:

- Pedestrians
- People Who Bike
- People Who Use Transit
- People who Drive
- Freight Operators

Planning, design, and implementation will follow applicable standards and best practices. Inclusive dialogue and evaluation, with decisions being transparent and based on authentic engagement with our communities, will guide the implementation of projects.

The county vision supports a routine review process of land use plans by agencies with authority to make and enforce decisions in order to minimize fragmentation. These agencies would coordinate and expedite the plans that ensure land is used in concert with the values of the whole community as well as individual and community interests.

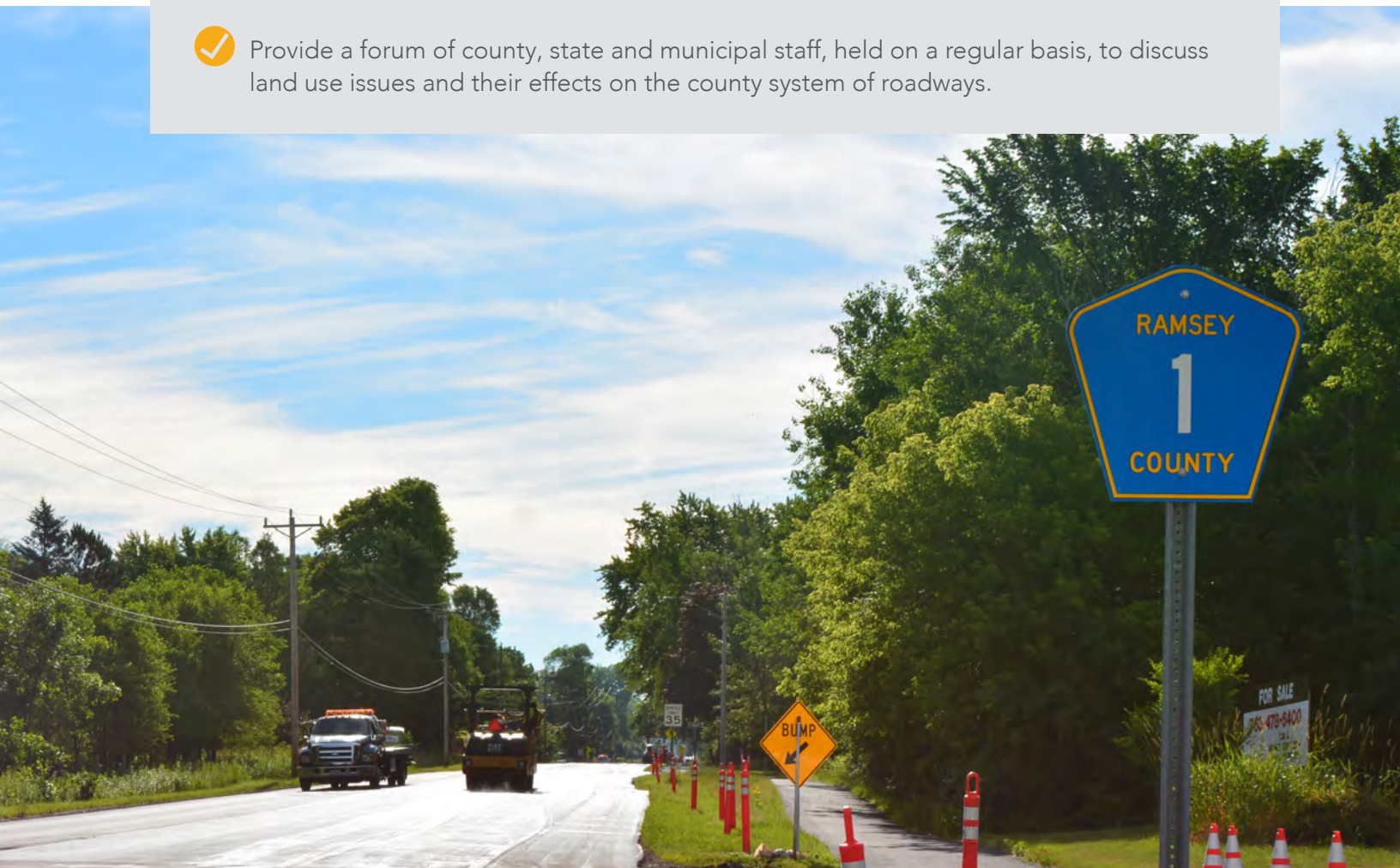
## POLICIES AND ACTIONS

The following summarize Ramsey County's primary policies as they relate to transportation and transit:

- Advance and implement the county's All Abilities Transportation Network Policy.
- Maintain safe travel on all county roadways through access management, functional classification, Travel System Management (TSM) and other programs.
- Provide a roadway system that supports the economic viability to ensure truck access and structural capacity on county roadways.

### Within its authorities, Ramsey County should:

- ✓ Apply equity principles to guide transportation planning and projects.
- ✓ Include meaningful and effective community engagement in planning processes.
- ✓ Review site designs to ensure that provisions are implemented for travel demand management (TDM), TSM, access management, pedestrians, bicycles and transit.
- ✓ Partner with municipalities on maintaining the functional integrity of roadways. Permitting officials in Ramsey County should establish contacts with municipal staff to ensure early involvement with access location decisions.
- ✓ Provide a forum of county, state and municipal staff, held on a regular basis, to discuss land use issues and their effects on the county system of roadways.





## TRANSPORTATION PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of transportation projects are categorized by short-term and long-term implementation:

### SHORT RANGE IMPLEMENTATION

Short-range implementation includes projects that repair and improve immediate roadway deficiencies. These projects are included in the five-year [Ramsey County Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#) process. The Ramsey County Public Works Department is responsible for monitoring and maintaining all of the roadways and bridges under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County. The department utilizes the TIP to manage the funding and prioritization of reconstruction and maintenance projects for roads and bridges. Other projects in the TIP include traffic signals, sidewalks, paths, and environmental projects. The focus of funding in the TIP has been shifting from expanding existing roads to preserving and managing existing facilities, with emphasis on multimodal transportation planning and programming.

### LONG RANGE IMPLEMENTATION

Traffic forecasts and multimodal planning are utilized to evaluate future travel needs. Items such as capacity and congestion are monitored and incorporated into the county's long-range planning process. Traffic volumes are monitored to identify potential changes in congestion and roadway capacity as development and/or redevelopment occurs within Ramsey County. Recommendations for roadway improvements based on capacity needs, like those based on structural deficiencies, are presented in the five-year TIP process. In addition, Travel System Management (TSM), as an alternative to capacity improvements, is a focus of Ramsey County. [Transportation Analysis Zones](#) are used for both short term and long term planning.

### Ramsey County Role in Land Use

Ramsey County has a limited role in land use planning, thus the county's role is one of coordination. Land use decisions impact the county system of roadways. Because the county does not have jurisdiction over land use planning, it is especially important for Ramsey County to work with municipalities within the county, sharing information and reviewing new development and redevelopment projects.

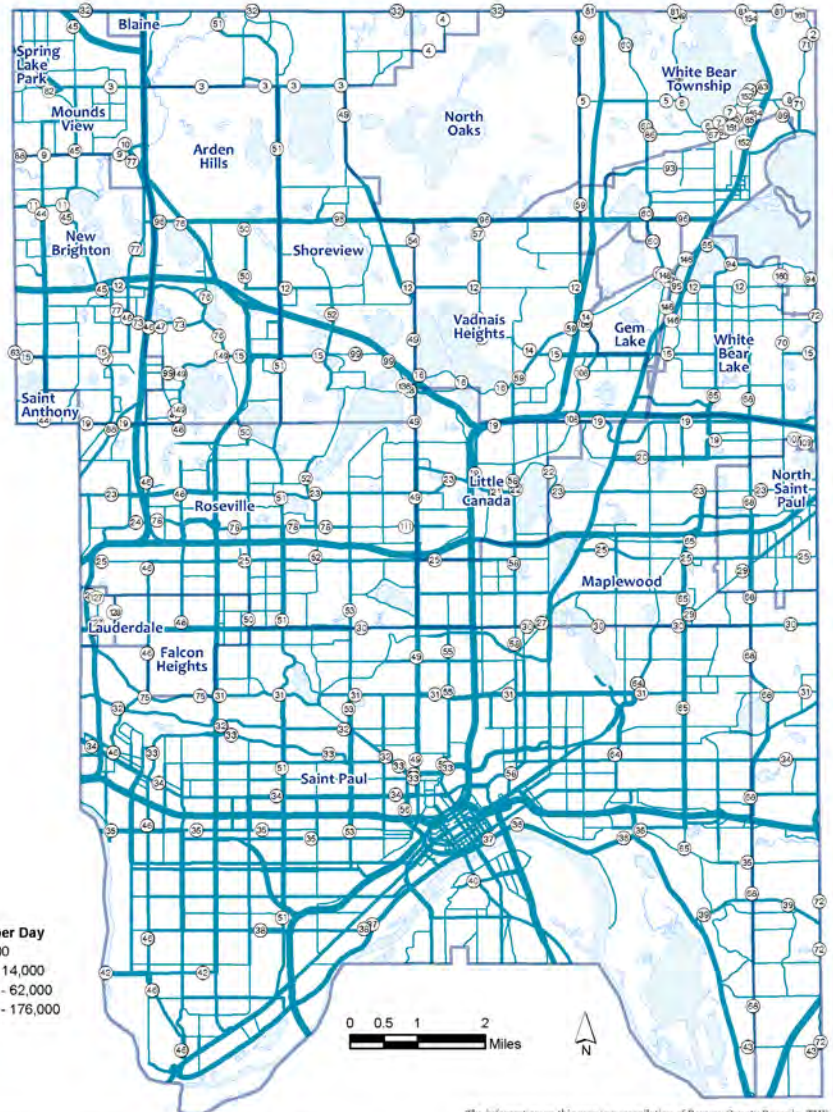
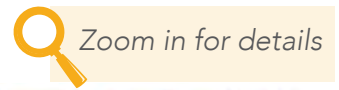
### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Although Ramsey County has limited control over land use decisions, the county provides and maintains a system of minor arterial roadways within the county. Minor arterials are high volume roadways that provide a link between trunk highways and local routes, emphasizing mobility rather than land access. The county road system absorbs most of the impact created by increased traffic volume that accompanies growth and redevelopment. Communities should strive to develop access plans that provide adequate access without compromising the integrity of the roadway system. For example, multiple driveways onto a roadway may be beneficial to a development, but they are not beneficial to the community because excessive access restricts the mobility and degrades the safety of a roadway. As areas develop or redevelop, Ramsey County will cooperate with the municipalities to manage access. The Ramsey County Public Works Department has developed the Ramsey County Access Management Policy. The goal of this policy is to bring the county road system into closer compliance with MnDOT access spacing standards and to improve the functionality and safety of the system.

#### Current Trends

Despite the projected population growth, traffic growth is expected to remain relatively flat due to changing consumer habits, flexible work schedules and advances in traffic management technology. Nevertheless, transportation investment is not expected to keep pace with growth and minor arterials will serve an important function as traffic is diverted from state principal arterial highways onto the county minor arterial system. Based on the population growth figures of the Development Framework, the Metropolitan Council has created a Regional Transportation Model to predict traffic growth. Ramsey County utilizes the Regional Model to predict traffic volumes on its system. The [2040 Estimated Traffic Volumes Map](#) was provided by the Metropolitan Council, for more detail please zoom and scroll.

#### 2016 Average Annual Daily Traffic



This dataset represents the most current AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) on sampled road systems in a particular given year; in this case 2016. AADT is a theoretical estimate of the total number of vehicles using a specific segment of roadway in both directions on any given day of the year. This estimate represents the total number of cars per year divided by 365 and is developed using factors that adjust for season, day of the week, and vehicle type. This information is displayed using the road centerlines within the state.

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## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation and land use planning should be linked to ensure development is favorable to transit, biking and walking.

**Within its authorities, Ramsey County will:**

- ✓ Plan for the needs of the most vulnerable transportation system users first.
- ✓ Encourage compact development that will provide a mix of housing, jobs and services within easy walking distance.
- ✓ Cluster jobs and commerce.
- ✓ Design developments and transportation improvements to accommodate walking, biking and transit use.
- ✓ Use the Connected Ramsey Communities Network as a framework to connect neighborhoods to key destinations such as parks, trails, schools, employment, healthcare facilities, retail and grocery stores.

Linking transportation and land use planning will help people thrive and prosper by providing access to a greater variety of transportation choices. Due to the relationship between land use and transportation, Ramsey County will work with municipalities to plan for future growth and transportation needs together.





## ROADWAYS

### Traffic Safety

Ramsey County monitors crashes at its intersections and along transportation corridors. Although crash data is not directly used to analyze the regional transportation model, safety on the county's road system is crucial to the integrity of the system. Unlike traffic volume data, crash histories are not projected into the future, but are reviewed to identify patterns and prevent the perpetuation of past problems.

The Ramsey County Public Works Department uses the Minnesota Crash Mapping Analysis Tool (MnCMAT) to review high crash locations to identify patterns that are correctable and locations on the county system that would benefit from traffic control or geometric improvements. Crash data is used to identify projects for the federal Hazard Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP), Central Safety Fund, Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and other funding programs, as appropriate.

### Future Expectations

In order to influence the future and change expectations, the county needs to continue its cooperation with municipalities for sharing responsibility for the delivery of services. For example, the county and municipalities should work more closely together on right of way and access management issues.

The county needs to study municipal land use plans to review economic growth and redevelopment areas identified by the municipalities to better coordinate access management and major trip generators.

These efforts will increase the efficiency and maintain the capacity of the county roadway system through coordinated development.

Coordinated development will reduce the trend to increase the capacity of the county roadway system by adding through lanes.

Density is directly related to an area's transportation needs. Because Ramsey County does not have jurisdiction over land use, it is especially important for the county to work with municipalities and other agencies, sharing information and reviewing new development and redevelopment projects.

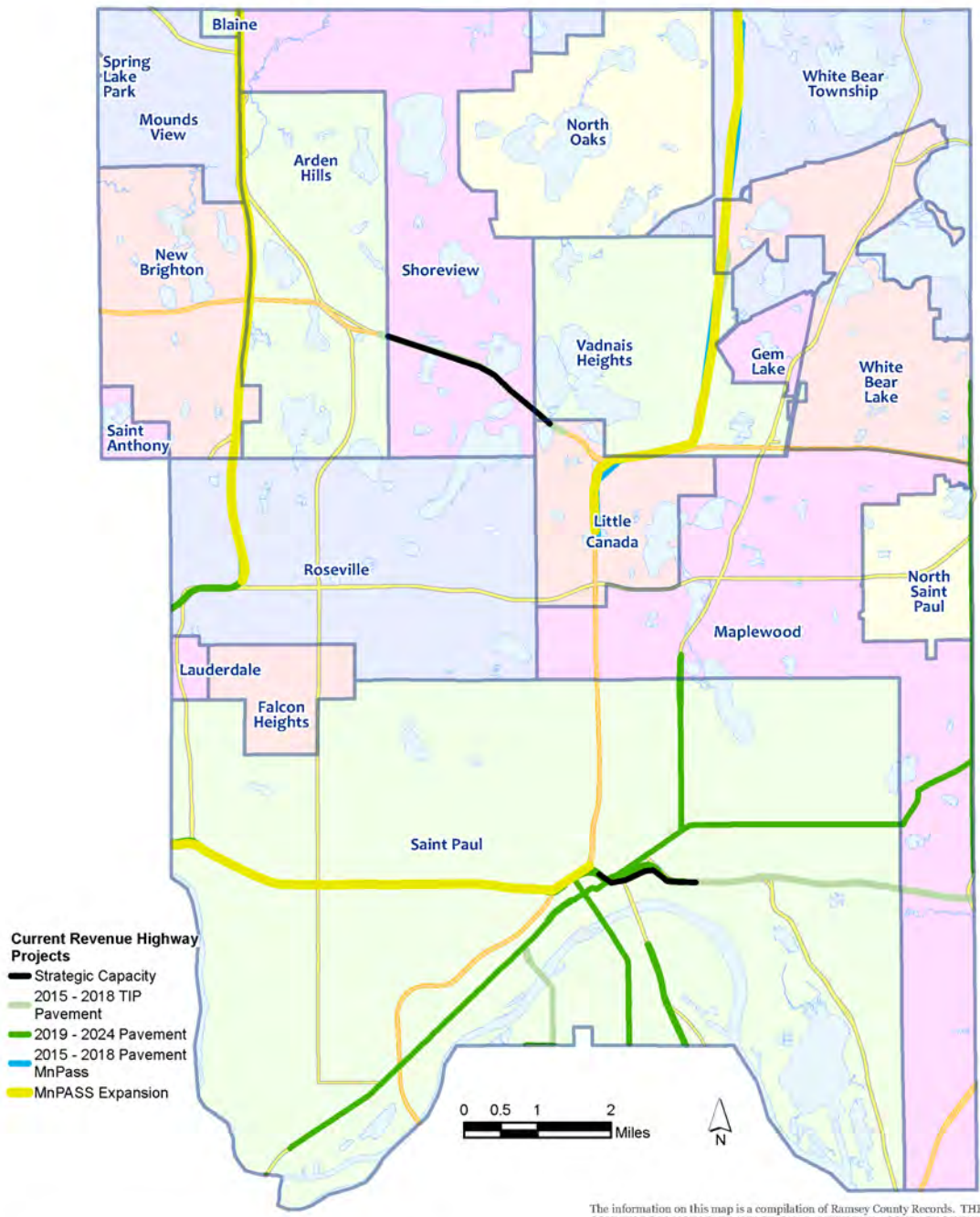
### Within its authorities, Ramsey County should:

- ✓ Review site designs to ensure that provisions are implemented for travel demand management (TDM), TSM, access management, pedestrians, bicycles and transit.
- ✓ Partner with municipalities on maintaining the functional integrity of roadways. Permitting officials in Ramsey County should establish contacts with municipal staff to ensure early involvement with access location decisions.
- ✓ Provide a forum of county, state and municipal staff, held on a regular basis, to discuss land use issues and their effects on the county system of roadways.

### Metropolitan Highways

Ramsey County will continue to coordinate efforts with the Metropolitan Council, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), municipalities and other entities throughout these major highway projects.

### 2040 Highway System Planned Investment for Ramsey County



Identified Projects in Highway Current Revenue Scenario from the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan was adopted Jan. 14, 2015. This data is from MNDOT and was used to produce regional maps in the TPP. It is to be used at a regional scale for planning purposes only and is not intended for site specific uses. Data reflect planned features and are subject to changes of the 2040 TPP.

The information on this map is a compilation of Ramsey County Records. THE COUNTY DOES NOT WARRANT OR GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OF THIS DATA. The county disclaims any liability for any injuries, time delays, or expenses you may suffer if you rely in any manner on the accuracy of this data.  
 Prepared by Ramsey County Enterprise GIS | RCGISMetaData@Co.Ramsey.MN.GIS  
 2014ComprehensivePlan\_HighwayInvestment 2/11/2015

## TRANSPORTATION

The following metropolitan highways, portions of which are located within Ramsey County, are planned for expansion during this timeframe:



Interstate 94



Interstate 35W



State Trunk Highway 36

The county acknowledges that the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan sets aside over \$1 billion to be used for management projects on metropolitan highways. While these specific projects are not yet defined, management projects—such as construction of interchanges—could be funded in this category. The county continues to cooperate with transportation expansion projects, and is actively involved with MnDOT in assisting and modeling, which is required through the course of a projects' development and implementation. In the 2018 Surface Transportation Program regional solicitation, Ramsey County applied for funding to modify the I-35E/County Road J (CSAH 60 and CR 81) interchange. These changes were approved by the MnDOT/FHWA/Metropolitan Council Interchange Planning Review Committee. Anoka County has initiated a similar improvement at the County Road J/I-35W interchange and has received approval. The Rice Street/I-694 interchange project that will be constructed in 2019 will implement access management improvements, significant geometric and traffic control changes, and pedestrian improvements at that critical junction of a minor arterial and interstate highways.





### Functional Classification

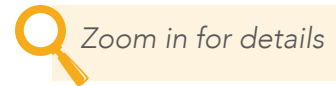
Roadways are classified according to their main function, whether it is providing mobility for through trips, or access to adjacent land. There are four classes of roadways within Ramsey County: principal arterials, minor arterials, collector streets and local streets. Due to the functional consolidation of roadways within Ramsey County, the majority of roadways on the county system will be high volume roadways providing a link between trunk highways and local routes. Because these roadways will emphasize mobility rather than land access, the majority of roadways under county jurisdiction must have a functional classification of minor arterial. This allows the county to maintain a level of continuity throughout its system through the utilization of uniform maintenance, design and construction standards.

The county vision encourages the county to be proactive in clarifying the consequences of travel decisions for the community. Because the county roadway system is designed to service medium to short trips (2-6 miles) at moderate speeds, it is important to

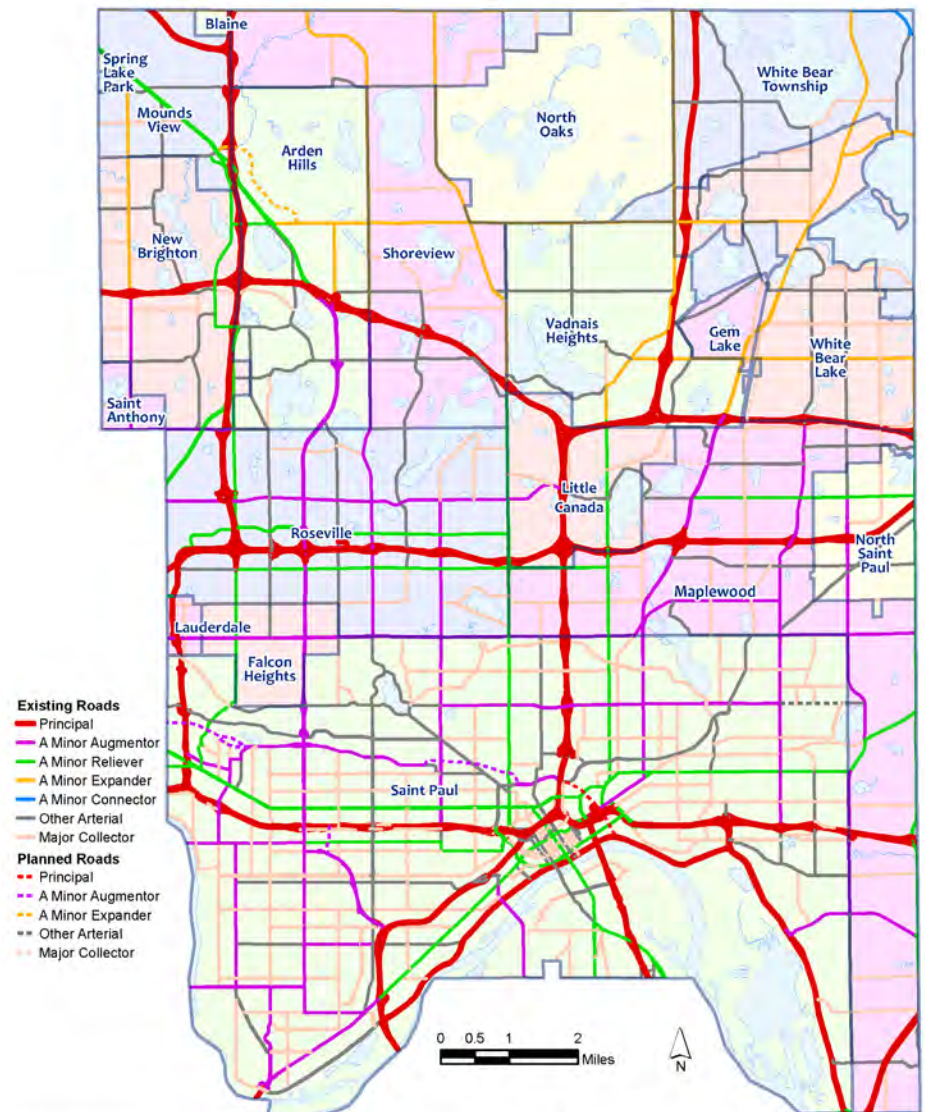
ensure that the appropriate functional classification has been assigned.

Generally, the appropriate functional classification for roads under county jurisdiction is that of minor arterial. Ramsey County will periodically review the functional class of its roads and re-classify them as appropriate. In conjunction with the review of functional class, the county will review the appropriate jurisdiction for roads and the county will assume jurisdiction of minor arterial roadways and may consider transferring jurisdiction of collector and local roads to municipal jurisdiction.

Transfer of jurisdiction to local governments will be negotiated, so that it is done under conditions acceptable to the county, the municipality and in conformance with State rules. At the time of approval of this Comprehensive Plan, Ramsey County has not



Functional Class Roads in Ramsey County



The functional class roads contain major roads and highways; the planned functional class roads contain approximate locations of planned major roads and highways. The specific classifications assigned to the roadways by the Land Transportation Committee, Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and Transportation Advisory Board as specified in the transportation planning process, using federal rules and guidelines. Planned functional class roads are meant to indicate the classification of planned new roads. Opening of planned functional class roads MAY cause designation changes to the existing functional class network.

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identified any roads for imminent transfer to local jurisdiction. Similarly, the Minnesota Department of Transportation reviews the appropriate functional class and jurisdiction of its roadways and identifies changes to each. Transfers from State to County jurisdiction are negotiated and implemented in accordance with State Rules pertaining to the jurisdictional transfer of roadways. Informing the community of the purpose of each of the four classes of roadways allows the community to choose the best route and method of travel, thereby increasing traffic flow and efficiency for the community. The county's Functional Class Roads map identifies the functional classification of the county's main roadways.

The City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County have proposed a change to the functional class of Lexington Parkway (CSAH 51) from a Class B Minor Arterial to a Class A Minor Arterial – Augmenter, between West Seventh Street (TH 5) and Larpenteur Avenue (CSAH 30) to bring the road into conformance with its functional class to the north and to make it eligible for federal funding. A future segment between Shepard Road, a Principal Arterial Highway and West Seventh Street has also been proposed for Metropolitan Council approval. As a result of discussions with the City of New Brighton regarding Old Highway 8 (CSAH 77), Ramsey County will request the reclassification of Old Highway 8, between County Road D (CSAH 19) and CSAH 46, from Class B Minor Arterial to Class A Minor Arterial- Reliever in 2019. A recent corridor study performed on Rice Street (CSAH 49) analyzed safety and traffic operations and recommended further study and a trial of alternate lane configurations. Follow-up work will begin in 2019.

### Right of Way

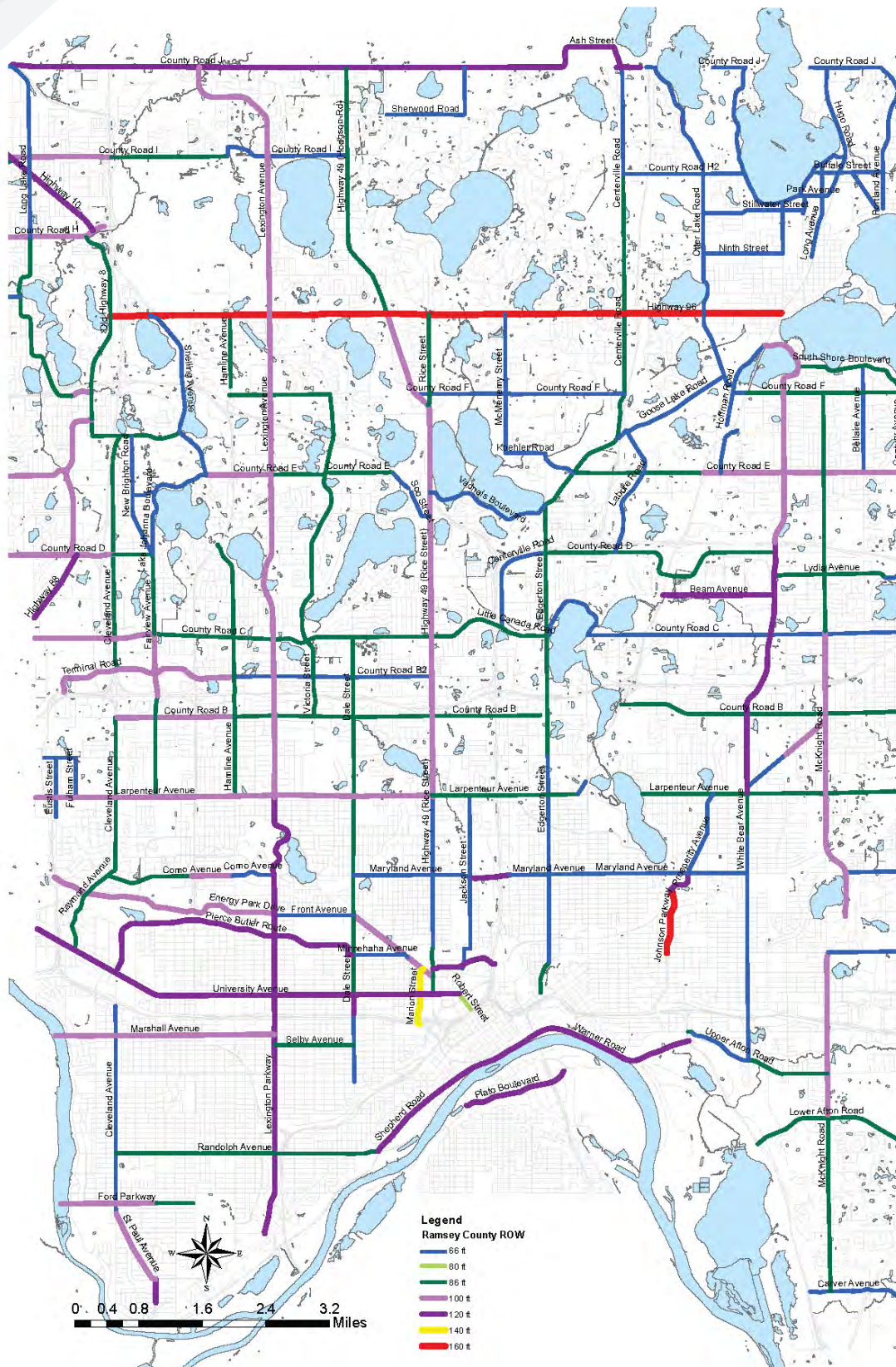
Ramsey County's Department of Public Works is responsible for the existing Major Street Plan and the maintenance of the existing right of way planning process. Reserving highway right of way for public use guides county highway planning. Acquiring adequate rights of way along the county highway system continues to be used as a long-range planning tool incorporating applicable state and federal regulations. Ramsey County will study "road diets" or the conversion of four-lane roads to three-lane roads. Candidates for road diets could include Maryland Avenue, Rice Street, Larpenteur Avenue and Dale Street. However, candidates have not been determined at this time.

Whenever municipalities within and adjacent to Ramsey County embark on a redevelopment plan, the county's Public Works Department reviews the site plans. The right of way planning process involves the following review:

- Determine the width of facility necessary to accommodate projected vehicular traffic volumes and potential multimodal uses;
- Consider on-street parking needs;
- Consider additional roadside width needed for traffic signals, sidewalks, bikeways, snow storage, signing, utilities, etc.;
- Consider additional roadside width needed for amenities, such as landscaping;
- Consider all eventualities, including the review of municipal setback requirements;
- Establish right of way widths whenever redevelopment occurs, to ensure they are sufficient on higher volume roadways; and
- Evaluate stormwater treatment requirements and right of way needs.



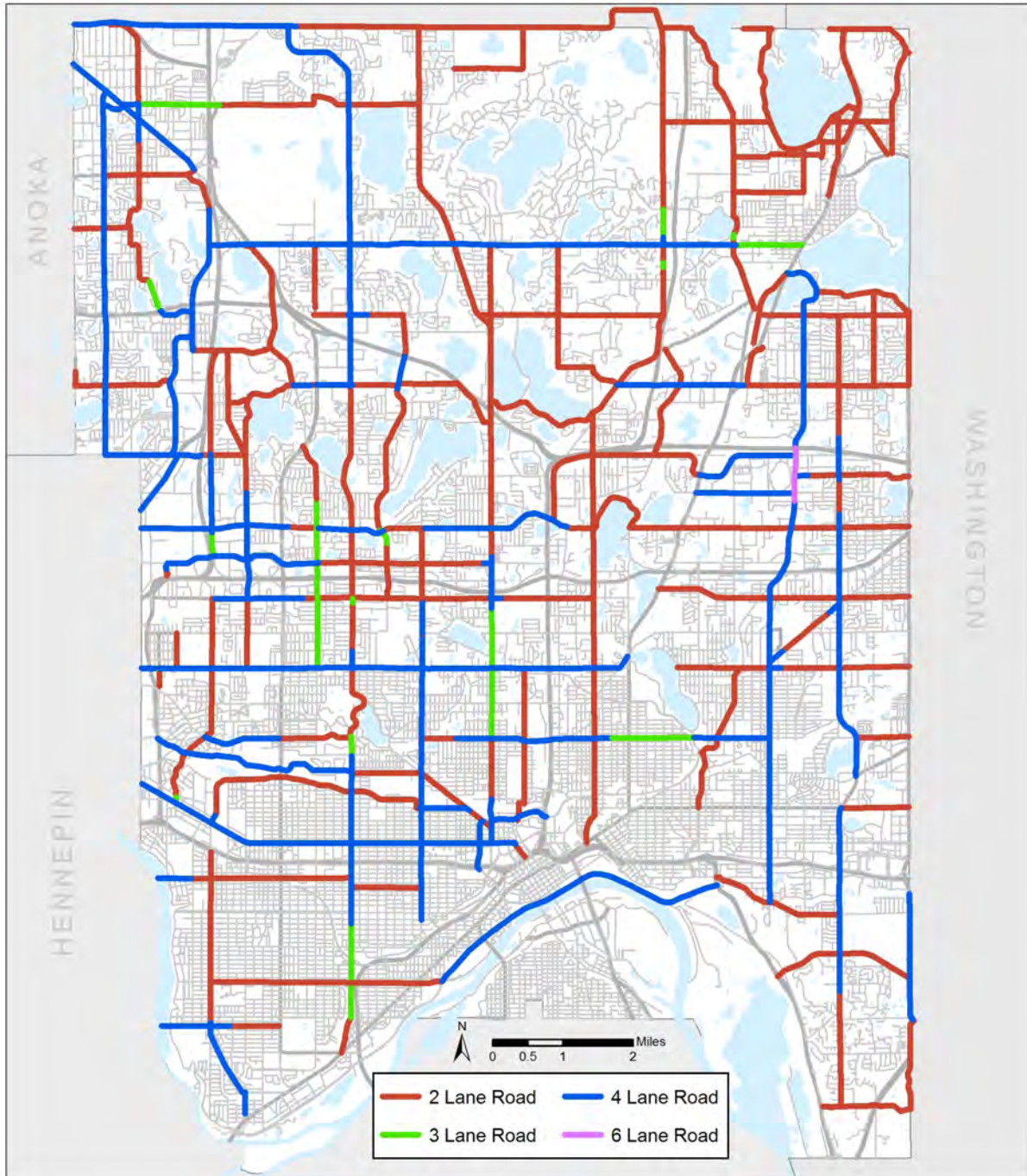
# Preliminary Major Street Plan 2018





# Existing Lanes on Ramsey County Roads

Map produced 5/6/2019 by Ramsey County Public Works



### Travel and System Management (TSM)

TSM strategies are technical programs and methods to improve the efficiency and effective capacity of the transportation system. These strategies may include signal timing, access management, transit improvements, and freeway management (e.g. ramp metering, video surveillance, and providing travel information). The focus of system management must be to move more people, not more vehicles. The goal is not to build additional roadways, but to help current roadways operate efficiently. Therefore, management of the highway system should provide incentives to those willing to share rides and reduce single occupant vehicles as well as providing for a smoother flow of vehicles. The vision also supports a system operation that will focus on increasing the occupancy of the vehicles that use the system while continuing to accommodate alternatives that cater to the individual.

One TSM strategy—signal timing—is utilized by Ramsey County. All county traffic signals are signals that minimize stops, delay, and fuel consumption. County traffic signals are set to keep traffic moving. The amount of traffic determines how long a light remains red or green. The goal is to coordinate as many cars as possible traveling as a group without encountering a red light. This system works well when there are heavy volume arterials and low volume cross streets. It represents the highest technological level of TSM in the county. Ramsey County will continue to implement signal timing optimization projects to alleviate the need to expand roadways. Additional interconnected, traffic responsive, coordinated signal systems will be implemented within the county where possible. The county will also continue to explore the use of new technologies that will minimize travel times and provide driver information regarding trip choices and roadway conditions.

### Existing Conditions

There are three levels at which TSM strategies can be applied to help existing roadways operate more efficiently. A low level of TSM is a two lane rural road that does not require travel and system management because the roadway is operating at full potential. A high level of TSM, like that found on an interstate highway, uses video cameras, loop detectors, and devices to measure speed and accidents. A high level of TSM has a full traffic management center - a complete system. A medium level of travel and system management is found on the county's system.

### County Role

- ✓ Ramsey County Public Works will continue to utilize TSM preservation strategies to maintain its system of roadways in order to make good use of county funds.
- ✓ Ramsey County will continue to educate its employees on the transportation choices available to them other than the single occupant vehicle, and will work with communities to educate the public on the impact trips have on the roadway system.



## TRANSIT

Public transit service is critical to increasing access to prosperity and opportunity in our region. Transit provides an affordable alternative to driving for Ramsey County residents and creates mobility options for households who lack consistent access to a vehicle. Greater access to workforce and employment opportunities is one of the greatest benefits of public transportation. Transit investment can have the secondary benefit of revitalizing business districts and stimulating redevelopment and reinvestment in commercial and residential properties. Redevelopment along transit corridor should be pedestrian-oriented and create opportunities for a sustainable mix of land uses and destinations.

Ramsey County's vision for transit comes from its All Abilities Transportation Network Policy, where the county is committed to creating and maintaining an integrated and fully connected transportation system that utilizes a variety of modes, and provides equitable access for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual preference, health, education, abilities and economics. Ramsey County's vision for transit is further refined through transitway planning efforts and the development of the purpose and need for transitway investments. Ramsey County is leading two significant transitway development projects; the Riverview Corridor and the Rush Line Corridor, and participating in the METRO Gold Line project which is led by the Metropolitan Council and Washington County.

### **Ramsey County's vision for public transit is one that:**

- Provides improved mobility and connectivity for its residents, businesses and visitors for a variety of trip purposes as travel demand increases.
- Supports re-development and re-investment at a level that is consistent with regional forecasts and local and small area plans.
- Is sustainable, resilient and expandable at incremental costs with minimal environmental impacts.
- Cultivates economic prosperity by providing transit dependent persons with greater access to opportunities.



### Mobility and Access to Opportunity

The Twin Cities' regional population is forecasted to grow through 2040. Without greater investment in alternatives to driving alone, growth in population and employment naturally means travel demand will increase, commute time will lengthen and traffic congestion will increase. There will be higher demand for parking and greater competition for right-of-way among different transportation users in Ramsey County. Accommodating increased travel demand will require a multi-modal approach.

Public transit is an important alternative and complement to driving alone that links people to jobs, schools, health care, family and friends, places of worship, entertainment and recreation. It is valuable to view public transit system as a regional network. The more linkages and destinations in the network, the more access and opportunity Ramsey County residents will have. Downtown Saint Paul is the hub of Ramsey County's public transportation network with multiple high frequency routes converging to provide connections for thousands of daily transit riders. Public transit also plays a role in transporting large volumes of visitors to major special events like the Minnesota State Fair, sporting events, festivals, civic gatherings and concerts. Improved public transit also increases access to destinations for Ramsey County's most vulnerable residents including young people, older people, people with disabilities and low-income populations. Accessible neighborhoods with quality pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure extend the usefulness of public transportation for all.



### Support redevelopment and reinvestment

Thrive MSP 2040 calls for communities to leverage regional transit system investments to support sustainable, coordinated, and transit-supportive development patterns and economic development opportunities. In February 2018, the Metropolitan Council reported that investment along the Green Line LRT reached \$8.4 billion; an increase of \$1.6 billion in the last year. Location near frequent, reliable transit service is a key element in development decisions because businesses and developers know that residents and workers of all ages desire access to public transit. The development of the Riverview and Rush Line transitways will create opportunities to redevelop vacant and underutilized land, and incentivizes reinvestment in existing commercial and residential properties. Investing in transit and supporting transit oriented development (TOD) are priorities for the region. Ramsey County will continue to support local communities in station area planning efforts to ensure that growth supports a reliable and cost-effective transit system, help cities leverage private investment, and advance regional equity.

### Sustainable, resilient and expandable transportation option

Sustainability balances the economic, social and environmental needs of a community. Public transit supports the principles of sustainability by reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled and associated inefficiencies of traffic congestion. Secondly, some transit service uses hybrid electric buses and alternative fueled vehicles to reduce emissions and the use of solar or renewable energy sources in support facilities. Ramsey County supports regional efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption through energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in the transportation network.

Resiliency, in the context of this comprehensive plan, refers to the ability of a system to maintain or recover functionality in the event of disruption or disturbance, so that the people who rely on that system can continue to thrive. The region's public transit network is subject to disruption by weather, traffic congestion and road closures. The public transit system is usually flexible and on-time performance issues

can be resolved quickly through detours or bus bridges. A bigger threat to the resiliency of the region's public transit system is the availability of funding for maintenance, operation and improvement. Lags in revenue from the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax affects funding for transit operations. Lack of funding in the Capital Investment Grant Program affects the ability to expand transitways because large transit projects rely on federal funds for up to half of the cost to design and build them. Maintaining resiliency of the public transit system is the responsibility of all stakeholders and Ramsey County has committed its sales tax revenue toward the operation and development of transitways.

Public transit is also an expandable transportation option. Where demand for transit service is growing, service frequency or span of service can be increased if resources are available. Larger transit vehicles could be put into service to accommodate higher demand. New or enhanced service could be implemented where long-term travel demand warrants the investment. In comparison to the high cost and adverse impacts of expanding roadway capacity to meet travel demand, public transit is a sustainable and expandable transportation option.

### Definitions

The regional public transit system includes several different types of service operating at a variety of frequencies on both rubber tires and rail. Six different types of public transit service currently provided in the region and Ramsey County include:

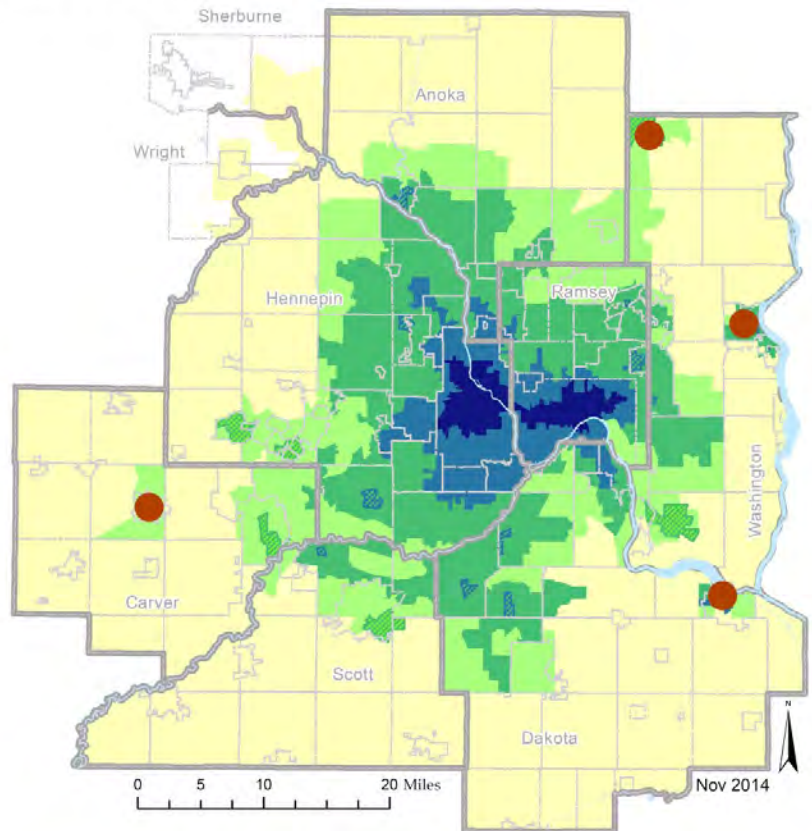
- **Regular-route bus service** is provided on a fixed schedule along specific routes, with riders getting on and off at designated bus stops. Regular-route service is provided using a variety of bus types that operate local service and express service. Currently, there are 217 regular route bus routes in the region, most of them operated by Metro Transit. Some of the busiest routes in Ramsey County connect downtown Saint Paul to dense, walkable neighborhoods and regional destinations.
- **Light rail transit (LRT) service** is provided by electrically powered trains operating at high frequencies in exclusive right-of-way. Light rail uses specially designed transit stations that offer level boarding, off-board fare collection and other amenities. Two LRT lines operate in the region; the Blue Line extends from downtown Minneapolis to MSP Airport and the Mall of America along TH 55 and the Green Line extends from downtown Minneapolis to downtown Saint Paul along University Avenue. Extensions of both the Blue Line and Green Line are in development.
- **Bus rapid transit (BRT) service** is provided at high frequencies with unique buses and specially designed facilities and amenities. Arterial BRT (aBRT) operates in mixed traffic, but offers low-floor boarding and off-board fare collection. The A Line opened in 2016 and is the only current aBRT service in the region. It connects Rosedale Mall to the METRO Green and Blue Lines via Snelling Avenue and Ford Parkway. The vision for the aBRT system was planned in Metro Transit's 2012, Arterial Transitway Corridors Study. The study highlighted 13 corridors including 4 corridors in Ramsey County. The next aBRT to open in Ramsey County will be the B Line, which will connect Uptown Minneapolis to Saint Paul's Midway via Lake Street, Marshall Avenue and Snelling Avenue.



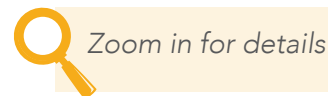
- **Highway BRT** serves a more regional purpose and utilizes bus shoulders and MnPASS lanes on the state and interstate highway system. The METRO Red Line is currently the only highway BRT in operation and connects the Mall of America and Dakota County. By 2040 Ramsey County will have additional dedicated BRT with the METRO Gold Line and Rush Line. Dedicated BRT operates in its own right-of-way with unique vehicles and stations that have level boarding and off-board fare collection. The METRO Gold Line will be the first example of dedicated BRT in the Twin Cities, serving Saint Paul, Maplewood and Washington County. The line is currently in project development and planning is managed by the Metropolitan Council.
- **Commuter rail** operates on traditional railroad track powered by diesel trains with limited stops. Commuter rail typically serves morning and evening commuters. Northstar commuter rail serves Anoka County and connects to downtown Minneapolis. There is currently no commuter rail in Ramsey County.
- **Dial-a-ride** is a shared-ride service that allows customers to schedule pickup times. There are two types of dial-a-ride service in the region: general public dial-a-ride and mandated Metro Mobility service mandated by state and federal ADA laws.
- **Public vanpools** are made up of five to fifteen people, including a volunteer driver, commuting to and from work destinations throughout the region on a regular basis in a subsidized van. Vanpools typically serve origins and destinations not served by regular-route bus service.

Development patterns and densities, demographics and geographic features influence the design of the regional transit system. Certain factors are used to establish transit market areas, a regional transit planning tool designed to match transit demand to the types and levels of service provided. Local governments and transit providers need to work together to best align these factors to maximize the success of the transit system and its potential integration with communities.

Transit Market Areas



2040 TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN | METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
Figure 6-3





## Transit Market Area Characteristics

### ► Transit Market Area I

Transit Market Area I has the highest density of population, employment, and lowest automobile availability. Market Area I has the potential transit ridership necessary to support the most intensive fixed-route transit service, typically providing higher frequencies, longer hours, and more options available outside of peak periods. In Ramsey County this includes Downtown Saint Paul, the neighborhoods along the Green Line, and parts of St. Paul's Eastside, North End and Westside.

### ► Transit Market Area II

Transit Market Area II has high to moderately high population and employment densities and typically has a traditional street grid comparable to Market Area I. Much of Market Area II is also categorized as an Urban Center and it can support many of the same types of fixed-route transit as Market Area I, although usually at lower frequencies or shorter service spans. Examples of Transit Market Area II include Saint Paul's Highland Park, Como, and Saint Anthony Park neighborhoods, as well as portions of Roseville, Falcon Heights, and New Brighton. It is expected that by 2040 North Saint Paul is also considered Transit Market Area II.

### ► Transit Market Area III

Transit Market Area III has moderate density but tends to have a less traditional street grid that can limit the effectiveness of transit. Transit service in this area is primarily commuter express bus service with some fixed-route local service providing basic coverage. General public dial-a-ride services are available where fixed-route service is not viable. In Ramsey County this includes many of the suburban communities including Maplewood, White Bear Lake, Vadnais Heights and Mounds View.

### ► Transit Market Area IV

Transit Market Area IV has lower concentrations of population and employment and a higher rate of auto ownership. This market can support peak-period express bus services if a sufficient concentration of commuters likely to use transit service is located along a corridor. The low-density development and suburban form of development presents challenges to fixed-route transit. General public dial-a-ride services are appropriate in Market Area IV. Examples of Transit Market Area IV include North Oaks, White Bear Township and Arden Hills.

### ► Transit Market Area V

Transit Market Area V has very low population and employment densities and tends to be primarily rural communities and agricultural uses. General public dial-a-ride service may be appropriate here, but due to the very low-intensity land uses these areas are not well-suited for fixed-route transit service. Transit Market Area V is not present in Ramsey County.

### ► Freestanding Town Centers

Freestanding Town Centers are areas that historically grew independently of Minneapolis and St. Paul and are still separated from the urban and suburban areas of the metro by rural land. Because of their concentrated downtowns laid out in a traditional urban form, these areas have a Transit Market Index value that would indicate Market Area III or higher. However, their relatively small population and land area, as well as their distance from other transit-supportive land uses, limits the potential for local fixed-route transit. Freestanding Town Centers are not present in Ramsey County.

### ► Existing Public Transit System

Metro Transit is the largest transit provider in the region and operates most of the region's regular-route bus service, and all light rail and commuter rail lines. Suburban transit providers operate regular route and, in some cases, dial-a-ride service for 12 suburban communities. The University of Minnesota provides regular-route bus service around and between the Minneapolis and Saint Paul campuses. Regular-route transit service is provided within the Transit Capital Levy Communities, or the cities in the metro area where a property tax is levied to pay for transit capital needs.

Transit centers are located where multiple transit routes connect and passengers can transfer to other routes. The region has 26 transit centers with facilities that improve waiting conditions and the transfer experience between routes. In Ramsey County transit centers are located at Rosedale Mall, Maplewood Mall, the Union Depot, Sunray Shopping Center, and Highway 36 & Rice Street. With the opening of the Green Line in 2014 and the A Line in 2016, the region now has 86 transit stations serving existing light rail, BRT and commuter rail lines. By 2040 dozens of new stations will be added to the network including along the Gold Line, Rush Line and Riverview Corridor.

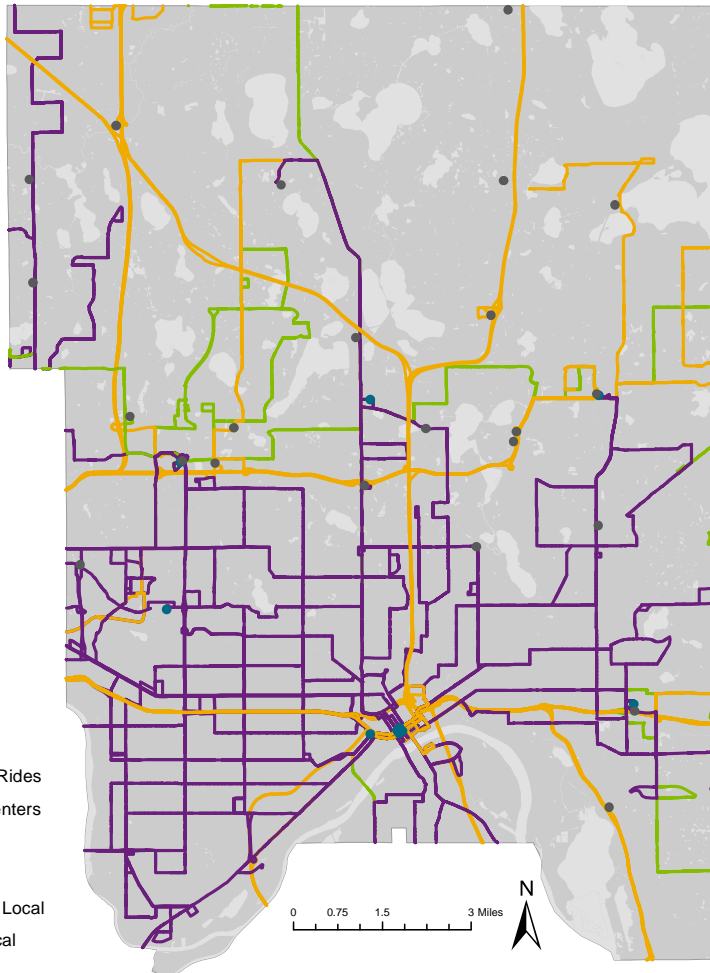
Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul serves as a regional multimodal hub that connects local bus service, intercity and charter bus services, Amtrak passenger rail, and the Green Line LRT. A few transit centers are in Ramsey County, along with several small and medium-sized park and ride lots, and one large lot at the Maplewood Mall.


The region also has a substantial system of transit support facilities, both public and private, that includes bus garages, maintenance buildings, rail support facilities, and operations centers. The Green Line operations and maintenance facility is in the Lowertown neighborhood in downtown Saint Paul.

On state highways, transit advantages can include bus-only shoulders, dedicated bus lanes, MnPASS lanes, ramp meter bypasses, and transit stations adjacent to or between roadways. MnPASS lanes are highway lanes that are shared by transit, high-occupant vehicles, and single-occupant vehicles (SOVs) that opt to pay a toll to use the lane during peak periods. On city streets and signalized highways,

improvements include dedicated bus lanes, dynamic parking lanes, traffic signals that are coordinated with transit service and/or provide transit priority, and queue jump lanes, among others. Bus shoulders are available on all freeways in Ramsey County and three MnPASS facilities are open in the region, including one on I-35E from downtown Saint Paul to County Road J in Vadnais Heights.

**Routes and Facilities Map**



 *Zoom in for details*

Metro Transit operates fixed-route transit within Ramsey County including local bus, express bus, suburban local bus, rapid bus and light rail transit. The map below depicts all fixed-route transit service in Ramsey County as of March 9, 2019.

Park-and-ride facilities are surface lots and structured ramps predominantly located outside of the urban center and are primarily served by express bus, bus rapid transit, or rail. In 2017, the region had 106 park-and-ride lots with nearly 34,008 spaces served by bus and rail transit. Ramsey County had 13 park-and-rides with capacity for 2,946 vehicles. According to Metro Transit's 2017 Annual Regional Park and Ride Report, Ramsey County's overall park-and-ride system has plenty of capacity for future usage with about 53% utilization of the system. Targeted capacity expansion may be needed at certain sites in the county. Additional park-and-rides may be added to the county in the future to complement Rush Line and Gold Line.

Park-And-Ride Name	City	Provider	2017 Capacity	2017 Usage	2017 % Utilized	2016 Capacity	2016 Usage	2016 % Utilized	2016- 2017 % Usage
Skating Center	Roseville	Metro Transit	50	51	102%	50.00	51	102%	0%
Shoreview Community Center	Shoreview	Metro Transit	10	10	100%	10	5	50%	50%
Salem Covenant Church	New Brighton	Metro Transit	70	34	49%	70	42	60%	-11%
Mermaid Supper Club	Mounds View	Metro Transit	80	82	103%	80	82	103%	0%
Maplewood Mall Transit Center	Maplewood	Metro Transit	1007	485	48%	1007	592	59%	-11%
Little Canada Municipal Lot	Little Canada	Metro Transit	20	19	95%	10	11	110%	-15%
1-35W & CO Rd H	Mounds View	Metro Transit	211	122	58%	211	112	53%	5%
I-35W & Co Rd C	Roseville	Metro Transit	460	206	45%	460	191	42%	3%
I-35E & County Road E	Vadnais Heights	Metro Transit	300	43	14%	300	36	12%	2%
Hwy 61 & Lower Afton Road	Saint Paul	Metro Transit	114	140	123%	114	151	132%	-10%
Hwy 61 & Co Road C	Maplewood	Metro Transit	229	99	43%	229	122	53%	-10%
Hwy 36 & Rice St	Little Canada	Metro Transit	280	178	64%	280	177	63%	0%
Grace Church	Roseville	Metro Transit	115	105	91%	115	81	70%	21%
<b>Total</b>			2946	1574	53%	2936	1653	56%	-3%

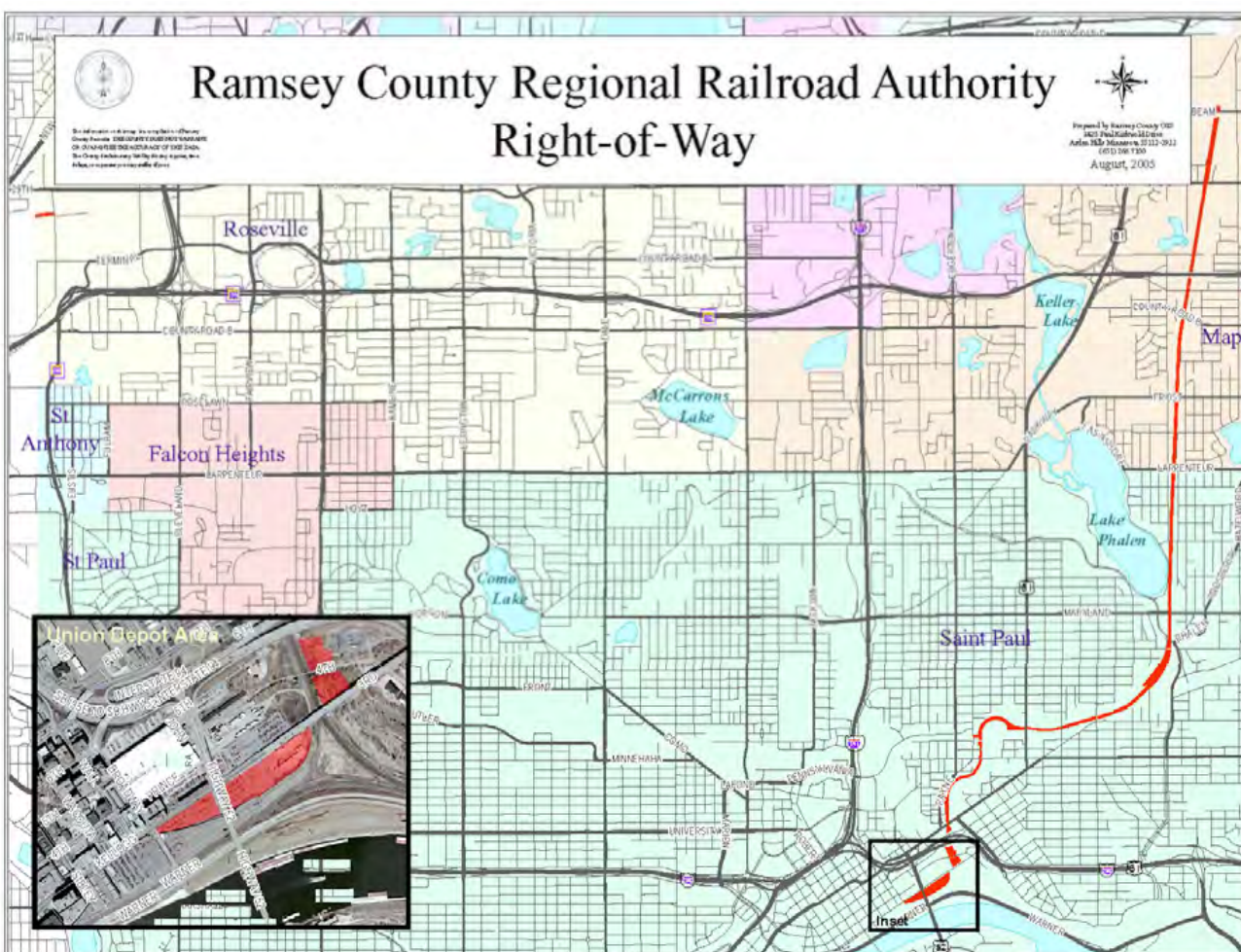


### Right of Way

Minnesota state statute 398A.02 states, "The purpose of the Regional Railroad Authorities Act is to provide a means whereby one or more municipalities, with state and federal aids as may be available, may provide for the preservation and improvement of local rail service for agriculture, industry, or passenger traffic and provide for the preservation of abandoned rail right-of-way for future transportation uses, when determined to be practicable and necessary for the public welfare, particularly in the case of abandonment of local rail lines."

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority acquired part of an abandoned railroad corridor from downtown Saint Paul to Beam Avenue in Maplewood from Burlington Northern Railroad in the 1990s. A paved trail was constructed in the right-of-way and named in 2001 for Congressman Bruce Vento, a well-loved politician from the East Side of St. Paul. Today it exists as a multi-use trail but the trail corridor is reserved for possible future bus or rail transit. The Rush Line Corridor Bus Rapid Transit project will share the corridor with the Bruce Vento Trail from about Payne Avenue in Saint Paul to Gervais Avenue in Maplewood.

The figure below shows the right-of-way owned by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, including Union Depot.



### Transit Funding and Finance

The Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) was created on April 1, 2008, as required by Minn. Statute Section 297A.992, by a joint powers agreement between the counties of Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties. Scott and Carver counties opted not to join. Its purpose is to receive and distribute the quarter-cent transit sales tax allowed by the state legislature and the \$20 motor vehicle sales tax, permitted by the Legislature. CTIB distributes the collected taxes by awarding annual grants for the development, construction, and operation of transitways serving the five-county area. Since being formed in 2008, CTIB distributed \$1 billion in grants to 10 different transit corridors.

In June 2017, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners voted 6-1 to leave CTIB by 2019, noting that the county has received less funding from the coalition than it has paid in. In its place will be five metro counties — Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington — going it alone, or at least crafting county-by-county deals to further the construction of future transitways. State lawmakers limited the amount of sales tax that could be imposed by the CTIB member counties to one-quarter cent. With the dissolution of CTIB, counties can impose a sales tax of up to a half cent for transit and roadway projects. Hennepin and Ramsey counties have agreed to increase their sales tax to the one-half cent ceiling; Ramsey County has dedicated the half-cent sales tax to transit.

Local funding accounts for only half of the resources to develop and construct transitways. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) administers the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Program, a discretionary grant program for funding major transit capital investments, including heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars and bus rapid transit. Federal law requires projects seeking CIG funding to complete a series of steps over several years to be eligible for funding. For New Starts and Core Capacity projects within the CIG Program, the law requires completion of two phases in advance of receipt of a construction grant agreement – Project Development and Engineering. For Small Starts projects, the law requires completion of one phase in advance of receipt of a construction grant agreement – Project Development. The law also requires projects to be rated by FTA at various points in the process according to statutory criteria evaluating project justification and local financial commitment.

The region's commuter rail project (Northstar), the Blue and Green LRT lines and the Orange and Red BRT lines were partially funded through the CIG Program.

### Intercity Passenger Rail


Intercity passenger rail service is available in the Twin Cities aboard the Empire Builder, Amtrak's long distance passenger train connecting Seattle, WA and Portland, OR to Chicago, IL. Amtrak's Empire Builder is the only intercity passenger train service in the region and serves Saint Paul's Union Depot. Amtrak completed feasibility study of second round trip train between Chicago and Saint Cloud in 2015 that found a second round-trip between the Twin Cities and Chicago could provide approximately 155,000 rides per year. The State of Wisconsin and Ramsey County jointly funded the TCMC Second Train Phase 1 study with additional funding from the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission and the La Crosse Area Planning Committee. Phase 1 is expected to be completed in 2018, finishing the alternatives analysis and conceptual engineering of needed capital improvements to accommodate a second passenger train together with increasing freight rail traffic on the route, which is owned by Canadian Pacific Railway. Phase 2 work includes environmental analysis and final design of the recommended capital improvements, and is currently unfunded. With funding in hand for Phase 2 work, capital improvements and train sets, the TCMC Second Train could be operational in 2022. Ramsey County is a leader among its regional peers in planning and advocating for the TCMC Second Train. Ramsey County will continue to advocate for state funding to complete the planning and design for the second train, construction of track improvements, purchase of train sets and implementation of the service independently and as a member of the MN High Speed Rail Commission.



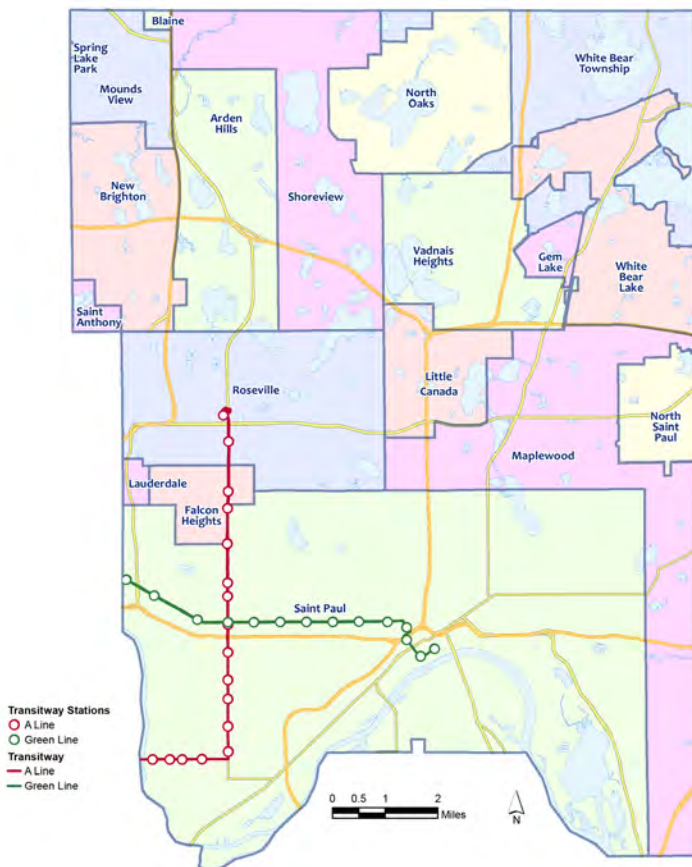
### Transitway Corridors

Ramsey County will be a leader and model in developing, promoting and providing public transit that benefits area businesses and neighborhoods. The county, in cooperation with the state, the Metropolitan Council and area municipalities, will engage in station area planning for the Gold Line, Rush Line and Riverview Corridor transitways that fosters increased use of public transit to the benefit of neighborhoods. A market assessment will be prepared for each station area to identify a likely future development scenario. Station area planning will strive to meet development density expectations and activity levels described in the Metropolitan Council’s Thrive 2040 plan. Station area plans also include design of accessible platforms for pedestrians and bicyclists and public realm improvements that make the station areas feel safe and inviting.

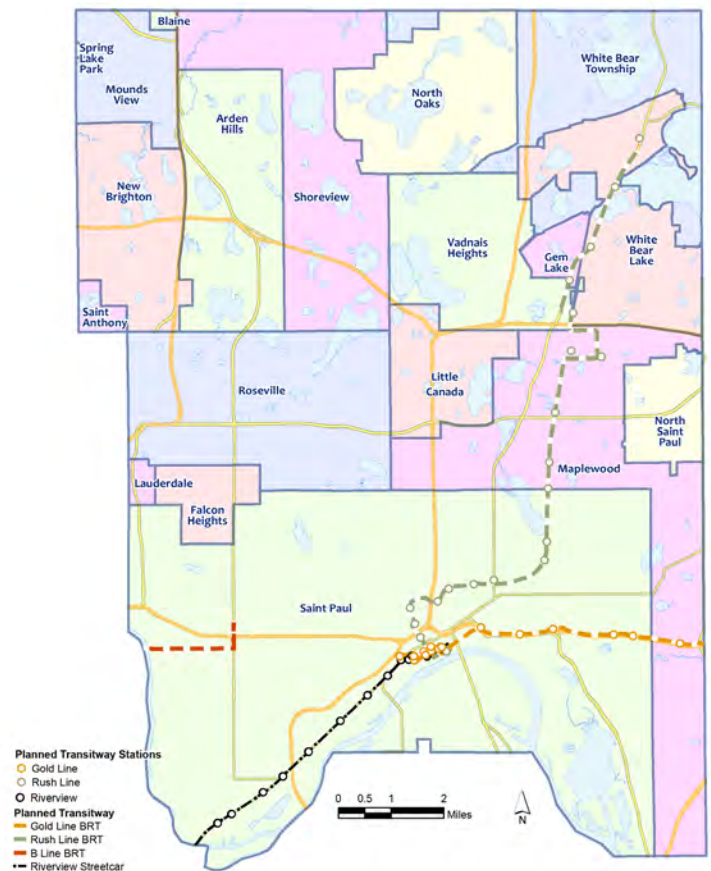
Ramsey County board and staff encourage citizens to participate in planning to deliver new and enhanced transit service because public engagement is essential to making informed decisions and earning local support for transitway projects. Ramsey County will continue to seek public input on the Gold Line, Rush Line and Riverview Corridor projects through a variety of outreach opportunities that include formal public meetings, informal pop-up meetings, community events, presentations to district councils, business organizations and civic groups and social media access. Policy advisory committees are open to the public and time is allotted for public comment. Business owners and area residents can participate on a community advisory committee and provide guidance on a variety of issues and concerns related to the transitway project.

 Zoom in for details and see next page for detailed descriptions of planned and existing transitways

#### Existing Transitways



#### Planned Transitways





## TRANSPORTATION

### EXISTING CORRIDORS:

- ▶ **METRO Green Line:** The [METRO Green Line](#) opened in June 2014. The METRO Green Line is an 11-mile route with 23 stations, connecting downtown Saint Paul with the University of Minnesota campus and downtown Minneapolis generally along University Avenue. The METRO Green Line is providing more rides than expected, averaging nearly 40,000 trips per day in 2016, meeting its 2030 projections less than three years after opening.
- ▶ **A Line:** The [A Line](#) is an arterial bus rapid transit that opened in June 2016. The A Line connects with the METRO Blue Line at 46th Street Station and the METRO Green Line at Snelling & University Station and several popular destinations, including Hamline University, Macalester College, Highland Village, Rosedale Mall, HarMar Mall, Minnehaha Park and the Midway area.

### PLANNED CORRIDORS:

- ▶ **METRO Gold Line:** The [METRO Gold Line](#) is a planned nine-mile dedicated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line that will connect St. Paul, Maplewood, Landfall, Oakdale and Woodbury generally along Interstate 94. The METRO Gold Line will be Minnesota's first BRT line that operates primarily within exclusive bus-only lanes. The METRO Gold Line will provide frequent, all-day service with 11 new stations, seven days a week. METRO Gold Line began Project Development in 2018 and service is expected to begin in 2024.
- ▶ **Rush Line:** The [Rush Line](#) is a planned 13-mile BRT project within a dedicated guideway serving 21 stations from Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul to downtown White Bear Lake generally along Robert Street, Phalen Boulevard, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority right-of-way and Trunk Highway 61. The guideway will be co-located with the Bruce Vento Trail through the portion of the route that utilizes the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority right-of-way. The Rush Line corridor began work on the draft Environmental Impact Statement in 2018.
- ▶ **Riverview Corridor:** The [Riverview Corridor](#) is a planned 11.7-mile modern streetcar route that will connect downtown Saint Paul with the MSP Airport, Mall of America and serve the Saint Paul neighborhoods in between, running generally along W. 7th Street. Riverview Corridor will be the region's first modern streetcar line, with 20 stations running partially in dedicated right of way and partially in shared lanes. Modern streetcar is compatible with the region's light rail system, so streetcars can operate on the same tracks as the METRO Green and Blue Lines. Work will begin on the draft Environmental Impact Statement in 2019 and is expected to take three years to complete.
- ▶ **B Line:** Metro Transit is planning improvements to the Route 21 corridor with the [B Line rapid bus project](#). The B Line will substantially replace the western portion of Route 21, serving Lake Street and Marshall Avenue, a Ramsey County road, between uptown Minneapolis and the Midway area in St. Paul. B Line planning will begin in 2019. Metro Transit plans to start detailed engineering on the B Line in 2020. Pending full project funding, B Line construction could begin as soon as 2021.

### OTHER CORRIDORS:

- ▶ **Red Rock:** The Red Rock Corridor has evolved into a potential BRT corridor connecting the city of Hastings and the region's southeastern suburbs to St. Paul primarily along US Highway 61. An Implementation Plan was prepared in 2016 that found that forecasted ridership did not justify implementation of a BRT project in the near-term, and instead focused on implementing all-day regular route service in the corridor to build ridership.
- ▶ **Robert Street:** The Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Study focused on providing more frequent and faster transit service between downtown Saint Paul and northern Dakota County within the Robert Street corridor. The analysis of alternatives identified two alternatives, BRT and modern streetcar in St. Paul and West St. Paul, as the projects with the best potential to address the needs for improved transit service in the study area. The study concluded in 2015 without action to select a Locally Preferred Alternative, allowing staff more time to conduct additional land use planning.

## TRANSPORTATION

- ▶ **Highway 36:** Trunk Highway 36 is an east/west freeway through the northern half of Ramsey County. The Metropolitan Council conducted the Highway Transitway Corridor Study in 2014 and concluded that there is a strong potential for Highway BRT in the TH 36 corridor. More detailed study has not been initiated in the TH 36 corridor.
- ▶ **I-35W North:** This freeway corridor links downtown Minneapolis to Forest Lake and runs through western Ramsey County. MnDOT led a feasibility study in 2013 that focused on MnPASS implementation, but also included analysis of highway BRT. Ultimately, MnDOT elected to implement a 12-mile MnPASS project on I-35W north, between County Road C in Roseville and County Road 53 in Lino Lakes. The project is scheduled for letting in September 2018.

## BICYCLING AND WALKING

Developing and maintaining a regional system of bicycle and pedestrian pathways throughout Ramsey County provides both active transportation and recreational opportunities for residents. Bikeways provide efficient and affordable transportation along with environmental and traffic congestion improvements. They also provide opportunities for people to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines, making active living a way of life.

Ramsey County will provide a coordinated multimodal transportation system, which meets all state and/or federal specifications, to ensure the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles. Off-street paved trails in Ramsey County are multi-use trails that serve pedestrians and bicyclists. Pedestrians and bicycle facilities connect residents to destinations such as businesses, transit, employment, community centers, and parks. Studies suggest that people in pedestrian-friendly communities, with well-connected streets and sidewalks and nearby commercial destinations, walk nearly four times as much as those in more auto-oriented neighborhoods.



### Ramsey County's commitment to create safe, efficient and accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities help residents to:

- Walk and bike in their daily routines
- Make active living a way of life
- Improve health and reduce chronic disease
- Choose sustainable, low-energy use modes of transportation



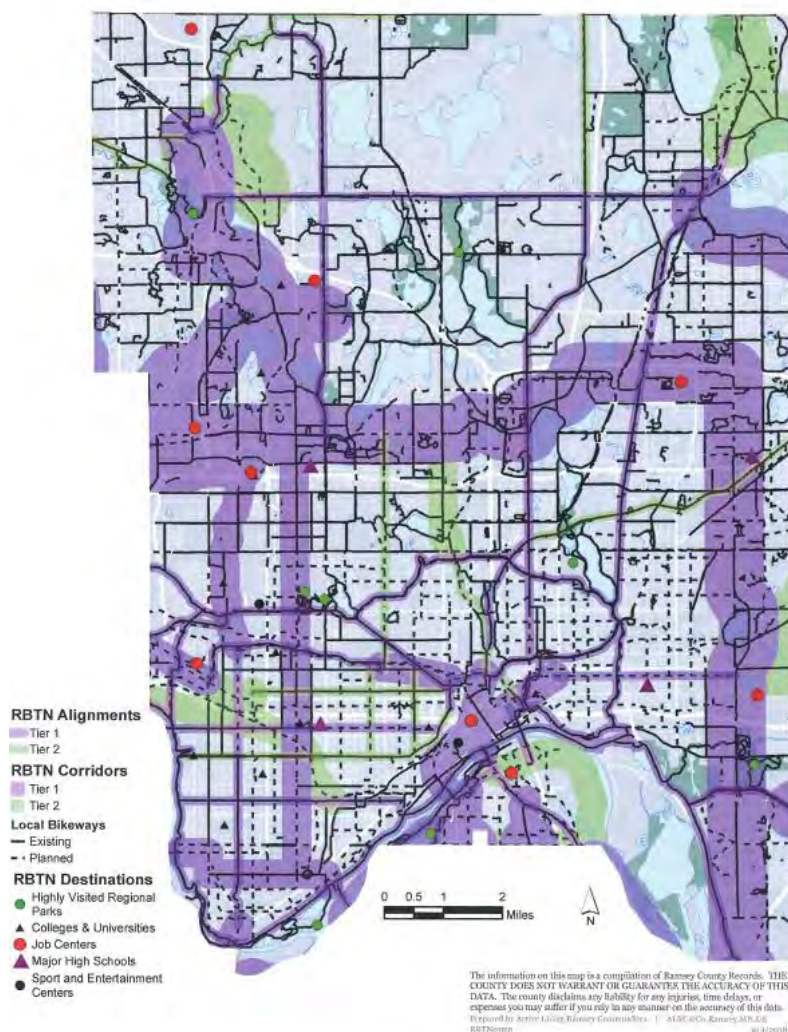
Walking and bicycling can provide community building and recreational benefits. It can reduce isolation and encourage connection. For some older people who are no longer able to engage in high intensity or high impact exercise, walking can be an accessible form of regular physical activity. It is often less expensive than other exercise options. For people who live on fixed incomes, that can be important. Regular activity can affect older peoples' ability to remain mobile, independent and able to care for themselves. It can help prevent chronic disease and other health conditions. In addition to the physical benefits, exercise improves mental health. Older people who are consistently physically active have performed better on tests of reaction, reasoning and memory.<sup>8</sup>

Ramsey County prioritizes safety and accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the transportation network. This work is guided by the Ramsey County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan and the Connected Ramsey Communities Network. The county's Public Works department evaluates pedestrian and cyclist needs on a project-by-project basis, as part of every improvement made to the transportation system. In addition, Ramsey County will continue collaboration with local governments to coordinate bicycle and pedestrian connections, both to neighboring counties and between local communities.

Ramsey County maintains mapping data for county, state, regional, and local pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The county will continue maintaining and updating these maps through the Active Living Ramsey Communities initiative, and will continue coordinating with municipalities and adjacent counties to maintain a comprehensive regional mapping system through MetroGIS.

### Ramsey County-wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan

Ramsey County municipalities came together to develop a countywide approach to increase biking and walking. The plan empowers the county and local communities with the tools and framework to create local pedestrian and bicycle networks with regional benefits. It includes a set of tools, analyses, and actions to engage communities in creating a place where people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can safely and comfortably walk and bike in their daily lives. It provides resources and a guiding framework to develop a network where walking and biking are regular parts of people's lives. The plan incorporates equity principles, tools and performance measures.



<sup>8</sup> Walking as a way of life. Emily Smith. AmericanTrails.org. Undated.  
<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/health/wayoflife.html>



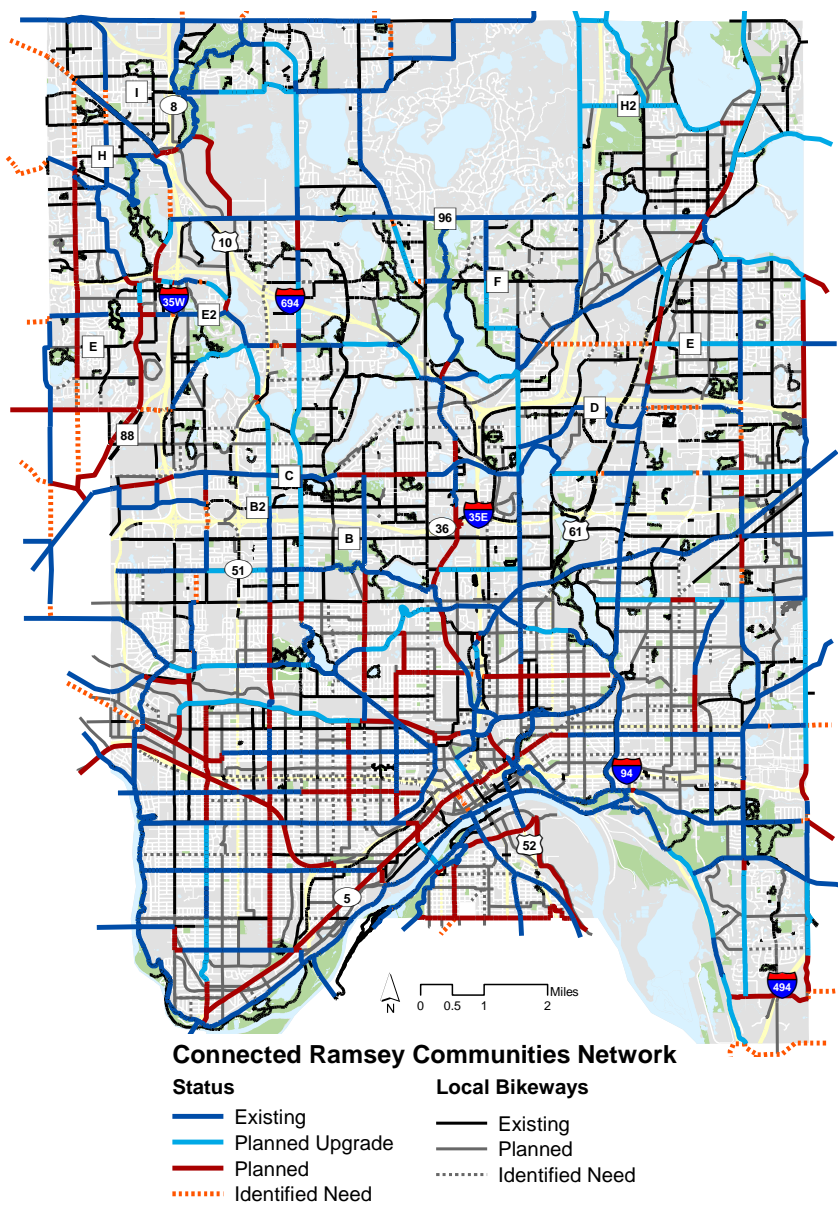
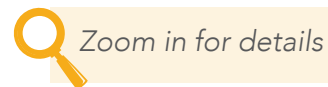
### Existing Conditions

Ramsey County has jurisdiction of pedestrian traffic crossing county roads. The inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian features in county projects is guided by the countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, adopted on February 2, 2016. Municipalities also have direct control over bicycle and pedestrian systems, including their maintenance. Each municipality determines its own criteria for the location of sidewalks and trails. The county maintains sidewalks on County bridges. Ramsey County pays for 25% of all bicycle/pedestrian paths and sidewalks adjacent to County roadways when that roadway is either under reconstruction is a component of a Ramsey County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project, or is part of a municipally-led project. The county monitors traffic volumes and accidents providing valuable safety feedback.

### Future Expectations

Bicycle/pedestrian facilities will continue to be provided by municipalities, MnDOT, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Mn/DNR), Ramsey County, guided by the countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The following needs to be done to influence the future and change expectations:

- Standards of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the State of Minnesota regarding bicycle/pedestrian criteria should be followed whenever work is performed on the adjacent roadway.
- Ramsey County will assist municipalities in the development of facilities that allow the bicycle to become a viable transportation option, and municipalities should work with the county in the development process to assist with right of way needs for bicycle/pedestrian routes.
- Bicycle/pedestrian trails should be connected at municipal, county, park and state levels in order to form a comprehensive system of safe and convenient trails.



The information on this map is a compilation of Ramsey County Records. THE COUNTY DOES NOT WARRANT OR GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OF THIS DATA. The county disclaims any liability for any injuries, time delays, or expenses you may suffer if you rely in any manner on the accuracy of this data.

Connected Ramsey Communities Network 8.5x11 12/18  
Prepared by Active Living Ramsey Communities 12/13/2018  
ALRC/Co. Ramsey MN US

AVIATION

Airports

The county is home to two airports: Benson’s Airport owned and operated by White Bear Twp., and St. Paul Downtown Airport. The county is also potentially affected by airspace protection related to operations at MSP International Airport.

The St. Paul Downtown Airport is classified as an intermediate, primary reliever airport providing service by commuter, air-taxi and corporate aircraft primarily for business flying. Its main service area is within thirty minutes ground travel time of the airport and includes downtown Minneapolis.

The Benson Airport is publicly owned by White Bear Township and operated by the Benson Airport Association. Benson Airport is limited to the public use of small, single-engine propeller aircraft. At this time, the Benson Airport is not included in the regional airport system, due to its license waiver concerning runway length, nor is it in the national plan of integrated airports (NPIAS). The airport is operated as a restricted facility under current state licensing criteria.

The Anoka County-Blaine airport borders Ramsey County along County Road J. This airport is classified as a minor, secondary reliever, and provides service by medium-size, twin-engine aircraft that are used primarily for training, pleasure and business flying. There are plans to expand the services of this airport. The airport’s service area includes most of northern Ramsey County and part of Saint Paul.

Both the St. Paul Downtown and the Anoka County-Blaine airports are designated by the FAA as relievers for the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) and are owned and operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC).

Located near the southwest corner of Ramsey County, MSP is the major airport for the region. According to the Metropolitan Council, the passenger, aircraft, and air cargo handling capacity at MSP will need to be expanded to meet forecasted needs.



### Noise Impacted Community

Part of the County is within the Influence Area of both the St. Paul Downtown Airport and Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP), both owned and operated by the MAC. As such, county-owned, regulated or permitted land uses could be affected by planning considerations potentially involving airport zoning, environmental mitigation, airport development and economic impacts, ground access needs, infrastructure requirements and general land use compatibility. At present, a portion of the County is designated a “Noise Impacted Community” by the Metropolitan Council in regards to the St. Paul Downtown Airport.

The noise policy area for St. Paul Downtown Airport reflects the noise exposure map generated in updating of the airport’s long-term comprehensive plan in 2001. The map depicts the noise exposure projected for year 2020 aircraft operations. The MAC has not submitted the plan for council review pending resolution of environmental and funding issues associated with flood protection of the airport. MnDOT Aeronautics Regulations (#14 MCAR 1.3013) designate specific lakes upon which seaplane activity is allowed and what operating conditions may apply. In Ramsey County, these lakes are: Bald Eagle Lake, Long Lake, Turtle Lake, White Bear Lake and Lake Owasso.

### County Role

The county has a limited role in airport-related matters. Land use compatibility and associated noise and height restrictions are the responsibility of the MAC, the Metropolitan Council, and affected municipalities.

- ✓ The county will continue to coordinate with municipalities and other government entities regarding any county-planned development or modifications that could impact aviation services, and to monitor increased passenger traffic to MSP to ensure reasonable travel times to the airport for all county residents. The county acknowledges that both Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and MnDOT Aeronautics safety standards, such as protection against potential hazards to air navigation as defined under MN Administrative Rules Chapter 8800.1200 including electronic interference, are to be considered in any planning and/or development within designated areas adjacent to the St. Paul Downtown, Anoka County-Blaine, and MSP International airports. The county also acknowledges federal regulations CFR – Part 77 requiring notification to the FAA regarding proposed construction or alteration of any county-owned, regulated or permitted land uses that could impact aviation services (FAA Form 7460-1).
- ✓ The county should ensure that roads to airport freight terminals address the operational needs of trucks to assure efficient truck access as well as the safety of the traveling public.



**FREIGHT**

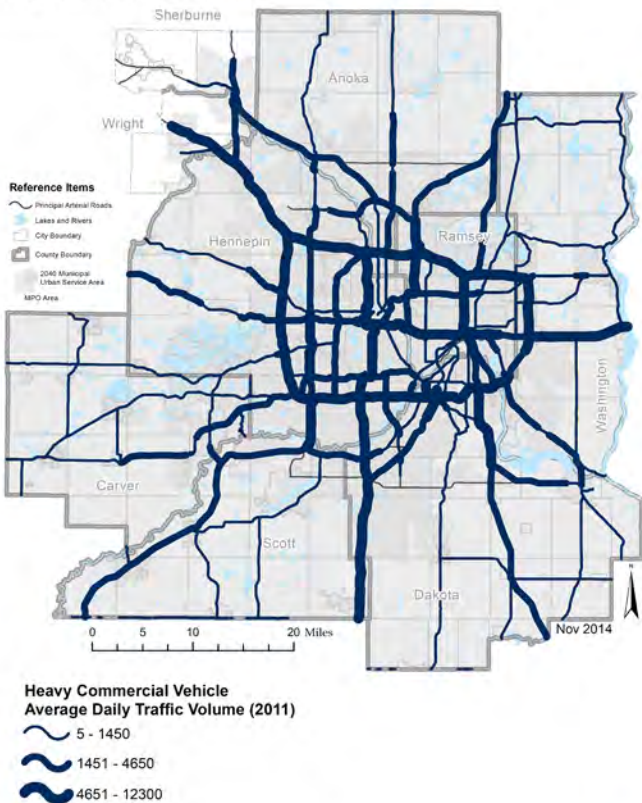
The county road system is important for heavy commercial traffic. Heavy commercial traffic includes trucks used for the transportation of goods and materials to and from commercial and industrial areas in the county. It also includes vehicles such as school buses, fire trucks, and refuse hauling trucks, essential to the well-being of residential areas. Rail and barge capacity also play an important role in the county's freight system. This includes intermodal transfer centers where goods can be moved between air, barge, rail and trucks- like the BNSF St. Paul Midway intermodal hub. The Saint Paul Port Authority manages barge traffic on the Mississippi River.

Establishing truck routes and providing efficient freight commodity movement to state, national and international markets is crucial to the region's economic prosperity. According to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), the principal means of freight movement in the metropolitan area is trucking by common carriers and private truck fleets. Trucking productivity depends on an adequate roadway system and its connections with ports, railroads, and airports. The county vision supports a system that will provide for the efficient movement of goods, protecting the economic vitality of the community.

This issue corresponds with the economic development vision that businesses will be accessible through a comprehensive and integrated transportation system that serves both people and products.

**Existing Conditions**

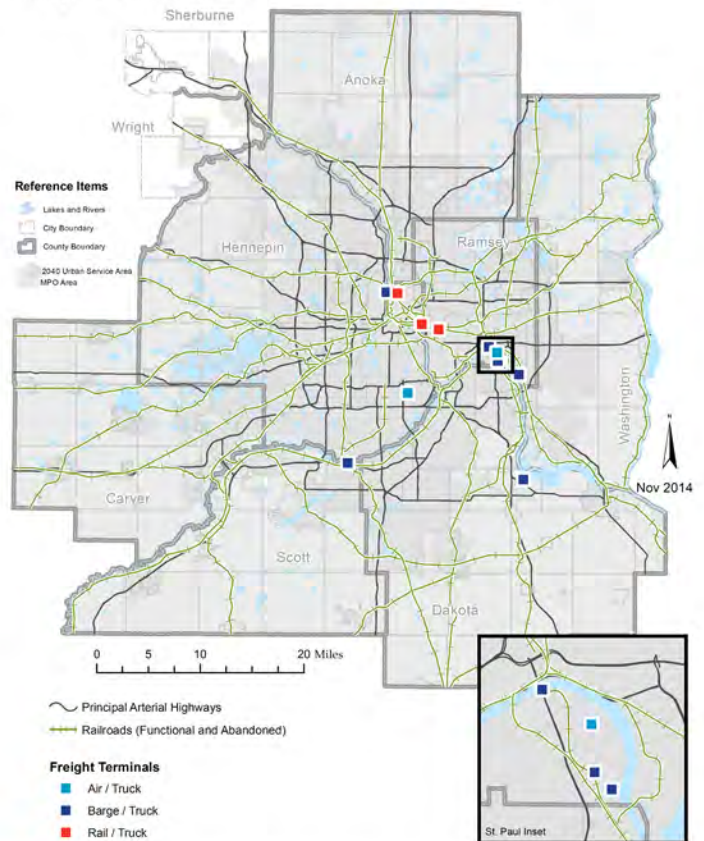
**Heavy Commercial Vehicle Traffic**



2040 TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN | METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
Figure 1-8



**Metropolitan Freight System**



2040 TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN | METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
Figure 1-6



Zoom in for details

According to the Ramsey County Public Works Pavement Management System Report, nine or ten-ton spring axle load limits apply to approximately 280 miles of County roads and seven tons to 6 miles. Seven-ton road limits are posted by Ramsey County. A goal for the Ramsey County Public Works department is to have nine- or ten-ton capacity on all county roads, thereby removing any spring weight restrictions for trucks. This will also alleviate the need to post roads for seven-ton load limits, thus saving both time and money.

The jobs most beneficial to the region are those resulting in exported products and services. Intermodal transportation is a critical support service for businesses importing/exporting products. In addition, there is pressure to move production facilities as close as possible to the market (i.e. East or West Coast or Chicago). Because of its geographic location, the Twin Cities must provide competitive shipping capability at competitive costs to local businesses.

According to the Metropolitan Council, trucking firms will continue to establish strategic alliances with railroads to move freight intermodally by containers and trailers. Small package handlers will continue to rapidly expand through extension of overseas service. These handlers will extend their service as logistic providers to small businesses. A primary purpose of the interstate highway system is for goods movement. A primary purpose of minor arterials is to move trucks from the principal arterial system. As a system of minor arterials designed to serve short-to-mid range trips at moderate speeds, the county roadway system should accommodate truck traffic, providing a link between trunk highways and local routes.

### Future Expectations

Ramsey County will continue to work with municipalities to designate truck routes on minor arterials that provide adequate truck access to intermodal freight terminals, truck terminals, transportation hubs, distribution centers, businesses, and industrial concentrations within Ramsey County. The county and municipalities would remove any existing weight and street restrictions from these truck routes. This coincides with municipal interest in reducing through traffic on local streets.

The county will continue to work with businesses and industries to change delivery times as necessary to restrict truck movement and on-street loading and unloading during peak traffic hours.

### County Role

The Ramsey County Public Works Department uses general road inventory information, observed pavement conditions, and field measurements to develop a pavement management system that determines the type of maintenance required, establishes maintenance priorities, and projects the cost of maintenance work. The pavement management system is used to maintain and improve pavements in an organized and cost-effective manner.

- ✓ The county will use the findings of the Metropolitan Council's Regional Truck Highway Corridor Study, approved on May 17, 2017, to guide programming decisions affecting freight travel on county routes.
- ✓ The county will continue to notify common carriers and private truck fleets of impending construction, and work with those companies and the municipalities in developing temporary alternative truck routes.
- ✓ The county will continue to review the county roadway system for sufficient pavement strength and adequate vertical clearance on all county roads.
- ✓ The county will continue to work with municipalities in reviewing pavement strength and vertical clearance for those local streets which provide a link between county roadways and truck destinations.



20  
40

## **WATER RESOURCES**

WASTEWATER

SURFACE WATER



## KEY THEMES:

- ▶ Increase surface water management efforts with a greater emphasis on strategic planning.
- ▶ Continue collaboration and partner with local agencies.
- ▶ Update the Ramsey County Groundwater Protection Plan.
- ▶ Annually inspect 20% of storm sewer system outfalls not connected to city storm sewer systems and other related structures, such as ponds, infiltration basins and outlets.
- ▶ Track the storm sewer system through an enterprise asset management system to improve budget estimates, aid in preventative maintenance and reporting to residents.
  - ▶ Continue to monitor septic systems in suburban Ramsey County.
  - ▶ Incorporating a performance-based approach to reducing chloride use.

## WASTEWATER

### COMMUNITY AND SUBSURFACE TREATMENT SYSTEMS

Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS), or septic systems, treat sewage at its location rather than transporting the sewage to a central treatment facility. Because many septic systems in Minnesota are not functioning properly, a state law was passed in 1994 to help prevent the serious environmental and human health problems they can cause. The 1994 Individual Sewage Treatment Systems Act sets requirements for minimum treatment standards for new construction and replacement systems. Major amendments to the 1994 act were posted in 1996 and 2008.

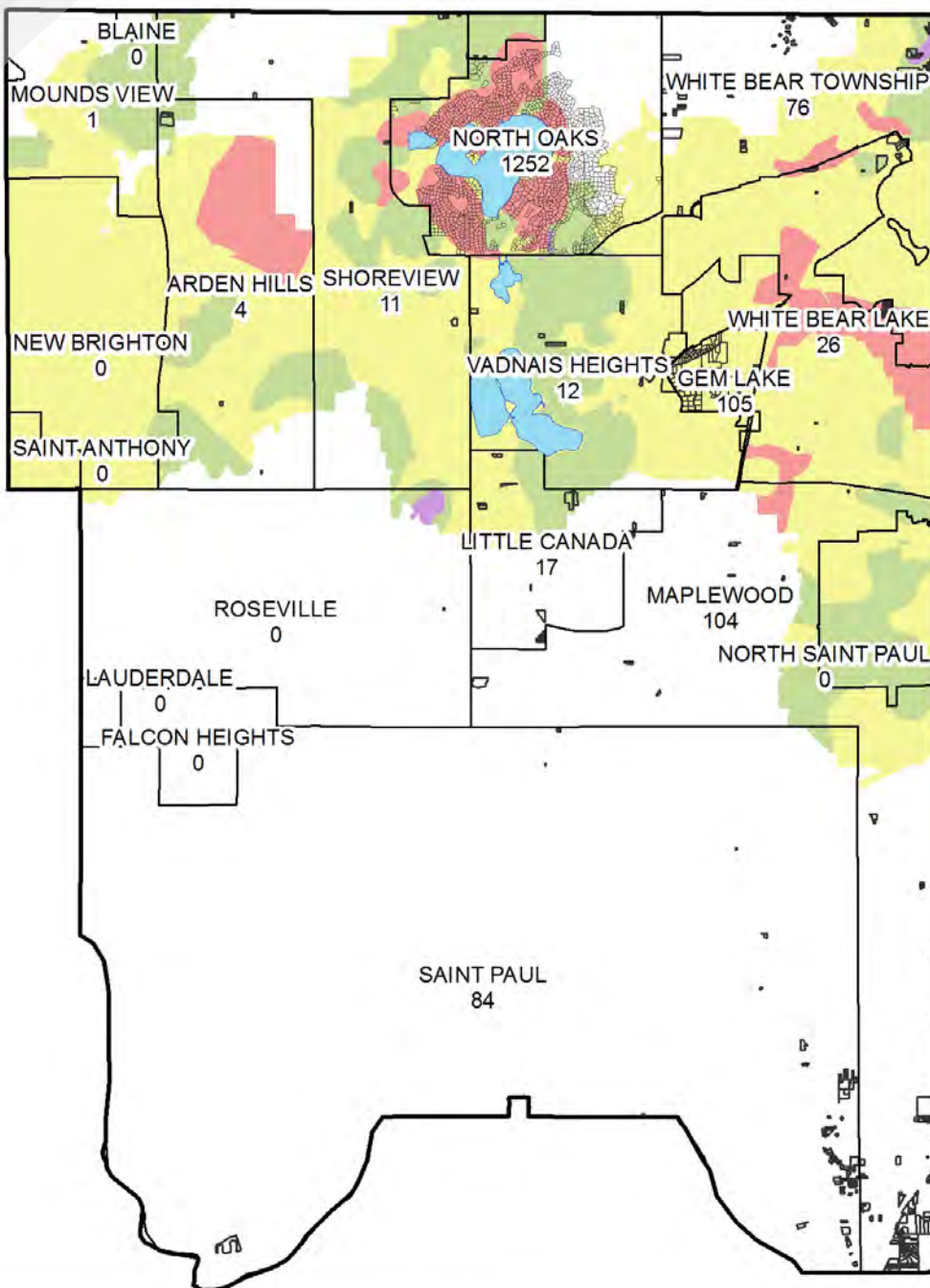
Minnesota Statute 2018, section 115.55, subdivision. 2 and Minnesota Rule 2018, part 7082.0040, subpart2, item A requires all counties to adopt and implement SSTS ordinances in compliance with chapters 7080 and 7081, except for towns and cities that have adopted ordinances that are in compliance with the county ordinance and Chapter 7082. The Metropolitan Council's local planning process requires counties to address this issue in their plans. Currently, Ramsey County is not required to have an SSTS ordinance because all the cities and towns have ordinances that meet the requirements of Minnesota Rules Chapters 7080-7083.

*The table on page 78 summarizes the type of septic system data received from each of these cities. Not all cities evaluate the locations of non-compliance. The majority of Ramsey County is served by the Metropolitan Council wastewater treatment plants, based on their service area maps. Only a few areas within the county, mostly in North Oaks, have undesignated treatment areas.*

Known subsurface sewage treatment systems are identified in Arden Hills, Gem Lake, Little Canada, Maplewood, Mounds View, North Oaks, Saint Paul, Shoreview, Vadnais Heights, city of White Bear Lake, and White Bear Township.

In 2009, Ramsey County had surveyed all the cities in the county to determine the number of septic systems in each city, the intentions of the cities' septic programs, and the desired components to a county septic ordinance. The information provided from the survey was used to draft a Ramsey County Individual Sewage Treatment Systems Ordinance. The draft ordinance was not fully reviewed and adopted by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners. The county was exempt from the requirement to have an Individual Sewage Treatment System Ordinance as every qualified city within Ramsey County had an ordinance.

For issues related to septic ordinances and regulations, the county defers to the city and local regulations. Each city will have individual requirements for the conditions under which private, community treatment systems would be allowed. Ramsey County supports city individual sewage treatment systems ordinances in an effort to protect water resources and the health, safety, and welfare of residents.



### Septic Systems and Drinking Water Supply Areas

**DWSMA Vulnerability**

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Very Low

**St Paul Regional  
Water Services  
Chain of Lakes**



Ramsey County, Minnesota



Sources:  
Septic Locations: Individual Cities (2016)  
Drinking Water Supply Mgmt Area  
(DWSMA) Vulnerability: MDH, 2015



City	Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems	Drinking Water Supply Management Area Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems	Pump Date	Type	Water Tight	City Dewater Available	Permit	Year Constructed	Water Connection	Well Depth	Pumper	Active Status	Size	Septic Number
Mounds View	1	0							X					
Arden Hills	4	3												
Shoreview	11	~8							X					
Vadnais Heights	12	~12							X					
Little Canada	17	~10												
White Bear	26	~25	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
White Bear	76	~25		X				X					X	
Saint Paul	84	0	X					X						X
Maplewood	104	1				X		X						
Gem Lake	105	~100												
North Oaks	1252	~100	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		

## SURFACE WATER

### Purpose

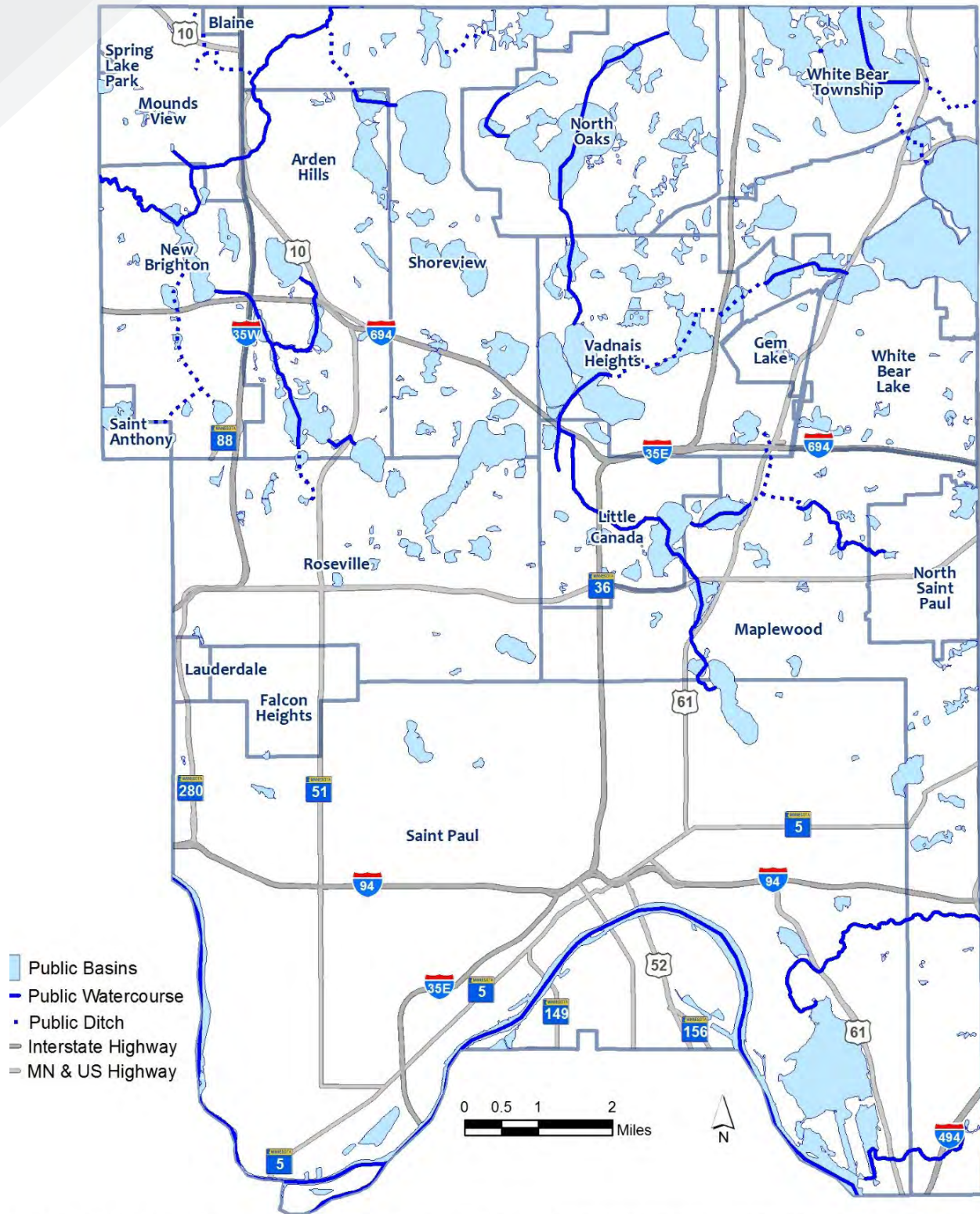
*Ramsey County has a variety of water resources including lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater sources. These water resources serve as an amenity and value to residents. Many agencies strive to protect these water bodies and Ramsey County considers itself one of those agencies.*

All water resources within Ramsey County's boundaries are regulated by a variety of federal, state and local agencies. The county is regulated by many agencies with respect to potential water resource impacts derived from road construction and maintenance activities, parks management, facilities development or other land management activities. The county obtains required permits and meets regulatory standards set by these agencies. The county also contributes to surface water management through activities such as lake water quality monitoring, strategic planning and implementation, operating aeration systems for some shallow lakes, swimming beach water quality monitoring, nuisance aquatic plant control, and wetland replacement. Legislative action Minnesota Statute 2018, section 383A.606, subdivision 2, transferred the duties and authorities of the Ramsey Conservation District to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners. On July 1st, 2018, the Ramsey Conservation District officially became the newly formed Soil and Water Conservation Division of the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department.

As a pledge to protect water resources and act as a partner in this initiative, Ramsey County enacts agreements with municipalities, other local agencies, and private parties. Water resource management related agreements are key to creating meaningful and purposeful relationships between the county and watershed districts and water management organizations. The types of agreements executed include joint powers agreements, maintenance and operations agreements, and cooperative agreements. Execution of these various agreements is initiated by project development, to address chronic issues where multiple parties have contributing drainage area, and for providing services.

Any proposed changes to the local water management plan may be submitted to the county by any residents, cities, or other local agencies. The proposed revisions should be submitted in writing for documentation purposes. The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners and the county planning committee will review each of the proposals and determine if an amendment to the local water management plan is warranted. The county amendment process should also consider other local plans and their procedures.

Public Waters in Ramsey County.



This map shows public water basins and watercourses included in the Public Water Inventory within Ramsey County. This spatial data was provided by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources with a date of content as 2/22/2017.

The information on this map is a compilation of Ramsey County Records. THE COUNTY DOES NOT WARRANT OR GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OF THIS DATA. The county disclaims any liability for any injuries, time delays, or expenses you may suffer if you rely in any manner on the accuracy of this data.

2040ComprehensivePlan\_PublicWaters

2/7/2018



### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND LAND USE

Ramsey County is a highly urban and developed county. Existing land use within the county ranges from agricultural, recreational, transportation, residential, multi-residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed use. Since Ramsey County is well established in land development, with only 8.3% undeveloped area, the proposed physical environment and future land use will largely remain the same.

Ramsey County has a limited role in land use planning, thus the county's role is more of coordination rather than of jurisdiction. Land use decisions impact the county road system. Given that the county does not have jurisdiction over land use planning, it is especially important for Ramsey County to work with municipalities within the county, sharing information and reviewing new development and redevelopment projects.

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners establishes the vision, mission and goals that guide Ramsey County. The vision, mission, and goals align with the county's aspirations for the well-being, prosperity, opportunity, and accountability in the future. Decision making will consider the greater good of the residents of the community and Ramsey County, yet minimize the adverse effects of those decisions on neighboring communities. Local land use plans should strive to be consistent with this vision for the county and with each other.

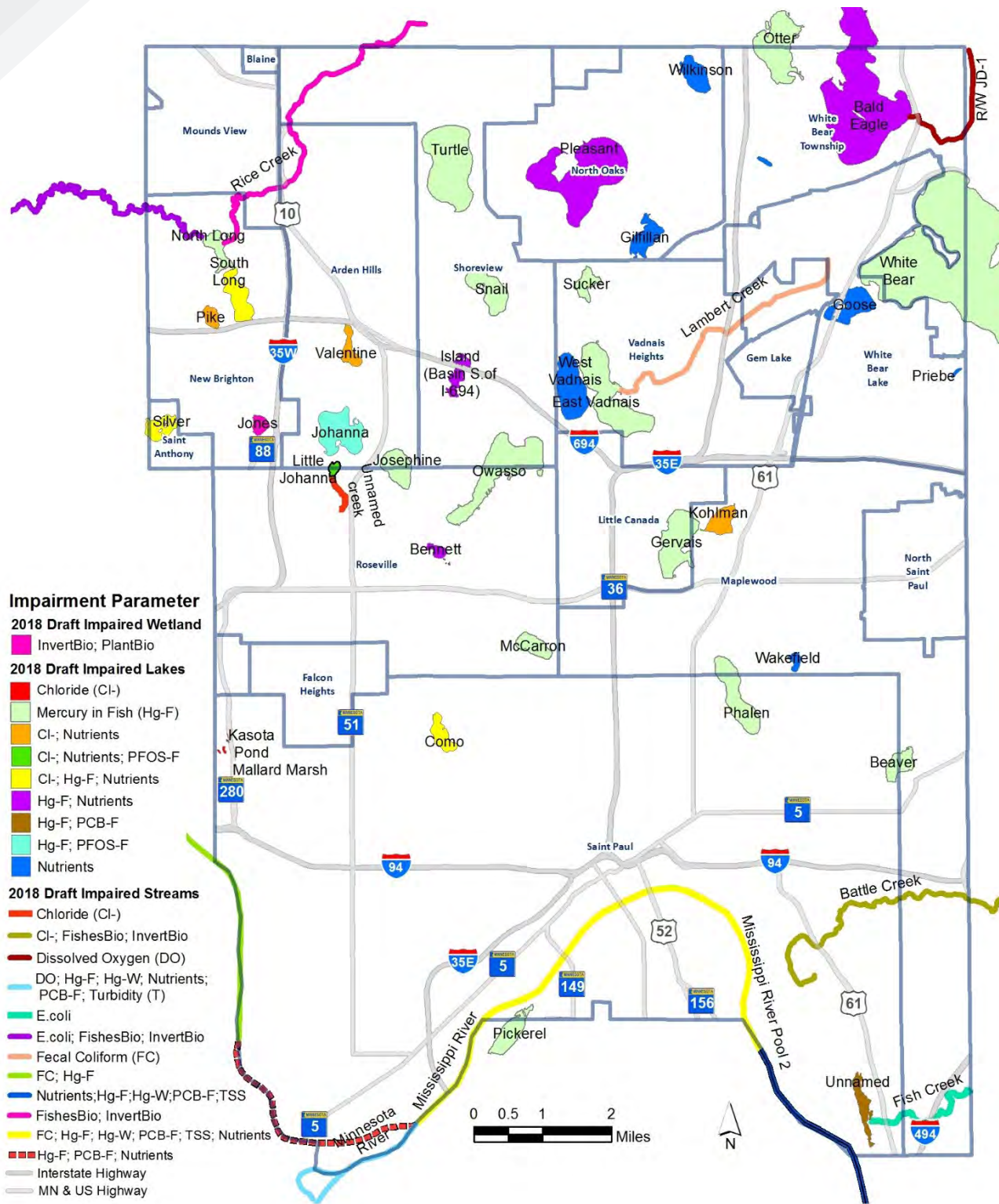
### EXISTING AND POTENTIAL WATER RESOURCE-RELATED PROBLEMS

The existing water resource problems in Ramsey County include the increasing number of water bodies listed on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Impaired Waters inventory, complying with and being partners to the associated management plans for the impaired waters, changing climate and precipitation patterns, and managing the county's extensive infrastructure including the storm sewer system structures.

The Environmental Protection Agency, through the MPCA, updates a list of Impaired Waters every two years that do not meet the minimum water quality standards per the Clean Water Act Section 303(d). Ramsey County currently has 42 impaired water bodies on the 2018 Draft Impaired Waters list. This includes one wetland, 35 lakes or reservoirs, and six rivers, creeks, and streams that have impaired water quality for one or more parameters. Water bodies on the Impaired Waters list must be included in a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study within a prescribed period of time to determine the pollutant load required to meet the water quality criteria, and identify the allowable sources and amounts, or waste load allocation, of the pollutant. The proposed management strategies and BMPs to achieve the acceptable pollutant load, as well as the timetable for implementation of the controls, are identified in the TMDL study.

Potential water resource related problems within Ramsey County are expected to trend upward from existing water resource related problems and climate change. Surface water management efforts will increase and the emphasis on strategic planning and implementation should grow. Baseline water quality monitoring and other data collection will continue to quantify problems and prioritize management strategies. The county will strive to collaborate and partner with local agencies to mitigate these potential problems.

Impaired Waters in Ramsey County.



This map shows the Impaired Waters of Ramsey County, as of the MPCA's 2018 Draft Impaired List. The spatial data is modified from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's 5/04/2017 shapefile on the 2016 Impaired Waterbodies to accommodate any new or delisted water bodies in the Draft 2018 List.

The information on this map is a compilation of Ramsey County Records. THE COUNTY DOES NOT WARRANT OR GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OF THIS DATA. The county disclaims any liability for any injuries, time delays, or expenses you may suffer if you rely in any manner on the accuracy of this data.

2019 Comprehensive Plan - Impaired Waters

2/12/2018

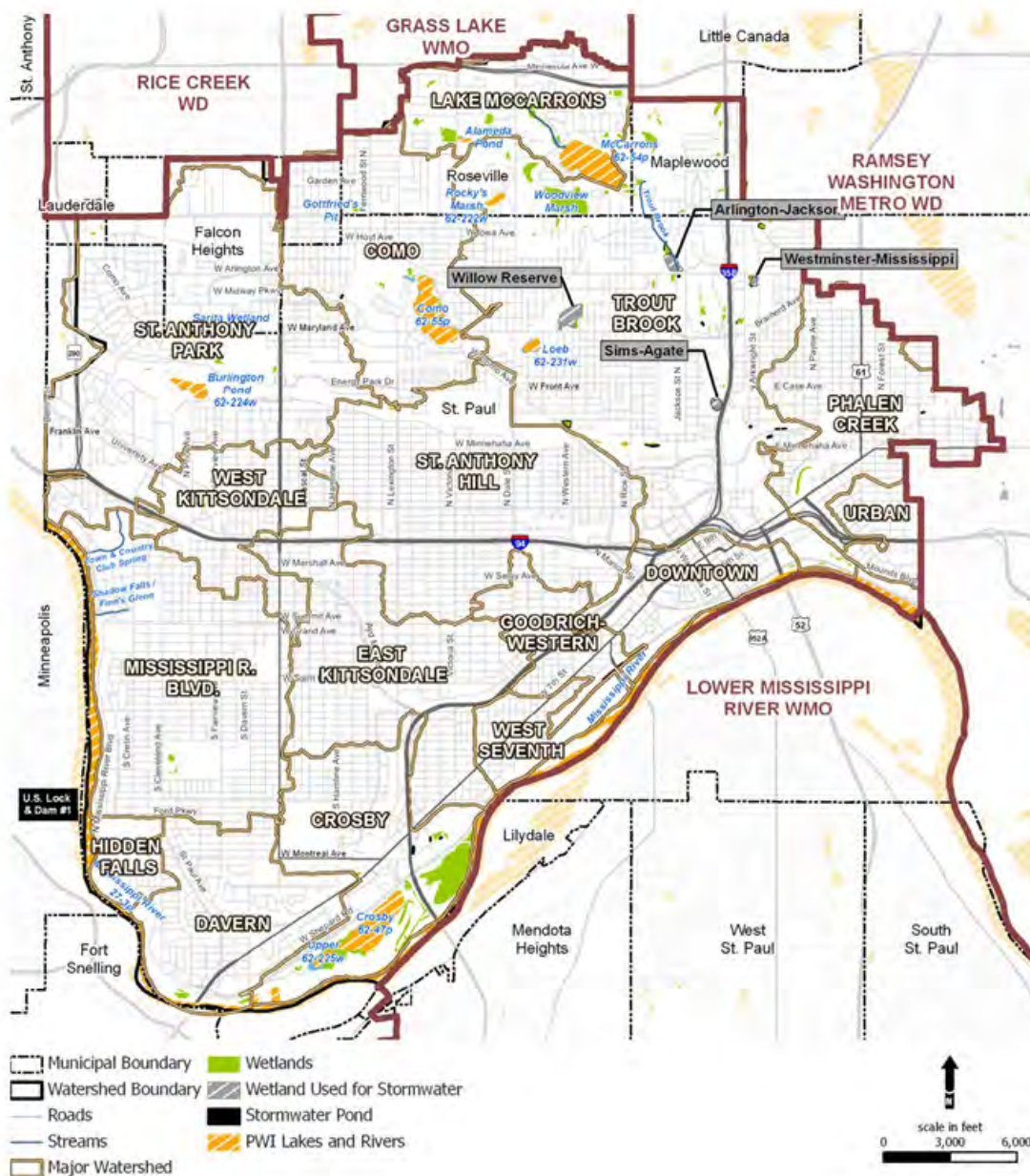


**Watershed Districts**

There are eight watershed districts and water management organizations within the county. The five watershed districts are Capitol Region Watershed District, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District, Rice Creek Watershed District, and Valley Branch Watershed District. The three water management organizations are Lower Mississippi River Water Management Organization, Mississippi Water Management Organization, and Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization. Watershed districts and water management organizations are required by Minnesota State Statute and under the regulation of the Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) to establish a water management plan. Many of these plans include detailed drainage area and subdrainage area evaluations and modeling.

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) largely drains to the Trout Brook Storm Sewer Interceptor, a major storm sewer pipe carrying flows eastern portion of their district, and to

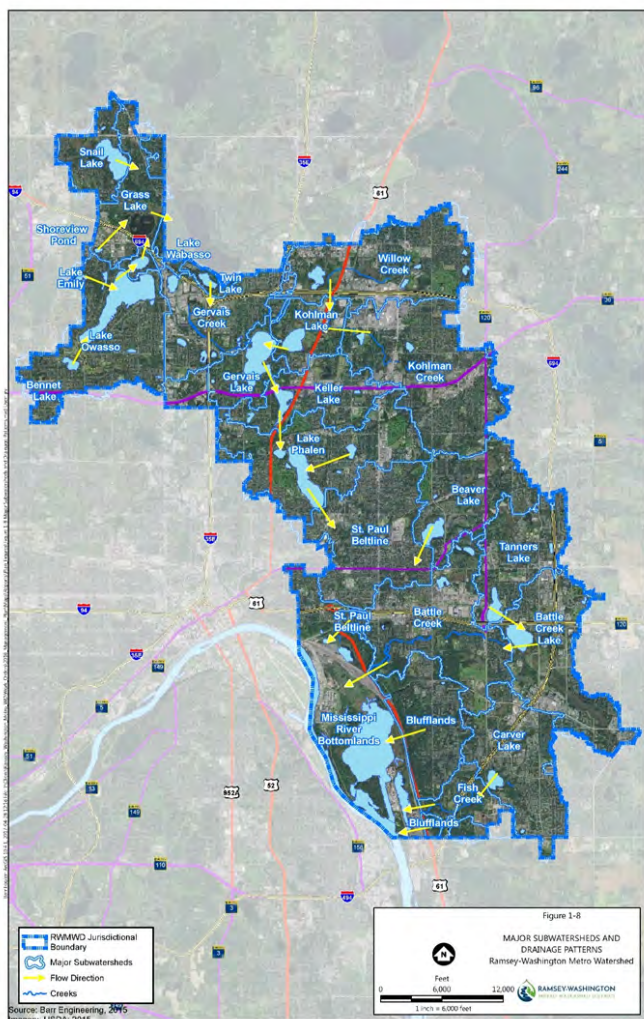
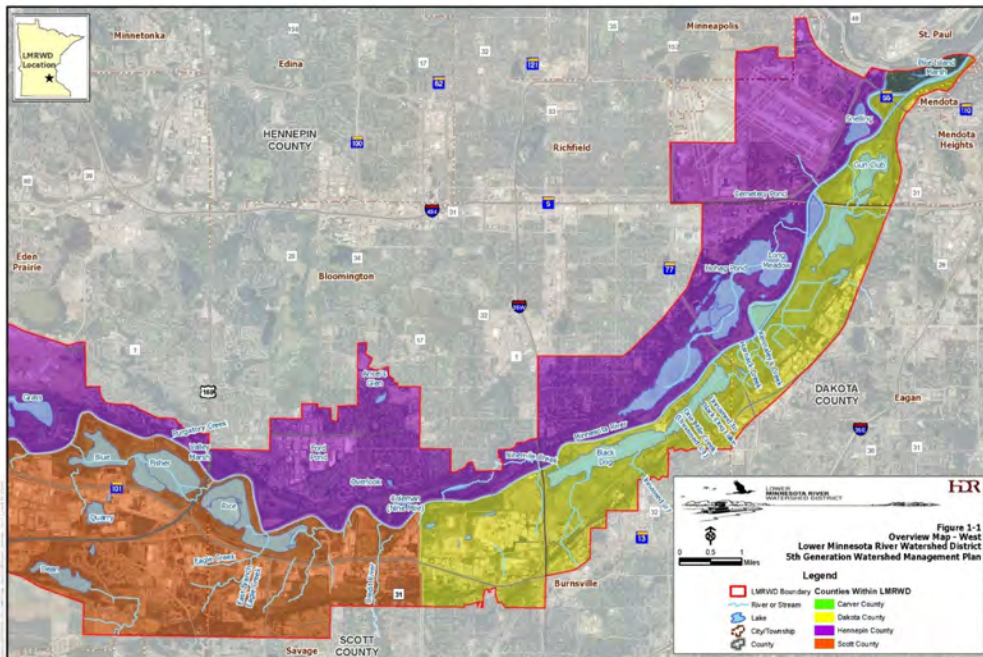
Capitol Region Watershed District, from the the Mississippi River.





**SURFACE WATER**

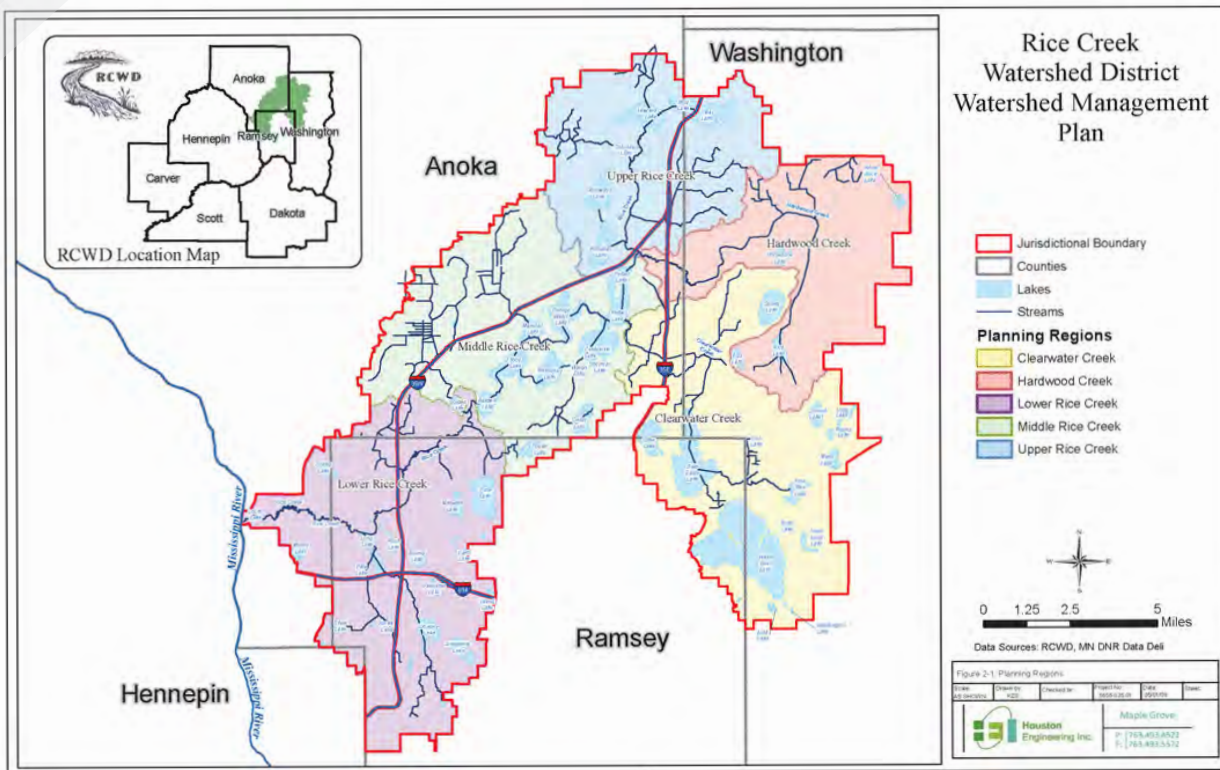
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) has only a small portion of its boundary within Ramsey County. Pike Island, a small marshland area located southwest of Saint Paul, is positioned at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. Pike Island is the only location within LMRWD that is in Ramsey County.



Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD) has 23 major subwatersheds and drainage areas in Ramsey County. The ultimate point of discharge for all subwatersheds is the Mississippi River. Some drainage areas flow directly to the river while others flow through a series of adjacent drainage areas prior to finally discharging into the river.

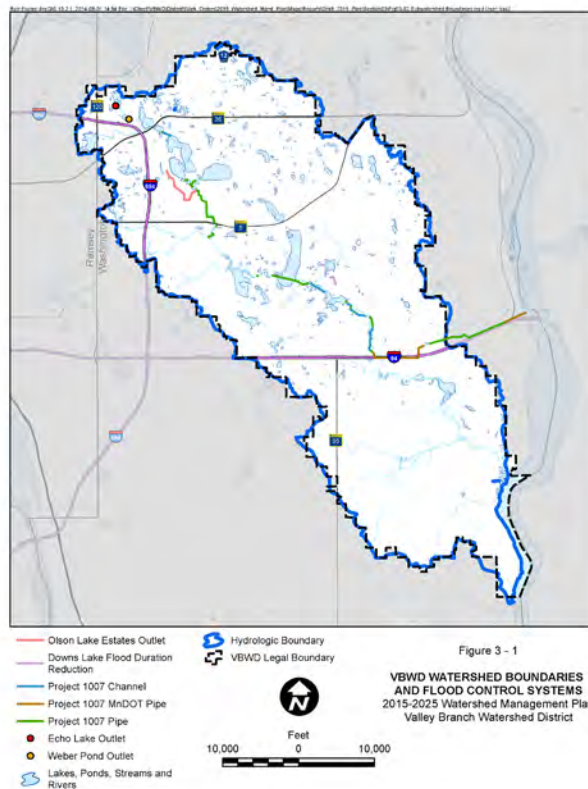
**SURFACE WATER**

Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) has three major drainage areas within Ramsey County. The three areas are Lower Rice Creek, Middle Rice Creek, and Clearwater Creek. Smaller, detailed subwatersheds exist in each of these three major drainage areas.



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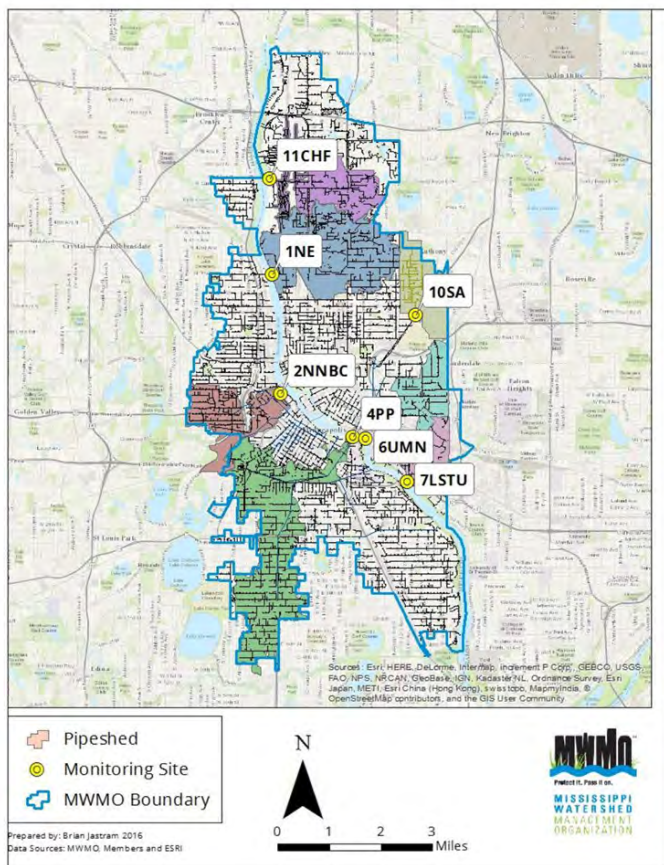
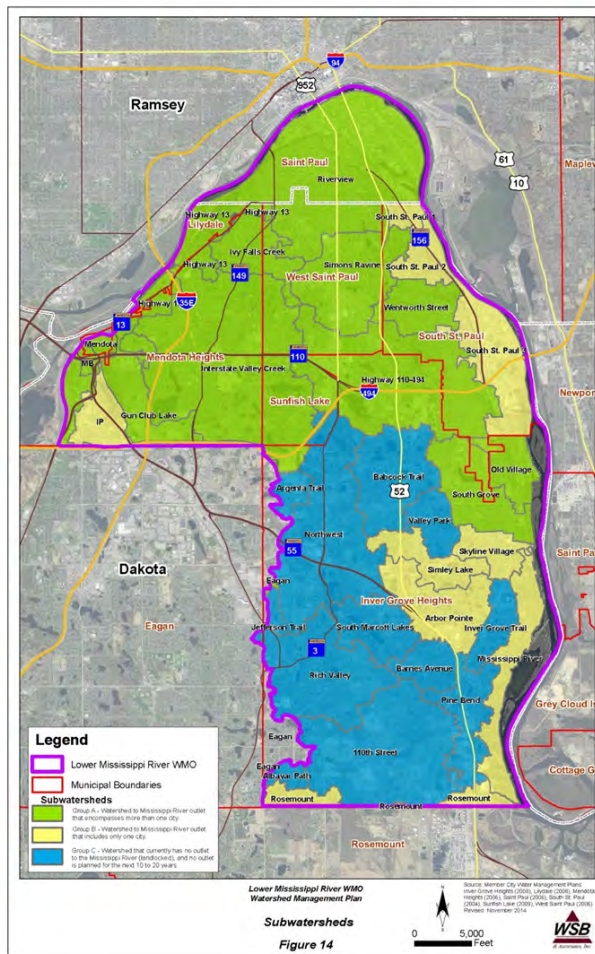
Valley Branch Watershed District (VBWD) has a small portion of its boundary in the northeast corner of Ramsey County. This area generally flows into Washington County and ultimately to the Lower St. Croix River.





**SURFACE WATER**

Lower Mississippi River Water Management Organization (LMRWMO) has drainage boundaries within southern Saint Paul that ultimately flow to the Mississippi River.

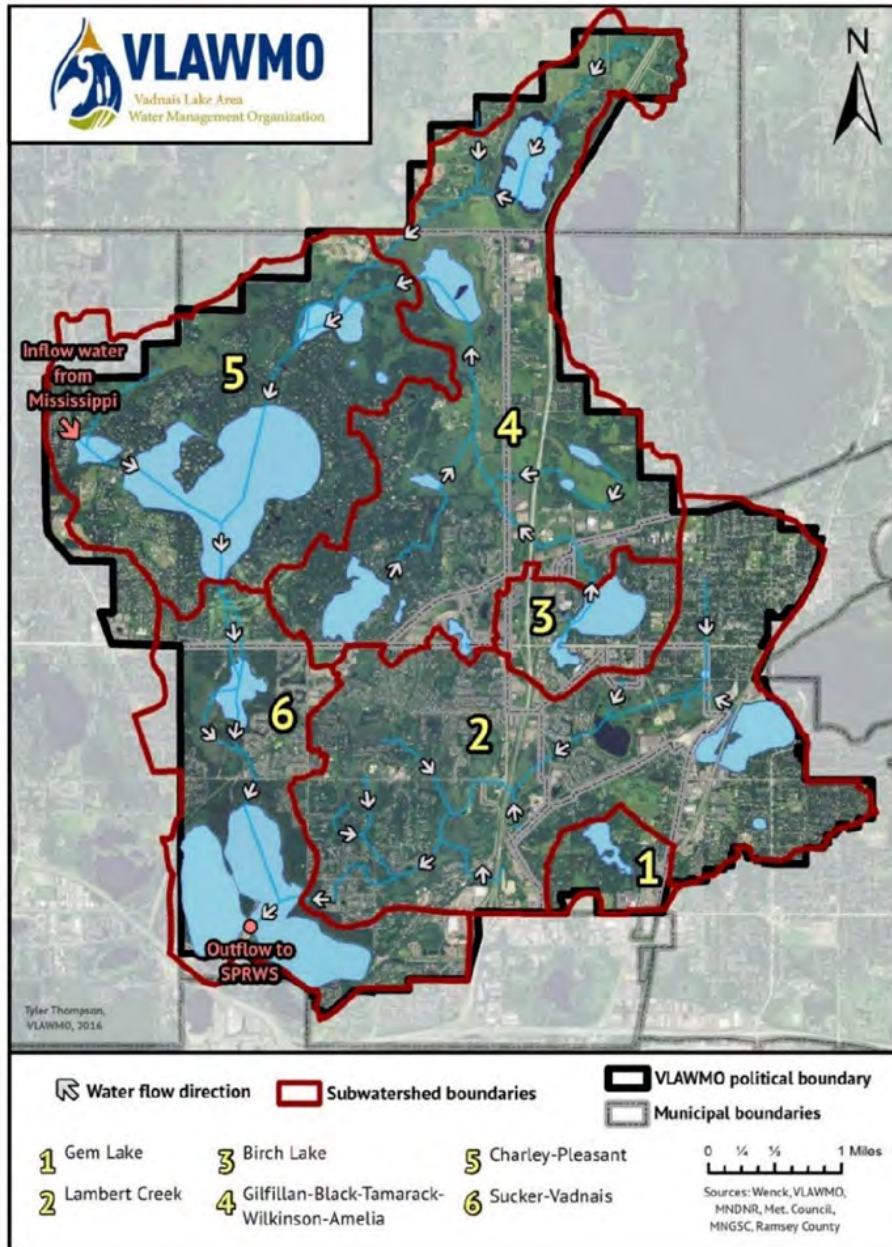


The Mississippi Water Management Organization (MWMO) has a small portion of its boundary on the western side of Ramsey County within the cities of Saint Paul and Lauderdale. This subwatershed ultimately drains to the Mississippi River through a series of pipe networks.



**SURFACE WATER**

The Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO) has six subdrainage areas within Ramsey County. These areas generally drain from north to south, with the exception of Birch Lake draining south to north. All subdrainage areas ultimately drain to Vadnais Lake East and Vadnais Lake West. The drainage then flows into RWMWD.



As Ramsey County is highly developed in land use, the volumes and flow rates within the drainage areas are greater than counties with mostly agricultural or vast open space. The percentage of impervious surface results in a high runoff rate and urban, poor quality soils often do not allow for infiltration practices. Most of the watershed districts and water management organizations regulate runoff rates as part of their permitting program. While the county has not individually modeled the volumes and rates of flow for each drainage area, several watershed districts and water management organizations have included this information as part of their watershed management planning.

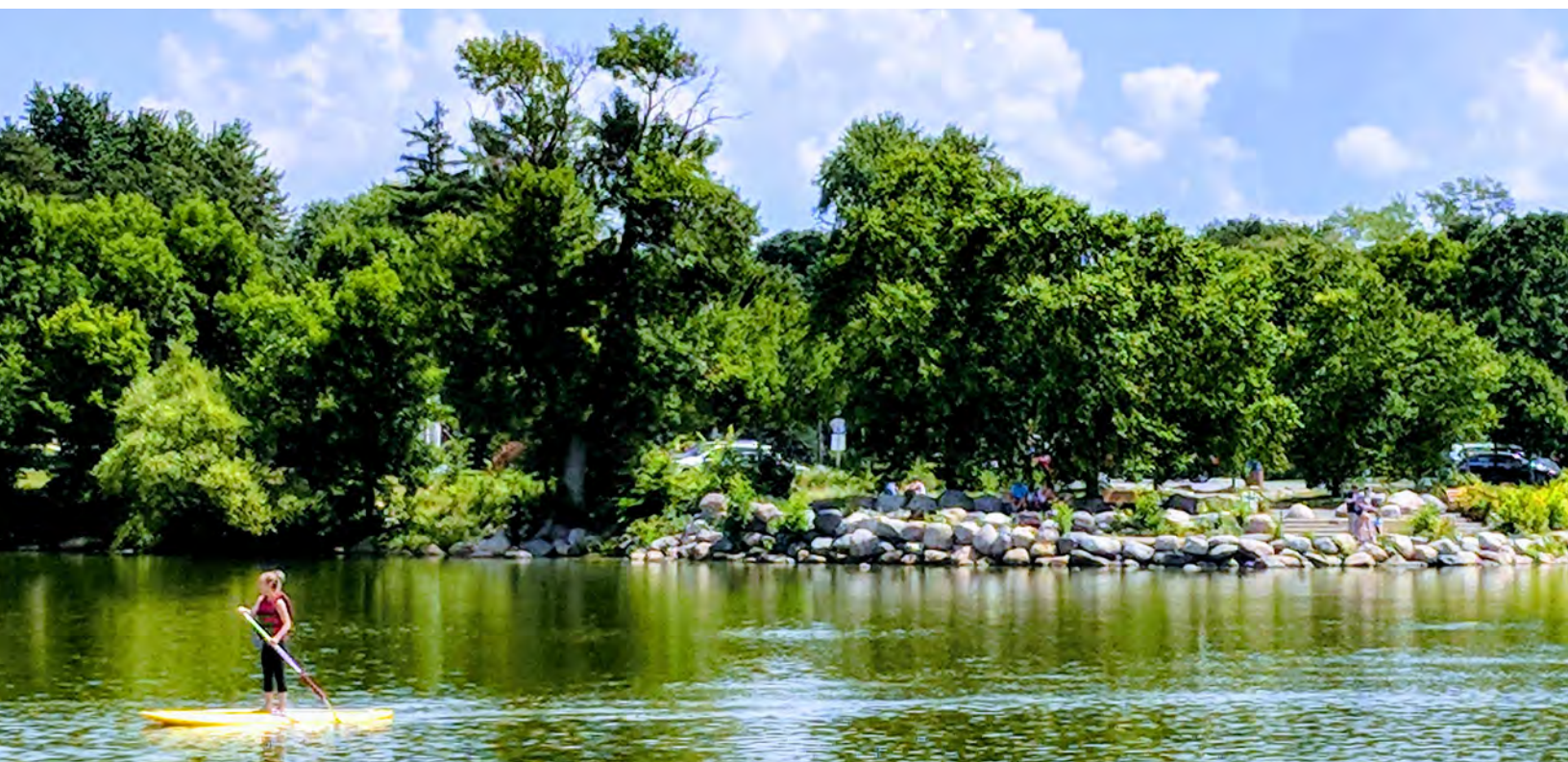
## LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/PROGRAM

The county has a limited role in local water management planning per Minnesota Rules 2018, part 8410 and Minnesota Statutes 2018, section 103B. The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners adopted the Ramsey County Groundwater Protection Plan, prepared by the former Ramsey Conservation District under Minnesota Statutes 2018, section 103B.255, in 1996. In 2014, the county received funding for Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid, under Laws of Minnesota 2014, chapter 308, section 477A19.

Effective July 1, 2018, legislative action transferred the duties and authorities of the Ramsey Conservation District to Ramsey County. Formerly the Ramsey Conservation District, is now the Soil and Water Conservation Division of the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department. They will continue to provide assistance to landowners implementing conservation projects, ensure compliance with Minnesota's buffer law, administering the Wetland Conservation Act as a member of Technical Evaluation Panels, supporting programs for the management of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species, among other critical initiatives for the wise stewardship of soil, water and habitat in Ramsey County. [View the RCD plan.](#)

Historically, Ramsey County had a very active role in water resource management, dating back to the 1923 County Lake Report, which resulted in the development of numerous lake level augmentation wells, monitoring of lake levels, and aquatic plant control efforts. The county considers itself a leader in surface water management and current management efforts include conducting a lake water quality and county beach sampling program on major recreational lakes, maintaining a laboratory certified to Minnesota Department of Health standards for recreational water quality parameters, maintaining an extensive water quality database, measuring lake water elevations using accurate benchmarks, conducting aquatic plant surveys, delineating wetland boundaries for projects or actions related to county roads, parks or tax-forfeit property, and aerating shallow lakes to maintain fish populations.

Ramsey County has conducted water quality monitoring of recreational lakes since the early 1980's. The monitoring program evaluates growing season mean water transparency (Secchi Depth) as well as concentrations of nutrients, chlorophyll (a measure of the algae population), bacteria and inorganic ions. Algae, zooplankton and aquatic plant populations are also characterized. Year-round





## SURFACE WATER

monitoring of dissolved oxygen, specific conductivity, temperature and chloride concentrations are conducted. Lake water quality data are submitted to the MPCA for input into the EPA's STORET database and are provided to watershed districts and water management organizations.

The County Aquatic Nuisance Control Policy, Resolution 83-750 provides for a county match up to the level of DNR funding for management of exotic plant species. In 2014, the county received funding for Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid, under Minnesota Legislation Chapter 308, H.F. No. 3167, sec. 11 [477A19]. The Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid program seeks to "solely prevent the introduction or limit the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) at all access sites within the county". The Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division has utilized funding from BWSR for the Ramsey County Cooperative Weed Management Area partnership to manage invasive plants that negatively impact natural lands, parks and open spaces in Ramsey County.

The Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division is one of many local agencies which administers the implementation and compliance of the Wetland Conservation Act. They participate on the Technical Evaluation Panel to evaluate potential wetland impacts and enforcement of unmitigated wetland impacts.

The county operates swimming beaches on Gervais, Johanna, Josephine, Long, McCarrons, Owasso, Snail, Turtle, and White Bear Lake. The county also owns park property providing public access to recreational lakes such as Island and Beaver. The county monitors beach water quality for E. coli bacteria on a weekly basis throughout the swimming season. These data are collected and reviewed per the County Beach Monitoring Protocol.

The county operates aeration systems on Beaver, Como, Island, Otter, Owasso and Silver East lakes. As required by the DNR permit, the county must provide advanced public notice prior to operation and maintain required warning signs during periods of operation to protect citizens.

The county operates and maintains boat ramps on several recreational lakes for which a DNR or watershed district permit may be required.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, which includes permits administered and enforced by the MPCA. Public agencies who own storm sewer systems are required to obtain a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. The permit holder is required to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program, or SWPPP, that includes measurable stormwater practices within six categories, termed Minimum Control Measures.

### These measures include:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation and Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management
- Pollution Prevention/ Good Housekeeping in Municipal Operations

*Annual projects and programming are derived from [Ramsey County Public Works Department's Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#), [Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department's project list](#), and [Ramsey County's Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\)](#).*





A report summarizing annual stormwater management activities based on the approved SWPPP is required. An annual public meeting is also a requirement of the permit to present information on stormwater management activities and solicit citizen input. Under the Clean Water Act and Minnesota Rule, part 7090, Ramsey County is required to obtain an NPDES MS4 permit. The county SWPPP has been prepared and includes activities of county departments, including Public Works, Public Health, Parks and Recreation, and the Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division. The county completes an annual report of stormwater management activities based on the SWPPP and conducts an annual public meeting.

NPDES Construction Stormwater permits are required for projects with grading activities impacting more than one acre. Preparation of a project Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is required, which includes erosion and sediment control and appropriate stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs). Regular inspection and maintenance of erosion and sediment controls is required during construction. The county obtains NPDES Construction Stormwater permits for road or other county projects meeting the required disturbance area of one acre or more. Temporary and permanent BMPs are designed and included in the project construction plans. Regular site inspections are conducted by county staff and the contractor during construction. County staff must receive training and be certified in Design of Construction SWPPP, Construction Installer, and Construction Site Management as presented by the University of Minnesota Erosion and Stormwater Management Certification Program. Maintenance of ponds, wetlands and other BMPs is a requirement of the MS4 permit program. Maintenance work completed annually is summarized in the MS4 annual report. Periodic inspection and recordkeeping is needed to establish the appropriate cleaning or replacement schedule for various BMPs.

Ramsey County has adopted Goals, Strategies, and Performance Measures as critical success indicators related to the inspection and condition rating of storm sewer system structures. These measures reflect the county's efforts to inspect storm sewer system structures and repair structures classified in poor condition. The county MS4 SWPPP identifies the commitment to annually inspect at least 20% of the storm sewer system outfalls not connected to city storm sewer systems and other related structures such as ponds, infiltration basins and outlets. Catch basin structures along county roads scheduled for major maintenance work are also inspected and repaired. Regular inspection and repair of deficient storm sewer system structures are required to effectively manage and sustain this valuable county asset. The storm sewer system will be tracked in the future using the enterprise asset management system. This tool will help improve budget estimates, aid in preventative maintenance rather than reactionary repairs, and act as a quantifier for reporting to residents.

Several watershed districts in the county have adopted or expanded their rules and permit programs. These programs generally affect land grading activities greater than one acre in size. In some watershed districts, volume reduction standards have been implemented to include 1.1 inch of runoff from all impervious surfaces within the project area (not only new impervious area).

The county provides funding for BMPs associated with its road construction or other development activities. For some projects, the BMP may provide stormwater treatment of runoff from outside county property. This may include BMPs such as surface or underground infiltration structures, ponds, swales and replacement wetlands.

Several housekeeping BMP programs are being implemented. The county operates an oil and oil filter recycling program for the public, as well as household hazardous waste collection sites and yard waste sites. County storage piles of salt material for winter ice control are covered and isolated from the storm sewer system. Various agencies within the county conduct extensive street sweeping efforts. As a metro county, Ramsey County is a stakeholder of the MPCA's Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Chloride Total Maximum Daily Load Study. Winter maintenance activities to roads and impervious surfaces are a primary contributor to increasing chloride levels in our water bodies. Through a [winter maintenance performance-based approach](#), we strive to reduce the chloride levels within county lakes, wetlands, and streams.

[Saltwater before the storm keeps roads clear — and it's greener and costs less](#)  
*Pioneer Press*

The capital improvement program detailing the schedule, estimated cost, and funding source of Public Works projects is shown in the [2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Plan](#). This plan is revised yearly to include most pertinent projects.





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## PARKS AND TRAILS

### **Purpose**

*Ramsey County 2040 includes an overview of Ramsey County's current parks and recreation system and highlights from the [2018 Parks System Plan](#), which offers a detailed vision and plan for the system over the next ten years. The planning, review and implementation of that plan is separate from Ramsey County 2040, but strongly informs the broad themes and vision presented here. Community engagement will be an important and necessary component of all future planning. The Comprehensive Plan and Parks System Plan will provide a framework for the community to engage around.*



Ramsey County is also one of ten implementing agencies that make up the Metropolitan Regional Park System. The update to the regional Parks Policy Plan will also influence and inform the planning process over the next 20 years.

## KEY THEMES:

- ▶ Implement the 2018 Parks System Plan and conduct master plans for individual parks.
- ▶ Focus will be on redevelopment of parks rather than new, large parks.
  - ▶ Increase access to parks by foot, mobility device, bicycle and public transit.
- ▶ Develop and implement countywide Solar Energy Plan.
  - ▶ Expand and extend the regional trail network.
  - ▶ Manage the diversity and quantity of our natural resources to support key wildlife habitat.
  - ▶ Continue to measure park system metrics and compare benchmarks to similar-sized systems.
  - ▶ Create a system-wide network of volunteers.
- ▶ Park programming and facilities will adapt to remain relevant to increasingly diverse population.
  - ▶ Continue to evaluate arena and golf systems.
    - ▶ Create a non-profit foundation to support mission of parks system.
- ▶ Prioritize multimodal transportation and support active living, including bicycling and walking.

### Current System

The Ramsey County Parks & Recreation system encompasses nearly 8,000 acres consisting of six regional parks including a family aquatic center and nature center, six regional trail corridors, nine county parks, nine protection open space sites, 13 indoor ice arenas and five golf courses. The parks and recreation services provided by Ramsey County complement services provided by municipalities. A [map within the Parks System Plan](#) shows where regional and county parks are located.

Ramsey County's park system represents the largest undeveloped land area in the county. The accessibility of these areas to residents provides both service opportunities and challenges. The opportunities center around easy access for all people, while the challenges relate to issues of carrying capacity (maintaining the quality and integrity of the resources that are subjected to intense use). The provision of recreation services must be evaluated based on the capacity of the resources to support public use.

The Ramsey County Parks department has been nationally-accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) since 2004. It is currently the only county parks department in Minnesota to carry the accreditation, which recognizes park and recreation agencies for excellence in operation and service based on 144 standards.

#### The Ramsey County Parks and Recreation System consists of:

- **Six Regional Parks including:**
  - Tamarack Nature Center  
Tamarack Nature Center offers a nature pre-school in conjunction with the White Bear Lake Area School District as well as nature play, day camps, guided hikes, ski and snowshoe rentals, maple syruping, and a wealth of nature programs for all ages. Tamarack Nature Center is located within Bald Eagle-Otter Lake Regional Park.
  - Water Works Aquatic Center offers water slides and a splash pad.
- **Six regional trail corridors.**
- **Nine county parks.**
- **Nine protection open space sites .**
- **Eighteen special-use facilities.**
  - Eleven indoor arena locations with 13 sheets of ice.
  - Five golf courses.
  - Ramsey County Fairgrounds.
  - Marsden Archery Range.

The parks and recreation services provided by Ramsey County complement services provided by local cities. The majority of recreation services provided throughout the system consist mostly of passive recreation opportunities - facilities for archery, wildlife viewing, boating and fishing, biking, picnicking facilities, swimming areas, hiking, off-leash dog areas, sledding and snowshoeing, geocaching and orienteering. There are six staffed beaches and three unguarded beaches. These natural outdoor recreation facilities have historically been the fundamental components of the Ramsey County parks and recreation system. In addition to passive recreation opportunities, the parks and recreation system also provides active recreation facilities for cross-country skiing, golf, hockey, Tub Lub and mountain biking.

### Resiliency

The park system makes Ramsey County more resilient by protecting and maintaining environmental areas. Climate change is expected to cause more frequent and severe storms throughout the year. Many of the county's parks and natural spaces are located in low areas, where storm water can pool and sometimes

cause flash floods. For example, in the Snail Lake-Grass Lake area, heavy rain has created flooding problems for trails and the beach area. Redesigns of these areas could serve as models for more resilient park and trail designs in the other low areas of the county.

The resiliency topic leads the Executive Summary because many aspects of resiliency are intertwined throughout the Park System Plan.

Parks & Recreation manages 76 facilities with electrical service (23 of which also have natural gas service), from energy-intensive ice arenas to low-usage park shelters. Approximately 85 percent of the department's energy usage comes from the ice arenas.

In recent years, the department has completed a variety of energy efficiency and conservation projects, such as LED lighting retrofits, installation of solar light tubes in park restrooms, and building management/control systems. Other resilience-related technologies and best practices have also been incorporated, including permeable pavements, storm water management systems, and water reduction technologies. Design standards have been updated to incorporate energy efficiency, including the department's adaptation of SB2030 standards and net-zero design goals for future park redevelopments. Ramsey County has recently created an internal countywide team to oversee all energy related activities and the Parks & Recreation department actively participates on that team.

Future resiliency opportunities include energy studies, renewable energy implementation, enhanced storm water management practices, regional trail network extensions, water reduction strategies, and collaborative master planning.



### Natural Resources

The Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department's mission in managing plant, animal and water resources is to provide adequate sustainable habitat to support populations of native wildlife species within the county's park system.

By focusing on sustaining wildlife habitat, the surrounding ecosystem as a whole will be enhanced. The primary wildlife habitat targeted includes species of greatest conservation concern, such as grassland songbirds, shorebirds, turtles and numerous species of small mammals as defined by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-25. Many of these wildlife species and other wildlife native to Ramsey County require large areas of habitat. The parks department will work to manage the diversity and quantity of our natural resources to provide the largest possible tracts of land that contain key wildlife habitats within the Ramsey County park system.

Priority habitat restoration will be targeted first for implementation, with a goal of ongoing and progressive natural resource management for the entire park system.

### Park System Metrics

As a component to the system plan update, the Parks & Recreation department initiated a process to develop metrics per the National Park and Recreation standards. This will assist the department effectively manage and plan the use of operating resources and capital facilities by providing helpful information for how the Ramsey County park system compares to similar local and national systems.



### HOW DO WE COMPARE?

Several county park systems with similar populations across the United States were chosen for comparison. Data reviewed was categorized into three areas, budget/expenditures, parks/trails, and programs. Information used considers a combination of operating metrics that factor budgets, staffing levels, and inventory of amenities. Due to differences in how each system collects, maintains and reports data, variations exist. These variations have an impact on the per capita and/or percentage allocations within the budget, park and trail amenities, and programs offered.

- ▶ **Budget/Expenditures** - Various areas throughout the parks department were considered in determining budget/expenditures for the level of service such as operating and capital budgets; operating expenditures; revenue from picnic reservations, programs offered, golf and arenas; and volunteer efforts to offset expenditures.
- ▶ **Park/Trail** – Facilities throughout the park system were considered in determining level of service. For example, the number of parks included regional parks and county parks; non-park sites consisting of ice arenas, golf course, open space areas, and special use-facilities such as the fairgrounds and Marsden Archery Range; and regional trails.
- ▶ **Programs** – A wide variety of various programs offered were considered in determining the level of service for non-fee programs and fee-based programs. Non-fee programs provided in regional parks through the Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment funding offered unique experience like canoing, fishing and gardening that are designed for inner city youth, recreation centers and non-profit organizations who work with a client base in need of these programs or other partnered non-fee programs with Ramsey County Library such as Story Trail; and fee-based programs offered at Tamarack Nature Center, arenas and golf.



## PARKS AND TRAILS

Overall, Ramsey County fared well with budget/expenditures, parks/trails, and programs ranging in the medium quartile with similar county park systems. With some of the metrics, Ramsey County was either below average or above average in comparison based on 2017 data (see Park Metrics section of the Park System Plan for additional data).

**Ramsey County Summary Effectiveness Ratio (based on 2017 data):**

	Ramsey County Parks & Recreation	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
<b>Budget/Expenditures</b>				
Capital budget for the fiscal year	\$5,290,545	\$5,290,545	\$8,879,578	\$12,248,757
Revenue per capita	\$14	\$2	\$8	\$14
Total revenue to total operating expenditures	66.8%	21.5%	30.4%	45.2%
Total tax expenditures per capita	\$7	\$5	\$12	\$24
Operating expenditures per acres of parks and non-park sites	\$1,381	\$1,381	\$2,391	\$3,436
Number of volunteers	650	553.3	925	1,332.8
<b>Parks/Trails</b>				
Total number of parks (regional park, county park)	15	13	39	104
Total number of non-park sites (arenas, golf course, open space, special-use facility)	33	11.8	12	17.3
Total acres of park and non-park site	7,020	3,388.4	6,139	10,794
Number of residents per park	36,043.3	5,989.7	12,708.3	42,318.2
Number of acres per park	468	46.8	217.7	298.3
Total number of trail miles managed or maintained by the agency	27.4	42.9	70	94
<b>Programs</b>				
Total number of programs offered	1,660	245	355	715
Number of fee-based programs	1,450	188.8	325	662.5
Number of participants per program	38.69	50.6	62.5	270.6
Ratio of fee programs to all programs	87.3%	63.0%	84.0%	90.5%
Ratio of building attendance to park	26.6%	26.1%	26.3%	26.4%

**Below Average Effectiveness**

Areas where Ramsey County was below average in level of service.

**Budget/Expenditures**

- Total tax expenditures per capita.
- Operating expenditures per acres of parks and non-park sites.
- Capital budget for fiscal year.
- Number of volunteers.

Ramsey County is investing less than similar-sized agencies to provide the park system. The number of volunteers is concentrated at Tamarack Nature Center and could be expanded system-wide with additional personnel.

**Parks/Trails**

- Total number of parks.
- Total number of trail miles managed or maintained by the agency.

Ramsey County's system tends to be fewer larger parks versus several small parks. The county is also the smallest in area within the state. The trails system is planning to grow in the near future.

**Programs**

- Number of participants per program.
- Number of non-fee programs.

The discrepancy for the number of participants per program reflects that most of the park use is by informal use. The nature center has been the source of the formal programs until the outreach program began in 2016. The department has been expected to cover a large portion of the cost of a program. Ramsey County does not program large community events which might be where the numbers skew in comparison.

**Above Average Effectiveness**

Areas where Ramsey County was above average in level of service.

**Budget/Expenditures**

- Revenue per capita.
- Total revenue to total operating expenditures.

The practice of raising two-thirds of the operational expenditures from fees originates mostly from the golf and arena portions of the budget. Both are large portions of the budget and are expected to come close to covering operating expenses. Subsidizing low, or no-cost, programs will be important when considering connecting under-served communities with the park system.

**Parks/Trails**

- Total number of non-park sites.
- Total acreage of park and non-park sites.
- Number of residents per park.
- Number of acres per park.

The golf and arena systems are large and typically operated at the city level. The high number of residents per park reflects the densely populated county and relatively small number of parks. The large acreage reflects the large area size of the small number of parks.

**Programs**

- Total number of programs offered.
- Number of fee-based programs.
- Ratio of fee programs to all programs.
- Ratio of building attendance to park attendance.



The data shows that many programs are offered to a small number of participants per program. The fee-based orientation of the programming reflects the pressure to cover costs. Moving towards serving underserved communities will require more subsidy and less reliance on revenue from fees and charges.

Other data and metrics will be gathered through satisfaction surveys, regional park surveys and user counts. Results from these and other metrics can be stored on [Ramsey County's open data portal](#) for all to access. Reports on use numbers can also be generated such as for golf course rounds played, ice rental numbers, and program participation.

### **Where Our System is at Today**

The park system has made many improvements since the last plan. Keller Golf Course received a makeover with new clubhouse and more than \$4 million in improvements to the golf course. Vadnais Sports Center was purchased and the three outlots on that site have been sold and developed. Tamarack Nature Center has gone through multiple phases of development and redevelopment. Keller Regional Park has undergone multiple phases of improvements and has one more major phase beginning in 2018.

The redevelopment of Lake Owasso County Park in 2018-2020 will represent a complete cycle of redevelopment for all county parks. The cycle will then begin again with at Beaver Lake County Park.

Ramsey County municipalities came together to develop a countywide approach to increase physical activity through biking and walking. The plan empowers the county and local communities with the tools and framework to create local pedestrian and bicycle networks with countywide and regional benefits. It includes a set of tools, analyses, and actions to engage communities in creating a place where people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can safely and comfortably walk and bike in their daily lives. It provides resources and a guiding framework for developing a Connected Ramsey Communities Network where walking and biking are regular parts of people's daily lives throughout Ramsey County. The plan incorporates equity principles, tools, and performance measures with an emphasis on an All Abilities Transportation Network that serves all people throughout Ramsey County.

The Connected Ramsey Communities Network is a countywide network of existing and future bikeways, designed to serve as a backbone connecting local communities and the region. This network is built from local facilities and is guided by local and regional planning efforts. It serves as a guiding framework for planning, prioritizing, and designing local active transportation systems. When fully developed, it will connect people with desirable destinations throughout the city and county with high-quality, long-distance, and connector routes.

The [Arena Task Force recommendations of 2016](#) are guiding the next 10 years for our arenas. Refrigeration systems are currently being changed out one arena at a time. Demand is closely monitored to stay in tune with the appropriate supply of rinks. Energy efficiency will be introduced along with the reshaping of the system.

A golf system analysis will be conducted in 2018 to guide the future of golf facilities.

Master plans for Battle Creek Regional Park and Rice Creek Regional Trail are currently under revision and will guide the future development and redevelopment for those two popular parks. Significant growth is proposed for Battle Creek Regional Park. The [Rice Creek Commons](#) development will impact the Rice Creek Regional Trail area and bring people to the broader system through the trail network.

More information is detailed in the [Parks System Plan](#).

## REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS

The regional parks system was established in 1974 by the state legislature to provide parks and open space that would serve as the “state parks” for the metropolitan region. During the next 10 years, the Metropolitan Council will update its Parks Policy Plan that guides the provision and operation of the regional parks and trails. Major themes in this plan will include the addition and placement of new parks and new regional parks and trails to add to the system and the importance of racial equity. The racial equity topic will impact the master planning process, require more collaboration amongst the 10 implementing agencies, broaden the types of facilities and amenities provided for park users, and elevate the importance of access through trails and transportation networks as well as the proximity of parks to areas of racially concentrated areas of poverty.

### Regional Park Objectives:

- To provide public access to major water bodies and watercourses.
- To provide sites of sufficient size (200-500 acres) that will accommodate a range of activities and large numbers of users.
- To provide a resource base with a carrying capacity for a high number of users.
- To emphasize outdoor recreational experiences as well as resource preservation.
- To provide recreational developments that are consistent with the specific resource base.
- To protect and manage significant natural resources within park units for aesthetic enjoyment and outdoor education.
- To provide internal trail networks that link or provide access to significant natural resources or outdoor recreation facilities.
- To provide special use areas such as off-leash dog areas that are compatible with the natural resources and other recreational development.

Environmental Natural Areas have been identified in those Regional Parks that have significant natural resources. Environmental Natural Areas (ENA) are defined within Regional Parks as having significant, sensitive, and unique natural resources to Ramsey County that warrant extended preservation. The habitat and vegetation within these areas is managed to support and enhance these natural communities. These areas are designated for increased habitat protection, ecological restoration, passive recreation and environmental education. Any development expansion within these areas is limited to trails only, with nature interpretation facilities allowed within the planned development areas of Tamarack Nature Center only. Public access to these areas is restricted to designated trails and the use of these areas is limited to passive forms of recreation such as hiking, skiing and nature viewing. Bicycles and off-road cycling is allowed only on designated trails. Dogs and off-trail activities are not allowed.

Official designation of regional parks requires approval by the Metropolitan Council. There are currently six regional parks under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County within the Regional Recreation Open Space System. These regional parks total 5,146.55 acres. In addition, the City of Saint Paul operates an additional four regional parks and Three Rivers Park District operates a Special Recreation Feature within Ramsey County.

## PARKS AND TRAILS

The Park System Plan details information about each of the six regional parks within the Ramsey County system – Bald Eagle-Otter Lake, Battle Creek, Keller, Long Lake, Tony Schmidt, and Vadnais-Snail Lakes regional parks.

### Some highlights include:

#### ► BALD EAGLE-OTTER LAKE

The 1987 master plan is in need of updating to be relevant for current and future needs. This will redefine the future development as well as the redevelopment of existing facilities. There are in-holdings identified within the park boundary and can be updated with the master plan update. These are important future acquisitions for completion of the park area.

Tamarack Nature Center will experience phased development to complete the campus of facilities. The addition of a recreation program space will be the last major piece to accomplish along with a maintenance area.

Trails will continue to be a focus. Extensions of existing trails and the creation of new segments will help improve access to the park and to the various amenities within the park. Bruce Vento Regional Trail will pass by the park to the east and the Birch Lake Regional Trail will extend north to possibly connect with regional trails heading into Anoka County and west on the northern Ramsey County border.

The main features of this regional park are the lakes and natural areas. Preservation and restoration activities are high priorities. Some partnership experimentation is in place with environmental education and are hosted within the park. Water quality experiments have occurred and will continue to be tested.

#### ► BATTLE CREEK



The master plan will be updated beginning in 2018. This will be an extensive examination of the largest park in the system. Already underway are an off-leash area master plan and an off-road cycling master plan for Battle Creek. The Great River Passage, an initiative led by Saint Paul, will also impact the park and future design of the Mississippi River portion. Plans for Pig's Eye Lake are also underway including the project proposal to create islands within the lake for increased habitat and wind erosion reduction.

The Water Works aquatic center will be a topic of discussion over the next 10 years. The infrastructure is aging to the point of rehabilitation and/or replacement. The decision will center around whether to do so or redevelop and repurpose that

area of the park. The current design appeals to younger families and has seen steady or declining attendance. Competition with large water parks and the contrast of the water park with the natural resource mission of the system are at odds.

The variety of natural areas is the main feature of Battle Creek. Woodlands, bluffs, prairies, wetlands, the creek, and the Mississippi River require attention to maintain and restore the complex ecosystems involved.

#### ► KELLER

Keller Regional Park will soon undergo a final phase of redevelopment concentrating on the support facilities surrounding the picnic areas. Previous phases recently completed have Keller in good position for the next 10 years.



## PARKS AND TRAILS

### ► LONG LAKE

The next phase of development within this park is the pavilion, rest room and nature play area in conjunction with New Brighton's Lion's Park. Both entities agreed to cost-share the parking lot and rest room construction. Ramsey County will use state bond funds for this project.



### ► TONY SCHMIDT

The picnic shelter has been renovated and should be in good shape for the next decade. Trail connections are the focus of this park heading north connecting to other trails nearby.

### ► VADNAIS-SNAIL LAKE

Resolving the flooding problems of 2016 and 2017 are the priority for this park. Working with the watershed district and city of Shoreview will help develop a plan for resolving the sections of trails underwater and the flooded beach.

## REGIONAL TRAILS

The regional trails are linear corridors that provide safe and enjoyable routes and support facilities primarily for recreational travel that pass through or provide access to elements of the regional parks system. They also connect communities to jobs, retail, schools and other amenities. Some regional trails are greenways and along waterways that provide corridors for wildlife to travel. The network of trails is becoming the major system for bicycling throughout the metropolitan area. Coordination among the 10 agencies is important for connections of the greater system.

### Regional Trail Objectives:

- To provide alignments that accommodate unimpeded passages with a minimum disruption of the resource base.
- To provide alignments that parallel or traverse areas having scenic, historic, scientific or cultural qualities.
- To encourage multiple use when concurrent uses are compatible and multi-seasonal use when practical.
- To provide alignments that are of sufficient length for a meaningful experience and of sufficient width for safe passage, maximum capacity and minimal negative influence on adjacent community.
- To provide alignments that connect regional recreational open space sites.
- To provide alignments that utilize natural system corridors and man-made corridors.
- To function as arterial trail routes that intersect and complement local trail networks.

## PARKS AND TRAILS

There are currently eight regional trails within the Metropolitan Council's Regional Recreation Open Space System under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County. These regional trail corridors include 880.54 acres and total 35.64 miles.

Ramsey County operates seven regional trails – Birch Lake, Bruce Vento, Highway 96, Lake Links, Lexington, Rice Creek North, Rice Creek West, and Trout Brook Regional Trails.

### Some highlights from the Park System Plan include:

► **BIRCH LAKE** – The focus during the next decade is to complete missing segments of the trail. The preferred route has challenges including limited width in some areas.



► **BRUCE VENTO** – The preferred route has yet to be completed and is a priority for the next few years. Once the route is established, design and engineering of plans will be created in order to be poised for potential funding.

► **HIGHWAY 96** – This trail is due for redevelopment in some sections. Missing sections were recently completed over Interstates 35E and 35W making the entire stretch complete.

► **LAKE LINKS** – This section will be added onto in the future as part of a larger project to complete a trail around White Bear Lake. The Lake Links section will also be a connection to a regional trail heading east to Stillwater.

► **LEXINGTON** – The master plan will be developed over the next 10 years. Much of this trail is established by city and county trails. The trail will connect to Saint Paul with a goal to reach the Mississippi River.

► **RICE CREEK NORTH** – A missing link from County Road H to Long Lake Regional Park was completed in 2016. New sections are being created around the development of Rice Creek Commons. Once completed, the trail will take users from Lino Lakes to the Mississippi River in Fridley. A coinciding water trail follows the route in Rice Creek and is popular with canoeists and kayakers.



► **RICE CREEK WEST** – This is the portion of the Rice Creek Trail heading west from Long Lake Regional Park to Fridley. The water trail in Rice Creek in this stretch has been deemed to be too difficult and dangerous for both maintenance and use. While not promoting use, this section will be available for use by those who dare venture there.

► **TROUT BROOK** – The preferred route is currently being planned for with several difficult segments to solve. These segments tend to be developed areas where acquisition and easements may need to be negotiated. There are also segments that pass through residential areas that see a trail in their front yard as undesirable.



## LOCAL COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS

**County Parks**

The county park areas tend to be of limited size and resource base (generally associated with a significant water recreation resource) that offer a range of related outdoor recreational opportunities for county and metropolitan area residents. They have natural resource based facilities and amenities. County parks differ from city parks in that they tend to focus on passive recreation and the natural resources rather than active sports that city parks tend to accommodate.

County parks operation and capital funding is mostly provided through the property tax levy. There are occasional capital grants available but all regular funding comes from levy dollars.

**County Park Objectives:**

- To provide outdoor recreation facilities for intense public use that complement the natural resource base.
- To provide public access to water bodies.
- To accommodate maximum use of site resources.
- To provide facilities that require intense management.
- To accommodate exclusive-use requests and special-interest groups.
- To protect and manage significant natural resources within park units for aesthetic enjoyment and outdoor education.



## PARKS AND TRAILS

There are currently nine county parks under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County. These parks total 726.49 acres.

The county parks and trails are also detailed in the [Park System Plan](#).

### Highlights include:

- ▶ **BEAVER LAKE** – This park is the next to undergo a master plan update. Upon completion of the plan, the project will be placed in the queue of capital project funding requests.
- ▶ **ISLAND LAKE** – Heavily used and host to the Slice of Shoreview summer festival, this park is well-loved. Opportunities exist with the connection to the Island Lake Golf Course. Should that use change in the future, the land would be an opportunity for a park redesign.
- ▶ **LAKE GERVAIS** – The master plan could use a revision. One consideration received from the city of Little Canada is a request for a boat launch. The park used to host a launch but was redesigned eliminating the launch. The public launch serving the lake is on Spoon Lake which makes access sometimes difficult due to water levels in the summer and open water in the winter. Alternatives will also be studied.
- ▶ **LAKE JOSEPHINE** – This narrow park has limited room for amenities. Land across Lexington Avenue has possibilities for a formal trail. The city of Roseville is looking for a trail segment through that area. Future development of the Lexington Regional Trail could incorporate Lake Josephine improvements or inclusion into the regional system.
- ▶ **LAKE MCCARRONS** – A redevelopment effort is underway with stakeholders for the nearby Rice Street and Larpenteur Avenue intersection and surrounding area. Lake McCarrons County Park is a major focal point of the plans for the redevelopment. New housing complexes would add to the demand on the park. Ramsey County will work closely with Roseville, Maplewood, and Saint Paul to ensure planning for parks and open space is factored into the redevelopment and park dedication decisions.
- ▶ **LAKE OWASSO** – This park will be redeveloped in 2018 with a final phase in 2020 when the road through the park is rebuilt by the city of Shoreview. Features will be similar to the current design with the addition of a nature play area.
- ▶ **POPLAR LAKE** – This space is undeveloped except for a county yard waste site, the next step is for a master plan to be developed. This may come up within the next 10-year window.
- ▶ **TURTLE LAKE** – This recently redeveloped park will service the northern part of the county well during the next decade.
- ▶ **WHITE BEAR LAKE** – The beach was closed for several years due to low water levels until reopening in 2017. The boat launch is active and casual picnicking is popular. Reestablishing the beach will be a priority if the water level remains high enough for swimming.

## PROTECTION OPEN SPACES

Outstanding landscape amenities, critical natural systems and vulnerable natural resources are characteristics of Protection Open Spaces. These characteristics contribute to public health, outdoor education, aesthetic enjoyment and ecosystem stability. Stewardship of these spaces is the charge for the parks and recreation department. This is a primary objective of the county's goal of community health and well-being.

### Objectives:

- To protect unique features of aesthetic, educational or scientific value for public enrichment.
- To protect natural areas and manage the resources within these areas to support appropriate natural vegetation.
- To manage areas of suitable size and character to provide adequate food and shelter for significant wildlife populations within the urban environment.
- To protect a system of drainageways and holding basins critical to the surface movement, storage and treatment of storm water runoff.
- To provide public access for trails, nature appreciation and outdoor education.

There are currently nine protection open space sites under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County. These sites total 650.56 acres.

- Beaver Creek Open Space
- Fish Creek Open Space
- Holloway Marsh Open Space
- Kohlman Creek Open Space
- Kohlman Marsh Open Space
- Mississippi River Bluffs Open Space
- Suburban Pond Open Space
- Turtle Creek Open Space
- Willow Lake Open Space
- Woodview Open Space

## SPECIAL-USE FACILITIES

Special-Use Facilities are areas or facilities that provide intense specialized or single-purpose indoor and/or outdoor recreation activities and require a specific resource base, location, restrictive control and management program above and beyond that associated with other general recreation activities.

### Objectives:

- To provide only that natural or artificial resource base which is necessary to accommodate the intended use.
- To provide opportunities for involvement as a participant or spectator in a controlled setting.
- To encourage multi-seasonal use when feasible to maximize return on capital investment.

There are currently 18 special-use facilities under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County. These facilities include five golf courses; 11 ice arena locations (13 rinks); a fairgrounds (including horseshoe courts and historic cemetery) and an archery range. These sites total 591.12 acres (plus Keller Golf Course which is part of Keller Regional Park; and the Island Lake Golf Center which is part of Island Lake County Park).

### Golf

Ramsey County's golf system includes five courses and one dome practice facility. Three of the county's five courses have a professional services contract with a PGA-Certified Golf Professional to manage the pro shop and clubhouse operations. The capital and maintenance at those three courses are managed and operated by the county. Those courses are Keller (18 holes, "flagship" course), Goodrich (18 holes) and The Ponds at Battle Creek (regulation nine-hole). The fourth course, Manitou Ridge, is operated under a professional service agreement, which covers the entire operation including clubhouse, pro shop and maintenance operation. The county maintains the capital needs of the course as part of the agreement. The fifth course, Island Lake, is an executive nine-hole course with a driving range. The course was established in a lease-to-build agreement. The county also has a land lease agreement for the operation of the Goodrich Golf Dome, which is separate from the course agreement.

In 2018, the golf operation will undergo an analysis to evaluate the current finances and operational practices at its golf facilities as they compare to industry best management practices in public golf course operations. The department is seeking assessment of the operational efficiencies and suggestions for enhancements that will increase revenues and decrease costs. In addition, the county would like an evaluation of its golf courses' position in the community and local market. Included in the final report, the county will have a review of golf operations in totality as well as facility-by-facility, the system's position in the local market environment, a review of the physical condition of the facilities and recommendations, and the results that can be expected from various management strategies and options. The evaluation will provide a foundation for operational and financial decisions for the upcoming biennium budget and long-term capital planning. The recommendations from the analysis are expected to be the 10-year plan for golf.



## Arena System



Ramsey County Parks & Recreation operates one of the largest indoor ice arena systems in the country, consisting of 11 locations with 13 sheets of ice. Seven of the 11 locations are within the city limits of Saint Paul. Nine arenas were constructed between 1971 and 1975, some utilizing state funding initiated during the Governor Wendell Anderson administration. These facilities were prioritized in a targeted area in Saint Paul. The majority of the arenas were built as practice facilities or shelters from the elements for the local high school and youth hockey programs.

The oldest arena in the system is Aldrich Arena, built in 1962. The newest facility to the Ramsey County system is Vadnais Sports Center. The County acquired the facility in July of 2014. Vadnais houses two sheets of ice and a 100,000 square foot dome turfed facility. There are currently 133 different user groups utilizing the Ramsey County arena system recently renting a total of 18,038 hours of ice time throughout the year, with 12,293 hours rented from November to February.

In 2014, The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners directed the County Manager to form an Arena Task Force to study the current state of the indoor ice arena system and make recommendations for the long-term future of the system. The task force examined the history of the arena system, the current operation, user groups, explored potential user groups, analyzed related issues and briefly explored possible alternative uses. Based upon the data analysis, trends examination, information from subject matter experts, community input, and the knowledge and experience of the task force members, the following list summarizes their topics of recommendations: Ice assigning/priority of use; Conditions for consolidation; Contracted use opportunities; Ice rental rates; Refrigerant replacement recommendation; Replacement schedule; Other capital improvements; Funding; Criteria for ending the use as an ice arena; Criteria for adding an arena; Repurposing process; Plan for non-county-owned arenas; Workforce impact. While the department's primary focus is on natural resource management, the Task Force did determine that the arena system does help accomplish the vision, mission and goals of Ramsey County through the provision of geographical access to a recreational amenity that provides healthy, safe, community-building opportunities. The arenas are an important part of the overall quality of life for Ramsey County residents, but for the future, careful consideration of recreational facility development should not supersede that focus.

**The arenas within the Ramsey County system include:**

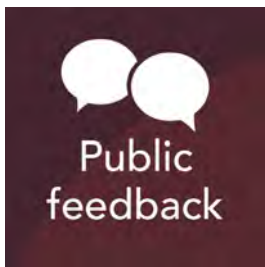
- Aldrich
- Biff Adams
- Charles Schulz-Highland
- Gustafson-Phalen
- Harding
- Ken Yackel – West Side
- Oscar Johnson
- Pleasant
- Shoreview
- Vadnais Sports Center
- White Bear County

The age of the system and changes to refrigeration systems have the county looking at capital improvements to replace the refrigeration system and update the buildings making them more energy efficient. The refrigerant R-22 is banned from production as of the year 2020. Most of the Ramsey County rinks utilize R-22. The plan is to gradually change out the systems at each arena. The rinks are prioritized for capital improvements based on projected use out into the future as well as their age and condition. The lowest priority rinks may well be the first to be repurposed, ideally before any capital investment is made. There are a few rinks in the system that do not directly serve those living nearby and are possibly the first to be repurposed. An extensive public process will guide the ultimate decision about the highest and best use.

Other indoor arena operators will influence the future of the Ramsey County system. The closure or continued operation will impact the supply and demand for indoor ice.

Another recommendation of the task force is to cluster rinks in order to receive efficiencies in operating costs. Two rinks side-by-side can operate more efficiently than two rinks each on their own separate mechanical systems. Opportunities to operate multiple sheets of ice are present at Vadnais Sports Center, Charles Schulz-Highland and Aldrich Arena. The three sites are spread out geographically within the county.

## PARK SYSTEM PLAN PUBLIC INPUT



Community Engagement was a goal to develop a framework that allowed Ramsey County residents, community members and organizations, and other local partners to participate in the planning process. Ramsey County Parks & Recreation recognized a need to review current recreation trends, park use, and available recreation amenities because much has changed throughout Ramsey County since the 2006 Park and Recreation System Plan was implemented. In an effort to evaluate the park and recreation system, a Comprehensive Parks Needs Analysis was launched to help direct the development of park and recreation space and programs throughout the county, and identify current and future community needs. As part of this process, a countywide parks planning survey has been created.

### The parks and recreation survey will:

- Document existing park and recreation facilities, how they're used, who uses them and where improvements can be made.
- Help county officials, park staff and residents determine what steps to take to ensure all communities in Ramsey County have adequate access to our parks and open spaces.
- Determine the size, location and number of future parks in Ramsey County.

### ► ONLINE SURVEY

An online Parks Needs Assessment Survey was launched in July 2017 to solicit additional insight and comments for improvement to the park system. The online survey was active until February 2, 2018. (See the Park Needs Analysis Survey item for further detail).

## PARKS AND TRAILS

### ► PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS

The Parks & Recreation department launched a series of community engagement meetings to gain further insight and comments for improvement to the park system. Early in the process, it was a goal to provide way to seek meaningful engagement. As a result, the department developed a series of nine pop-up table meetings throughout the community at various locations and times:

- December 5, 2017 - Shoreview Library.
- December 9 - Tamarack Nature Center.
- December 16 - Battle Creek Community Center.
- December 18 - Maplewood Community Center.
- December 19 - Shoreview Community Center.
- December 30 - Highland Arena.
- January 5 - Vadnais Sports Center.
- January 6 - Health and Fitness Expo, New Brighton Community Center.
- January 18 - Roseville Library.

### ► PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

After review of information received from the online survey and public engagement meetings, staff developed user themes for the parks and recreation system.

#### ► Existing System

- Accessible and free access.
- Well-maintained facilities.
- Wide range of recreation amenities.
- Connectivity to natural resource amenities.

#### ► Gaps

- Trail connections.
- More variety of facility with food/concessions.
- More variety of recreation amenity rentals (boats, kayaks, recreation equipment, bikes).
- Extended park hours.

#### ► Future Improvements

##### **Park and Trail Improvements**

- More mountain bike and cross-country ski trails.
- Addition of another nature center.
- Improved trail development for better connections to parks and communities.
- Add or improve recreation amenities (playgrounds, nature playground).
- Improved rental facilities.

##### **Golf**

- Improved connections and or access to facilities.
- Improved golf amenities and opportunities.
- Improve cost and discounts.
- Multi-use of golf course.
- Partnerships – reduce amount of tax dollars spent.

##### **Arena**

- Improved connections and or access to facilities.
- Improved arena amenities and opportunities.
- Multi-use of arenas.
- Improve use and operating costs.

##### **Programing**

- More programing opportunities throughout system.
  - Nature programming.
  - Recreation programming.



## Active Living Summary



Active Living Ramsey Communities is a coalition created in December of 2004 by Parks & Recreation, other county departments, and community partners. For more than 10 years, the coalition has engaged the community to improve health. They create and promote environments that make it safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities to be physically active in their daily routines. Active Living Ramsey Communities encourages healthy lifestyles by bringing people and resources together to build active, walkable and bike-able communities. A collective vision and collaborative approach inform all aspects of this plan. Their work supports active living and active transportation for people in Ramsey County.

This comprehensive plan and the Ramsey County-wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan provide a framework for the development of a Connected Ramsey Communities Network. Implementing these plans helps to create a comprehensive network for people of all ages and abilities to safely, easily and comfortably walk, bicycle and be active.

### **Ramsey County-wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan**

Ramsey County municipalities came together to develop a countywide approach to increase physical activity through biking and walking. The plan empowers the county and local communities with the tools and framework to create local pedestrian and bicycle networks with countywide and regional benefits. It includes a set of tools, analyses, and actions to engage communities in creating a place where people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can safely and comfortably walk and bike in their daily lives. It provides resources and a guiding framework for developing a Connected Ramsey Communities Network where walking and biking are regular parts of people's daily lives throughout Ramsey County. The plan incorporates equity principles, tools, and performance measures with an emphasis on an All Abilities Transportation Network that serves all people throughout Ramsey County.

### **Connected Ramsey Communities Network**

The Connected Ramsey Communities Network is a countywide network of existing and future bikeways, designed to serve as a backbone connecting local communities and the region. This network is built from local facilities and is guided by local and regional planning efforts. It serves as a guiding framework for planning, prioritizing, and designing local active transportation systems. When fully developed, it will connect people with desirable destinations throughout the city and county with high-quality, long-distance, and connector routes.

### **Equity**

Active Living Ramsey Communities incorporates an equity lens in their work. The coalition works closely with staff throughout Ramsey County including Public Health, Public Works, and Regional Rail to achieve the county's vision, mission, and goals. Working with community partners, especially local municipalities, is essential to achieving the goal of creating walkable and bike-able communities for all residents. These close working relationships help produce positive results to support residents in being physically active in their daily routine.

### Ramsey County Parks and Recreation System Survey

The 2018 Parks System Survey highlights the importance of pedestrian and bicycle connections to parks and filling gaps in pedestrian and bicycle corridors to create continuous pathways throughout Ramsey County. The following key themes and findings from the survey include:

- Walking, hiking, jogging, and cycling are the most popular park activities.
  - 85% of respondents use county parks for walking, hiking, or jogging.
  - 55% of respondents use county parks for cycling.
- Most park users travel to parks within bicycling distance, and many travel to parks within walking distance.
- Nearly half of park users surveyed walk and/or bike to county parks.
- Some respondents have trouble accessing the parks by bicycling and walking. Winter access, ADA accessibility, car traffic, and wayfinding were some of the issues cited by respondents.
- Trails were the third most cited facility priority for ADA improvements.

### Opportunity and Constraints

Within the Parks System Plan, each park and trail description details opportunities and constraints specific to that location. This introduction attempts to describe broader opportunities and constraints not necessarily specific to any one location. With that in mind here are some thoughts about the next ten years:

#### SYSTEMWIDE OPPORTUNITIES:

- ▶ **Focus on acquiring in-holdings** – Developing a strategy to fund the purchase of properties within a park master plan or properties that border a park or trail corridor and would enhance the experience will take time even with persistent effort. The county will need to be prepared in order to move quickly when an opportunity presents itself.
- ▶ **Focus on redevelopment** – Maintaining assets within the system is critical to sustaining a functional system. Doing this in a flexible way to meet the needs and interests of a changing population is key.
- ▶ **Cultural diversity creates new and different facilities and program offerings** – New and changing demographics should yield a park system that looks different than the current park system. Community engagement, a racially representative staff, and equitable policies and processes are vital to all future planning efforts.
- ▶ **Focus on remaining opportunities such as AHATS** – Rice Creek Commons, the Ford plant site and other redevelopment not yet on the horizon offer opportunities to create more equitable park space and facilities. The Arden Hills Army Training Site offers vast opportunity for recreational use and a possible world-class venue for international meets and events.
- ▶ **Partnerships with other governmental agencies, stakeholders, and the private sector** – All major projects require a partnership at some level. Collaboration and cooperation will build the future. Relationships with the community and partners will cultivate the resources and momentum to get things done.
- ▶ **Master plan amendments or updates** – Several park and trail master plans were developed in the 1980s and 1990s and include amenities that were appropriate for the desired park use at that time. Due to changing recreation trends, demographics and use patterns, many of the park and recreation facilities are now out of date. Master plan amendments provide an opportunity to reevaluate park and trail facilities for improvements to existing infrastructure, new recreation opportunities not

## PARKS AND TRAILS

currently within the park and trail system, and more equitable recreation amenities for all people, ages and abilities. Parks are community gathering spaces and there exists an opportunity to utilize those spaces to celebrate and bring awareness of the rich culture within Ramsey County. Space for public art installations, cultural events and programs opens the parks for wider use among residents.

- ▶ **Healthy food options** – Park and recreation facilities promote healthy lifestyles, activity and a sense of well-being. It's vital that all individuals have access to healthy food options in parks and other public spaces. Often there are either no or very few food options available, and those available are unhealthy. There are opportunities in key park locations to provide healthy food options in vending machines or concession stands.
- ▶ **Multi-use of facilities** - Use of park facilities has changed since they were originally developed more than 25 years ago. This provides an opportunity to review our park system and determine if facilities can accommodate more recreation activities or if there are other seasonal recreation opportunities that fit that facility.
- ▶ **Programming** – With the growth of population groups come opportunities for new programs. Community engagement will reveal interests and recreation activities that attract all groups into the park system. Formal programming or facilities that promote independent use of the park will be among the methods for accommodating new programs.
- ▶ **Natural Resources** – The park and recreation system is a natural resource-based park system that offers a variety of habitat areas in a developed urban area. Nature appreciation is an important method for building stewardship of the environment. Having such a densely populated area filled with natural open spaces is an opportunity to create appreciation.

### SYSTEMWIDE CONSTRAINTS:

- ▶ **Almost fully developed county** – Opportunities to create something “big” are few and far between in a county that is almost completely developed. Instead, attention turns to redevelopment opportunities. This can take much longer to create versus projects that begin with a blank slate.
- ▶ **Accessibility by residents and visitors** – The parks are wrapped around preserved natural resources, not typically located in densely populated areas. Most of the system was developed when personal vehicle ownership was widespread and dominated the development landscape. Ramsey County is still vehicle-oriented but many residents use mobility devices, public transportation, bicycle or walk . The All Abilities Transportation Network will eventually create a more easily accessible network. Economic accessibility is also a constraint. Parks and trails are typically free of charge and financially accessible. Subsidizing the provision of parks and trails remains key to a thriving community.
- ▶ **Funding to maintain and operate the system is limiting opportunities** – Finding support for the funding necessary to build and maintain a park system is a never-ending challenge. While most residents acknowledge the importance of parks and trails and leisure-time activities to their quality of life, financial resources can be scarce. Parks and recreation opportunities are necessary for social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development and well-being. Parks and recreation can prevent illness, crime and other disparities. Understanding the vital role parks play in the larger social structure is key to gaining public support for funding.
- ▶ **The system was created 20 to 50 years ago and is slow to change to current and future needs** – A dominant culture still exists and influences decisions and priorities in the parks system. To date, many community members that attend open houses for future park development planning express ideas about what they used to do when they were younger. We need to ensure that a broad range of voices is represented in planning for a future inclusive of all of our communities.



## PARKS AND TRAILS

- ▶ **Technology philosophies hold us to proven technologies and security concerns that raise the cost of operation** – Ramsey County has made a conscious decision to move forward with proven technology. The risk tolerance constrains opportunities to utilize technology that is farther along, friendlier for the public to access, and attractive to new or atypical users.
- ▶ **Age of infrastructure** – Much of the infrastructure across the park system is more than 25 years-old. Resources are spent maintaining what exists. Planning is important to decisions about whether to repair, replace, or re-purpose. In many cases, redevelopment of existing park and recreation facilities will be required to offer new or increased recreation amenities such as non-traditional playgrounds, larger picnic pavilions, and a wider variety of recreation amenity rentals such as kayaks, canoe, recreation equipment, and bikes.
- ▶ **Pedestrian Connections** – Transportation trends have changed over the years, there is higher demand to provide additional pedestrian access and trail connections from adjacent neighborhoods. In many cases, redevelopment of existing infrastructure and development of new connections will be required. New development opportunities present a challenge in many areas as additional land purchases or easements may be required to allow new pedestrian connections.

### Communication Plan

Communication is an important component of all Parks & Recreation projects. Effective communication and engagement is essential for good decision-making. The fundamental objective of communication will be to develop strategies that ensure public engagement goals are met. Activities will include coordinating messages, information sharing and increasing awareness.

#### The scope of the communication plan will include:

- Social media.
- Web content.
- Subscription-based emails.
- Local media outreach.
- Print collateral and signage.

### Community Engagement

Successful public engagement requires building trust, understanding and a foundation for informed consent. This requires a process that is characterized by technical competence, honesty, integrity, good listening and responsiveness. These principles will create the framework within which public engagement will continue to occur. For successful outcomes, this approach requires:

- Early and continuous participation of stakeholders.
- Reasonable availability of project information.
- Collaborative input on the preliminary planning.
- Open access to the decision-making process.
- Ongoing engagement through a variety of channels to reach community members throughout the development process.
- Proactive efforts to inform the public and engage them in the process, including those groups that are often underrepresented in design processes, namely people of color, immigrants, young people, renters, people with any disability, low-income residents, and people with limited English proficiency.

The approach to public engagement for Parks & Recreation projects is to intentionally expand the number and diversity of voices providing guidance. Our goal is to make public engagement easy and convenient for more people to participate.

### How Do We Get There?

► **Partnerships** – All major projects require collaboration and working partners. Building relationships is be vital to achieving success. The Ramsey County Parks & Recreation Commission has been meeting with cities’ park commissions throughout the county. This helps coordinate plans and synchronize development projects. Annual communication takes place with parks and recreation staff from each of the cities in Ramsey County. A list of current partners is included in the Parks System Plan.

► **Foundation** – Creating a parks foundation is one tool that can build support and provide funding for major initiatives. This offers a blend of the public, private and non-profit communities to come together for the greater good.

Prioritized needs usually come with the resources to make them happen. Being current and relevant helps the department tune in to those needs. Relationship building, community engagement, and connections will keep parks and recreation in the forefront of people’s minds and therefore relevant and a priority.

► **Responsive staff** – A staff that better represents the community will be a more responsive staff and more aware of the needs and interests of those they serve.

► **Relationship Building** – Relationships are often the most valuable outcome of shared work. Ongoing relationships are beneficial to all. Valuing relationships and spending the time to nurture them is what makes the work satisfying and enjoyable. Parks and recreation spaces create that sense of place and sense of community.

Working with the regional system and the implementing agencies, including the Metropolitan Council, the state legislature, the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks System are all vital to funding capital projects, operation and maintenance work and the future of the Legacy program. Cooperation and collaboration can improve how these groups work together to advance the quality of life that Minnesotans have come to expect.

### 10-Year Implementation Plan Priorities

So often, plans are developed and then proceed to sit on shelves and gather dust. Much time and energy goes into the development of plans that are meant to deliver the vision and mission in specific ways. There are several plans that have been recently developed as living documents that impact daily operations. Ongoing plans are revised periodically and will be prominent in the focus for the next ten years.

The Capital Improvement Program is a six-year plan that shapes projects, both regular and major. The plan is revised and updated every two years in conjunction with the budget cycle. Work has begun on the 2020-2021 budget years. Future capital projects are placed in the following four years as placeholders that aren’t officially funded. This allows for some flexibility should the priorities shift and emerge.

Master plan updates with improved community engagement will be methodically revised until the system is completed. To project what each park will look like and what facilities and amenities are included would be presumptuous and ignore the community engagement process. Every aspect will include some form of engagement and will especially examine opportunities to eliminate racial disparities.

The Natural Resources Plan maps out the methods and priorities for protecting, preserving, and maintaining the natural resources that the park system is meant to steward. Funding opportunities are key to implementation of the plan.

The Arena System Plan, as presented by a task force in 2016, will help guide work over the next ten years. Arenas are prioritized in order of importance based on current demand. Lower priority

arenas may provide an opportunity for repurposing in the future. Three arenas, Aldrich, White Bear County and Shoreview, are the first to see redevelopment. Charles M. Schulz -Highland will see redevelopment in the 2020-2021 budget cycle.

The Ramsey County-wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, completed in 2016, will guide the work in this area for the next ten years and beyond. Immediate work will fill gaps in the network system. Ramsey County will continue ongoing maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing system, and plan for opportunities to develop the system further. Developing an interconnected network of trails will be important work over the next ten years.

A Golf System Plan will be developed from a comprehensive analysis of the golf courses in Ramsey County in 2018. This will determine work in the courses for the immediate future. It is anticipated that the analysis will highlight improvements to customer service, market corrections, physical rehabilitation and preparing the golf system to meet future demands from the community.

Redevelopment of county parks continues methodically. After Lake Owasso County Park is redeveloped in 2017-2020, the process or redevelopment begins at Beaver Lake County Park. All county parks will follow. These redevelopment steps provide an opportunity to meet the changing needs and interests of the ever-changing population of Ramsey County. Community engagement will be vital to redesigning these parks which tend to be more locally based.

Creating a foundation for Ramsey County parks will begin within the next ten years. Formation of a non-profit group with a board to lead the effort will take time and energy. Board member selection will need to be done carefully to ensure an effective group of leaders can establish an impactful organization that supports the mission of parks in the county with a robust base of support.

Another financial focus is to create a method for funding the purchase of in-holdings. This may happen in conjunction with the foundation or in combination with a variety of funding methods. Having the ability to purchase properties as they become available is important to grow the system.

Park maintenance standards will be a priority to help Parks & Recreation operate effectively and efficiently. The asset management system will eventually allow for improved data collection that can help analyze the operation and be more playful.

Finally, the Energy Plan for the county and the Green Spaces, Green Places energy initiative created by the department will help us work towards goals of reduced electricity and natural gas use. Not only will this provide an economic benefit but will also better alignment the department with natural resources management and environmental stewardship.

The park ordinance is the legal policy in place, used for instruction, guidance, enforcement and protection of the parks, natural resources and people who use them. Keeping the rules and laws current and relevant to the community is important. The changing demographics of park users will raise issues and conflicts that need to be sorted out through the park ordinance.

### **Delivering the Vision**

How does Parks & Recreation deliver the vision set forth by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners: A vibrant community where all are valued and thrive? For decades, the park system has delivered places and programs where many are valued and thrive. The challenge is to go further and make Ramsey County parks vibrant for all community members.

**Following the Ramsey County mission** - A county of excellence working with you to enhance our quality of life - will be the guiding principle for service delivery. Working on established goals will further demonstrate how that vision is achieved. Each employee of the county will then use objectives and strategies that dive deeper into specific methods to make the vision a reality.



**Diversify the workforce** – This demonstrates to the community that Parks & Recreation staff are reflective of the community, are of the community and can relate to their interests and needs. Much effort will need to be exerted to change the internal culture that persists. The county is looking to implement changes that will influence the attraction, retention and promotion of talent.

**Develop relationships in the communities underrepresented** – This involves reaching out to all community members and will take intentional effort and focused resources. These communities are more difficult to reach and therefore take more resources to connect with as compared to the general population. The staff that reflects the community will help make this connection. New and different methods of outreach will be employed to build those relationships so critical to hearing voices not heard before. Use of a racial equity toolkit will help maintain the lens and eliminate disparities. The toolkit will inform all policies, procedures, facilities and planning for every aspect of the department.

**Listen** – The majority of time needs to be spent listening. What are residents saying? What messages are important to hear? Remove the barriers and focus on ways to enrich the conversation. The government exists to serve, not dictate to the residents.

**Racial Equity Toolkit** – We apply a racial equity lens for analysis of programs, policies, procedures, budgeting, capital planning – everything Parks & Recreation does. This is a formal method to listen and learn and respond appropriately. The toolkit will help formalize the process that will eventually become the way of doing business. Everything that is delivered will benefit all people.

**Lead** – Much of this effort takes leadership. The ability to inspire people to move forward, grow and change. To persevere even when resistance is blowing in the face of the leader. Knowing and believing in justice and what will benefit all – the community as a whole – not just the majority.

**Implement change that reflects the needs and interests of the new community** – This will result in changes that reflect what the community is saying. If the county delivers parks and recreation in this fashion, the vision will be realized.

The communication section describes the methods for keeping the public informed. General lack of awareness seems to be an important barrier to getting people out to the parks and trails. Increasing awareness through transparency will improve the use of the system. The county's online Open Data Portal will be one tool that can provide the public with information that they are looking for while telling important stories about the impact of parks and recreation on the community.

The operations and maintenance division within Parks & Recreation will standardize their operation. This will provide for effective and efficient use of resources. The standards will also provide justification for future budget needs. As the system changes, the use of data through asset management will be key to effective operations. The ability to model impacts of change to the system will improve resiliency, sustainability, and channel resources to essential areas.

Keeping natural resources front and center is primary to the mission of the Parks & Recreation department and should drive the decisions forward. Preserving and protecting what we have is vital. Restoring and creating improved natural resources enhances the scope of what the department is about.

Resiliency, sustainability and green energy are all related to the work of parks and recreation. Focus on these areas will set the department up for a long-range viability and keep the synchronicity of how environmental stewardship is linked to parks.

### Funding the Vision

A major component of implementing the plan is funding. Limited funding is one of the reasons a comprehensive plan is essential to prioritizing the resources expended. Choices need to be made based upon plans laid forth. This plan relies upon multiple funding sources that include, but are not limited to:

1. **Tax Levy** – Currently the operating budget for parks and recreation is funded approximately one-third (33 percent) from the county's property tax levy.
2. **Revenue** – The balance of the operating budget is generated through fees and charges and some of the other funding sources listed below.
3. **Operations and Maintenance Regional Parks and Trails Funding** – The state legislature provides the Metropolitan Council with operation and maintenance funding that is distributed among the ten implementing agencies of the regional park system. Ramsey County's share varies with the funding amount. Recently the share has covered approximately \$250,000 of the \$6 million cost to maintain and operate the six regional parks and six regional trails in the system
4. **Parks and Trails Legacy Fund** – The State provides this funding through a portion of the sales tax to the regional park system. This can be used to fund projects, programs, positions and other initiatives that meet the four pillars of the program – Create, Connect, Coordinate, Care for.
5. **The Legacy Fund** also provides grants through the Conservation Partners Fund that support natural resource-related projects. The Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund is a potential funding source for historical and cultural projects. Other Clean Water-related projects may be eligible as well.
6. **Capital Improvement Program – Regional Parks** – The state provides bonding for capital projects every two years. Every \$3 in bond funds are matched with \$2 in Met Council bond funds. Ramsey County receives a portion based on a formula.
7. **Capital Improvement Program – County** – Ramsey County has a Capital Improvement Program funded through the sale of bonds.
  - Major Projects – are projects over \$1 million.
  - Regular Projects – are projects under \$1 million.
8. **Federal Transportation Grants** – In recent years the status of these grants has been uncertain due to the volatile federal budget. The program funds trail projects.
9. **All Abilities Transportation Program** – A Ramsey County Policy which will vet all transportation related projects through a lens of the least mobile residents on up to large commercial carriers.
10. **One-half percent Transit and Transportation Sales Tax** – Utilizing the All Abilities Transportation Program policy, this funding source may be the source of some funds after the regional transportation projects are completed.
11. **Twenty dollar-per vehicle excise fee** – primarily used for road projects, related trails and trail connections are also a part of many projects.

### Future Ideas

Create a Parks & Recreation Foundation 501(c)3 – Setting up an independent non-profit foundation would allow for fundraising, donations and initiatives related to supporting the parks system.

Sell park property and create a fund to be used to purchase in-holdings. The fund can receive other sources through donations, grants, and budgetary infusions. Currently, when in-holdings become available, there is no funding source readily available to respond within the window of opportunity.

Establish a revenue policy. Fees and charges for programs and services are categorized by policy. For example, programs, facilities and services (P/F/S) of community-wide benefit are usually offered at low or no charge. P/F/S geared toward a specific audience will be offered at market rates covering some of the cost. P/F/S that offer exclusive or special interest participation are expected to charge

the amount needed to offer the P/F/S. This philosophy/policy will govern how the activities of the parks and recreation department are delivered. The policy also guides the budget development.

The shift towards racial equity and eliminating disparities will usually mean an increase subsidy to offer P/F/S that interest and attract those not currently utilizing the P/F/S. The current parks and recreation system was built based upon a majority dominant culture, more passive recreation, and relatively few programs. The demand is shifting towards programming, ease of accessibility both physically and financially, and facilities other than those offered in the past.

Partnerships with other government agencies – Partnerships can cost-share projects that provide benefit to all involved. New Brighton, for example, is sharing the cost of a parking lot and rest room within Long Lake Regional Park. The lot and rest room will serve both regional park visitors as well as Lion’s Park users.

School districts – Partnerships with public schools helped to build arenas at Harding and Johnson high schools. Renters at some arenas are the high school hockey teams. Relationships with schools provides regular programming with Tamarack Nature Center.

Partnerships with other entities – Cretin Derham-Hall, Hill-Murray, Woodbury and Mahtomedi youth hockey associations have helped keep certain arenas full. The arena flooring at Aldrich is being provided by a vendor through a revenue agreement.

Contract Services – Services such as canoe and kayak rental, food trucks, concessions, Go Ape, yoga-in-the-parks, and bike rentals are examples of contract services that could generate revenue.

### **Revenue Generation Ideas –**

Camping – there are currently no camping opportunities within the park system. Camping cabins are a popular amenity.

Sponsorships of building and facilities – Sponsorship is a portion of the revenue at the Vadnais Sports Center. Naming rights and system-wide sponsorship are other possible expansions of this concept.

Advertising – Hockey boards and Zambonis display advertising. Electronic ads, sign ads at facilities, and ads on vehicles are some ideas.

Lease Agreements – Examples of this type of revenue include the golf dome, Island Lake Golf, and the Biff Adams Curling Club. Future repurposing of other arenas (curling clubs, lacrosse, hydroponics, other business use) are possibilities.

Operating Agreements – Manitou Ridge, Keller, and Goodrich golf courses all have agreements with the individual golf pros

Increase daytime users of indoor ice – The daytime user is always a sought-after commodity.

Increase dry floor use of arenas spring through fall – Many attempts have been made to increase use of the indoor arenas outside of the winter skating season.

Revenue generating facilities – Use of Aldrich Arena and other arenas with concrete floors for events such as concerts and large group gatherings such as quinceañeras. Other facilities could be built to host large events such as festivals and fairs.

### **Performance Measures**

Performance measures play a critical role by defining goals, strategies and methods for tracking performance measures to make progress for towards each goal. The Parks & Recreation department implements two areas for performance measures to address Ramsey County Vision, Mission, and Goals, and for the Metropolitan Council Thrive 2040 Regional Park and Trail Policy Plan. The performance measure in both areas may differ for proposed goals and strategies, but they are combined to create an overarching common goal for providing the highest quality park and recreation opportunities, experiences, and equity for all people, all ages and all abilities.



### Ramsey County Performance Measures

Parks & Recreation plays a critical role within Ramsey County's vision and mission by defining goals for all park and recreation facilities, and implementing strategies and performance measures to make progress for towards each goal. This method provides a baseline for providing for providing the highest quality recreation opportunities throughout Ramsey County. Defined park and recreation goals and strategies include:

- ▶ **Strengthen individual, family and community health, safety and well-being through effective safety-net services; innovative programming; prevention and early intervention; and environmental stewardship.**
  - Provide access to safe and well-maintained county and regional parks, offering a variety of services and facilities that promote healthy and active living for all residents of Ramsey County.
  - Provide early learning opportunities with a nature-based curriculum.
  - Promote environmental stewardship through preservation and restoration of natural resources.
  
- ▶ **Cultivate economic prosperity and invest in neighborhoods with concentrated financial poverty through proactive leadership and inclusive initiatives that engage all communities in decisions about our future.**
  - Engage in proactive and constructive partnerships and dialogue with residents from all neighborhoods, races, classes, and cultures.
  - Offer programming and facilities that reach across economic levels and allows opportunities for all residents.
  - Create and expand opportunities for local, diverse, and women and minority-owned businesses and workers through Ramsey County's procurement efforts.
  
- ▶ **Enhance access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses through connections to education, employment, and economic development Throughout the region**
  - Offer educational programming and opportunities, including the classes offered through the Tamarack Nature Center, and provide a field trip destination for schools throughout the region.
  - Build, promote and improve pedestrian bike and trail systems that are accessible to all residents of Ramsey County and connect to neighboring regional trail networks.
  
- ▶ **Model fiscal accountability, transparency and strategic investments through professional operational and financial management.**
  - Invest in the development and maintenance of parks and trail systems, ice arenas, and golf courses through grant opportunities and regional maintenance funding.
  - Implement cost and energy saving measures at various parks facilities and buildings, taking into advantage of available programs and funding sources, including capital improvement funding.
  - Reach out to residents of Ramsey County through social media and other methods to provide information on the many available parks opportunities.
  - Strive to be accredited through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CARPA).
  - Actively recruit and engage volunteers to serve in a variety of capacities through the park system.

### Thrive goals

In addition to following the Ramsey County Vision, Mission and Goals, this plan also supports the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan which outlines the Metropolitan Council's goals and strategies for the development of world-class regional parks. It reflects the regional vision set forth in Thrive MSP 2040 and describes how the regional parks system will be developed and operated to support Thrive MSP goals. The council adopted the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan on February 11, 2015.

The plan strives to build upon the existing good work of the implementing agencies to advance equity by committing to several strategies designed to strengthen equitable use of the Regional Park System. The planned regional parks and trails will enable residents to enjoy a variety of new park experiences throughout the region. Policies and strategies for regional parks include:

Expanding the Regional Parks System to conserve, maintain, and connect natural resources identified as being of high quality or having regional importance.

Providing a comprehensive regional park and trail system that preserves high-quality natural resources, increases climate resiliency, fosters healthy outcomes, connects communities, and enhances quality of life in the region.

Promoting expanded, multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails, and the transit network, where appropriate.

Strengthening equitable use of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents, such as across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin and ability.

As a requirement for regional park and trail funding, the department defines performance measures for Capital Improvement Program projects funded through state bonds and Parks and Trail Legacy Amendment funds received through the Legacy Fund.

The Parks and Trails Legacy Plan recommends how the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund should be used. The Parks and Trails Fund, one of the four funds created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment passed in 2008, receives 14.25 percent of the money raised by the sales tax increase of three-eighths of one percent. The purpose of the amendment is to provide supplemental financial resources to traditional funding sources for support of state and regionally significant park and trail systems.

**Legacy outcome measures as indicated in the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan should be tied to forward four strategic directions, also referred to as pillars or themes. The four are:**

- Connect people and the outdoors.
- Acquire land and create opportunities.
- Take care of what we have.
- Coordinate among partners.

For both the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund and the Capital Improvement Program there are performance measures tied to a racial equity tool. Agency project proposals answer questions about community engagement, how the project enhances racial equity, and how the project will be measured to determine the impact.



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## HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

*Residents, families and children need safe, stable homes and neighborhoods to thrive. Housing instability involves more than a lack of shelter or a home, it originates and is perpetuated by unmet health, economic and social needs. Having affordable housing available throughout the metro area is important to a strong economy. Affordable, stable housing reduces worker shortages for local employers, and improves children's chances for success in school. A vibrant economy depends on a workforce that has stable, affordable housing. Housing is an essential part of life for all residents, from immigrants to youth to older adults. Realizing housing stability for our residents is crucial because our community's well-being and prosperity is dependent upon on all families and individuals having a stable place to call home.*



## KEY THEMES:

- ▶ Create policies designed to meet the counties affordable unit allocation need of 3,841 additional units by 2040.
  - ▶ Ensure that families that exit county the county's shelter system do not become homeless.
  - ▶ Follow-up with all county clients after they exit a program to ensure housing stability.
  - ▶ Expand shorter-term supportive housing options.
- ▶ Support and partner with landlords to overcome rental barriers.
  - ▶ Adjust policies related to tax-forfeited lands that will encourage affordable housing development.



## VISION

Access to high-quality, fair, affordable, stable housing strengthens children, families, adults and neighborhoods in our community. By affirmatively furthering fair housing through the operation of our housing, homelessness, and community development programs, Ramsey County is creating real choices for people in the region to determine where and how they want to live. Partnerships with federal, state, and local stakeholders continue to enhance the resources and outcomes of our housing continuum. From first homebuyer resources, to homelessness prevention and shelter programs, to supportive and affordable housing development and maintenance, Ramsey County's housing continuum resources are shaped to ensure everyone has a place to call home.

## VALUES

The housing chapter is well integrated into Ramsey County's annual strategic plan and aligns with the lenses of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update.

### Racial Equity

- Addressing lack of shelter in combination with unmet health, economic, and social needs for all.
- Engaging community to develop evaluation criteria, as well as participate in the ranking process for continuum provider selection to ensure our community needs are met through service provision.
- Using data to monitor performance of supportive housing and prevention programs and ensure allocations toward homelessness response service providers lead to outcomes for all participants.

### Resiliency

- Using prevention resources to meet residents further upstream and avoid homelessness whenever possible.
- Providing access to affordable, high-quality stable housing which supports school success for children, lowers the transaction costs of matching local employers with workers, and improves grows families, neighborhoods, and communities.
- Promoting affordable housing development in, or with access to, transit and economic centers.

### Health in All Policies

- Supporting low income households' equity growth through the development of affordable housing.
- Connecting at risk households and those experiencing homelessness with employment resources and mainstream benefits to stabilize income and support their ability to maintain housing.

**EXISTING HOUSING CONTINUUM NEED**

Ramsey County’s current needs vary across its housing continuum. To demonstrate these, Ramsey County uses the Metropolitan Council’s Existing Housing Assessment, the homeless Housing Inventory Count, System Performance Measures, and the Homeless Management Information System’s Coordinated Entry reports.

**Unsheltered Homelessness**

Unfortunately, there is limited reliable data on this population. Existing reporting mechanisms, like the “Point In Time Count” are limited by methodology and seriously underestimate the count of this population. The Minnesota Homelessness Survey is also a point in time count of people, but is only conducted once every three years and could potentially represent an overcount, due to the financial incentive provided for completing the survey. Regardless, though the unsheltered population is difficult to identify and monitor, all evidence suggests this number is significantly increasing in Ramsey County.

**Emergency Shelter**

Ramsey County had 929 emergency shelter beds as of January 24th, 2018. Of these beds, 277 were for families, 639 were for single adults, and 11 were for youth. In the federal fiscal year 2017, 3849 individuals utilized our shelter services at least once. This is a 16.7% increase from 2016 federal fiscal year. Access to shelter is limited by bed availability as they consistently operate at full capacity. This indicates there are many more attempting to use shelter who cannot. This population is not represented in our current data.

**Supportive Housing**

As of January 24th, 2018, there were 4238 beds of supportive housing dedicated to serving persons experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County. This number has continued to rise from year to year due to increment increases in funding. Of these beds, 474 are within Rapid Rehousing, 609 are within Transitional Housing, and 3115 are within Permanent Supportive Housing projects. On average, programs are operating at or near full capacity, and certain programs have very little client turnover. Concurrently, coordinated entry priority lists, representing all persons eligible and in search of supportive housing in the county, remain at over 1200 households. Thus, there are many more households waiting for housing due to its limited availability.

**Affordable Housing**

Metropolitan Council estimates of occupied units show how many units are affordable to households using three income thresholds. The income thresholds are defined as a percent of area median income.

At or below 30%	31% to 50%	51% to 80%
22,432	70,464	76,906

**Housing Tenure**

Housing tenure describes whether an occupied housing unit is owner-occupied or renter-occupied.

**Ownership units**

129,745



**Rental units**

91,209





## HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

### Housing type

Housing types include structures zoned by communities for occupancy by single families and for multiple families. These can include duplexes, townhomes, condominiums and apartments.

Single-family units	Multi-family units	Manufactured homes	Other housing units
130,576	87,487	2,877	14

### Housing Cost Burdened Households

Housing cost burden refers to those households whose housing costs are at least 30 percent of their income. Using the same income thresholds as were used to define affordability, the Metropolitan Council has estimated the number of housing cost burdened households in Ramsey County. The following table shows the number of households with housing cost burden according to their level of income.

Housing cost burdened with income at or below 30% of area median income (AMI)	Housing cost burdened with income between 31% and 50% of area median income (AMI)	Housing cost burdened with income between 51% and 80% of area median income (AMI)
27,254	20,087	10,481



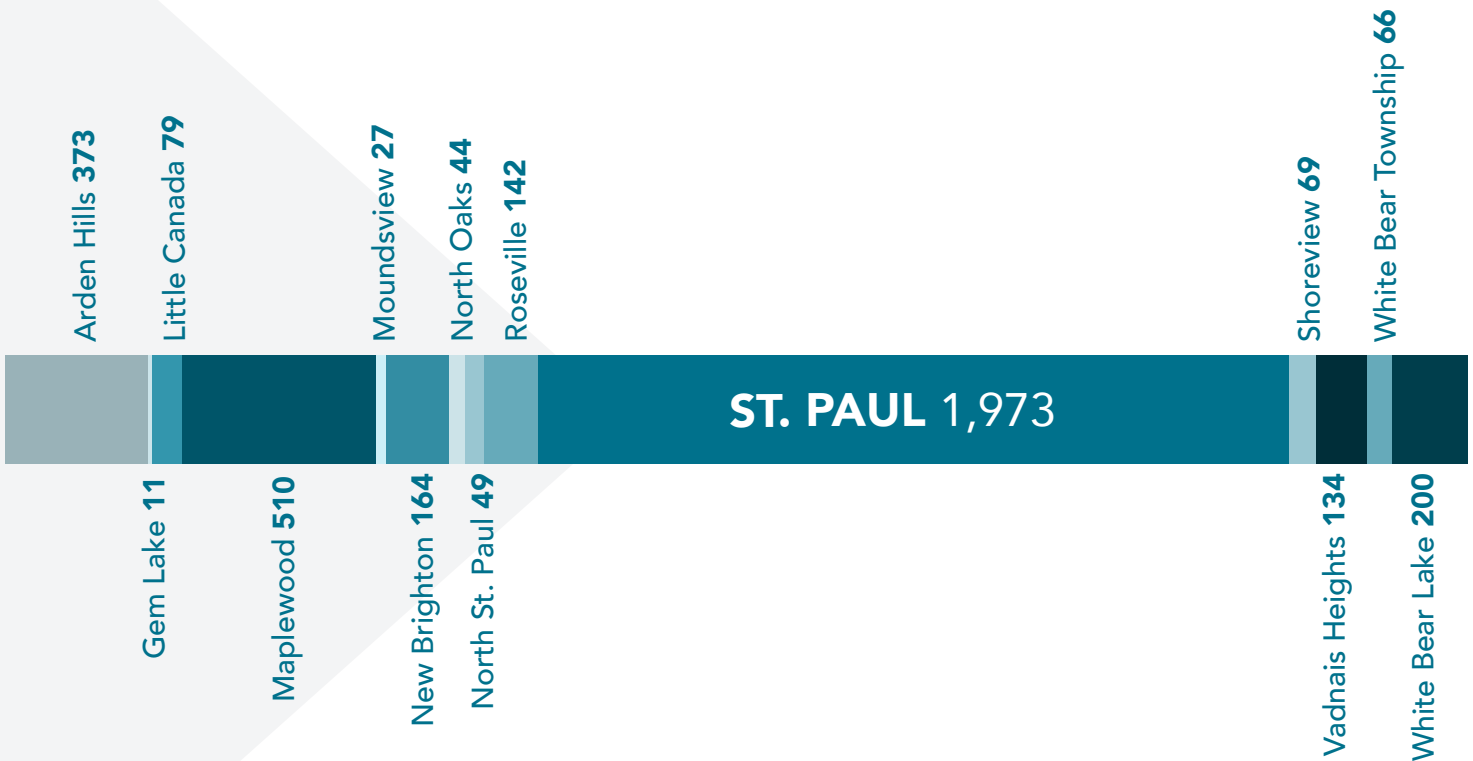
**PROJECTED HOUSING CONTINUUM NEED**

Metropolitan Council forecasts of Ramsey County housing show that by 2040, the community can expect to have 246,050 households. Estimates indicate that municipalities within Ramsey County will have some 219,260 housing units connected with regional wastewater infrastructure by the year 2020. These sewer-connected households are expected to grow to 231,830 by 2030. That is a net expected growth in the number of sewer-connected housing units in Ramsey County of 12,570 in a decade.

Ramsey County does not have accurate ten or 20 year projections on the homelessness population. Rather, long term impacts to the county’s population experiencing homelessness are reflective of how well the County develops methods to respond to our current needs, as well the capacity for our systems to endure future shocks. Trends demonstrating increasing rent costs and overall costs of living, as well as demographic forecasts projecting a larger ageing population imply necessary attention to systems preventing households from experiencing homelessness and quickly housing those who do.

The greatest need for additional affordable housing will occur in communities where projections of population and household growth are the greatest. The following table shows Metropolitan Council projections and the allocations for affordable housing needed by 2040 in Ramsey County communities. Based on our cost burdened household population, the projections will not be enough to ensure housing stability for all in Ramsey County.

**Additional affordable units needed by 2040.**



## POLICIES AND ACTIONS

By incentivizing greater development of affordable housing and supporting new home buyers in purchasing their homes, Ramsey County is using policy and practice to assist communities in accomplishing affordable, stable, safe housing for all residents of all ages, incomes and abilities. Ramsey County supports the goals and recommendations of the Governor Mark Dayton's Housing Task Force. Ramsey County also supports Minnesota's 2018-2020 Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The existing and developing strategies targeting housing stability in this document are guided by these state planning efforts.

### Internal Planning

Ramsey County is actively working to reduce homelessness by effectively engaging with residents and partners, and maximizing coordination and leadership within and across county departments and programs. Through the creation of the Interdepartmental Council on Housing Stability in 2017, the county is restructuring its organizational approach to respond to the current housing crisis. The group has developed a countywide inventory of all housing-related resources and is conducting a comprehensive gaps analysis to identify and advocate for opportunities for collaboration and innovation. The Council is also enhancing the relevance of data around homelessness, pioneering methodologies to track actionable indicators and evaluate success. Moreover, focus on racial equity has advanced our examination of the racial and ethnic disparities across the homelessness continuum and supports effective resource targeting. This investment of county resources alongside measurable goals around decreasing homelessness and improving service provision will ensure Ramsey County experiences realizable change over the next 20 years.

### Affordable Housing Development and Preservation Resources

Ramsey County is using policy to create greater incentives for development of mixed-use-mixed-income projects to support communities in achieving sufficient housing affordability in 2040. Federal HOME funds are used to put affordable units in otherwise market rate new construction rental properties. Tax forfeited land and property end up among the county's holdings as a result of severely delinquent taxes. It is important that these lands and properties be returned to the tax rolls so that one of the county's most scarce resources – land – is not allowed to sit idle, unused and delivering no value to our communities. These policies support resilience, by supporting housing that is affordable, safe, well maintained and energy efficient.

Ramsey County's FirstHOME buyer assistance program helps first-time buyers with low to moderate incomes who are purchasing homes in suburban Ramsey County communities.<sup>9</sup> Eligible buyers may qualify for up to \$10,000 with zero percent interest to help bring their monthly housing costs down to 30 percent of income. Buyers are responsible for a minimum investment of \$2,000. This principle-only subordinate mortgage must be repaid when the property is sold. The loans can be used for down payment assistance, closing costs and, occasionally, health, safety, or code improvements.



<sup>9</sup> Suburban Ramsey County includes all municipalities in the county except the City of Saint Paul.



## HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

As new development projects take place within the county, it will be important to strategically plan for and preserve affordable housing. Not only do major redevelopment projects impact housing affordability, they are also opportunities to create new affordable units. The county will establish flexible funding sources for the preservation and development of affordable housing supply. Ramsey County also recognizes the need to support naturally affordable housing. Though newly built affordable housing is a necessary strategy to expand this stock, ensuring older housing units can decrease in value is also a crucial method because it is often more expensive to build new units. Resources for the preservation of the existing affordable housing stock may be a less costly approach and further influence cost balance across our county. Additional efforts to increase the affordable housing stock will require more investment in collaborative planning and resource pooling. See the Collaboration section for more information.

### Prevention

Preventing homelessness remains a crucial priority for the county. Even one night of homelessness can severely impact all components of a household, as well as the communities of which the household is part. It is widely known that previous episodes of homelessness is the most significant factor in predicting future homelessness. Ramsey County recognizes the need to improve and expand its homelessness prevention resources. Considering the noticeable increase in demand for rental units within the county, assisting households with landlord negotiation and legal issues, as well as direct assistance for rent and utilities will also increase in importance. Tax forfeiture processes may also be examined to support homeownership and prevent homelessness.

## HOMELESSNESS

### Landlord Engagement

Evolving Ramsey County's homelessness response will require the county to expand its current effective programming and resources. Most notably, landlords will need continued support to increase accessibility of housing for those with housing barriers. Criminal history, credit history, housing history, behavioral health, among others are criteria used to screen out applicants. Households with homelessness histories inevitably will present at least one of these barriers, severely limiting housing options for this population. Even those who may access stable employment or mainstream benefits which can consistently pay for housing costs are screened out due to competition with households with less barriers and landlords' aversion to perceived risk of damage, nuisance, or court costs. Other landlords may be willing to rent to high barrier households, but will increase upfront payments to cover potential losses. This can include requiring two or three month's rent at move in or damage deposits three times the cost of one month's rent. These costs make it difficult for households and supportive services with limited funds for rent and deposits. Ramsey County supports the of improving access to housing for all. Increasing resources for both landlords and tenants, the county may better support access to market rate and affordable housing options.

### Supportive Housing and Coordinated Entry

The need for housing with services is projected to increase. This supportive housing offers a subsidy in the form a voucher, presented to market rate or affordable housing landlords, or may be housing located in an agency owned property. It is offered alongside services that may include case management, mental health treatment, employment services, tenant training, legal resources, and a number of other impactful benefits. Both housing and services may be short or long term.


## HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

As the ageing population increases, and options for households with severe mental illness decrease, resources for long term supportive housing will need to increase. Concurrently, current focus on chronic homelessness has qualified resources for households in need of housing, but less entrenched in the homelessness experience. The number of households impacted by housing costs is increasing. In order to discourage transitioning households into deeper seeded homelessness it will be necessary to ensure shorter term supportive housing options, like rapid re-housing, are available an abundant. Additionally, expanding supportive housing for large families will be a crucial need over the next 20 years.

Supportive programming around housing will need to be offered at different points to more effectively end homelessness cycles in the future. As households exit programming with temporary housing, like correctional institutions or health treatment facilities, ensuring appropriate housing opportunities are secured before exit will be crucial to prevent exits to homelessness. For youth exiting such programming, connecting their families with housing stability resources will offer more positive environment to which they may return. Coordinated entry, the inclusive intake system for all supportive housing in Ramsey County, will need more support to connect with such institutions and other benefits so that it becomes more accessible, and households can be connected with services immediately. Additionally, follow up after clients have exited programing, to ensure they maintain housing will also require investment.

Ramsey County currently funds and manages the family emergency shelter system. The shelter system is currently constrained by capacity, which has further led to the development a prioritization and length of stay maximums impacting accessibility and efficacy. Prioritization lists for access and eligibility methods, developed to ensure the most vulnerable families are served, conversely prevent many families experiencing homelessness from accessing resources. Maximum length of stay and other stay requirements, developed to maintain order and support continuous flow of open beds, can lead to families exiting shelter into homelessness. With shelter waitlists at 80 families, expanding the capacity to shelter families in need will require acute attention over the next 20 years. Moreover, ensuring the county's shelter system does not exit families to homeless by reviewing our approach to service provision will be crucial to establishing a more equitable system.

Expanding our capacity to report on who access our system, their experiences while receiving services, and the outcomes after will be important for continuous improvement. Also, for clients, keeping track of documentation imbedded across our data systems can be a challenge. In order to access housing resources, transient households are expected to present official documentation. This becomes a barrier for many to access housing, extending homelessness episodes for months at times, or even preventing households from access entirely. Different data resources often have access to this important documentation, but are blocked from sharing by data privacy interpretations. Ramsey County will develop methods to surmount these barriers in order to impact client experience and the efficiency of our system. Ramsey County supports the evolution of our homelessness data systems.

A photograph showing two hands, palms up, holding a white paper cutout of a house. The house cutout has a gabled roof, a chimney on the right side, and a window with a cross-shaped frame. The hands are positioned against a blurred green background, likely grass. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

*The advancement of the housing continuum cannot be achieved alone. Ramsey County is committed to engaging partners at all levels around housing solutions.*

### **Collaboration**

The advancement of the housing continuum cannot be achieved alone. Ramsey County is committed to engaging partners at all levels around housing solutions. Housing is intertwined into every aspect of our community. Convening the expertise and resources of different governments, community organizations, private partners, and members of the community will create inclusive strategies which foment the desired holistic evolution of our county through housing. The Heading Home Ramsey Governing Board is an existing institution bringing together a broad range of stakeholders around homelessness in Ramsey County. Alongside securing funding from HUD, the state, and other private funders the Board directs priorities, develops policy and systems, and advocates to end homelessness in Ramsey County. Ramsey County will continue to support these existing collaborative institutions, as well as invest in new partnerships to improve the housing continuum and expand its impact throughout the county and metro region.

Ramsey County recognizes the importance of collaboration to develop impactful solutions for our housing crisis. Without authority over zoning and planning and limited financial resources, the County relies upon partnerships with other governments, funders, and the community to build responses to housing needs. Ramsey County will continue to support existing community planning boards and committees as well as engage with local cities, community developers, non-profit providers, partner agencies and existing committees. The County will also host convenings to encourage shared values and approaches with city governments within our jurisdiction. Collaborative solutions will also require financial resources to make projects work and demonstrate commitment. Ramsey County will re-evaluate allocations to ensure appropriate resourcing of homelessness initiative.





20  
40

## RESILIENCE

*Resilience describes the capacity of a system to maintain functionality or recover in the event of a disruption or disturbance. Ramsey County will work to strengthen the capacity of communities so that residents - particularly the poor and vulnerable- survive and thrive no matter what stressors or shocks they encounter. This plan lays out strategies to mitigate and adapt to a rapidly changing climate.*

## KEY THEMES:

- ▶ Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 from 2008 levels.
  
- ▶ Complete climate vulnerability assessments, as well as develop and implement mitigation tools to protect the county's infrastructure and environment.
  
- ▶ Develop and implement a countywide renewable energy plan.
  - ▶ Recover the greatest value from waste to add value to the local economy.
    - ▶ Work with community partners to eliminate food insecurity by 2040.
  - ▶ Transition the county vehicle fleet to electric vehicles when appropriate.
  
- ▶ Increase understanding and recognition of social capital in communities often considered vulnerable.
  - ▶ Prevent disruption in health coverage for individuals on public insurance.

**Purpose**

*The Interdepartmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently reported that by 2040 the effects of a warming world will be widespread and dire. Without immediate action by all local governmental units to reduce greenhouse gases, climate change will cause catastrophic impacts to communities around the world. Ramsey County recognizes the need to take action for the health and resilience of the community. Existing work has laid the vision for this chapter. This includes the Public Health Strategic Plan and the Climate Change Health Vulnerability Assessment.*

Resilience is a complex issue that involves the interaction of a community's strengths and vulnerabilities. The factors that increase a community's vulnerability to climate-related impacts often contribute to other vulnerabilities as well, such as language barriers, fiscal instability and lack of access to safe and affordable housing. It will be impossible to address climate change without addressing the foundational needs of Ramsey County's residents. While the reader will find resiliency referenced in other chapters (such as transportation, surface water, and housing), this chapter is home to an intentional conversation on resiliency. The chapter describes resilience and vulnerability, provides findings from the Vulnerability Assessment, and identifies key concerns and potential strategies regarding infrastructure and environment, energy infrastructure and resources, healthy communities.

**DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS****Resilience**

Resilience describes the capacity of a system to maintain functionality or recover in the event of a disruption or disturbance. The importance of a resilient city, or county, is important when chronic stressors or sudden shocks threaten widespread disruption or the collapse of physical or social systems. Ramsey County will address the stressors and shocks of climate change that will significantly impact our residents.

**Resiliency includes:**

- Planning for extreme weather events, such as prolonged heatwaves.
- Improving health and well-being of residents.
- Ensuring economic prosperity and opportunity for all.

Ramsey County's resiliency strategies will focus on mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation strategies will emphasize minimizing our contribution to climate change through reduced energy use. Adaptation strategies will focus on how to change policies and practices to plan for and adjust to the effects of climate change. Our adaptation strategies will need to be increasingly flexible due to the uncertainty of how climate change will develop.

Like the rest of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update, resiliency will be viewed through the lens of racial equity and "health in all policies." Ramsey County, in collaboration with its communities, is committed to ensuring that all residents can live healthy lives by expanding access to housing, economic opportunity, healthy food options and recreational opportunities. Equity and justice increase a community's resilience.



### Climate Vulnerability

Vulnerability refers to characteristics that negatively affect a person or community's ability to anticipate, adapt to, and recover from the effects of a climate hazard. Examples include:

- living in poverty
- social isolation
- pre-existing physical or mental illnesses
- communications or language barriers
- homelessness
- very old or very young age
- inadequate healthcare
- limited mobility
- lack of financial savings
- structural racism

Climate impacts will affect each person differently and will disproportionately impact vulnerable communities. Vulnerability can be situational, meaning an individual may only be vulnerable in the wake of a climate hazard, not necessarily inherently vulnerable. Vulnerability can be temporary, such as with the case of pregnancy, homelessness or some illnesses. Vulnerability is a dynamic condition that affects all Ramsey County residents at some point in their lives. Understanding how vulnerability contributes to the impact of climate change stressors and shocks will prove beneficial as the county works with its businesses, residents and communities to develop and implement strategies. To ensure healthy people, healthy communities, and a healthy environment. Strategies to address climate-related health impacts must consider all residents and businesses, including the most vulnerable.

Resiliency and vulnerability are not mutually exclusive. Individuals may encounter resiliency within the same identities and experiences that make them vulnerable to climate change. For example, an individual who faces housing and food insecurity regularly may have experience navigating local resources and be more comfortable accessing aid in a disaster. The recognition of inherent social capital among individuals otherwise considered vulnerable will be incorporated into plans for resiliency and climate change adaptation in Ramsey County.

### Risks include:

Factors that could worsen the negative impacts of a hazard.

- Environmental risks and challenges (e.g., poor air quality days, likelihood of flooding of homes and businesses, pollution from storm events that affect public health and surface water quality)
- Social risks and challenges (e.g., social unrest, lack of citizen engagement, high crime rate, migration)
- Economic risks and challenges (e.g., loss of income, extraordinary public expenses for infrastructure replacement, extraordinary expenses to residents and businesses to accommodate changes and damage to assets)

### Shocks:

- Single or multiple events of short duration (e.g., tornado, heavy rain, heat wave, ice storm)

### Stressors:

- On-going and or longer-term issues (e.g., chronic unemployment, housing instability, PTSD from previous shocks or life experiences, affordable and reliable energy supply)

### Mitigation:

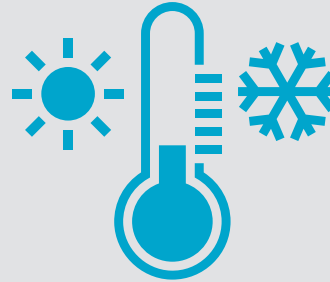
- Reducing GHG emissions (e.g., switching from fossil fuel-based energy to renewable energy, reducing vehicle miles traveled, reducing energy use in buildings).

### Adaptation:

- Lowering the risks posed by climatic changes (e.g., sizing storm drains to accommodate bigger rain events, moving appliances off basement floors, establishing cooling centers for use during heat events).



AVERAGE OF  
**30.44**  
inches of rain per year



AVERAGE  
TEMPATURE OF  
**44**  
degrees Fahrenheit

### THE LOCAL CLIMATE

Ramsey County has an extreme climate with major seasonal shifts in temperature and weather. The county averages 30.44 inches of rain per year and an average temperature of 44 degrees, with warm summers and cold winters. Temperatures can range from a high of 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer to a low of -40 degrees Fahrenheit in the winters. Annual snowfall averages approximately 45 inches. During the summer, Ramsey County is on the northern edge of “tornado alley” and severe thunderstorms are commonplace. Ramsey County is also vulnerable to effects of natural disasters such as floods, tornadoes, drought and winter storms. Extreme weather has become more frequent and severe as the effects of climate change continue to worsen.

Ramsey County can expect a changed climate by 2040. Climate change will bring milder winters, hotter summers, more threatening storms and longer allergy seasons to the county. Milder winters will result in additional ice events and allow disease-carrying insect populations that historically die out during severe winter weather to survive. Also, climate change is anticipated to bring more summer days of high humidity with higher than average overnight temperatures. Ramsey County’s high population density and urbanized land use mean that climate change will have a more significant impact compared to nearby counties. Environmental risks will increase the impact of climate change and are more visible in certain areas of the county, especially Saint Paul.

#### **Environmental risk factors that increase the impact of naturally occurring hazards on people and the built environment:**

- Impervious surfaces (such as blacktop, roofs, compacted soils and concrete)
- Absence of grass, trees and other natural areas
- Ratio of land to water cover (water moderates temperature)
- Concentration of ground-level ozone
- Concentration of particulate matter
- Concentration of pollen
- Proximity of housing relative to roadways
- Topography
- Soil characteristics



## INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Climate change has the potential to have major impacts on infrastructure and environmental assets across the county. These assets are most directly threatened by the increased frequency and intensity of rainstorms and heat waves, which often lead to flooding and power outages. Ice storms damage power lines, trees and buildings, and make streets impassable. Higher temperatures can increase the freeze-and-thaw cycles that deteriorate road surfaces and building structures.

Ramsey County is vulnerable to a variety of both climate enhanced natural disasters such as severe summer storms, floods, tornadoes, and unusual winter weather as well as human-caused hazards such as hazardous materials accidents, major transportation accidents, nuclear power plant incidents, civil disorders, terrorism, nuclear attack, acts of war, dam failures, and research and development incidents.

Ramsey County's high population density and small geographic area may pose significant risk to persons and property. The potential scope and impact of these emergencies may vary from a minor local emergency requiring minimum response to a major national catastrophe that requires maximum response. Time of day, weather conditions, time of year, warning time, location and/or the type of emergency or disaster will further influence the risk posed by any hazard.

Completing assessments, developing and implementing resiliency tools, and using best practices are essential for protecting Ramsey County communities and the region's infrastructure and environmental assets. This process will support the county in acknowledging and actively combating economic, racial and gender injustices that arise from inequitably distributed resources before, during and after climate catastrophes. The assessments and strategies should recognize that first recovery and response priorities immediately following any hazard, disaster or emergency are the preservation of human life.

Emergencies of various types are expected to result in damage to private and public property, including homes, businesses and critical infrastructure. The ability of either the county or the local municipalities to provide critical services depends upon the ability to recover the use of certain infrastructure such as buildings, roads, telecommunications and equipment. Consideration should also be paid to the current design of county infrastructure and its inclusiveness to vulnerable communities.



### **Infrastructure Supporting Emergency Response**

Following an adverse event, effective response and recovery revolves around the assumption that such activity can occur. To assure our basic ability to respond and recover, certain public and private sector infrastructure must be maintained or, if compromised, be the first systems recovered. These include the county's power infrastructure, government computers, internet, data and voice telecommunications systems, transportation systems, and systems for communicating with the population.

### **Vulnerable Populations**

There are some populations within the county who are unable to relocate. These include areas used by dependent populations in publicly owned facilities or individuals who are in the custody of a jurisdiction. Ramsey County is responsible for the Ramsey Care Center, the Lake Owasso Residence, the Ramsey County Correctional Facility, the Law Enforcement Center, the Adult Detention Center, the Juvenile Detention Center and Boys Totem Town. Other jurisdictions within the county may have other residential centers such as public housing and non-residential programs such as schools. Private organizations provide services for homeless people, group homes for people with disabilities, day program centers for seniors and people with disabilities, nursing homes, child care facilities, and other programs. For these facilities emergency planning and strategies should address routes of egress and ingress, shelter, and relocation venues, animal resources and similar topics. Longer term operational and infrastructure strategies should include facility planning and improvements that incorporate resiliency.

### **Infrastructure Critical to Health and Safety**

Certain systems sustain the basic needs of all residents' health and safety. Once the initial response is protected, and adequate services for those persons fully dependent on specific facilities are assured, these basic needs must be addressed for all remaining persons and properties. These systems include but are not limited to housing, medical facilities, energy systems, sites containing potential hazards, utilities, and food and medical supplies.

### **Government Administrative Buildings and Other Facilities**

Governmental functions are a critical part of our communities. The restoration of these functions is another essential priority. Government and private sector facilities are necessary to protect the economic viability of the county, municipalities, and our citizens. Local resources, available through public, volunteer and commercial means will be utilized first. State and federal support will augment ongoing disaster operations. Local jurisdictions will enter into mutual aid agreements with each other as necessary to effectively use resources in response to emergencies and disasters.

### **Climate and Environment**

During extreme temperature and weather events, particularly with resulting power outages, it may be necessary to open heating or cooling centers to provide affected persons a respite from the impact of these events. Ramsey County Emergency Management has existing agreements with the county library system to operate for extended hours during extreme heat events. Shelter agreements are in place with city and county recreation centers to operate for overnight protection from heat or in response to power outages. Ramsey County and City of Saint Paul Emergency Management will develop additional facility agreements to assist with reunification and family assistance for natural or man-made disasters that result in family separations, mass injuries and/or casualties.

The appropriateness of a facility will depend on the nature, scope, and geography of the disaster and the status of the facilities at that time. To help ensure comprehensive and appropriate responses

to any given situation, Ramsey County will invest in conversations with community and faith-based partners to identify barriers to access of currently identified facilities and assess the need for diverse facilities that can and will accommodate populations with limited mobility and complex health conditions. Arrangements with facility owners/operators will need to be made at the time for their use. Prior to public messaging, it is imperative that the owner/operator of the facility that is going to be recommended as a heating or cooling center has formally consented to such use. Some facilities may have a regular fee for use, such as fitness centers, movie theaters, swimming pools, etc. and an agreement with the owners may be necessary to temporarily waive or reduce fees for the purpose. Heating and cooling centers may need help with staffing, traffic and parking issues, and/or security to handle the surge in visitors.

### **Mutual Aid**

Ramsey County is prepared to render assistance to any jurisdiction in the county or elsewhere upon request. Ramsey County is able to supplement its own emergency resources with those provided by other counties, private organizations, and volunteers. If at any point a municipality concludes that its resources are (or are likely to become) overwhelmed, the jurisdiction could declare a local emergency and request Ramsey County resources. Those resources, along with those of other jurisdictions would then be made immediately available.

Emergencies require cooperation between agencies and jurisdictions. While all emergencies are local, the planning, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts needed to cope with them must be regional. Resources are always limited and will need to be distributed equitably before, during and after a disaster. Careful planning and close cooperation are needed to set priorities and assign resources in an effective manner including human resources that can help residents and small businesses return to their place of residence/business following a disaster and not be burdened with excessive red tape or bureaucracy that causes them undue economic hardship and the possibility of displacement.

### **Emergency Planning**

The county has a well-developed culture for planning for and responding to emergency situations. The emergency communication system includes 800 MHz radio, emergency notification, and outdoor siren warning for all municipalities in the county and their public safety agencies. The county's emergency communications center is the largest in the Upper Midwest, handling one million calls for assistance annually. The county's emergency communications system are fully integrated as subsystems of regional and state-wide systems, providing redundancies during emergencies. Moreover, public safety agencies in the county have networks of mutual aid agreements to support each other across the county and region, which are coded into the county-wide computer aided dispatch system used for public safety dispatch communications throughout the county.



## RESILIENCE

Ramsey County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (EMHS) coordinates the emergency planning and response for events that occur in municipalities across the county (outside of Saint Paul). Saint Paul's Emergency Management Department leads planning and response for incidents that occur within the city limits. The University of Minnesota has an Emergency Management Team that responds to incidents on the section of the campus located in Ramsey County. Many municipalities have additional emergency management staff, all of whom have an integral voice in the county's ongoing planning around community hazards.



EMHS's mission is to foster resilience in Ramsey County through development of a community-wide culture of preparedness, as well as focused efforts on coordination of public safety to prevent, plan for, respond to, mitigate and recover from all hazards disasters and emergencies. Creating this culture of preparedness is a key component of building resilience in Ramsey County. Ramsey County became the first county in Minnesota to adopt a common Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for the entire county, outside of Saint Paul. All suburban municipalities agreed to participate and subsequently created a coordinated approach for emergency management through the EOP. The Plan establishes common terminology and standardized incident management processes and assessments. The adoption of a county-wide plan has drastically reduced the duplication of efforts otherwise required of municipal and county emergency managers. Most importantly, it fosters greater trust and improved relationships between county and municipal leaders, and reduces the time needed to bring assistance to any municipality impacted by emergency or disaster.

EMHS was tasked with developing the Ramsey County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee. This committee revised the [Ramsey County Hazard Mitigation Plan \(HMP\)](#) as required per state and federal guidelines in 2012. Public health, social services, healthcare facilities, school districts and community partners have a strong interest in collaborating in ongoing hazard mitigation efforts and have been active participants in planning since 2012. In addition, collaboration with other local public health agencies, state response entities, and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Saint Paul-Ramsey County Health Department has developed an all-hazards response plan that supports community health protection. This all-hazards plan is shared across agencies, as it provides critical capacity to Ramsey County residents in the event of a public health emergency.

Ramsey County is primarily urban with limited agricultural production capability. As such, protection of the food supply and natural resources requires the county and municipalities cooperate with neighboring counties, states and state and federal agencies. Emergency support functions regarding natural resources require cooperation between Ramsey County, state, federal, and local authorities to provide nutrition assistance; control and eradication of highly contagious diseases, and outbreaks of economically devastating plant pests or disease. This helps ensure the safety and security of the commercial food supply, as well as protection of natural and cultural resources and historic properties during an emergency response or evacuation.

Recovery from a disaster relies not only on government agencies like Emergency Management, but neighbors, faith-based organizations, and small businesses that are generous with food and supplies. Ramsey County will engage internally and externally around the topic of personal emergency preparedness and business continuity planning. The county should share assessments of hazards and climate make evidence-based infrastructure updates that will protect resources and mitigate financial loss.





### Utility Disruptions

Limited and/or short-term energy disruptions are not uncommon, especially as a result of seasonal storms, scheduled repair outages, and small-scale construction accidents (such as accidental severing of a utility pipeline or wire). Most energy disruptions are handled internally by the service provider or in coordination with local first response departments and do not trigger the activation of an emergency support function. Even moderately widespread power outages, though very inconvenient for residents and businesses, do not normally cause life safety and property protection issues beyond what local resources can manage. The same holds true for other utility and power disruptions such as fuel shortages or water use restrictions; they are managed by their service providers and require little government resources to support response and restoration.

A utility or energy service disruption can have potentially serious consequences depending on the timing, location and facilities affected. Emergency support functions may need to be activated when utility or energy disruptions have, or are expected to have significant impact on the county's capabilities or its population. Significant impacts can include but are not limited to the need to provide for heating, cooling or other mass care services during power outages in inclement weather; loss of power affecting other utilities and energy sources (such as lift stations not being able to adequately move storm, waste water and potable water); and fuel pumps not working. Loss of power and/or water may also have significant longer term and financial impact for businesses, particularly those that serve food. Residents who rely on powered in-home medical devices can have serious issues in longer term outages.

When the county is requested to assist an affected municipality, or if the county activates emergency support functions to coordinate the provision of temporary emergency power (electrical, petroleum fuels etc.) and the restoration of damaged energy and utilities (electrical, natural gas, water, sewer, telecommunications etc.) within Ramsey County during and following disasters on its own due to the situation, the county and the affected municipalities will coordinate on any emergency support function efforts. If activated, the county emergency support function's lead for Energy and Utilities will be the coordination point for these issues. The county will ensure that it coordinates its efforts with the State Emergency Operations Center when it is activated for any incident placing energy infrastructure and resources at risk in Ramsey County. In planning for resiliency, the county will mitigate potential risk by incorporating micro-grids, energy storage and independent renewable energy supplies.

### County Energy Vision

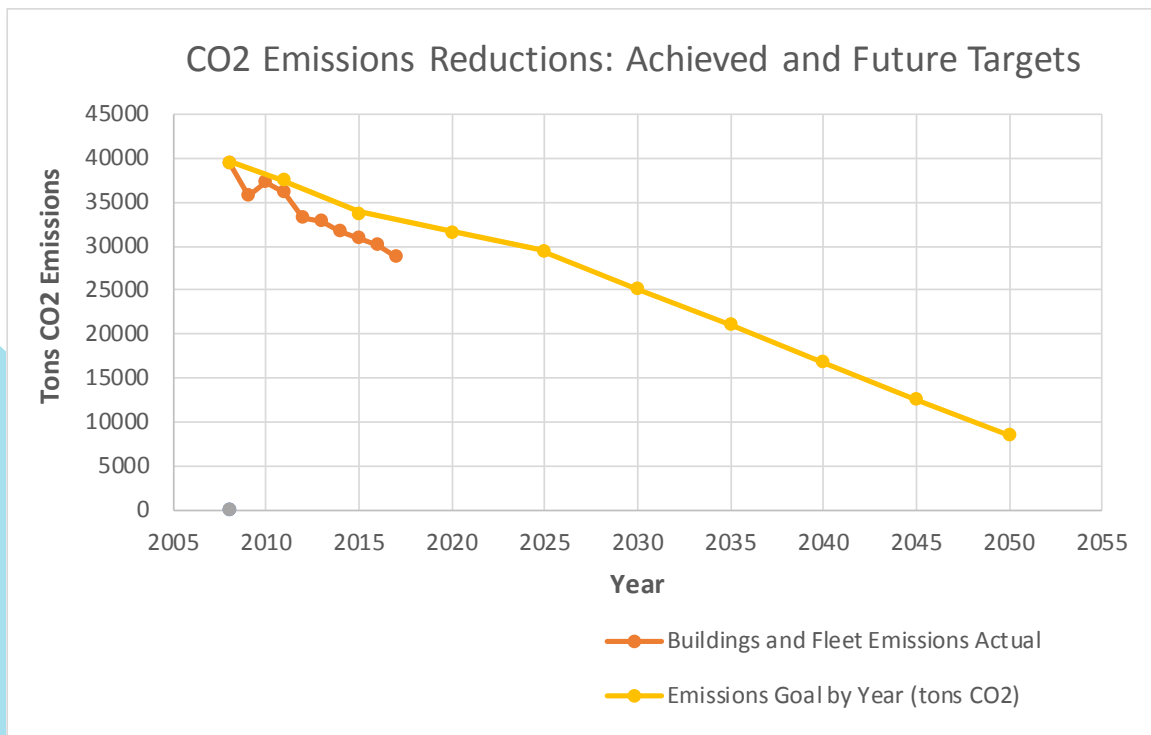
*Ramsey County's programs, policies, and practices reflect a commitment to energy and environmental stewardship as a cornerstone of healthy and vibrant communities, in alignment with the county's vision, mission and goals.*

#### Energy Use Reduction Goals

- Reduce energy use 25 percent by December 31, 2020 from 2008 levels.
- Reduce energy use 30 percent by December 31, 2025 from 2008 levels.

#### Ramsey County's Goals for Reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2025 from 2008 levels.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 from 2008 levels.



Success within Ramsey County's operational systems will not ensure an energy-efficient and resilient county overall. There are opportunities to look outward to support and/or assist cities within the county with their energy and resiliency goals that encompass not only the cities' operations but also their residential, commercial and industrial sectors. Municipalities in the county have expressed interest in working more collaboratively with the county and other local units of government to facilitate achievement of their energy, carbon reduction and resiliency goals. Going forward, the county will seek out opportunities to support local communities in these areas and support the state's broader goals set forth in the Next Generation Energy Act of 2007<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2010/other/101582/www.governor.state.mn.us/mediacenter/pressreleases/printerfriendly/PROD008146.html>

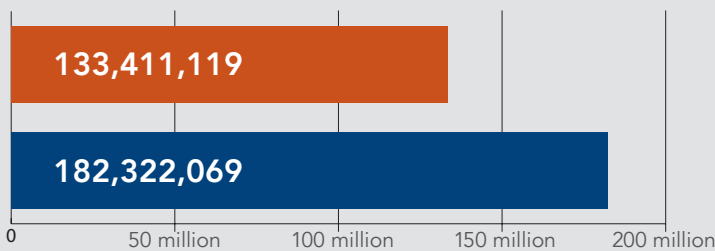
**CURRENT REALITY**

**Energy consumption**

Xcel Energy is the primary producer and supplier of electricity and natural gas in Ramsey County. The measurement and evaluation of energy consumption from this source is key to understanding which strategies will be most effective to create a resilient county. Business customers in Ramsey County are the biggest consumers of energy in Ramsey County. The approximately 14,000 business customers in Ramsey County have an oversized impact when compared to the 161,000 residential customers. View a detailed breakdown: [Ramsey County's 2017 energy consumption](#).

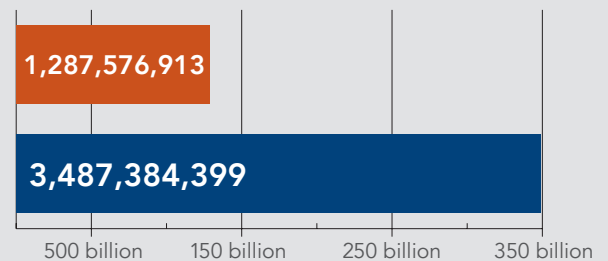
**Natural Gas Consumption by Sector (therms)**

- = 161,132 RESIDENTIAL customers
- = 14,140 BUSINESS customers



**Electricity Use by Sector - (kWh)**

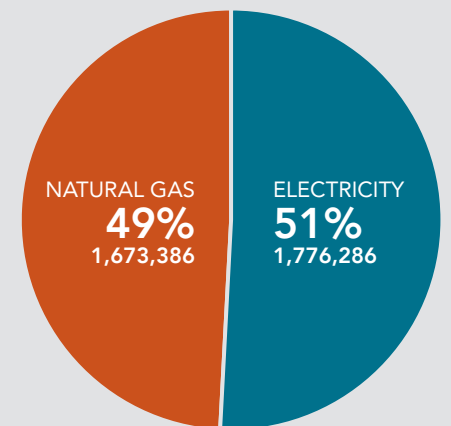
- = 204,924 RESIDENTIAL customers
- = 22,572 BUSINESS customers



In absolute numbers, business customers make up roughly 10% of Xcel Energy's total customers as compared to the number of individual residential customers. However, total annual carbon emissions generated by businesses in Ramsey County are nearly double those of the residential sector. In addition to electricity and natural gas, transportation fuels are a major contributor to total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Ramsey County and represent a significant portion of total energy expenditures by businesses and residents. Emissions from other sources of fuel such as propane, fuel oil, the transportation sector and the consumption or provision of goods and services are not accounted for in these graphs. Therefore, it will be important for the county and its municipalities to include non-residential audiences in energy efficiency and GHG emission reduction strategies as they are developed. (insert emissions chart on right)

Residential and commercial buildings typically consume 41% of a community's energy and are responsible for approximately 40% of total GHG in the U.S. Therefore, it is essential for Ramsey County to encourage commercial, residential and institutional building improvements and new construction to be as energy efficient as possible and to be "renewable energy ready" and "electric vehicle ready" and/or incorporate renewable energy wherever possible. Improvements to housing stock and other buildings create economic development challenges by potentially increasing construction costs yet also create long term value for the owners by increasing the long-term affordability of these facilities. As such, Ramsey County will adopt the Minnesota Sustainable Buildings Energy Standard for all county projects and will encourage municipalities within the county that have not already done so to adopt this or an equivalent standard.

**Carbon emissions by energy type for buildings served by Xcel Energy in Ramsey County**  
(metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>)<sup>[9]</sup>



[9] Estimated total carbon emissions from natural gas for a customer class are equal to the total therms consumed by the customer class, multiplied by the standard CO<sub>2</sub> coefficient of 11.7 lbs/therm.



### ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

Ramsey County's interests in energy fall into six categories that go beyond the daily use of electricity, natural gas and other fuels to carry out the county's work.

#### These include:

- County as an energy consumer.
- County as an energy generator.
- County as a service provider in the context of equity.
- Economic development.
- Environmental issues.
- System reliability and resiliency.

Residents and businesses depend on affordable and reliable energy. Residents on fixed modest incomes and residents on fixed incomes, or other vulnerable communities as referenced on page 126, can become "energy burdened" when energy prices rise while their incomes remain flat. Maintaining stable, reliable, affordable energy for residents is a necessity in today's energy dependent world. Ramsey County supports continued innovation in energy efficiency, conservation, clean energy generation, transmission and distribution to keep electricity affordable for its residents while improving the electric grid so that it can meet the demands of the 21st century.

**For businesses,** the ability to expand business development is affected by energy policy decisions and system design. Depending on how it occurs, changes in energy policy and service delivery could help businesses control and reduce costs and improve reliability. The cost of energy affects the ability of businesses to pay for labor and continued growth, and is related to the economic viability of communities. Encouraging commercial, industrial and residential energy efficiency and energy generation can have a positive impact on the local economy. In 2016 commercial, industrial and residential energy customers spent more than \$600 million dollars for energy to heat, cool and operate buildings and manufacturing processes, and other infrastructure. Much of this money leaves the local economy, unlike energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy that can reduce the outflow of cash and create local jobs and lifelong careers and opportunity for economic prosperity.

**Within the county,** energy efficiency and conservation efforts continue. Planning for and integrating renewable energy, energy storage capabilities, micro grids and other strategies and technologies into its energy systems will reduce the county's risks and build greater resiliency into its infrastructure and operations. Diversity in energy supply, continued integration of technology and storage can help the county manage price increases and bounce back more quickly from disasters and minimize disruption of services to residents and local businesses. Success in this work will require partnerships with multiple stakeholders across the county and the region.

**RENEWABLE ENERGY**

*Local renewable energy resources are available for economic capture in Ramsey County. Two of the most abundant energy resources available in Ramsey County are solar and energy-efficiency resources.*

Less abundant resources include wind, biogas and bioenergy. As solar installations become increasingly cost competitive with grid-provided natural gas, nuclear, and fossil fuel energy resources, a small number of residents and businesses are integrating solar energy into their energy supply. At the same time, Xcel Energy continues to commit to higher levels of renewable energy in its grid supplied energy mix over the next three decades and this will help all Ramsey county businesses and residents achieve lower carbon emissions from electricity use if consumption levels remain the same or go down.

**SOLAR RESOURCE CALCULATIONS AND POTENTIAL**

To meet county goals, it is important to plan for the protection and development access of solar energy. The total capacity of the rooftop solar resource in Ramsey County is 24,310,786 MWh/year. This is equal to approximately 20 percent of the electricity consumed in the county as of 2016. However, Ramsey County's solar potential is lower than surrounding counties (30 to 60% solar potential) and thus careful planning will be needed to preserve solar potential. However, Ramsey County's solar potential is lower than surrounding counties (30 to 60% solar potential) and thus careful planning will be needed to preserve solar potential. There are 352 grid-tied solar projects in the county as of 2016 with a total capacity of 3,516 kW/year.<sup>13</sup> The opportunity for solar energy development in the county remains high. These are estimates of how much electricity could be generated using existing technology and assumptions on the efficiency of conversion.

Community	Gross Potential	Rooftop Potential	Gross Generation Potential <sup>14</sup>	Rooftop Generation Potential <sup>15</sup>
<b>RAMSEY COUNTY</b>	191,692,400 MWh/yr	24,310,786 MWh/yr	19,169,240 MWh/yr	2,431,079 MWh/yr

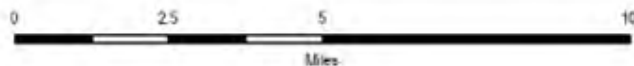
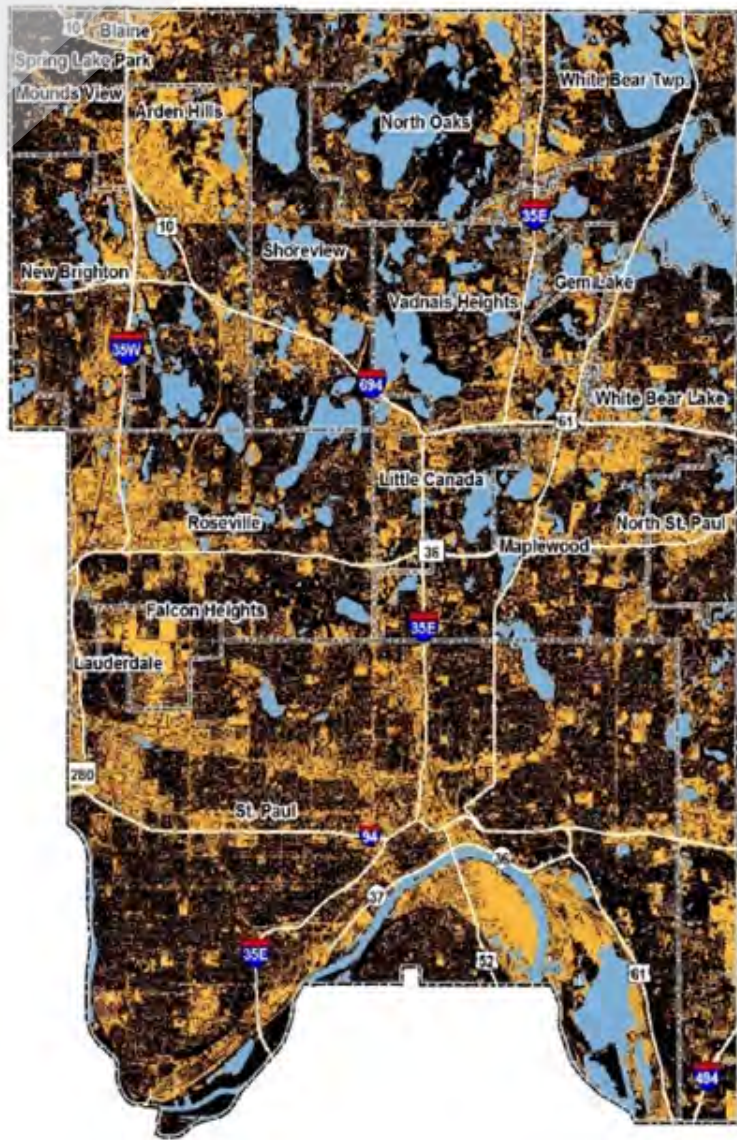
The gross solar generation potential and the gross solar rooftop generation potential for Ramsey County are calculated by the Metropolitan Council and are expressed in megawatt hours per year (MWh/yr). These estimates are based on the solar map, figure shown on the next page, developed for Ramsey County by the Metropolitan Council. These values represent gross totals and are not reflective of the amount of solar likely to develop within Ramsey County. Instead, the calculations estimate the total potential resource before removing areas unsuitable for solar development or factors related to solar energy development or factors related to solar energy efficiency.

<sup>13</sup> Source: Xcel Energy, Annual Community Energy Report, 2017

<sup>14</sup> In general, a conservative assumption for panel generation is to use 10% efficiency for conversion of total insolation into electric generation. These solar resource calculations provide an approximation of each community's solar resource. This baseline information can provide the opportunity for a more extensive, community-specific analysis of solar development potential for both solar gardens and rooftop or accessory use installations. For most communities, the rooftop generation potential is equivalent to between 30% and 60% of the community's total electric energy consumption. The rooftop generation potential does not consider ownership, financial barriers, or building-specific structural limitations.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

Gross Solar Potential – Ramsey County



Gross Solar Potential  
(Watt-hours per Year)

High : 1279387  
Low : 900001

- Solar Potential under 900,000 watt-hours per year
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- Wetlands and Open Water Features

Source: University of Minnesota U-Spatial Statewide Solar Raster.



### WIND ENERGY

Current wind energy technology and a lack of sustained wind speeds at lower heights typically needed for wind development in dense urban areas, does not facilitate significant development of wind as an energy resource in the highly densified confines of Ramsey County. Some volume of wind energy may be able to be harvested in suburban and semi-rural areas of the county with current technology but this is unlikely to be a significant resource in the county. Residential and commercial customers of Xcel Energy can purchase wind energy through the utility's Windsource™ program. As of 2017 there were 67 businesses and nearly 11,000 residential customers signed up for the Windsource™ program for a total subscribed energy load of 31,545,261 kWh.<sup>16</sup>

### BIOENERGY RESOURCES

#### Biogas

Anaerobic digestion is a process that uses organic matter and converts it to methane and carbon dioxide that can be captured as a biogas. Biogas is also known as "renewable natural gas" and if processed to a specific standard, can be used as a replacement fuel for natural gas. Municipal wastes, wood debris, food processing residue and other organic materials (biomass) can be used to create biogas. Through the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board), Ramsey County owns and operates with Washington County the Recycling & Energy Center in Newport, MN. This is a refuse derived fuel facility that uses shredding, magnetic separation and density separation to convert waste received at the plant into a shredded material that is then transported to Red Wing and Mankato, MN to be burned as fuel to generate electricity. Ferrous metals and aluminum are separated and recovered for recycling as part of the processing done in Newport.

Through the R&E Board, the two counties are also exploring additional technologies to increase energy produced, create fuels, make compost, and/or provide recyclable materials for manufacturing. These technologies include improved mixed waste processing, anaerobic digestion, and gasification.

#### Biomass

District Energy, St. Paul operates a district heating and cooling system within Ramsey County that serves facilities in downtown Saint Paul. This facility uses natural gas and local wood debris to generate electricity and heat. Metro area wood debris is the main biomass source for this facility.

#### District Energy, St. Paul Operations Information and Benefits <sup>17</sup>

- Simultaneously produces 65 megawatts of heat and up to 33 megawatts of electricity.
- Up to 25 megawatts of this renewable electricity are supplied to the local electric utility, enough for 20,000 homes.
- Excess thermal energy heats enough water for approximately 65% of District Energy's heating needs.
- Utilizes approximately 280,000 tons of urban wood residuals (biomass) annually.
- Captures the wasted thermal energy to make energy production more efficient and effective.
- Helps with managing urban wood waste and puts more than \$10 million annually into the local economy.
- Reduces the risk of energy price spikes, power outages, and power quality problems.
- Improves energy security and community resiliency.
- Significantly reduces air emissions and greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change by using biomass and combined heat and power (CHP) together.

<sup>16</sup> Xcel Energy Annual Community Energy Report, 2017

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.districtenergy.com/technologies/combined-heat-and-power>

**ACTION AND POLICIES**

*To meet its goals of reducing energy use and emissions Ramsey County will develop key strategies, actions and policies. By focusing on mitigation and adaptation strategies Ramsey County will help create more resilient communities. Partnership and collaboration with municipalities, government agencies, community partners, residents and business will be important pieces of all resiliency efforts.*

In 2019 Ramsey County will develop a renewable energy plan as part of its broader efforts to increase the use of on- and off-site renewable energy. The renewable energy plan will guide development of solar energy and will include specific goals and policies for integrating solar energy resources into county facilities, fleet and infrastructure operations. Ramsey County recognizes that for county operations to meet the state's carbon emissions reduction goals it will require much greater integration of energy efficiency and renewable energy by all sectors of the county's economy. The county will initiate collaborative efforts with cities within the county to support their efforts to create and expand energy efficiency and renewable energy programs in their communities. As a SolSmart member, the county will encourage all communities to join the Green Step Cities program, to become certified under the national SolSmart program, explore future community solar opportunities and to use the Metropolitan Council's solar calculations as a planning and decision-making tool for local land use development before removing areas suitable for solar energy production.

As business customers are the primary producer of carbon emissions in the county it is important to partner with them to create a more resilient county. To assist non-residential property owners, the county participates in the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program implemented by the Saint Paul Port Authority. This program assists property owners with energy efficiency and renewable energy project financing that can facilitate deep energy retrofits to facilities and operations. The county anticipates continuing its support for this program and is reviewing current legislative proposals to expand this program to residential properties in the state.

To address emissions and energy usage from the transportation sector Ramsey County will reduce vehicle miles travelled by employees, clients, and the providers of goods and services related to county business. We will encourage electric vehicles and cleaner burning fuels be used for transportation of goods and people. Major county investments will continue in transitway corridors that will provide residents with more energy efficient alternatives to driving alone. Electrification of the overall transportation system and expanded public transit, sidewalks and bikeways will be important components of this work and will require multi-sector collaboration to facilitate a rapid and smooth transition. Ramsey County has installed seven public electric vehicle charging stations and owns three all electric vehicles. The county will continue to integrate hybrid and electric vehicles into its fleet to meet its fleet needs and will expand its use of technology that results in lower vehicle miles travelled to conduct county business.

**RAMSEY COUNTY WILL...**

...develop a solar energy plan as part of its broader efforts to increase the use of on- and off-site renewable energy.



...initiate collaborative efforts with cities within the county to support their efforts.



...encourage all communities to join the Green Step Cities program.



...reduce vehicle miles travelled by employees, clients, and the providers of goods and services related to county business.



...continue investing in transitway corridors that will provide residents with more energy efficient alternatives.



...continue to integrate hybrid and electric vehicles into its fleet.

### Additional Resiliency Opportunities

Ramsey County will continue to discuss, evaluate and plan for building additional resiliency into its policies, plans and programs. Identifying opportunities to build more flexible systems and supporting the continued development of resilient communities are key to long term growth, stability and prosperity for the people and businesses within the county while protecting natural resources.

**The complexity of mitigating climate impacts while planning for climate adaptation requires the county to balance current economic and social realities with prudent long-term planning. Some of the challenges and opportunities facing the county include:**

- Improving and maintaining energy reliability and climate resilience of critical emergency response facilities such as police, fire, emergency communications and hazard response centers.
- Designing and constructing infrastructure to meet the changing and unpredictable nature of climate enhanced weather events and longer term climate changes.
- Increasing the use of local energy resources to capture job creation opportunities and diversifying the local economic base while maintaining economic competitiveness.
- Encouraging investment in electric grid infrastructure and solar development that makes electric service more flexible, reliable and resilient to weather-related and other disruptions.
- Supporting the development of zero net carbon residential and commercial buildings.
- Use of local renewable and energy efficiency resources especially for affordable housing and small business development in the county.





## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### Resiliency and Health

Climate change is both directly and indirectly linked to a variety of negative health outcomes. Climate change affects the social determinants of health by disrupting access to clean air, safe drinking water, food access and safe housing. The health repercussions of climate hazards arise from a combination of environmental risk factors and the vulnerability of the individuals affected. Understanding how environmental risk and vulnerability together contribute to the impact of climate change will prove beneficial as the county moves forward in our mission to protect all Ramsey County residents by ensuring healthy people, healthy communities, and a healthy environment.

The impact of climate change on health occurs at the intersection of the type of hazard, vulnerability of the public and environmental risk. Resiliency is the enhancement of the system to counter these factors. Some communities may be more vulnerable to climate change due to social, economic and environmental risks. Young children and the elderly are biologically less able to regulate body temperature and will experience more respiratory distress. As people age their lungs become less elastic and less able to filter out polluted air. The effects of poor quality air will be exaggerated within aging populations who are fighting infections or who have respiratory or cardiovascular disease. These populations are also more vulnerable in a disaster scenario and it is critical to consider the infrastructure resiliency of child care centers and nursing homes.

People of color, particularly African Americans, experience higher rates of high blood pressure and asthma than their White counterparts. In addition, Ramsey County residents of color have a lower rate of health insurance coverage than other Ramsey County residents, further concentrating the deadly effects of extreme heat and poor air quality within already vulnerable communities. Ramsey County will identify and address disproportionately high adverse health or environmental effects on low-income people and people of color and work to prevent discrimination by race, color or national origin, sexual orientation, and gender in county programs.

### Health Care

Access to health care is critical for managing chronic health conditions that are exacerbated by climate change. Ramsey County financially supports several Federally Qualified Health Centers that accept public insurance and offer sliding scale fees. Ramsey County should ensure quality at those health centers and consider innovative partnerships between public health and health care. Collaboration across the Metro Area between public health and health care will further support response and recovery from disease outbreaks or incidents requiring medial surge measures. The Twin Cities Metro is a national model for collaborative planning across hospital systems and will maintain this leadership role. Ramsey County will examine its own programs and processes to prevent disruptions in health coverage for individuals on public insurance. Sharing information across county departments and with other government agencies will ensure continuity of health care and service for households experiencing poverty as well as acute and chronic illness.

### Food, Nutrition and Resilience

Access to safe, affordable and nutritious food is essential to health. Food insecurity refers to having limited or inconsistent access to healthy, safe foods.<sup>26</sup> Many communities are vulnerable to hunger and other nutritional deficiencies due to inconsistent intake to healthy, affordable foods. Some of the most vulnerable to food insecurity tend to be those in poverty, those with mental and physical disabilities, those who may lack the ability to cook and prepare foods.

Currently, 22.7% of Ramsey County residents are food insecure, the highest rate in the six-county metro area.<sup>27</sup> Since the tightening of SNAP (food stamps) access and benefits, many people rely on food shelves; however, limits on the number of times a person can visit each month can be a barrier to healthy nutrition.

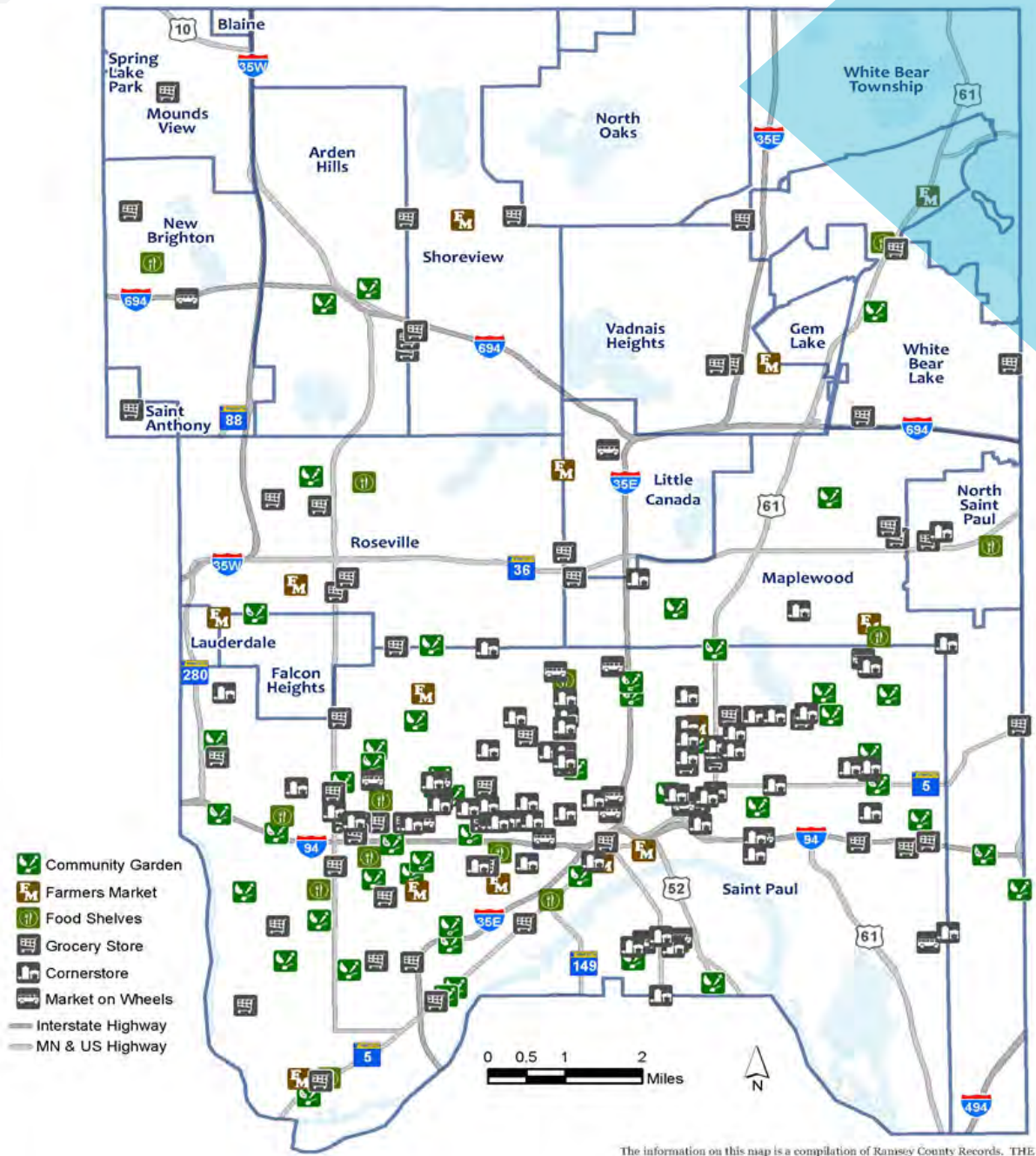
Food insecurity is an existing vulnerability for many Ramsey County residents, and will likely become more widespread and burdensome as climate change aggravates the major stresses and shocks of daily life. As demonstrated in the following image, as of 2017 there are inconsistencies and inadequate food access points in many parts of Ramsey County. For individuals, families and seniors living in the Suburban Ramsey County areas without reliable transportation, it can be difficult to access grocery stores and other food outlets/access points. Additionally, food shelves, grocery and corner stores selling healthy foods do not exist in some areas of concentrated poverty.

In future planning, Ramsey County will expand its partnerships to address lack of access to nutritious food, including working with food shelves, farmers markets, corner and larger grocery stores to eliminate food insecurity.

<sup>26</sup> Andersen SA, ed. *Core Indicators of Nutritional Sate for Difficult to Sample Populations*. *The Journal of Nutrition*. 1990: 120:1557S-1600S.

<sup>27</sup> Metro SHAPE 2014. *Ramsey County Data Book*.

### Food Resources in Ramsey County



Data originally collected for a web mapping application about various food resources located in Ramsey County. Community gardens, farmers markets, food shelves, stores (grocery stores, corner stores and market on wheels) were collected March 2017.

The information on this map is a compilation of Ramsey County Records. THE COUNTY DOES NOT WARRANT OR GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OF THIS DATA. The county disclaims any liability for any injuries, time delays, or expenses you may suffer if you rely in any manner on the accuracy of this data.



**Resiliency in the Food System**

Ramsey County will work with community partners to eliminate food insecurity among Ramsey County residents by 2040. This will include a focus on strategies to build a comprehensive local food system that promotes resiliency and access to healthy, safe foods. The image below<sup>28</sup> details a resilient local food system. Strategies to accomplish this goal rely on a whole-system approach, including access to healthy clean soil, local distribution and production, expanding local food access, including food shelves, markets and other food outlets, educating on cooking skills, improving the quality of food offered and reducing edible food waste and composting. Many theoretical and possible stressors and shocks to our landscape and environment could be detrimental to Ramsey county residents’ health. This includes climate change, extreme heat events and other extreme weather events that will directly impact our food system.

**WHAT A RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM LOOKS LIKE**



Ramsey County will move to implement strategies (listed in the above graphic) to become a more resilient food system. As recommended by the Minnesota Department of Health, a resilient food system is critical to community success including; eliminating food insecurity will contribute to a more resilient community.

<sup>28</sup> Adapted from the MN Food Charter. <https://mnfoodcharter.com/the-charter/food-infrastructure/strategies/>

### Healthy Homes

There is a clear connection between housing and health. A healthy home is dry, clean, pest-free, safe, contaminant-free, ventilated and well maintained. For three decades Ramsey County has worked to reduce lead hazards in housing to lower the incidence of lead poisoning in children. Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health began research into a whole-home approach beginning with referrals to homes of children with severe asthma in economically disadvantaged families. Using investigation and interventions, the approach resulted in a statistically significant reduction in both school absences for the children and work absences for parents, as well as fewer visits to emergency rooms.

As a result of the Healthy Homes program, individual children, families and the broader community benefit from healthier kids spending more days in school, parents who miss less work, and overall reduced health-care costs for families and the public health care system. The approach now implemented by the county uses well-documented, evidence-based interventions to address housing-related health issues. Moving forward, the healthy-homes approach will continue to assess and reduce asthma triggers in the home and identify and minimize other indoor contaminants.

### Lead in Homes

There are a significant number of children living in homes in Ramsey County that continue to be at risk for exposure to lead. Overexposure to lead can cause lead poisoning – which is a huge concern for children. Lead poisoning can cause learning, behavioral and health problems. Ramsey County will continue to take a whole-homes approach, especially in areas of concentrated poverty, where making home repairs and improvements is a financial challenge for owners and tenants. This is primary prevention work that reduces health risks for current and future occupants of the home. The focus of this program is to replace lead painted windows. These replacements not only eliminate the lead source but also add comfort and improve energy efficiency to the home.



### Waste Management

Solid waste management has an important role to play in addressing a variety of risks: public health, environmental, economic, occupational and property. With regard to environmental impacts, risks associated with greenhouse gas emissions, environmental toxicity, energy consumption and water use are all affected by how waste is managed. There are significant environmental benefits resulting from waste reduction and recycling. Moving materials to their highest and best use and finding alternative disposal options beyond landfilling maximizes these environmental benefits. Effective regulatory programs can assure compliance with laws that are aimed at reducing risks. Reducing risk to health and the environment is a key goal of the county's solid waste management system. Solid waste planning for Ramsey County aligns with our values that focus on prevention, building relationships and health in all policies.

Ramsey County recognizes that how it manages waste can contribute to our changing climate. The county through Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy has been exploring new technologies for solid waste management that can help reduce the amount of carbon and methane gas currently produced in its processes, thereby reducing harmful contributions to climate change. In addition, the county, through its Solid Waste Management Master Plan identifies policies and strategies for the proper management of waste that results from emergency situations, such as natural or human-caused disasters. The management of emergency debris, such as trees, building components and hazardous materials is important when building capacity to respond to natural or human-caused disasters.

Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy is looking at ways to convert refuse derived fuel into biofuels as a way to minimize the negative environmental health impacts of waste management. In addition, a strong emphasis is placed on reduction, reuse and materials separation. The path forward for solid waste management is guided by the principle of pivoting the view from "waste" to "resources". Thereby recovering the greatest value from trash and adding value to the local economy and the environment. The path forward also includes the goal to move to a circular economy. This is a closed loop system from production to distribution to consumption to reuse, repair and recycling and back to production. In a closed loop system resources are used for as long as possible – with the maximum value extracted before disposal and causing the least negative environmental impacts.

A sustainable community seeks a better quality of life for current and future residents by minimizing waste, preventing pollution, promoting efficiency, and developing resources to revitalize local economies. Ramsey County's waste management system is an integral component of the infrastructure of a sustainable community. Proper management of garbage and recycling conserves resources and assures a high level of community sanitation. Therefore, solid waste will be managed by technologies and methods that support sustainable communities and environments.





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## **IMPLEMENTATION & APPENDIX**

*Ramsey County will implement the comprehensive plan through its existing short-term and long-term planning processes. Coordination with local, regional, state and federal plans will be key to a vibrant and thriving county in 2040.*

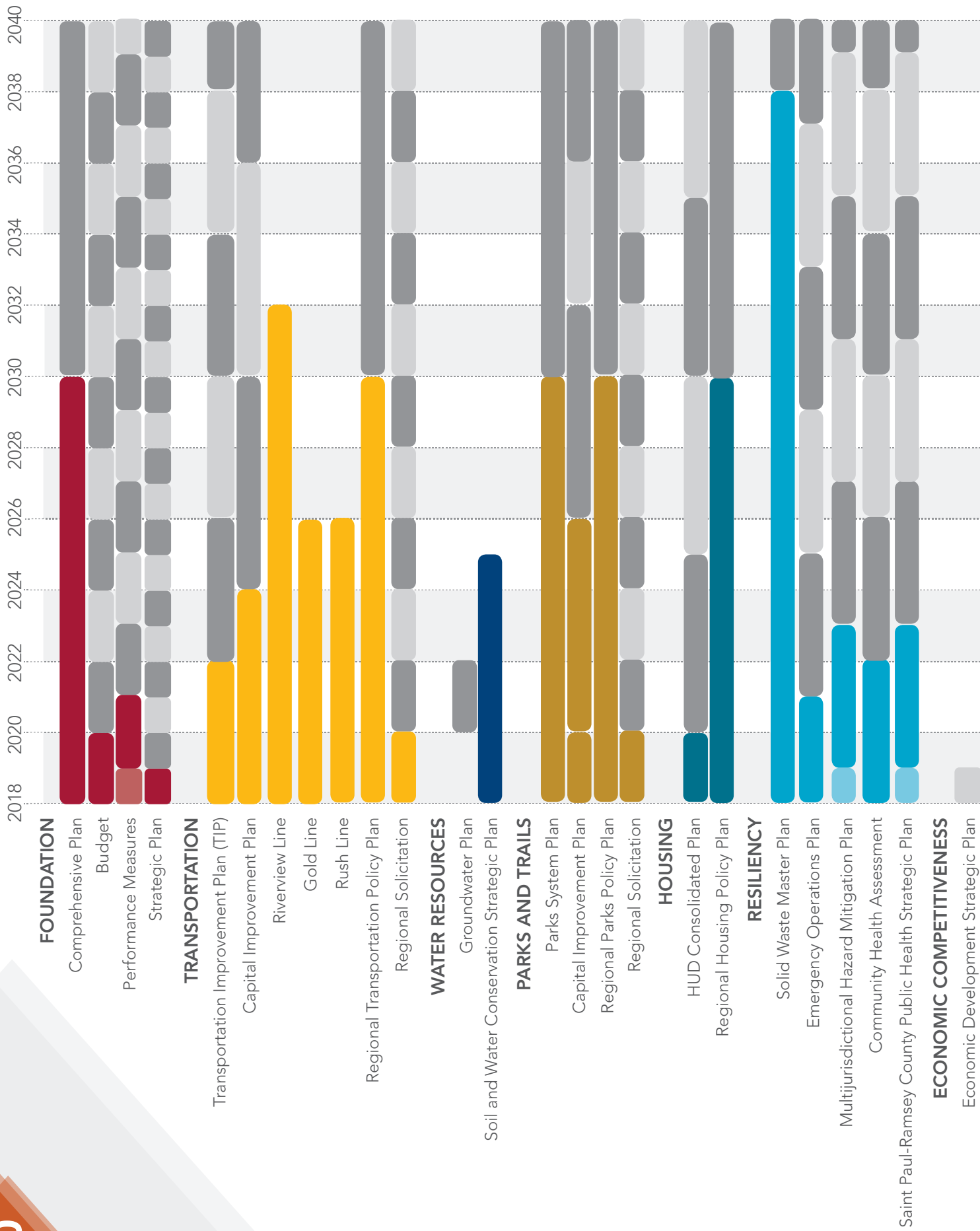


The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners will continue to use the service team approach to implement services, planning processes, and programs. Ramsey County's four service teams; Health and Wellness, Information and Public Records, Economic Growth and Community Investment, and Safety and Justice will be the primary vehicle for implementation of the comprehensive plan. The county-wide strategic plan sets annual interdepartmental priorities that the service teams will focus throughout the year.

The county will also continue to take a Resident's First approach to service delivery and community engagement will remain an important part of the decision-making process. Staff will continue to foster community inclusion in the decision-making process through advisory boards and committees. These committees provide county staff with valuable community perspective and help align priorities across the county. In addition to citizen boards, stakeholder groups and committees, creative and meaningful approaches to community engagement will be effectively used across the county.

The chart on the next page and the appendix offers a comprehensive list of existing plans that will be used to implement sections of Ramsey County 2040. Colored bars indicate the current plan and grey bars indicate future planning processes. The Ramsey County Capital Improvement Program (CIP) will be an important implementation tool for transportation, storm water facilities, parks and other infrastructure. Individual cities' comprehensive plans were not included on this list, but coordination, review and partnership with our local partners will be a key strategy for implementation.







**APPENDIX****FOUNDATION**

[Budget](#)  
[Performance Measures](#)  
[Strategic Plan](#)  
[Thrive MSP 2040](#)  
[Public Comment Recieved](#)  
[Move MN Final Engagement Report](#)  
[KAYSC Final Engagment Report](#)

**TRANSPORTATION**

[Transportation Improvement Plan \(TIP\)](#)  
[Capital Improvement Plan](#)  
[Riverview Line](#)  
[Gold Line](#)  
[Rush Line](#)  
[Regional Transportation Policy Plan](#)  
[Regional Solicitation](#)  
[2040 Traffic Volumes](#)  
[Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrain Plan](#)  
[Active Living Ramsey Communities](#)

**WATER RESOURCES**

[Groundwater Plan \(in progress\)](#)  
[Soil and Water Conservation Strategic Plan](#)

**PARKS AND TRAILS**

[Parks System Plan](#)  
[Capital Improvement Plan](#)  
[Regional Parks Policy Plan](#)  
[Regional Solicitation](#)

**HOUSING**

[HUD Consolidated Plan](#)  
[Regional Housing Policy Plan](#)

**RESILIENCE**

[Solid Waste Master Plan](#)  
[Emergency Operations Plan](#)  
[Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan](#)  
[Community Health Assessment](#)  
[Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health Strategic Plan](#)  
[Health Equity Plan](#)  
[Climate Change Health Vulnerability Assessment](#)  
[Solar Potential Chart](#)

**ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS**

[Economic Development Strategic Plan \(in progress\)](#)



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## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

*Ramsey County envisions an inclusive economy where all residents prosper and have access to opportunity. By 2040, Ramsey County seeks to eliminate racial disparities in employment, educational attainment, and income. Full participation in the regional economy by all residents will create wealth, expand the talent pool and increase well-being. Ramsey County will leverage workforce development programs and partnerships, business expansion programs, internal procurement and hiring, the development of regional transit corridors, and inclusive redevelopment of key county sites, like Rice Creek Commons and Riverfront Properties, to accomplish this vision.*

## KEY THEMES:

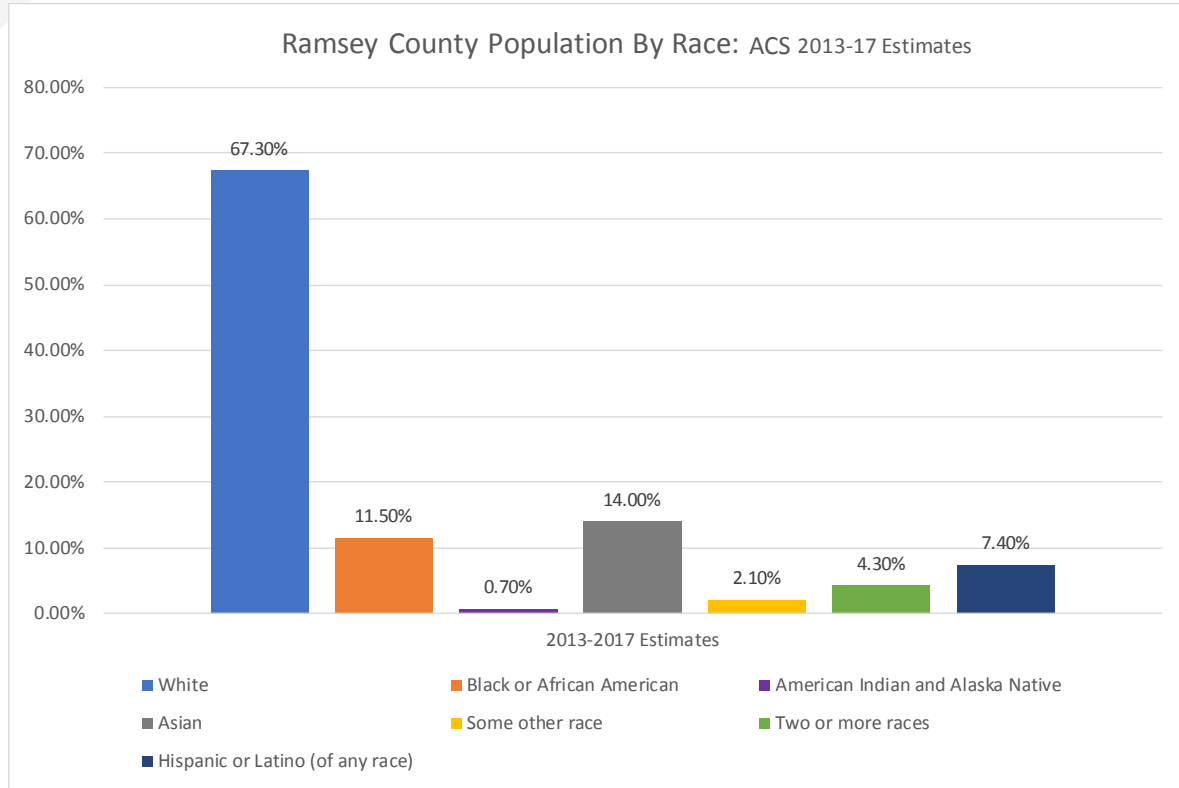
- ▶ Eliminate racial disparities in employment, educational attainment, and income.
  - ▶ Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- ▶ Support jobseekers, businesses, and entrepreneurs through an array of support services.
  - ▶ Implement and meet county-specific workforce inclusion goals for all capital projects.
    - ▶ Implement and meet county-specific contracting inclusion goals.
    - ▶ Attract, grow and retain a talented, diverse and healthy internal workforce.
- ▶ Riverview, Rush Line, METRO Gold Line and the B Line will be in operation and connect to key job centers.
  - ▶ Rice Creek Commons will be an active, fully-developed regional center.
- ▶ Riverfront Properties will be home to a marquee, mixed-use development.



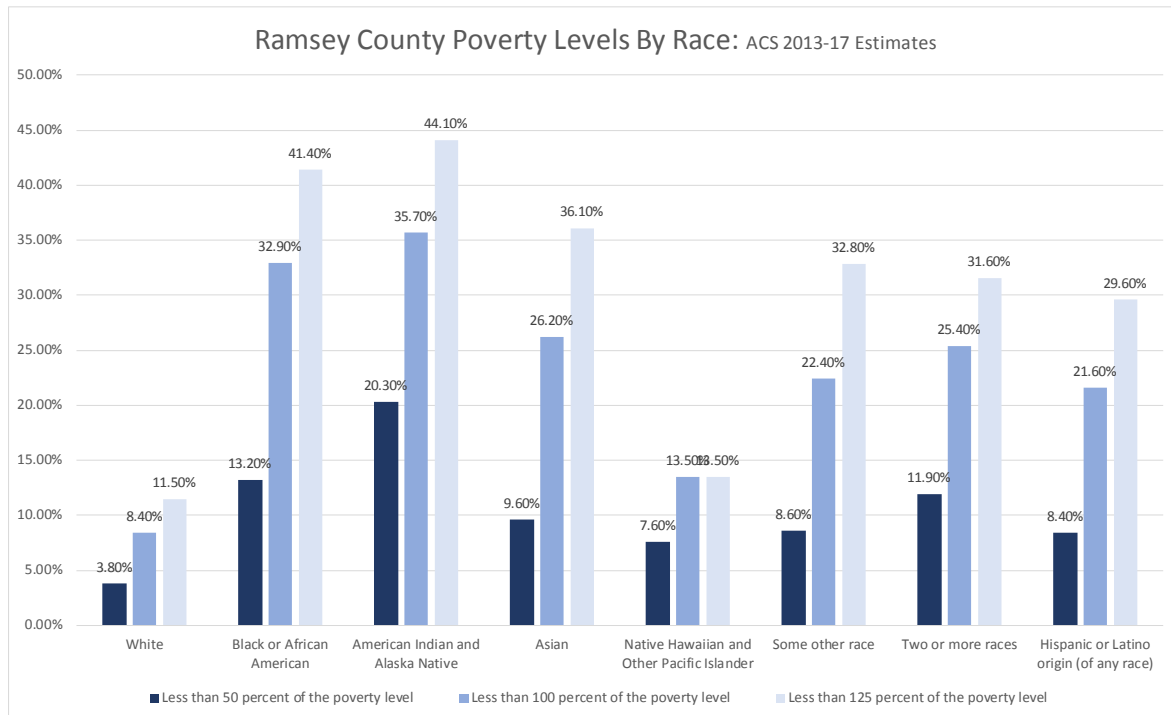
## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

### CURRENT REALITY

Ramsey County is racially and ethnically diverse. However, large disparities exist by race in poverty rates, educational attainment and unemployment rates. Eliminating these disparities would lead to a more just, inclusive and economically prosperous county for all.

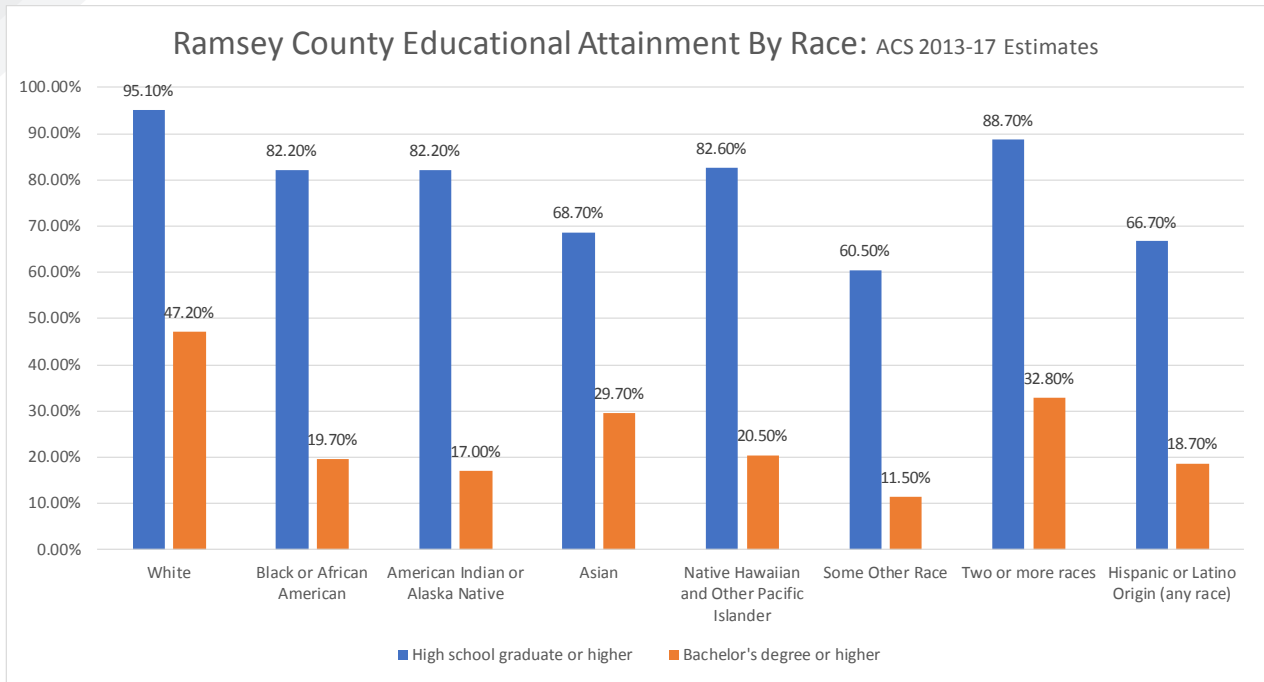


Poverty rates are significantly higher for American Indian, African American and Asian American residents compared to white residents.

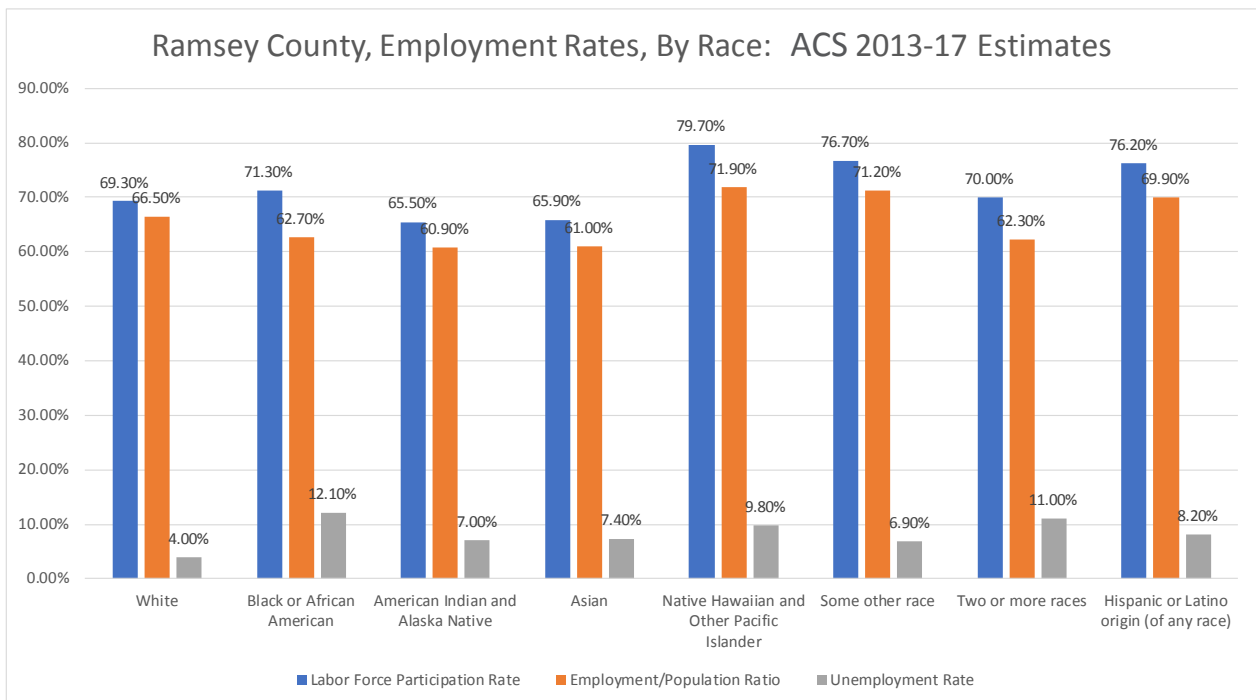


## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

White residents graduate from high school and obtain bachelor degrees or higher degrees at a significantly higher rate than residents of color or American Indian residents. Because educational attainment is strong predictor of income it will be extremely important to reduce this disparity.



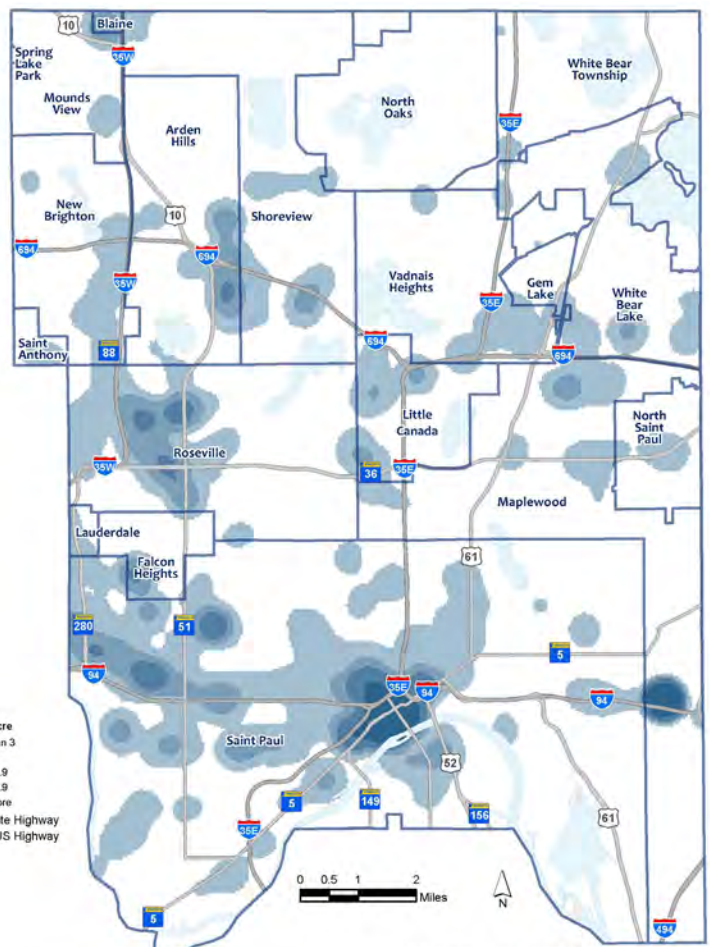
The unemployment rate is eight points higher for African American residents and mixed-race residents than white residents. Overcoming barriers to employment will allow all residents to more fully participate in the regional economy.



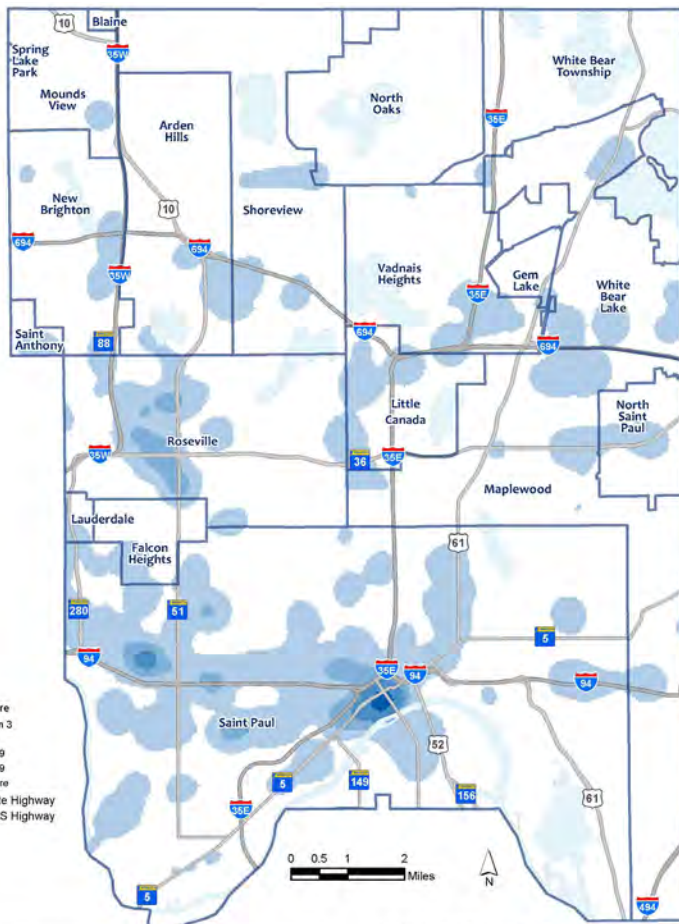
# ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS


A spatial mismatch between areas of concentrated poverty and areas with high job density are present in Ramsey County and across the region. Poverty is concentrated primarily in the city of Saint Paul whereas jobs are dispersed throughout the county. Major job concentrations exist in Downtown Saint Paul, Maplewood at the 3M Campus, western Roseville, Saint Paul's Midway and along the I-694 Corridor. Low wage jobs, which are potential career pathways for low-income residents follow a similar distribution. Many of the areas with employment opportunities are disconnected from public transportation, which puts many jobs out of reach for residents who do not have regular access to vehicles. Economic development strategic planning and multimodal transit planning will need to address this to create a more prosperous region and county.

## LEHD Job Density in Ramsey County.



## LEHD Low Wage Job Density in Ramsey County.



 Zoom in for details



## STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

To create an inclusive economy and eliminate racial disparities Ramsey County will implement strategies that leverage and expand existing programs and initiatives. In 2019 Ramsey County will develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan that lays out a vision and expands upon existing programs and strategies.

### Workforce Development



Ramsey County's Workforce Solutions department is committed to connecting jobseekers and businesses with training services and employment opportunities. The department focuses on two key populations, workers who were laid off from their jobs and those who are connected to our assistance programs. Since economic conditions are constantly changing Ramsey County will remain agile and adaptable to both ongoing and acute economic trends.

Enhanced regional and county-specific partnerships, like the Workforce Innovation Board, will be essential to adapt to changing economic forces. Ramsey County and the larger metropolitan area are nearing full employment. Employers are struggling to attract and retain talent in the tight job market. The number of jobseekers that are utilizing workforce programs are decreasing due to the strong economy. Ramsey County must help diversify the labor market and connect this expanded labor market to all communities. This includes youth, people with criminal records, persons of color and/or American Indians, persons with disabilities, and people with low educational attainment.

Other economic trends must also be addressed. The "gig economy" is expanding rapidly due to corporate restructuring, accessible technology and employee preferences. Ramsey County must develop strategies and partnerships to better understand the implications of this transformation. The decentralization of employment, especially low and mid-skill jobs, to suburban and exurban jobs creates a spatial mismatch between the labor market and available jobs. Ramsey County must partner with employers and other government agencies to establish and expand effective strategies. This will include economic development planning, expanding transit service, and "last-mile" solutions that connect workers from transit corridors to their employment.

Ramsey County must reconsider and adapt its workforce development programs and entire service delivery model to better meet the needs of its residents. Partnership and collaboration with community providers, libraries, other county services, and government agencies are paramount to accomplish this. The goal is to make service delivery accessible and effective for all county residents. This will require a two-generation approach that focuses on the entire family and their needs. The county's technology will also need to be updated to provide more educational and employment training opportunities online.



### Major Redevelopments and Transit Corridors

Ramsey County is planning for two major development projects, Riverfront Properties and Rice Creek Commons. Rice Creek Commons in Arden Hills sits on the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP). The county-owned site is the largest Superfund site in Minnesota and following an extensive clean-up will be delisted in 2019. By 2040, Rice Creek Commons will become an inclusive, mixed-use town center that will feature a variety of housing types for an array of income levels, major employment opportunities, institutional space, green energy initiatives and recreational access. Road, trail and transit improvements will connect the development to the region and surrounding neighborhoods. Diverse construction hiring and contracting goals will ensure that the benefits of development extend to communities beyond the site. The county will continue to partner with Arden Hills, private developers and other government agencies to make this vision a reality.

Riverfront Properties is a nearly five-acre, county-owned site located along the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in Downtown Saint Paul. In 2015, Ramsey County began deconstruction of the former Adult Detention Center and West buildings to prepare the site for development. The site is now poised for a marquee development that will bring much needed Class-A office space and additional amenities to the downtown core. Once complete, the development will bring high-paying jobs to an area that is near hundreds of affordable housing units and is highly accessible to the entire region by public transportation. Again, diverse construction hiring and contracting goals will ensure that the benefits of development extend to communities beyond the site. Additionally, partnerships between future office tenants and workforce development programs will connect residents to job opportunities.

As mentioned in the transportation chapter, Ramsey County is partnering with other government agencies to complete three major public transit corridors that will connect residents to education, employment and recreational opportunities. The Riverfront Corridor will be a modern streetcar line that connects Downtown Saint Paul to the MSP International Airport and the Mall of America via West Seventh Street. The Rush Line will connect White Bear Lake to Downtown Saint Paul via Maplewood Mall. The line will provide greater access to many health care facilities and much needed service to St. Paul's Eastside. The METRO Gold Line will connect Woodbury to Downtown Saint Paul with stations on St. Paul's Eastside and the 3M headquarters. Ramsey County also supports Metro Transit as they work to expand the rapid bus system across the region, including the B Line on Marshall Avenue in Saint Paul.

## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

### Procurement and Contracting

Ramsey County procures millions of dollars' worth of goods and services each year. As a major consumer, the county can make sure that its spend better reflects its mission, vision and goals. Currently Ramsey County focuses on contracting with businesses that are certified small businesses. The focus is on firm size rather than race, gender or veteran status. Current data is incomplete, but shows room to expand procurement and contracting opportunities with small and disadvantaged businesses. In 2019, Ramsey County will reexamine its procurement practices to include a racial equity lens and expand current reporting to include non-profit vendors, a major provider of contracted services. An adjusted procurement process will create more opportunities for vendors owned by women, people of color and American Indians.

In 2018 Ramsey County created a diverse workforce hiring goal and laid the groundwork to create a diverse contracting goal for construction, capital and development projects. Starting in June 2019, all county-led construction projects will aim to hire 32% minority and 20% women, which reflects the state construction workforce goal. The county policy also gave directive for staff to create goals for inclusive and diverse contracting for construction, capital and development projects. Ramsey County will pursue a "carrot-based" approach, which will emphasize relationship-building between private developers, contractors, trade schools, unions, workforce development programs, and government agencies. This acknowledges that goals will not be met with strict enforcement, but rather through collaboration and evaluation.

### Internal Workforce

Ramsey County is one of the largest employers in the region with approximately 4,000 employees spread throughout the county. Ramsey County's overall workforce currently reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the county. 32% of the workforce are people of color or American Indian, compare to 30% of the overall county population. However, employees of color leave the county at a higher rate than white employees and there are less formal leaders of color than white formal leaders. Employees of color are not evenly housed across departments of the county. Some departments are predominately employees of color where other departments have no employees of color.

The county can work to attract, retain and promote a diverse and talented workforce that better reflects the community. Five job classes were identified that are struggling to recruit and retain employees, including 9-1-1 telecommunicators, clerk typists, financial workers, real estate appraisers and building maintenance mechanics. Strategies will be implemented to identify and support career pathways for these job classifications within the county. Additionally, Ramsey County has developed four themes to address talent attraction, retention and promotion issues.

- Organization-wide culture
- Human Resources as a strategic partner
- Modernize personnel rules to align with values
- Modernize job classifications and compensation

Ramsey County believes that the implementation of these themes will create a more inclusive and equitable workplace. Other efforts to attract a diverse workforce include the Progressive Internship Program that recruits students from St. Paul College and Metro State University to gain two years of work experience at the county. Similarly the Finance Fellowship is a three year program where fellows gain public finance experience in departments across the county.



2018 Small Business Procurement Fair





### Business Support Programs

Ramsey County's Economic Development Strategic Plan will identify which business support programs are desired by the private sector. Two current programs provide support and could be expanded in the future. Economic Gardening provides a suite of high-end, accelerated business growth resources to non-competing second stage businesses including CEO peer coaching and collaboration roundtables, CEO informational forums/referral networks, technical assistance and focused market research, GIS mapping, search engine optimization and social media marketing. The Economic Gardening program is available to for-profit, privately held companies that have been headquartered in Ramsey, Hennepin, Anoka or Scott County for at least the previous two years. The company must generate annual revenue or working capital between \$1 and \$50 million, employ between 10 and 99 full-time employees and demonstrate growth in employment and/or revenue during at least two of the previous five years. Additionally, eligible companies must provide products or services beyond the local area to regional, national or global markets. The program is offered to qualifying companies at no cost.

Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers' (MCCD) Open to Business program helps new and early-stage businesses access the technical assistance they need to grow and prosper by providing advice and counseling to clients, helping them achieve their entrepreneurial goals. MCCD provides on-site business services specialists to work with city and county staff in such areas as startup and expansion financing, business plan development, licensing, zoning and regulatory issues, and financial management. MCCD also offers businesses access to low interest loans and other services on a fee-for-service basis. This is a cost-effective way of providing another level of small and medium-sized business assistance to our businesses to retain and grow jobs in Ramsey County. Open to Business addresses an important gap in the spectrum of business retention and expansion tools in the county. When combined with current activities like Economic Gardening, infrastructure improvements and selective property abatements, the county provide services across the business continuum to firms of all sizes.

## EVALUATION

## Open Data Portal and Performance Measures



Ramsey County is committed to becoming a resident-centered organization that delivers transparency and accountability in government. Open and accessible public data provides opportunities to partner with the community to develop innovative solutions, improve the quality of data and analysis, assist stakeholders and county staff with their work, and proactively disclose frequently requested public information. Engagement with the community is vital to ensuring that the county's [Open and Accessible Public Data Portal](#) supports the needs of a diverse community and is reflective of the county's resident-centered focus. Performance Measures that track department-level performance are important evaluation criteria to track progress and are included in the [biennial supplemental budget](#). Ramsey County's open data portal includes a page dedicated specifically to sharing the county's performance measures and community indicators. Community indicators are broad-based indicators about the state of the community and the region. Which policies are working well? How might we revise our policies where outcomes are not what the community desires or expects? What insights might emerge from analyzing the community indicators to guide future decisions, including adjusting policies and priorities to more effectively advance the county's vision, mission and goals? The open data portal and the community indicators together will help create an additional platform to foster dialogue with residents, partners and stakeholders. What can and will the county do to advance its vision, mission and goals? Where are the gaps, overlaps, and opportunities? What can we all do to support Ramsey County in its efforts to create a community of excellence where all are valued and thrive?