

# Community Engagement in the City of Ramsey: An Experiential Assessment of Three Engagement Formats

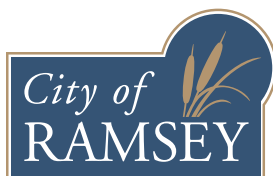


**Prepared by**  
Myles Campbell, Natela Jordan, and  
T.J. Hofer

Students in PA 8081: Planning and Public Affairs Capstone Workshop  
Instructor: Dr. Daniel Milz  
Humphrey School of Public Affairs

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**Prepared in Collaboration with**  
Tim Gladhill  
Community Development Director  
City of Ramsey



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The contents of this report represent the views of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of RCP, CURA, the Regents of the University of Minnesota, or the City of Ramsey.



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### **Resilient Communities Project**

University of Minnesota  
330 HHHSPA  
301—19th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455  
Phone: (612) 625-7501  
E-mail: [rcp@umn.edu](mailto:rcp@umn.edu)  
Web site: <http://www.rcp.umn.edu>



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# Community Engagement in the City of Ramsey

*An Experiential Assessment of Three  
Engagement Formats*

A Capstone Project by:

Myles Campbell

Natela Jordan

T.J. Hofer





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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the recent years the City of Ramsey has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving citizen outreach and engagement. The City partnered with the Resilient Communities Project (RCP) at the University of Minnesota and other organizations and community groups to examine and refine its community engagement practices. As the city population grows and diversifies, the City views improved community engagement as an important strategic goal in achieving its vision for a more connected and active community.

Building on the previous analysis of community engagement efforts, this report provides an experiential assessment of the three specific engagement formats and takes stock of the City's achievements and challenges in this area. The first section of this report provides the background and context for this project, outlines project scope and purpose, and presents a project plan. The second section reports on the three engagement activities: the Visual Preference and Volunteer Opportunities online survey, charrette workshop, and a World Café focus group. It discusses the research, design, and methodology used to conceptualize each format, reflects on possible adjustments and future replication of these methods, and reports on major findings. These findings are discussed in the third section of this report. This section also contains key takeaways of each project. All instruments used in these activities (survey, charrette workshop and focus group protocols, and evaluation form) are referenced and included in the Appendices section. The key themes that emerged from all three engagement formats include: improved public engagement, unengaged audiences, Ramsey as a destination, urban growth versus rural character, and regional cooperation.

The fourth section provides recommendations and ideas for further advancement of community engagement efforts. These include: 1) proactive improvements to communication, outreach, and engagement, 2) focus on younger people and families, 3) evaluation and measurement of community engagement efforts, and 4) increased and enhanced regional collaboration and partnerships.

# Introduction

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## Background

The City of Ramsey is a steadily growing and developing community in northwest Twin Cities Metro. Ramsey's population is projected to increase by 70% between 2020 and 2040 reaching almost 40,000 residents.<sup>1</sup> The 40-49 age range being the largest segment of the population, Ramsey faces the challenge of retaining older residents while appealing to younger families with children aged 5-14, the second largest segment of the population.<sup>2</sup> While Ramsey's population is currently over 90% white, based on the regional trends its population of color is projected to more than double in the next twenty years.

Public engagement is viewed as a priority and a strategic goal by the city staff. In the last decade, the City took considerable strides towards improving community engagement practices. It showed a significant commitment to building collaborative community engagement processes during the previous Comprehensive Plan Update, when assisted by the McKnight Foundation and Ramsey<sup>3</sup> citizen group, it undertook a complete redesign of its engagement strategy. Since then the City has also partnered with the University of Minnesota's Resilient Communities Project (RCP) on a number of projects focused on community engagement. Through this partnership the City has made further updates and improvements to its communication, outreach, and engagement, and experimented with several innovative community engagement methods such as mapping activities, leave-behind boards, and workshops.

The City of Ramsey staff underlines Improved Public Engagement in Key Policy Decisions as one of the key accomplishments of the previous comprehensive plan.<sup>3</sup> Anecdotal reports suggest the residents have responded positively to more collaborative engagement opportunities that go beyond formal public hearings. The instances of confrontational public hearings have decreased dramatically which the city staff attribute to proactive outreach and collaboration with the community. At the same time, the City views the launching of the next Comprehensive Plan Update as an opportunity to take its community engagement to the next level which reflects its commitment to "collaborative, citizen-driven policy development."<sup>4</sup>

## Project Scope and Purpose

The project scope (Appendix 1) was determined in collaboration with the city staff and based on the previous community engagement efforts within the RCP-City of Ramsey partnership. The city staff outlined three projects of interest: 1) Every Voice Matters, 2) Highway 10: Community and Regional Focal Point, and 3) A Gathering Within: COR Redevelopment Plan. Rather than pursuing one of the three projects, the team proposed to combine the three projects into one with the narrower and more specific focus on community engagement based on the theme of the City's recent campaign: What do you want in our backyard?

**Project Purpose:** The City of Ramsey seeks to improve its communication and engagement efforts with stakeholders (citizens, business owners, and commuters). The purpose of the project will be to analyze existing engagement plan, develop and field-test communication and engagement tools, and to offer recommendations for future engagement efforts. The team will design and host a series of community engagement events that will include an online survey, a charrette workshop, and a focus group. These engagement efforts will be analyzed to see which formats resonate with the City of Ramsey stakeholders. Each format will allow participants to share their preferences and insights about future civic engagement efforts which will be included in recommendations for further improvements.



# Project plan: Three Engagement Formats with a Unifying Theme of Community Engagement

The project plan was designed to develop and test three engagement formats corresponding to the three projects outlined by the City with community engagement as a unifying theme. The online Visual Preference and Volunteer Opportunities survey largely focused on the COR redevelopment plan and looked into residents’ preferences in style and design elements of single family, multifamily, mixed use, and commercial buildings. The survey was launched ahead of the other two activities to allow time to advertise it during other events and allocate sufficient time to collect responses. The survey also included a separate section about engagement and volunteer opportunities within the City of Ramsey which asked questions about the City’s current outreach efforts as well as the survey as a format of engagement. The Charrette workshop was aimed at addressing residents’ concerns and brainstorming opportunities for land use and development around Highway 10 and the COR. While most of this event was dedicated to a mapping-based activity, it also included a structured conversation with participants about the effectiveness of the City’s communications and outreach. The World Café Focus Group provided an alternative engagement format for collecting residents’ feedback on existing volunteer opportunities and the City’s efforts to publicize them as well as exploring creative and collaborative ideas about the future opportunities.

Each of the three formats provided an opportunity for residents to share feedback and insights not only about specific content, such as building design or a specific traffic concern, which are important pieces of actionable intelligence for the City, but also about how well the current engagement practices are working within the framework of each project’s content and how they can be improved in the future. Building on the previous examination of community engagement efforts in the City of Ramsey conducted in December 2017,<sup>5</sup> the goal of this project was to offer an experiential assessment of these efforts based on the three different formats.

Table 1: Project Plan

Project	Engagement Format
A Gathering Within: COR Redevelopment Plan	Online Survey - Visual Preference and Volunteer Opportunities (200-250 respondents) March 5 - April 13, 2018
Highway 10: Community and Regional Focal Point	Charrette Workshop - Land Use and Development around Highway 10 and the COR (15-20 participants) March 27, 2018
Every Voice Matters	World Café Focus Group - Engagement and Volunteer Opportunities (10-15 participants) April 3, 2018

# Visual Preference and Volunteer Opportunities Survey

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## Purpose

The survey was designed as an engagement activity for two elements of the project: Every Voice Matters and A Gathering Within: COR Redevelopment Plan. As the City is updating its comprehensive plan for downtown, transit-oriented, mixed use city center, the focus of the survey was to connect land use change with community engagement and to field-test a visual preference survey as one of the engagement activities with the residents. The online visual preference survey method was selected for a number of reasons: 1) ability to reach a large number of participants, 2) potential to create a “common language” for participants with and without technical expertise,<sup>6</sup> and 3) more appealing format where residents can visualize potential changes in their community. Since community engagement is the core of all three project activities, the survey also included a short non-visual section to gather insights about volunteer opportunities with the City of Ramsey.

## Design and Methodology

During the design phase, the team reviewed the City’s Design Framework document and the existing comprehensive plan and reached out to the city staff about potential themes for the survey. The initially generated themes included: single family homes, multifamily housing, mixed use buildings, storefront, commercial buildings, lighting, public-private interface, sidewalks, crosswalks, parking, screening, and streetscaping. After further consultations, the team designed a test survey with the following categories: single family homes, multifamily housing, mixed use buildings, storefront, and commercial buildings. The decision was made to focus on building design and elements in this survey and potentially explore other elements in subsequent engagement activities.

The survey was designed using the online *SurveyMonkey* tool. The test version was shared with students at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, city staff, and a few people with non-technical or academic backgrounds. The test survey was taken by 24 participants who provided feedback on the overall survey design and flow as well as specific elements and images. Based on the feedback, the final version was shortened and consisted of six sections:

1. Introduction
2. Single Family Home
3. Multifamily Housing
4. Mixed use Buildings
5. Commercial Buildings
6. Volunteer and Engagement Opportunities.

Of these final sections, Introduction and Volunteer and Engagement were non-visual sections, while Single Family Home, Multifamily Housing, Mixed-use buildings, and Commercial Buildings were visual sections.

The test survey feedback also provided insights on the language used to describe the elements in the images. The revised version simplified or excluded potentially confusing or technical terms and provided an option to “not like” any of the elements. For each visual preference section, participants were first invited to rank four images from 1 (most favorite) to 4 (least favorite) and then select elements that appealed to them in each of the images.

The final list of elements included 16 checkboxes: Accessibility, Architectural Style, Fit with the Community, Garage/Parking, Landscaping, Lawn or Greenspace, Lighting, Materials, Outdoor Space, Pedestrian-friendly, Quality of Construction, Sense of Safety, Sidewalk/Boulevard, Size, Tree Cover, and I do not like any. Participants could also leave comments if they wished to clarify or add to their selections of the elements.

Most images included in the survey were from outside of the City of Ramsey, but all of them were from Minnesota. This was done to avoid potential biases in the rankings due to personal connection to the depicted area or venue, while also allowing participants to visualize ideas based on the design elements common in the area.

## Promotion and Outreach

The survey was open to participants and officially launched on March 5, 2018. It was advertised through the City of Ramsey website and Facebook page as well as shared on Facebook pages of local organizations and businesses. Paper flyers were distributed at various locations within the city and shared by email with civic and community organizations, schools, and business owners in the area. While the Ramsey residents were the target audience, it did not disqualify other responses, but asked whether participants lived in the city or commuted to the city for work. In addition to the online survey, a paper form was developed with the same images and questions. It was shared online as a downloadable document and placed at the City Hall.

The survey generated over 100 responses in the first week it was open. As an incentive, participants were offered a chance to be entered into a raffle for the three gift cards from a local grocery store. Each raffle was promoted online as a way to generate additional survey responses. The survey was open throughout all project activities and advertised at each of the events. The survey was closed on April 13th, 2018 and concluded with 238 total respondents, 163 of which were complete responses, yielding a completion rate of 68% of those that took the survey.

Preliminary feedback was gathered both before the survey was launched and while the survey was in progress. The feedback provided before the launch led to wording changes and a reduction in size. The City received feedback about the ease of use, largely pertaining to the size of the images. Since the survey software accommodates minimal changes for surveys in progress, little could be done to address this issue. A paper version of the survey was developed as an alternative offline format. The paper survey allowed for smaller images and closer examination for those who found the online format challenging. The difficulty of interaction was likely caused by respondents taking the survey on handheld devices which made ranking of large-sized images hard to navigate. Completed paper surveys were entered into the online client by a member of the project team.

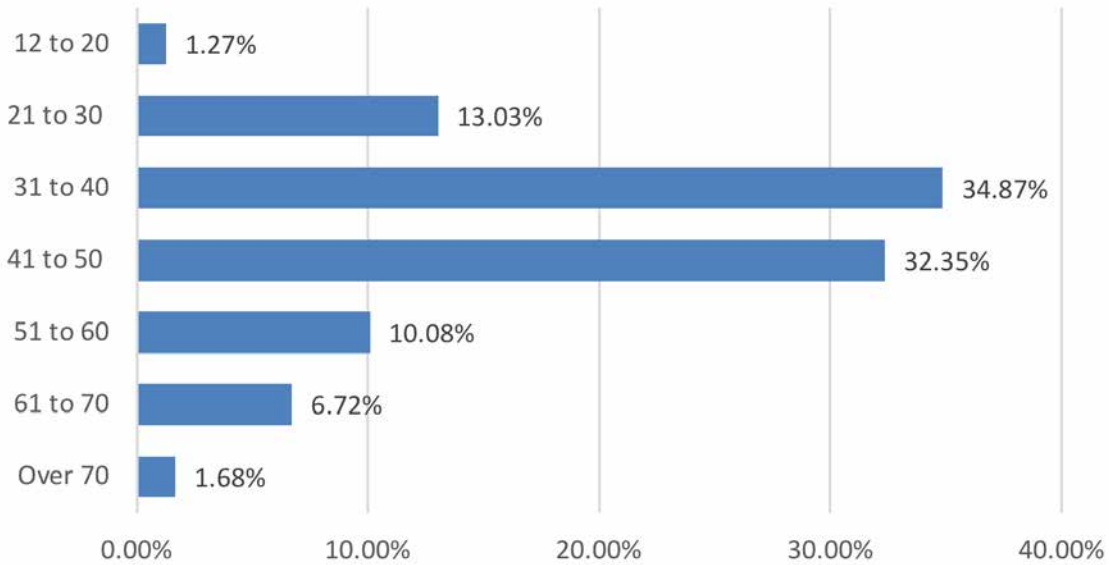
## Findings: Data Compilation

### 1. Introduction and Background

The first section of the survey was designed to gather background information about respondents. Over 94% of respondents were residents of Ramsey. According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the total population of Ramsey is 25,329 people. Thus, this survey represents less than one percent of the population.

The age cohorts that were presented as options and respondent percentages were as follows:

## Age Cohorts of Respondents



The largest respondent group was the 31 to 40 cohort, followed by the 41 to 50 cohort. After these two cohorts there was a sharp drop in representation to the 21 to 30 cohort, which was made up of only about 13% of respondents. At this level and below, these groups are not significant enough to identify preferences of people within age cohorts outside the 31 to 40 and 41 to 50 cohorts. Nearly 65% of respondents were full-time employees, followed by the next largest group, business owners, that made up almost 10% of respondents. Over 80% of respondents worked outside the City of Ramsey. About 13% of respondents commuted to the city.

## 2. Single Family Housing


The single family housing section was completed by 218 respondents. The chart on the next page shows the weighted average ranking of these buildings as well as the overall ranking, based on the weighted average ranking.


*\*Note: The method for calculating weighted average ranking is detailed in Data Analysis Methodology section on page 37. Variables in the calculation include frequency at which a building was placed at a certain rank, the value of the rank, and the number of respondents to the question.*

Building	Overall Ranking	Weighted Average Ranking from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest)
<p>"Home with two-car garage"</p> 	<p>1</p>	<p>2.11</p>
<p>"Brick home with landscaping"</p> 	<p>2</p>	<p>2.18</p>
<p>"Stucco home with open porch"</p> 	<p>3</p>	<p>2.39</p>
<p>"Mixed materials contemporary home"</p> 	<p>4</p>	<p>3.31</p>

The building with the highest ranking was titled "Home with two-car garage." The second highest ranked building titled "Brick home with landscaping" had a weighted average ranking that was less than one-tenth of a percentage point higher than the top-ranked building. This indicates a very slight preference, but certainly not a strong preference. The third image was a building titled "Stucco home with an open porch" which overall received mixed reviews. The lowest rated building was titled "Mixed material contemporary home," and received overwhelmingly negative rankings, being ranked fourth by over 60% of respondents.

Respondents were then asked to select preferences from a list of elements for the same images, and to leave additional comments under each image. The tables below identify the three most popular elements of each building, as well as the key points from the comments.

Single Family Home: "Brick home with landscaping"	
	<p>Most Popular Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Architectural Style - 66.67%</li> <li>• Landscaping - 65.26%</li> <li>• Materials - 41.31%</li> </ul>
	<p>Comment Synthesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not "cookie-cutter"</li> <li>• Not enough space between houses</li> <li>• Too small</li> <li>• Developed landscaping is good, including mature trees evident by the shade on the house</li> </ul>

Single Family Home: "Home with two-car garage"	
	<p>Most Popular Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garage/Parking - 72.90%</li> <li>• Fit with the Community - 61.21%</li> <li>• Sidewalk/Boulevard - 52.34%</li> </ul>
	<p>Comment Synthesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House is well sized, lot is too small</li> <li>• Fits in with what is around, but is "cookie-cutter" and boring</li> <li>• Landscaping is poor, needs more trees and bushes</li> </ul>

Single Family Home: "Stucco home with an open porch"



- Most Popular Elements:
- Architectural Style - 73.11%
  - Outdoor Space - 32.55%
  - Size - 31.60%

- Comment Synthesis:
- Porches are extremely popular
  - Houses are too close to one another
  - Traditional, but out of date
  - City house that is reminiscent of old farmhouse feel, could fit in Ramsey

Single Family Home: "Mixed materials contemporary home"







- Most Popular Elements:
- I do not like any - 45.50%
  - Architectural Style - 35.55%
  - Materials - 16.11%

- Comment Synthesis:
- Unique, but too modern for Ramsey
  - Second level outdoor space is nice
  - Some benefits to mixing architectural styles in neighborhoods, adds variety

Overall, reactions to the single family housing favored options already available in Ramsey. Many comments expressed concerns about how these housing options would affect Ramsey, specifically in terms of the distance between houses, with one comment identifying that anything on less than a ".75 acre lot" as unacceptable. Another common reaction was concern about landscaping especially tree cover. The "Home with two-car garage" was the most popular option with garage and parking as the important elements of the house. Comments left throughout the survey suggest that respondents cared about the amount of parking, but were open to the orientation of the parking, as long as it was near the building. Interestingly, the sidewalk in the "Home with two-car garage" was also identified as a positive element. Traditionally, suburban communities did not favor sidewalks, but the survey respondents showed an interest in sidewalk inclusion in neighborhoods. Further research is likely needed to determine the predominant preference for the single family home design.


### 3. Multifamily Housing


The Multifamily Housing section of the survey was completed by 201 respondents.

Building	Overall Ranking	Weighted Average Ranking from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest)
<p>"Townhomes with varying paint colors"</p> 	1	2.06
<p>"Four-story apartment building with neutral colors"</p> 	2	2.21
<p>"Six-story apartment with bright accent colors"</p> 	3	2.39
<p>"Brick multi-unit structure with accent colors"</p> 	4	2.89



The highest rated multifamily housing option was the image titled "Townhomes with varying paint colors." The second highest ranked building was the image titled "Four-story apartment building with neutral colors." The third and fourth images, "Six-story apartment with bright accent colors" and "Brick multi-unit structure with accent colors" respectively, received overall negative reviews.

Multifamily Home: "Four-story apartment building with neutral colors"	
	<p><b>Most Popular Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Architectural Style - 61.03%</li> <li>• Fit with the Community - 40.51%</li> <li>• Pedestrian-friendly and Sidewalk/Boulevard - 36.92%</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Comment Synthesis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are enough apartments in Ramsey</li> <li>• Good fit and style, but "cookie-cutter"</li> <li>• Landscaping is good</li> <li>• Balconies are a plus</li> </ul>

Multifamily Home: "Six-story apartment with bright accent colors"	
	<p><b>Most Popular Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Architectural Style - 46.63%</li> <li>• Fit with the Community - 29.53%</li> <li>• Sidewalk/Boulevard - 26.94%</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Comment Synthesis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not fit in Ramsey</li> <li>• Street level entrances are nice</li> <li>• This style and aesthetic are nice, but they belong elsewhere</li> </ul>

Multifamily Home: "Townhomes with varying paint colors"



Most Popular Elements:

- Landscaping - 61.54%
- Architectural Style - 55.90%
- Fit with the Community - 55.38%

Comment Synthesis:

- Variety in color is polarizing
- There are already enough townhomes in Ramsey
- The design here is fine, the aesthetics are not

Multifamily Home: "Brick multi-unit structure with accent colors"



Most Popular Elements:

- Architectural Style - 49.22%
- I do not like any - 38.86%
- Materials - 26.94%

Comment Synthesis:


- Brick is popular, but this not being a modern building made it unattractive
- Size here was generally well received, different option than an apartment building

Multifamily options for housing in Ramsey were generally met with hesitation, with the attached townhome option being the most well-received. Even the townhome received some criticism. The aesthetics of the building, especially the color variety, was disliked by respondents. Many of the comments indicated that respondents did not feel Ramsey needed more apartments, and that further growth in multifamily options should reflect the "country nature" of the area and preserve the "peace and quiet." Respondents appear to communicate concerns about crime and property value decline when it comes to multifamily housing.

## 4. Mixed Use Building

Building	Overall Ranking	Weighted Average Ranking from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest)
<p>"Mixed use 5-story building with ground floor retail and 4-stories of apartments above"</p> 	<p>1</p>	<p>2.04</p>
<p>"Mixed use 2-story building with ground floor retail and 1-story of apartments above"</p> 	<p>2</p>	<p>2.51</p>
<p>"Mixed use 3-story building with ground floor retail and 2-stories of apartments above"</p> 	<p>3</p>	<p>2.54</p>
<p>"Mixed use 2-story building with ground floor retail and 1-story of apartments above"</p> 	<p>4</p>	<p>2.90</p>

The highest ranked mixed use building option was the image titled "Mixed use 5-story building with ground floor retail and 4-stories of apartments above." The second and third-ranked buildings were respectively, "Four-story apartment building with neutral colors" and "Mixed use 3-story building with ground floor retail and 2-stories of apartments above." These two buildings were extremely close in their weighted average ranking. The lowest ranked building was the third image in the section titled "Mixed use 2-story building with ground floor retail and 1-story of apartments above."

Mixed Use Building: "Mixed use 3-story building with ground floor retail and 2-stories of apartments above"	
	<p>Most Popular Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Architectural Style - 76.44%</li> <li>• Pedestrian-friendly - 44.83%</li> <li>• Sidewalk/boulevard - 41.95%</li> </ul>
	<p>Comment Synthesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This design and aesthetic were received extremely positively.</li> <li>• Most common concerns are about the landscaping around the building, and parking</li> </ul>

Mixed Use Building: "Mixed use 2-story building with ground floor retail and 1-story of apartments above"	
	<p>Most Popular Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lawn/GreenSpace - 42.69%</li> <li>• Architectural Style - 32.16%</li> <li>• Fit with the Community - 31.58%</li> </ul>
	<p>Comment Synthesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seen as "cookie-cutter"</li> <li>• The placement of the building was disliked due to it being isolated</li> <li>• The building was criticized as too large</li> </ul>

Mixed Use Building: "Mixed use 2-story building with ground floor retail and 1-story of apartments above"



Most Popular Elements:

- Architectural Style - 54.71%
- Pedestrian-friendly - 38.82%
- Sidewalk/Boulevard - 32.35%

Comment Synthesis:

- Considered charming and small town center feel
- Seen as old
- Criticized for not providing enough housing to make the mixed use

Mixed Use Building: "Mixed use 5-story building with ground floor retail and 4-stories of apartments above"



Most Popular Elements:

- Architectural Style - 37.50%
- Fit with the Community - 36.90%
- Pedestrian-friendly - 32.74%

Comment Synthesis:

- The building is seen as "cookie-cutter"
- Fits with what is in Ramsey already
- The outdoor space was appreciated, but more was wanted


"Mixed use 3-story building with ground floor retail and 2-stories of apartments above" received the single highest percentage of positive elements throughout the entire survey. Although the fourth image was ranked the highest in this section, this building also received the greatest number of negative comments. Some respondents stated that this design was functional, yet ultimately dull, while others believed putting mixed use buildings in the City of Ramsey, in general, was a mistake. Overall respondents seemed to appreciate older architectural styles when it comes to higher density mixed use buildings as is evident from the architectural style of both the first and third image.


## 5. Commercial Buildings


Building	Overall Ranking	Weighted Average Ranking from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest)
<p>“Single building with multiple commercial venues”</p> 	<p>1</p>	<p>1.85</p>
<p>“Row of stores”</p> 	<p>2</p>	<p>2.31</p>
<p>“Single building with multiple commercial venues with outdoor seating/green space in front”</p> 	<p>3</p>	<p>2.42</p>
<p>“Big box office/commercial building surrounded by parking lot”</p> 	<p>4</p>	<p>3.42</p>

The commercial buildings section is the most interesting visual section as it contains both the absolute highest and the absolute lowest weighted average ranked buildings. The building with the highest weighted average ranking in the survey was the image in the commercial section titled "Single building with multiple commercial venues." The second highest in this category was titled "Row of stores," and featured a traditional small-town commercial downtown. The third-ranked building was titled "Single building with multiple commercial venues with outdoor seating/green space in front." Finally, the lowest ranked building of the section, and the entire survey was the image "Big box office/commercial building surrounded by parking lot."

Commercial Building: "Row of stores"	
	<p>Most Popular Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian-friendly - 49.68%</li> <li>• Architectural Style - 45.81%</li> <li>• Sidewalk/Boulevard - 42.58%</li> </ul>
	<p>Comment Synthesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quaint, small-town feel</li> <li>• Old style is unattractive</li> <li>• Not enough parking</li> </ul>

Commercial Building: "Single building with multiple commercial venues"	
	<p>Most Popular Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Architectural Style - 74.21%</li> <li>• Pedestrian-friendly - 45.91%</li> <li>• Fit with the Community - 42.77%</li> </ul>
	<p>Comment Synthesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classic architecture, has curb appeal</li> <li>• Rooftop area is popular</li> <li>• Concerns over parking</li> </ul>

Commercial Building: "Big box office/commercial building surrounded by parking lot"	
	<p>Most Popular Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do not like any - 48.45%</li> <li>• Garage/Parking - 36.65%</li> <li>• Accessibility - 21.74%</li> </ul>
	<p>Comment Synthesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boring and unattractive</li> <li>• Easy access, plenty of parking</li> </ul>

Commercial Building: "Single building with multiple commercial venues with outdoor seating/ green space in front"	
	<p>Most Popular Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Architectural Style - 56.52%</li> <li>• Outdoor Space - 52.80%</li> <li>• Pedestrian-friendly - 49.07%</li> </ul>
	<p>Comment Synthesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seems more appropriate in the central city</li> <li>• Big windows are appreciated</li> <li>• Public space out front is good</li> </ul>

The two most important points from the commercial building section are that respondents enjoy more classic brick architecture, but they are concerned about parking in nearly every example. The most popular image "Single building with multiple commercial venues" received extremely high results in architectural style. Based on the comments in this section, the rooftop area of this building could have been the reason respondents chose this option.



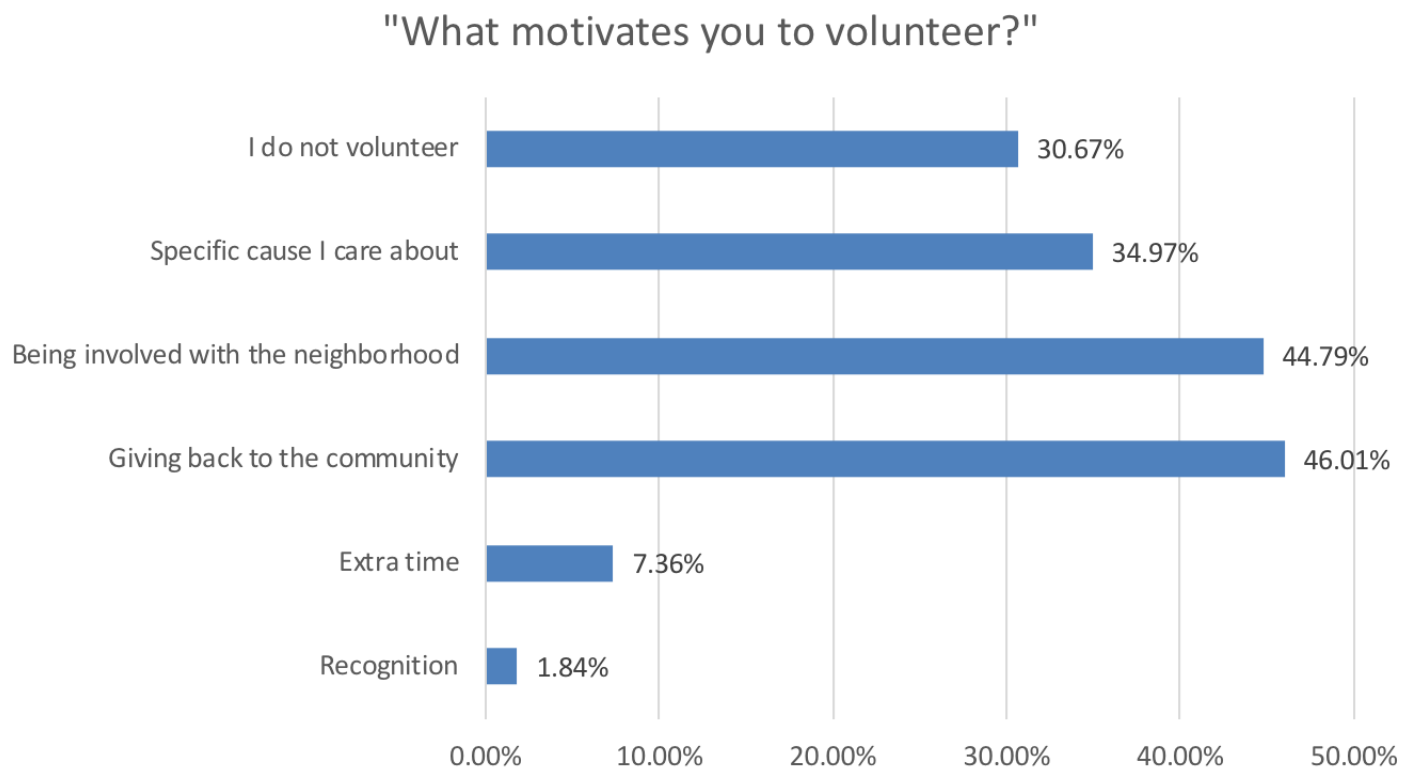
## 6. Volunteer and Engagement Opportunities

The final section of the survey asked questions about the community engagement efforts and volunteer opportunities in the city. This section had no thematic relation to the visual preference sections of the survey.

This section had a total of 163 respondents. The first question asked respondents to rate the City of Ramsey's engagement efforts on a scale from 0 to 100 (0 - terrible; 100 - great). The City was rated at 58, indicating a slightly above average job at engaging the residents. In this engagement format, this was the only question that asked for an evaluation of the City's efforts.

When asked about previous volunteer experience with Ramsey, nearly 83% responded they had never volunteered. Out of remaining respondents, about 7% had an excellent experience, 8% had a good experience, and 2% had an average experience. No respondents selected the bad or terrible experience options. The most frequent additional comments stated that respondents did not know where to find information about volunteer opportunities or that they had volunteered in the past, and were waiting to see the results of their efforts.

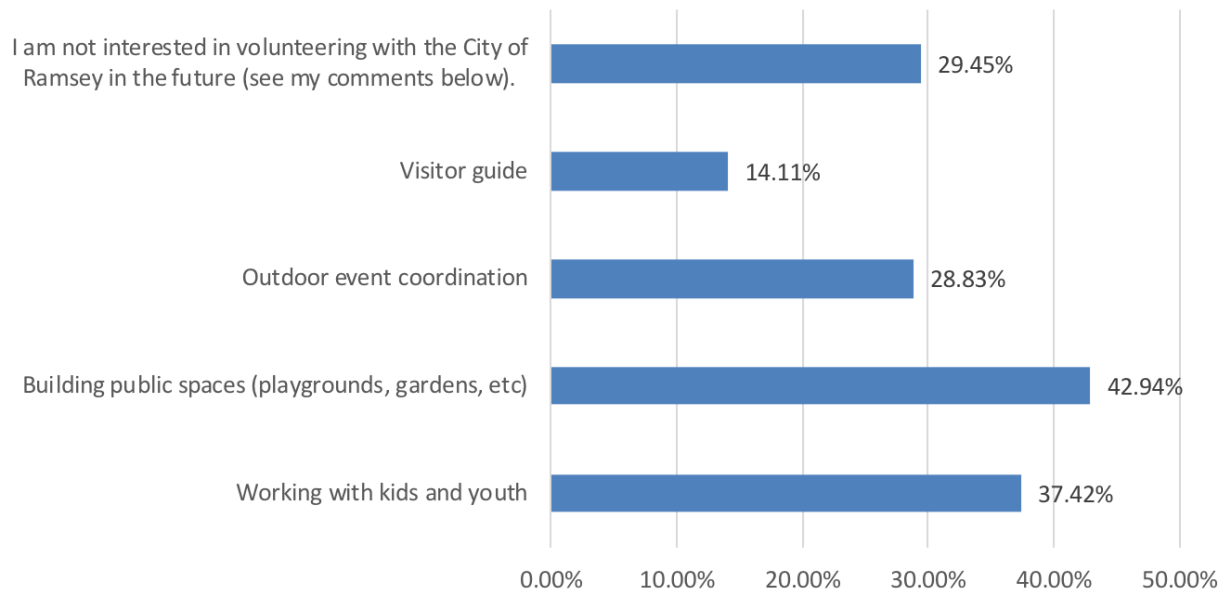
The next question asked respondents about their motivation to volunteer in general. Below is a chart of the results:



Most respondents stated they were motivated to volunteer by their ability to give back to the community or be involved with the neighborhood. The "Specific cause" option was the third most selected response. However, comments on this question reinforce the importance of a specific cause for volunteering, such as concerns about animal welfare. This section also contained multiple responses about the interest and willingness to volunteer, and lack of information about how to find volunteer opportunities and get started.

Next, respondents were asked to select volunteer opportunities in which they would be interested:

## "What volunteer opportunities would make you interested in volunteering with the City of Ramsey in the future?"



Many respondents were interested in the idea of volunteering to improve the community through building communal spaces such as playgrounds or gardens. The next most popular opportunity was working with kids or the youth. Interestingly, the third most selected option was to not volunteer at all. Comments explaining why they chose this option identified additional causes of interest, such as animal welfare, veteran services, and outdoor preservation. The most common response to why people are not interested in volunteering is a lack of time.

The survey next asked if participants were interested in being entered into a raffle for taking the survey, and, if so, to share contact information in case they win a prize. This question was optional. 72% of respondents expressed interest in a raffle.

Finally, the survey asked respondents to rate their experience on a scale from 0 to 100 (0 - terrible; 100 - great), and to state if they would be interested in additional surveys. The survey was rated at a 64 indicating a slightly above neutral average. When asked if they would take other surveys, over 64% of the 163 respondents for this section selected "yes," nearly 29% selected "maybe," and the remaining nearly 7% responded "no." Comments left for this question largely indicated that the survey was too long, or there were issues with the layout of questions or the selection of images being not applicable to Ramsey. A number of comments were requests for surveys on other subjects, such as park amenities and improvements and economic and business development.

## Major Themes

### 1. Large Lots with Landscaping

Respondents still favor medium to large-lot traditional suburban homes, with some variations. Landscaping is an important factor mentioned in both element ratings and comments. The highest ranked single family home is a traditional suburban home, set on a smaller lot. The size of the lot was criticized by some, but the landscaping was a concern for many, specifically the lack of tree cover. The lack of tree cover was a common concern throughout all the sections where landscaping was mentioned. Generally, respondents appreciated well maintained and thoughtfully designed open space. Within the images this open space was usually associated with areas with higher density. Further study will be needed to determine a prevailing preference in the design of single family homes.

## 2. Multifamily in Many Ways

Smaller multifamily housing options were more popular among respondents. The quadplex pictured in the image titled "Brick multi-unit structure with accent colors" was liked due to the size of the building, but respondents believed that the age and style of the building were not attractive. Additionally, the highest rated building in the section was small attached townhomes. Encouraging these forms of housing throughout the city could help disperse affordable housing. However, this preference alone should not discourage higher density development in the COR. Smaller forms of multifamily housing may occur through renovations, but this possibility would be determined by the housing types already present. If respondents' preferences are representative of residents, multifamily options may not be well received. Some respondents expressed concerns that an increase in large multifamily housing developments may disturb the "peace and quiet" they sought when they first moved to Ramsey. Finally, there were multiple images of both multifamily housing and mixed use buildings that were disliked by the respondents as too "cookie-cutter." Since approval of architectural style was high amongst all multifamily buildings, the City could explore less common designs and the styles would still be well received.

## 3. Mid-sized Commercial with Character

There is a considerable preference for buildings that display a strong architectural style such as the building titled "Single building with multiple commercial venues." Additionally, there are concerns about these types of land uses in terms of availability of parking. Commercial buildings in Ramsey will likely require more parking than is present in many of the survey images according to respondents. Since the look of commercial buildings seems to play a large part in how they are received, finding the right balance between the architectural styles and the supportable amount of parking will be a challenge for developers and city planners. Also, the City will want to closely examine the allowable uses within the COR specifically as there was enthusiastic support for elements like the usable rooftop. The highest rated element throughout the survey was the architectural elements of the "Single building with multiple commercial venues." These types of buildings and uses will not be supportable outside of the COR development area.

## 4. Volunteerism and Engagement

Three important aspects stand out in this section to guide further volunteer efforts in the City: respondents do not know where to find information on volunteering, respondents believe they do not have time to volunteer, and the City is seen as doing a slightly above average job at engagement. Similar issues were identified in the World Café focus group, and these issues are further explored in that section.

# Charrette Workshop

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## Purpose

The charrette workshop was designed for the Highway 10: Community and Regional Focal Point to examine how the City could use active engagement methods in order to create community buy-in and help find a cooperative approach to development in the city. In addition, the City and the team sought community feedback on the Highway 10 corridor project, which provided the content for the workshop.

## Design and Methodology

In preparation for this event the team had researched the application of charrettes to community engagement and planning processes. Charrettes are a part of architectural tradition, a multi-day collaboration that breaks the design of a project or site into three steps.

### 1. Visioning

Designers, community members and other stakeholders come together to decide on values, goals, and opportunities for the project. Designers take these ideas and develop materials for the second step.

### 2. Alternative Concepts

A number of separate alternatives are developed in advance of the second meeting, and then feedback is collected on each alternative. From this feedback, designers develop a single vision for the community.

### 3. The Preferred Alternative

A plan which incorporates the recommendations and feedback from the first two steps, is created.<sup>7</sup>

Given the scope and purpose of the project, the team decided to design an abridged charrette, that would integrate some of its characteristics. Due to time limitations, this would only be a one-time, 2-hour event, which would not include the second and third steps of the charrette. For this reason the team proceeded with the format of step one, visioning. This format also shifted the focus away from the fact that Minnesota Department of Transportation had already developed a preferred plan for the highway improvements to avoid giving the wrong impression to participants that there were still many undecided matters.

To this end the team had to select activities to engage participants and considered a few different possibilities:

*Place It* is a play-driven activity which attempts to break down the barriers of design by replacing technical drawing and modelling with toys and other found objects. Participants are asked a question that is meant to spark their imagination and are invited to design a solution using anything from blocks to pipe cleaners. After initially considering this activity, the team decided to not use it given that the anticipated audience was going to be business persons who were already experiencing meeting fatigue. Both the city staff and the team believed this group would not be as open to the activity as is necessary for it to be effective.

*"Paper Doll" Home Design* is an activity the team found during its research, that was initially run in the City of Newark<sup>8</sup> as a way of examining zoning standards as they related to façades and design. Participants would be given a cardboard box and share a number of different façade elements for it. The goal was to put all these differently designed houses next to each other on a mock city block and see how they interacted with each other. The team had considered this activity before settling on using the Highway 10 map for the topic, and then felt it would not translate easily to a transportation/corridor study.

Mapping was the primary activity selected for the event. It was focused on a large scale map of Highway 10 (map images are included in Appendix 5) and allowed participants to designate areas of concerns and opportunities with a number of different colored stickers and markers. The colors corresponded to short-term threats, long-term threats, opportunities, and solutions.

The mapping activity was followed by a short discussion afterwards to get participants' perspectives on both the identified topics of discussion from the mapping activity and their opinions on engagement practices of the City. Both activities took place at the same central table, so that participants could reference the map that they had worked on earlier. A summary of the protocol is shown below; the full protocol used is available in Appendix 4.

## Protocol Overview

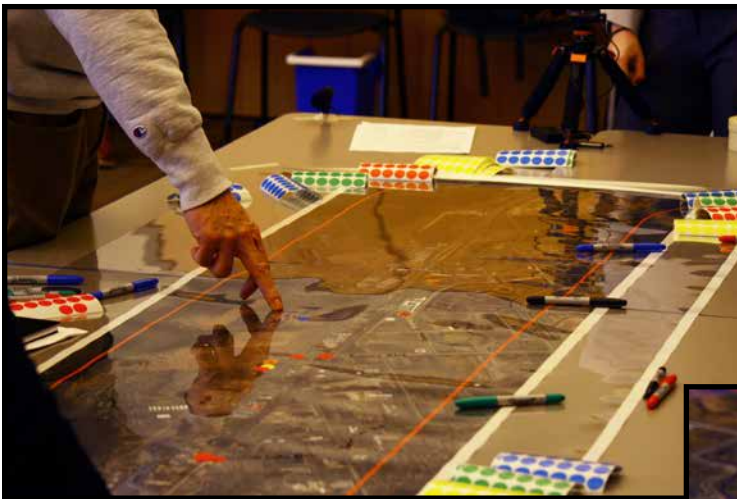
### Introduction

### Round 1: Mapping Exercise

Mark up of the physical map, structured facilitator-led discussion, leading questions and prompts

### Round 2: Group Reflection

Feedback on the previous activity, transition to the community engagement theme with a series of questions about the City's engagement efforts



# Charrette Questions

## Activity Questions

- Why do you think this is an immediate or potential concern?
- Could you describe why this is an opportunity?
- What specific solutions, actions, or remedies would you like to see implemented here?
- Why are you concerned about this particular site?
- What does it mean to you? How does it affect you and your family? Your business?
- What would success look like to you at this particular site?
- What would you like to see here?
- What would you not like to see here?
- What stands in the way of this vision?

## Discussion Questions

### *Feedback on the activity:*

- What did you think of this exercise?
- What was most helpful? What was least helpful?
- Would you consider doing a similar mapping activity with the City again?
- How can it be changed to make it more helpful/enjoyable for you?

### *Feedback on the City of Ramsey's engagement efforts:*

- Do you think the City is doing a good job of engaging the stakeholders about the Highway 10 development? Why? Why not?
- What improvements would you like to see?
- How would you like to be engaged? What activities not currently implemented would you like to propose?
- Do you have any other feedback or comments to share?

The intent to video and audio record the event was initially communicated to potential participants on the promotional flyer. Participants could review the information about the project and sign consent forms (Appendix 7) when they arrived for the workshop.

## Promotion and Outreach

To promote the event, the team created and distributed flyers in Ramsey as well as shared them online with civic organizations, schools, churches and businesses in the area, and the Visual Preference and Volunteer Opportunities survey respondents who expressed interest in further engagement opportunities. The flyers were posted in public areas two weeks before the event. A sign-up sheet was created through Google Forms for participants to register online. Simultaneously, the event was being promoted digitally via the City's Facebook page which also shared a PDF file of the flyer and later provided a direct link to the sign-up sheet. The team had also shared a project-based e-mail address for questions about the event and an alternative way to register.

# Findings: Major themes

The findings were organized into two categories:

1. Highway 10 Themes focusing on the project and the content of the event
2. Engagement Themes focusing on the methodology of the event and the City of Ramsey's approach to engagement as a whole

## Highway 10 Themes

The discussion on Highway 10 development could be summarized under the two broad sub-categories: traffic and the development of Ramsey. Specific sites selected during the mapping activity in the context of concerns and opportunities are outlined in the table below and further explored under specific themes.

Site	Opportunities/Concerns
Sunfish Lake Boulevard	Major concerns around safety/traffic with the Northstar Rail Line
Armstrong Boulevard	Opportunity to connect to potential southbound bridge over the Mississippi
142nd Ave NW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Possible Bike/pedestrian trail</li><li>• Opportunity to connect with the Mississippi bridge</li></ul>
Riverdale Drive NW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frontage road which might be replaced during project</li><li>• Would serve the area highlighted as a big box retail location</li><li>• Potential bike/pedestrian trail</li></ul>
Ramsey Boulevard and Highway 10	Potential signage location for COR

### 1. Traffic

By far, the most used word during this event was traffic. Early on it was a common point amongst all participants to mark which intersections got especially backed up either during rush hour or when the train ran through Ramsey. One participant mentioned a lack of traffic being the reason why he had moved to Ramsey years ago, and it was why he was hopeful that improvements to Highway 10 would lessen the existing load. Traffic was a transition point for a number of smaller themes. For example, one participant mentioned that he lived near the highway and that the sound of cars and the train were a large nuisance. He pointed out the opportunity to put sound dampening walls on sections of the highway with residential homes to mitigate this negative impact. Nuisances would also be discussed later in regards to economic development and city branding, making it one of the themes present in both of the broader categories.

### Safety

Another major theme was safety. This again was highly related to traffic. Participants would talk about how people drove more recklessly after being stuck waiting for the train to pass, or that they would make dangerous illegal turns when medians impeded entrance into a gas station or business. Pedestrian safety was also mentioned on a few occasions. One participant noted that he had seen kids crossing Highway 10 where there were no crosswalks or safety features in place.

### ***Non-vehicle Transportation***

Non-vehicle transportation came up a few times, however, the only commission member present mentioned it was currently a divisive topic for the City Council. Participants marked a few places on the map where they wanted to see trail or bridge connections. There was not much discussion of sidewalks along roadways, but participants did mention the need when discussing the COR area and potential new commercial areas to make them walkable and pedestrian-friendly. There seemed to be interest in expanded transit options or frequency for Ramsey. Participants noted that it was necessary for persons who might not have a car, and wondered what could prompt Metro Transit to add frequency to the NorthStar or to create local express bus lines.

### ***Missing Road Connections***

The final theme was focused on increasing connections. Early in the mapping activity, a participant mentioned the possibility of a new bridge over the Mississippi which could eventually connect Ramsey's downtown to communities south of the river, such as Dayton and Rogers. Participants recognized that existing commercial areas east and west along Highway 10 made better North-South connections a priority for the City's transportation network.

## **2. Ramsey and Development**

The second category of themes included those that were related to the impact the highway would have on the surrounding area, and on Ramsey's character. Themes in this category included: economic development and commercial recruitment, COR advertisement and Ramsey branding, the COR development and city character, and housing.

### ***Economic Development and Commercial Recruitment***

Economic Development was a major talking point, and participants saw it very closely related to roadway improvements. A better transportation corridor created opportunities for businesses around it, and participants pointed out sites within the COR and south of the highway where they wanted to see potential retail and service businesses. Participants believed that medians could interfere with business operations. Two participants shared an example of a gas station they thought went out of business due to the placement of a median which negatively impacted accessibility. One participant felt there was no need for the medians at all.

Within this discussion, participants made a note of what retail already existed regionally and tried to come up with ideas for big box stores which could fill a missing niche. Their belief was that one large business would have to move into the area first before smaller businesses would be able financially to follow. Participants also talked about the value of Coborn's and existing commercial enterprises in the city.

### ***COR Advertisement and Ramsey Branding***

The development of the COR was another major topic. Participants wanted to make sure that it would be easy to access and be aware of if you were driving along Highway 10, to encourage more people to visit the city. Along this vein was making the COR area walkable, providing quality signage advertising it along Highway 10, and attracting great service businesses to the area. Participants also wanted to see the City and businesses do a better job at branding to stand out from other cities in the region. The presence of the two rivers, the Mississippi and the Rum, was suggested as one possibility for branding.

### ***COR Development and City Character***

Also requested for the COR area was a community center or gathering space. This point touched upon a number of themes that related either to measures meant to build the sense of community in the city or to preserve its "quiet" character. More than one resident mentioned that a large portion of Ramsey's population had moved here to have a more rural or suburban residential life, but still possibly commuted to work in the Twin Cities or another first ring



suburb. This trend allowed this small-town character to be preserved in the face of the highway improvements and the COR development. However, it is worth noting that all participants seemed open and hopeful about what changes these projects might bring.

### **Housing**

A topic that came up a few times was how to utilize and develop residential areas around the highway. There are existing single and multifamily homes in the area already, but with the planning of the highway improvements and where right-of-way accesses will be preserved, the team asked participants about where they would want to see more housing. Participants mentioned that new housing should provide a greater diversity of options than what already existed in the city, for example, housing that could accommodate people of different ages, or couples who were starting a family and only needed or could afford a smaller home. However, when team members referred to this as “affordable” housing, participants balked, indicating perhaps a history of misuse or mistrust of the term. This could be important for the City in how it structures the discussion about residential development in the future.

## **Engagement Themes**

In the second half of the event, the team held a short discussion about what participants liked and disliked about the mapping activity and about how they felt about the City of Ramsey’s overall engagement efforts.

The key point was that participants felt the City of Ramsey was doing a good job of communicating and working with its residents. There may be ways to improve upon their work, but participants were generally impressed with the City’s proactive outreach to residents and its adoption of new communication mediums. Participants were very supportive of the Ramsey Resident newsletter, however were unsure if that was a personal bias or widely accepted view in the community. They also thought that new redesign of the website had significantly improved its usability for community members.

When discussing the City’s proactivity, instead of having limited communication and then getting angry or misinformed groups at community meetings, the City was doing a better job at introducing development projects or ordinance amendments earlier in the process to reduce misinformation. Participants also mentioned the case of a developer who went door-to-door with his plat documents to “be a good neighbor” with the residents who would be impacted by the developments. The importance of proactive outreach was repeatedly emphasized.

One improvement in outreach could focus on marketing new businesses and opportunities. The business of the month project was mentioned, but the fact that information about these businesses was not shared with the residential community was seen as a missed opportunity for the City to build a stronger relationship with its entrepreneurs. Similarly, a participant mentioned that a new child care center had opened recently but that it had made little news in the community. This type of new service is something that the City should be highlighting both for the benefit of residents, and as a way to attract new office and retail businesses who could benefit from childcare for their employees.

Regarding the event itself, participants primarily liked that it allowed them to be hopeful and present their vision for the future of the area. They also appreciated staff being there but only as a resource and not as a participant. In this way staff could provide technical assistance but still allow residents or business owners to be the active party. One participant who was involved with the Planning Commission mentioned that this activity could work well for open houses that were used to introduce new developments. Not only could people voice their concerns, hopes, or questions, but they could also show on a map exactly where those were spatially.

# World Café Focus Group

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## Purpose

The focus group was designed as an engagement activity for the Every Voice Matters project. The process of updating the comprehensive plan prompted the City to look at its current civic engagement methods with a goal of building and supporting a network of volunteers. A focus group method is “a convenient, cost-effective, relatively fast method to collect information from a number of individuals.”<sup>9</sup> Since the overall focus of this project is community engagement, the traditional focus group was combined with the World Café method<sup>10</sup> for a dual purpose of providing community feedback to the City on its volunteer opportunities and exploring an alternative engagement format to contribute to the City’s overall community engagement efforts.

## Promotion and Outreach

The event was advertised via a promotional flyer that was shared through the City’s Facebook page as well as emailed to community organizations, business owners, churches, and schools in Ramsey, and to all individuals who had taken the Visual Preference and Volunteer Opportunities survey and expressed interest in hearing about other engagement events from the City. The flyers were also placed at the City Hall. 16 participants registered for the event and 10 attended. The city staff members also sent personal invitations to several volunteer group representatives active in Ramsey and neighboring areas. A sign-up sheet was created through Google Forms for participants to register online.

The intent to video and audio record the event was initially communicated to potential participants on the promotional flyer. The flyer also included the team’s email address for any questions about the project and another way to sign up for the event. Participants could review the information about the project and were asked to sign consent forms (Appendix 7) when they arrived for the focus group.

## Design and Methodology

Having reviewed literature on focus groups as a method of qualitative research<sup>11</sup> as well as on the World Café approach<sup>12</sup> as a hosting technique for group conversation, the team designed a World Café focus group protocol (Appendix 6) that integrated elements of both methods. The activity was conceptualized, recorded, coded and analyzed based on the traditional focus group methodology. At the same time, the World Café method contributed “the way of building on the structured conversation in brief cycles, deliberately mixing participants between cycles to maximize knowledge exchange.”<sup>13</sup> The activity was comprised of the three thematic parts and two rounds that took place at three different tables. The event started with the opening remarks from the City staff representative, however, as it was agreed with the team in advance, all City staff left the room after the introduction to ensure participants could share their feedback more freely. Each of the three parts was facilitated by a different team member based on the protocol questions and prompts as well as the unique flow of the conversation at each table.

# Protocol Overview

## Introduction

**Round 1: (All 10 participants): Personal Experiences with Volunteering (30 min)**

**Round 2: (Small Groups of 5: participants switch tables after 20 minutes)**

**Table 1: Existing Outreach, Engagement, and Volunteer Opportunities at the City of Ramsey**

**Key Question: How can the City of Ramsey improve its outreach, engagement, and volunteer opportunities? (20 minutes)**

**Table 2: Creative Ideas for the New Volunteer Opportunities at the City of Ramsey**

**Key Question: What ideas do you have for a successful volunteer program at the City of Ramsey? (20 minutes)**

The first round took place at a larger table with all participants and focused on their personal volunteer experiences. In addition to a series of questions asked by the facilitator, participants were also encouraged to write or draw comments and graphically connect insights on the flipchart sheet placed in the middle of the table. After this first 30-minute round, participants were instructed to move to two separate tables (based on yellow and blue dots distributed at arrival aimed at maintaining gender balance at each table).

The second round looked at the two key questions that participants examined in smaller groups of 4-6 participants for 20 minutes before switching the tables for another 20-minute discussion to allow participants to contribute to and build on others' insights for both questions. Following the small group rounds, participants were called back into the large group and asked to share any final comments on volunteering and the activity format, and given brief engagement feedback forms (Appendix 8) to provide written comments.



# Focus Group Questions

## Round 1:

- How many of you have heard of the World Café before?
- How many of you volunteered with the City of Ramsey before in any capacity?
- What motivates people to volunteer? Why do you all volunteer and why do people you know are volunteers?
- Do you think there are any specific local (City of Ramsey) issues or causes that would get people excited to volunteer?
- Do you think time commitments for volunteering impact whether people are able to volunteer?

## Round 2:

Table 1 question: How can the City of Ramsey improve its outreach, engagement, and volunteer opportunities?

- What do you know about existing volunteer opportunities?
- How is the City reaching out about current volunteer opportunities?
- How did you find out about the opportunities you are involved in now?
- Did you find out about any volunteer opportunities on social media?
- How do you feel the City is doing about engaging people and letting them know about these opportunities?
- What do you think about advertising in places where people already are gathering?
- How often do you look at a bulletin board at Coborn's?
- What is the importance of engaging at a regional level?
- Are you aware of the City of Ramsey Facebook page and, if so, how often do you visit it? What do you think of the amount of information posted there?
- How can communication be improved to reach more residents/different demographics?

Table 2 question: What ideas do you have for a successful volunteer program at the City of Ramsey?

- What are some ideas you have that the City should put their efforts behind?
- What do you want to see that the City is not already doing? How do you get people to participate in these kinds of programs?
- What do people think of the Parks and Recreation department programs? Do you see a vision for the City if there was an opportunity to expand, staff, and fund those programs?
- What are the elements of successful volunteer program?
- Are there specific opportunities that can only happen in Ramsey whether it is due to the Rivers or the COR, or other local unique features?
- Since there are not as many activities in the winter, is there a way to capitalize on that in terms of volunteer opportunities?
- Since you see the Happy Days as successful, what do you think had helped it grow into a stable annual event? What is the role of volunteers?

# Findings: Major Themes

## Volunteer Groups: Fundraising for Community

As participants introduced themselves, it became clear that virtually every one of them represented a volunteer group or organization active in Ramsey or neighboring areas. Although these groups differ in their history and purpose, they share a very similar model of group volunteering, organizing fundraising events, and donating proceeds to various causes or projects in the community. Therefore, one of the major themes was how the City could partner with, coordinate, assist, and leverage these groups in building a robust volunteer network.

## Generational Differences and Societal Changes

Many participants shared concerns about generational differences in attitudes towards volunteerism. Some felt strongly that the younger generation was unwilling to “step up and do their part” and unable to commit to a project that did not provide “instant gratification.” Others mentioned broader societal changes, such as urbanization and integration of women into the workforce, which they felt prevented the younger generations from developing the same culture of “helping your neighbors” that they saw as an integral part of their agrarian background. Two of the younger participants agreed that they did not experience volunteerism as a part of the family culture, having grown up with working parents, and rather were introduced to volunteering as a “school assignment” which some participants saw as a possible reason that turned younger people away from volunteerism. Growing presence of technology in young people’s lives was repeatedly mentioned as a detriment to social interactions that volunteering entails. While there was a strong agreement that younger families had a lot of demands on their time which made volunteering challenging, many participants were critical of the younger generation’s priorities and lack of commitment to helping others.

## Motivation to Volunteer

Many participants shared the reasons that motivated them to volunteer: giving back to the community, growing social networks and friendships, and being a part of something “larger than oneself.” All participants had volunteered for many years, but became more active when they retired or reduced their workloads. Several female participants also noted that they originally joined volunteer groups to have “intelligent conversations” not focused on childcare and household chores, and became more active when their children grew up and did not take as much of their time.

## Declining Membership

Declining membership and challenges in recruiting new, younger members, was continually brought up by all participants, who believed their groups shared very similar concerns. In addition to generational differences and societal changes discussed above, uncertainty about how much time commitment is needed and inability to offer consistent input were viewed as possible deterrents to joining volunteer groups.

## Regionality

The topic of regionality was discussed in the context of lack of information about and coordination with other volunteer groups in the area. Participants referred to “balkanized local communities” that do not share information about volunteer opportunities despite their close proximity to one another which limits the pool of potentially available volunteers. They also expressed interest in further exploring the possibility of merging local chapters and expanding volunteer recruitment efforts beyond one city’s limits.

## Effectiveness of City Outreach

While participants saw the City's website and Facebook page as improvements in community outreach, they believed the City was still having difficulty in reaching all residents. For example, several participants mentioned the recent City Council elections where few residents showed up claiming a lack of information from the City.

The Facebook page is a new outreach method for many volunteer groups and based on the current demographics of their members, they do not think it is the most effective method since many older residents get "left out." While many are aware of the Ramsey Resident newsletter, participants are unsure about whether and how much of the newsletter is read by the residents. The residents "on the outskirts," specifically the border with Elk River, are seen as "completely disengaged" based on how informed or connected they feel to Ramsey. The City of Ramsey billboard is viewed positively, however, participants question its effectiveness due to its smaller than regular billboard size that makes it less visible and its location on the highway where the 65 miles per hour speed limit does not allow enough time to view the information. All participants did not know where to find information about existing volunteer opportunities with the City of Ramsey and found their existing volunteer opportunities through other groups.

## Ideas and Solutions

### Needs-based, Community-driven Approach

Participants believed that the City should adopt a needs-based community-driven approach to its volunteer programming. They saw the role of the City in creating a network of already existing volunteer groups and leveraging their efforts toward community needs. Participants saw spontaneity and common goals as the most important elements of successful volunteer programs, whereby the City would create conditions for volunteer groups to organically respond to and engage residents in events and projects based on their concerns, interests, and skills. Participants saw the previous community needs assessment outreach, such as a leave-behind board where residents could add their ideas for what they wanted in the community, as a step in the right direction and wanted to see similar efforts related to volunteer projects in the future.

### Central Repository of Volunteer Opportunities with Broader Geographic Area

Participants proposed that the City create a central "hub" or "repository" of all available volunteer opportunities. The repository would come with a name of a contact person whose responsibility it would be to promptly connect interested individuals with the relevant city department or refer to volunteer groups and organizations. While individual departments list their opportunities on their web pages, participants believed it is important to have a central list of all opportunities that would include a broader geographic area to facilitate access and engagement at a regional level.

## Multiple Communication Formats and Points

Participants saw the diversification of communication formats and points as a way to improve communication and outreach and to contribute to existing outreach methods. Several ideas were proposed to address communication and outreach concerns:

- Engaging local churches to advertise opportunities through them would provide access to many potential volunteers.
- Electronic Kiosk with interactive features could engage younger audiences.
- A foldable desktop exhibit display with photos and information about projects, impacts, and volunteer opportunities brought to community events could lead to new volunteers.
- Well-placed electronic billboards could increase visibility and generate additional interest in volunteering.
- A community-moderated Facebook page or forum of volunteer opportunities could enhance and amplify the City's communication efforts as well as encourage genuine community-driven volunteer opportunities to emerge.

## More Things to Do in Ramsey will Bring More Volunteers

Lack of activities and events in Ramsey was seen as a detriment to recruiting and engaging volunteers. Participants believed that expanding existing events and activities and building new ones would both energize the existing volunteer base and lead to new people joining.

- The Happy Days and Concerts were seen as successful events that could be further improved by adding food trucks or inviting multiple volunteer groups to collaborate on food catering, fundraising, raffles, etc.
- The Parks and Recreation department could do more to enhance recreation, for example by partnering with Anoka-Hennepin Community Education to provide classes and after-school activities.
- Winter activities are almost non-existent, and participants had a number of ideas for collaborative volunteer group events: tree-lighting event on a skating rink, organized events for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, skating.
- Some participants wanted to see a greater focus on arts as opposed to sports, and thought a local Arts Center or a series of art events could engage artistically-minded residents.
- Participants liked the idea of a community center and a splash pad. Some believed these projects should engage community volunteers in planning and construction of additional facilities. Others warned about logistical complexity and liability issues.
- Many participants felt strongly that the City of Ramsey should focus on capitalizing on Ramsey's natural assets and building "something unique" that would both excite residents and bring visitors from neighboring areas. Ramsey's historical past was mentioned as a potential draw for local history enthusiasts. A butterfly trail was discussed as a successful example of building a collaborative volunteer project that could grow into a unique local amenity.

## Feedback Form Summary

On the scale of 1 to 100, the City's efforts to engage the residents in meaningful volunteer opportunities was rated at **49.4**. The World Café focus group was rated at **80**. Participants appreciated the opportunity to hear different viewpoints and generational perspectives and ideas about how to engage more residents. Representatives of different groups commented on how all the groups had similar issues, and it was helpful to bring them together to brainstorm ideas for recruiting new members. Participants noted that not everyone was from Ramsey or familiar with Ramsey issues and that some conversations moved to different topics. Some thought that the topic was too broad and presenting a specific issue or problem and asking participants to help solve it would have been useful. There was a general feeling that having more groups or individuals interested in volunteering both from Ramsey and neighboring areas would have been beneficial. The full summary is included in Appendix 8.

# Analysis, Reflection, and Synthesis

## Data Analysis Methodology

The data analysis process was guided by the end-user strategy of providing actionable information to the City and exploring and documenting the patterns in the data which could lead to some new insights. Since limited number of participants in the three engagement activities allowed for a relatively small sample, the team decided to apply qualitative data analysis methods supplemented by descriptive statistics summaries.

The data gathered through the online survey was exported from the online SurveyMonkey account into an Excel file. The survey contained two types of information: responses to the selection and ranking questions and comments on the selected questions. The selections that were made by respondents were indicated by numbers within the Excel file, and these were used to make graphs to illustrate the selections. To better understand the rankings of the buildings, a weighted average ranking was determined. This was done by summing the product of the weights "1, 2, 3, and 4" and the number of times the building was placed in that rank, and dividing by the number of people who completed the question. This resulted in a range of numbers, with the lowest number being the highest rated building. Written comments were gathered and coded thematically. In addition, comments made within visual preference sections about specific buildings were also coded either positive, negative, or neutral in an attempt to create a snapshot of the comments in a way that could be more easily represented. One method of analysis of the survey data that was considered but not pursued was regression analysis to estimate the relationship between different variables. This method of analysis could potentially have given deeper insight into responses and allowed for the qualitative analysis to become more quantitative. However, without specific research questions to guide such analysis, it was unlikely to produce any meaningful conclusions and is therefore reserved for future efforts.

The data from the charrette workshop and the World Café focus group was analyzed following a very similar process. Based on the consent forms signed by all participants, both events were video and audio recorded. The team members had individually reviewed all video and audio recordings and identified major themes for coding the data. In this process, the team compiled summary notes for the charrette workshop since the visual and interactive nature of the event rendered full transcription unnecessary. The focus group videos were similarly analyzed using more detailed transcription notes. Following an individual review, the team members met to review and discuss the themes jointly. Since the themes identified did not significantly differ among the team members, the team fine-tuned the codes and reviewed the notes again to apply the revised codes and organize the data thematically.

In addition to the content questions, building design, land use, and volunteer opportunities respectively, the survey, charrette workshop, and focus group each had a built-in feedback section on the engagement format itself. The final survey questions focused on the experience with the survey and asked about participants' views about surveys as an engagement method and the likelihood of their participation in similar surveys in the future. The team decided to alternate oral and written feedback to test different approaches to post-event evaluation. The last segment of the charrette workshop focused specifically on this format of engagement where participants were asked to evaluate their experiences with this format and their level of satisfaction with how the City engaged its residents. Similar questions were asked in a written engagement feedback form (Appendix 8) that was distributed at the end of the World Café focus group.



## Limitations

Throughout the process of data collection and analysis, the team recognized many limitations of the project and methodology. While the key themes and patterns along with the resulting recommendations will provide some helpful insights, the following limitations should be taken into consideration:

1. Sample size. A total of 251 participants were engaged throughout the process which represents less than half a percent of Ramsey's population.
2. Sample demographics. While most of the survey respondents were in the 31-40 age group, most participants in the charrette and focus group were above 55. Only three participants attended the charrette.
3. Affiliation with the City. Most participants in the charrette and focus group had a previous affiliation with the City as an employee, volunteer, or member of a commission.
4. Urban image surveys. While surveys provide valuable insights, without a "more meaningful collaboration between designers and inhabitants, addressing complex urban realities" they are inadequate tools.<sup>14</sup>
5. Implicit bias. Images presented in the survey are very likely to impart some bias into the visual preference sections. Variability in seasonality in images, possible negative connotations or specific interpretations of building descriptions can affect ratings.
6. Translating qualitative data into actionable information. In the Multifamily Housing section, every image had architectural style as one of the top three elements. Two of these buildings are similar, but since all of them include the architectural style as a top element, combined section rankings had to be considered to determine the overall favorite architectural style. Alternative interpretations could be acceptance of many kinds of multifamily housing or, although unlikely, indifference about the architectural style of multifamily housing.

## Reflection and Takeaways on the Three Engagement Formats

The three engagement formats were generally well-received by the participants. In case of the survey and the focus group where participants were specifically asked to rate their experience on a scale from 1 (worst) to 100 (best) with the City's engagement efforts and their experience with these engagement formats the latter were ranked higher than the former. Survey participants rated the City's engagement efforts at 58 and their experience with the survey at 64. In addition, over 64% of respondents expressed interest in participating in similar surveys in the future. The focus group participants rated the City volunteer engagement efforts at 49.4 and the focus group as a format at 80. Charrette workshop participants provided positive feedback for both overall City efforts and the charrette as a method of engagement. This suggests that residents are generally open to new engagement formats, but both the current efforts and the formats themselves need further improvement.

## Participant Profile

While the online survey respondents were younger and largely employed full-time, the participants in the charrette workshop and the focus group were older retired residents who were already involved with the City in some capacity. The participants in the two events were also generally new to social media and other online tools, and expressed a preference for face-to-face meetings. Many were also reluctant to write or draw on maps or flipchart sheets even when repeatedly prompted by facilitators, which may suggest these engagement methods are still a novelty.

## Survey

The survey faced some difficulty in promotion and engagement through social media. Posts were made on the City's Facebook page to promote the survey. The survey was repeatedly advertised as a part of the promotion for the City's other events creating a swath of information that could overwhelm the intended audience. Moreover, the City of

Ramsey utilizes only Facebook, while many media streams remain untapped. A paper version of the survey was created to help establish another line of engagement. It was distributed along with the online survey and produced only three responses which suggests either a strong preference for the online format or not enough outreach. Direct mailings with return envelopes is a commonly used form of distribution that could be used to increase response for paper surveys. Promotion at City events in a partially offline mode is another option. The survey could be projected or displayed and the residents could review and vote electronically or on paper forms.

Given the nature and the overall engagement theme of this project, the survey focused on both visual preferences and volunteer opportunities in an effort to produce a greater amount of actionable information for the City of Ramsey. This combination increased the overall length of the survey as well as diluted the focus of either aspect. The survey was designed to take approximately fifteen minutes, however according to the statistics assembled by surveymonkey.com the average time to complete the survey was eleven minutes. This statistic includes respondents that did not finish the survey. Only respondents who finished the survey would have progressed to the question that asked for feedback on the survey. Therefore, respondents that commented on the length of the survey, did in fact finish the survey. Finally, images for visual surveys need to be tested to ensure that they can be viewed easily on mobile devices such as tablets and phones. This aspect impacted the ease of use, and likely reduced the completion rate in the process. Future surveys should maintain a singular focus and purpose and use restraint in combining different aspects into one survey in order to yield higher completion rates.

As mentioned in the Limitations section above, implicit biases are an issue in community engagement, especially in surveys as there is no communication and it is instead a single user interacting with text or images. These kinds of biases are challenging to avoid, but further efforts should be made to minimize such effects through further education on the issue, and careful consideration and selection of images and descriptions.

## Key Takeaways

- Single family housing is still preferred over multifamily housing.
- Research design preferences around single-family housing as resident preferences are varied.
- Recognize smaller multifamily units are preferred so long as they looked new and modern.
- Design mixed use and commercial buildings to include modern exteriors and a variety of uses that may be outside of the current zoning code.

## Charrette Workshop

The charrette workshop seemed to have resonated well with the participants. They appreciated the opportunity to envision the future of the area and brainstorm ideas together about the possibilities. The low turnout, however, suggests that either this particular activity appeals only to a small portion of the population or that additional avenues to promote it and recruit participants could be pursued. During the event, participants seemed interested and engaged in the discussion but somewhat reluctant to mark up the map, attach stickers, or write on post-it notes. Facilitators at future events should consider integrating more structured prompts where participants are first asked to write their comments and then explain and attach them to the map. The presence of staff was seen as beneficial when they provide information needed by the participants and answer questions, but do not actively participate in the design or mapping. The team also recommends that members of the city commissions follow similar guidelines, since their opinions can be deferred to by other participants due to their expertise or affiliation.

Another explanation for the low attendance could be the oversaturation of events during the month of March when this event took place. One possible adjustment in recruitment for future charrette-style activities could be the emphasis

on citizen participation where no planning or design experience is necessary. It is possible that the name “charrette” and the maps on the flyer discouraged citizens without this special expertise from attending. A modified charrette-style event in a community location, such as the Coborn’s, could potentially draw more engagement if participants could stop by to add their stickers or notes to the map rather than committing to a 2-3 hour-long workshop.

## Key Takeaways

- Examine how to improve traffic flow at intersection connections with Highway 10 and in regards to the heavy rail line.
- Acknowledge traffic as a major concern amongst residents when engaging in public outreach.
- Examine the effects of street elements on businesses and ensure road design is not a barrier to accessing businesses.
- Understand the demand for housing diversity, explore options for where this housing can be located, and understand the sensitivity of this topic in outreach efforts.
- Reach out to younger residents due to the long-term nature of the Highway 10 plan and to ensure buy-in from these groups who are most likely to be impacted in the future.

## World Café Focus Group

As the team conceptualized this event, the expectation was to reach out to individual residents with varying degrees of experience as volunteers and gather feedback on what volunteer opportunities might make them more interested in volunteering with the City of Ramsey in the future. Instead, the participants represented several volunteer groups active in the City of Ramsey and neighboring areas. Thus, the event was less about individual civic engagement and more about networking, collaboration, and coordination among the different groups and the City of Ramsey. While this is a potentially very beneficial collaboration that should be further developed, it would be an interesting opportunity to engage currently unaffiliated residents as future volunteers, especially given the participant profile that emerged from the two events and the conversations with members of a few different commissions.

Given the profile of the participants, their strong views about generational and societal differences, and the lack of participation of young people and families, the City should take special efforts to recruit participants from this population, test the accuracy of assumptions about their non-participation, and explore strategies for better outreach and engagement. While participants enjoyed the event, they did not specifically comment on the format and largely appreciated the opportunity to convene and explore challenges and brainstorm solutions. They also demonstrated a preference for conversations as opposed to writing and drawing which needed to be repeatedly encouraged by the facilitators. This could be an indication of generational differences, the novelty of the format, or both. Given the high satisfaction rating, this format should be considered for future engagement events and adjusted accordingly based on the profile of the attendees.

## Key Takeaways

- Consider engaging residents unaffiliated with any existing volunteer groups to promote civic engagement and a stronger connection to the City.
- Create an easily accessible and comprehensive medium for sharing volunteer opportunities.
- Establish conditions for young people and families to be more involved in volunteerism.
- Promote regional collaboration to increase the pool of volunteers and create greater access to volunteer opportunities.

# Synthesis of Themes and Patterns

Having analyzed and reflected upon the three engagement formats, the team came up with the five themes that emerged from the participants, interactions with the city staff, review of documents, and the team members' observations.

## Improved Public Engagement

The residents believe there has been an improvement in the City's outreach and engagement, in particular in terms of the revamped website, proactive workshop and open house-style meetings, and a new Facebook page. The city staff noticed a significant reduction in unproductive confrontational public hearings following these proactive outreach and engagement efforts. While these improvements are notable, the evidence of success is largely anecdotal and the level of engagement and satisfaction has not been formally documented and measured. Projected population growth and greater diversity will likely necessitate further improvements and innovative approaches to reaching specific audiences.

## Unengaged Audiences

A large portion of the population still remains unengaged, in particular young people and families with young children. While they are known to attend and enjoy popular events, they do not appear to be well represented on the city commissions and in other planning processes. There appears to have been no comprehensive efforts to understand the reasons behind the lack of participation from this age group. Lack of time, full-time work, and family and children responsibilities are frequently cited as causes.

There are still a lot of residents who do not know where to find information about events and opportunities. There are also residents who do not use social media or who reside on the border of Ramsey with neighboring areas who are often left out of the communications from the City. The City currently relies on existing volunteer groups to promote and provide volunteer opportunities. As these groups face declining memberships and challenges in recruitment, this model of volunteer engagement is likely not sustainable in the long run.

## Ramsey as a Destination

Most residents appear to want more things to do in Ramsey, such as new small and large-box retail, new restaurants and stores, parks, arts and sports activities, and others. There is also an idea shared by many participants in the engagement activities to go beyond increased amenities to capitalize on Ramsey's unique features to turn it into a destination. The residents differ on what constitutes "unique," whether it be Ramsey's history, or a butterfly trail, brand new community center or the focus on the two rivers, but they believe this is an opportunity worth exploring.

## Urban Growth v. Rural Character

One of the patterns observed is the apparent contradiction in Ramsey residents' preferences. There is a strong feeling that Ramsey needs more activities, amenities, and services not only for the residents, but also to draw in people from the region. At the same time there is a recurring theme of "peace and quiet" which manifests itself in the desire for bigger lots with larger-sized homes not in close proximity to neighbors, more open space and more parking. These preferences are often expressed by older retired residents who volunteer on various city commissions. This contradiction and the lack of input and participation from the younger population complicates the creation of a common vision of Ramsey as a growing community.

## Regional Cooperation

The theme of regional cooperation was brought up repeatedly in the three engagement formats. It first appeared in the survey responses in the context of styles and designs of buildings that would work best in the region. It was later discussed by the charrette participants when exploring options for new businesses and retail in the COR. It was especially prevalent in the focus group when participants discussed their previous volunteer experiences across the city borders and how they had been initially exposed to these volunteer opportunities. Increased regional collaboration is seen as an opportunity for better outreach and engagement, but this idea could reach beyond community engagement to achieve a new level of regional cooperation and planning in the northwest suburban area. Exploring such cooperation is outside the scope of this report and would likely warrant further research on regional agreements between cities and outreach projects to nearby municipalities to determine its feasibility.



# Recommendations

Recommendation	Actions and Ideas
<p>1. Proactively Improve Communication, Outreach, and Engagement</p> <p><i>The City of Ramsey should address the current gaps in communication, outreach, and engagement efforts as well as proactively employ a variety of innovative tools to maintain existing connections while reaching out to new audiences.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design a comprehensive communication and engagement strategy that includes multiple channels of communication and formats of engagement and provides a communications plan and calendar.</li> <li>• Hire a Community and Volunteer Engagement coordinator to implement the strategy and proactively respond to emerging opportunities.</li> <li>• Create and maintain Instagram and Twitter accounts.</li> <li>• Build a City of Ramsey volunteer program while coordinating/leveraging other volunteer groups and organizations.</li> <li>• Create an online repository of volunteer opportunities and resources regularly monitored by a facilitator to ensure prompt follow-up.</li> <li>• Launch a series of <i>Ramsey as a Welcoming Community</i> events, such as cultural arts and food festivals or potlucks to honor the culture and diversity of residents.</li> <li>• Continue to hold visioning and education sessions with residents to ensure a common vision is created (Ideas: infographics-based fact sheets that show how many residents are needed in the area to support a new restaurant or retail: to educate on density and growth, short youth-created public service announcements on what they want to see in Ramsey shown prior to a community meeting or in a contest format).</li> </ul>
<p>2. Focus on young people and families</p> <p><i>The City of Ramsey should direct specific recruitment, outreach, and engagement efforts to engage young people and families.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create incentives for families who attend city committee meetings and events (dinner, child care, and activities for children during scheduled evening meetings).</li> <li>• Partner with local schools or individual teachers to create civic engagement projects that would include tours of the City Hall, specific volunteer initiatives with the City or the Parks and Recreation Department, Young Volunteer club.</li> <li>• Create a new model of volunteer engagement for younger audiences: online sign up for specific time slots or tasks.</li> <li>• Capitalize on interest in technology (online meetings, City events and Volunteer Opportunities app, online surveys and polls).</li> <li>• Better utilize and target digital mediums to reach younger audiences: use several social media platforms.</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Actions and Ideas
<p>3. Evaluate and Measure Community Engagement Efforts</p> <p><i>The City of Ramsey should establish an ongoing process of evaluation and measurement of community engagement efforts and utilize the results of this process for continuous improvement.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a community engagement evaluation and measurement plan as a part of the communications and engagement strategy with specific qualitative and quantitative metrics.</li> <li>• Conduct a bi-annual communication and engagement audit.</li> <li>• Include evaluation and feedback as an integral part of event planning (post-event feedback forms, surveys, online polls, outreach meetings, stakeholder engagement sessions, interactive exercises or circles for final comments).</li> <li>• Track and measure how and how much the online content is consumed, liked, and shared using Facebook Insights and use this information to make adjustments.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Increase and enhance regional collaboration and partnerships</p> <p><i>The City of Ramsey should partner and collaborate with governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses in the region for greater effectiveness and efficiency in its communication, outreach, and engagement efforts.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a regional brand for Ramsey, Anoka, Elk River and Coon Rapids.</li> <li>• Initiate a regional online newsletter.</li> <li>• Partner with local and regional business owners to coordinate promotion and outreach to residents.</li> <li>• Establish a regional volunteer council for outreach efforts.</li> <li>• Conduct further research on successful city-based regional organizations to identify best practices.</li> </ul>

# Endnotes

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## Credits:

Photos: Dan Herrera, Natela Jordan, streets. MN Community, Ramsey Community Photos (RCP).



# **Appendix 1: Project Scope**

# Community Engagement in the City of Ramsey

## Draft Project Scope

**Project Team: Myles Campbell, Natela Jordan, T.J. Hofer**

**Problem statement:** The City of Ramsey is seeking to improve its communication and engagement efforts with stakeholders (citizens, business owners, and commuters). The purpose of the project will be to analyze existing engagement plan, develop and field-test communication and engagement tools, and to offer recommendations for future engagement efforts.

Pre-project:

1. Discuss and finalize the scope of work with the City of Ramsey.
2. Receive relevant data and information from the City of Ramsey.
3. Review existing community engagement plan and other relevant documents, interview staff about implementation and successes and challenges in reaching and engaging community members.
4. Develop a consistent and applicable data analysis framework to help unpack the results of selected engagement activities and create a common set of takeaways from each format.

### **PROJECT ACTIVITIES:**

#### **1. Online Survey - Architectural Aesthetics Preferences**

The online visual preference survey will contain images from local buildings, green spaces, and design elements to explore aesthetic preferences of residents on building types, materials, and shared spaces. The survey will contain 20-25 image-based questions and also include questions on community engagement and gauging interest in volunteer opportunities. The survey will be launched on **March 5**, and will be available online until **April 9** with a goal of collecting 200-250 responses.

1. Identify the survey tool (Survey Monkey) and secure subscription/account.
2. Determine promotional incentives (e.g. Gift cards to local businesses, etc).
3. Generate a list of subject matter topics and run them by the City contacts.
4. Draft survey questions with a few images and run them by the City contacts
5. Collect/take images and photos for the survey
6. Develop a survey promotion and distribution plan (City website, social media, additional listservs and channels)
7. Draft full survey (images, photos, questions) and run it by the City contacts.
8. Make adjustments based on feedback
9. Develop promotional materials (flyers, social media posts, emails)
10. Launch the survey
11. Regularly monitor responses online and adjust promotional activities as needed.
12. Run an online raffle and give out 2-3 gift cards to encourage additional responses.

13. Analyze survey data and make recommendations in the final report
14. Include the survey and data in the report appendices.

## **2. Focus Group- Engagement and Volunteer Opportunities**

The focus group will examine the city's existing engagement efforts and current and potential volunteer opportunities. The focus group will include 10-15 community members. **Potential dates: March 9, 15, 16**

1. Review existing volunteer engagement efforts (documents and or interview with city staff).
2. Develop a focus group protocol and questions
3. Develop analytical framework
4. Incorporate feedback and make adjustments
5. Identify promotional rewards/incentives, if necessary
6. Schedule the date and time
7. Develop promotional materials
8. Promote the focus group
9. Identify and invite participants and city contacts
10. Manage logistics: space, food, video camera and recording equipment, other incentives, if any.
11. Host focus group
12. Record the focus group
13. Transcribe the focus group
14. Code responses based on framework
15. Debrief and provide recommendations and insights about volunteer programs and opportunities within the city.
16. Analyze the focus group protocol and include changes and recommendations for future focus groups.
17. Include focus group protocol with revisions into the final report appendices.

## **3. Charrette - Land Use Preferences**

This mapping and activity-based charrette will engage 15-20 residents in designing and mapping spaces along Highway 10 and the COR. **Potential dates: March 20, 22, 23**

1. Identify specific subject matter/content to include in the charrette
2. Receive feedback and make adjustments
3. Identify analytical framework for coding

4. Draft a protocol for the charrette and run it by the city contacts
5. Schedule a charrette and invite stakeholders
6. Identify and secure charrette materials (maps of Highway 10, building materials, etc).
7. Identify and secure promotional incentives/rewards for participation
8. Host charrette
9. Audio/video record the charrette
10. Code audio/video recording
11. Analyze coded videos to provide recommendations on the subject and format on the charrette
12. Include charrette protocol with revisions into the final report appendices

### **Deliverables**

1) Final Report:

A) Analysis of Community Engagement efforts

B) Data Analysis and Recommendations from the three activities

C) Recommendations: Updated Communications and Engagement Plan

D) Appendices:

- Focus Group Protocol
- Charrette Protocol
- Survey Design and Images
- Data Transcription and Statistics

2) 5 project posters (1 for each activity and 2- recommendations)

## **Appendix 2: Promotional Flyers**



# VISUAL PREFERENCE AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES SURVEY

The City of Ramsey and a team of Capstone Project students from the U of M Humphrey School of Public Affairs invite you to take this survey. The goal is to engage you in the process of shaping the design of the new development in the City of Ramsey/The COR. The focus of this survey is on building design and city volunteer opportunities.



What do you want in our backyard?

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RAMSEYVPS>

Take this 15-20 minutes survey and win one of the three \$15 Coborn's gift cards. **QUESTIONS?** Email the Capstone Project Team at [cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com](mailto:cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com)



**Tuesday  
March 27th**

## **Please Join Us for a Charette Workshop!**

**You're invited** to participate in a charette workshop for the development and design of the Highway 10 corridor, conducted by students from the University of Minnesota and with technical assistance from the City of Ramsey's Planning Department.

This interactive workshop will give residents an opportunity to collaborate and envision what the future of this area will look like, and how it could improve the lives of Ramsey residents. We hope to see you there and hear:

### **What do you want to see in our Backyard?**

**When:** Tuesday March 27th, 4:30-7:00pm

**Where:** Ramsey City Hall,  
Alexander Ramsey Room

**Sign Up Online at:**

<https://goo.gl/forms/x4zifg6De5Niaxll2>

**Or via Email:**

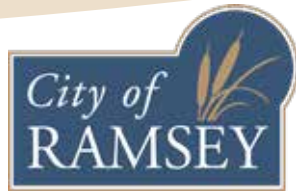
[cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com](mailto:cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com)

**Refreshments will be  
provided**

**All participants will  
receive a \$10 Coborn's  
gift card!**



HUMPHREY SCHOOL  
OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



## WORLD CAFE FOCUS GROUP: VOLUNTEERING IN THE CITY OF RAMSEY

APRIL 3, 2018 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM



The City of Ramsey and a Capstone Project team of students from the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs invite you to join us for an open and creative conversation about current and future volunteer opportunities.

***What do you want to see in our backyard?***

***How might we inspire and involve volunteers in building our city together?***

Come meet your neighbors for coffee and snacks and share your thoughts and ideas with the City! (We plan to record the meeting to capture your ideas more accurately).

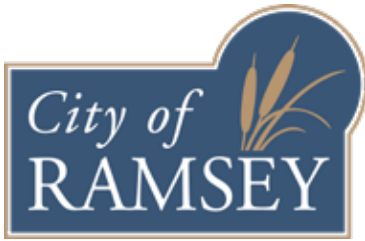
**SIGN UP ONLINE** <https://tinyurl.com/yc6b37xg>

**OR VIA EMAIL** [cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com](mailto:cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com)

***All participants will receive a \$10 Corborn's gift card!***



# **Appendix 3: Paper Version of the Survey**



## Visual Preference Survey

Dear residents and neighbors,

The City of Ramsey invites you to take this Visual Preferences Survey. The purpose of this survey is to engage you in the process of shaping the design of the new development in the City of Ramsey/The COR. Your participation will help determine the future look of the City!

For any questions about the survey, please email us at [cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com](mailto:cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com).

The survey contains sets of images with potential alternatives for single family and multifamily homes, mixed use and commercial buildings. For each set, we invite you to rank images and then tell us what elements you like in each photo.

The final section also includes questions about the City's engagement and volunteer opportunities and how those can be improved in the future.

The survey will take about 20-30 minutes, but many will finish it quicker. As a thank-you for your participation, all survey participants will be entered into a raffle to win one of the three \$15 Coborn's gift cards.

We appreciate your participation and looking forward to your comments and ideas!



**Take online: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RAMSEYVPS>**

**1. Are you a resident of Ramsey?**

Yes

No

**2. Please select your age group:**

12-20

21-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

61-70

Over 70

**3. What is your occupation?**

Student

Business owner

Worker

Full-time employee

Part-time employee

Unemployed

Retired

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Do you work within the City of Ramsey?**

Yes

No

**5. Do you commute to the City of Ramsey?**

Yes

No

# 1: SINGLE FAMILY HOME

1. Please rank these 4 images from 1 (most favorite) to 4 (least favorite). You will have the opportunity below to comment on specific elements of each home that you like.

RANK #	RANK #	RANK #	RANK #
			
Brick home with landscaping	Home with two-car garage	Stucco home with an open porch	Mixed materials contemporary home

2. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

3. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

4. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

5. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

## 2: MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

1. Please rank these 4 images from 1 (most favorite) to 4 (least favorite). You will have the opportunity below to comment on specific elements of each home that you like.

RANK #	RANK #	RANK #	RANK #
			
Four-story apartment building with neutral colors	Six-story apartment with bright accent colors	Townhomes with varying paint colors	Brick multi-unit structure with accent colors

2. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

3. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

4. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

5. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:



### 3: MIXED USE BUILDINGS

1. Please rank these 4 images from 1 (most favorite) to 4 (least favorite). You will have the opportunity below to comment on specific elements of each home that you like.

RANK #	RANK #	RANK #	RANK #
			
Mixed use 5-story building with ground floor retail and 4-stories of apartments above	Mixed use 2-story building with ground floor retail and 1-story of apartments above	Mixed use 4-story building with ground floor retail and 3-stories of apartments above	Mixed use 3-story building with ground floor retail and 2-stories of apartments above

2. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility <input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space <input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style <input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly <input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community <input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction <input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking <input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety <input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping <input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard <input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace <input type="checkbox"/>	Size <input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting <input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover <input type="checkbox"/>
Materials <input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any <input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

**3. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.**



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

**4. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.**



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

5. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.







Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

## 4: COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

1. Please rank these 4 images from 1 (most favorite) to 4 (least favorite). You will have the opportunity below to comment on specific elements of each home that you like.

RANK #	RANK #	RANK #	RANK #
			
Row of stores	Single building with multiple commercial venues	Big box office/commercial building surrounded by parking lot	Single building with multiple commercial venues with outdoor seating/green space in front

2. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

3. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

**4. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.**



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

**5. Please check the boxes below based on the elements in the photo that you liked.**



Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pedestrian-friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fit with the Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage/Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sense of Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk/Boulevard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/Greenspace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Size	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not like any	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

# 5: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**1. How well does the City of Ramsey engage its residents? (Select one)**

Select a number on a scale from 0 (terrible) to 50 (average) to 100 (great):

**2. If you have previously volunteered with the City of Ramsey, how would you evaluate your volunteer experience?**

- |                            |                          |           |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Haven't volunteered before | <input type="checkbox"/> | COMMENTS: |
| Excellent                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| Good                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| Average                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| Bad                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| Terrible                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |

**3. What motivates you to volunteer? (Select as many as apply)**

- |                                   |                          |           |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Recognition                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | COMMENTS: |
| Extra time                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| Giving back to the community      | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| Being involved with the community | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| Specific cause I care about       | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| I do not volunteer                | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |

**4. What volunteer opportunities would make you interested in volunteering with the City of Ramsey in the future?**

- |  |                          |           |
|--|--------------------------|-----------|
| Working with kids and youth  | <input type="checkbox"/> | COMMENTS: |
| Building public spaces (playgrounds, gardens, etc.)  | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| Outdoor event coordination   | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| Visitor guide  | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |
| I am not interested in volunteering with the City of Ramsey in the future (see my comments below). | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |

5. **Would you like to be entered into a raffle for a \$15 Coborn's Gift Card?**

Yes

No

6. **Would you like to hear from the City of Ramsey about volunteer and engagement opportunities?**

Yes

No

7. **OPTIONAL: If you answered yes to question 5 or 6 above please leave your full name, email address, and phone number. Your contact information will not be shared with third parties or used for any purposes other than those specified above and selected by you below.**

Name:

Address:

City/Town:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email:

Phone:

8. **How would you describe your experience with this survey?**

Select a number on a scale from 0 (terrible) to 50 (average) to 100 (great):

9. **Would you be interested in sharing your opinions with the City of Ramsey via similar online surveys in the future? Please leave a comment on how we can improve this experience for you.**

Yes

Maybe

No

COMMENTS:

**Thank you for taking this survey.  
We appreciate your feedback and time.**

# **Appendix 4: Charrette Workshop Protocol**



## CHARRETTE WORKSHOP PROTOCOL

**Description:** This two-round mini-charrette will engage participants in identifying concerns and opportunities and proposing ideas for the future vision of the area.

**Total time:** 2 hours (4:30 PM-7:00 PM)

**Facilitators:** Capstone Team, City Planner/Representative.

**Materials:** Maps, flipchart paper, markers, building/design materials, paper, name tags

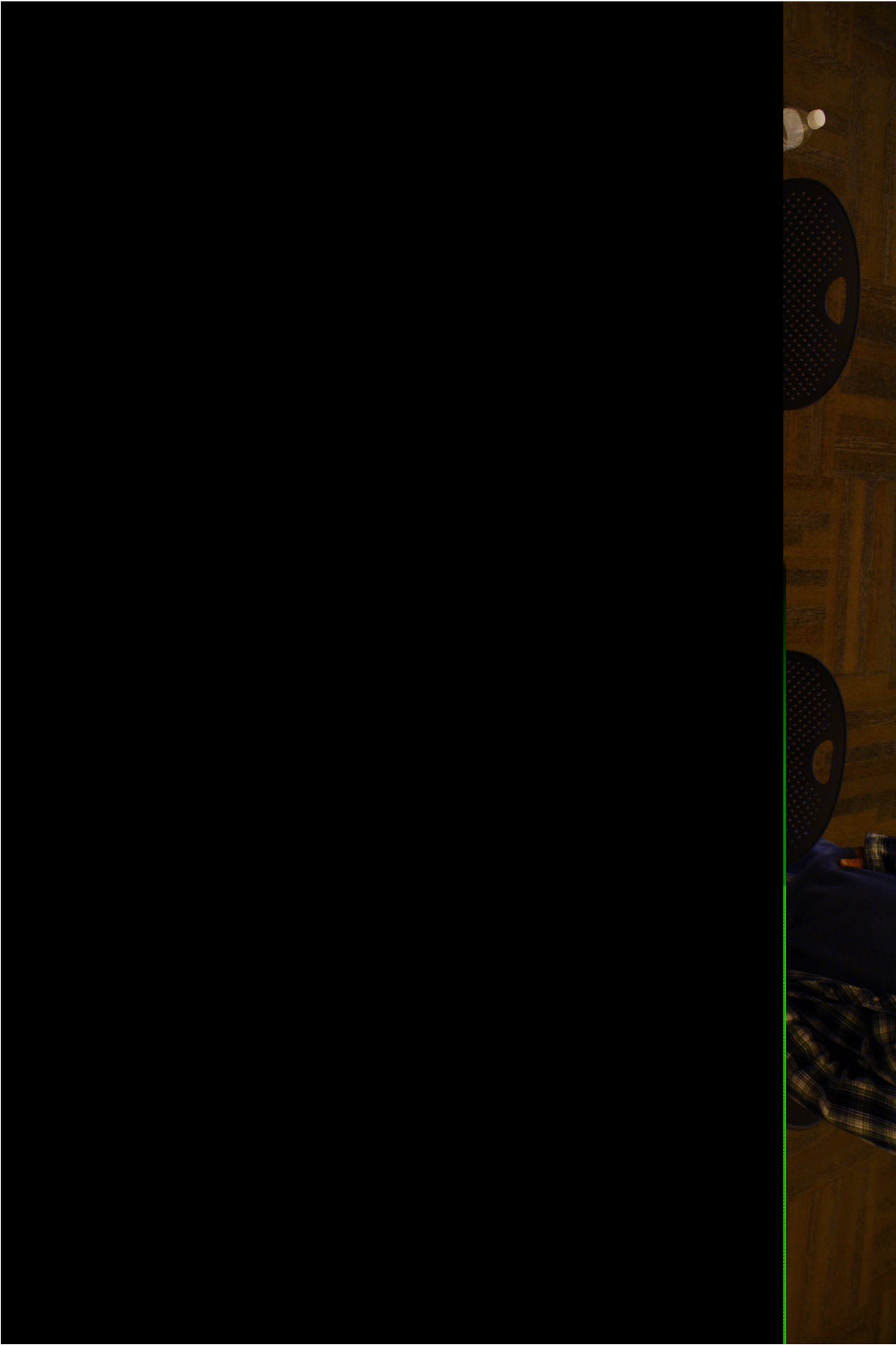
### AGENDA

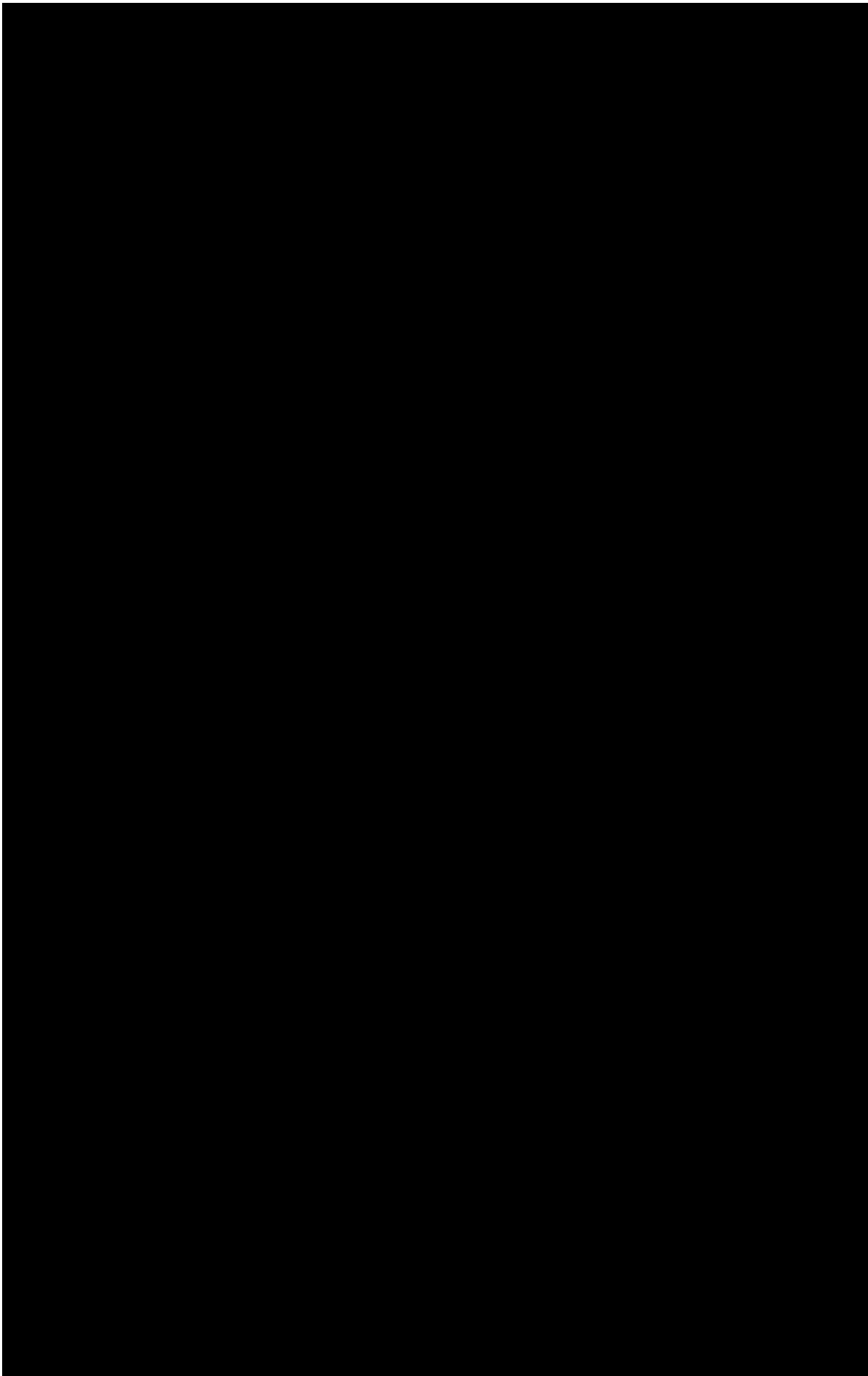
ACTIVITY	Description	Time	Materials
<b>Pre-meeting/ Registration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set-up tables and recording equipment</li> <li>● Greet participants, and have them sign consent forms for video and audio recordings.</li> <li>● Distribute paper copies of VPS.</li> <li>● Write agenda on a flipchart or board.</li> </ul>	4:30-5:05	Refreshments  Info/Consent Forms  VPS- paper copies  Recording equipment
<b>Introductions and Agenda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Introductions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce the team and city staff</li> <li>2. Ask participants to introduce themselves and share: Why are you here tonight? What is one priority or value that you would like to share before we begin this discussion. (Facilitator records responses on a flipchart)</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Overview of Hwy 10 Project Background (City Staff)</b></li> <li>● <b>Explanation of the Charrette method and the task</b> (Piloting of an engagement method and collecting feedback to improve future engagement efforts).</li> </ul>	5:05-5:30	Markers  Flipchart or board  Video equipment/ projector
<b>Mapping Exercise Round 1: Concerns and Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain the task: Participants will look at the map of Hwy 10 and identify and discuss areas of concerns and opportunities</li> <li>● Gather participants around the larger map. Provide red, yellow and green sticker dots to designate respectively areas of <b>immediate concern, potential concern, and opportunities</b>. Allow 5 minutes for participants to look at the map and attach the dots.</li> </ul>	5:30-6:15	Large map of the entire length of Hwy 10 Acetate sheets Sharpies  Red, yellow and green sticker dots  Post-it notes

	<p><b>Structured facilitator-led discussion:</b> Go around the table and ask each participants. Ask what others think about identified areas.</p> <p>Why do you think this is an immediate or potential concern?</p> <p>Could you tell me more about why this is an opportunity?</p> <p>What specific solutions/actions or remedies would you like to see implemented here?</p> <p><b>Additional questions for smaller group setting (storytelling):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Why are you concerned about this particular site?</li> <li>● What does it mean to you? How does it affect you and your family? Your business?</li> <li>● What would success look like to you at this particular site?</li> <li>● What would you like to see here?</li> <li>● What would you not like to see here?</li> <li>● What stands in the way of this vision?</li> </ul> <p><b>Larger group setting (over 12 participants)</b> Divide participants in 2-3 groups, ask them to identify one site of concern or opportunity discussed earlier and pose a question:</p> <p>What specific solutions/actions or remedies would you like to see implemented here?</p> <p>Facilitators circulate to each table to discuss/record ideas.</p> <p>Announce the break, ask participants to stay for the reflection/feedback exercise after the break. Distribute written forms, if anyone needs to leave early.</p>		<p>Flipchart or board Markers</p> <p>Feedback questionnaires for participants leaving early.</p>
<b>Break</b>		<p>6:15-6:25 or 6:20 -6:25 for larger group</p>	

<p><b>Reflection on Engagement Activity</b></p>	<p>Thank participants for sharing their views earlier. Remind them that this was a pilot activity to provide the city with feedback about how the residents feel about it.</p> <p>Specific feedback on activity tonight:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What did you think of this exercise?</li> <li>2. What was most helpful? What was least helpful?</li> <li>3. Would you consider doing a similar mapping activity with the City again?</li> <li>4. How can it be changed to make it more helpful/enjoyable for you?</li> </ol> <p>Now let's talk about the City's engagement efforts in general...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Do you think the city is doing a good job of engaging the stakeholders about the Hwy 10 development? Why? Why not?</li> <li>6. What improvements would you like to see?</li> <li>7. How would you like to be engaged? What activities not currently implemented would you like to propose?</li> <li>8. Do you have any other feedback or comments to share?</li> <li>9. Remind participants about the survey (take online or drop off paper forms at the City Hall) and tell them about the upcoming focus group.</li> </ol>	<p>6:25-:6:50</p> <p>(Reflect in 2-3 smaller groups for larger groups)</p>	<p>Marked sites map/acetate sheets with street names,etc.</p> <p>Focus group flyer</p>
<p><b>Wrap-up</b></p>	<p>Thank participants. Direct them to the team member who distributes gift cards.</p>	<p>6:50-7:00</p>	<p>Coborn's gift cards</p>

## **Appendix 5: Images of Map**





# **Appendix 6: Focus Group Protocol**

## WORLD CAFE FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Date: April 3, 2018 (Expected number of participants: 10-15)

Activity	Description	Time	Materials
<p><b>Pre-meeting/ Registration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set-up tables and recording equipment</li> </ul> <p>One large table for up to 20 participants or circle with chairs Two smaller tables (10 participants) with a distance in between (for recording purposes) for key questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set up flipcharts (two flipcharts sheets connected together with a key question -visible on both sides of the table)</li> <li>● Greet participants and have them sign consent forms for video and audio recordings.</li> <li>● Distribute paper copies of VPS.</li> </ul>	<p>3:30-4:10</p>	<p>Refreshments Name tags (put equal number of yellow and blue dots- to divide into groups after the break). Recording equipment Registration List Info/Consent Forms VPS- paper copies</p>
<p><b>Introductions &amp; Agenda</b></p>	<p><b>Opening Remarks:</b> City of Ramsey (Kurt) <b>Greetings and Project Overview:</b> Project: Community Engagement in the City of - Ramsey, three engagement formats/activities Dual purpose: insights for the city to improve existing/develop future volunteer opportunities and try out a different engagement format to contribute to the City's overall community engagement efforts. Thank you for exploring these methods with us. <b>What is World Cafe?</b> Interactive, visual and creative format for hosting a group conversation. Launched in 1995, used both in private and public sector to engage stakeholders, generate new ideas, and improve processes. Collaborative approach to problem solving and an opportunity to build on each other's ideas.</p> <p><b>Ground Rules:</b> Allow everyone a chance to speak Build on what others have said/connect ideas No right or wrong answers Community building: talk to other participants not facilitators. Creativity</p> <p><b>Agenda:</b> (Large Group): Personal Volunteer Experience World Cafe-two tables: 1) Existing Outreach, Engagement and Volunteer Opportunities 2) New Ideas for Volunteer Opportunities.</p>	<p>4:10- 4:20</p>	



	<p>Final comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Introductions of participants</b></li> </ul> <p>(Name, why you were interested to attend this event, role in the community)</p>		
<p><b>Round 1: Large Group</b></p>	<p>Discuss in large group (around the table):</p> <p><b>PERSONAL VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is your connection/role to the City of Ramsey? (unless asked during intro)</li> <li>● Have you been involved with the City of Ramsey in any capacity before?</li> <li>● How many of you have volunteered with the City of Ramsey?</li> <li>● <b>What motivates people to volunteer?*</b></li> <li>● Do you volunteer? Why? Why not?</li> <li>● Why? Why not? What was your experience?</li> <li>● Have you volunteered anywhere else in the City or the area? What was your experience? (Why did you (did you not) volunteer locally?</li> <li>● <b>Are there any specific local (City of Ramsey) issues or causes</b> that you feel strongly about and would personally volunteer for or know others who would be interested?*</li> </ul> <p>* Post-it notes (optional: talk to your neighbor and write your responses to three questions on post-it notes).</p>	<p>4:20-4:50</p>	<p>Optional handout:  <a href="http://www.largescalinterventions.com/documents/TWC-Perspectus-2008.pdf">http://www.largescalinterventions.com/documents/TWC-Perspectus-2008.pdf</a></p>
<p>Break</p>		<p>4:50-5:00</p>	

<p><b>Round 2: Small Groups</b></p>	<p>Divide the group into two smaller groups. Place a flipchart with one of the key questions along with markers and post-it notes on the each table. Ask participants to discuss the key question and write and draw their ideas on the flipchart. Encourage participants to be creative. One facilitator joins each table to help guide/but not dominate the discussion as well as to document key discussion points. One facilitator keeps the time. Allow 20 minutes for group work.</p> <p><b>Table 1: EXISTING OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT THE CITY OF RAMSEY</b>  <b>How can the City of Ramsey improve its outreach, engagement, and volunteer opportunities?</b>  <b>Prompts:</b>  Do you know about existing volunteer opportunities?  How well does it engage its residents?  How well does the City communicate about its volunteer opportunities?  How can this communication and engagement be improved?</p> <p><b>Table 2: CREATIVE IDEAS FOR NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE CITY OF RAMSEY</b>  <b>What ideas do you have for a successful volunteer program at the City of Ramsey?</b>  <b>Prompts:</b>  (Be creative!) Generate ideas for successful volunteer program that would work in your community!  What are aspects of successful volunteer program?  What makes people want to volunteer?  What opportunities are specific to Ramsey?</p> <p><b>Participants switch tables. Facilitator at each table remains to introduce the question and asks to build on or add to ideas shared.</b></p>	<p>5:00-5:20 (switch at 5:20)</p>	<p>Two flipcharts with key questions, markers, post-it notes</p> <p>(Optional: World Cafe method for facilitators:  <a href="http://www.theworldcafe.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Cafe-To-Go-Revised.pdf">http://www.theworldcafe.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Cafe-To-Go-Revised.pdf</a></p> <p>Café Etiquette Handouts for each table (p.5)</p>
<p>Wrap-Up</p>	<p>Facilitator asks the table facilitator to post both flipcharts on the wall and invites participants to share any final comments on volunteering in the City or Ramsey and the exercise.  Quick written evaluation form  Gift cards.</p>	<p>5:45 -6:00</p>	<p>Evaluation forms  Gift cards</p>

# **Appendix 7: Consent Forms**

## **CHARRETTE WORKSHOP INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to participate in a Charrette Workshop for the development and design of the Highway 10 corridor. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a resident of Ramsey or neighboring area, have expressed interest in the City's engagement efforts and volunteer opportunities, and you are at least eighteen years old. Your perspective and experience as a local resident is a valuable resource for the City's efforts to continue offering world-class engagement opportunities. We ask that you read this form which explains today's activities and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participating in this activity.

We are a group of graduate students from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. We are working with the City of Ramsey to complete our required Capstone Project. The overall goal of our project is to provide information to the City about different community engagement strategies to improve its efforts to reach out to community. The project is implemented based on the guidance of the city staff and under the direction of Dr. Dan Milz, Visiting Assistant Professor in Environmental Planning and Civic Engagement in the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be a part of this project, we would ask you to do the following:

- Participate in this workshop and share your opinions about the development and design of the Highway 10 corridor.
- Agree to video and/or audio recording of the activity.

### **Confidentiality:**

The records of this workshop will be kept private. In transcripts and final report, we will not mention any names or include any information that will make it possible to identify a specific participant. Your likeness and voice will not be shared or reproduced at any time. Audio/video records will be destroyed once they have been transcribed and anonymized.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this workshop is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or the City of Ramsey. You are free to decline or withdraw your participation at any time, including after we complete today's workshop.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

If you have any further questions for the Capstone Project Team or if you wish to withdraw your participation at any time, you can reach us at [cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com](mailto:cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com) or Dr. Dan Milz at 612-626-5047, [dmilz@umn.edu](mailto:dmilz@umn.edu)

By printing and signing below, you attest that you have read and understand the information on the previous page, that you are at least eighteen (18) years old, and that you are willing to participate in this workshop:

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(Printed Name of Participant)

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(Signature of Participant)

(Day/Month/Year)

*If illiterate or blind*

I have witnessed the reading of the information and consent form to the potential participant. The individual has been given the opportunity to ask questions and has had them answered. They have given their consent freely and voluntarily.

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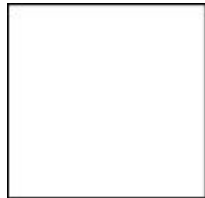
(Printed Name of Witness)

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(Signature of Witness)

(Day/Month/Year)

Thumb print of participant



***Statement by Capstone Team Member***

I have provided and read the information about this workshop to the potential participant. I have made sure that the participant understands, to the best of my ability, that the following will be done:

- They will be asked to share their opinions about the development and design of the Highway 10 corridor,
- and that their answers will be audio/video recorded.

I confirm that the participant was allowed to ask questions about the workshop and has been given contact information if they have any further questions. Moreover, I have answered their questions to the best of my ability. I can confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and it has been given freely and voluntarily.

They have been provided with a copy of the information sheet on the first page.

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(Printed Name of Capstone Team Member)

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(Signature of Capstone Team Member)

(Day/Month/Year)

## **FOCUS GROUP: VOLUNTEERING IN THE CITY OF RAMSEY INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to participate in a Focus Group about volunteer opportunities with the City of Ramsey. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a resident of Ramsey or neighboring area, have expressed interest in the City's engagement efforts and volunteer opportunities, and you are at least eighteen years old. Your perspective and experience as a local resident is a valuable resource for the City's efforts to continue offering world-class engagement opportunities. We ask that you read this form which explains today's activities and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participating in this activity.

We are a group of graduate students from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. We are working with the City of Ramsey to complete our required Capstone Project. The overall goal of our project is to provide information to the City about different community engagement strategies to improve its efforts to reach out to community members and to create more opportunities for interested residents to volunteer with the City. The project is implemented based on the guidance of the city staff and under the direction of Dr. Dan Milz, Visiting Assistant Professor in Environmental Planning and Civic Engagement in the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be a part of this project, we would ask you to do the following:

- Participate in this activity and share your opinions about volunteering in the City of Ramsey.
- Agree to video and/or audio recording of the activity.

### **Confidentiality:**

The records of this focus group will be kept private. In transcripts and final report, we will not mention any names or include any information that will make it possible to identify a specific participant. Your likeness and voice will not be shared or reproduced at any time. Audio/video records will be destroyed once they have been transcribed and anonymized.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this focus group is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or the City of Ramsey. You are free to decline or withdraw your participation at any time, including after we complete today's focus group.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

If you have any further questions for the Capstone Project Team or if you wish to withdraw your participation at any time, you can reach us at [cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com](mailto:cityoframseyengagement2018@gmail.com) or Dr. Dan Milz at 612-626-5047, [dmilz@umn.edu](mailto:dmilz@umn.edu)

By printing and signing below, you attest that you have read and understand the information on the previous page, that you are at least eighteen (18) years old, and that you are willing to participate in this focus group:

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(Printed Name of Participant)

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(Signature of Participant)

(Day/Month/Year)

*If illiterate or blind*

I have witnessed the reading of the information and consent form to the potential participant. The individual has been given the opportunity to ask questions and has had them answered. They have given their consent freely and voluntarily.

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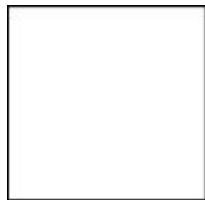
(Printed Name of Witness)

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(Signature of Witness)

(Day/Month/Year)

Thumb print of participant





***Statement by Capstone Team Member***

I have provided and read the information about this focus group to the potential participant. I have made sure that the participant understands, to the best of my ability, that the following will be done:

- They will be asked to share their opinions about volunteering in the City of Ramsey,
- and that their answers will be audio/video recorded

I confirm that the participant was allowed to ask questions about the focus and has been given contact information if they have any further questions. Moreover, I have answered their questions to the best of my ability. I can confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and it has been given freely and voluntarily.

They have been provided with a copy of the information sheet on the first page.

---

(Printed Name of Capstone Team Member)

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(Signature of Capstone Team Member)

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(Day/Month/Year)

**Appendix 8:  
Focus Group Feedback Form  
and Summary**

# ENGAGEMENT EVENT FEEDBACK FORM

World Café Focus Group, April 3, 2018

1. On the scale from 1(worst) to 100 (best) how well does the City of Ramsey engage the residents in meaningful volunteer opportunities?
2. On the scale from 1(worst) to 100 (best) how would you rate the engagement event today?
3. What did you like best? Why?

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4. What did you like least? Why?

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5. What would you do differently and why?

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6. What should the City do to encourage more residents to volunteer?

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7. Any other comments or feedback? (Feel free to use the other side for additional comments).

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!**

**FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK FORM SUMMARY  
10 ATTENDEES**

**1. On the scale from 1(worst) to 100 (best) how well does the City of Ramsey engage the residents in meaningful volunteer opportunities?**

- 25
- 60
- 50
- 50 (They try but people need to respond)
- 50 (Don't know enough about it but 50 maybe from what I heard from members)
- 50
- 60
- 50
- 50

**AVERAGE: 49.4**

**2. On the scale from 1(worst) to 100 (best) how would you rate the engagement event today?**

- 75
- 90
- 80
- 20
- 75-100 (Everyone got involved)
- 100 (I enjoyed it very much)
- 90
- 90
- 75
- 90

**AVERAGE: 80**

**3. What did you like best? Why?**

- Communication between us to hear different ideas. Open mind to actually think about volunteer recruitment.
- Talking with others, finding out others are having the same issues
- Exchange of ideas, variety of backgrounds of participants
- Hearing thoughts for future programs how to get residents more involved.
- Hearing different perspectives on volunteering and what we can do in our organization to continue growth.
- Voicing of different ideas, solutions, all not easy to identify!
- I like the free flow of ideas between all the volunteers in the group.
- Conversations/problem solving.
- Hearing the different viewpoints from the generations.
- Being invited

**4. What did you like least? Why?**

- None
- It was all fine

- All interesting.
- Not all participants are familiar with Ramsey.
- I was hoping for more participants in the activity. Too many in the community complain about the changes within the city. Never show up and volunteer.
- Defining issue/problem to specificity and what can citizens do to solve or help with this?
- Lots of off topic conversations.

#### **5. What would you do differently and why?**

Wish we could have more volunteers at this meeting to gather additional ideas.

- Don't know what should be changed.
- Have other volunteer groups outside of Ramsey to hear their thoughts on their city and how to get more involved.
- Topic is a little broad.
- Keep the volunteers more focused on the topic at hand. Too many questions went off into other topics not related to the discussion.
- Nothing. Good conversation. Some group represented but could have had more groups represented.
- Keep focus on volunteering.
- Perhaps a Needs based.

#### **6. What should the City do to encourage more residents to volunteer?**

- Multi-media exposure to things going on and needs that are identified.
- Get involved in more media campaign. Facebook, Instagram, Mailer Campaign for older residents.
- Show opportunities or clubs on how to get involved.
- Have access to local opportunities for volunteering on websites or links to clubs.
- Make it easier to find volunteer opportunities in Ramsey that is all in one place like on the website or Facebook page. Somewhere where people can add their opportunities for volunteering.
- Bring in more volunteer groups around Ramsey to events.
- Kiosk, more social media.
- Other social media outlets: Twitter, Instagram.
- Website, Facebook, large public notice board at entrance to building.

#### **7. Any other comments or feedback? (Feel free to use the other side for additional comments).**

- It would have been nice to have city officials here.
- Maximize our history – we are going to love some of our major historians like Al Pearson.
- Gather the notes from the tables.
- Nice job of facilitating by the grad students.
- Great information for other groups.
- Thank you for doing this.