

**CITY OF SHOREVIEW
MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING
February 10, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Martin called a workshop meeting of the Shoreview City Council to order at 6:00 p.m. on February 10, 2014.

ROLL CALL

The following attended the meeting:

City Council: Mayor Martin; Councilmembers Johnson, Quigley, Wickstrom and Withhart

Staff: Terry Schwerm, City Manager
Kathleen Castle, City Planner
Mark Maloney, Public Works Director

White Bear Lake Jo Emerson, Mayor

St. Paul Area
Chamber of
Commerce Jonathan Weinhagen, Regional Director

Ramsey County Janet Guthrie, Senior Policy Analyst
Staff: Blake Huffman, Ramsey County Commissioner

SEH Dave McKenzie

PRESENTATION BY RAMSEY COUNTY - CULTIVATING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Presentation by Janet Guthrie, Senior Policy Analyst, County Manager's Office

Four key policy areas have been identified from the data collected:

- Fostering the best well being of people
- Intensity of land use
- How new partnerships with cities and businesses can drive change
- Building on the existing foundation

As part of the goals adopted by Ramsey County for the 2014/2015 budget development process, a new goal was added to cultivate economic prosperity and combat areas of financial poverty.

Local and national data have been studied to understand the foundation of economic prosperity and what concentrated poverty means.

It was learned that economic prosperity work means working in multi-jurisdictions. Work done in one jurisdiction impacts other jurisdictions and cannot be done in isolation. Secondly, economic prosperity work is multifaceted in that different strategies must be incorporated to address different issues. Creation of a policy framework that can be effectively applied to a variety of circumstances is required for success.

Wealth generation is defined with three assets: 1) people or human capital; 2) land or natural capital; and 3) capital investments. Wealth is an indicator of the particular strength of any jurisdiction. An analysis of wealth looks at assessing available assets--what factors generate or could generate long-term stability and growth and where more investment is needed. Limitations are identified--what aspects of wealth are outside county influence and whether there are limitations unique to Ramsey County not in the rest of the region.

Future economic growth requires an educated, trained and available workforce. Ramsey County population is approximately 500,000, the second most populous county in the region. The 2010 census shows approximately 175,000 from communities of color. Ramsey County is the most diverse county in the region. It is projected that in 2030 the entire region will be as diverse as Ramsey County is now. Ramsey County has the highest percentage of adults without a high school diploma. To not address disparities in education will exacerbate the issue. Students of color, whether from high or low income, have disparities in education.

Ramsey County has 5.5% of the land mass of the region, although it is the second most populous. The majority of state government is located in Ramsey County in the capitol city of St. Paul. Also, 33% of non-profit organizations are located in the County. It has the lowest percentage of undeveloped land and the highest percentage of institutional use that does not generate taxes. Land use in the County is disproportionately residential at almost 50%. For every dollar of revenue residential areas generate, the County spends between \$1.06 and \$1.15 in services. For every dollar of commercial use generated, there is \$.96 of service cost. The mix of residential and commercial is critical.

By looking at the current and future capital land base, capital growth potential can be measured. Ramsey County has the lowest proportion of undeveloped land use for future capital expansion. This means that the intensity of use matters more than in any other county within the region. If land productivity is going to increase, it means redevelopment. Ramsey County is one of the two major employment centers in the region. The big four concentrated employment centers in the region are Minneapolis, St. Paul, University of Minnesota and the airport. Concentrated poverty occurs when there is not access to jobs, transit options are not available to get to jobs.

The poverty threshold is defined by the federal government at approximately \$12,000 per household of one or \$18,000 for a family of three. Concentrated poverty means certain neighborhoods have a disproportionate amount of poverty. A high poverty area is an area with over 20% of its residents below the federal poverty line. Extreme poverty is an area with over 40% of residents below the federal poverty line. Ramsey County has 32% of all federally

subsidized housing in the region. There is an issue to address. This is a heavy concentration of subsidized units. Without concentrated investment in employment opportunity, financial poverty increases.

There are five neighborhood factors that are accepted as influencing economic prosperity: employment, education, housing, investment and capacity. One concern is how to address the balance of these factors. All have to be addressed, not just one. All influence the resiliency of the community.

Every decision on land use in Ramsey County is significant because there is so little undeveloped land to work with. There needs to be awareness of when decisions impact other jurisdictions. There is great potential because there are more jobs than workers. The challenge is to match educational skills with available jobs so that local residents take advantage of employment opportunities rather than importing workers from other areas.

Analysis of what the County is doing in light of this data and what are the levers of change that can make a difference.

Councilmember Withhart suggested additionally looking at poverty in terms of age, as there are many lower income retirees in Ramsey County.

Commissioner Huffman stated that diversity is growing in the suburb. It is no accident that the TCAAP Master Plan is 4000 jobs and 4000 residents. The Metropolitan Council is now discussing transit all the way to TCAAP.

Councilmember Withhart asked why residential is included in TCAAP when this information clearly shows a need for more jobs within the County. Commissioner Huffman agreed, but the County does not control the land use of the TCAAP property.

Mayor Martin stated that one reason to include residential is to help the schools.

City Manager Schwerm noted that the City's redevelopment efforts and helping businesses to expand within Shoreview tie in well with the County's goal.

Mayor Martin thanked Commissioner Huffman and Ms. Guthrie for the presentation, the excellent information and challenge to be aware of how land decisions can make many impacts.

DISCUSSION REGARDING TRANSIT IN RAMSEY COUNTY

Mayor Emerson, White Bear Lake, stated that cities and counties that have transit were very organized in making transit happen in their areas. As Ramsey County is the smallest and most developed, transit is critical to bring families in. In order to get transit, it is important that municipalities work together and support transit at any location within the County. Once there is one transit line, others can be built off that one.

Mr. Weinhagen added that major employers are urging a strong stand for transit. The Chamber has taken a position to support a 1/2 cent sales tax to that effort. Transit provides an advantage and is a competitive necessity. Younger people will grab a bus or train rather than a car. It is important to recruit top talent to suburban communities.

Mayor Martin asked how this relates to the big grant that was received. Mr. Weinhagen stated that Ramsey County, Washington County and the Chamber worked together to compete for a \$750,000 grant which was received. A Board of Governors has been established, and an Executive Director will be hired to provide oversight and guidance.

Councilmember Wickstrom asked if some of the money could be used for the Local Preferred Alternative Analysis, which provides the best studied routes as determined by local officials. It is important to have transit lines exist before development occurs. Commissioner Huffman agreed and stated that there would be a big draw to TCAAP if there was transit.

Mayor Martin stated that she would like to see the information from the Ramsey County presentation fed into transit plans.

Councilmember Quigley stated that it is important to have each city identify where bus or transit routes should be.

Councilmember Johnson stated that ride share, shared cars and non-traditional transportation are options that also need to be considered because transit will not happen soon.

Mayor Emerson stated that the main thing to do is for all cities to stand together and support transit wherever it can happen.

DRAFT RAIL QUIET ZONE STUDY

Mr. McKenzie, SEH, explained that in the early 2000s, regulations were formulated for quiet zones. Quiet zones are allowed as long as safety is not decreased. The rules consider the following as a risk index: 1) the number of trains per day; 2) the speed of the trains, 3) number of cars at a crossing, 4) warning device that exists at a crossing and its crash history. There have been no crashes in Shoreview in the last five years. There are four crossings in Shoreview. The crossings on Lexington and Victoria already have gates and meet the minimum standard for a warning device. In order to establish a quiet zone at the Lexington crossing, the median would have to be extended approximately 10 feet to the track with added signage. The estimated cost is \$5,000.

Victoria is a complex signal system. There is not a lot more that can be done after new signal improvements are completed in June. In regard to numbers, Victoria would not qualify to become a quiet zone. However, if it were combined with the Lexington crossing because of the medians, both crossings could become quiet zones. Combined as one zone, the two together would meet the risk index. All that would be needed is additional signage.

The North Owasso crossing has gates, but it does not have the right internal circuitry. The circuitry would have to be upgraded. The crossing at Jerrold only has the stop signs.

Councilmember Wickstrom asked if it is the railroad's responsibility for the upgrades. Mr. Maloney stated that what is at the North Owasso and Jerrold crossings is adequate for the railroad. Because the City wants to make those two areas quiet zones, any cost becomes the City's cost. Mr. Schwerm added that because of increased rail traffic, the railroad may upgrade those two crossings, but it is an unknown as to when that might happen. To establish a quiet zone now would mean the City paying for the needed upgrades.

Mayor Martin stated that to upgrade North Owasso would mean also addressing Jerrold. Mr. McKenzie agreed explained that North Owasso and Jerrold are only 1/4 mile apart and need to be kept together. The Jerrold crossing needs signals and gates. Because of the increase in traffic, the Jerrold site could be a candidate for federal funding that would pay 90% of the cost, but funds are limited and probably four years out from distribution.

Mayor Martin noted that the work on the Rice Street and I-694 bridge will also impact the North Owasso crossing, and that work is about four years out. It may be worthwhile to apply for federal funding for these crossings. Mr. Maloney stated that he anticipates that plans for the Rice Street bridge will mean approach work as far as the railroad crossing. The crossing is barely in Ramsey County jurisdiction and Owasso Boulevard is a City street. There may be a question of whether it is City responsibility.

Mayor Martin stated that with the bridge improvement there may be land left that could bring development.

Mr. McKenzie stated that with CP Rail changes in operations and they met with MN/DOT last spring to discuss all of the small crossings. Little Canada has huge issues that will cost in the millions to address. At that time, MN/DOT ruled that if traffic speed of trains increased to 25 mph, signals would have to be installed at Jerrold. CP Rail backed off from a speed increase. One decision the City has to make is whether to establish quiet zones only at night or for 24-hour time periods. The rules are the same for both. The night time frame is 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

Councilmember Quigley stated that he views the big issue as noise, but there is also blockage, fumes and safety. With no incidents in five years, safety is a minimal issue and it is difficult to justify fixing crossings.

Mayor Martin stated that Cardigan Junction has been addressed with CP Rail changing their operations to not change cars and blow horns every time cars are moved. The crossings at issue are Lexington, Victoria, North Owasso and Jerrold. Long before Cardigan was an issue, the City was hearing about noise issues at night.

Councilmember Withhart asked if the train speed limit would increase if North Owasso and Jerrold were upgraded. Mr. McKenzie stated that he would not anticipate an increase in speed. Mr. Schwerm stated that the best strategy might be to see what upgrades CP Rail will do to the St. Paul corridor before Shoreview applies for funding. The improvements to Lexington and

Victoria could occur quickly because the cost estimate is less than \$20,000. The City should then apply for the funding and in the four years it takes to receive funding, CP Rail may come in and make the improvements needed. However, if CP Rail cannot increase speed to get through Jerrold and North Owasso because of the curves and proximity to Little Canada, CP Rail may not choose to upgrade those two crossings on their own. Mr. McKenzie stated that CP is doing their own analysis and it will depend on their priorities for spending money. He believes there will be a traffic increase and Jerrold and North Owasso will ultimately be improved by CP Rail.

Councilmember Wickstrom stated that she supports the Lexington and Victoria upgrades, but would not want to signal to the railroad that the City may pay for upgrades to North Owasso and Jerrold by applying for funding. Mr. McKenzie noted that there is a time frame in that the County, railroad and Mn/DOT all have a 60-day comment period on any design for a quiet zone. Once the plan moves forward, construction can be done. Lexington and Victoria could be established as quiet zones by July or August.

Mr. Schwerm stated that he would prefer to see the City apply for funding now because if CP Rail does not make improvements to North Owasso and Jerrold in five years, the City would have to wait another four or five years to receive funding.

Councilmember Wickstrom stated that applying for funds should at least wait to see the outcome of the Little Canada study. It was the consensus of the Council to consider further application for funding after the Little Canada report is released.

Mr. McKenzie noted that Minnesota has included \$2 million in the bonding bill for old signal equipment that may be available. He offered to include an addendum to this report that would give an analysis of funding options.

Mr. McKenzie also mentioned Operation Lifesaver, which has educational safety videos for residents and schools. He noted further that the report includes railroad contact information. He recommended a group of cities and emergency response agencies to contact the railroad together.

Councilmember Quigley stated that he would prefer to see only a night quiet zone. Mr. Schwerm noted that engineers have the right to use horns if there is any traffic. Mayor Martin and Councilmember Wickstrom stated that they would prefer 24-hour quiet zone time frame.

It was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to proceed with the improvements needed for Lexington and Victoria to qualify as quiet zones.

OTHER ISSUES

Augmentation for Turtle Lake

Mayor Martin stated that the president of the lake homeowners association has called and wants to meet with the City to discuss moving forward with a feasibility study for augmenting the lake. A discussion with the association Board will be scheduled for the March workshop meeting regarding a feasibility study and funding.

Planning Commission Chair Appointment

At the request of the Planning Commission, the Council briefly discussed the process for appointing chair and vice chair and policy for attendance.

It was the consensus of the Council to request a letter of interest for Council consideration from Commissioners who would be interested in serving as Chair. Secondly, 80% attendance will be counted over a two-year period instead of one year. This new practice would go into effect in 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.