



**Working With You to Enhance Our Quality of Life.**

**Cultivating Economic Prosperity and Eliminating  
Concentrated Poverty**

Internal Actions to Enhance Prosperity:

- As a major service provider
- As a major procurer of goods and services
- As a major employer

# Foreword

This document signals Ramsey County's commitment to taking focused actions to cultivate economic prosperity and eliminate concentrated poverty within our community. It represents a defining turn toward action for an effort that first started over a year ago when the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners adopted a new goal and set in motion a focused effort around measurement, trend-projections and stakeholder discussions.

The eleven items outlined on the following pages are focused on Ramsey County's internal actions that the organization can take on its own to contribute to greater prosperity, but the work cannot end with this list if the ultimate vision of greater prosperity for all is to be realized. Future development of a similar list of collaborative efforts, involving a wide range of community institutions and stakeholders of which Ramsey County can be only one of many voices at the table, must accompany this document if we are to holistically address the economic prosperity and concentrated poverty challenges facing the community in the present and future. We will seek out business-led efforts, non-profit led efforts, community-led efforts and public-sector led efforts as a part of that collaborative development process. Our success will ultimately hinge on a shared vision of greater prosperity and a commitment to implementing a set of shared ideas--both big and small--that can deliver on that vision.

The following pages are admittedly process-oriented and focused on how a large organization can align and change its structures, processes and resources to "move the needle" to influence greater economic prosperity. This document is not written as an advertisement to simply generate excitement; it is focused on how we move from vision toward implementation. It is intended to serve as a roadmap that aligns various efforts and ideas under one strategic vision. Most importantly, it sets out to instill an organization-wide commitment to this work and recognizes that the long-term successes of our community and Ramsey County as an organization are linked together.

The work ahead is surely daunting, but also exhilarating as it is centered on the idea that Ramsey County is committed to aligning its resources as a service provider, procurer of goods and services, and employer to cultivate greater prosperity. We hope that individuals, neighborhoods and organizations join the conversation, hold each other accountable and define how we accurately measure our efforts. The creation of this document signals a big moment for the County, but if the community truly embraces this strategic vision and responds with collaborative action, this moment will be eclipsed by many greater ones yet to come.

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## As a Major Service Provider

**We will align our development tools to ensure that projects are connecting all residents and neighborhoods with the Region's growth and prosperity.**

### **Strengthen the Ties between Workforce, Infrastructure and Economic Development**

**Timeline:** Planning to begin during 2014 with steps to follow as appropriate thereafter

**Strategic Focus Area:** Our People Are Our Future, Eliminating Concentrated Poverty, Land Use Matters

**Key Organizational Leads:** County Manager's Office, Public Works, Regional Rail Authority, Workforce Solutions, Housing and Redevelopment Authority

#### **Why will this “move the needle” towards greater prosperity?**

Investment is one of the most significant ways in which Ramsey County can link residents to prosperity opportunities throughout the region. As a major investor in workforce, infrastructure and economic development activities, the County must maximize its resources by ensuring from the outset of a project: every transit decision is linked to workforce needs, every public works investment is linked to future transit plans, and every economic development grant has criteria that reflect the workforce and physical development priorities of the community. In order to achieve this integrated and aligned vision, the County must reshape how it looks and functions so that it may better serve its neighborhoods and residents.

#### **What will this effort entail?**

- The development of a plan to redesign the structure and processes of workforce, infrastructure and economic development departments within the County;
- A commitment from involved departments to a shared vision of integrated planning and decision-making that enhances outcomes for residents and neighborhoods; and
- Ongoing evaluation of how redesigned structure and processes create new regional opportunities in workforce, infrastructure and economic development.

## As a Major Service Provider

**We will ensure that our programs and interventions are focused on youth and their families learning, growing and succeeding within our community.**

### **Improve the Continuum of Services Available to Ramsey County's Youth and their Families**

**Timeline:** Staff person hired to coordinate the research, system design and implementation effort across departments during summer 2014; focused work will continue into 2015

**Strategic Focus Area:** Our People Are Our Future, Eliminating Concentrated Poverty

**Key Organizational Leads:** Community Corrections, Community Human Services, Workforce Solutions, County Attorney's Office, Public Health, County Manager's Office

#### **Why will this "move the needle" towards greater prosperity?**

Ramsey County services currently available for youth skew toward the ends of the programmatic spectrum (prevention or detention) with few program intervention options available in between those ends. Research and case studies from other communities demonstrate that community services that are available to youth and families result in better outcomes for youth (who are disproportionately youth of color). Youth and families within Ramsey County and the County's departments would therefore benefit from improvements to the current services continuum.

#### **What will this effort entail?**

- The hiring of a staff person by the County Manager's Office to coordinate the organization-wide research, system design and implementation efforts that will improve the services continuum;
- A commitment from all participating departments to improve the services continuum by making process and system changes that result from the initial work; and
- Development of a family-centric decision-making model that embraces the notion of choice in consultation with evidence-based information.

## As a Major Service Provider

**We will locate our buildings and service delivery locations in places that improve access and outcomes for residents and neighborhoods.**

### Develop and Execute a Strategic Facilities Implementation Plan

**Timeline:** Board review of the strategic facilities plan during spring 2014, creation of the implementation plan during rest of 2014 with implementation beginning in 2015

**Strategic Focus Area:** Our People Are Our Future, Land Use Matters

**Key Organizational Leads:** Property Management, Senior Management Team

#### Why will this “move the needle” towards greater prosperity?

The location of County facilities and the services provided at each facility location have a significant impact on the ease and ability of Ramsey County residents to access services. The soon-to-be-completed Strategic Facilities Plan will recognize that the County has opportunities to improve its service delivery to citizens and the internal efficiency of its operations through strategic decisions about future facility location. Implementing recommendations from that plan will ensure that Ramsey County’s physical presence in the community is as responsive to the needs of residents as possible.

#### What will this effort entail?

- Board review of the Strategic Facilities Plan during spring 2014;
- Subsequent development of a Strategic Facilities Implementation Plan that translates the strategy and principles of the initial work into actionable next steps for Ramsey County; and
- A commitment to the principle that County facility locations and related service delivery at those locations contributes to strong neighborhoods and positive experiences for residents.

## As a Major Service Provider

**We will empower our important collaborative partnerships to break through existing barriers and deliver meaningful results that benefit the community.**

### **Dedicate Planning and Strategic Staff Support to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council**

**Timeline:** Staff person hired to coordinate the work of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council during summer 2014

**Strategic Focus Area:** Our People Are Our Future, Eliminating Concentrated Poverty

**Key Organizational Leads:** Sheriff's Office, County Attorney's Office, Courts, Community Corrections, County Manager's Office

#### **Why will this “move the needle” towards greater prosperity?**

The Criminal Justice Coordinated Council (CJCC) was created in 2011 after being selected as one of seven sites from across the country to participate in the Evidence-Based Decision Making Initiative. Since then, the CJCC has analyzed and mapped the County's criminal justice system, but analytics and theory have yet to mature into major changes in practices. Providing focused staff support will ensure that the CJCC has the coordination and attention required to overcome remaining barriers so that it can begin to implement transformative, systemic improvements that will offer benefit Ramsey County residents.

#### **What will this effort entail?**

- The hiring of a staff person by the County Manager's Office that is dedicated to providing coordination, planning and analytical support to the CJCC;
- A commitment from all CJCC stakeholders to implement data-supported, status-quo altering strategies that improve the lives of residents, particularly for men of color who are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system; and
- An annual evaluation of completed work and planning of future work to ensure that the CJCC's efforts are transforming the criminal justice system as desired.

## As a Major Service Provider

**We will improve resident awareness of and access to workforce tools that result in increased employment opportunities throughout the Region.**

### **Expand Resident Use of Job Connect and Construction Hiring Connections when Seeking Employment**

**Timeline:** Implement plans to expand the reach of job seeking tools with direct service departments by the end of 2014

**Strategic Focus Area:** Our People Are Our Future, Eliminating Concentrated Poverty

**Key Organizational Leads:** Workforce Solutions, Community Human Services, Public Health, Property Records and Revenue, Senior Management Team

#### **Why will this “move the needle” towards greater prosperity?**

Ramsey County operates two of the best worker recruitment tools available within the MSP region—Job Connect and Construction Hiring Connections—for job-seeking residents to list their qualifications and present themselves as available for work opportunities to potential employers. Both tools remain unknown to and underutilized by many residents who live within Ramsey County and are actively seeking employment opportunities. Further use of both tools by residents will create opportunities for Ramsey County residents seeking employment (who are disproportionately people of color and women) to connect with hiring employers.

#### **What will this effort entail?**

- A commitment from direct service departments to develop strategies and implementation plans that educate all clients about the existence and availability of workforce tools;
- The concurrent development of a measurement effort to ensure that the new resident education and enrollment effort is achieving its intended result of greater employment; and
- A link between the effort to expand employer use of Job Connect and Construction Hiring Connections (page 11 of this document) and this effort to expand the number of Ramsey County residents making themselves available for employment opportunities.



## As a Major Service Provider

**We will consider how our decisions may impact residents and neighborhoods within concentrated areas of poverty from the outset.**

### **Develop a Culture that Continually Evaluates How County Decisions will Impact Concentrated Areas of Poverty within the Community**

**Timeline:** New strategies implemented during 2014

**Strategic Focus Area:** Eliminating Concentrated Poverty

**Key Organizational Leads:** County Manager's Office, Senior Management Team

#### **Why will this “move the needle” towards greater prosperity?**

Research and history demonstrate that organizations routinely recognize after a decision is made that it will have a disproportionate impact on concentrated areas of poverty. As the County in the MSP region with the highest proportion of racially concentrated areas of poverty, concentrated areas of poverty in general and the largest contiguous area of concentrated poverty, Ramsey County must enhance its culture of decision-making so that areas of concentrated poverty are always a primary consideration during all stages of the policy and program development process.

#### **What will this effort entail?**

- The development of tools, processes and/or strategies that the County Manager can apply during the biennial budget development process;
- A county-wide convening of departments to develop tools, processes and/or strategies that can be applied during day-to-day departmental decision-making; and
- A commitment to sharing the resulting tools, processes and/or strategies with the broader region as other organizations seek to improve their culture of decision-making.

## As a Major Procurer of Goods and Services

**We will actively support small businesses enterprise because it creates prosperity opportunities for residents and grows stronger neighborhoods.**

### **Enhance Small Business Enterprise Procurement by County Departments when Purchasing Goods and/or Services**

**Timeline:** Implement initial changes during 2014 with future refinements to follow

**Strategic Focus Area:** Our People Are Our Future, Eliminating Concentrated Poverty

**Key Organizational Leads:** Finance, Senior Management Team

#### **Why will this “move the needle” towards greater prosperity?**

For the first time in decades Ramsey County has baseline procurement data regarding its Small Business Enterprise (SBE) utilization rate. The organization’s new procurement office has now identified opportunities to expand that utilization rate, with a belief that expanded SBE utilization will directly benefit Ramsey County residents.

#### **What will this effort entail?**

- Implementing the thirteen recommendations presented by the Finance Department to the Board during the December 2013 and February 2014 procurement workshops;
- Additional refinement of SBE utilization measurement across Ramsey County’s capital and operating accounts so as to provide more useful trend data for future decision-making;
- Development of countywide performance measures that reflect County economic disparity goals and critical success indicators to eliminate disparities in access to and outcomes of County services for diverse populations; and
- A commitment to ongoing evaluation and refinement of the SBE utilization implementation efforts so that adjustments can be made, as necessary, to ensure that the program is directly benefiting Ramsey County residents in the way in which the organization intended.

## As a Major Procurer of Goods and Services

**We will grow the number of employers using our workforce tools to improve access to employment for residents.**

### **Expand Employer Use of Job Connect and Construction Hiring Connections when Seeking to Hire Employees**

**Timeline:** Implement new procurement guidelines for contracts by end of 2014

**Strategic Focus Area:** Our People Are Our Future, Eliminating Concentrated Poverty

**Key Organizational Leads:** Workforce Solutions, Finance, Senior Management Team

#### **Why will this “move the needle” towards greater prosperity?**

Ramsey County operates two of the best worker recruitment tools available within the MSP region—Job Connect and Construction Hiring Connections—for employers to easily identify and employ qualified individuals in search of work. Both tools remain underutilized by employers that operate within Ramsey County; the tools are actually more frequently used today by employers outside of the County. Further expansion and utilization of both tools by Ramsey County contractors will therefore boost local opportunities for Ramsey County individuals seeking employment (who are disproportionately people of color and women).

#### **What will this effort entail?**

- A commitment from departments to collaboratively design and enforce contracting provisions related to contractor utilization of Job Connect and/or Construction Hiring Connections;
- The concurrent development of a measurement effort to ensure that the new contracting provision is achieving its intended result; and
- A link between the effort to expand resident use of Job Connect and Construction Hiring Connections (page 8 of this document) and this effort to expand the number of Ramsey County employers using these tools to actively hire new employees.

## As a Major Employer

**We commit to always ensuring that equity is at the core of everything we do as an organization.**

### **Build on the Initial Successes and Momentum of Ramsey County's Race Equity Leadership Team**

**Timeline:** Expansion throughout a broader segment of the organization will continue throughout 2014 with additional expansion planned for 2015

**Strategic Focus Area:** Our People Are Our Future

**Key Organizational Leads:** Ramsey County Race Equity Leadership Team, County Manager's Senior Management Team, Human Services, Corrections, Libraries, Public Health, County Manager's Office, Human Resources

#### **Why will this "move the needle" towards greater prosperity?**

As an organization at the center of the MSP region, a region with the greatest racial disparities in the United States, Ramsey County must proactively take steps to ensure that its workforce is equipped to recognize and root out racism (whether overt or institutional). Equal access to opportunity should be an unquestioned right for all Ramsey County residents and the race of residents should never be a determinant of health, education, employment or home ownership outcomes.

#### **What will this effort entail?**

- Broaden the reach of training and discussion/action forums from the County Manager's Race Equity Leadership Team to the entire Senior Management Team during 2014;
- Deepen the departmental impact of race equity efforts by focusing on training leadership and staff within five departments in 2014; and
- Continue to broaden and deepen equity efforts that result in equal access to opportunity for all residents in already-started departments and by expanding into additional departments in 2015.

## As a Major Employer

**We will ensure that we are recognized by current employees and talented job seekers as the public sector employer of choice within the Region.**

<b>Conduct a Comprehensive Review of Human Resources Hiring, Promotion and Retention Practices and Policies within Ramsey County</b>
<b>Timeline:</b> Planning to begin during 2014 with follow-up steps to occur thereafter
<b>Strategic Focus Area:</b> Our People Are Our Future
<b>Key Organizational Leads:</b> Human Resources, Senior Management Team

### **Why will this “move the needle” towards greater prosperity?**

In order to address the complex and challenging issues facing the community, Ramsey County must be an organization that can attract, retain and promote employees who are best able to meet these challenges. To achieve that goal, Ramsey County, like many other organizations in the MSP region, must continue to transform itself so that it is viewed by a talented and diverse group of individuals as a welcoming place where he or she can contribute and thrive.

### **What will this effort entail?**

- A holistic review of the organization by an outside consultant that involves all departmental and human resources practices and policies related to hiring, retention and promotion;
- A critical assessment of the consultant's review and analysis by the County Manager's Senior Management Team;
- A follow-up implementation effort based on recommendations that will move forward from the review and analysis; and
- A commitment from initiative leaders to share lessons learned and results with public, private and non-profit stakeholders within the community that are interested in conducting similar reviews and employer-improvement efforts.

## As a Major Employer

**We will incorporate opportunities for aspiring leaders to enhance our thinking and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement**

### **Create the Ramsey County Undergraduate Internship Program for Students Who Grew Up within a Concentrated Area of Poverty**

**Timeline:** Program development during April 2014; first two interns join the program during summer 2014 with the possibility of expanding to a cohort of four during 2015.

**Strategic Focus Area:** Our People Are Our Future; Eliminating Concentrated Poverty

**Key Organizational Leads:** County Manager's Office, Senior Management Team

#### **Why will this “move the needle” towards greater prosperity?**

There is no substitution for County professionals learning from the experience of aspiring leaders who grew up within a concentrated area of poverty within Ramsey County, while also teaching those aspiring leaders about Ramsey County and its important role within their community. The Program would identify a small cohort of local undergraduates that are interested in public service and offer a three-year internship experience that grows with a student as they progress through their studies, with the belief that County staff and aspiring leaders both stand to benefit from a learned experience together.

#### **What will this effort entail?**

- A recruitment and development effort that targets and identifies aspiring leaders who grew up in a concentrated area of poverty within Ramsey County;
- A commitment from across the County's departments to identify placement opportunities with interesting projects for program interns and learn from the experiences and contributions from the program interns; and
- A commitment from Ramsey County's leaders to mentor program interns and actively support them in their professional development.