

## Joint Property Tax Advisory Committee

Saint Paul School District #625  
651-767-8152

City of Saint Paul  
651-266-8510

County of Ramsey  
651-266-8008

### MINUTES

Thursday, September 28, 2023

9-10:30 am

Courthouse 15 West Kellogg Blvd, MN

Room 220

#### 1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Chair Ryan O'Connor, County of Ramsey.

Members and staff present included: Amy Brendmoen, Chauntyl Allen, Jay Willms, Jennifer O'Rourke, Joe Gothard, John McCarthy, Madeline Mitchell, Mai Chong Xiong, Rebecca Noecker, Rena Moran, Tom Sager, Trista Martinson, Uriah Ward, Eric Peterson, Ryan O'Connor, Mitra Jalali, Halla Henderson, Stevenson Morgan, Jim Grathwol, Eric Peterson, Tracy West, Pat Chapman, Larry Timmerman. Noted absent- Victoria Reinhardt and Jim Vue

#### 2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes from the June 23, 2023 meeting

Chair O'Connor moved to approve the order of the main agenda. It was seconded by Councilmember Noecker. It passed by acclaim.

Chair O'Connor moved to approve the Minutes of the Joint Property Tax Advisory Council Meeting of June 23, 2023. It was seconded by Commissioner Martinson. It passed by acclaim.

#### 3. Joint Levy Presentation (County Assessor, Ramsey County, City of St. Paul, St. Paul Public Schools)

Presenters were Pat Chapman (Ramsey County Assessor), Tracy West (Ramsey County Auditor/Treasurer), Susan Earle (Ramsey County Budget Director) Madeline Mitchell (St. Paul Budget Manager) and Tom Sager (St. Paul School District Executive Chief of Financial Services)

#### 4. Adoption of Maximum Joint Levy

Councilmember Noecker moved to adopt the maximum joint levy. It was seconded by Commissioner Martinson. It passed by acclaim.

5. Review Taxation and Budget Models (County Auditor/Treasurer)

Presenters were Pat Chapman (Ramsey County Assessor), Tracy West (Ramsey County Auditor/Treasurer).

6. Discussion of agenda and future meeting dates

- a. January 22, 2024
- b. March 25, 2024
- c. June 24, 2024

In preparation for the January meeting, Chair O'Connor asked that the government relations staff to present their 2024 platforms with an eye on issues that have direct links and impacts to the property tax base.

7. Adjourn

Commissioner Martinson motioned to adjourn. It was seconded by Councilmember Brendmoen. It passed by acclaim.

The meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.



January 22, 2024

# Joint Property Tax Advisory Committee

Presentation & Discussion of State Legislative Platforms





# Ramsey County 2024 Legislative Priorities





# 2024 Capital Improvement Requests

1. Rice Creek Commons Infrastructure - \$25 million
  2. The Park at RiversEdge - \$20 million
  3. Aldrich Arena/Community Event Center - \$6.4 million
  4. St. Paul – Ramsey Co. Public Health - \$10.5 million
  5. Youth Detention Center - \$16 million
- Joint Ramsey-Washington County Anerobic Digester -  
\$30 million in general fund (cash)

## Issues with Property Tax Implications

- Homelessness Funding – Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care
- Tax Forfeiture changes responding to Tyler v. Hennepin County
- Expanding HRA Eligibility to allow for more flexibility with business supports
- County Program Aid Formula changes – Ramsey/Hennepin artificially capped
- On-going Funding for Youth Treatment Homes
- On-going Funding for Mental Health Treatment Rooms
- Tax base building with Rice Creek Commons, Park at RiversEdge



# **Saint Paul Public Schools District 2024 Platform**

January 22, 2024

# St. Paul Public Schools Pay 2024 Levy

- Pay 2024 Levy
  - \$204.6 Million
  - Increase of \$3.6 Million over Pay 2023
  - 1.79%
  - Property Tax = 20.0% of FY 24 Revenue



# Property Tax Implications of 2024 SPPS Legislative Agenda

- **SPPS' 2024 Legislative agenda has minimal and prospective property tax implications**
  - Unemployment Insurance Benefit Extension to non-licensed district staff (Education Assistants, Food Service, Transportation.)
    - State Financed with a one-time \$135M appropriation to a Special Revenue Fund.
      - 2023 cost statewide = \$42M
      - We estimate a need for additional revenue by 2026
    - Solutions include
      - Amend School District UI levy for this purpose
      - An equilized state levy for this purpose
      - A state appropriation to Special Revenue Fund for this purpose

# Property Tax Implications of 2024 SPPS Legislative Agenda cont.

- Operating Referendum; Debt Service Equalization; Equity Revenue
  - Our legislative agenda includes support for education formula's that provide state equalization aid to local levies
  - A supplemental budget recommendation may include small appropriations that could have a marginal local property tax impact
  - We do not anticipate significant K-12 Finance Formula Appropriations from the 2024 Legislative Session



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# 2024 Legislative Priorities

# 2024 Capital Improvement Requests

1. **Mississippi River Learning Center: \$22.638 million**
2. **Como Zoo - Cat Exhibit: \$25.659 million**
3. **River Balcony: \$24.902 million**
4. **Urban Tennis - Cemstone Site: \$5.876 million**
5. **Eastbound Kellogg RiverCentre Bridge: \$51.9 million**
6. **Randolph Avenue Bridge: \$11.6 million**



# 2024 Capital Improvement Requests

7. Regional Sports Facility: \$35.637 million

8. Phalen Lakeside Center: \$11.189 million

9. Battle Creek Park: \$2.894 million

10. Hayden Heights Library: \$4 million

11. Riverview Library: \$5.7 million



# Issues with Property Tax Impacts

- **LGA: Ensuring balance in the state-local fiscal relationship by maintaining the current Local Government Aid (LGA) formula as modified in 2023 and increasing funding for the LGA program. In addition, indexing the LGA formula for inflation**
- **Supporting the Fiscal Disparities Program: An important tool in providing common level of services among cities.**
- **Sales Tax Exemption: Simplifying the process for local governments to receive the sales tax exemption for purchases of construction materials**
- **Homelessness/Unsheltered Funding: Support funding from the state to effectively respond to the increase in unsheltered homelessness. This funding is in alignment with the recommendations of Heading Home Ramsey and the COC co-chaired by Commissioner Trista Martinson and Deputy Mayor Jaime Tincher**



# Issues with Property Tax Impacts

- **Copper Wire Theft:** Wire theft from streetlights and other public infrastructure negatively impacts our community by reducing public safety for all modes of transportation and mobility. Replacing and repairing damaged streetlights due to theft costs hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to the City of Saint Paul
- **Minnesota Conversion Tax Credit for Residential Transition:** Create temporary assistance to convert Minnesota's underutilized and vacant building stock to meet the needs of today's communities in post-Covid America
- **Cannabis:** Granting authority to cities to impose local taxes on cannabis, or consider changes to local government revenue sharing, so that the costs of compliance and enforcement to local governments are paid for by cannabis revenue



# Questions?

Contact:

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Intergovernmental Relations Associate

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# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2024 STATE PLATFORM



**VIEW ONLINE** [RAMSEYCOUNTY.US/LEGISLATIVEPLATFORMS](https://RAMSEYCOUNTY.US/LEGISLATIVEPLATFORMS)

# RAMSEY COUNTY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Residents First: Effective, Efficient and Accessible Operations

Advancing Racial and Health Equity and Shared Community Power

Putting Well-Being and Community at the Center  
of Justice System Transformation

Advancing a Holistic Approach to Strengthen Families

Responding to Climate Change and Increasing Community Resilience

Intergenerational Prosperity for Racial and Economic Inclusion

Aligning Talent Attraction, Retention and Promotion

LEARN MORE [ramseycounty.us/StrategicPriorities](https://ramseycounty.us/StrategicPriorities)



## LEGISLATIVE TOP PRIORITIES

### Family and community stabilization:

- Investing in housing stability—affordability and transitions out of homelessness.
- Addressing racial disparities in out-of-home displacements.
- Preventing and responding to youth violence through innovative community programming and investments.
- Funding an increase in County Program Aid for Ramsey County.

### Systems transformation:

- Improving mental and behavioral health systems and support.
- Reforming criminal justice approaches, centering community.

### Economic competitiveness and inclusion:

- Funding for Ramsey County bonding requests.
- Responding to climate change by prioritizing adaptation and resiliency.
- Investing in workforce supports for all residents.
- Funding transportation, including new revenues for transit, roads and bridges

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT REQUESTS

### Ramsey County bonding requests

1. Rice Creek Commons Infrastructure **\$25 million**
2. The Park at RiversEdge **\$20 million**
3. Aldrich Arena & Community Event Center **\$6.4 million**
4. Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health Facility **\$10.5 million**
5. Youth Detention Facility **\$16 million**

### SUPPORT FOR OTHER BONDING REQUESTS

Gibbs Farm-Pathways to Dakota & Pioneer Life, Ramsey County Historical Society **\$9.9 million**

# Advancing a holistic approach to strengthen families

## Increased health care access

- Support legislation to address racial disparities in health care access, quality and outcomes.
- Support legislation to increase Minnesota Eligibility Technology System funding to develop needed technological improvements that help county financial aid workers more efficiently and accurately determine public program eligibility, amidst increased demands for services and state-mandated data matching activities.
- Oppose legislation that would change or remove key Affordable Care Act provisions such as coverage for dependents up to age 26 and prohibiting the denial of coverage for preexisting conditions and the use of lifetime caps for coverage.

## Mental health

- Support legislation to develop additional community-based mental health placement options and services to shorten stays in state facilities and reduce costs after inpatient care is no longer necessary.
- Support legislation to address the comprehensive substance abuse, mental and behavioral health needs of the community, foster coordination among partners and ensure parity in services across populations.
- Support policy changes to provide clarity within the use of force protocol regarding transport holds for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Individuals who are in crisis due to mental illness where a transport hold is requested but not enforced are more likely to be arrested and funneled through the correctional system than given proper medical care.
- Support legislation to address student health needs, including increased reimbursement for school-based clinics as well as embedding social workers in schools to assess needs and support mental health. The social workers would also ensure families had information about and direct access to county services.
- Support legislation to resolve the gaps between the criminal court process and a person's access to mental health care when the court deems someone, an adult or a youth, incompetent to participate in their defense due to a mental illness. This includes increased capacity for Rule 20 evaluations, increased community-based supports and increased local hospital capacities to quickly readmit people who either resume drug abuse, discontinue prescription medication compliance or otherwise decompensate, so that they can obtain necessary care and avoid any further police interactions.
- Pursue adequate ongoing funding support for the Youth Mental Health Urgency Room created by the 2022 legislature.
- Support legislation to address acute, complex behavioral health placements and community services and clarify the state's safety net role in providing and funding these critical services.
- Support legislation and funding to support the families, especially children, of murder, suicide, or murder-suicide victims.

## **Community-centered criminal justice reforms**

- Support legislation that further reforms the investigation and prosecution of fatal shootings and wrongful actions by police, increases police accountability and transparency, raises standards of conduct and supports officer excellence, partners officers with the communities they serve, repairs and builds community trust, and enhances community-centered public safety.

## **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)**

- Support the ratification of the ERA to bolster pay equity, domestic violence laws and pregnancy discrimination protections, among other equity goals.

## **Public health support**

- Support funding resources directed to infectious disease response, including, but not limited to: building and maintaining our workforce, specifically for our 24/7 facilities, community education, engagement and outreach, case investigation and contact tracing, testing, delivery of essential services, and distribution of vaccines with specific focus on underserved communities, kids, youth and young adults.
- Pursue legislation to ensure adequate funding to support increased response expectations for local public health agencies to investigate elevated blood lead level result in children.
- Pursue \$10.5 million in state funding to support the renovation or construction of a new St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health and Wellness facility.

## **Racial equity in budgeting**

- Support legislation to develop a state-based racial equity budgeting tool that will help provide racial equity impacts for legislative budgeting decisions.

# Residents first: effective, efficient, and accessible operation

## Data Practices Act and privacy reforms

- Support maintaining flexibility in local governments' data retention schedules and reporting requirements to avoid overwhelming local technical capabilities.
- Support legislation that considers local costs and improved public access when considering updates to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and address the use of intentionally disruptive and expensive data requests that provide little or no public benefit.

## Human services program improvements

- Support legislation to ensure state compliance with federal background check requirements that endanger Title IV-E reimbursements to foster care providers.
- Support continuing program modifications that demonstrate administrative efficiency and support the modernization of human services programs and processes to improve outcomes and service delivery.
- Support a health care eligibility system that serves as a sustainable platform for performing health care functions and fully integrates with other technology systems.
- Support legislation to simplify and modernize the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), General Assistance and Minnesota Supplemental Aid reporting requirements in order to align budgeting methods with nationwide best practices, encourage earned income and employment, and create equity across the program.
- Support legislation to address workforce challenges and resource shortages in the home and community-based services and disability services system, including increasing wage minimums and other incentives, to expand the worker pool of personal care assistants, nurses, social workers and other support staff, and county employees to enroll residents in these necessary services.
- Support continued investment in new, modern technology infrastructure for counties to streamline health care, financial assistance and social service program administration, enhance data and program integrity, and promote efficient service delivery, with a focus on programs connected to MNBenefits applications.
- Support funding to add triage capabilities and improve responsiveness for technology systems tied to the MNBenefits application program.
- Support legislation to change the requirement to complete a full MNChoices assessment from annually to once every 2-3 years unless there is a change in condition.
- Support legislation to increase reimbursement rates for providing waiver case management services.

## Funding for libraries

- Support legislation to increase Regional Library Basic System Support funding for residents' access to diverse digital and database resources that reflect the needs of the community.
- Support library construction and remodeling grants to fund safety and renovations at libraries.
- Oppose reductions to Arts & Cultural Heritage Legacy funding for regional public library systems to support arts, arts education and arts access, and to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage.
- Pursue legislation to create a task force to review and suggest recommendations for a funding mechanism to support the statewide law library system.

## Funding for parks and trails

- Support legislation to ensure that the Ramsey County park system receives a fair share of revenues from Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment funding, Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources funding or other environmental stewardship grants.
- Support inclusion of \$15 million in state bonding for capital projects for Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails, which leverages Metropolitan Council dollars and benefits projects in Ramsey County.
- Support legislation to ensure that the Ramsey County park system and other local agencies in the metro regional park system receive the full 40 percent for operations and maintenance as mandated in state law. Currently the Legislature only funds it at 14 percent.

## County procurement changes for small business

- Pursue legislation that would authorize the county to expand the amount for bids to no greater than \$500,000. Currently, the county can solicit small businesses for bids no greater than \$250,000. This change will enable counties to increase its overall spending with small businesses, which includes businesses owned by women and people of color. Increasing county expenditures with small BIPOC-owned businesses is an important part of Ramsey County's overall strategy to reduce racial disparities.
- Support legislation that would authorize the county to use cooperative contracts resulting from competitive solicitations. This change to allow solicitations will enable Ramsey County to allow use of cooperative contracts for supplies, equipment, materials, labor services and construction regardless of the type of solicitation so long as there was a competitive solicitation process, align the use of cooperative contracts with the State and further Ramsey County involvement with the cooperative contract initiative lead by NACo.

## Digital inclusion

- Pursue and support state and federal efforts and funding for digital inclusion and equity to ensure all residents have access to affordable broadband choices, computing devices and training and internet safety skills. This includes, but is not limited to: increasing the federal standard for broadband speeds; increasing the availability of high-quality and competitive broadband choices for residents in single family homes, public housing, and apartment buildings and condominiums, particularly in urban digital desert census tracts; and supporting perpetual funding of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and other affordable, sustainable and subsidized device ownership programs and multilingual digital literacy navigation and skills training that ensure all residents can participate in the economy and digital life.

# Advancing a holistic approach to strengthen families

## Child protection reforms

- Support African American Family Preservation Act legislation encouraging county case management and support services to accommodate cultural differences, address challenges and build on strengths to remedy the disproportionate placements of children of color into foster care and other out-of-home displacements.
- Support Families First legislation allowing states and counties to use federal Title IV-E funds to focus child protection efforts on engaging families, building support networks and providing culturally informed services that help avoid compounding the trauma out-of-home displacements often cause while ensuring the funding and operational mechanisms are efficient and sustainable.
- Pursue legislation to create an exception or variance to the background check policy, enabling county staff to make an informed placement decision without relying on the state.
- Pursue legislation to allow autonomy to determine which applicants to Ramsey County's Children's Services Review Panel have been impacted by our system, represent the community we serve and should be selected to participate on the panel. Current law requires approval from the county board and DHS to accept new members.
- Support legislation requiring coordination between law enforcement and county child protection agencies to occur prior to a child being removed.
- Support legislation to increase required training for law enforcement officers on child protection and the use of emergency holds, particularly regarding the impact of child protection removals on children and families.
- Support child protection and foster care systems change and reform developed in partnership with community.

## Child care reforms

- Support child care licensing practice improvements to simplify rules and promote improved relations between providers and regulators.
- Support efforts to implement refinements to training, county liability insurance requirements and other requirements to foster best practices in all childcare settings.
- Support additional state investments in childcare infrastructure, wages and workforce needs.



## **Hunger relief**

- Support additional funding and policy changes to address hunger and food insecurity relief needs in Ramsey County for children and adults. As a result of systemic racism and other long-standing issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity continues to disproportionately affect our racially and ethnically diverse communities.
- Support state funding to allow community-based organizations to significantly expand food and crisis services for people in Ramsey County. This includes support for culturally connected and medically appropriate foods, as well as food rescue programs to divert food waste.
- Pursue legislation directing the Department of Human Services to seek a federal waiver to allow disabled, elderly, or unstably housed persons to use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase hot prepared meals.

## **Economic supports to families**

- Support legislation to provide cash payments or other economic supports, like the federal child tax credit expansion, to families in a way that will not make them ineligible for income, food or medical assistance, with the goal of removing barriers so families can self-stabilize.

## **Immigrant, refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking families**

- Support budget legislation and policies that ease navigation and access to essential wraparound services such as emergency and transitional shelter, medical assistance, emergency food, basic cash support, and legal assistance.
- Support legislation pursuing budgetary, programmatic, and legal resources that help new arrivals secure work authorization and enter the labor market to gain financial independence and exit out of the emergency shelter system.
- Support the acceleration of processing work authorization applications by USCIS for new arrivals, including those with temporary protection status (TPS), those granted humanitarian parole, and asylum applicants.
- Support legislation and policies that increase access to immigration legal resources aimed at keeping families and children together as they undergo immigration proceedings.

# Intergenerational prosperity for racial and economic inclusion

## **The Park at Riversedge**

- Pursue \$20 million in funding for the Park at RiversEdge. RiversEdge is an innovative public-private project revitalizing the historic riverfront and expanding public access to the Mississippi River. The funds are for acquisition, design, furnishing and construction of a land bridge extension of the public realm space called The Park at RiversEdge. This new nine-acre urban park space includes: expanded public access to the river from the downtown bluff to the shoreline, community gathering space for public events, and trails that connect to the river and to other downtown destinations and park trail systems.

## **Rice Creek Commons**

- Pursue \$25 million in funding for the Rice Creek Commons development project in Arden Hills on the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition (TCAAP) site. The project consists of building stormwater infrastructure and a public roadway (known as the Spine Road) that will connect County Road H and Highway 96 through the Rice Creek Commons development.

## **State-local fiscal partnership**

- Pursue changes to County Program Aid (CPA) for Ramsey County that artificially cap the formula and create inequities for taxpayers.
- Support efforts to maintain County Program Aid (CPA) with indexing funding and increasing the base appropriation after the COVID-19 economic recovery.
- Support an annual state omnibus bonding bill addresses the backlog of the state's growing public infrastructure needs and invests in important regional projects.
- Support additional state funds for elections implementation by local entities.
- Support changes to the county share formula for cannabis tax revenues to reflect the disparate impact cannabis prohibition has had on certain communities.
- Support a clarifying amendment to the 2023 Special Guerilla Unit's (SGU) Museum appropriation that would expand their leasing options for a building beyond the borders of Saint Paul, as specified in the enabling legislation.

## **Regional workforce investments**

- Support efforts to align local, regional and statewide investments for workforce development programs to ensure the unique needs of businesses are met while supporting job seekers with career pathways needed to obtain family sustaining wages and benefits.
- Support legislation to address existing economic, racial and gender disparities, especially among Black/ African American, American Indian and other racially/ethnically diverse communities, by coupling training and education with equity efforts in housing, transportation, child care and other stabilizing factors.
- Support legislation to dedicate sufficient, ongoing state funding to provide workforce programming targeted to those who are unemployed, under-employed or under-represented in the workforce as a means to reduce disparities and to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Pursue state investment in Ramsey County Driver's License Academy which is successfully supporting young adults obtain a critical job credential.
- Pursue state investment in Training Stipends as part of all workforce programs.
- Pursue state investment in Ramsey County to create more employment and training supports and opportunities for those who are justice impacted. Ideas include re-entry navigators in WFS.
- Pursue state investment in digital navigators and digital literacy training in Ramsey County to support job seekers.

## **Expanding HRA eligibility**

- Pursue statutory changes to Ramsey County's Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) that will allow for more flexible uses of resources for business, while continuing to prioritize housing fund investment. Statutory authority in Minn. Stat. 469.1082 and the use of special legislation allows the HRA to expand to include Economic Development Authority (EDA) powers, which is what Ramsey County would like to achieve with City partners.

*Continued on next page.*

## **Affordable and stable housing**

- Pursue funding and policy legislation in partnership with the Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care to fund homelessness work until the affordable housing investments come online. This funding will support operations and shelter capacity for single adults, families with children, day services and critical supportive services for individuals and families seeking shelter.
- Pursue clarifying language to the metro local housing sales tax statues that allow revenues to be used for county administrative purposes.
- Support budget and bonding legislation that increases public funds and brings attention to the preparation for homeowners and the production and preservation of affordable housing.
- Support legislation that advances policy and practice reforms that reduce barriers to affordable homeownership, such as reducing the cost of production.
- Support new state funding of more loan counseling for the refinancing of special loans, such as rehab/down payment assistance. Currently there is not enough organizational capacity for the amount of refinancing that is happening in the market.
- Support increased funding for affordable housing and housing programs focused on specific populations in need of additional assistance, including those experiencing mental illness, or other disabilities, individuals with criminal records, large families, families seeking reunification, veterans and those who are homeless.
- Support housing infrastructure bonds for buildings that are 50% Area Median Income (AMI) with at least 10% of units at 30% AMI in order to better leverage American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.
- Support legislation to create a dedicated fund for the development of affordable housing that enrolls private investors into the production of affordable housing to benefit local businesses, creates jobs and contributes to the overall growth of the economy.
- Support expanding the Housing Support Demonstration capacity to include all seven metro-area counties to increase access to Housing Support for traditional rental assistance and support services for people experiencing homelessness. Consider legislative changes that would allow distributing vouchers based off priority populations in order to maximize ARPA and Housing and Redevelopment Authority funding.

## **Property tax assistance**

- Support transitioning the special property tax refund to a property tax credit that is automatically calculated and issued to qualifying homeowners on their annual property tax statement, thereby reducing property tax regressivity and helping keep home ownership affordable. Currently, state statute requires homeowners to apply for the special property tax refund.

## **Interest rates on tax-forfeited property**

- Support legislation to allow flexible interest rates on contracts for deed for tax-forfeited properties to reduce barriers for low-income families interested in purchasing or repurchasing these properties and provide a low-barrier pathway to homeownership for those with more modest incomes.

## **Tax forfeiture**

- Support revisions to Minnesota's tax forfeiture laws that respond to the U.S. Supreme Court Case Tyler v. Hennepin County and honor the county values outlined under the AMC Tax Forfeiture Work Group. Any legislative solution should include state payment for the costs associated with forthcoming class action lawsuits as well as funding to assist counties with managing and cleaning up blighted properties.

## Transportation and transit funding

- Support statewide transportation funding that adequately invests in the long-term sustainability of local communities and addresses deferred basic maintenance, safety concerns, mounting congestion and missed economic growth opportunities for businesses and commuters. A comprehensive, balanced, and sustainable transportation solution should include robust funding for a multimodal transportation system including roads, bridges, sidewalks/trails and transit and address the varying needs in different parts of the state.
- Pursue a clarification to the 2023 \$1 million appropriation for the Rice Street Revitalization that specifies the funds are to be used for planning, design, environmental documentation, and right-of-way acquisition. The language as passed referred to reconstruction, and MN Management & Budget has asked for more specificity.
- Support legislation alongside Hennepin County to amend the Motor Vehicle Leased Sales Tax (MVLST) to include Ramsey and Hennepin counties as recipients so revenues can be spent in the metro-area counties where most funds are collected.
- Support investments in MnDOT's Local Bridge Replacement and Local Road Improvement Programs to fund the replacement, rehabilitation, or removal of deficient bridges on the local road systems and for the construction or reconstruction of local roads.
- Oppose attempts to shift transit costs to counties.
- Support federal and state funding for major transportation and transit projects in Ramsey County that are extremely complex in nature, involve multiple jurisdictions and communities, span many years for project development, and require funding from multiple sources to complete. Some of these include:
  - Highway 36/Century Avenue (Highway 120) interchange.
  - Purple Line (Rush Line) Bus Rapid Transit, Riverview Corridor Transitway, Rondo Community Land Bridge.
  - UP Railroad /BNSF Railway grade separation adjacent to Westminster Junction.
- Support for equity in funding of transportation development that helps to repair and acknowledge past wrongs with infrastructure investments.
- Support reform of the governance for Metropolitan Council with a focus on accountability, transparency, and cooperative partnership.
- Support a sales tax exemption on transit projects.
- Support a requirement that Metro Transit consult with locals when they ask for state or federal funds, so all parties are aware of project costs.
- Support legislation that requires mapping of private utilities, especially in public works projects.
- Pursue speed camera enforcement in conjunction with other interested metro area jurisdictions, in order to combat road fatalities. Camera enforcement research recently conducted by MnDOT shows it to be an effective tool in reducing fatalities.

# Putting well-being and community at the center of justice system transformation

## Response options for justice-involved youth

- Pursue ongoing funding for culturally appropriate, intensely therapeutic, community-based home placement options for youth involved in the justice system.
- Support funding for the creation of family support groups, community-based sites for conflict or crisis de-escalation, and other resources to support youth and families through all stages of the justice process and to prevent incarceration or further systems involvement.
- Support legislation to align licensing requirements for service providers across state agencies to reduce barriers, along with additional investments for providers to sustain and improve programs that can fully support youth and their families.
- Pursue \$16 million in state funding to support the development of a new Youth Detention Facility.

## Community supervision funding

- Support full funding for the community supervision formula and further refinement of the policy language enacted in 2023.

## Extension of post-conviction relief

- Support legislation to extend the current two-year post-conviction relief time limit for immigrants who face deportation proceedings or are otherwise unable to apply for immigration benefits due to improper, defective or outdated misdemeanor convictions.

## Gun safety

- Support legislation that reduces gun violence through a community-centered approach to violence prevention, including funding for focused deterrence, non-fatal shooting investigations, and funding for the development of new response types and enhancements to dispatch countywide resources.

## Uniform collateral consequences of conviction act

- Support legislation that gives those who have become permanently or temporarily ineligible for employment, housing or some licenses a means to apply for a restoration of their rights and notifies individuals when they are criminally charged, and again when they are sentenced and released, about the sanctions that apply to them.

## Fines and fees

- Support legislation to increase flexibility to waive fines and fees charged in the criminal justice system.
- Pursue legislation to eliminate the removal of a driver's license as a penalty for past due medical payments or allow counties the authority to waive the debt owed to them. Low-income workers whose drivers' licenses are suspended can lose their jobs, leaving them unable to earn the income necessary to pay their court debt or meet other basic expenses such as groceries and rent.

## **Cash bail reform**

- Support legislation to eliminate the harm to community caused by the cash bail system by allowing the use of a risk assessment tool to release individuals back into the community if they are determined not to be a risk to society.

## **Expungements**

- Support legislation to centralize and automate the process of sealing criminal records for low-level felonies and lesser crimes after the waiting periods in the expungement statute. Criminal records and the collateral consequences that follow long after people have fulfilled their obligations to the justice system serve as barriers to jobs, housing, education and more, preventing people from serving as productive members of our community.

## **Domestic violence prevention**

- Support funding to fully address the shelter and other needs of domestic violence victims.
- Support funding for programs targeted at reducing domestic violence rates in our community.

## **Court system funding**

- Pursue state funding to support the four specialty treatment courts run by the Second Judicial District. These courts provide alternative adjudication of certain DWIs, mental health related criminal cases, cases involving veterans, and cases involving substance abuse.
- Pursue legislation to ensure reimbursement for county costs to provide state-mandated defense attorneys for Child in Need of Protection Services (CHIPS), civil commitment, and public housing eviction cases.

## **Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) funding**

- Support sustainable, ongoing funding to update and maintain the ARMER Radio System that services public safety and public service radio users statewide.

## **Health and mental health care for incarcerated individuals**

- Support legislation directing the Department of Human Services to submit a Section 1115 Medicaid Demonstration Waiver application to:
  - Allow incarcerated individuals to access to proper health care in jails
  - Update Medicaid's prohibition on paying for mental health treatment delivered in institutions for mental disease; and
  - Allow incarcerated individuals to submit an application for SNAP and other benefits prior to their date of release.

# Responding to climate change and increasing community resilience

## Equitable climate change mitigation and resilience

- Support legislation that addresses climate change, protects and enhances natural environments, addresses the need to expand adaptation and resilience efforts, responds to the potential impact of severe weather events, and promotes sustainability in county operations.
- Support legislation that focuses on increasing use of local energy to create jobs and diversify the local economy
- Support legislation and funding that addresses reforestation needs for local governments impacted by the Emerald Ash Borer.

## Waste and energy efforts

- Support legislation to encourage the development and use of new technologies to address organic waste and create renewable energy resources, including by streamlining and adopting modern permitting requirements to implement new technologies.
- Support the legislative efforts of the Partnership on Waste and Energy and the Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board.
- Pursue, in collaboration with Washington County, \$30 million in funding to support the creation of a new anaerobic digestion facility for the east metro.

# Aligning talent attraction, retention & promotion

## Employee supports

- Pursue legislation to make any necessary changes to Ramsey County statutes in order to implement initiatives that advance our primary goal of attracting, retaining and promoting talented employees across races, classes, cultures, genders, ages and abilities.
- Support legislation that allows county assessors to use more virtual and online tools in their appraisal work.



## RAMSEY COUNTY **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**



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## RAMSEY COUNTY **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**



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## RAMSEY COUNTY **SUPPORT OF OTHER POSITIONS**

In addition to the initiatives contained in this platform, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners generally supports the legislative recommendations of the local units of government within the county and organizations in which it holds membership, including, but not limited to:

- Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and its associated professional organizations, including:
  - Local Public Health Association of Minnesota (LPHA).
  - Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA).
  - Minnesota Association of County Officers (MACO).
  - Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties (MCCAC).
  - Minnesota County IT Leadership Association (MCITLA).
  - Solid Waste Administrators Association (SWAA).
  - Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers (MACVSO)
- Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers (AMEM).
- Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA).
- Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD).
- Minnesota County Engineers Association (MCEA).
- Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB).

The county board may choose to take a different position on individual items within the platforms of these and other organizations whose platforms they generally support. The county board may also consider additional positions in response to issues that emerge during the legislative session.



# LEGISLATIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These legislative guiding principles provide a foundation for the specific initiatives and support items that are included in the 2024 State Legislative Platform. In a field as dynamic as the legislative session, these basic tenets inform Ramsey County's response to legislative proposals as they are introduced and move through the process.

## RESIDENTS-FIRST FOCUS

- Prioritize support for legislative proposals that clearly improve how government works with and serves Ramsey County residents.
- Evaluate the impact of legislative proposals on residents and provide opportunities for affected communities to publicly discuss and influence legislation.

## RESPONSIBLE, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

- Communicate openly with the public and operate transparently.
- Observe good data practices to protect individual privacy and provide access to public data.
- Equalize access to government resources, opportunities and services across all communities.
- Respond proactively to address the needs of vulnerable children and adults and at-risk families who are experiencing instability and difficulty in meeting basic needs.
- Tend to ongoing maintenance and planning for future infrastructure needs.
- Advance information/data technology and ongoing updates that support program integrity and efficient service delivery.
- Increase citizen access to the polls and voter participation.
- Engage in good stewardship of natural resources.
- Encourage inter-governmental collaboration built on the goals of improving performance, increasing efficiencies and building trust across programs, government agencies and communities.
- Support local authority to define local priorities.

## STABLE, SUFFICIENT, FLEXIBLE FUNDING

- Allocate sufficient state funding to counties to carry out state mandates.
- Distribute funding equitably, based on fair and practical distribution formulas.
- Acknowledge county costs for existing or new state mandates.
- Support county innovations in the delivery of mandated service when efficiencies can be gained.
- Respect local government control of their resources and budgetary processes.
- Expend funds for the purposes for which they are collected or allocated.

## PRACTICE-BASED POLICY

- Invest in practice-based policies that include ongoing assessment and adjustments to improve effectiveness of services and to save tax dollars.
- Emphasize prevention and early intervention.
- Promote stable families, safe neighborhoods, public safety, health and wellness by engaging individual and community strength.
- Foster economic development, broad access to education and training, and growth of living-wage jobs.
- Pursue policy that is not impinged by excessive, unnecessary regulation.

## Vision

A vibrant community where all are valued and thrive.

## Mission

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

## Goals



WELL-BEING

### **Strengthen individual, family and community health, safety and well-being**

through effective safety-net services, innovative programming, prevention and early intervention, and environmental stewardship.



PROSPERITY

### **Cultivate economic prosperity and invest in neighborhoods with concentrated financial poverty**

through proactive leadership and inclusive initiatives that engage all communities in decisions about our future.



OPPORTUNITY

### **Enhance access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses**

through connections to education, employment and economic development throughout our region.



ACCOUNTABILITY

### **Model fiscal accountability, transparency and strategic investments**

through professional operations and financial management.

Information about how the county is pursuing its mission and goals is available in the county's strategic plan at [ramseycounty.us/StrategicPlan](https://ramseycounty.us/StrategicPlan)

Information about performance measures related to the county's mission and goals is available in the county's Open Data Portal at [opendata.ramseycounty.us](https://opendata.ramseycounty.us)



**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS** 250 Courthouse, 15 West Kellogg Blvd, Saint Paul, MN 55102

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## **2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA – DRAFT**

### **BOTTOMLINE:**

- These recommendations for an SPPS 2024 Legislative Agenda include policy corrections, new policy provisions and minor education finance formula adjustments with a small fiscal footprint.

The balance of this document reviews:

- 1 Legislative agenda items from the 2023 Agenda which were not enacted.
2. “Clean” up provisions relating to 2023 Legislative enactments.
3. New Policy Provisions annotated to indicate alignment with AMSD
4. New Finance Provisions

### **Residual 2023 Agenda Items**

- These are fiscal items more appropriate for a budget year not a bonding year, but could be revisited if there is a significant surplus projected in the MMB Budget Forecast.
  - Link Extended Time Revenue to Gen. Ed. Revenue
  - Link All Categorical Funding to Gen. Ed. Revenue
  - Reduce SPED Tuition Billing for students open enrolled into other districts and charters
  - Address Unreimbursed Fees charged by Intermediate School districts

### **2023 Clean Up of Policy Funding passed in 2023**

- Clarify privacy implications of student directory language
- Make permanent appropriations to the Unemployment Insurance Special Revenue Fund (AMSD)
- Compensatory Revenue 2-year Hold Harmless - Make permanent while researching a new poverty metric for the formula. (AMSD)
- Clarify READ act timelines and eligible curriculum reimbursement process (AMSD)
- Clarify the language on appropriate use of Physical Restraints in schools (AMSD)
- Continue to monitor DHS’/MDE’s implementation of Medicaid Billing for School-based services law,