



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

May 4, 2026 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

AGENDA

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. New Business

3.1. 2026-97 Ramsey County EDA Participation (10 Minutes)
Sponsors: Ruth Tucker, Economic Development Specialist

3.2. 2026-98 Concept Plan for 3610 131st Avenue NE (30 Minutes)
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, Community Development Director, Jerome Krieger, Park and Recreation Director

3.3. 2026-99 Municipal Cannabis Partnership Update (30 Minutes)
Sponsors: Ruth Tucker, Economic Development Specialist

3.4. 2026-100 Charitable Gambling - Premise Permits (10 Minutes)
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

3.5. 2026-101 Council Requested Items for Discussion (10 Minutes)
Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, City Manager

4. Other Business

5. Adjournment



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2026-97

Agenda Date	Status
May 4, 2026	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Ruth Tucker, Economic Development Specialist

Agenda Item # 3.1

Ramsey County EDA Participation (10 Minutes)

Background

During the 2025 legislative session, Ramsey County received authorization from the State of Minnesota to establish an Economic Development Authority (EDA). On December 2, 2025, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners took the initial step to formally create the EDA. This action allows the County to expand the use of its existing Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) levy to include business and economic development programming.

A key component of the enabling legislation is that the EDA **does not have independent taxing authority**. No new taxes will be imposed as a result of this change. Instead, the EDA is funded solely through the existing Ramsey County HRA levy, which is already at its statutory maximum. The legislation simply broadens the eligible uses of those existing funds to include small business support and economic development activities.

Historically, the HRA levy has been primarily utilized for housing and redevelopment-related programs, including affordable housing investments, redevelopment initiatives, and related planning efforts. As a result, communities that do not have significant residential or mixed-use development opportunities have seen limited direct benefit from these funds.

This has been the case for the City of Blaine. The portion of Blaine located within Ramsey County is guided and zoned exclusively for industrial uses. Because HRA-funded programs are largely focused on housing and mixed-use redevelopment, Blaine has not been a significant direct beneficiary of HRA investments to date, despite Ramsey County taxpayers within the city contributing to the levy.

The creation of the EDA is intended to address this gap by allowing a portion of HRA funds—anticipated to be approximately \$1.5 to \$2 million annually—to be directed toward business-focused programming. Proposed areas of investment include:

- Expanding technical assistance and advisory services for businesses
- Supporting and building the capacity of business support organizations
- Developing cohort-based leadership and growth programs
- Enhancing data collection, research, and reporting capabilities
- Providing direct support to businesses and projects that drive economic growth

These efforts would build upon, not replace, existing programs such as Open to Business, CEO Next, CEO Now, and RamseyCountyMeansBusiness.com.

In order to participate in these expanded programming opportunities, cities within Ramsey County must formally “opt in” to the EDA. Opting in requires adoption of a City Council resolution by June 1, 2026. Cities that opt in will be included in the EDA’s area of operation and will be eligible for both existing HRA programs and the new business-focused programming. Cities that do not opt in will continue to have access only to the current housing and redevelopment programming.

For Blaine, opting into the Ramsey County EDA would provide a mechanism for businesses located within the Ramsey County portion of the city to receive more direct benefit from the taxes they already pay into the HRA levy. This represents a shift toward a more balanced return on investment for those properties, particularly given the area’s industrial land use and limited eligibility under traditional HRA programs.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council direct staff to prepare and present a resolution to opt into the Ramsey County Economic Development Authority (EDA) for consideration and action prior to the June 1, 2026 deadline, enabling Blaine businesses located within Ramsey County to access expanded business support programming.

Questions for Council

Would the City like to opt into the Ramsey County EDA?

Attachment List

1. Ramsey County EDA Implementation Next Steps MEMO - FINAL
2. RC EDA - FAQ v2025-03-14

DATE: March 6, 2026

TO: Ramsey County City Administrators and Community Development Directors

FROM: Josh Olson, Director, Community & Economic Development Department

CC: Ling Becker, County Manager

Kari Collins, Deputy County Manager, Economic Growth & Community Investment

RE: Ramsey County EDA Implementation Next Steps

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Ramsey County's housing and redevelopment programming. I look forward to the continued partnership in ensuring all in Ramsey County are valued and thrive.

I am reaching out to provide you with information regarding the next steps to enhancing programming for entrepreneurs and small businesses as result of last year's approved 'EDA Bill.' On December 2nd, 2025, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners took an initial step to formally create the Ramsey County Economic Development Authority. This was a required first step, prior to the beginning of this year's legislative session, but it is the first of many steps required to allow enhanced business programming to be funded through the Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority levy.

While the legislation allowed for the creation of the Ramsey County Economic Development Authority (EDA), it outlined two important conditions:

1. **The EDA will have no taxing authority.** This was intentional as the EDA will only receive and spend funding from the existing Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) levy. Expansion of the HRA to include EDA powers, as described by state statute, allows the county to utilize a portion of HRA levy funding for purposes of small business support and enhanced business programming.
2. **Each City is required to 'Opt In' to this enhanced business programming.**

'Opt-In' Process

The process for a City to Opt-in requires a city resolution by June 1, 2026. Receipt of approved resolutions from cities will create a map that shows the EDA's Area of Operation. Ramsey County would then establish the EDA Area of Operation on or by June 15th, 2026. Enhanced business programming will begin January 1, 2027. A draft resolution for city council approval is provided below.

Tentative Programming

Tentative plans continue to plan for an allocation of \$1.5 - \$2 million yearly from the existing Housing and Redevelopment Authority levy towards business focused programming. Programming and total budget allocation have not yet been formalized as the County awaits

250 Courthouse
15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
(651) 266-8010
RamseyCountyMN.gov

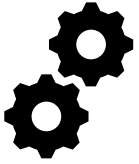
final decisions from cities regarding their intent to opt-in. While the approved EDA's Area of Operation is a critical consideration to determining the scale and scope of final programming, we have identified five core focus areas for enhanced business support and growth programming. These areas include (further details below):

- Improve the capacity of Business Support Organizations
- Expand technical assistance service offerings to businesses
- Create new cohort-based learning opportunities
- Establish data gathering, research & reporting capabilities
- Provide direct support to projects and businesses that deliver business growth

Please note: The County's existing portfolio of business programming (Open to Business, CEO Next, CEO Now, and RamseyCountyMeansBusiness.com) remains unchanged for this year.

Please reach out if you would like to further discuss this process and/or tentative programming, including any additional questions. Lastly, while it is not expected, if you are able to communicate your council's intentions ahead of the June 1st deadline that would be appreciated.

Proposed Core Programmatic Areas for Enhanced Business Programming



Improve the Capacity of Business Support Organizations

Business Support Organizations (BCOs) are important lifelines to entrepreneurs and small businesses. In many instances BCOs are a first stop of businesses looking to get a business started, navigate regulatory and technical hurdles, and seek financing. As the County, we saw first-hand during recent crises and business interruptions that our BCOs require resources to effectively and proactively respond. The ongoing ***Business Reimagination Center*** initiative is piloting efforts in 2026 that support capacity of BCOs. This piloted effort will inform future programming.

High Level Budget Estimate: \$250,000



Expand Technical Assistance Service Offerings to Businesses

Small businesses often seek a myriad of technical assistance services in order for them to grow and prosper. The County currently invests in the Open to Business program that offers no cost direct technical assistance and other forms of support to small business owners and entrepreneurs. Enhanced technical services support general business challenges like accounting, marketing, digital literacy and/or could support business sectors. The ongoing ***Business Reimagination Center*** initiative is also piloting new and enhanced technical services that will inform future programming.

High Level Budget Estimate: \$250,000



Create New Cohort-Based Learning Opportunities

Cohort-based learning programs like CEO Next and CEO Now allow business leaders to learn with and alongside their peers. CEO Next and CEO Now are a regional partnership with Hennepin County. Hennepin County currently operates these programs. Ramsey County is exploring possibilities for Ramsey County only cohorts as well as cohorts serving business at different growth stages.

High Level Budget Estimate: \$250,000



Establish Data Gathering, Research & Reporting Capabilities

Data is everywhere, and it is increasingly playing a role in business growth and innovation. Decision making driven by robust data can create transformational impacts in assisting businesses in their growth, as well as support more robust and coordinated business retention, expansion and attraction efforts by the county and cities.

High Level Budget Estimate: \$250,000



Provide Direct Support to Projects and Businesses That Deliver Business Growth

Accelerate business growth by providing direct, targeted support to projects and businesses with strong economic potential through mechanisms such as grants, low-interest loans, etc.

High Level Budget Estimate: \$1,000,000

--VERSION 3/14/2025--

**Statutory Change Expanding Use of Ramsey County
Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA)
[SF 2521 \(Hawj\)](#) [HF 2349 \(Lee\)](#)**

Small businesses are the backbone of Ramsey County. It's critical to our region that we continue to invest in our business community in the wake of the pandemic. Ramsey County seeks to amend the HRA statutory language to expand authority to better support diversifying industries, communities, and emerging entrepreneurs as best as possible.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is Ramsey County not just revising its Housing and Redevelopment Authority to include business programming as an allowable use? Why is establishment of an economic development authority included in this legislation?

A: Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority is established under state statute. The state statute is narrowly worded to the support and funding of affordable housing and redevelopment projects and programs. Small business programming is defined as allowable uses with economic development authorities. Ramsey County does not currently have an economic development authority. Based on legal guidance, the proposed legislation expands the powers of the Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority through the establishment of an economic development authority.

Will this legislative change result in a new property tax to Ramsey County property owners?

A: No. This legislative change has no change on property taxes. This legislative change simply expands the list of eligible activities in which Ramsey County's Housing and Redevelopment Authority levy is used. The text change would additionally add programming for entrepreneurs and small businesses as an eligible use for the Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority levy.

What is the county seeking from Ramsey County cities? If the legislation is successful, what is required from Ramsey County cities?

A: The County does not require approval from Ramsey County cities for this proposed legislation. The County does however seek support from our cities for this legislation.

If the legislation is successful, cities within the existing Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority area of operation will have the choice whether to:

- Opt-in: A city that chooses to opt-in will receive the greatest flexibility of eligible programming. In addition to the current portfolio of affordable housing and redevelopment programming, business programming will be provided. City Councils will be asked to pass resolutions 'opting-in' by June 2025. With the first year of HRA levy funded business programming occurring in 2026.
- Opt-out: A city that chooses to opt-out will continue to receive the current portfolio of affordable housing and redevelopment programming.

The City of North Saint Paul is not to be a part of the Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority Area of Operation. There is no change to North Saint Paul as a result of this legislation.

Ramsey County Housing & Redevelopment Authority

What is the current levy of the Ramsey County Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA)?

A: The 2024 HRA Levy is \$12,595,222. HRA Levy spending maintains a directed parity of 50% of the levy spent within suburban Ramsey County and 50% within the city of Saint Paul.

How is the Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority levy currently used?

A: The Ramsey County HRA levy is in its third year of operation. Over the last two years, the general breakdown of HRA levy usage was (Avg. of 2022 & 2023):

Housing Programing	Redevelopment Programs	Administration
73%	17%	10%

Current suite of HRA levy programming

Housing Programs	Redevelopment Programs
Affordable Housing infrastructure Investments	Critical Corridors – Development + Infrastructure;
FirstHome Down payment assistance	Critical Corridors Suburban Commercial Corridor Initiative <i>*Suburbs only*</i>
Emerging & Diverse Developers Program	Critical Corridors Planning
	Site Assessment Grants

► **HRA 2024 Annual Report – Highlights** (3rd year of operation)

Final Report is currently in production with a final version published in Q1 2025. General highlights to include:

- Affordable Housing Investments. \$6.5M of HRA levy obligated to affordable housing projects in 2024.
- Emerging & Diverse Developers (EDD). Over 30 developers received technical assistance in 2024. County invested \$2.4 million (HRA Levy only) into projects led by EDD.
- FirstHome Down Payment Assistance. 46 closings in 2024.
- Critical Corridors. Assisted 9 qualifying applicants/projects with \$1.76 million in Housing & Redevelopment Authority levy funding for place-based investments in three core areas: pre-development planning, commercial corridor initiatives (suburban only) and development and infrastructure
- Site Assessment Grants. Supported 16 projects with site investigation in 2024.

► **HRA 2023 Annual Report – Highlights** (2nd year of operation)

- Affordable Housing Investments. \$6.15M of HRA levy obligated to affordable housing projects in 2023. Across all funding streams, County invested in the construction of 1,365 new and 767 preserved rental housing units in 2023. Of the total, 988 were classified as deeply affordable for residents earning at or below 30% Area Median Income.
- FirstHome Down Payment Assistance. Of the 27 closings, 25 were first-generation homebuyers.
- Emerging & Diverse Developers (EDD). EDD is a two-part program initiated in second half of 2023.

- Part A provides technical assistance and cohort group learning to strengthen the pipeline of local emerging and diverse developers in real estate. 48 developers received technical assistance in 2023.
- Part B is a solicitation for projects led by EDD. County invested \$3.1 million (across all funding) into projects led by EDD.
- Critical Corridors. Assisted 10 qualifying applicants/projects with \$2.1 million in Housing & Redevelopment Authority levy funding for place-based investments in three core areas: pre-development planning, commercial corridor initiatives (suburban only) and development and infrastructure
- Site Assessment Grants. Program initiated in late 2023. Supported one project in 2023.

► **HRA 2022 Annual Report – Highlights** (1st year of operation)

- Affordable Housing Investments. \$7.2M of HRA levy obligated to affordable housing projects in 2022. Across all funding streams, Ramsey County leveraged multiple funding sources in 2022 to bring dozens of affordable housing projects closer to realization and invested in the construction of 1,128 new rental housing units and preserved 1,029. Of the total, 571 are classified as deeply affordable for residents earning at or below 30% Area Median Income.
- FirstHome Down Payment Assistance. In Fall 2022, County relaunched its down payment assistance program to better align with market realities and offer first-time and first-generation homebuyers with down payment assistance. \$187,500 in down payment assistance loans disbursed in 2022.
- Critical Corridors. Established in the Fall 2022, 14 grants in its first round of solicitations, totaling roughly \$2.3 million in three core areas: pre-development planning, development and infrastructure, and commercial corridor initiatives.

Will this change result in Ramsey County shifting its focus from supporting the preservation and expansion of deeply affordable housing?

A: No. Ramsey County remains focused on the improving affordable housing infrastructure throughout the county. The MN Legislature made unprecedented investments in housing and housing infrastructure as part of the 2023 Legislative session. The Local Affordable Housing Aid (LAHA) or housing sales tax is estimated to bring resources comparable to that of the HRA levy. This additional funding for affordable housing allows for a slight adjustment of funding priorities of the HRA levy without deviating from the County’s primary focus on expanding and improving affordable housing infrastructure.

Who decides on funding priorities on HRA Levy?

A: Ramsey County HRA Board is responsible for establishing funding priorities and make final decisions regarding spending of HRA levy. While the County HRA outlines its priorities, it relies on city partners as well as community organizations and developers to ready important projects. Prior to the county’s funding in a project, projects are required obtain a municipal resolution in support in accordance with state statute.

EDA and business programming

What type of business activities does the County intend to do with this legislative change?

A: The County is responding to community requests for enhanced business programming. The small business support (EDA eligible activities) realized by this legislative flexibility would be a strong reelection of those local requests and would initially start at \$1.5 - \$2 million of our yearly HRA levy to ensure the bulk of resources are remain available and prioritized for housing programs and projects. Funding will continue to align with HRA levy spending directives where 50% of HRA levy spending occurs in suburban Ramsey County and 50% with the City

of Saint Paul. Areas of need identified to strengthen the small business ecosystem are informed by the County's involvement and engagement with cities, business support organizations and small businesses that include:

- ▶ Capacity building of small business support organizations to meet current and future needs
- ▶ More technical assistance/advisory services to better serve targeted geographies, communities and/or industries
- ▶ Additional flexible capital to enable greater business retention, expansion and attraction

Did the County attempt to form an EDA previously?

A: During the 2024 Legislative Session, Ramsey County introduced proposed legislation amending HRA statutory language and establishing an EDA to allow for business programming to be an eligible use of Ramsey County HRA levy funding. HF 3784 (Lee) / SF 4655 (Hawj) was later amended based on feedback from cities. A redlined version, including a memo from the County Attorney's office describing the changes is available. The current draft version for the 2025 Legislative session of the bill reflects this city feedback in 2024.

In 2016, the County did submit legislation that would have created a Ramsey County EDA. The legislation was pulled by the County following community concerns around the creation of a new taxing authority. The county's current legislation would not create a new taxing authority as it merely allows for additional eligible uses (i.e. business programming) of the County's existing Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

Does Ramsey County provide business programming? If so, what programs? How much does it spend? And how does it pay for business programs?

A: Ramsey County provides limited business programming. The County funds the programming through the County's general property tax levy. Current business programming totals \$345,000.

- ▶ Entrepreneur support: Open to Business – Provides no cost direct technical assistance and other forms of support to small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. This program was expanded countywide in 2019 in response to direct city requests for this program.
- ▶ Small Business Growth: Ramsey County has two cohort-based leadership programs geared for established businesses. Both programs are a partnership with Hennepin County.
 - CEO Next – Group learning leadership program for CEOs/founders of second stage businesses that are growth-minded (\$1M-50M in revenues, 10-99 employees, etc.)
 - CEO Now – Group learning leadership program for CEOs/founders of first stage businesses that are growth-minded (\$250K-2M in revenues, more than one employee, operating for two years, etc.) Newly established in 2024.
- ▶ Marketing & attraction programming: RamseyCountyMeansBusiness.com An online portal providing workforce and economic development resources throughout the county to current and prospective businesses and investors. This online portal went live in 2019 and was refocused during the pandemic as a central repository for covid business relief resources. A redesign of the portal is underway and will be live in early 2025.

How do other metro counties support business programming and how did they obtain authority to provide economic development activities?

A: Hennepin County received special legislation (MN Statute 383B.79) - *A multijurisdictional reinvestment program is authorized involving Hennepin County, the Hennepin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and one or more of the following political subdivisions: the cities of Minneapolis, Brooklyn Center, and other interested statutory or home rule charter cities in Hennepin County, the Minneapolis Park Board, the Three Rivers Park District, and any*

watershed district entirely or partially located in Hennepin County. The multijurisdictional program may include plans for housing rehabilitation and removals, industrial polluted land cleanup, water ponding, environmental cleanup, community corridor connections, corridor planning, creation of green space, acquisition of property, development and redevelopment of parks and open space, water quality and lakeshore improvement, development and redevelopment of housing and commercial projects, economic development, and job creation.

- ▶ Hennepin County utilizes Housing and Redevelopment Authority funding for a variety of economic development programs including their CEO Next and Elevate Business platform. Due to the broader nature of this statute, this has limited applicability to Ramsey County.

Dakota County has a Community Development Agency. Under MN Statute 383D.41, subdivision 7, *After December 31, 1999, the Dakota County Housing and Redevelopment Authority shall be known as the Dakota County Community Development Agency. In addition to the other powers granted in this section, the Dakota County Community Development Agency shall have the powers of an economic development authority.*

- ▶ A core focus of local Community Development Agencies (CDAs) is the ability to own and operate affordable housing. Ramsey County has expressed no interest in owning and operating affordable housing, so this the CDA statute has limited applicability to Ramsey County.

Washington County has a Community Development Agency. In 2016, Washington County successfully sought special legislation to amend their Housing & Redevelopment Authority and created a Community Development Agency. Under MN Statute 383D.41, section 2, subdivision 2a, *Request to handle economic development, housing, or redevelopment duties. The governing body of a statutory or home rule charter city or township with an existing municipal economic development authority may request the Washington County Community Development Agency to handle the economic development, housing, or redevelopment duties of the authority and, in such an event, the Washington County Community Development Agency shall act and have exclusive jurisdiction for economic development, housing, or redevelopment duties in the statutory or home rule charter city or township pursuant to the provisions of the Economic Development Authorities Act, Minnesota Statutes, sections 469.090 to 469.1081.*

- ▶ A core focus of local Community Development Agencies (CDAs) is the ability to own and operate affordable housing. Ramsey County has expressed no interest in owning and operating affordable housing, so this the CDA statute has limited applicability to Ramsey County.

Scott County and Carver County each have a Community Development Agency. CDA's provide the most diverse array of eligible programing for housing, redevelopment and economic development uses.

Other questions:	
JENNIFER O'ROURKE Director of Government Relations 651-366-7276 jennifer.orourke@ramseycounty.us	JOSH OLSON Director of Community & Economic Development 651-295-0370 josh.olson@ramseycounty.us



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2026-98

Agenda Date	Status
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May 4, 2026

In Control	File Type
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City Council

Workshop Item

New Business - Sheila Sellman, Community Development Director, Jerome Krieger, Park and Recreation Director

Agenda Item # 3.2

Concept Plan for 3610 131st Avenue NE (30 Minutes)

Background

The applicant is seeking feedback on a concept plan proposed for 3610 131st Ave NE, which is immediately adjacent to the Legacy Creek Open Space which was sold to the City by the applicant's late father. The concept plan includes single family residential and open space proposed for donation to the City.

Proposed Subdivision

The applicant provided a rough sketch of how the property could be developed so that the City Council can make an informed decision about the proposed land donation. Unlike most concept plans reviewed by council, the plan was not prepared by a surveyor or engineer, does not include area for the required storm ponding, and does not consider water table, soil conditions/corrections or grading and drainage. A wetland survey and a rare plant survey will be required by the DNR on this site, which may also impact development layout. Therefore, staff anticipates that the plan will change significantly between the proposed concept plan and an engineered plan.

The applicant is proposing 80-foot wide lots and plans to request rezoning from Farm Residential to R-1. As presented, the plan has a density of 3.3 acres. Please note that lot sizes and density are likely to change with the refinement of the plan, particularly if high groundwater, wetlands and rare plants are found on the property.

The provided concept sketch indicates a single residential roadway that would end in a proposed cul-de-sac. However, this would not provide for the connectivity to neighboring properties, and therefore, would be required to be revised to allow for a stub street to the property to the east. Given that the property to the west is currently owned by the City as open space land, connection to the west would not be required.

This property is on the south side of 131st Avenue NE, across from the currently proposed Montean Meadows residential development. The Montean Meadows development is proposing to install the required city infrastructure along the 131st Avenue alignment to the east property line of the Montean parcel. A request has been submitted with the Montean Meadows proposed development that any development that would gain access to 131st Avenue street and utility improvements, would pay for their share of those improvements, and be collected at the time of development, if development occurs within a specified time frame. This proposed development would be required to connect to the newly constructed city infrastructure and therefore, subject to that request.

The proposed subdivision will require:

- Preliminary and final plat.
- Rezoning from Farm Residential (FR) to Single Family Residential (R-1).

If the refinement of the plan does not allow for 80-foot wide lots while meeting the 2.5 unit per acre density, the applicant may instead request Development Flex (DF) zoning for narrower lots and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) will be required.

Proposed Land Donation

The proposed 7 acres of open space within this parcel is adjacent to the 9-acre Legacy Woods Open Space that the city currently owns. The Natural Resources Conservation Board was informed of this opportunity and is excited about the potential to add and preserve additional open space land for our Blaine community. This additional land donation meets many of the goals of the 2040 Natural Resources and Sustainability Comprehensive plan.

Speaking with the applicant, staff has identified requirements that must be met in order to accept the land. These requirements include removal of the house, well, septic, and any other items on or below the property.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

1. Do you support accepting a donation of approximately 7 acres of land from the applicant to be held by the City as protected open space?
2. Do you support a subdivision of approximately 3 acres of land generally in accordance with R-1 standards?

Attachment List

1. Location Map
2. Concept Plan
3. Narrative

Legacy Creek Open Space and Proposed Donation



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles



Existing
Legacy Woods
Open Space

Wooded -
Proposed
Open Space

Field -
Proposed
Open Space

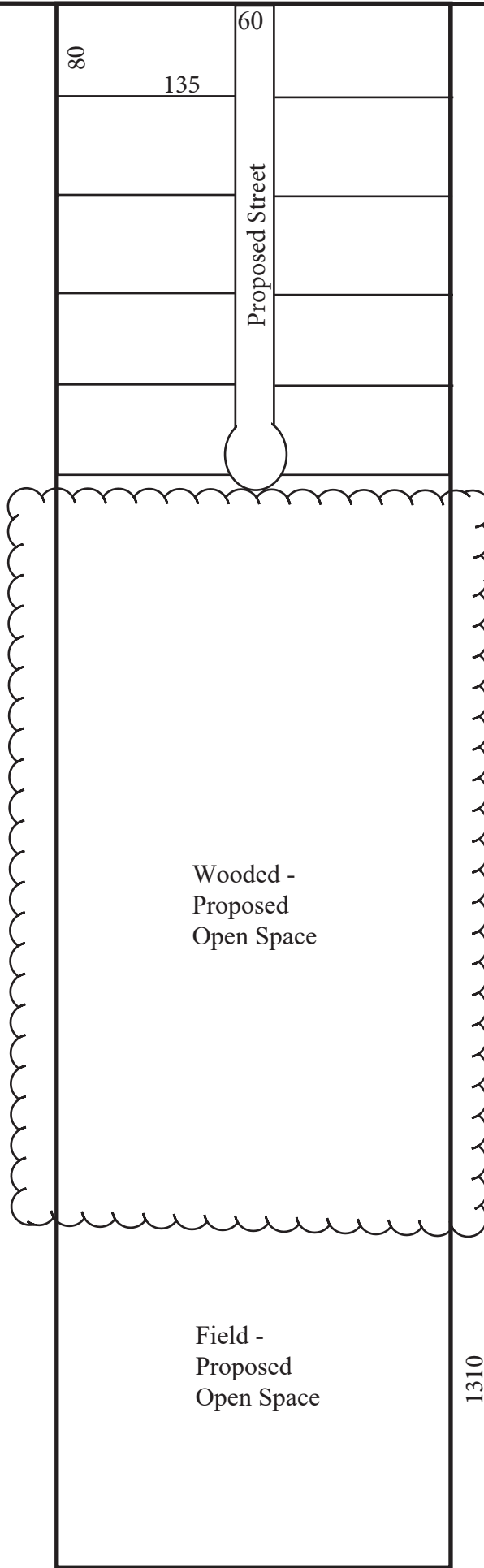
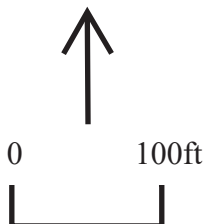
**Concept Plan
Florin Parcel**

3610 131ST AVE
BLAINE MN 55449

PID 02-31-23-24-0002

Legal Location:
SE1/4 OF NW1/4 OF
SEC 2 TWP 31 RGE 23
EXCL E 987

Parcel size 330 x 1310ft
Total Site Acres +/-10
Number of Lots 10
Lot Size 80x135ft
Total Developed Acres
+/- 3.0



330

1310

To: City of Blaine Planning Department

From: Frank Florin, Property Owner

Date: April 3, 2026

Subject: Concept Plan for 10-Acre Florin Property at 3610 131st Ave NE (PID 02-31-23-24-0002)

In 2025, I inherited my father John Florin's 10-acre property at 3610 131st Ave NE in Blaine. John lived at the property for 50 years, moving there in 1975 after several years of service in the U.S. Marine Corps. Some of his greatest joys in life were watching the abundant wildlife and living amongst the towering oak trees on his property in Blaine. He took on a variety of homesteading projects over the years, including: planting trees and a large garden; raising chickens, ducks, pheasants, and a cow; building a solar greenhouse and small tennis/basketball court in the yard; and cutting firewood for the woodstove. I spent most of my weekends until adulthood at the property. In his later years, it was my father's often-repeated wish that most of the property would be preserved to protect the natural habitat and provide a place for the public to enjoy nature. I promised my father that I would preserve most of the property, and it is important to me that I follow through on that commitment to him.

The property is currently zoned as Farm Residence and has a single home and about 6 acres of mature woods and 4 acres of open fields. There are no wetlands on the property. The City owns the 10.1-acre Legacy Woods Open Space that adjoins the entire west side of the property, which my father sold to the City in 2004. The 2007 Blaine Open Space Management plan notes that the forest of the Legacy Woods Open Space is a "good quality oak forest community", and the same forest continues into the subject property. The adjoining properties are zoned as Farm Residence and have not been developed, except for the Legacy development that abuts the southwest corner of subject property and borders the Legacy Woods Open Space to the west.

My proposed plan for the property includes: 1) developing 3 acres with 10 residential homes, having lot sizes of 80 by 135 feet; and 2) donating 7 acres to the City of Blaine for open space. The 3 acres of proposed development are in the open field at the front of the property (north end) and encroach slightly into the wooded area. These 3 acres would be sold to a developer, and I will have a rare plant survey conducted for these 3 acres. Of the 7 acres proposed to be donated to the City for open space, about 4 acres are mature woodland (mostly oaks and maples) and 3 acres are open field. The existing Legacy Woods Open Space would benefit, both ecologically and in recreational potential, from the additional 7 acres of proposed open space. I will remove the existing house and associated infrastructure in the proposed open space.

My proposed plan for the property, which includes 7 acres of open space, will assist the City in fulfilling the following seven goals stated in **Blaine 2040 Comprehensive Plan - Chapter 2: Natural Resources and Sustainability**:

Goal #1 Promote preservation of Blaine's high value natural resource areas for public enjoyment through passive and active recreational opportunities.

Goal #2 Promote and protect natural resources areas in the review and approval of new development.

Goal #3 Elevate the importance of both maintenance and management of existing natural resources in open spaces and developed land.

Goal #4 Become a more sustainable city by continuing to focus on programs and policies that advance environmental enhancement...

Goal #7 Incorporate climate change resiliency into city planning and decision making.

Goal #8 Support and promote community-wide health initiatives.

Goal #9 Support community-wide environmental education campaigns, opportunities, and programming.

As outlined in the Blaine 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the remaining undeveloped lands in Blaine are expected to be developed over the next decade or so, resulting in a considerable change to the landscape and natural environment as large areas of natural lands are converted to suburban residential neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Plan clearly emphasizes the value and protection of natural resources in Blaine. The current proposal, which includes a mixture of development and land conservation, aids the City in achieving the goals of the Plan with regard to preservation of natural resources amidst the large-scale, city-wide development. In the future when Blaine has been fully developed, the proposed open space will be one of the few places in the City where the public can go to experience and enjoy a natural environment.

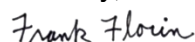
There is an abundance of interest and research in urban green spaces stimulated by widespread urban growth in many cities, and a large amount of information on this topic is available in articles and studies that are accessible on the internet. Numerous studies across various fields have found the benefits of urban green space to include: physical and mental health and wellbeing; biodiversity and ecological resilience; improved air quality; climate change resilience; increase in property values; and enhanced quality of life. A Google search of the “benefits of urban green spaces” yields over 200 million results, with Google AI summarizing the results by stating: “Urban green spaces - parks, gardens, and tree canopies - significantly enhance city life by improving air and water quality, reducing urban heat islands, and boosting mental/physical health. They promote social cohesion, foster biodiversity, reduce noise pollution, and increase property values, making them essential for sustainable, livable cities”. It is clear that: human life is directly interconnected with nature; most people enjoy and value nature; and green spaces are of benefit to the community.

The value and benefits of urban green space in cities are especially important at the present time due to an accelerated loss of habitat, pollution, climate change, and invasive species that threaten the existence of many plant and animal species. Also, natural places are particularly valuable for human well-being, considering the fast pace and stresses of modern life combined with a more sedentary lifestyle and increasing computer/screen time and indoor time. Additionally, I believe that humans, as stewards of the earth, have a moral and ethical responsibility to care for the plants, animals, and natural resources that we share the planet with. It is easy to understand that nature is precious and valuable when we consider that nowhere else in the universe can we find a flower, a tree, a bird, or butterfly, except on earth.

I look forward to working with the City of Blaine to find a way to fulfill my father’s wishes to preserve the natural habitat on most of this property.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Frank Florin
Property Owner



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2026-99

Agenda Date	Status
In Control	File Type
May 4, 2026	
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Ruth Tucker, Economic Development Specialist

Agenda Item # 3.3

Municipal Cannabis Partnership Update (30 Minutes)

Background

Council has held multiple discussions regarding the selection of an operating partner for the City's municipal cannabis retailer license, including review of materials submitted by Voyageur Cannabis and a presentation from the City of Anoka regarding its municipal cannabis operation and potential partnership approach. At the previous meeting, Council directed staff to further vet Voyageur Cannabis and continue discussions with the City of Anoka to better understand potential partnership terms.

Both Voyageur Cannabis and the City of Anoka have expressed interest in partnering with Blaine to operate a cannabis retail facility under the City's municipal license. Each option presents a different operational structure for Council's consideration.

At the state level, proposed legislation may impact municipal partnership structures by allowing private operators to both hold their own license and partner with a municipality.

Blaine must activate its cannabis retailer license by December 2026, requiring timely direction on an operating partner.

Additional information will be handed out at the workshop.

Staff Recommendation

Select an operating partner and authorize staff to proceed with a Letter of Intent.

Questions for Council

1. Does council have any questions or concerns regarding the information presented for Voyageur or the City of Anoka?
2. Does council want to move forward with either proposal?

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2026-100

Agenda Date	Status
In Control	File Type
May 4, 2026	
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Agenda Item # 3.4

Charitable Gambling - Premise Permits (10 Minutes)

Background

Staff received a request from Blaine Youth Hockey that council consider increasing the number of lawful gambling locations allowed per organization from four to five:

Sec. 22-264. Additional regulations.

(3) No organization may maintain more than four lawful gambling locations in the city at one time, except that an organization operating lawful gambling activities at more than four locations as of January 1, 2004...

If council is willing to explore this request, staff will provide further background as to why the cap was put in place and any potential impacts for a change and present a report at a future workshop for council direction.

Staff Recommendation

Council direction is requested.

Questions for Council

Does council wish to direct staff to research and present a possible code amendment to increase the number of charitable gambling sites allowed by an organization?

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2026-101

Agenda Date	Status
In Control	File Type
May 4, 2026	
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Erik Thorvig, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.5

Council Requested Items for Discussion (10 Minutes)

Background

Request From Councilmember Ford:

Discuss a citywide organizational study because residents deserve efficient, effective services, not arbitrary cuts driven by ideology.

Strategic Plan Alignment

This topic aligns with two strategic policies: organizational health and financial sustainability.

Urgency Level

High - next workshop

Staff Recommendation

Per policy, this discussion will be limited to whether or not the council wishes to direct staff to prepare a future workshop agenda item for council discussion. Staff can answer questions about the nature of the work and timeline during the workshop.

Questions for Council

Is there council consensus to place this topic on a future workshop agenda?

Attachment List

None