



Board Workshop / Discussion Agenda

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-266-9200

March 17, 2026 - 10:30 a.m.

Courthouse Room 220

WORKSHOP

1. **Driving Economic Growth & Strengthening the Tax Base**

[2026-052](#)

Sponsors: Economic Growth and Community Investment



Board Workshop / Discussion

Request for Board Action

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
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Item Number: 2026-052

Meeting Date: 3/17/2026

Sponsor: Economic Growth and Community Investment

Title

Driving Economic Growth & Strengthening the Tax Base

Attachment

1. Presentation

3/17/2026

Driving Economic Growth & Strengthening the Tax Base

County Board Workshop



Introductions and Presenters

Presenters

Ling Becker – County Manager

Kari Collins – Deputy County Manager, Economic Growth and
Community Investment

Josh Olson – Director, Community and Economic Development

Agenda

- Introduction and Presenters
- Responding to Property Tax Realities
- Leveraging Our Tools for What's Next
- Adapting for the Future
 - Catalyzing Economic Growth — From Downtown to Every Corner of the County
- Conversation & Strategic Discussion

Unprecedented property tax pressures

Limited tax base (revenue)

- High proportion of tax-exempt property (14%).
- Lowest per capita net tax capacity in the seven-county metro area.
- Small, densely populated, and fully developed = few new development opportunities.
- Higher-cost redevelopment requires partnership, investment and time.
- Property tax shift to residential property.

Cost pressures (expenses)

- Cost shifts and unfunded/underfunded mandates, including:
 - Federal: \$1 trillion shift over next 10 years to state and local governments.
 - State: Looming state budget deficit with potential cost shifts.

**8.25% property
tax levy in 2026**

Feb 10th Workshop – Recap, Key Takeaways

- Heard from Urban3 on different ways to explore data, including the
 - Fiscal Health Analysis is a starting point to understanding our land use composition and budget constraints.
 - Value is one input to calculating tax base.
 - Downtown is important to County's overall fiscal health.
 - Abundance of tax-exempt property, especially county-owned, is part of the county story and demonstrates a big opportunity.
 - The need to find ways for infill development to create greater density when possible.

<u>County</u>	<u>Land Area (acres)</u>
Anoka	269,596
Carver	226,467
Dakota	362,185
Hennepin	353,171
Scott	224,761
Washington	245,296
Ramsey County	98,380
Metro Area TOTAL	1,779,856
Ramsey as % of Metro Area	5.5%

Metropolitan Council 2020 Land Use Data

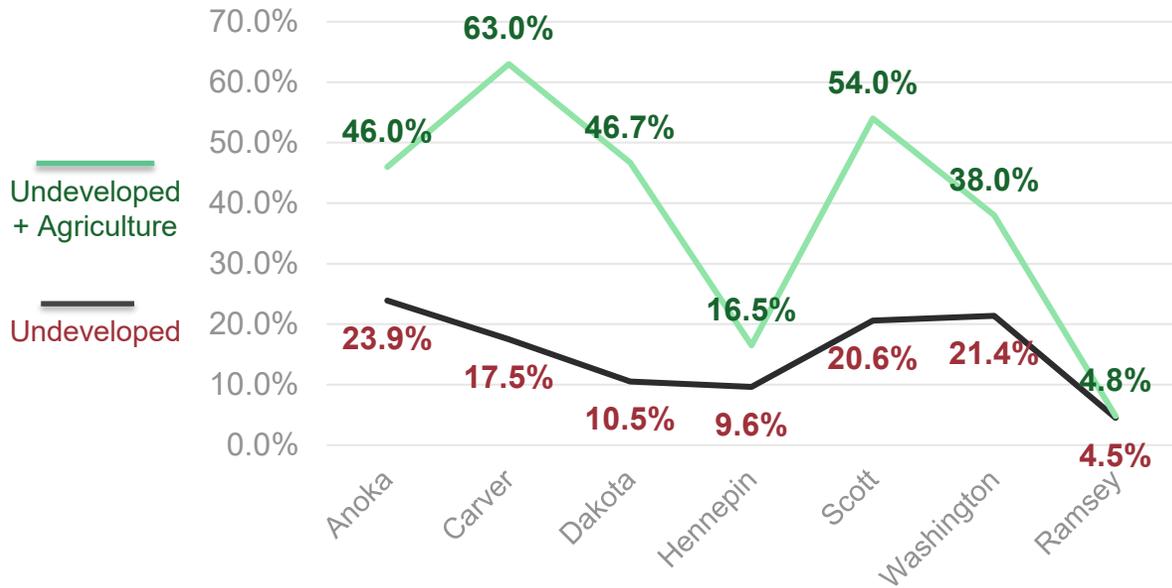
A Closer Look at LAND within Ramsey County

- Availability of Land is a key wealth generation factor and predictor of future development and economic growth.

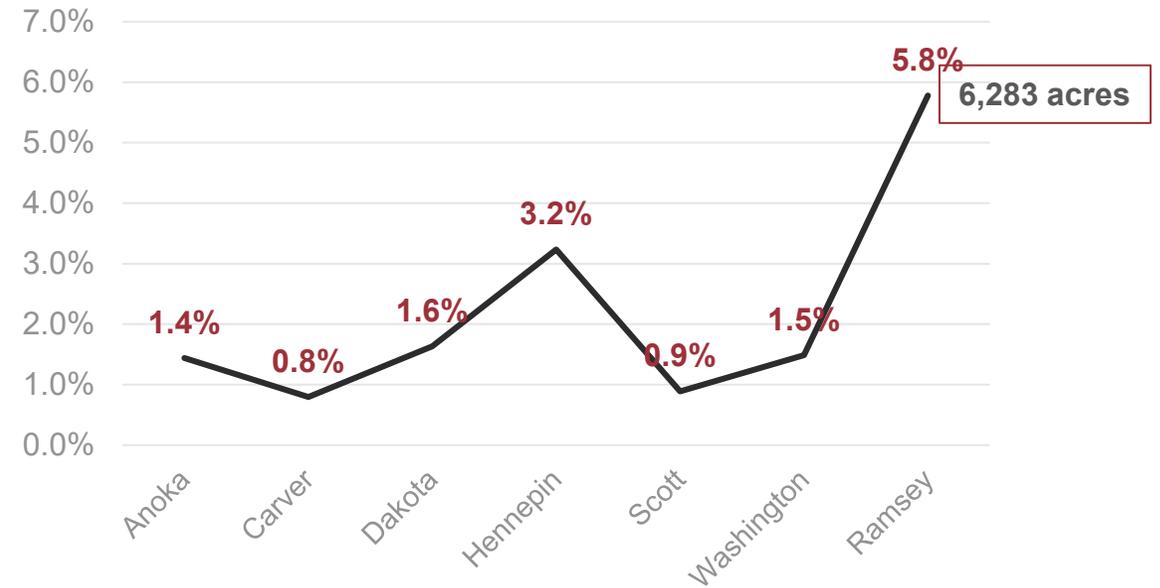
Ramsey County is **less than 100,000 acres** in size and contains **5.5% of the total land area** in the region

A Closer Look at Land within Ramsey County

Percent Undeveloped Land

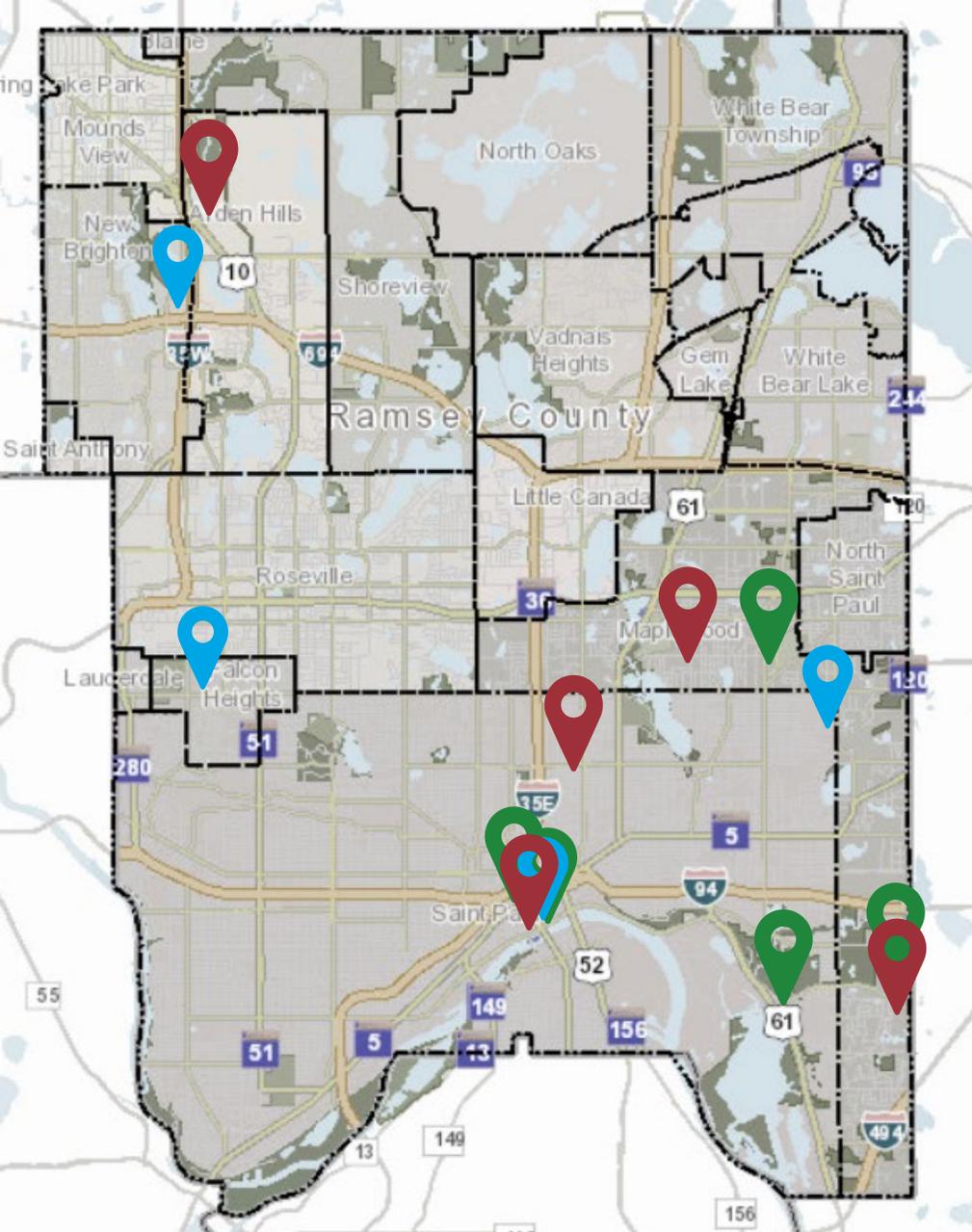


Percent Institutional Land



Source: Metropolitan Council 2020 Land Use Data

“State Capitol Communities” often have a higher proportions of institutional land uses. And when combined with little undeveloped land or greenfield development, **every development and redevelopment opportunity** in the County is significant.



Abundant Opportunities

County-Owned Site — *Active opportunities* **Total ± 525 Acres**

County owned sites include Rice Creek Commons, RiversEdge, Maplewood Properties South, Payne & Maryland, Frost and English, Ramsey County East Building, 555 Cedar.

Additional County-Owned Sites **Total ± 105 Acres**

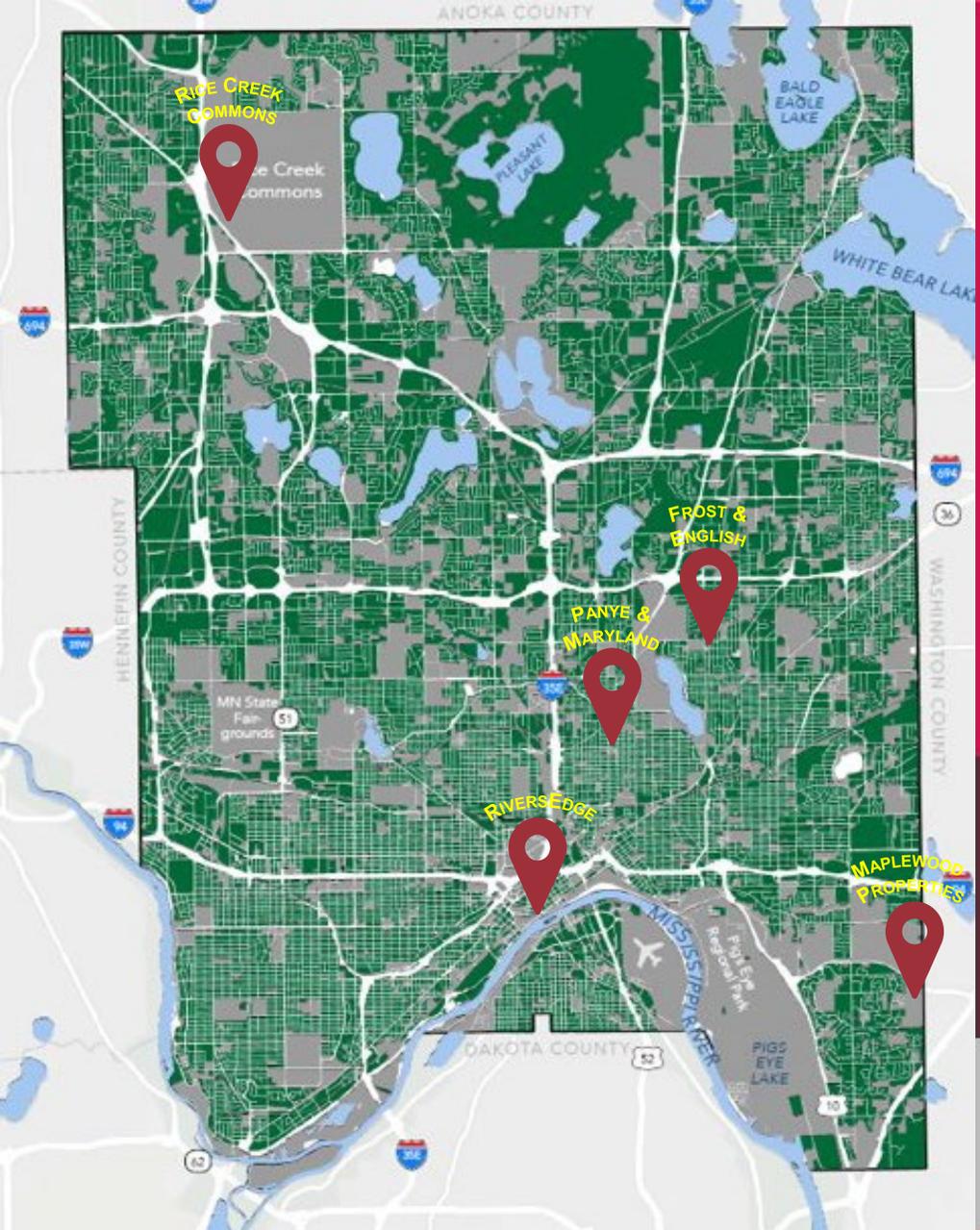
County owned sites include Boys Totem Town, Maplewood North Parcel, other county owned facilities, underutilized rights-of-way, etc.

Tax Exempt Sites by Others **Total ± 274 Acres**

Non-County owned sites include the Les Bolstad Gold Course, The Heights, New Brighton Exchange, etc.

*Other high-profile projects not included in figure - Highland Bridge, United Village

At ± 904 acres or 14% of institutional land use acres
represent ample opportunities to move tax base needles.



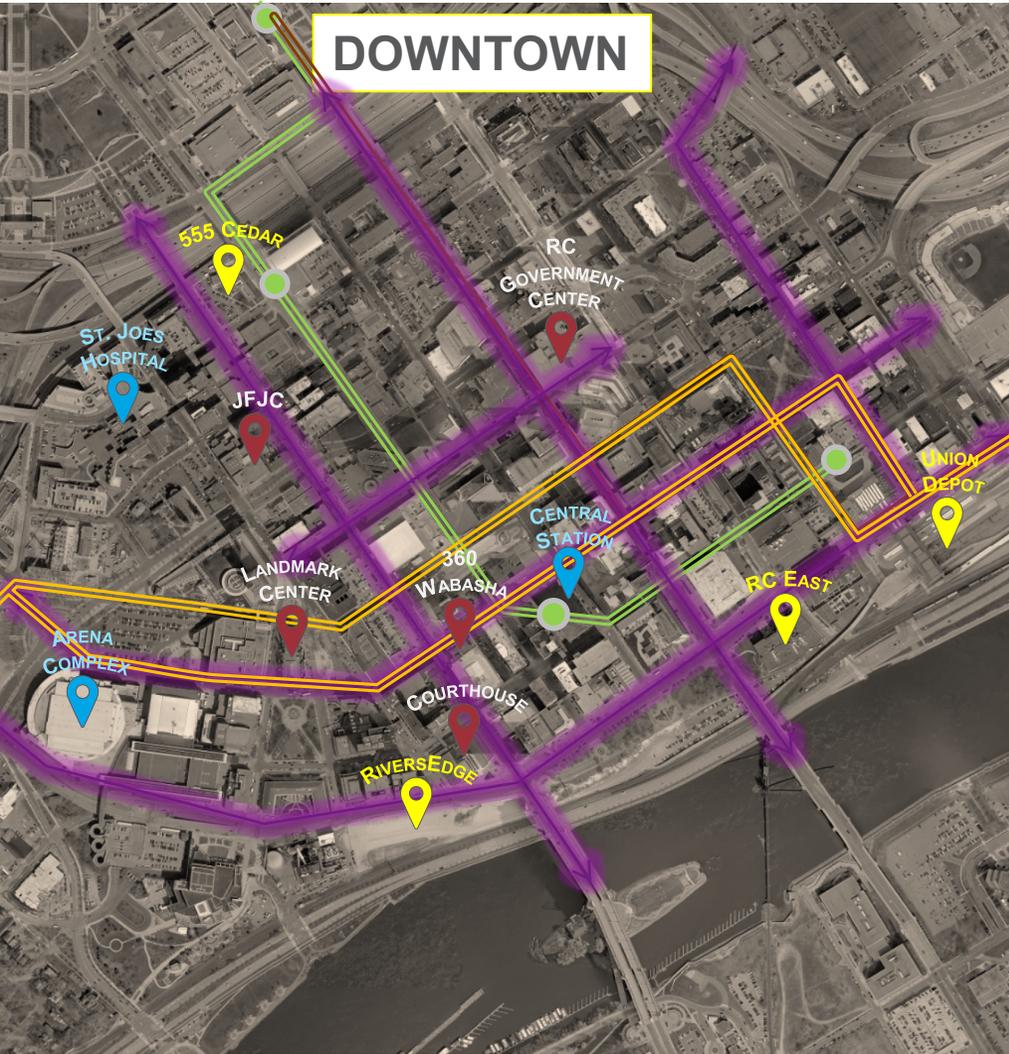
The County's Unique Challenge

- Tax-exempt properties are found countywide.
- Areas of highest net tax capacity are also areas of considerable amount of tax-exempt properties.

- ① Roseville
- ② Maplewood
- ③ Shoreview
- ④ Highland [Saint Paul]
- ⑤ White Bear Lake

55% of Downtown [Saint Paul]'s *hypothetical* net tax capacity is in tax-exempt properties.

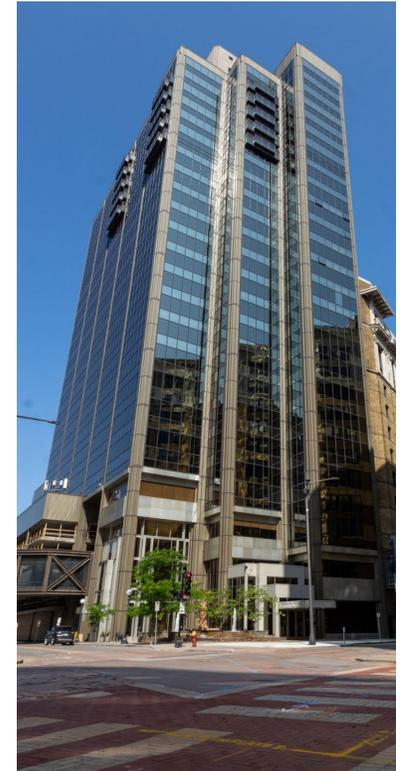
16% of Maplewood's *hypothetical* net tax capacity is in tax-exempt properties.



Downtown at the *Center*

- 49% of Estimated Market Value in downtown is exempt.
- Untapped potential is significant.
- Downtown's contribution to the County's tax capacity is declining.
- Home to Ramsey County facilities and redevelopment assets as well as other important tax-exempt sites.

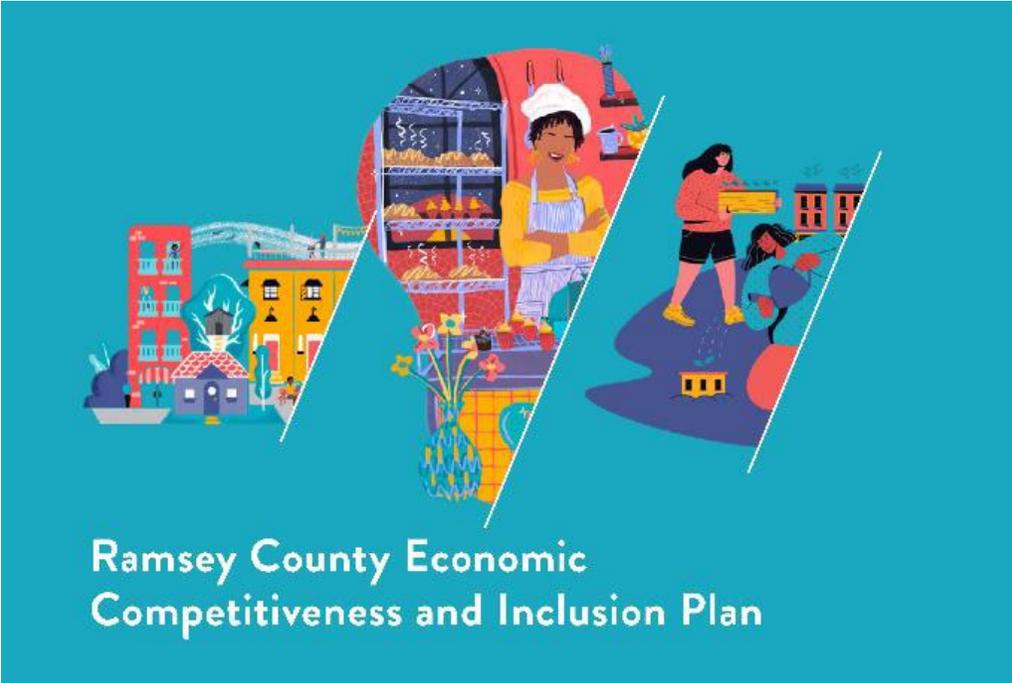
Steering Progress Through Challenges.



Maximizing Tailwinds for Growth.

- The County's assets are uniquely positioned to move the needle toward growth.
- Through aligned partnerships the full potential is unlocked.
 - *Note, however, that the County does not have land use authority.
- New and enhanced resources represent new areas to spur economic development.

Leveraging Our Tools for What's Next



Community & Economic Development Department
Housing and Redevelopment (+EDA) Authority



Public Works Department
Regional Railroad Authority, Transportation Funding

Ways to ‘Jump the Curve’ & ‘Create the Moment’

- **Address** high percentage of tax-exempt property in County
- **Expediate** real estate project readiness & **jumpstart** the large portfolio of underutilized properties.
- **Reinvest** through public infrastructure that fosters economic opportunities and **contributes** to sustaining and enhancing vitality
- **Cultivate** new and enhanced partnerships to build the tax base

