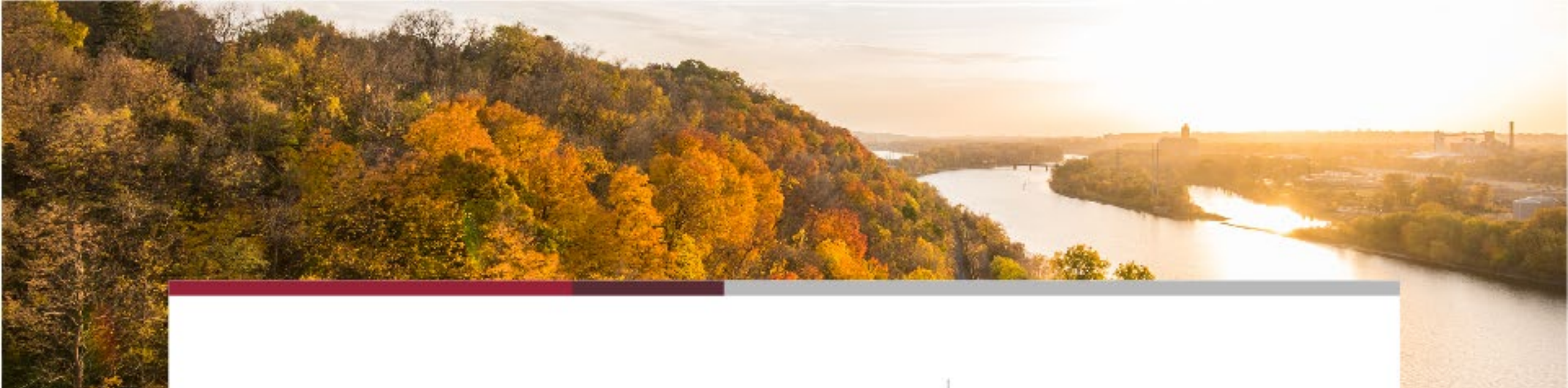




Proposed 2026 Legislative Platform Priorities

Legislative Committee of the Whole
November 4, 2025



Goals of This Presentation

The Legislative Committee of the Whole is requested to:

- Review and provide final input on draft 2026 state and federal legislative platforms.
- Vote to move draft platforms to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners for final approval on November 18.

Recap from October 21 Board Workshop

- Presented draft state legislative priorities and provided an overview of possible federal platform priorities.
- After the workshop, a follow-up memo provided more detail on proposed 2026 advocacy strategy (from board workshop slides) and federal platform (which we will discuss in more detail today).

Active Advocacy: Responding to Unprecedented Shifts

- NACo identified unprecedented shifts impacting local governments.
- The stakes have never been higher—we need new approaches and recalibrated responses that balance evolving responsibilities.
- Persistent property tax pressure.
- Our path forward:
 - Agility in adapting to changing conditions.
 - Opportunities to take ownership and to participate in emerging and urgent conversations.
 - Laying the right foundation to be ready for *any and all solutions*.
 - Balancing relationships while preserving our fiscal health.

Ramsey County's Overarching Themes in 2026

No new unfunded mandates.

Protect counties from further cuts.

Counties must be at the table for any service delivery change.

Reduce reliance on property tax.

The background of the slide features a scenic landscape. On the left, a dense forest of trees with autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and green covers a hillside. To the right, a wide river flows, reflecting the bright light of the sun, which is positioned low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare and a warm, golden glow across the scene. The sky is a pale blue with wispy white clouds.

Proposed 2026 Legislative Platforms

Capital Improvement Requests (Bonding Items)

Top priority	Bonding Requests
!	Park at RiversEdge (\$20 million)
!	Aldrich Arena (\$8.5 million)



Pursue Items

Pursue means Ramsey County takes the lead works with the bill sponsor to get the bill jacketed and introduced. Ramsey County may co-lead with another partner. The issue mainly affects only the County and/or no other entity is leading. Requires a substantial investment of time and resources from the County.

Top priority	Proposed Platform Item
!	Establish Capitol Complex County Host Program (CCCHP) , a program similar to Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) for Ramsey County as host of the Capitol Complex.
!	Amend MN Statute 383A to clean up human resources language; to raise small business contract threshold to \$500,000; and to postpone or eliminate expiration of Environmental Response Fund.
!	Seek funding extension for the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA).
!	Establish a statewide homelessness funding program , to be funded in the 2028-29 budget, that would provide ongoing, separate funding for counties and providers.
	Adjust funding allocation formula for vulnerable adult protection to balance resources between screened-in cases and referral volume more equitably.

Leading Advocate Items

- Another county, coalition, or association is pursuing the bill or leading opposition.
- As a **Leading Advocate**, Ramsey County provides active advocacy efforts but is not the primary lead.

Top priority	Proposed Platform Item
!	Preserve current reimbursement method for MnCHOICES assessments , to ensure sufficient funding for Ramsey County’s MnCHOICES division budget and staffing.
!	Enhance efficiencies in Home & Community-Based Services , where program changes have increased administrative burden, increasing pressures on workforce and wait times for residents.
!	Modernize state human services systems to better serve residents and reduce counties’ administrative burden.
!	Preserve or increase formula-based transportation funding for Ramsey County.
	Increase access to secure mental health treatment options in the East Metro to better address residents’ complex behavioral health needs.
	Allow local governments to restrict guns on properties they own , especially buildings.
	Allow a portion of state housing and homelessness funds to be used for administrative costs.
	Repeal 2028 sunset of Local Homeless Prevention Aid

Support Items

- Include some top priorities, though the County will play a less active role in advancing them.
- Time and resources are invested in **Support** items on an as-needed or as-requested basis.

Top priority	Proposed Platform Item
!	Address the comprehensive substance abuse, mental and behavioral health needs of the community, including youth and those with acute and/or complex needs.
!	Enhance public safety and reduce gun violence
!	Support the Catalyzing Underutilized Buildings (CUB) Tax Credit to encourage redevelopment efforts and to increase housing stock.
!	Protect counties from increased costs resulting from federal changes to SNAP and MA
!	Move MAAFPCWDA case review responsibility to state
	Address racial disparities in healthcare quality, access and outcomes, especially those likely to result from recent federal legislative changes that will cause residents to lose access to healthcare.
	Classify residential addresses of elected officials and government officials as private government data.
	Transition the special property tax refund to a property tax credit that is automatically calculated and issued
	Increase state allocations to 40% of Operations & Maintenance costs for regional parks and trails.
	Support legislation aligning with Climate Equity Action Plan
	Allow recovery of costs of special elections for state and federal offices.
	Expand the responsibilities of Office of Broadband Development to include Digital Opportunity

Priorities Led by Ramsey County Attorney's Office

RCAO would take the lead on the following items, supported by Ramsey County Government Relations.

Proposed Platform Item
Remove automatic cost-of-living adjustments for maintenance and child support orders in favor of routine reviews, as required by federal regulations, enhancing fairness & improving compliance.
Require employers to report new hires of 1099 independent contractors to DHS , which will help increase child support payments and enhance the fairness of child support orders.
Increase funds in the state auto theft fund for advanced prevention and intervention efforts.

Summary of All Top Priorities

County Role	Top Priorities
Pursue	Bonding for Park at RiversEdge
	Bonding for Aldrich Arena
	Capitol Complex County Host Program (CCCHP) for Ramsey County
	Amendments to MN Statute 383A
	Seek funding extension for MAAFPCWDA.
	Establish a statewide homelessness funding program
Leading advocate	Preserve current reimbursement method for MnCHOICES assessments
	Enhance efficiencies in Home & Community-Based Services
	Modernize state human services systems
	Preserve or increase formula-based transportation funding for Ramsey County
Support	Address substance abuse, mental and behavioral health needs
	Enhance public safety and reduce gun violence
	Support the Catalyzing Underutilized Buildings (CUB) Tax Credit
	Protect counties from increased costs resulting from federal changes to SNAP and MA
	Move MAAFPCWDA case review responsibility to state

Federal Platform: Broad Approach

- Defend against funding cuts and identify bipartisan legislative opportunities that we can support.
- Preserve flexibility so Ramsey County can be agile in responding to events as they occur, guided by the legislative themes.

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Proposed Federal Platform Items

Issue Area	Proposed Platform Item
Health and Human Services	Support legislation that would delay the implementation of federal changes to SNAP and Medicaid.
	Support efforts to change rule and/or statute to allow streamlining of MnCHOICES reassessments.
Workforce	Support re-authorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and sustained or increased funding for critical program areas such as WIOA Youth.
Emergency Management	Support increased, sustained and accessible funding for emergency management grants that are vital to Ramsey County's work.
Homelessness Assistance	Support increased, sustained and accessible funding for the Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grants homelessness assistance programs, as well as legislation that would simplify the administration of these programs.
Affordable Housing	Support legislation reauthorizing and fully funding the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) to allow increased federal support for county community development initiatives, affordable housing and economic revitalization efforts.
	Support legislation to reauthorize the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, to allow program flexibility for improved housing creation and preservation, and to authorize increased federal funding assistance for affordable housing development.
	Support increased funding for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance such as Housing Choice Vouchers and other tenant-based vouchers, which provide critical assistance to low-income renters.

Next Steps

November 18

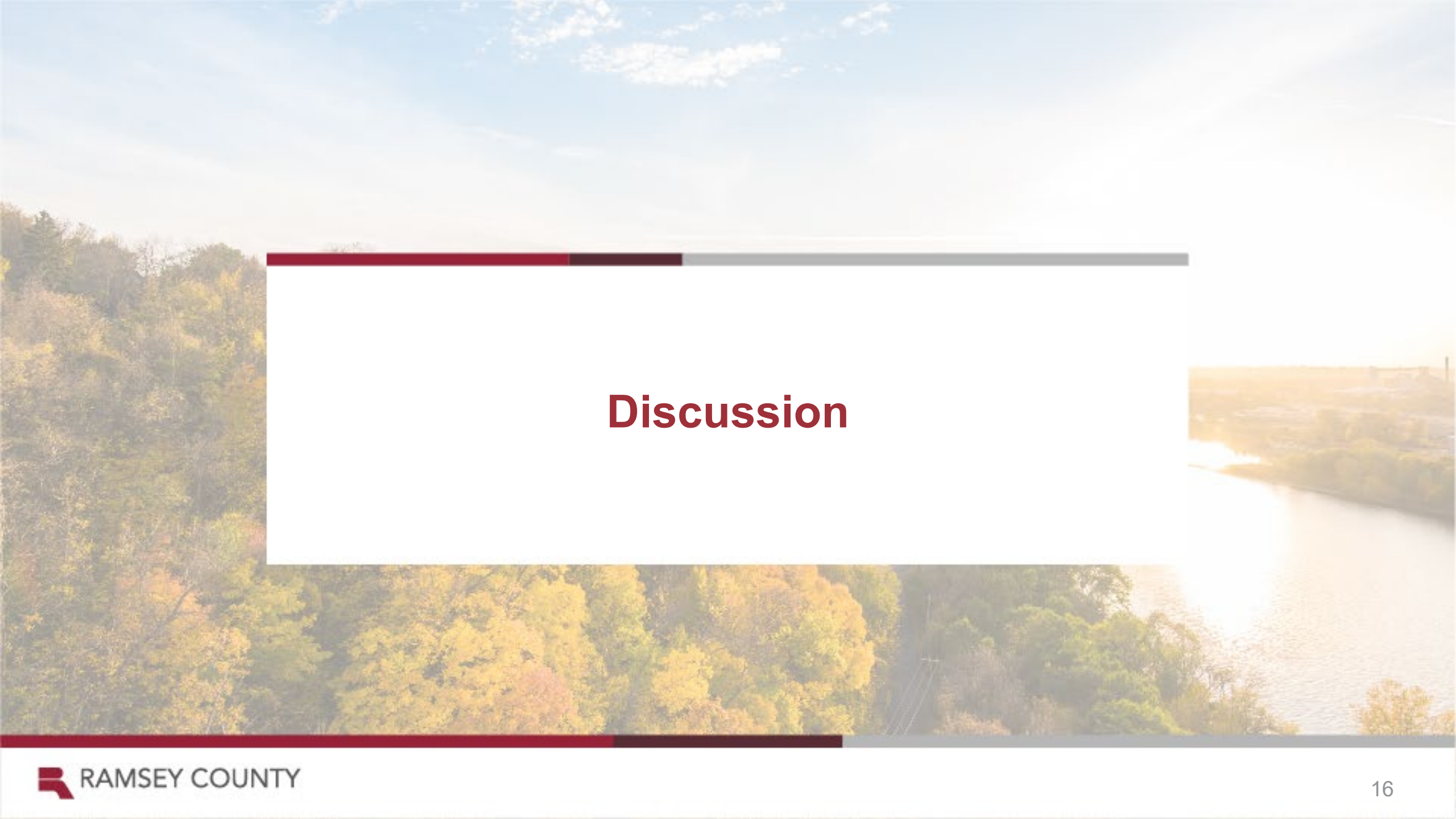
- County Board approves the state and federal platforms.

November – February

- Meetings with legislators and partners.
- Ramsey County Delegation Meeting (planned for December).
- Board presentation on Congressionally Directed Spending projects (January – February).

February 17

- 2026 Session begins.

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Discussion