

## **14. COMMUNITY IDENTITY**

The identity of Ramsey lies in its abundant natural resources. The Mississippi River once played an important role in the establishment of Ramsey. Trading posts were established on the Mississippi River for commerce along the ox-cart trail that followed the River all the way from South St. Paul to central Minnesota. Highway 10 and the BNSF railroad line have since replaced the trail, and Ramsey businesses now replace the trading posts on Highway 10. Highway 10 is the main corridor in which visitors see Ramsey, and there is much concern in improving Ramsey's image along this corridor. This transportation corridor parallels the Mississippi River along its lower terraces, separating much of the residential areas to the north from the River.

The Residential areas to the north exist among oak woodlands and wetlands, connected by small streams and drainageways. The Rum River makes up the eastern border of Ramsey, and offers another great natural resource to the identity of Ramsey.

City Hall is located in Town Center in the south central part of the community near Highway 10. Although currently there is an economic downturn, the Town Center area holds great promise for creating a center of activity and identity for Ramsey. Careful design and planning of this commercial gathering place can offer a wonderful image to Ramsey that will serve residents, workers and travelers.

One problem that was evident in various public meetings and discussions with community representatives is the lack of identity due to the name Ramsey and its affiliation with Ramsey County and the State Capital. Often people think of Ramsey County rather than the City of Ramsey. Although changing the name of a community can be difficult and disruptive to businesses, a name change can make a significant impression on a community's identity.

### **General Identity Framework Goals**

The following are the City's goals for creating identity:

1. To have a unique and positive image of Ramsey for residents and people entering Ramsey, especially along the Highway 10 corridor.
2. To highlight Ramsey's natural resources of rivers, woods, prairies, and wetlands.
3. To create a stronger connection to the Mississippi River.

### **Identity Framework Policy**

It is the policy of the City to:

1. Create standards in building architecture, landscaping and signage for businesses along Highway 10 and other highly visible commercial areas.
2. Work with MnDOT, Anoka County Highway Department and local business owners along Highway 10 towards a common frontage road linking businesses along Highway 10, with design elements focusing on intersections connecting to Highway 10.
3. Preserve and manage stands of trees along designated scenic roadways.

4. Work with Anoka County on development of Mississippi West Regional Park to create a strong connection across Highway 10 to link to the greater Ramsey Community, its places to work and residential neighborhoods.
5. Work with adjacent communities and MNNRA agencies to complete a regional recreational trail along Mississippi River with natural and historical interpretive stops.
6. Build on Ramsey's history as a trading route along Highway 10.
7. Support landowners in establishing, restoring and managing natural vegetation, i.e. Wetlands, oak stands, and prairie. Red pine stands are also acceptable.
8. Consider changing the name of the City of Ramsey to a name that reflects on the Community.

**Implementation Strategy:**

1. Create desirable images along Highway 10, through building standards, landscaping and signage.
2. Develop two east/west-connecting roadways (Industry Avenue and 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue) with parkway like identity. Allowing for automobile, bike and pedestrian movement in a safe, efficient and pleasant way.
3. Preserve and highlight natural features through:
  - Greenways should reach to street edges, allowing views into corridors and parks from the roadway.
  - Establish Scenic roadway protection along the northern sections of Armstrong Boulevard, Ramsey Boulevard, and St. Francis Boulevard.
  - Highlight Mississippi West Regional Park along Highway 10.
  - Preserve natural pockets along Highway 10 to prevent continuous strip development.
4. Improve Organization and identity along Highway 10:
  - Development of a frontage road along Highway 10, with a common identity to create a connected identity among businesses along Highway 10 (possibly a trade route theme).
  - Limit access points off of Highway 10, creating identity at intersections off Highway 10 to reinforce access points.
5. Encourage planting of native oaks, prairie and wetland species to maintain and restore natural character of Oak Woods and Savanna. Set up program to educate residents on establishment and management of native species. Row plantings of Red Pine are a newer character of Ramsey and can be used to emphasize roadways, boundaries, and other development patterns as well as provide a natural wind break for the better snow plow management.
6. Establish a committee to look into changing the name of the City of Ramsey. Careful planning should address needs of residents and businesses that may be impacted by changing the name of a municipality.