

Introduction

Designated by Governor's Executive Order in the 1970s, the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) is a land corridor along the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area governed by special land planning requirements and land development regulations. These regulations, which are implemented through local MRCCA plans and ordinances, protect and preserve the natural, scenic, recreational, and transportation resources of this section of the Mississippi River. The MRCCA comprises 72 miles of river and 54,000 acres of surrounding land in 30 local jurisdictions.

Ramsey adopted its first Critical Area Plan in 1980. Ramsey adopted its first Critical Area Ordinance in 1985, and has processed several amendments since that date.

Ramsey has ensured that plan preparation has included extensive public engagement. In 2013, Ramsey hosted a series of public workshops on the topic, and maintains a contact database. In addition, Ramsey's overall Comprehensive Plan Update has included the most extensive public engagement process Ramsey has hosted for any of its Comprehensive Plan Updates.

Comprehensive Plan Strategic Imperatives

- A Balance of Rural Character and Urban Growth
- An Active Community (Parks, Recreation, and Open Space)
- A Connected Community (Transportation)
- A Positive Learning Environment

Initiatives for the Critical Area

A Balance of Rural Character and Urban Growth

- Protect and Restore Significant Ecological Resources
- Improve Water Quality

An Active Community

- Maintain and Improve Recreation Opportunities along and adjacent to the Mississippi River

A Connected Community

- Improve Access to the Mississippi River

A Positive Learning Environment

- Communicate the Benefits of Protection of Ecological Resources

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Districts

River Neighborhood

The river neighborhood district is characterized by primarily residential neighborhoods that are riparian or readily visible from the river or that abut riparian parkland. The district includes parks and open space, limited commercial development, marinas, and related land uses.

The river neighborhood district must be managed to maintain the character of the river corridor within the context of existing residential and related neighborhood development, and to protect and enhance habitat, parks and open space, public river corridor views, and scenic, natural, and historic areas.

Minimizing erosion and the flow of untreated storm water into the river and enhancing habitat and shoreline habitat vegetation are priorities in the district.

Rural Open Space

The rural and open space district is characterized by rural and low-density development patterns and land uses, and includes land that is riparian or visible from the river, as well as large, undeveloped tracts of high ecological and scenic value, floodplain, and undeveloped islands. Many primary conservation areas exist in the district.

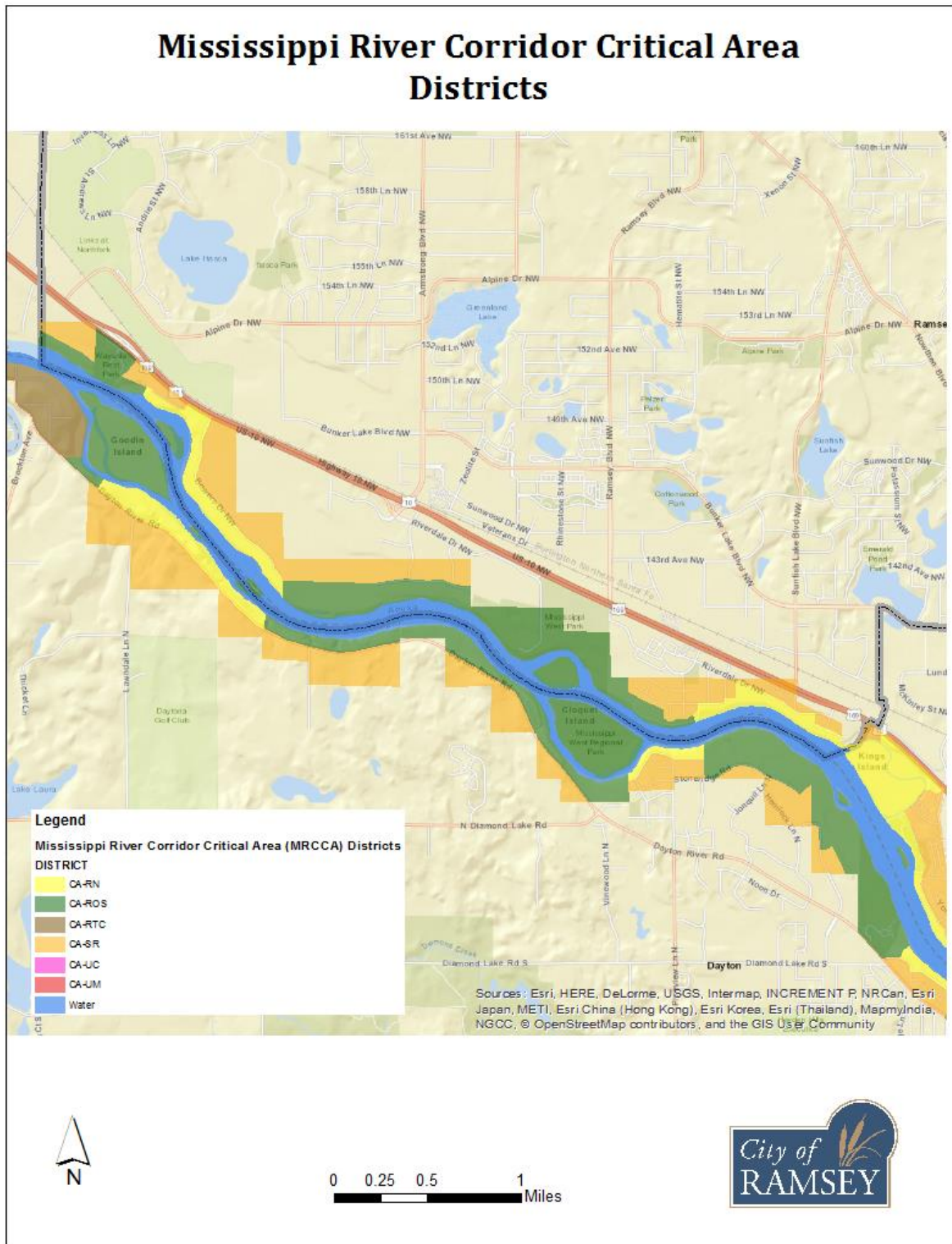
The rural open space district must be managed to sustain and restore the rural and natural character of the corridor and to protect and enhance habitat, parks and open space, public river corridor views, and scenic, natural, and historic areas.

Separated From River

The separated from river district is characterized by its physical and visual distance from the Mississippi River. The district includes land separated from the river by distance, topography, development, or a transportation corridor. The land in this district is not readily visible from the Mississippi River.

The CA-SR district provides flexibility in managing development without negatively affecting the key resources and features of the river corridor. Minimizing negative impacts to primary conservation areas and minimizing erosion and flow of untreated storm water into the Mississippi River are priorities in the district.

Figure 1: Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Districts



Primary Conservation Areas

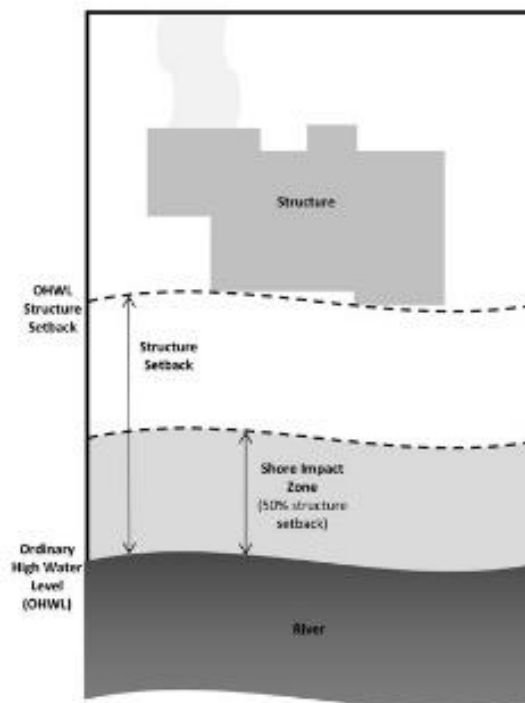
"Primary conservation areas" means key resources and features, including shore impact zones, bluff impact zones, floodplains, wetlands, gorges, areas of confluence with tributaries, natural drainage routes, unstable soils and bedrock, native plant communities, cultural and historic properties, significant existing vegetative stands, tree canopies, and other resources identified in local government plans.

General Overview and Description

Generalized maps of the Primary Conservation Areas below are included in the text below. Larger, more detailed maps are included as an appendix. Detailed maps will be available upon request.

Shore Impact Zones

"Shore impact zone" means land located between the ordinary high water level of public waters and a line parallel to it at a setback of 50 percent of the required structure setback or, for areas in agricultural use, 50 feet landward of the ordinary high water level.



Floodplains and Wetlands

"Floodplain" means the areas adjoining a watercourse which has been or hereafter may be covered by the regional flood.

Confluence with Key Tributaries

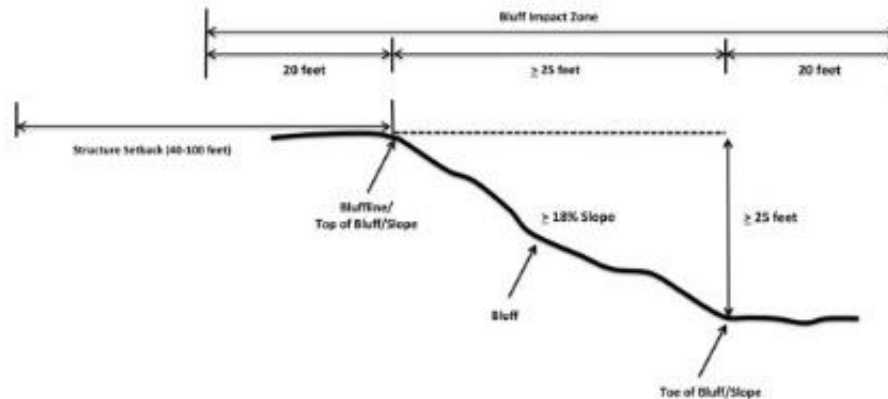
There are no confluences with key tributaries within Ramsey.

Natural Drainage Areas

The Critical Area Plan includes mapping of natural drainage areas that impact the Mississippi River.

Bluff Impact Zone

"Bluff impact zone" means the bluff and land within 20 feet of the bluff.



Native Plant Communities and Significant Existing Vegetative Stands

"Native plant community" means a plant community that has been identified as part of the Minnesota biological survey or biological survey issued or adopted by a local, state, or federal agency.

Cultural & Historic Properties

"Historic property" means an archaeological site, standing structure, site, district, or other property that is:

- A. listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places or locally designated as a historic site under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 471;
- B. determined to meet the criteria for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places; or
- C. an unplatted cemetery that falls under the provisions of Minnesota Statutes, chapter 307, in consultation with the Office of the State Archeologist.

One area of cultural and historic significance is located in the corridor. It does not meet the definition above. The location of the first settlement in Ramsey is located within the corridor, originally known as Itasca Village. There are no remaining structures or assets from this original settlement.

Gorges

There are no gorges located in Ramsey.

Unstable Soils and Bedrock

There is significant areas of shoreline erosion located along Ramsey's Mississippi River Shoreline. This erosion is documented through a 2016 Anoka Conservation District Survey. The results of said survey are incorporated into this document by reference. Ramsey will be utilizing this information for education, outreach, and funding purposes to restore priority areas from further erosion.

Figure 2: Shore Impact Zone Map



Figure 3: Floodplains and Wetlands

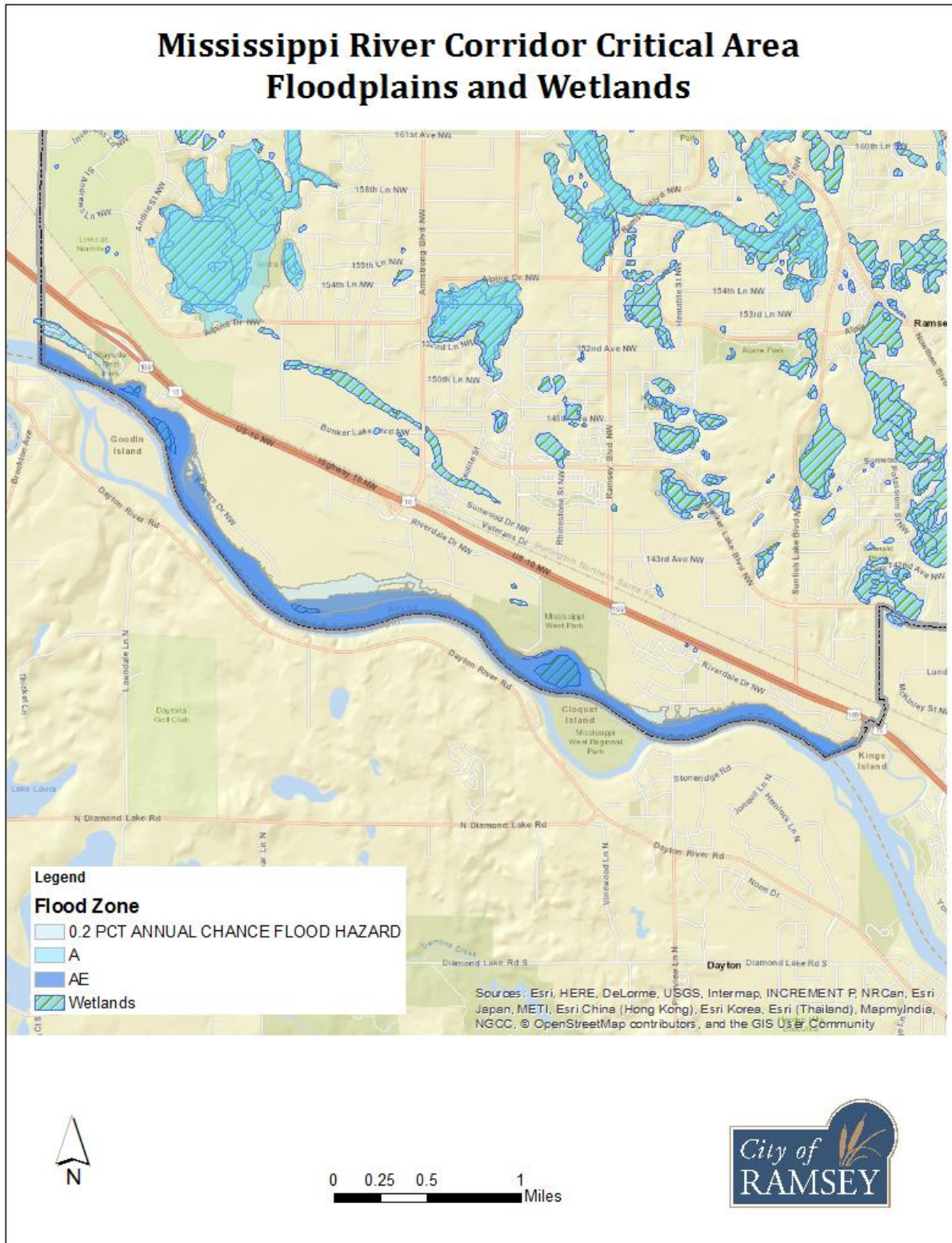


Figure 4: Confluence with Key Tributaries

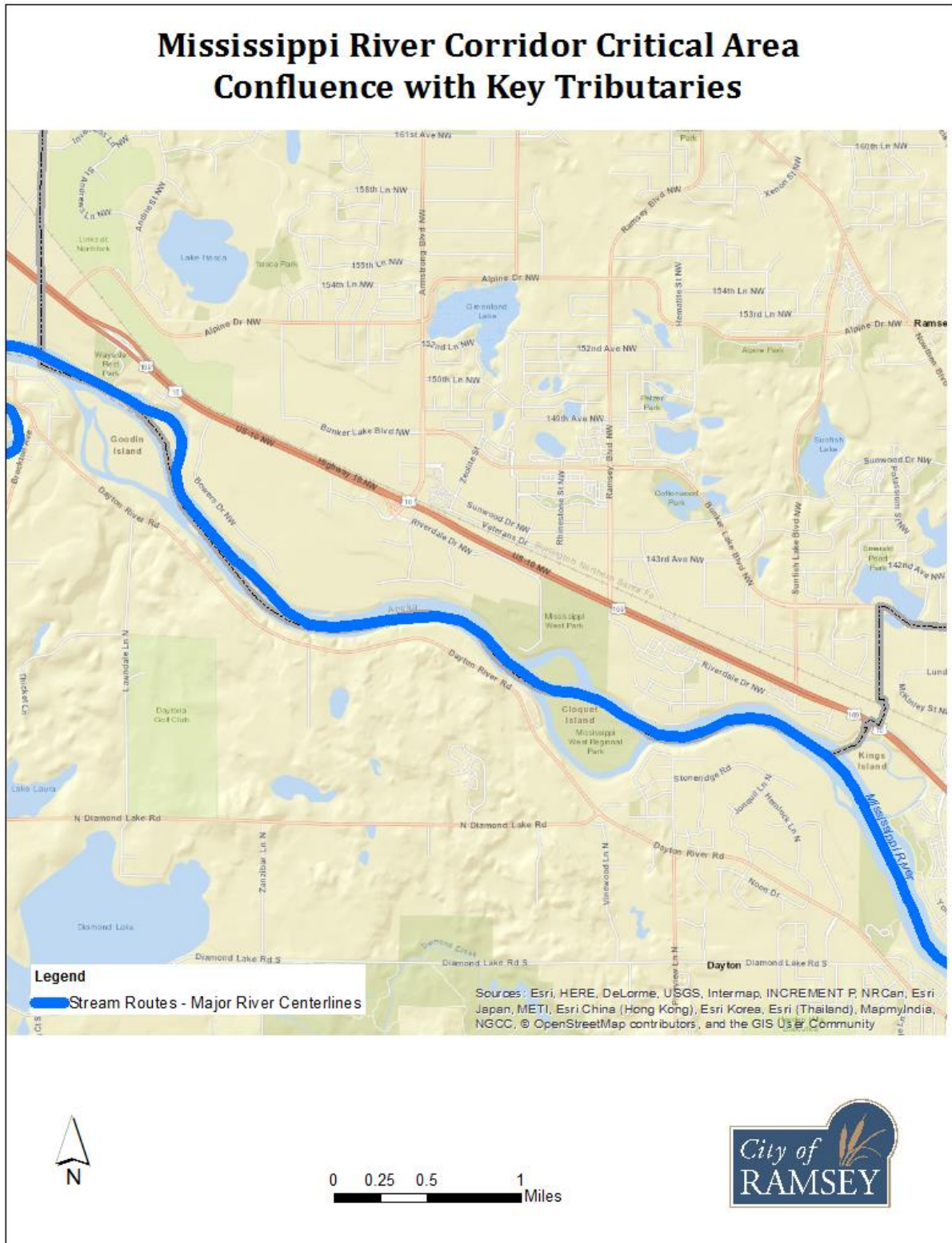
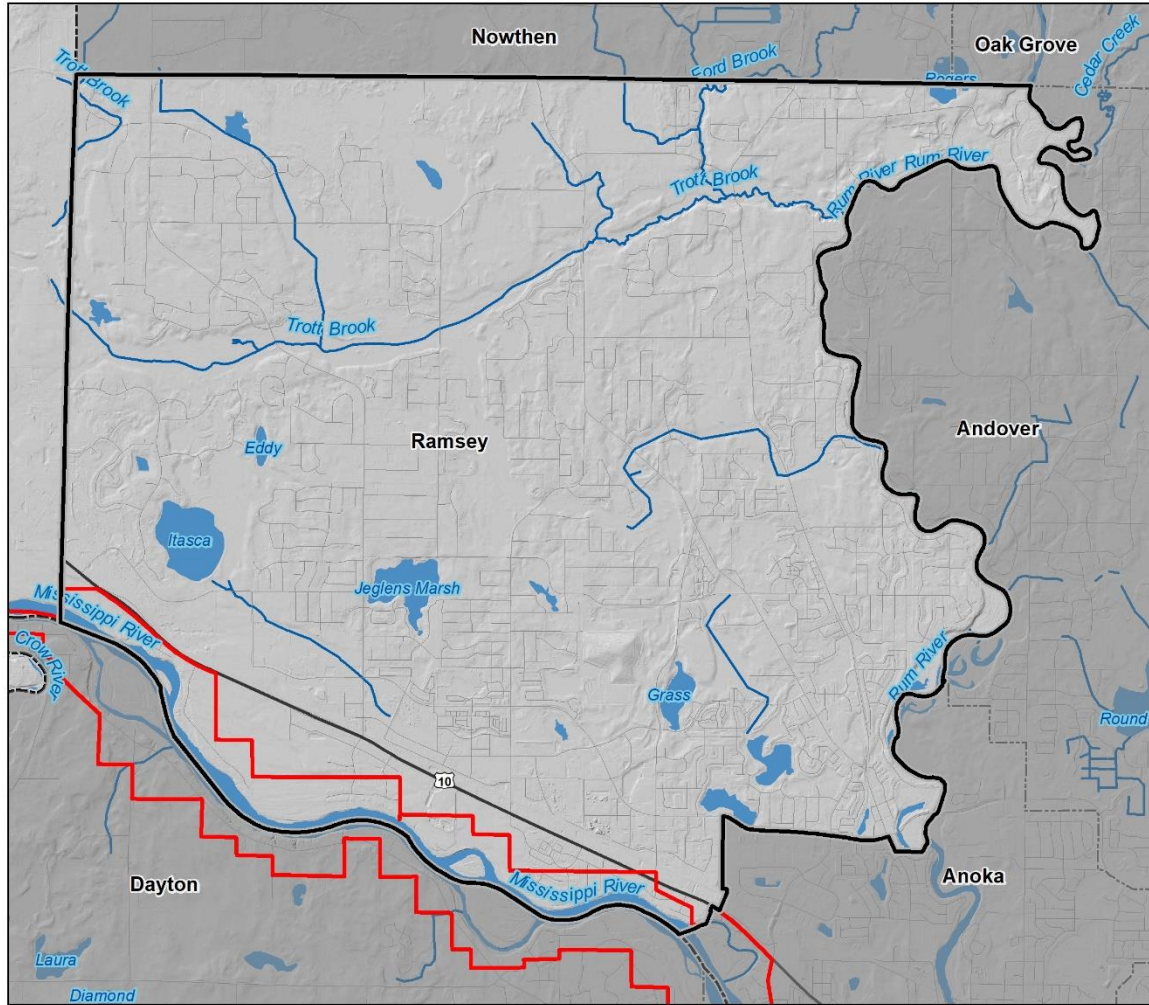


Figure 5: Natural Drainage Areas

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area - Major Natural Drainage Routes City of Ramsey, Anoka County



- MRCCA Boundary
- Background Layer: MnGEO Hillshade (LIDAR)
- ~ Streams (All Types - Perennial & Intermittent)
- Lakes and Major Rivers
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- NCompass Street Centerlines

Figure 6: Bluffs and Bluff Impact Zones

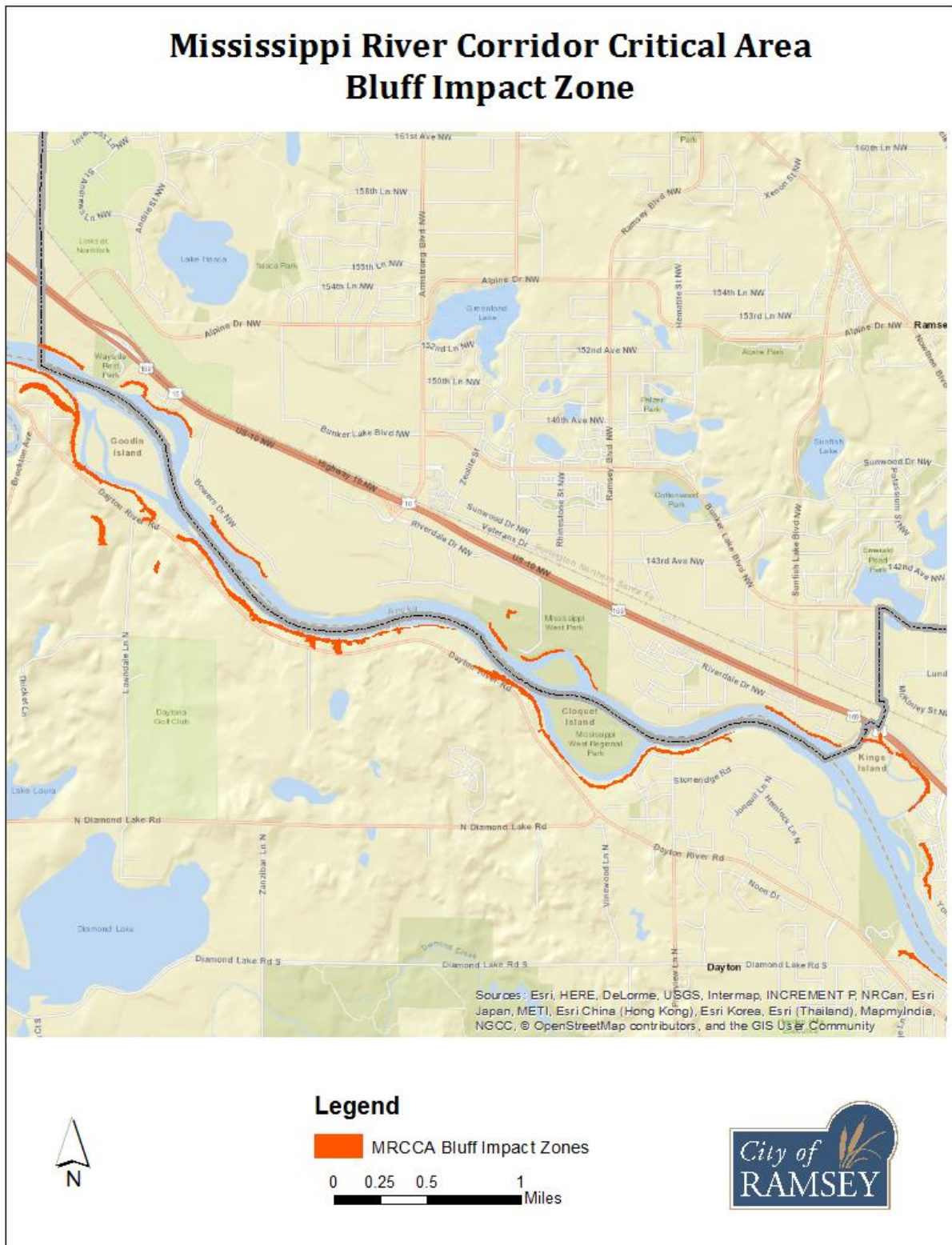
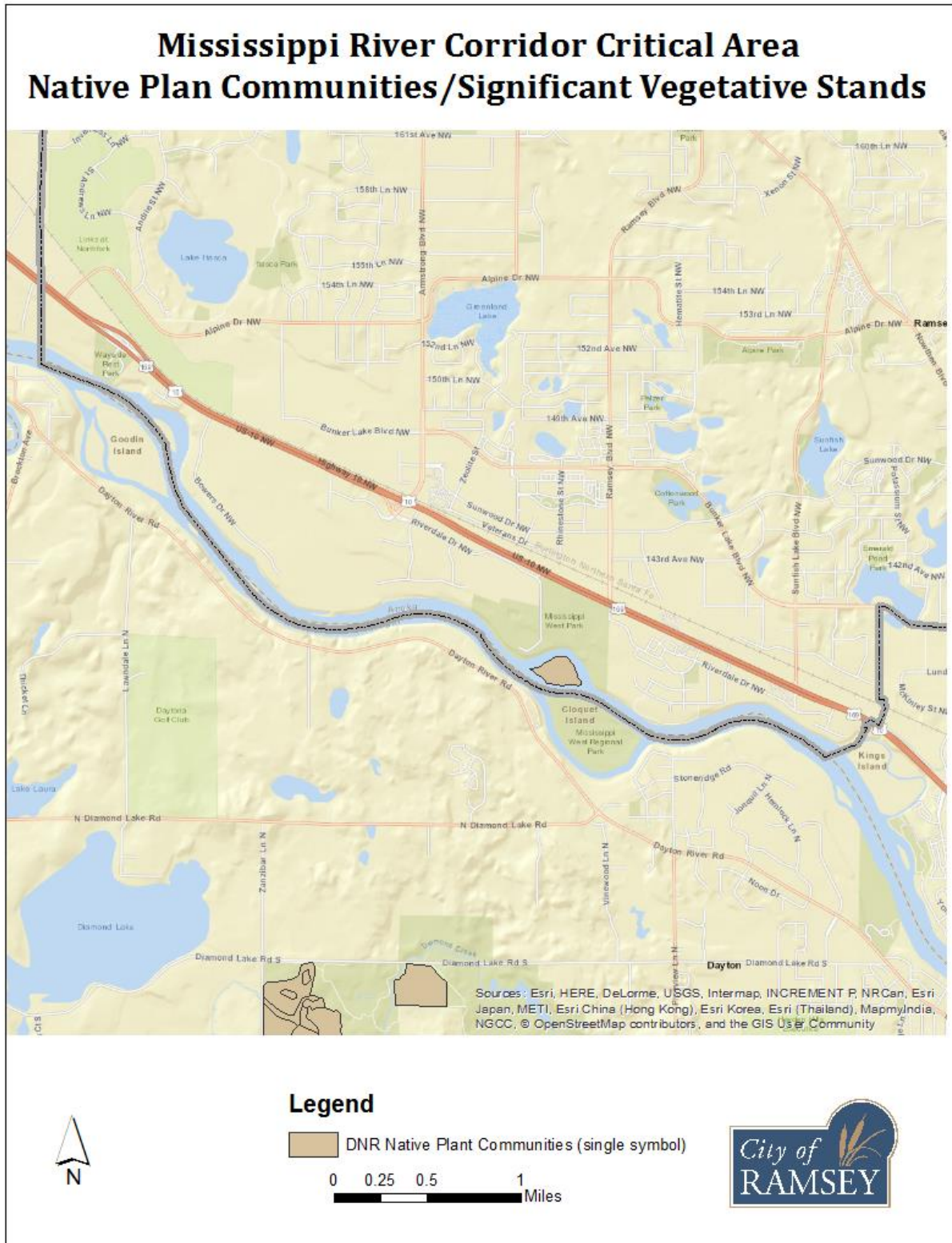


Figure 7: Native Plan Communities & Significant Existing Vegetative Stands



Public River Corridor Views

General Overview

A key component of the Critical Area Plan is to improve access to public river views and protect the views of bluffs from the river.

Views Toward River from Public Places



Views Toward Bluffs from River

Examples of Views from River

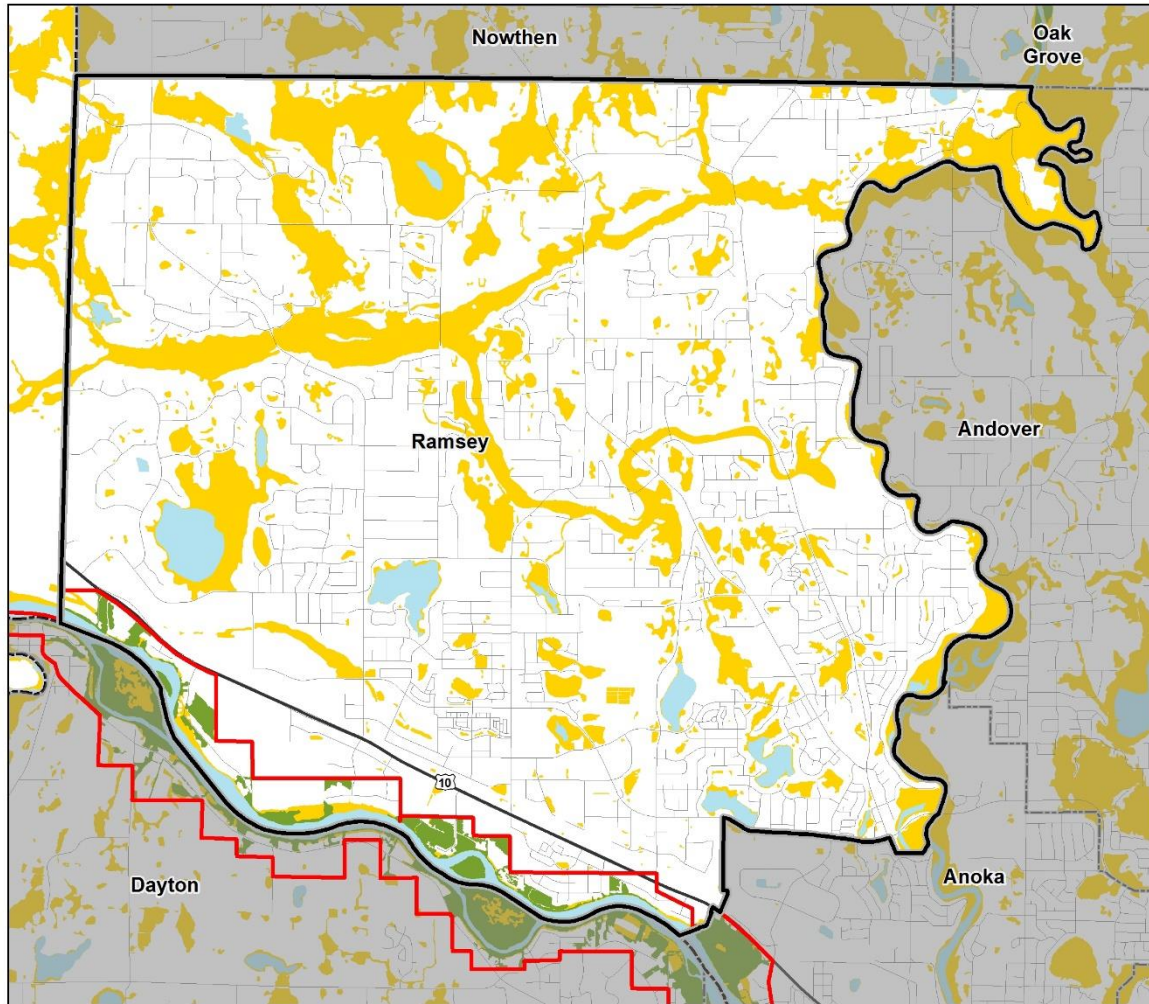


Priorities for Restoration

Ramsey's priority for restoration within the Corridor is protecting the Corridor from significant erosion as identified by the 2017 Anoka Conservation District Mississippi River Shoreline Inventory for Ramsey.

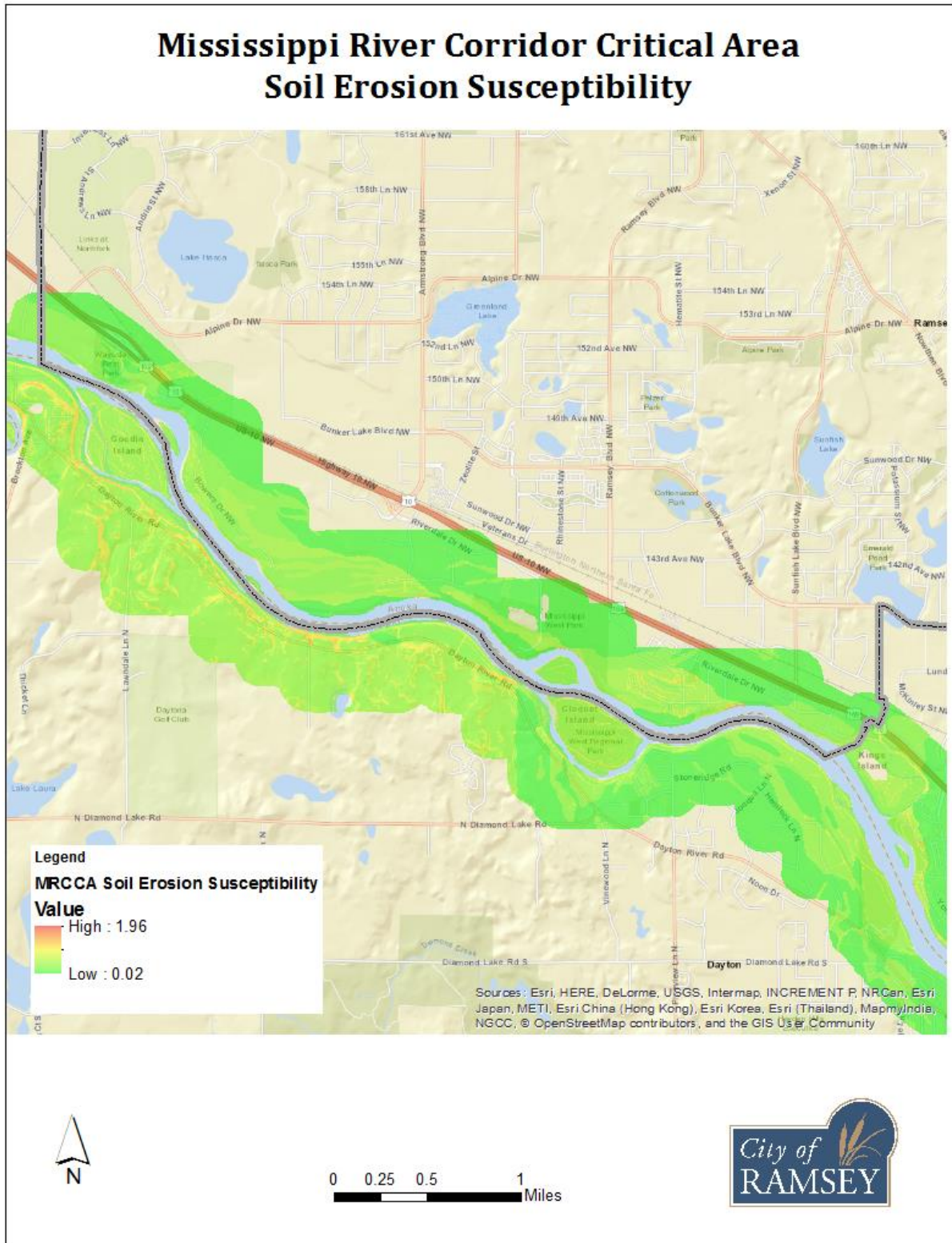
Figure 8: Vegetation Restoration Priorities

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area - Vegetation Restoration Priorities City of Ramsey, Anoka County



-  MRCCA Boundary
-  DNR Native Plant Communities & Significant Existing Vegetative Stands
-  Vegetation Restoration Priorities (Bluff and shore impact zones, floodplains and wetlands not already covered by native plant communities and significant existing vegetative stands)
-  County Boundaries
-  City and Township Boundaries
-  NCompass Street Centerlines

Figure 9: Soil Erosion Susceptibility



Surface Water Uses

Water-Oriented Uses

Open Space & Recreational Facilities

Existing Recreation Facilities

The Mississippi River Trail and Riverdale Park are currently located within the Corridor.

Future Recreation Facilities

The future Mississippi West Regional Park is located within the Corridor. In addition, the future alignment of Central Anoka County Regional Trail connect to the Corridor. A future component of the Central Anoka County Regional Trail is a grade-separated pedestrian crossing over the BNSF/Northstar Commuter Rail Corridor and U.S. Highway 10, known as the Mississippi Skyway.

Transportation & Public Utilities

An existing Connexus Energy Electric Transmission Line current crosses the Mississippi River connecting Ramsey and Dayton. Ramsey continues to plan for a future River Crossing between Ramsey and Dayton.

Figure 10: Mississippi River Bridge/Crossing



Policies

General

Districts/Land Use

Ramsey will implement the policies of the Critical Area by adopting the new districts within our Zoning Code.

Primary Conservation Areas

Ramsey will encourage conservation subdivision design to protect Primary Conservation Areas. Conservation Subdivision Design will allow the clustering of lots in exchange for permanent protection of Primary Conservation Areas. Ramsey will also continue its proactive approach to subdivision design by encouraging setbacks and adequate lot depth to preserve Primary Conservation Areas.

Public River Corridor Views

Ramsey will strive to work with applicable partners, especially Anoka County Parks, to improve access to Public River Corridor Views.

Restoration Priorities

Ramsey will continue to implement pilot demonstration projects and incentives to encourage restoration of priority areas.

Surface Water Uses

Ramsey will continue to support Anoka County's operation of a Boat Launch along Traprock Street.

Water-Oriented Use

There are no private Water-Oriented Uses planned along the shoreline of the Mississippi River. However, the Mississippi West Regional Park will be a primary access to encourage interaction with the Mississippi River. There is also a future local park planned west of Mississippi West Regional park.

Open Space & Recreation Facilities

Ramsey will continue to support planning and implementation for Mississippi West. Ramsey will continue to own and maintain Riverdale Park. Ramsey will continue to plan for a new municipal park along the Mississippi River between the Alpaca Estates and Bowers neighborhoods.

Transportation & Public Utilities

Ramsey will continue to support future planning for the future Mississippi River Crossing to the City of Dayton in Hennepin County.

Ramsey will continue to support Connexus Energy's electric transmission line across the Mississippi River to the City of Dayton.

City Code Amendments

In order to properly administer this amended plan, the City will need to make certain amendments to City Code. These amendments include, but are not necessarily limited to the following.

- Establish General Land use Review Procedures.
- Develop administrative procedures for shoreline stabilization.

- Actively communicate with other communities to protect views they have identified in your community that are valuable, and vice versa.
- Establish a vegetation permitting process that includes permit review procedures to ensure consideration of restoration priorities identified in this plan in permit issuance, as well as standard conditions requiring vegetation restoration for those priority areas.
- Establish process for evaluating priorities for natural vegetation restoration, erosion prevention and bank and slope stabilization, or other restoration priorities identified in this plan in CUP, variances and subdivision/PUD processes.
- Develop visual analysis approach for CUPs for additional height in the RTC and UM districts (if applicable), as well as for proposed PUDs and variances.
- Develop a system for reviewing, tracking, and monitoring open space required as part of the subdivision process.

Critical Area Implementation Plan

Imperative #1: A Balance of Rural Character and Urban Growth

Initiative #1.1: Protect and Restore Significant Ecological Resources

Tactic	Priority	Responsible Party	Resources
Update Zoning Code to reflect Amended Plan	Immediate Term	Community Development	Normal Staff Duties
Establish a plan to reduce erosion, protect canopy coverage, protect significant vegetative areas, and encourage pollinator-friendly landscapes.	Immediate Term	Community Development	Normal Staff Duties

Initiative #1.2: Improve Water Quality

Tactic	Priority	Responsible Party	Resources
Establish a plan to reduce the amount of sediment and phosphorus entering the river.	Long Term	Community Development	Normal Staff Duties

Imperative #2: An Active Community

Initiative #2.1: Maintain and Improve Recreation Opportunities along and adjacent to the Mississippi River

Tactic	Priority	Responsible Party	Resources
Prioritize areas for acquisition to increase opportunities to access the river.	Long Term	Parks and Recreation	Normal Staff Duties
Coordinate jurisdictional planning efforts.	Long Term	Parks and Recreation	

Imperative #3: A Connected Community

Initiative #3.1: Improve Access to the Mississippi River

Tactic	Priority	Responsible Party	Resources
Prioritize facilities and projects that improve access to the river.	Immediate Term	Parks and Recreation	Normal Staff Duties
Complete the Central Anoka County Regional Trail Connection	Long Term	Parks and Recreation	
Update the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to reflect the amended Plan.	Immediate Term	Parks and Recreation	
Update Surface Water Use Regulations.		Community Development	
Provide Guidance to Private Property Owners for Private Accesses.		Community Development	

Imperative #4: A Positive Learning Environment

Initiative #4.1: Communicate the Benefits of Protection of Ecological Resources

Tactic	Priority	Responsible Party	Resources
Create Informational Packets	Immediate Term	Community Development	Normal Staff Duties
Develop a Communications Plan			
Create a new Critical Area Webpage			
Create a Signage Package for Public Spaces			

This is the old format.

ACTION	TIMEFRAME
Ordinance/City Code Updates	
Amend MRCCA Overlay District (City Code)	2019
Amend Zoning Map	2019
Ordinance/City Code Administration	
Establish General Land Use Review Procedures	2019
Develop Administrative Procedures for Shoreline Stabilization	2019
Actively communicate with other communities to protect views they have identified in your community that are valuable, and vice versa.	2019
Establish a vegetation permitting process that includes permit review procedures to ensure consideration of restoration priorities identified in this plan in permit issuance, as well as standard conditions requiring vegetation restoration for those priority areas.	2020
Establish process for evaluating priorities for natural vegetation restoration, erosion prevention and bank and slope stabilization, or other restoration priorities identified in this plan in CUP, variances and subdivision/PUD processes.	2020
Develop visual analysis approach for CUPs for additional height in the RTC and UM districts (if applicable), as well as for proposed PUDs and variances.	2020
Develop a system for reviewing, tracking, and monitoring open space required as part of the subdivision process.	2020
Education and Outreach	
Create Informational Packet	2019
Develop a Communications Plan	2019
Create New MRCCA Webpage	2019
Create Signage Package for Public Places	2020
Capital Improvements	
Update Capital Improvement Program to Reflect MRCCA Plan Update	2019
Include Transportation Corridors Within MRCCA in CIP	2019
Land Acquisition	
Create Land Acquisition Plan for Select Parcels	2020
Additional Initiatives	
Adopt Surface Water Regulations	2019
Conduct Additional Research	??
Coordinate Jurisdictional Planning Efforts	??
Conduct Master Planning Efforts	??
Conduct Corridor Planning Efforts	??