

City of Ramsey
Agenda
Environmental Policy Board (EPB)
Monday, March 16, 2026
6:30 pm
Council Chambers, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW

Remote Attendance available at www.cityoframsey.com/meetings.
Those joining remotely and requesting to speak are asked to use a webcam when speaking.

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Citizen Input**

3. **Approve Agenda**

4. **Approve Minutes**
 1. Approve Meeting Minutes Dated February 9, 2026

5. **Policy Board Business**
 1. Consider Request for a Variance to Utilize an Alternative Technique for Collecting the Tree Inventory Data for Serenity at Rivers Edge (Project 26-101)
 2. Update on Managed Natural Landscape Ordinance Amendment

6. **Board/Staff Input**
 - Update on HHW event and Fix It Clinic
 - Update on Arbor Day event at Alpine Park

7. **Adjournment**

Environmental Policy Board (EPB)

Meeting Date: 03/16/2026

Primary Strategic Plan Initiative:

Information

Title:

Approve Meeting Minutes Dated February 9, 2026

Purpose/Background:

The purpose of this case is to approve the Environmental Policy Board meeting minutes dated February 9, 2026.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approving the February 9, 2026 Environmental Policy Board meeting minutes.

Outcome/Action:

Motion to approve the February 9, 2026 meeting minutes.

Attachments

Environmental Policy Board Meeting Minutes Dated February 9, 2026

Form Review

Inbox

Brian Hagen

Form Started By: Chris Anderson

Final Approval Date: 03/12/2026

Reviewed By

Kalia Lor

Date

03/12/2026 01:55 PM

Started On: 03/10/2026 08:28 AM

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY BOARD
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

On Monday, February 9, 2026, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) met in the Council Chambers at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Melissa Fetterley
 Board Member Reid Bernard
 Board Member Nick Burgess
 Board Member Thomas Hagerty
 Board Member Paula Houts
 Board Member Laura Moore
 Board Member Hassan Salami

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Planning Manager Todd Larson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Fetterley called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Board Member Hagerty and seconded by Board Member Moore to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Fetterley, Board Member Hagerty, Moore, Bernard, Burgess, Houts, and Salami. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated January 12, 2026

Motion by Board Member Bernard and seconded by Board Member Hagerty to approve the regular meeting minutes dated January 12, 2026.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Fetterley, Board Members Bernard, Hagerty, Burgess, Houts, Moore, and Salami. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Consider the Natural Resources Aspects of a Site Plan and Sketch Plan for Serenity at Rivers Edge (Project No. 26-101); Case of Rivers Edge Development LLC

Planning Manager Larson presented the staff report. He stated that the City has received a Land Use Application from Rivers Edge Development LLC for review of both a Sketch Plan and Site Plan for a proposed residential subdivision located on the south side of Riverdale Drive, between Dolomite Street and Sunfish Lake Boulevard. The subject property abuts the Mississippi River and is within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) Overlay District.

Board Member Moore asked if there was information on why the house pad placement was chosen.

Planning Manager Larson replied that those locations were chosen to maximize the river views for the homes.

Board Member Hagerty asked if a Landscape Plan would be required.

Planning Manager Larson replied that he did not believe a Landscape Plan would be required, as they should be able to meet the tree requirement with trees that are preserved.

Board Member Burgess asked for more information on the Tree Inventory to be done.

Planning Manager Larson replied that the applicant will propose a method for providing that information.

Chairperson Fetterley recognized that a residential development would require two trees per lot that will be met by the trees that will be left on-site. She asked and received confirmation that the Tree Inventory would also identify trees to be removed to support the construction of the homes. She asked if there is an anticipated plan for the outlot.

Planning Manager Larson replied that the intent would be to chop up that property with similar lots, but the builder is a custom home builder who cannot construct many homes at once. He anticipated that another plat would follow later this year or early 2027 to split off lots for him to build on in 2027.

Motion by Board Member Hagerty and seconded by Board Member Burgess to recommend approval of the natural resources aspects of the Serenity at Rivers Edge project, contingent upon receipt, review, and approval of a Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan, a Vegetation Permit Application, and a Vegetation Restoration Plan.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Fetterley, Board Member Bernard, Burgess, Hagerty, Houts, Moore, and Salami. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- **Fix It Clinic and HHW Events Update**

No comments. We can post this topic for the next month's agenda.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Board Member Bernard and seconded by Board Member Hagerty to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
Senior Planner

ATTEST:

Kalia Lor
Planning Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.

Environmental Policy Board (EPB)**Meeting Date:** 03/16/2026**Primary Strategic Plan Initiative:****Information****Title:**

Consider Request for a Variance to Utilize an Alternative Technique for Collecting the Tree Inventory Data for Serenity at Rivers Edge (Project 26-101)

Purpose/Background:

The City has received a Land Use Application from Rivers Edge Development LLC (the "Applicant") for a variance to deviate from the standard tree inventory methodology for the plat known as Serenity at Rivers Edge. The project is located on the south side of Riverdale Drive, between Dolomite Street and Sunfish Lake Boulevard (the "Subject Property"). The Applicant is proposing to use a Fixed Radius Plot methodology, rather than tagging each individual significant tree, due to existing site conditions.

Time Frame/Observations/Alternatives:**Development Summary**

The Applicant is proposing to subdivide the Subject Property into two (2) single family residential lots along with a large outlot. The intention is to develop the entirety of the Subject Property into single-family residential lots. However, the Applicant cannot currently meet the density requirements (2.25–4 units per acre), without essentially clear-cutting the existing tree cover on the Subject Property. But, the Subject Property abuts the Mississippi River, which means it is also located within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA). This overlay district includes additional regulations, specifically addressing vegetation management and land disturbance, amongst other things. The Applicant has stated a desire to limit the overall impact on the Subject Property and has proposed to 'custom' develop each lot to minimize impacts on existing natural resources. As part of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan Update process, Staff will be proposing a 'River District', applicable to both the Scenic River Protection Overlay District and the MRCCA, which would permit a lower density. The purpose of a lesser density would be to align more with the intent of both overlay districts, which is to minimize disturbance of existing natural resources.

Proposed Tree Inventory Methodology

There is significant tree cover on the Subject Property, primarily consisting of eastern red cedar, with other species, both coniferous and deciduous, sprinkled throughout the site. The tree cover is very dense, and considering that the vast majority of trees are evergreens (eastern red cedar) with branching down to the ground, it would be very challenging, time-consuming, and costly to complete a standard tree inventory (locating and tagging each significant tree). Furthermore, many of the lowest limbs are dead, due to a lack of sunlight reaching them, posing more of a safety risk for the individual(s) that would be conducting the inventory (these branches can be sharp). Thus, the Applicant is proposing to map the precise boundaries of the wooded areas and then utilize Fixed Radius Plots (FRP) to collect data and then extrapolate that out to the entire Subject Property.

The Subject Property is nearly a monoculture of eastern red cedars that appear to all be roughly the same height and are in similar growing conditions and soil. Thus, the FRP method would be an acceptable alternative method. This is the same methodology that was used for the tree inventory and preservation plan for a different development in the northern part of the City (this project was granted a variance to utilize FRP to complete the tree inventory and develop their tree preservation plan). Within the Subject Property, the Applicant would establish 1/10 acre plots and all trees within these plots would be inventoried. Once completed, the data can be extrapolated out to the entire site to provide a relative basal area, relative species abundance, and relative health condition, which can then be used to formulate the tree preservation plan.

The Subject Property is within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) Overlay District, which has additional vegetation management standards above and beyond the basic tree inventory and preservation plan. For example, at the time of building permit application submittal, the builder will also need to apply for a Vegetation Permit, which will specify exactly which significant trees will need to be removed to facilitate the installation of the home, driveway, and utility connections. The Tree Inventory will give a high-level overview of existing tree cover on the Subject Property, while the Vegetation Permit will focus on more specific tree removals on a specific lot.

When contemplating a variance, a three (3) factor test must be applied to determine whether 'practical difficulties' exist. The three (3) factor test includes:

1. Reasonableness — The proposal is to utilize an alternative inventorying technique, not to eliminate the need to do an inventory. The vast majority of the trees on site are a single species (eastern red cedar) that share similar size characteristics and growing conditions. Therefore, the FRP technique should provide a fairly accurate accounting of existing trees and thus, the proposal is reasonable.
2. Uniqueness — The denseness of the eastern red cedars, including the fact that their branching extends down to the ground, has resulted in a lot of dead branches (due to a lack of sunlight reaching them) that creates a safety concern for anyone conducting a tree inventory and presents a significant physical obstacle to tagging each individual significant tree.
3. Essential Character — This alternative sampling technique will not have any bearing on the essential character of the surrounding area. There will be persons on the ground collecting tree data (whether using the FRP technique or conducting a standard inventory). This is just data gathering and will not have any direct bearing on the layout of the proposed development.

Funding Source:

The Applicant is responsible for all costs associated with this request.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approving the variance request. Additionally, Staff is also recommending a minor amendment to the tree preservation section of City Code that would allow alternative methods of collecting data for a tree inventory without needing to seek a variance. If there is support from the Environmental Policy Board, Staff would prepare an Ordinance Amendment for consideration at a future meeting.

Outcome/Action:

Motion to recommend approval of a variance to use an alternative methodology to complete a tree inventory on the Subject Property.

Attachments

- Site Location Map
- Applicant Narrative
- Significant Existing Vegetative Stands Exhibit
- Sketch Plan
- Final Plat

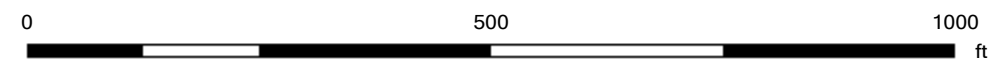
Form Review

Inbox	Reviewed By	Date
Chris Anderson (Originator)	Chris Anderson	03/10/2026 12:48 PM
Brian Hagen	Kalia Lor	03/12/2026 01:55 PM
Form Started By: Chris Anderson		Started On: 03/10/2026 09:26 AM
Final Approval Date: 03/12/2026		



**South of
Riverdale Drive
between Sunfish
Lake Blvd and
Dolomite St NW**

**PID:
34-32-25-14-0029**



Variance Request Narrative: Tree Inventory Methodology

Date: 03/05/2026

To: City Engineering & Planning Department

From: SERENITY AT RIVERS EDGE – Development team

Project Site: 34-32-25-14-0029

Re: Variance Request – City Code Section 106-910 (Tree Inventory Methodology)

1. Request for Variance

In accordance with City Code Section 106-220, I am formally requesting a variance from the standard tree inventory methodology, which typically requires the individual tagging and surveying of every "significant tree." Instead, I am proposing a **Representative Area Summary and Canopy Map** to be prepared by Kameron Kytonen, Certified Arborist, #MN-4237A, as an alternative methodology for this specific site.

2. Statement of Practical Difficulty

Per City Code, a variance may be granted when a landowner faces "practical difficulties" unique to the property. The following site-specific conditions demonstrate why a tree-by-tree inventory is unfeasible and unnecessary for this project:

- **Unique Biological Monoculture:** A preliminary site assessment by a certified tree specialist has identified that the tree canopy on this site consists of **85-90% Eastern Red Cedar**. Unlike a typical mixed-hardwood lot, this site is a near-monoculture. Tagging every individual cedar (averaging 8" to 15" DBH) would yield redundant data that does not provide additional value to the City's preservation goals beyond what a density-based summary provides.
- **Physical Site Constraints (Safety & Accessibility):** The specific growth habit of the Eastern Red Cedar on this property presents a physical barrier to the standard inventory method. These trees possess a high density of sharp, dead lower branches that extend to the ground, making the trunks physically inaccessible for a surveyor to reach and affix tags without extensive clearing of live and dead vegetation. This physical constraint is unique to the biological density of this specific lot.
- **Environmental Sensitivity:** Applying a "one-size-fits-all" tagging requirement to the dense cedar grove on the upland portion of the site would require significant disruption of the understory just to access the trunks, which is counter-intuitive to the City's goal of vegetation preservation.

3. Proposed Alternative Methodology

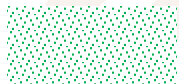
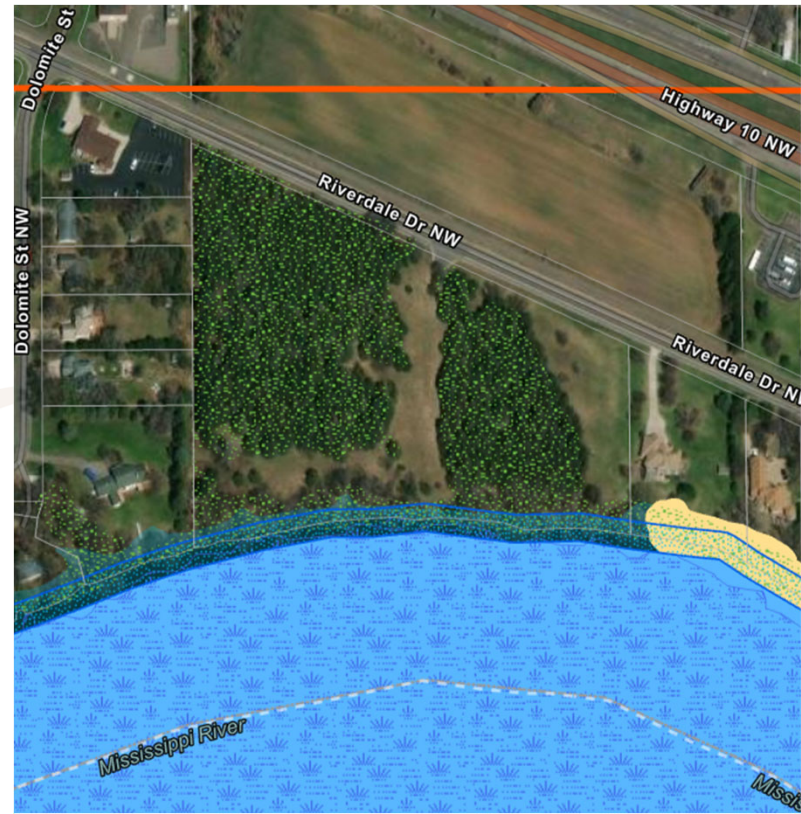
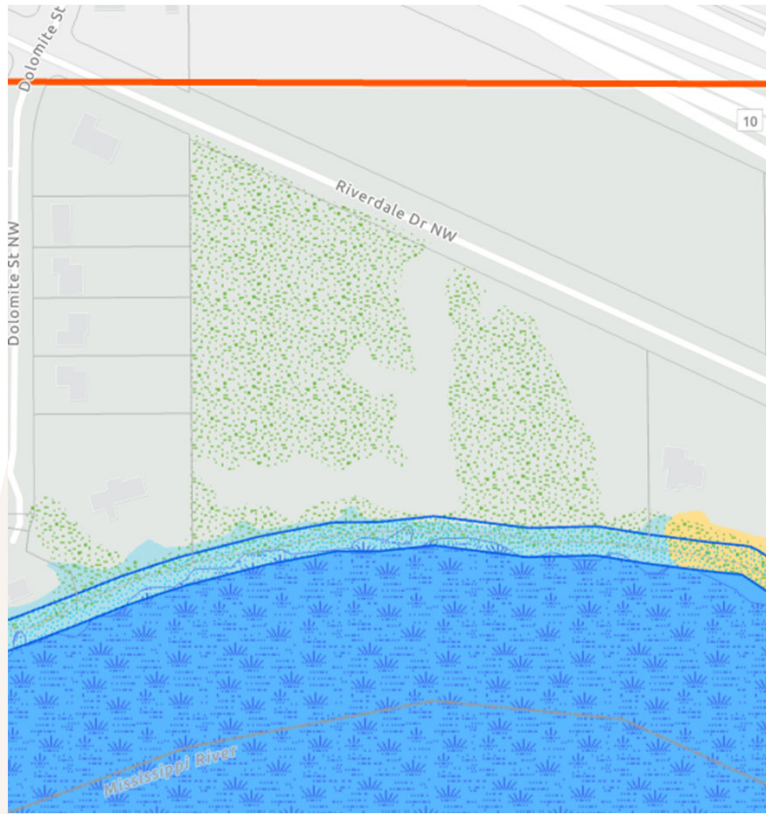
In lieu of individual tagging, we propose to provide the City with a **Vegetation Restoration and Preservation Plan** that includes:

1. **Canopy Delineation:** Mapping the precise boundaries of the cedar grove and the floodplain hardwood area.
2. **Representative Sample Plots:** Detailed inventory of specific 1/10th-acre plots to provide an accurate statistical density and health assessment.

4. Conclusion

The requested variance is not sought for economic gain, but rather to address a physical hardship created by the unique biological density and species composition of the land. This alternative approach will provide the City with the necessary data to evaluate the Site Plan and Vegetation Restoration Plan while respecting the physical realities of the site.

MN DNR's PRIMARY CONSERVATION AREAS (PCAs) MAPPING TOOL



Existing Significant Vegetative Stand



Shore Impact Zone (SIZ)



SKETCH PLAN OF SERENITY AT RIVERS EDGE

P.I.D.#34-32-25-14-0029

BENCHMARK

MNDOT GSID Station #781, named "F 257",
Elevation = 864.762 (NAVD88)

DEVELOPMENT DATA

LAND USE:
SINGLE FAMILY HOMES: 2 LOTS
OUTLOT: 1 OUTLOT
TOTAL: 405,752± sq.ft. 9.31± acres (ABOVE WATER AS LOC. 6/25/25)
EXISTING ZONING: R-1A
PROPOSED ZONING: R-1A
Density = $45,921 + 33,248 = 79,169$
 $79,169 \text{ sq.ft. above OHW} / 2 = 39,584.5$

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

That part of Tract C lying West of the East 210 feet as measured at right angles to the east line of Registered Land Survey No. 119, files of Registrar of Titles of Anoka County, Minnesota.

NOTES

- FIELD SURVEY STARTED IN JUNE 2025.

- MINIMUM LOT WIDTH = 80 FEET
- MINIMUM LOT DEPTH = 100 FEET
- MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT = 35 FEET
- MAXIMUM IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE = 40%
- FRONT SETBACK = 35 FEET
- SIDE SETBACK = 5 FEET
- SB DENOTES SETBACK LINE

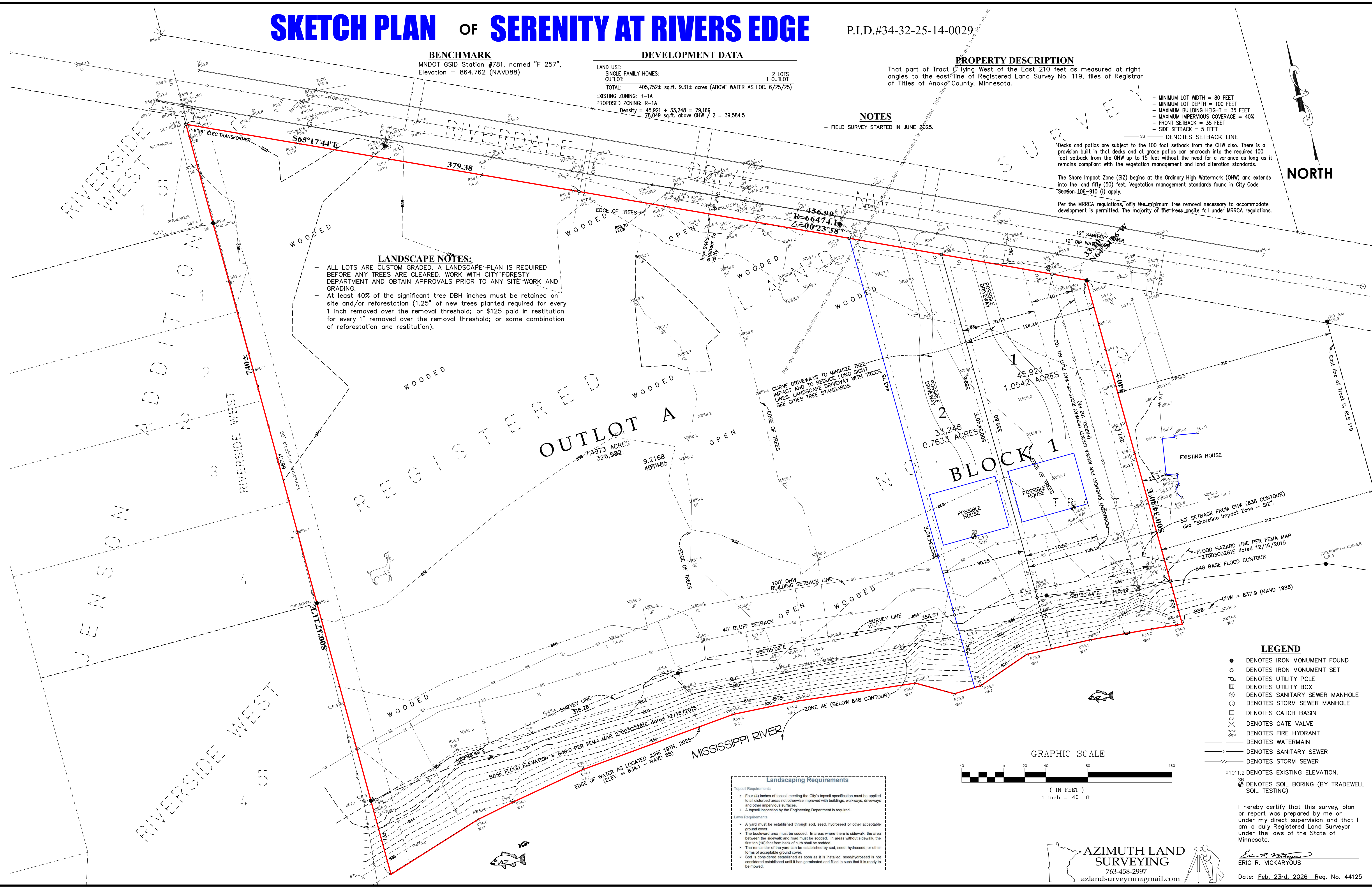
Decks and patios are subject to the 100 foot setback from the OHW also. There is a provision built in that decks and at grade patios can encroach into the required 100 foot setback from the OHW up to 15 feet without the need for a variance as long as it remains compliant with the vegetation management and land alteration standards.

The Shore Impact Zone (SIZ) begins at the Ordinary High Watermark (OHW) and extends into the land fifty (50) feet. Vegetation management standards found in City Code Section 106-910 (i) apply.

Per the MRRCA regulations, only the minimum tree removal necessary to accommodate development is permitted. The majority of the trees on site fall under MRRCA regulations.

LANDSCAPE NOTES:

- ALL LOTS ARE CUSTOM GRADED. A LANDSCAPE PLAN IS REQUIRED BEFORE ANY TREES ARE CLEARED. WORK WITH CITY FORESTRY DEPARTMENT AND OBTAIN APPROVALS PRIOR TO ANY SITE WORK AND GRADING.
- At least 40% of the significant tree DBH inches must be retained on site and/or reforestation (1.25" of new trees planted required for every 1 inch removed over the removal threshold; or \$125 paid in restitution for every 1" removed over the removal threshold; or some combination of reforestation and restitution).



LEGEND

- DENOTES IRON MONUMENT FOUND
- DENOTES IRON MONUMENT SET
- DENOTES UTILITY POLE
- DENOTES UTILITY BOX
- DENOTES SANITARY SEWER MANHOLE
- DENOTES STORM SEWER MANHOLE
- DENOTES CATCH BASIN
- DENOTES GATE VALVE
- DENOTES FIRE HYDRANT
- DENOTES WATERMAIN
- DENOTES SANITARY SEWER
- DENOTES STORM SEWER
- DENOTES EXISTING ELEVATION.
- SB DENOTES SOIL BORING (BY TRADEWELL SOIL TESTING)

I hereby certify that this survey, plan or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Registered Land Surveyor under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Eric R. Vickaryous
Date: Feb. 23rd, 2026 Reg. No. 44125

AZIMUTH LAND SURVEYING
763-458-2997
azlandsurveying@gmail.com

Landscaping Requirements

Topsail Requirements

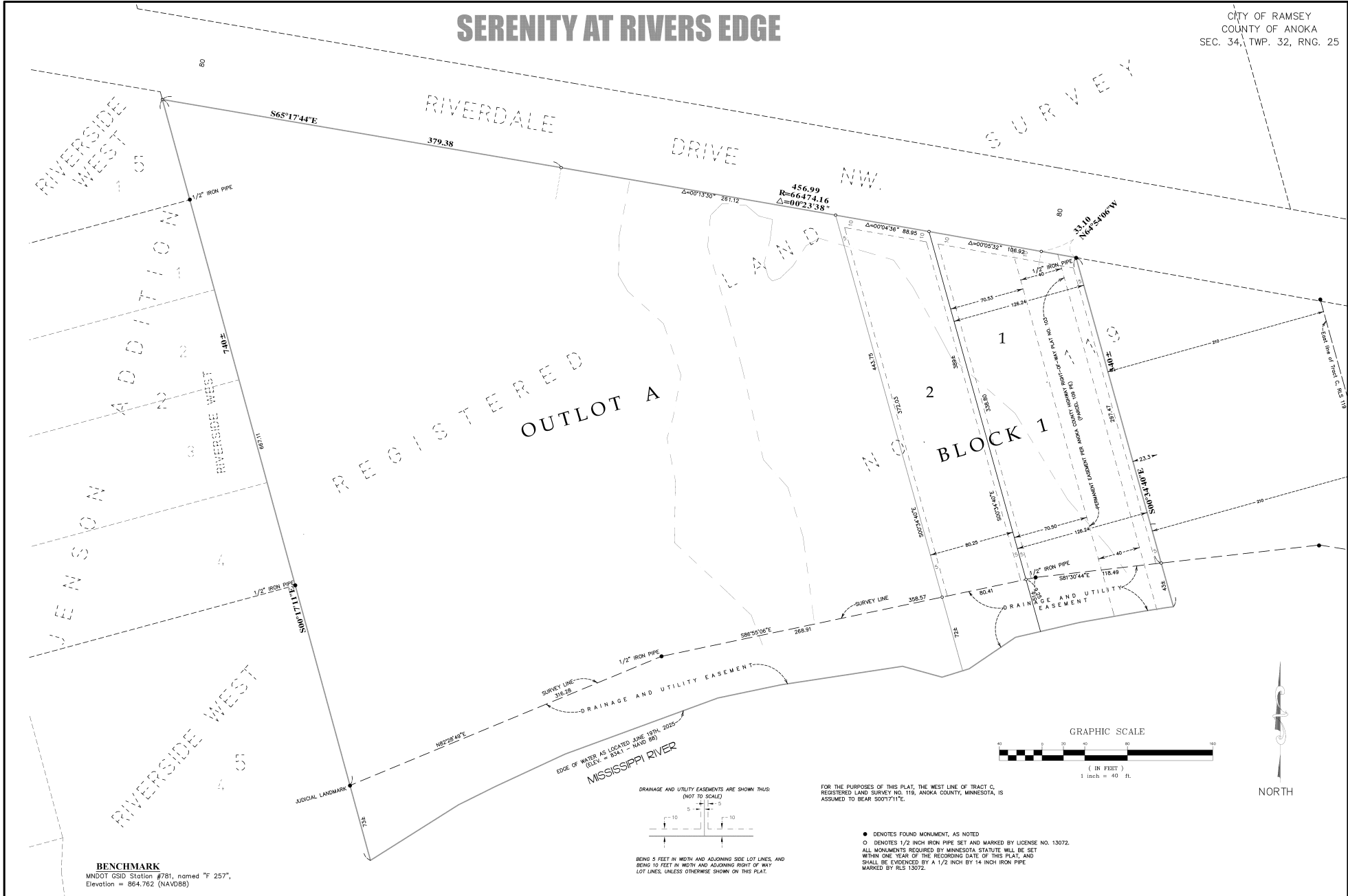
- Four (4) inches of topsail meeting the City's topsail specification must be applied to all disturbed areas not otherwise improved with buildings, walkways, driveways and other impervious surfaces.
- A topsail inspection by the Engineering Department is required.

Lawn Requirements

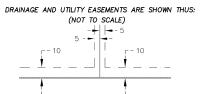
- A yard must be established through sod, seed, hydroseed or other acceptable ground cover.
- The boulevard areas must be sodded. In areas where there is sidewalk, the area between the sidewalk and road must be sodded. In areas without sidewalk, the first ten (10) feet from back of curb shall be sodded.
- The remainder of the yard can be established by sod, seed, hydroseed, or other forms of acceptable ground cover.
- Sod is considered established as soon as it is installed, seed/hydroseed is not considered established until it has germinated and filled in such that it is ready to be mowed.

SERENITY AT RIVERS EDGE

CITY OF RAMSEY
 COUNTY OF ANOKA
 SEC. 34, TWP. 32, RNG. 25



BENCHMARK
 MNDOT GSD Station #781, named "F 257",
 Elevation = 864.762 (NAVD88)



BEING 5 FEET IN WIDTH AND ADJOINING SIDE LOT LINES, AND BEING 10 FEET IN WIDTH AND ADJOINING RIGHT OF WAY LOT LINES, UNLESS OTHERWISE SHOWN ON THIS PLAT.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PLAT, THE WEST LINE OF TRACT C, REGISTERED LAND SURVEY NO. 119, ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA, IS ASSUMED TO BEAR S00°17'11"E.

- DENOTES FOUND MONUMENT, AS NOTED
- DENOTES 1/2 INCH IRON PIPE SET AND MARKED BY LICENSE NO. 13072.
- ALL MONUMENTS REQUIRED BY MINNESOTA STATUTE WILL BE SET WITHIN ONE YEAR OF THE RECORDING DATE OF THIS PLAT, AND SHALL BE EVIDENCED BY A 1/2 INCH BY 14 INCH IRON PIPE MARKED BY RLS 13072.

Environmental Policy Board (EPB)**Meeting Date:** 03/16/2026**Primary Strategic Plan Initiative:****Information****Title:**

Update on Managed Natural Landscape Ordinance Amendment

Purpose/Background:

After working with the Environmental Policy Board to develop standards related to the establishment of a natural landscape, Staff forwarded the Ordinance Amendment to the City Attorney for review. The City Attorney recommended a slightly different approach that creates more flexibility should adjustments be necessary in the future. Rather than codifying all standards in City Code, the City Attorney recommended that the only language necessary in City Code is to specify that a management plan is required. Then, in a separate policy document or application packet, the City should outline specifically what information must be included. Staff has modified the Ordinance Amendment accordingly and is in the process of developing an application packet that will be required should a resident desire to install a natural landscape. Attached to this case is the Ordinance Amendment with the City Attorney's comments, an updated version of the Ordinance Amendment without the standards, and a draft Application Packet. Please note that Staff will ultimately be working with the City's Communications Coordinator on the ultimate design and layout of this document.

Recommendation:

There is no recommended action as Staff's intention was to simply provide an update to the Board on the status of this project.

Outcome/Action:

No specific action is needed unless the Board has specific feedback or comments on the Application Packet.

Attachments

Ordinance Amendment with City Attorney Comments

Ordinance Amendment (clean version)

DRAFT Managed Natural Landscape Application Packet

Form Review**Inbox**

Brian Hagen

Form Started By: Chris Anderson

Final Approval Date: 03/12/2026

Reviewed By

Kalia Lor

Date

03/12/2026 01:55 PM

Started On: 03/10/2026 03:03 PM

ORDINANCE #26-XXX

**CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF
MINNESOTA**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 30 (NUISANCES)
AND CHAPTER 106 (ZONING CODE)**

The City of Ramsey Ordains:

Underlined text is inserted into City Code.

~~Strikethrough~~ text is deleted from City Code.

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY

This ordinance is adopted pursuant to and under the authority of the City Charter of the City of Ramsey.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 30 (NUISANCE CODE).

The following portion of Chapter 30, Section 1 (Definitions), is amended as follows:

Sec. 30-1. – Definitions

~~Acceptable prairie restoration means an area of semi or continuous ground cover consisting of native grasses and forbs, with an identified plant species matrix that does not include identified, state listed noxious weeds or invasive non native plants. With respect to any undesirable plants, the establishment and long term maintenance plan shall address the eradication measures to be employed.~~

Managed natural landscape means a planned, intentional and maintained planting of native or non-native grasses, wildflowers, forbs, ferns, shrubs, or trees, including but not limited to rain gardens, meadow vegetation, and ornamental plantings. It does not include turf-grass lawns left unattended or unmaintained for the purpose of returning to a natural state.

Meadow vegetation means grasses and flowering broad-leaf plants that are native to, or adapted to, the State of Minnesota, and that are commonly found in meadow and prairie plant communities, excluding noxious weeds.

Noxious weeds shall have the meaning assigned by Minnesota Statutes, Section 18.77, Subd. 8.

The following portion of Chapter 30, Section 3 (Property Conditions), is amended as follows:

Sec. 30-3. – Property Conditions

(2) Grass, weeds, or noxious growths.

a. All grass, weeds, or noxious growths of vegetation upon public or private property exceeding eight inches in height, ~~or whatever height specified in the appropriate zoning district,~~ excluding ~~acceptable prairie restoration plant materials~~ managed natural landscapes with an approved management plan as approved by City Staff.

1. Exemption. All ground cover vegetation located in the following areas are hereby exempt from height restrictions:

- i. Shore impact zones;
- ii. Bluff impact zones;
- iii. Areas within 50 feet of a wetland or natural drainage way;
- iv. Areas of native plant communities with approved management plans;
- v. Significant vegetative stands identified within City Code, relating to Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) Overlay District development standards;
- vi. Any vegetation management within the MRCCA Overlay District shall comply with the requirements and standards of City Code and with any vegetation clearing permits approved by the City of Ramsey;
- vii. Areas of steep slope where mowing is not safely possible;
- viii. Any area that has been undisturbed by development, grading or building and remains in its original natural state.

2. All areas that have been graded or developed must maintain the property to turf grass standards unless an ~~an appropriate prairie~~ approved management plan for a managed natural landscape has been ~~accepted~~ approved by the city or falls within the exemption list above. Rain gardens or pocket pollinator gardens not exceeding 100 square feet are also exempt from requiring a management plan.

i. Managed Natural Landscape Management Plan Required Information:

- i. Name, phone number, and email address of the property owner and address of the property, along with contact information including both a phone number and email address.
- ii. Scaled site plan of the property (including all improvements such as structures, driveway(s), septic system, well, and property lines) showing where the managed natural landscape will be established.
- iii. A general description of proposed vegetation types, plants, and plant succession to be used.
- iv. Estimated transition period and timeframe to establish the managed natural landscape. If this is to be accomplished in phases, the management plan shall also specify the duration of each phase and an estimated completion date.
- v. Description of method(s) to be used to eliminate existing vegetation in advance of establishing a managed natural landscape.
- vi. Description of method(s) to be used for controlling invasive vegetation and other non-desirable vegetation elimination (how, when, and frequency).

Commented [AJ1]: This is where you give yourself authority to approve the plan and make it a code requirement.

- vii. A general description of the means to plant natural landscape plants (e.g. through transplanting or seeding by human or mechanical means).
- ii. Managed Natural Landscape Standards:
 - i. Planting or replanting of the area shall be by transplant or seeding by human or mechanical means (e.g. cannot just rely on wind, insect, or other natural means of establishing a managed landscape area).
 - ii. If the managed natural landscape is in a location likely to be seen by the public, a small sign, no larger than 12 inches by 12 inches, and to a height not taller than 48 inches, which informs the public that a natural landscape is being established, shall be installed and maintained until less than 25% of the managed natural landscape area consists of weeds.
 - iii. If more than 25% of the managed natural landscape area consists of weeds, it shall be mowed to a height not more than 8 inches at least twice per year, once in June and once in August, to prevent weeds from developing and spreading seeds.
 - iv. Replanting or reseeding shall be done if less than 75% of the area is covered in native or intentionally planted plants after an establishment period of three years.
 - v. The managed natural landscape area must be maintained at least once per year by way of mowing to a height not more than 8 inches or by burning, after securing the necessary burn permit(s) from the Ramsey Fire Department.

Commented [AJ2]: Put all of this information into a Natural Landscape Management Plan Checklist. You do not need this in code because we say above that they have to provide a plan that you approve.

Sec. 106-371. – Managed Natural Landscapes

Managed natural landscapes have the following standards:

(1) Managed natural landscapes within the MUSA shall maintain a setback of three (3) feet (enough for one pass with a lawn mower) from all property lines, roads, sidewalks, and trails, unless one of the following exemptions applies:

a. The managed natural landscape area abuts another similar private or public managed natural landscape area, a wetland, pond, lake, stream or river.

b. A fully opaque fence with a minimum height of at least four (4) feet either exists or is installed along the lot line adjoining the planned managed natural landscape area.

~~(+)~~(2) Outside of the MUSA, no setback shall be required.

~~(-)~~(3) Plant cover, with not more than 25% weeds, shall be established within three (3) years' time.

SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance becomes effective upon publication, subject to City Charter Section 5.07.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Ramsey, Minnesota the ____ day of ____, 2026.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Introduction date:
Posting dates:
Adoption date:
Publication date:
Effective date:

ORDINANCE #26-XXX

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Managed natural landscape means a planned, intentional and maintained planting of native or non-native grasses, wildflowers, forbs, ferns, shrubs, or trees, including but not limited to rain gardens, meadow vegetation, and ornamental plantings. It does not include turf-grass lawns left unattended or unmaintained for the purpose of returning to a natural state.

Meadow vegetation means grasses and flowering broad-leaf plants that are native to, or adapted to, the State of Minnesota, and that are commonly found in meadow and prairie plant communities, excluding noxious weeds.

Noxious weeds shall have the meaning assigned by Minnesota Statutes, Section 18.77, Subd. 8.

The following portion of Chapter 30, Section 3 (Property Conditions), is amended as follows:

Sec. 30-3. – Property Conditions

- (2) Grass, weeds, or noxious growths.
 - a. All grass, weeds, or noxious growths of vegetation upon public or private property exceeding eight inches in height, excluding managed natural landscapes with a management plan as approved by City Staff.
 1. Exemption. All ground cover vegetation located in the following areas are hereby exempt from height restrictions:
 - i. Shore impact zones;
 - ii. Bluff impact zones;

- iii. Areas within 50 feet of a wetland or natural drainage way;
 - iv. Areas of native plant communities with approved management plans;
 - v. Significant vegetative stands identified within City Code, relating to Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) Overlay District development standards;
 - vi. Any vegetation management within the MRCCA Overlay District shall comply with the requirements and standards of City Code and with any vegetation clearing permits approved by the City of Ramsey;
 - vii. Areas of steep slope where mowing is not safely possible;
 - viii. Any area that has been undisturbed by development, grading or building and remains in its original natural state.
2. All areas that have been graded or developed must maintain the property to turf grass standards unless a management plan for a managed natural landscape has been approved by the city or falls within the exemption list above. Rain gardens or pocket pollinator gardens not exceeding 100 square feet are also exempt from requiring a management plan.

SECTION 3. AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 106

The following Section is hereby added to Chapter 106:

Sec. 106-371. – Managed Natural Landscapes

Managed natural landscapes have the following standards:

- (1) Managed natural landscapes within the MUSA shall maintain a setback of three (3) feet (enough for one pass with a lawn mower) from all property lines, roads, sidewalks, and trails, unless one of the following exemptions applies:
 - a. The managed natural landscape area abuts another similar private or public managed natural landscape area, a wetland, pond, lake, stream or river.
 - b. A fully opaque fence with a minimum height of at least four (4) feet either exists or is installed along the lot line adjoining the planned managed natural landscape area.
- (2) Outside of the MUSA, no setback shall be required.
- (3) Plant cover, with not more than 25% weeds, shall be established within three (3) years’ time.

SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance becomes effective upon publication, subject to City Charter Section 5.07.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Ramsey, Minnesota the ____ day of ____, 2026.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Introduction date:

Posting dates:

Adoption date:

Publication date:

Effective date:

This application packet includes the basic standards and regulations for establishing and maintaining a Managed Natural Landscape on your property. Please make sure to provide detailed responses on the application itself.

A Managed Natural Landscape is a planned, intentional, and maintained planting of native or non-native grasses, wildflowers, forbs, ferns, shrubs, or trees, including but not limited to rain gardens, meadow vegetation, and ornamental plantings. Converting your yard, or a portion thereof, into a Managed Natural Landscape, can provide a number of benefits both for you and the environment. Native plants are adapted to our local climate and soil. Thus, once native plants are established, they seldom require watering, mulching, protection from frost, or routine mowing. Native plants also benefit animals, birds, insects, and butterflies by providing food in the form of nectar, pollen, and seeds, as well as habitat.

Managed Natural Landscapes typically result in less stormwater runoff, due to their deep root systems. Certain native plant species have roots that get as deep as fifteen (15) feet, while standard turfgrass have roots that only penetrate about one to two inches (1-2") beneath the surface. The deeper root systems aid in infiltration of rainwater (rather than runoff) and in replenishing groundwater aquifers while also providing protection against erosion.

If you plan to establish a natural landscape, you must complete and submit the enclosed Managed Natural Landscape Application to the Planning Division for review. City Staff will contact you if additional information or clarifications are necessary. Review time is typically two (2) weeks.

Managed Natural Landscape Standards

- ❖ Planting or replanting shall be by transplanting or seeding by human or mechanical means (e.g. cannot rely on wind, insects, or other natural means for establishment).
- ❖ If the Managed Natural Landscape will be in a location likely to be seen by the public, a small sign (not larger than 12" x 12" and not taller than 48") shall be installed to inform the public that a Managed Natural Landscape is being established. The sign must remain until the Managed Natural Landscape consists of less than 25% weeds.
- ❖ Until such time that there are less than 25% weeds in a Managed Natural Landscape, the area shall be mowed twice per year, once in June and once in August. This is intended to prevent weeds from developing and spreading seeds.
- ❖ The Managed Natural Landscape area shall be maintained at least once per year by way of mowing to a height not more than eight inches (8") or by burning, but only after securing the necessary burn permit from the Ramsey Fire Department.
- ❖ Within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA), a setback of three (3) feet (essentially enough space for one pass with a lawn mower) from all property lines, roads, sidewalks and trails shall be maintained unless one of the following exemptions applies:
 - The Managed Natural Landscape area abuts another similar private or public Managed Natural Landscape area, a wetland, pond, lake, stream, or river.
 - A fully opaque fence (e.g. a privacy fence), with a minimum height of at least four (4) feet, either exists or is installed along the lot line adjacent to the Managed Natural Landscape area.
- ❖ The area shall be replanted, reseeded, or returned to a traditional turfgrass state if, after the initial 3-year establishment period, less than 75% of the area consists of native or intentionally planted plants.

I have reviewed the Managed Natural Landscape standards and do hereby confirm that my proposed landscaping project will be compliant.

Applicant Signature

Date

Managed Natural Landscape Management Plan Checklist

(For Office Use Only)

- Name, phone number, and email address of the property owner, and the address of the property where the managed natural landscape is proposed.
- Scaled Site Plan of the property. The Site Plan must include all existing improvements, including structures, driveway(s), septic systems, wells, etc., property boundaries, wetlands (if present on the property), and the area(s) where the managed natural landscape will be established.
 - Please note that establishing a managed natural landscape must be done via transplanting plants or seeding by human or mechanical means (cannot rely on wind, insects, or other natural means of establishing the managed natural landscape).
- Provide a general description of proposed vegetation types, plants, and plant succession (if applicable) to be used.
 - If using a seed mix, please specify the seed mix name/type and include species names within the mix.
- Provide an estimated transition period and timeframe for the establishment of the managed natural landscape. If the project is proposed to be conducted in phases, the duration of each phase and the estimated completion date must be specified.
 - Please note that plant cover, with not more than 25% weeds, shall be established within three (3) years of project commencement.
- Provide a description of the method(s) to be used to eliminate existing vegetation in preparation for establishing the managed natural landscape.
- Provide a description of the method(s) to be used for controlling invasive vegetation and other non-desirable vegetation that is found in the managed natural landscape. Please make sure to specify not only how this will be accomplished, but also indicate when this will occur and the frequency it will be done.
- Provide a general description of how the natural landscape plants will be installed (it must be through transplanting or seeding by human or mechanical means (cannot just let the yard 'go wild').

Applicant Contact Information

Please note: All official communication will be routed through this contact.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

In the box below, please provide a general description of the proposed vegetation types, plants, and plant succession to be used.

In the box below, please describe the estimated transition period and timeframe to establish the Managed Natural Landscape. Please note that if the Managed Natural Landscape is to be established in phases, please make sure to specify the duration and estimated completion date of each phase.

In the box below, please provide a description of how existing vegetation will be eliminated as part of the process of establishing a Managed Natural Landscape.

In the box below, please describe how you will control invasive and/or other non-desirable vegetation, including timing and frequency.

In the box below, please describe how the Managed Natural Landscape will be installed (e.g. this must be accomplished through transplanting or seeding by human or mechanical means).

If the Managed Natural Landscape will be located such that it will likely be seen by the public, a small sign (not more than 12" x 12" and not taller than 48") informing the public that a natural landscape is being established, must be installed and maintained until less than 25% of the Managed Natural Landscape area consists of weeds or non-desirable vegetation. If applicable, please include an image of the proposed signage to be used.

Until such time that less than 25% of the Managed Natural Landscape area consists of weeds or non-desirable vegetation, the area shall be mowed to a height not more than eight (8) inches at least twice per year. Mowing shall be completed once in June and once in August, to prevent weeds from developing and spreading weeds.

A detailed, scaled Site Plan must be included with the application. The Site Plan shall identify the property boundaries and all existing improvements, such as structures, driveway(s), septic system and well (if applicable), and existing or proposed fencing (if applicable). The Site Plan shall also identify the location(s) and dimensions of the proposed Managed Natural Landscape area(s).