::Town of Ramseur: An Optimistic Future::
::Conceptual Designs::

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This report is a summary of the conceptual design efforts of the Community Design Initiative of the College of Design at North Carolina State University and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, in collaboration with the citizens of Ramseur and their NC STEP Committee. Director of Community Design Initiative: Jay Tomlinson (jdt@ncsu.edu). Graduate student support: Irene Sadler Judge, Jacqui Harris, + Jon Blasco. Signage design collaboration with Kerri Lindley.

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Situated along the banks of the Deep River in the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina, the Town of Ramseur is a friendly, rural community in flux.

The first residents of the area were of the Catawba Indian Nation: “the River People.” Today, the Deep River is still the Town’s main identifier. After the American Revolution (1775-1783) the land was purchased by the Allen family, whose sawmill facilitated the development of the town.

In 1850, the Columbia Manufacturing Company converted the facility into a cotton mill with railroad arriving in 1890. Today, global shifts in manufacturing have led to the closure of Ramtex, with operations ceasing in 2009. The poem to the right, taken from the Chatham Journal, evokes the sentiments of its closure.

Now, it is time to plan for the future. Achieving a critical mass of people in the Historic Downtown and commercial sectors of Ramseur is an immediate item for consideration. This can be attained with a signage system, attracting traffic from Highway 64 to the nearby offerings of Ramseur. The addition of placemaking destinations for patrons is critical and must include entertainment, eateries, and shops.

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i [www.townoframseur.org/history.htm](http://www.townoframseur.org/history.htm)

ii [www.townoframseur.org/history.htm](http://www.townoframseur.org/history.htm)


iv [www.townoframseur.org/history.htm](http://www.townoframseur.org/history.htm)

v [www.townoframseur.org/history.htm](http://www.townoframseur.org/history.htm)

vi [www.jrmooreson.com/Ramtex.html](http://www.jrmooreson.com/Ramtex.html)

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Farewell to Ramtex

Farewell to thee, dear Ramtex!
We must say good-bye.
Though, we spent our lives here,
The time to leave is nigh.

We’ve been here in the good times,
We’ve stayed here for the bad.
For some, it’s been the only
Job we ever had.

We came when we were sick,
We came when we hurt.
We knew we should be at home in bed,
But, we just had to work!

Now, our future is uncertain,
We’re not sure what we’ll do.
For most it seems a bit too late
to be starting out anew.

But, one thing we know for certain,
One thing we know is true:
We worked hard and we were loyal,
So, the loser here is you!

By “Debbie”
(former Ramtex employee)
Community Revitalization

Entertainment opportunities include the proposed Amphitheater built into the slope of Roller Mill Hill, the Deep River Rail Trail (see examples of Row River Trail to the right), which will connect Franklinville with Ramseur's Historic Downtown, fishing piers, and non-motorized boat access along the Deep River.

These placemaking destinations, along with other innovative offerings, will grow Ramseur over time. The results could include romantic riverside bed and breakfasts, an excursion on the way to the Asheboro Zoo, a dynamic, supportive place to raise children or retire, and an Historic Downtown turned event space during Amphitheater events.

Additionally, streetscape enhancements including street trees, cross-walks, planted medians, stamped-asphalt pedestrian cross-blocks, bicycle route stamps, and curb extensions increase the safety, navigability, and aesthetic appeal of the downtown and commercial areas, attracting patrons and businesses.
Map 1: Downtown Revitalization: Focus on intersections: planted medians, street trees, bicycle route stamps, cross-walks, and stamped-asphalt pedestrian cross-blocks.
Map 3: Streetscape modifications: planted medians, pedestrian cross-blocks, cross-walks, street trees, and bicycle route stamps.

Highway median precedent:
Western Boulevard next to NC State Campus, Raleigh, NC
The images below represent examples of successful outdoor amphitheaters with monolithic, stadium seat-walls built into the existing slope of the land. For the case of Ramseur’s Amphitheater, ruins of the old sawmill and the peaceful progression of the Deep River would serve as a backdrop behind the stage. Themes from the Deep River Rail Trail or references to the Roundhouse that once occupied the lot could be incorporated to tie the Town’s amenities together. The currently proposed location of the Amphitheater at Roller Mill Hill, seen on Map 2, is recommended. Slated to hold up to 2,000 patrons, the Amphitheater could be a boon to the economy of Ramseur hosting a variety musical and theatrical spectacles as well as local, weekly markets.
Curb extensions make unused street space available to pedestrians.

Trees narrow street, slow Main Street traffic, and provide shade for businesses and patrons.

Stamped-asphalt pedestrian cross-blocks strengthen impression of Main Street and enhance pedestrian safety.

Fruit orchard at southern end of Main Street can be incorporated into a Spring Music Festival.

Rail-Trail and boardwalks provide fishing and kayak access to river.

Outdoor amphitheater seats 2,000 and turns downtown Ramseur into a destination.

New parking facilities, with handicapped access to amphitheater.
A Wayfinding System will help Ramseur communicate with potential visitors, passing motorists, and commuters about the myriad of offerings available just a quarter mile South of Highway 64.

The signage designed for Ramseur in the following pages focuses on welcome and wayfinding signage, but websites, printed materials, informational kiosks, and placemaking destinations are all a part of the Wayfinding System, as well as the new Town logo, featured here, and the new Town motto, “Where Family and Friends Meet”.

See Map 4 for signage placement and Town amenities.
Map 4: Proposed welcome and wayfinding sign placement.

Welcome sign locations have been placed close to Ramseur Town Limits, while wayfinding signage has been placed to attract traffic South to Downtown Ramseur.

Resources featured on the wayfinding signage include:

- Ramseur Community Museum
- Proposed Deep River Rail Trail
- Proposed non-motorized boat access points
- Proposed fishing piers
- Proposed Amphitheater and Annual Spring Music Festival site
- Proposed orchard at the top of Roller Mill Hill
- Proposed Deep River Pedestrian Bridge (built upon foundation of dam remnants)
- Leonard Memorial Park
- Schools
- Emergency facilities
- Libraries
- Town offices
Before and after images showing proposed signage on Highway 64 with drought tolerant landscaping and new street lighting.

Current Highway 64, West bound.

Proposed Highway 64 with signage, new Ramseur logo, new motto, and street lighting.

Proposed Highway 64 with Welcome Sign.
Main Street: Wayfinding signage on Main Street with street lighting options. The Ramseur Museum and proposed Deep River Rail Trail, the Amphitheater, Orchard, Kayak Ramps, and Fishing Piers would be nearby amenities.

Main and Liberty Streets: existing image. Deep River access is on the right.

Wayfinding signage with lighting option B: Mid-century modern with wide brim to support dark skies.

Wayfinding signage and lighting option A: Modern lighting with light embellishments.

Wayfinding signage with lighting option C: Historical carriage lights.
Extended and expanded bicycle routes, sidewalks, trails, and Deep River access points are recommended to increase transportation options, promote the health and well-being of Ramseur citizens, and bolster a diverse economic ecology for Ramseur. Diagrams of alternative transportation options are shown in the following pages.
Multi-Modal Transportation Diagrams:
Existing and proposed sidewalks, trails, and greenways.

Currently existing sidewalks

Proposed extensions of sidewalks and continuation of the Deep River Rail Trail
(see appendix for Deep River Rail Trail Plan).
Multi-Modal Transportation Diagrams: 5 minute / 10 minute walking radius and multi-modal transportation network.

Humans can generally walk a quarter mile in five minutes and a half mile in ten minutes.

Multi-modal transportation network: proposed sidewalks and trails, bicycle routes, and non-motorized boat access points to Deep River.
Phasing and Summary

To best promote the economy, culture, and community of Ramseur it is recommended by the Community Design Initiative to strengthen the connection between the historic downtown (ie. Main Street) with Highway 64 and to communicate the offerings of Ramseur to the world through a comprehensive Wayfinding System.

Strategic phasing will be necessary to accomplish the multitude of ambitions and goals described in this report.

The continuation of the Deep River Rail Trail is important as the Franklinville portion is complete. As development continues, non-motorized boat access points, fishing piers, pedestrian bridges, and Deep River access points can begin construction.

Safety and accessibility are important goals, too. Installations of crosswalks and bicycle route stamps will encourage citizens and visitors to enjoy exploring Ramseur.

The construction of the Ramseur Amphitheater can begin after siting is complete. The first stage of amphitheater construction can begin with volunteers (eg. Eagle Scouts and other community members). A simple clearing of the site to accommodate the proposed Annual Spring Music River Festival and weekly, local markets would be a great place to start. A community orchard can be installed at the top of Roller Mill Hill along with these preliminary efforts. Citizen involvement is integral to the success of Ramseur.

The improvements listed above will attract residents and businesses to Ramseur and spur the need for additional businesses, restaurants, and employees. The momentum of the energy created by the community is essential and will generate economic activity, investments, and interest in the future and well-being of Ramseur.
Appendix:
Deep River Rail Trail Plan by the Piedmont Triad Regional Council