Community image is a thread running through the entire Comprehensive Plan. Every section of the Plan deals, in some manner, with the face Faribault presents. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to establish and maintain a positive community image by:

• Creating an overall development pattern that is well designed and sustainable.

• Maintaining edges and buffers that define and protect adjacent land uses.

• Promoting a development pattern that properly blends the built and the natural environment.

• Sustaining livable neighborhoods and promoting pride in property and community.

• Creating and maintaining an excellent system of parks, trails, and open spaces.

• Providing community facilities that meet needs of Faribault residents.

• Taking public action to prevent blight and to promote reinvestment in existing buildings.

In addition to these objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, certain aspects of community image merit additional attention. This section of the Plan examines several specific aspects of community image for Faribault

Image Issues

Various elements combine to form community image. In using the Comprehensive Plan as tool to enhance image, it is important to consider the issues that shape Faribault's image. The following questions help to frame planning related to image:

• Can the commercial corridors be improved visually?

• Should and/or how can the image of Faribault be improved in the minds of residents and non-residents?

• How can the sense of "place" be enhanced?

• Should neighborhoods be more clearly defined and identified?

• How can the entrances (or gateways) to Faribault be more clearly identified?

• Do the City, the business community, and School District market themselves effectively to existing and prospective residents (especially families)?

The answers to these questions will help to guide public actions related to community image. Some of these issues are explored in greater detail in the remainder of this section.

Corridors and Gateways

Gateways announce that you have entered Faribault. These gateways should be lighted, well landscaped and designed with quality so they need minimal maintenance and present an enduring positive image. As the first thing that people see when entering

Faribault, these gateways create a lasting impression of the community.

The primary gateway points for Faribault occur at the Interstate 35 interchange areas. The roadway system establishes these points as the primary entrances to Faribault. The interchanges create a focal point for a gateway. Other gateway locations occur at entrance points and key road junctures.

In Faribault, the concept of a gateway cannot be defined solely by a particular point on the map. A more accurate approach to gateways looks at corridors. Many community destinations lie some distance from the highway oriented gateways. Road corridor should provide a broad gateway function, drawing people into the community.
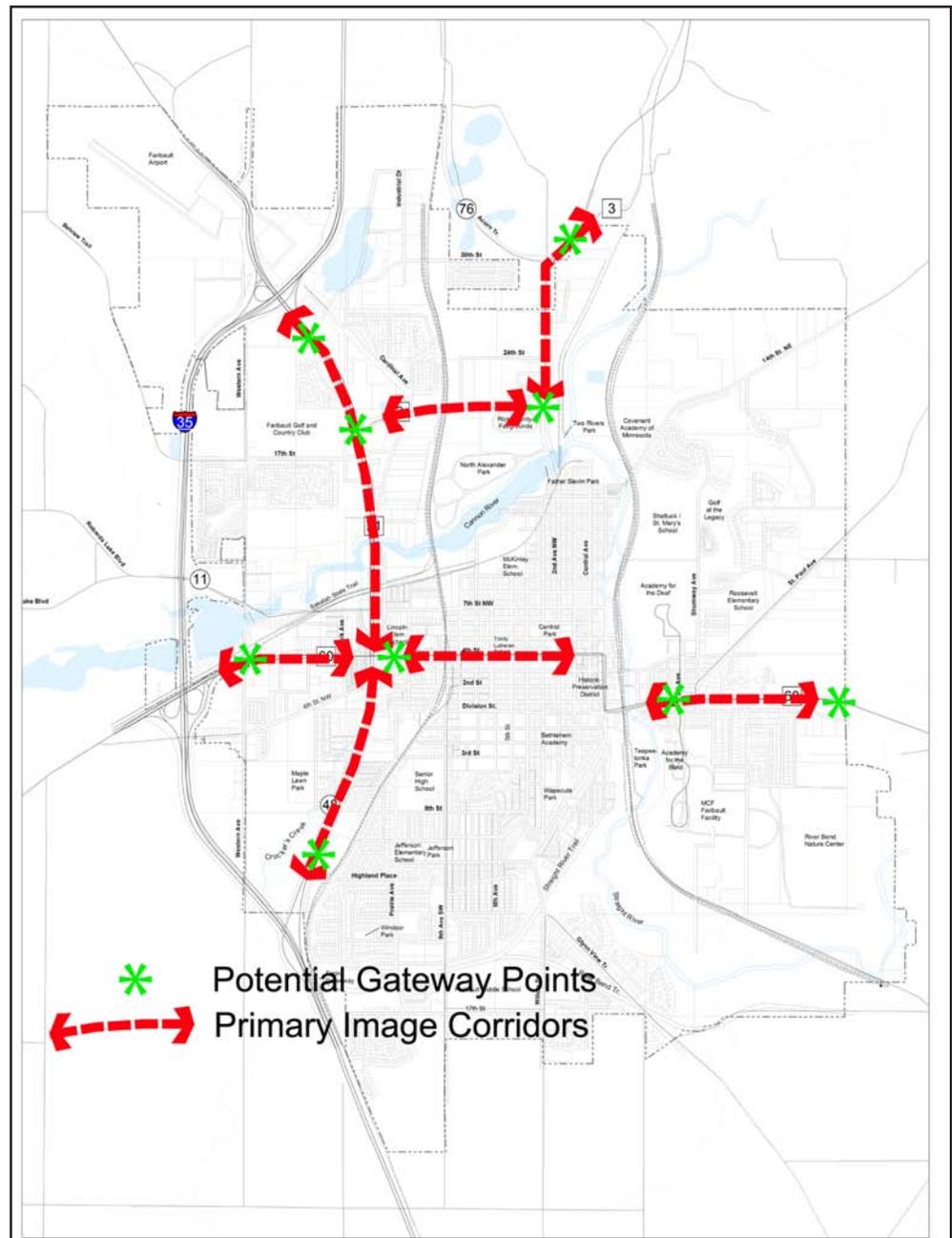

Figure 11-1
Community Gateways and Image Corridors

Figure 11-1 illustrates key gateway points and image corridors in Faribault.

Part of the challenge of corridor planning and improvements comes from the conflicting objectives placed on these roadways.

- The main corridors in Faribault involve State highways. The primary objective of these roads is to move traffic safely and efficiently.

- The corridors are commercial districts. Businesses seek visibility and convenient access.

- These roads are important parts of the community fabric. The appearance of public and private investments along these roads shapes the impression of Faribault.

Addressing the needs of these image corridors requires linking additional investigation with a catalyst for action. Previous corridor planning efforts have not changed the character of these areas. The Highway 60 improvements provide such a catalyst. Additional opportunities may come from redevelopment initiatives along the corridor.

Signage

Both private and public signage play a role in community image. Business signs are an important extension of commercial development. These signs announce the presence and location of business. Without public guidance, business signs can diminish the overall image of commercial district and corridors. Local ordinances should seek a balance between private and public objectives. At a minimum, the size and appearance of signs should not detract from a positive community image. A better objective is to find ways of using these private investments to enhance the visual appeal of an area. Business interests will center on costs and effective communication. The photo on the right show how the simple and cost-effective addition of landscaping can be used to enhance signage.

Public signage is an important element of image. Directional and informational signage can reflects community image and heritage. These public improvements should be part of broader plans for corridor enhancements. If corridors attempt to draw people into Faribault, signage must support this objective. Signage suggests that there are points of interest not immediately visible from the edge or gateway. Effective signage helps visitors navigate around the community.

Public Investments

Public buildings in Faribault demonstrate how investments in public facilities can define community image. City Hall and the Buckham Center are two examples of how the reuse and enhancement of historic structures shape the face of the community. These facilities provide a positive reflection of community heritage and values.

The park system offers another illustration of using public investments to enhance image. Parks create green space and natural settings in a built environment. Parks

provide places for the community to gather and play. Parks provide tangible proof of Faribault's commitment to quality of life.

The pubic investments in streets and the adjacent right-of-way can have significant impacts on community image. The illustration in Figure 11-2 depicts the elements of
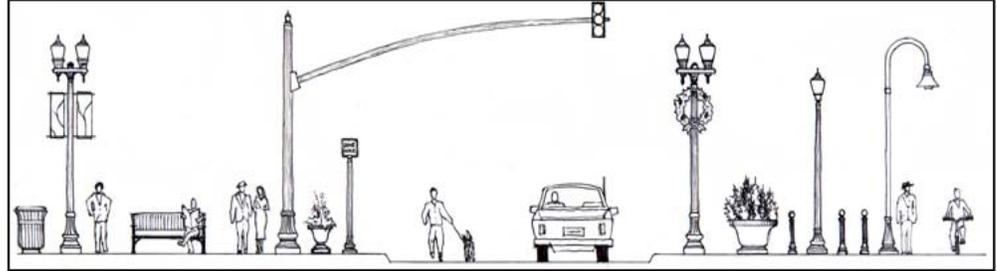
Figure 11-2
Elements of Streetscape Enhancements

streetscape. Planning for improvement to the Highway 60 corridor will give Faribault the opportunity to explore the use of these improvements to enhance image.

Policies

The following policies are statements of intent related to community image. These policies are intended to guide decisions to pertaining both general approaches that integrate with other sections of the Comprehensive Plan and to specific objectives related to community image.

1. Use public investments in infrastructure and facilities to promote design and character that enhances the image of Faribault.

2. Use public participation in development projects to promote quality design, community character and sustainable environments.

3. Improve the appearance of primary entrance corridors to Faribault.

4. Strengthen and preserve the high-quality environment of Faribault's residential neighborhoods.

5. Establish a strong sense of pride in the community through beautification, historic and cultural preservation and high quality design.

6. Encourage the maintenance of and reinvestment in existing buildings.

7. Take a proactive position on community redevelopment and renewal projects to improve the environmental soundness, efficiency of use and physical appearance of underutilized or incompatible land uses.

8. Encourage quality design of redevelopment and new development, especially that which occurs within the key corridors.

9. Support the local events and festivals to heighten public awareness of the identity, character, pride and unity of the community.

Initiatives

The process of preparing the Comprehensive Plan led to the following initiatives. These initiatives are actions to be undertaken by the City of Faribault to achieve the policy objectives related to community image.

1. Previous planning has examined planning and urban design issues in the primary highway corridors (see 1996 Corridor Inventory and Analysis). These issues should be revisited with a focus on implementation. State improvements to Highway 60 in Faribault provide a catalyst to consider ways to strengthen this corridor. Local planning should precede State design efforts to allow community objectives to shape the improvements. Road design, streetscape, and adjacent land uses combine to influence image in this corridor.

2. Many of the same issues apply to the Highway 21 and Highway 3 corridors. Planning for Highway 60 should include other corridors and gateway to create a cohesive image.

3. Planning for corridor improvement provides the opportunity to consider public and private signage issues.

4. The responsibility for community image goes beyond city government. The city should seek collaborative relationships with other units of government, the Chamber of Commerce and other community groups to create positive community image. These relationships should seek areas of shared concern, opportunities to involve the community, and approaches to promote Faribault.

5. Increased community involvement and volunteerism allows adults, seniors and children to work in tandem for a common good. This approach builds greater ownership and pride in Faribault. Broader events such as Earth Day, America Recycles Day, or Pollution Prevention Week can provide a focus for promoting volunteerism.

6. Signage issues should be explored through corridor planning efforts. Regulations for business signage should ensure appropriate business identification while minimizing the cluttered look of highway business corridors. Public signage should promote community identity and visitor wayfinding.