



# Merrill, Wisconsin

Branding Proposal

Updated April 19, 2022

# Merrill | Brand key issue

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Considering that currently, people have a wide range of perceptions about Merrill, how do we position the Merrill community in the minds of current and potential residents, businesses and visitors in a way that will define our attributes *and* motivate them to live, work, do business or visit here?

**Be Bold.**

**Be True.**

**Be Focused.**

# Merrill | Brand inside-out

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It is important to realize that this effort is both internal and external. We must generate pride and affection for Merrill with those who already live and work here as well as attract new people to our community.

# Merrill | Brand strategy

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The intent of the Merrill brand strategy is to create an emotional connection between people and place that will retain and attract residents, businesses and visitors.

# Merrill | Brand purpose

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Develop a strong brand image that focuses on  
a simple, fulfilling lifestyle and a diverse  
choice of rich and robust outdoor activities

# Merrill | Brand core pillars

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## PRIMARY



LIFESTYLE/WORKSTYLE  
INTEGRATION



OUTDOORS

## SECONDARY



FAMILY



EDUCATION



COMMUNITY



AFFORDABILITY

# Merrill | Brand target audience

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Interests align with attributes found in Merrill.



Willingness to move or travel.



24 to 45 year-old.

# Merrill | Brand vision

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A brand vision statement indicates the eventual milestone that Merrill would like to reach. This vision should align with but not be the same as the City Government vision.

Merrill will be recognized as providing  
a **fulfilling lifestyle experience** to generate  
interest in and connection to a  
small-town environment.



# Merrill | Brand positioning statement

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Positioning statements are for internal use. These statements guide the marketing and operating decisions for Merrill branding. A positioning statement will help Merrill make key decisions that affect perception of the Merrill brand.

There are four essential elements of a best-in-class positioning statement:

1. Target Customer
2. Market Definition
3. Brand Promise
4. Reason to Believe

For those seeking a balanced integration of lifestyle and workstyle,  
Merrill offers residents, businesses and visitors  
fulfilling, natural and authentic experiences.

These experiences are achieved through a simple, fulfilling lifestyle and a  
diverse choice of rich and robust outdoor activities.

# Merrill | Brand promise

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Set an expectation of an experience with our brand. It needs to be relevant, competitive and authentic. But it can't be everything to everybody. If it is, it will not be differentiating or meaningful.

Merrill delivers an **authentic experience** that is achieved through a **simple, fulfilling lifestyle** and a diverse choice of **rich and robust outdoor activities**.

*Authentic:* Merrill reflects the genuine nature of our experiences, people, community and history.

*Simple:* Merrill offers small-town charm and amenities that are warm, open and neighborly.

*Fulfilling:* Merrill offers a balanced integration of lifestyle and workstyle important to our target audience.

*Outdoor:* Merrill offers a vast choice of outdoor activities important to the outdoor-loving side of our target audience.

# Merrill | Brand attributes

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Touchstones that define the qualities of our brand. Characteristics that make our brand personal and unique in the mind of our target audiences. They help us stand apart from our competition and are beneficial in establishing the tone-of-voice in communications.

## **Authentic**

Unpretentious – unaffected, sincere, respectful.

## **Natural**

Existing with nature – four season beauty and activities.

## **Small Town Charm**

A simpler life – family and community friendly, play is as important as work.

# Merrill | Brand personality

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A set of human characteristics that bring our brand to life. A brand personality is something to which our audiences can relate; an effective brand increases its brand equity by having a consistent set of traits that a specific audience segment enjoys.

## **Neighborly**

Especially welcoming, helpful, friendly and kind.

## **Outdoorsy**

Enjoy existing with nature through recreational four-season outdoor activities.

## **Hard-working**

Exhibit a strong work ethic of energy, commitment and passion.

# Merrill | Brand appeal

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Glaciers left our region with its amazing natural beauty, alive today in forests, fields, lakes and rivers. Combined with the neighborly, outdoor-loving people who have truly shaped our region into a modern wonderland of work and play, we will appeal to our target audience, inviting them to consider visiting or living and working in Merrill.

# Merrill | Messaging framework

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## ATTRIBUTES

- Authentic
- Natural
- Small Town Charm

## PERSONALITY

- Neighborly
- Outdoorsy
- Hard-working



**MERRILL**

**PROMISE: A simple, fulfilling lifestyle**

# Merrill | Brand essence

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The heart and soul of the brand.

The brand essence is the most succinct definition of the brand. *What are we here to do?* Every strong brand stands for something – an attribute that differentiates the brand from competitors as perceived by the target audience. The word, or words, are not necessarily used in marketing, but are used to guide the marketing choices we make.

For instance, consider the following examples of brand essence:

- Nike: Authentic Athletic Performance
- Walt Disney: Magical Fun
- Hallmark: Enriching Lives
- Jeep: Adventurous
- 3M: Innovative
- Lexus: Luxury
- Volvo: Safe
- Maytag: Dependability
- Starbucks: Rewarding Everyday Moments
- Jenny Craig: Enhancing the Enjoyment of Life

*Merrill ...*

# Merrill | Brand essence

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Option One

**More to life.**



# Merrill | Brand essence

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## “More to Life” leverages a double entendre’:

- Reinforces the “balance of life and work integration” attraction important to our target audience.
  - Merrill offers extraordinary life/work integration with terrific career options, quality of life, outdoor recreation and friendly community.
- Promises that they will get more out of their life here in Merrill.
  - Examples – direction drafts only:
    - More life, less stress.
    - More house, less money.
    - More craft beer, less bland beer.
    - More farm to table, less mega-farm processing.
    - More snow fun, less snow blahs.
    - More natural wonder, less concrete jungle.
    - More friendly, less rude.
    - More community, less isolation.

# Merrill | Brand essence

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A place rich in experiences and small-town charm, Merrill is unlike any other area in the country. Located in North Central Wisconsin, it provides *More to Life* – a simple, fulfilling lifestyle and a diverse choice of rich and robust outdoor activities.

Discover a host of four-season activities for outdoor enthusiasts. You'll find open bike and hiking paths, canoeing and kayaking waterways, local parks, fishing spots, hunting, snowmobile and UTV trails and a host of winter activities, including cross-country and downhill skiing and snow-shoeing – offering more ways to enjoy the natural beauty of the region and the spirit of adventure.

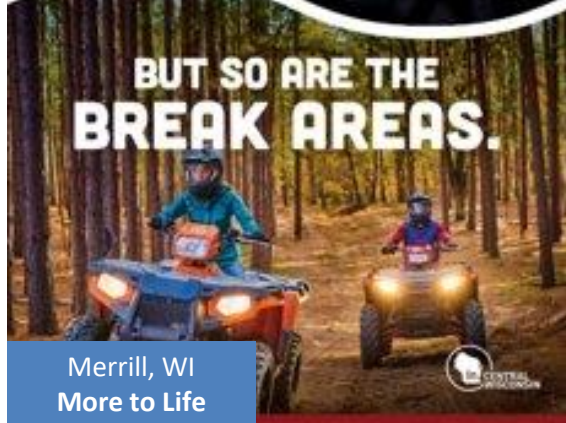
Discover more ways to enjoy life as you experience the openness and authenticity of our small town, distinctive local bakeries and cafes, unique shops and local festivals and events.

Discover the importance of our heritage, open your mind and expand your knowledge about Merrill's significant contribution to Wisconsin. Merrill offers a history and tradition deeply rooted in Indigenous Peoples as stewards of the land, a prosperous logging industry and a commitment to our natural resources.

Discover a wonderful place to raise your family with access to a strong education system, one-of-a-kind college scholarship program and a diversity of job and career opportunities.

*More to Life* captures the emotional engagement of visiting or living and working in Merrill and will connect with the type of visitors we are trying to draw to the area.

# Merrill | Brand essence



Merrill, WI  
More to Life

Merrill, WI  
More to Life

Merrill, WI  
More to Life

# Merrill | Brand

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## Discussion