



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
**1st Quarter Meeting**  
**March 2, 2017 • 2:30 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**State Office Building Room 500 North**  
**DRAFT AGENDA**

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- 2:30 p.m. Introductions** S. Johnson  
- Welcome to:  
Millie Philipp, Explore Minnesota Tourism  
Boxuan Xia, MnDOT SEEDs Paraprofessional, Senior/U of M
- 2:35 p.m. Approve Today's Agenda & Minutes from 11/10/16 and 1/5/17** S. Johnson/All
- 2:40 p.m. Commission Business**  
- Budget Report Miller  
- Review/Edit Process for Letters of Comment and Support Miller/All  
- Executive Committee Report Handout/Committee Members
- 3:00 p.m. National MRPC Updates**  
- 2017 Semi-Annual Meeting – Paducah, KY, Apr. 19-21 Samp/S. Johnson/Miller  
- 2017 Annual Meeting – Marquette, IA, Sept. 19-21 Samp  
- Confirm/Update Technical Committee Membership S. Johnson/All
- 3:20 p.m. Old Business**  
- Plan Your Project Interactive Maps Update Zoff/Xia  
- National Advisory Council on Travel & Tourism Infrastructure Zoff  
- Mississippi River Trail (MRT) Update Handout  
- MN GRR Map Reprint Status Miller
- 3:50 p.m. New Business**  
- Mississippi River Connections Collaborative Updates Anfinson  
- MN GRR Ambassador Development Pilot Lewis, Mulry  
- Report on Meetings with U.S. Senators/Members of Congress Lewis  
- Partnership Request – Source Song Festival Miller/All
- 4:15 p.m. Agency and Regional Updates**  
- Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids Salminen  
- Grand Rapids to Brainerd MacDonald  
- Brainerd to Elk River Samp  
- Elk River to Hastings Pierson  
- Hastings to Iowa Border Mulry  
- Agriculture Hugunin  
- Explore MN Tourism A. Johnson/Philipp  
- Historical Society Kajer/Kelliher  
- Natural Resources Parker/Bonsignore  
- Transportation Bradley/Zoff  
- National Park Service/MISS Anfinson
- 4:55 p.m. Other Business**
- 5:00 p.m. Wrap Up and Adjourn**



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
4th Quarter Meeting – November 10, 2016  
State Office Building, St. Paul MN  
MINUTES – Draft**

**Commissioners Present**

Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River  
Anne Lewis – At Large Member  
Rep. Sheldon Johnson – Chair  
Keith Parker – DNR Appointee  
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border  
Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings  
Nancy Salminen – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids  
Amanda Mac Donald – Grand Rapids to Brainerd

**Technical Advisors & Staff Present**

Carol Zoff – Transportation  
Gina Bonsignore – DNR

David Kelliher – Historical Society  
Greg Hubinger - LCC  
Chris Miller – Staff

**Commissioners & Technical Advisors**

**Absent**

Scott Bradley – Transportation Appointee  
Paul Hugunin – Agriculture Appointee  
Adam Johnson – Tourism Appointee  
Sen. Patricia Torres-Ray  
Sen. David Senjem  
Andrea Kajer – Historical Society Appointee

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The meeting was called to order at 2:35 by Chair Johnson, followed by introductions. A quorum was present. Chair Johnson and all welcomed new member Amanda MacDonald, representing the Grand Rapids to Brainerd Region.

**Review of Agenda and Minutes from 8/11/16 Meeting**

The draft agenda was reviewed along with draft minutes from the 8/11/16 meeting. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Cordelia Pierson to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried. Motion by Sheronne Mulry and seconded by Nancy Salminen to approve the 8/11/16 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**Commission Business**

**Budget Report:** Chris Miller provided an overview of the budget report included in the meeting packet. The budget includes carry over funding from FY '16, which must be spent during FY '17. Great River Road needs include a printed map and website updates. A question was raised about whether the Commission can enter into a map sponsorship arrangement or sell advertising to help cover printing costs. LCC will check into this.

**Regional Meetings/Elections Update:** A Bluffs Regional Meeting was held in Red Wing on September 23 and Sheronne Mulry was re-elected to the Regional Commissioner position. Sheronne described the meeting attendance and response and special thanks were noted to Red Wing Ignite, the meeting location. A Metro Regional Meeting was held at Historic Fort Snelling on October 27 and special thanks were noted to meeting hosts Historic Fort Snelling and the Minnesota Historical Society. Cordelia Pierson was re-elected to the Regional Commissioner position. Cordelia shared information on the meeting attendance and feedback and also noted the Mississippi River Geotourism Website rollout meeting that followed, including a welcome by St. Paul Mayor Coleman. Amanda MacDonald, Executive Director of the Aitkin Chamber of Commerce, was recently elected to fill the remainder of the term in the Grand Rapids to Brainerd Region following the move by Anne Lewis to the At-Large Position.

**Executive Committee Confirmation and Initial Tasks:** The Executive Committee description in the meeting packet was referenced as edited and approved at the last meeting. By definition, the committee is to include the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary-Treasurer. Two additional positions are to be filled by the MRPC and overall membership is to include a House or Senate member, regional member and agency member. Rep. Johnson recommended Andrea Kajer (MNHS – agency member) and Sen. Dave Senjem (MN Senate) to fill the two positions. Both have indicated willingness to serve. Motion by Anne Lewis to approve the proposed Executive Committee membership (Rep. Johnson, Sheronne Mulry, Anne Lewis,

Andrea Kajer and Sen. Senjem), seconded by Cordelia Pierson. Motion carried. A meeting of the Committee will be set early in 2017.

**Confirm 2017 Quarterly Meeting Dates:** Quarterly meeting dates for 2017 were confirmed as follows – March 2, June 8, August 31 and November 9. Meetings will be from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the State Office Building unless otherwise noted. In addition, a special meeting was set for consideration of letters of support for Transportation Alternatives Program grant applications. That meeting will be Thursday, January 5 at 2:30 p.m. in the State Office Building. Length of the meeting will be determined by the number of projects to be considered for support and members can participate and vote by phone.

### **National MRPC Updates**

**2016 Annual Meeting - Natchez, MS:** Anne Lewis reported. The City of Natchez was a beautiful riverfront location and provided wonderful Southern hospitality. Anne participated in multiple committee meetings to represent the MN-MRPC. There was discussion at the MRPC Board meeting regarding development of a ten-state Corridor Management Plan (CMP) that will align with individual state CMPs as well as coordinate ten state efforts and provide help for states without a CMP in place. GIS route files from all ten states have been received by the National Office and they are working with a consulting firm to utilize the route information for drivable mapping in the GRR app as well as future printed maps. A launch event was held for the Mississippi River Geotourism Website, in conjunction with the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative Meeting and MRPC Annual Meeting. The event included discussion on the importance of tourism as an economic driver along the Mississippi River. Regional rollout meetings have been subsequently held in several locations. The MRPC 2017 Semi-Annual Meeting will be held in Paducah, Kentucky in mid-April and the 2017 Annual Meeting will be in Iowa during the third week of September.

**GRR Interpretive Centers – MN Additions:** The MRPC Culture and Heritage Committee approved the Charles A. Lindbergh Historic Site and the Oliver Kelley Farm for inclusion in the Network of Great River Road Interpretive Centers, and forwarded the nominations to the MRPC Board for final approval.

**Drive the Great River Road Month Report:** Anne Lewis referenced the summary information included in the meeting packet. Minnesota's Drive the Great River Road Month promotion centered on the concept of "10 Glimpses of America via the Great River Road." A press release was distributed, different "glimpses" were highlighted each week on the MN GRR website and Facebook page, and the ten-state sweepstakes was promoted. Special thanks to MN-MRPC agency partners who helped with the promotion through social media, newsletters, sharing of photographs, etc. Their efforts were invaluable and much appreciated.

**MRPC Marketing Committee Update:** Anne Lewis reported and referenced the MRPC Quarterly Marketing Report in the meeting packet. Upcoming plans for the Marketing Committee include bicycling and birding promotions in 2017 in addition to the Drive the Great River Road month promotion; a new print run of a National GRR map – due to the popularity and rapid distribution of the previous printing; GRR navigation app update to include a ten state drivable route map; and exploration of sponsorships to help fund initiatives. The committee will be holding more frequent calls/meetings to continue the positive momentum.

### **Old Business**

**Plan Your Project/Plan Your Trip Interactive Maps:** Carol Zoff announced that MnDOT will be hiring a student worker through their SEEDS Program. The position description focuses on taking the mapping information provided by Kimley-Horn for the CMP and then developing the "Plan Your Project" online tool for use by road and facilities managers followed by future development of the "Plan Your Trip" tool for travelers. The student worker position will include 10 – 20 hours per week during the school year and 20 – 40 hours per week in the summer. A position posting was distributed and all MN-MRPC members and partners were encouraged to share the information.

**Mississippi River Geotourism Website Launch:** A Twin Cities Regional Rollout Meeting for the National Geographic Mississippi River Geotourism Website was held on October 27. Contributor

recognition certificates were presented to those in attendance. Certificates were also provided to all contributors via email.

**Mississippi River Trail (MRT) Update:** Chris Miller shared information provided by Liz Walton. MRT signage in Minnesota has a few gaps remaining and there would be interest in partnering on any signage projects pursued for the Great River Road. MnDOT and NPS have been receiving inquiries about the ten state MRT. The MRT Inc. website is no longer operational and travelers/bicyclists are seeking information. Questions were raised regarding the potential of MRT Inc. becoming part of the MRPC. The MRPC Board has requested a draft agreement/proposal from the MRT Inc. Board.

### New Business

**Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium Conference – Speaker Request:** A letter from the Minnesota GIS/LIS Conference Chair was included in the meeting packet. They are requesting a Minnesota Great River Road keynote speaker after reading the GRR article featured in the spring edition of Lake Time Magazine. A vendor booth is also being offered for GRR materials and promotion. There was discussion about the request and potential presenters. Anne Lewis and Carol Zoff volunteered to do a shared presentation, to be designed after discussion with the conference chair. MN-MRPC members agreed to this approach and several members offered to help staff the vendor booth (Salminen, Mulry, Samp). Keith Parker offered assistance from the DNR as the presentation is prepared. Based on the discussion, Chair Johnson confirmed acceptance of the presentation invitation on behalf of the MN-MRPC and requested that staff contact the conference chair.

**MN Great River Road Map Project:** There was discussion on options for development and printing of a MN GRR map prior to the 2017 travel season. The supply printed in 2015 has been depleted and bulk orders are no longer being fulfilled. A limited supply of the maps remains in stock for fulfillment of individual orders from the MN GRR website and for use at meeting/events. A marketing grant application was not submitted to Explore Minnesota due to lack of matching funds which are required to be from non-state sources. Sponsorships or advertising might be options to help fund future print pieces, if determined to be allowable under the MN-MRPC statute. There was support for the use of 2017 MN-MRPC operating budget funds to develop and print a new map or revise/re-print an existing piece. Cost will determine what is possible. It was agreed that a drivable map would be most helpful, especially as signage remains a concern. Staff will look into options. Members volunteered to assist on the project – Anne Lewis, Sheronne Mulry, Keith Parker, Karl Samp, Nancy Salminen. A recommendation was made to consider the regional map tablets for a re-print.

**Letters of Support – Transportation Alternatives Applications:** Carol Zoff provided background on the Transportation Alternatives funding solicitation currently open at MnDOT. The opportunity is available statewide except for the Twin Cities Metro area. The first step is for local projects to submit letters of interest. 75 letters have been received, 14 of the projects are in Great River Road communities, and 12 are projects along the byway (four have self-identified as byway projects). The 12 projects are requesting a total of \$7.3 million which would be matched by an additional \$12.9 million. These potential project applicants will receive notice from MnDOT in late November indicating whether they are approved to submit a full application. Applications are due in mid-January. Letters of support from the byway organization are not required but would be of help. A special meeting of the MN-MRPC has been scheduled for January 5 at 2:30 p.m. to act on requested letters of support. MN-MRPC staff will contact TAP applicants regarding the timeline and process for letters. Letter requests and project summaries will be provided to MN-MRPC members in mid to late December for review and consideration.

**Crown Hydro Proposal –MN-MRPC Role:** Cordelia Pierson shared information on the proposed Crown Mill Hydroelectric Project in Minneapolis and referenced the comment letter from Friends of the Lock and Dam (included in the packet) and MNRRA/NPS (distributed). Comments were due on November 2, though additional comments may be accepted after that date. NPS has not taken a position on the overall project but has noted specific concerns and supports the determination that a new license application is the appropriate mechanism to license the project, as well as an Environmental Impact Statement to adequately address impacts. The existing license was received 17 years ago, prior to much recent and current riverfront activity. David Kelliher provided historical perspective and information. Keith Parker noted that the DNR will be submitting comments related to permitting. Consensus of the

Commission was that more information is needed about the project and its potential impacts. The Great River Road is directly alongside the project location in Mill Ruins Park. There was discussion about scenic impact to the byway if there are changes to the water volume of St. Anthony Falls.

Motion by Nancy Salminen and seconded by Keith Parker authorizing a letter from the MN-MRPC to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission stating interest in the project, noting concerns over potential impact to byway intrinsic qualities, noting support of member agency comments submitted (NPS, DNR, DOT, MNHS) and asking to be in the loop for future communications and comment opportunities regarding the project. Motion carried.

### **Agency and Regional Updates**

**Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids:** Nancy Salminen reported that the Lady's Slipper Byway (partially co-located with the GRR) has obtained traffic counts for two of its interpretive sites. Information was shared and details will be emailed to Commission members. Traffic counts might be good information to collect at points along the GRR in the future. A pre-design meeting will be held on November 17 in Bemidji for the Mississippi River pedestrian bridge project along Highway 39. Stakeholders including MN-MRPC members are invited and details will be shared via email. The Lady's Slipper Byway is also working on plans for a new 1/3 mile accessible walking trail which could be constructed next summer.

**Brainerd to Elk River:** Karl Samp shared an update including information on the plans for expansion of the Cuyuna Lakes Trail system. The Brainerd Riverfront Project continues to meet and is planning for "three bridges trail" along the river. The group is pursuing Transportation Alternatives funds for the project. Two tour groups from Shore Excursions took bus trips to Itasca State Park in late summer, connected with American Queen cruises. There are plans for future tours as well and preliminary discussions have taken place regarding a Great River Road bus tour in the future. Karl also mentioned a recent strategic planning session with the MN Farmers Market Association and interest of their members in promoting sites via the Great River Road.

**Elk River to Hastings:** Cordelia Pierson provided information on the State of the River Report recently released by Friends of the Mississippi River and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area; and suggested it as a presentation topic for a future MN-MRPC meeting. The Federal Lands Access Program is currently accepting funding applications and local groups are considering submitting requests. Elk River has new conservation land along the Mississippi River; Minneapolis is continuing with potential plans for an amphitheater along the river; East River Trail now provides an improved bicycle/pedestrian route; St. Paul recently hired a new Great River Passage Coordinator; NPS launched a pilot paddle share (kayak) program in conjunction with Nice Ride stations; and many restoration and volunteer clean-up programs have been taking place along the river recently.

**Hastings to Iowa Border:** Sheronne Mulry reported that Wabasha County will be accessing funds to assist with August flood damage. Goodhue County has nominated the Cannon Valley Trail for inclusion on the Mississippi River Geotourism Website by Goodhue County. A new exhibit – Memories of Vietnam – just opened at the Winona County History Center. Sheronne recently joined the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance and has been sharing information about the MN-MRPC and Great River Road. The Alliance works to protect and restore the natural heritage of Lake Pepin. Information is available at - <http://www.lakepepinlegacyalliance.org/>.

**Historical Society:** David Kelliher announced that attendance was up this season at Minnesota Historic Sites. There was an overall 3% increase in visits even with the Capitol closure. Work at the Oliver Kelley Farm is now 98% complete and a suggestion was made to hold a future MN-MRPC meeting at the new facility. The Historic Fort Snelling visitor center project is continuing including community engagement efforts and increased involvement of Native American partners.

**Natural Resources:** Keith Parker noted the DNR's comments in process regarding the Crown Mill Hydroelectric Project and also provided a status update on the Mississippi Corridor Critical Area Rules. The DNR is working on final adoption of the rules after information was received back from the Administrative Law Judge. A new manager is being hired for Fort Snelling State Park after Larry Peterson moved into a new role with the Fort Snelling Upper Post Project. Progress continues on work at the

Upper Post and hopefully funding will be available to continue the affordable housing project. Camp Ripley has been designated as a Sentinel Landscape (one of five nationally), allowing for continued placement of buffer zones as land becomes available. Gina Bonsignore announced that the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association Conference will be held in Red Wing on March 2017. A "Bike to Nature" ride was held with participants including Commissioner Landwehr, Mayor Coleman, and Superintendent Anfinson. The bicycle ride followed the MRT from the DNR Central Region Headquarters to Fort Snelling and is now expected to be an annual event. Public Lands Day activities at Hidden Falls were a success with approximately 600 people attending. Kudos were given to students from the Metro Deaf High School who came out to volunteer on clean-up projects.

**Transportation:** Carol Zoff provided updates. Commissioner Zelle of MnDOT and Diana Threadgill of Tennessee (representing the MRPC) have been selected for participation on the National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure. The first meeting will be held in December. This committee could have impact on restoring funding sources for byways, especially for activities not allowable under current funding structures. Current ineligible activities for Transportation Alternatives funds are – Corridor Management Plan development and implementation, marketing and interpretation. The 2016 Minnesota Scenic Byways Workshop will be held November 29-30 in Willmar. Agenda details were included in the meeting packet and any Commission members interested in attending were asked to contact MN-MRPC staff. The National Scenic Byways Foundation is planning a December event in Washington D.C. to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Scenic Byways Program. In September, Carol and Brian Smalkoski of Kimley-Horn presented a mobile workshop at the MN APA Conference in St. Cloud. The workshop focused on the Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail in the area.

### **Next Meeting**

Special Meeting – Transportation Alternatives Funding Letters of Support

Thursday, January 5, 2017

2:30 p.m.

State Office Building (Members can participate by phone instead of in-person)

2017 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Meeting

Thursday, March 2, 2017

2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

State Office Building

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Special Meeting – January 5, 2017  
State Office Building, St. Paul MN  
MINUTES – Draft**

**Commissioners Present**

Anne Lewis – At Large Member  
Rep. Sheldon Johnson – Chair  
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border  
Sen. David Senjem

**Technical Advisors & Staff Present**

Carol Zoff – Transportation  
John Anfinson - NPS  
Diane Henry-Wangentseen - LCC  
Chris Miller – Staff

**Commissioner Participating by Phone**

Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River  
Keith Parker – DNR Appointee  
Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings  
Nancy Salminen – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids  
Amanda Mac Donald – Grand Rapids to Brainerd  
Scott Bradley – Transportation Appointee  
Andrea Kajer – Historical Society Appointee

**Commissioners & Technical Advisors**

**Absent**

Paul Hugunin – Agriculture Appointee  
Adam Johnson – Tourism Appointee  
Sen. Patricia Torres-Ray  
David Kelliher – Historical Society  
Regina Bonsignore - DNR

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The meeting was called to order at 2:30 by Chair Johnson, followed by introductions. A quorum was present.

**Consider and Act on Letter of Support Requests for Transportation Alternatives Funding Applications**

Chris Miller reviewed questions received from members - Why are some projects included that are not directly on the GRR? How does the TAP process work and will some of these projects be competing against each other? Should the Commission be prioritizing projects within regions? How much funding is being requested for each project?

Carol Zoff provided background on the projects and process for Transportation Alternatives applications. All projects requesting letters of support would benefit byway travelers, address byway intrinsic qualities and/or help implement the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan. Some projects did not self-identify as being byway related because the form asked whether they are located on the byway, rather than asking about impact to intrinsic qualities, byway experience and CMP implementation. Project applications will be submitted to Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs) for consideration and funding decisions. All ATPs except the Metro Area (Met Council) are accepting applications in January for funding in 2021. The Met Council handles solicitations on a different timeline. Regional Great River Road projects may be competing against one another and are also competing with other proposals from throughout each region. Currently, there is not a process in place for prioritization of projects along a byway. The MN-MRPC would indicate support of the attached projects if it deems appropriate, or could choose not to provide support. The process would be to provide a letter to the applicant for inclusion with the funding application.

Commission member consideration and discussion followed, including discussion on impact of support letters. It was noted that each ATP develops its own criteria and process for selection and that letters are one of several factors included. It is important to demonstrate that projects are part of a plan and have broad impact. Supporting local projects also helps build/strengthen relationships between the Commission and local communities.

Summary of TAP funding being requested (estimates, not numbers from final applications):

- Aitkin – requesting \$192,000 with \$48,000 match
- Brainerd – requesting \$1,000,000 with \$8,150,000 match
- Cass County- requesting \$1,200,000 with \$300,000 match

- Grand Rapids – requesting \$540,000 with \$126,000 match
- La Crescent – requesting \$1,000,000 with \$1,671,000 match
- Little Falls – requesting \$480,000 with \$120,000 match
- Red Wing – requesting \$900,000 with \$1,253,081 match
- Sauk Rapids – requesting \$294,664 with \$73,666 match
- Stearns County – requesting \$800,000 with \$800,000 match

There was an opportunity for public testimony with no testimony received.

Motion by Anne Lewis and seconded by Sheronne Mulry to authorize letters of support for all nine Transportation Alternatives funding applications described in the attachment. A roll call vote was taken by Chair Johnson. Yes – Nancy Salminen, Amanda MacDonald, Cordelia Pierson, Sheronne Mulry, Andrea Kajer, Keith Parker, Scott Bradley, Sheldon Johnson, David Senjem, Anne Lewis. Abstention – Karl Samp due to involvement with the Brainerd project. Motion carried. Staff will provide the letters as requested pending final approval by the Chair.

### **Next Meeting**

2017 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Meeting  
Thursday, March 2, 2017  
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.  
State Office Building

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.



**Minnesota Great River Road  
Transportation Alternatives Local Project Summaries  
December 19, 2016 (updated 12/22/16)**

**For MN-MRPC Consideration on January 5, 2017  
and Potential Letters of Support**

Aitkin	pg. 2
Brainerd	pg. 3
Cass County	pg. 4
Grand Rapids	pg. 5
La Crescent	pg. 6
Little Falls	pg. 7
Red Wing	pg. 8
Sauk Rapids	pg. 9
Stearns County	pg. 10

**City of Aitkin**  
**Tammy Lou Pfaff, City Clerk**

**Cuyuna Lakes Trail – Tank Trail Segment**

The City of Aitkin seeks funding to construct a 1.3 mile segment of the Cuyuna Lakes Trail in the City of Aitkin as part of the Cuyuna Lakes Trail between Aitkin and Baxter. In addition to being part of the Cuyuna Lakes Trail, the segment will connect the existing segments of the Cuyuna Lakes Trail to city owned property used for biking, hiking and cross country skiing.

Sponsoring Agency – Aitkin County – John Welle, County Engineer

## City of Brainerd

Heidi Peper, SEH for the Brainerd Riverfront Committee/City of Brainerd

### Three Bridges Trail

After a group of citizens from the Brainerd Area taking part in the Blandin Community Leadership Program identified Mississippi Riverfront development as a priority project, the City of Brainerd commissioned the Brainerd-Baxter Mississippi Riverfront Vision Plan in 2010, which then led to the Mississippi River Partnership Plan that focused on a two mile corridor of the Mississippi River dubbed currently as the Brainerd Riverfront Park. The City received a Difference Maker grant from the Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation to help efforts to analyze and implement elements of the plan. The Brainerd HRA is managing the grant and implementation of the plan for the City of Brainerd. The Brainerd Riverfront Park will provide great opportunities for residents and visitors to access and enjoy year-round activities along or on the River. This section contains a large amount of public land with acreage on both banks. It provides significant opportunities and spaces for public and private redevelopment that engage the River and reconnects residents and visitors to its cultural and recreational amenities:

- Riverfront Trail on the east bank - "Three Bridges Trail" - linking the riverfront, Boom Lake, Buster Dog Park, Kiwanis Park and all the new and enhanced amenities described below. This trail has the potential to travel northward to the paper mill dam and St. Joseph's Medical Center (just three blocks north of Washington Street). While park-like along its entire length, the Riverfront Trail will transition in character from urban at the northern end (Washington Street/Medical Center) to more natural at its southern end, traveling through Kiwanis Park to even more natural further south at Buffalo Creek / Rotary Park.
- Identity-branding and way finding signage to the River from Downtown.
- Public art within the Riverfront park, temporary and permanent that celebrate Brainerd's cultural and artistic community.
- Riverside plaza and amenities between Washington and Laurel streets providing access to the River's edge and public open space for small gatherings and events.
- Park enhancements within Adams Field area (Brainerd School District's athletic fields).
- Park enhancements at Kiwanis Park, Buster Dog Park, and Boom Lake including picnic areas, fishing pier, and a winter warming house to support ice skating and sledding,
- Eastside floodplain forest trails and amenities.
- On the west side, DNR/Central Lakes College bluff line river overlook.
- Pedestrian bridge across river connecting east and west side river banks and facilities.
- Enhanced river access – fishing pier, canoe access, etc.
- River cultural and historical interpretive stations / environmental learning opportunities.
- Riverfront Arts and Cultural Center, preferred site on west side of river in cooperation with Brainerd School District and Central Lakes College, providing a venue for artistic and cultural performances with view and access to the River.

One of the first elements of the Plan that will be constructed is the Three Bridges Riverfront Trail as described above.

Note – the Brainerd Riverfront Committee will discuss final approval to proceed with this application on December 23...

**Cass County**  
**Laura Hadrava, Construction/Design Engineer**

Cass County, in cooperation with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, is intending to apply for a Transportation Alternative Program grant for the construction of a pedestrian bridge located adjacent to Cass County State Aid Highway 8 near the Corps of Engineers recreation area in Federal Dam, MN.

County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 8 provides access to Leech Lake Tribal lands within the Chippewa National Forest and serves as the connection between the cities of Bena and Federal Dam. The existing CSAH 8 Bridge in Federal Dam is the only bridge over the Leech Lake River for 16 miles and serves as the connection between the United States Army Corp of Engineer's (USCOE) Recreation Area at the Leech Lake Dam parking lot and the picnic area. The current bridge is narrow and does not provide any shoulders for alternative transportation modes. This limitation is restricting the safe use of this crossing for pedestrian travel, fishing access, and recreational use.

The TAP funds would be used to construct a pedestrian bridge over the Leech Lake River west of the existing CSAH 8 Bridge and will separate the pedestrian and bicycle traffic from the highway traffic. The bridge would be constructed to serve primarily as a pedestrian bridge, but if needed could serve as a one-lane bridge for vehicle traffic in the event that something happens to the existing bridge in the form of maintenance or replacement. The funds will be to construct a concrete pedestrian bridge including approaches and some additional grading to connect to existing walking paths.

As part of the application we need to include letters of support and would like to request that you provide one if you feel this project meets the vision and goals of the MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

**City of Grand Rapids**  
**Matt Wegwerth, City Engineer**

The City of Grand Rapids respectfully requests a letter of support from the MN-MRPC for the proposed Grand Rapids / Cohasset Connection Trail.

The proposed trail project will run along County Road 63, from County Road ~~17~~ 76 to Us Hwy 2 within Grand Rapids and Cohasset. CR 63 and CR ~~17~~ 76 are currently part of the MN Great River Road route and the proposed project will help to connect residents and trail users to the Mississippi River and Downtown Grand Rapids. Additionally, the MN Great River Road Corridor Management Plan (4.4.1 Route Adjustments, pg 04-41) highlights this section of CR 63 as a possible area for route adjustment. Currently this section is unserved by an off-road recreational facility, which requires users to use the shoulder of the road which can create a safety hazard. The project would include the construction of 4,350 linear feet of 10 foot non-motorized bituminous trail. The proposed connection is the final link between the trail system in Grand Rapids and the trail system in Cohasset, and provides a safe route for residents to connect with the outdoors and natural amenities. The project includes a connection to the Mississippi River Trail which is located along the Great River Road Scenic Byway. (Note – map below should read County Road 76 instead of County Road 17)



**City of La Crescent**  
**Terry Erickson, Community Development Director**

Please accept this request and brief summary as a request for a letter of support to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Transportation Alternatives Program MNDOT-TAP for Phase III funding for the Wagon Wheel Project.

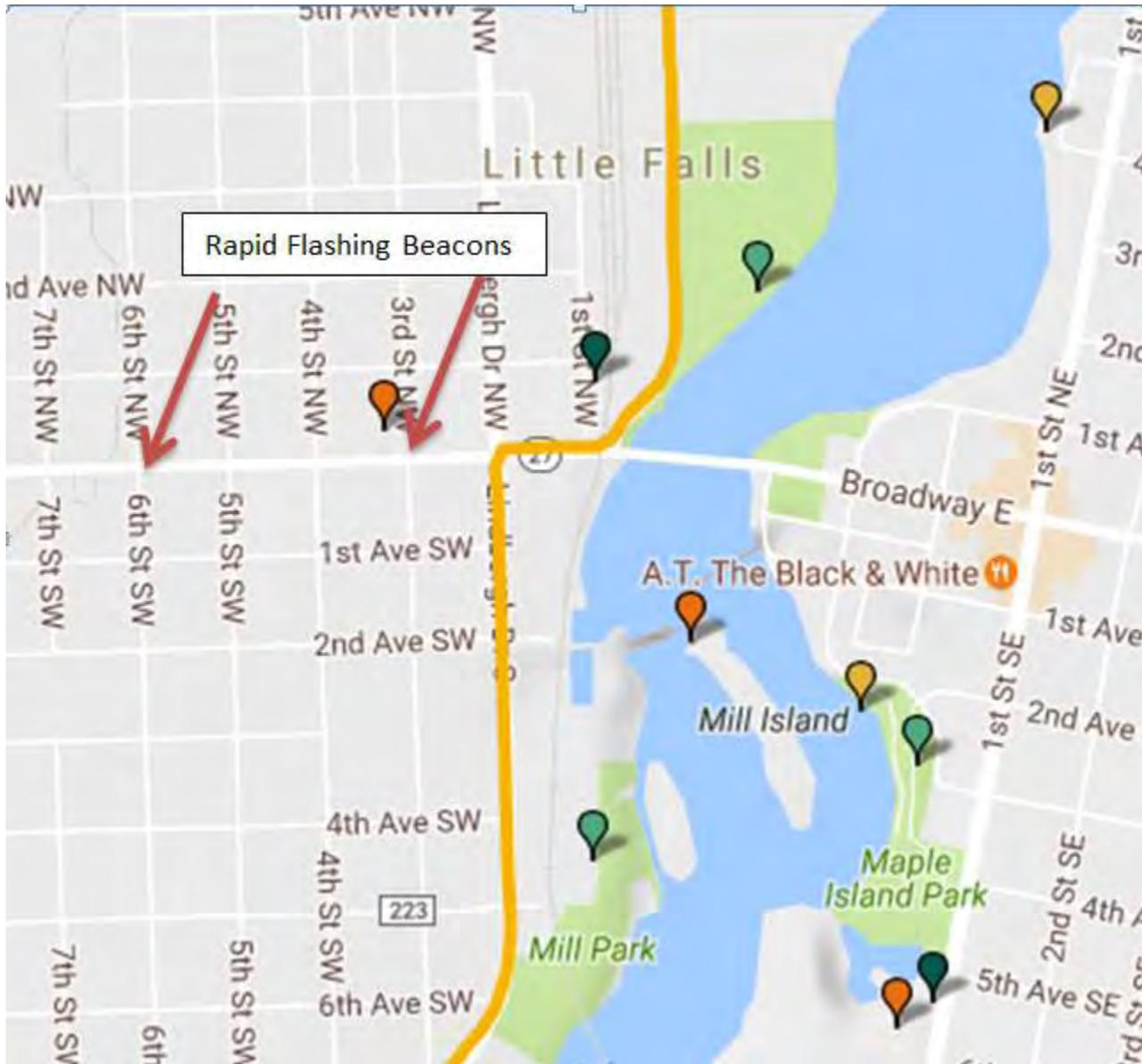
Summary: The City of La Crescent is seeking funding from the Transportation Alternatives Fund (MNDOT TAP) to complete Phase III of the Wagon Wheel Trail project. The Wagon Wheel Trail is a key segment to complete the linkage of four State Trails in the region. Phase I of the project was constructed in 2014 and Phase II is slated to be completed in 2017. The project will be financed through a combination of federal, state and local resources. The total project budget is \$2,671,000. The MNDOT TAP request is for \$1,000,000. The remaining match of \$1,671,000 would come from the Department of Natural Resources, Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission and the City of La Crescent. Project funding would be used to pay for road and bridge costs of \$2,671,000.

Phase III of the Wagon Wheel Trail Project consists of a grade-separated crossing of TH 14/61 near downtown La Crescent. The project will ultimately provide a safe and reliable multi-use trail for pedestrians, bicyclists and other recreation users. The trail at ultimate buildout, will connect downtown La Crescent and La Crosse and thereby connect Minnesota and Wisconsin regional trails which merge into local city limits.

The project is located along the Great River Road National Scenic Byway and could enhance the byway experience and could help implement Great River Road Corridor Management Plan strategies. Please feel free to contact my office if you should need additional information.

### Little Falls Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Improvements

The City of Little Falls would like to request the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission's support on our Transportation Alternative Grant request. Our TA request is to construct sidewalks, trails, and rapid flashing beacons in select locations to improve the walkability of our sidewalk system. The area closest to the Great River Road, would see the addition of rapid flashing beacons at two locations. One near Our Lady of Lourdes Church by the middle school and another near Lincoln Elementary. Both would allow pedestrians to cross Trunk Highway 27 in a much safer way than currently exists.



**Red Wing Riverfront Trail**



Red Wing's riverfront trail idea emerged during the 1986 Red Wing Trail Plan planning process. The trail project was formally included as a capital improvement action within Red Wing's 1996 Comprehensive Plan. More recently, in the spring of 2016 the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkways Commission completed the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan (CMP). The city's Riverfront Trail project is consistent with the CMP. The CMP identifies the Mississippi River Trail (MRT), Minnesota's first statutory state bikeway route (USBR 45), as an important alternative transportation mode. We expect the Riverfront Trail system to be identified as the MRT in the future.

In addition, in September 2016 the MN DNR completed the Master Plan for the Mississippi Blufflands Trail. Red Wing's Riverfront Trail is an important segment of the legislated State Trail corridor, critical to the overall success of the future State Trail. The recently completed MN DNR Master Plan for the Mississippi Blufflands Trail can be accessed here:

[http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/mgmtplans/trails/mississippi\\_blufflands.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/mgmtplans/trails/mississippi_blufflands.html)

As stated, Red Wing's 3.6 miles of designated riverfront trail lies within the Mississippi Blufflands State Trail corridor. Completing the Red Wing segments of the state trail will create the foundation for a unique, regionally significant and safe 17 mile State Trail between the communities of Red Wing and Lake City. The fully developed state trail will provide a connection to local, regional and state recreational facilities and trails along the US Highway 61 Scenic Byway corridor. The trail will be a separated transportation facility benefitting the region. The trail will provide an alternative bikeway-walkway for local, regional and long distance MRT users.

Segment one, from the Cannon Valley Trail - Goodhue Pioneer State Trail to Red Wing's Levee Park is complete. Two segments within the city, Levee Park to Barn Bluff Park (segment two), and Barn Bluff Park to Colvill Park (segment three) remain to be developed. The city is seeking \$900,000 in FY 21 TAP funding for segment three, the three-quarter mile segment between Barn Bluff Regional Park and Colvill Park. The construction of this trail segment connecting the two significant regional recreational parks, abutting TH 61 and the riverfront; establishes a unique transportation alternative, separated from Highway 61.

**City of Sauk Rapids**  
**Todd Schultz, Community Development Director**

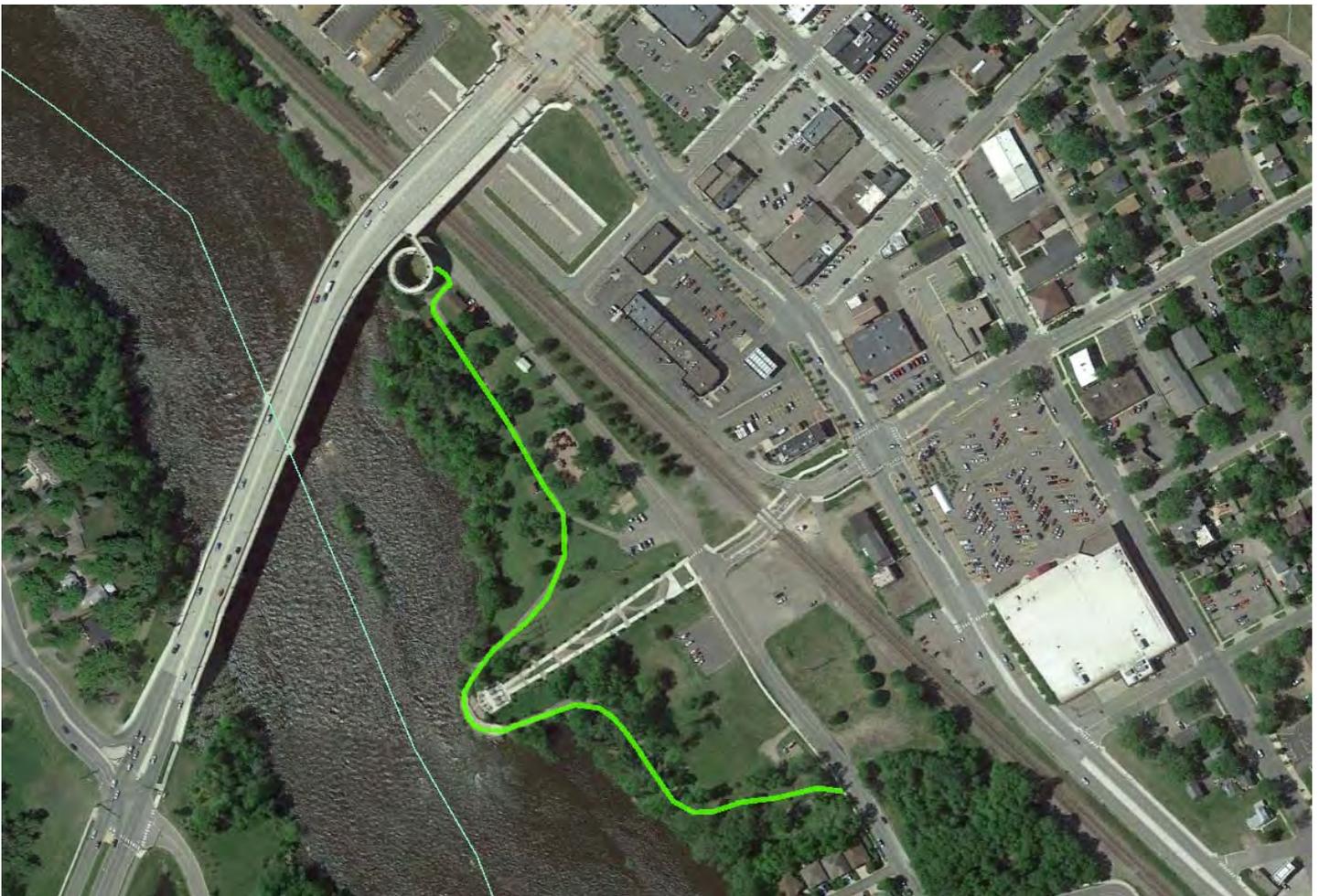
**Mississippi River Trail Lighting**

As you know, the City of Sauk Rapids has requested funding for a Greater Minnesota Transportation Alternatives Solicitation project.

The City has an off-road trail segment of the Mississippi River Trail that leaves River Avenue North at the foot of the Sauk Rapids Bridge, for approximately 2,000 feet as the trail meanders through Lions and Southside Parks and along the Mississippi River. The trail is completely unlit and also somewhat remote. We would like to install lighting along this trail segment to make it more user friendly and safer for both central Minnesota's and outstate bikers on the Mississippi River Trail. There are also two fishing piers just off of this trail that get used heavily in the summer. I have attached a drawing below.

The City in recent years has made a focus of becoming more multi-modal in its transportation projects. Although this segment is existing, it has become more remote as the old Mississippi River Bridge crossing has moved two blocks to the north. This trail segment is very popular with people in central Minnesota and nationally as an MRT route for walking, biking, roller-blading, etc. The City has looked at doing this project within the scope of its own park program, but due to the length of this segment, the project is very expensive. The total project budget is \$368,330.16

We would respectfully ask for the support of the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission in the form of a letter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.



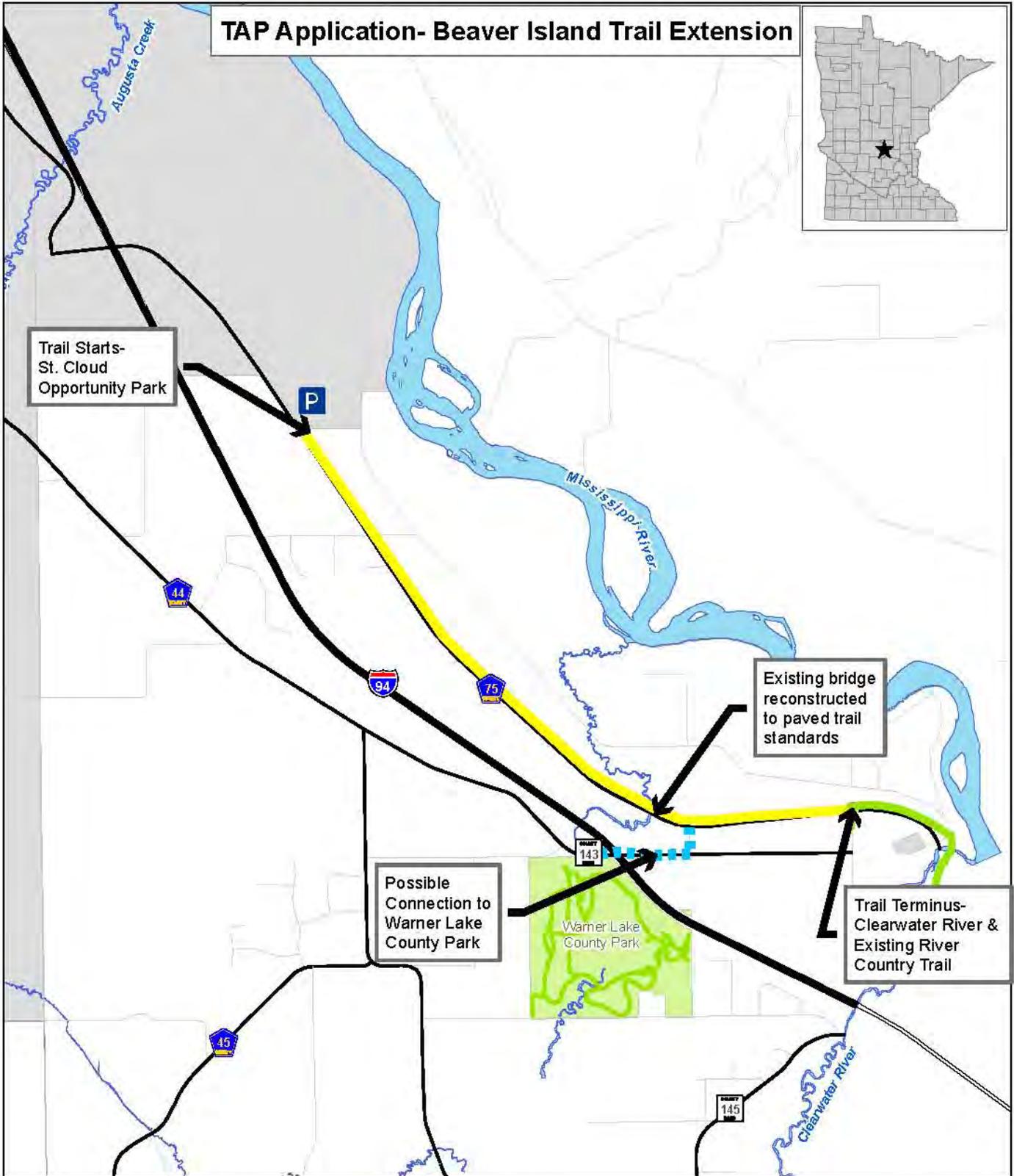
**Stearns County**  
**Ben Anderson, Operations Coordinator**

**Beaver Island Trail Extension**

The Beaver Island Trail Extension is approximately 4.5 miles long and runs from the City limits of St. Cloud (near Opportunity Drive right off of Interstate 94) to the existing City of Clearwater's River Country Trail. The Stearns County Parks Department has been working for more than 10 years to secure the old railroad corridor where the trail will be built. The proposed trail will consist of a 10 foot wide bituminous surface and have two foot gravel shoulders. The Federal Fiscal Year 2021 cost estimates for this project is \$1.7 million. The Stearns County Parks Department is going to ask for \$800,000 from the Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation Alternatives Solicitation to assist with construction costs. If the funding is received the Stearns County Parks Department will also use the \$800,000 as a match to leverage the remaining project costs from the Minnesota Legacy Funds. As you probably already know, this trail extension would provide a great opportunity to bring the MRT trail off of the busy County Road 75 and onto a safer, separated paved trail.

See map on following page.

# TAP Application- Beaver Island Trail Extension



Trail Starts-  
St. Cloud  
Opportunity Park

P

Existing bridge  
reconstructed  
to paved trail  
standards

Possible  
Connection to  
Warner Lake  
County Park

Warner Lake  
County Park

Trail Terminus-  
Clearwater River &  
Existing River  
Country Trail

## Project Site Level Map

- Existing Trail
- Proposed Beaver Island Trail Extension
- - - Warner Lake Connection Trail



0 1 Miles



Stearns County Auditor/Treasurer  
Division of Land Management

This map is made available on an "as is" basis, without express or implied warranty, other than including, specifically, any implied warranties of fitness for a particular purpose, warranties of merchantability or warranties relating to the accuracy or completeness of the database(s).

MN-MRPC FY '17 Budget  
2/23/17

<b>MN-MRPC FY '17 Operating Budget</b>						
Obj Code	Description	FY '17 Budget	Spent	Pending	Remaining	Comments
41070	Other Benefits (Per Diem)	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 770.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 3,120.00	Commissioner Per Diems: MN-MRPC quarterly mtgs, MRPC Annual Mtg & Semi-Annual Mtg, committee mtgs, commission representation at meetings and events, CMP project
41100	Space Rental	\$ -	\$ 100.00		\$ (100.00)	
41110	Printing & Advertising	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 128.86	\$ 29.42	\$ 3,341.72	Commission meeting copies, materials
41130	Prof/Tech Services	\$ 38,461.20	\$ 17,693.07	\$ 3,190.00	\$ 17,578.13	Admin contract, website design services, additional staff time for projects, other services as needed
41150	Computer & System Services	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 855.94		\$ 144.06	Website hosting, stats and email
41155	Communications	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 409.85	\$ 32.28	\$ 1,057.87	Postage/deliveries, MN MRPC phone line and conference calls, shipping costs, Constant Contact email marketing service
41160	In-State Travel	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 2,199.69	\$ 311.11	\$ 1,989.20	Commissioners/Advisors/Staff: quarterly mtgs, committees, events, CMP project
41170	Out-State Travel	\$ 6,000.00	\$ -		\$ 6,000.00	MRPC 2017 Semi-Annual Meeting - Paducah, Kentucky
41180	Employee Development	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 150.00		\$ 1,350.00	Meeting and conference registration fees, including MRPC Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings
41300	Office Supplies		\$ (86.00)		\$ 86.00	General office supplies for Commission projects. Donations for GRR maps are placed in this line item.
43000	Other Costs (MRPC Dues)	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00		\$ -	MRPC 2017 Dues
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 75,461.20</b>	<b>\$ 37,221.41</b>	<b>\$ 3,672.81</b>	<b>\$ 34,566.98</b>	
Note: Expenditures reflect 2/1/17 finance report, plus invoice batches submitted since then						



## Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota

300 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, Suite 101 • Waite Park, Minnesota 56387

Phone: 651-341-4196 • E-Mail: [info@MnMississippiRiver.com](mailto:info@MnMississippiRiver.com)

**Members of the House:** Sheldon Johnson (DFL – 67B) – Chair **Members of the Senate:** David Senjem (R – 25); Patricia Torres Ray (DFL – 63)  
**State Agency Appointees:** Paul Hugunin – Agriculture, Scott Bradley – Transportation, Adam Johnson – Explore Minnesota Tourism, Keith Parker – Natural Resources, Andrea Kajer – Historical Society **Regional Appointees:** Nancy Salminen – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids, Amanda MacDonald – Grand Rapids to Brainerd, Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River, Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings, Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border  
**Member at Large:** Anne Lewis

### Process for Letters of Support Adopted 5/19/16

#### Revision Proposed 3/2/17 (first bullet under #2 below)

The following actions will be taken after a request for a letter of support is received.

- 1) If the timeline allows for discussion at a regular quarterly meeting –
  - The topic will be placed on the agenda with information sent out to members in advance for review and consideration.
  - Discussion will take place at the meeting and action will be taken.
  - Staff will follow up with letter requestor as directed by the Commission.
  
- 2) If the timeline does not allow for discussion at a regular quarterly meeting –
  - **The Chair will determine whether to call a special meeting for consideration of the request.**
  - The request and any background information will be emailed to MN-MRPC members.
  - A phone meeting of the MN-MRPC will be scheduled to allow for public testimony.
  - A meeting notice will be posted on the Legislative Coordinating Commission website, and a room will be available at the State Office Building to allow for members of the public to attend. MN-MRPC members may participate by phone or in person.
  - Discussion will take place and a decision will be made on how to proceed.
  - Staff will follow up with letter requestor as directed by the Commission.



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Executive Committee – January 5, 2017  
State Office Building, St. Paul MN  
MINUTES – Draft**

**Members Present**

Anne Lewis – At Large Member  
Rep. Sheldon Johnson – Chair  
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border  
Sen. David Senjem

**Technical Advisors & Staff Present**

Carol Zoff – Transportation  
Diane Henry-Wangentseen - LCC  
Chris Miller – Staff

**Members Participating by Phone**

Andrea Kajer – Historical Society Appointee

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The meeting was called to order at 3:10 by Chair Johnson, followed by introductions. A quorum was present. It was agreed that some topics would be deferred to future meetings as appropriate.

**Commission Membership**

**Regional Member Elections – Review Fall 2016 Process & Plans for 2017:** This will be discussed at the next Executive Committee meeting in summer 2017.

**Agency Appointments – Timeline and Process for Renewals:** Agency appointments should be renewed and process/timeline will be discussed in summer 2017.

**Open Positions - Plans to Fill:** The Commission is currently in need of an additional House member to fill the voting member roster. This will be addressed within the current House committee assignment process, and it was confirmed there is interest in serving. The Commission is also in need of a new technical advisor from Explore Minnesota Tourism. Anne Lewis offered to assist in making contacts. Chair Johnson will provide support as needed. Although they provide technical assistance upon request, Department of Agriculture has not been present at meetings recently. Chair Johnson will follow up.

**MN-MRPC Officers – 2017 Election:** An officer election has not been held since prior to the Corridor Management Planning process, to allow for continuity throughout that process. A recommendation was made to hold an election at the June MN-MRPC meeting, at which time the Commission should have a full roster and the legislative session will be completed. A schedule should be included in by-laws for the Commission – officer election at the Second Quarter Meeting, every two years.

**National MRPC Responsibilities**

**2017 Dues Status – Update:** Chris Miller reported that an invoice will be requested from the National Office soon and funding is set aside in the Commission's FY '17 budget to cover the \$15,000 annual cost.

**Standing Committee Membership – Review and Fill Positions as Needed:** Committee recommended handling this at the MN-MRPC Quarterly Meeting and asked staff to provide a list of current committees, members and needs.

**Upcoming National Meetings – Plan for Attendance:** The MRPC 2017 Semi-Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 19 – 21 in Paducah, Kentucky and the 2017 Annual Meeting will be September 19 – 21 in Marquette, Iowa. MN-MRPC participation is important. In the past, priority has been given to those who have not yet attended a National MRPC Meeting and to active members of MRPC Standing Committees. The MN-MRPC needs coverage at the four committee meetings. Priority used for past meeting attendance was confirmed for upcoming meetings. Staff will send out the April agenda when available and request responses from those interested in attending.

## **Corridor Management Plan Progress, Needs & Direction**

Carol Zoff and Chris Miller provided background information. The Corridor Management Plan included four initial implementation areas - Wayshowing Signage; Plan Your Project Interactive Mapping Tool; Plan Your Trip Interactive Mapping Tool and Great River Road Ambassador Development. Descriptions and cost estimates are on pages 05-1 to 05-8 of the CMP.

Wayshowing Signage – The CMP included a preliminary estimate of \$100,000 for sign fabrication, to replace missing and out of compliance signs. That estimate has been updated to \$120,000 plus the cost of shipping to local sites/districts for installation. Condition of existing signs needs additional confirmation before a cost estimate can be finalized. Carol recommended following past practice as defined in Great River Road route designation resolutions, which involves local installation rather than a statewide installation contract. Discussions within MnDOT have indicated that the agency is determining if existing resources and methods might be able to address this signage need. It was noted that the Commission would like to be advised of status as soon as possible so that opportunities to pursue other channels would not be lost.

Plan Your Project and Plan Your Trip Interactive Mapping Tools – The CMP included cost estimates for Plan Your Project (\$50,000) and Plan Your Trip (\$250,000) development. MnDOT will be the keeper of data for these tools but all partner agencies will need to be involved in the development and maintenance of the data and tools. The Minnesota Great River Road website is old and in need of updating, which is included in the overall cost estimate for Plan Your Trip. A general estimate of cost to update the MN GRR website is \$20,000, which would also make it mobile device friendly. MnDOT is in the process of hiring a student worker with responsibilities to include building upon the CMP prototypes for posting online refined versions of the Plan Your Project/Plan Your Trip Tools. A recommendation was made to look into keeping the Plan Your Trip tool “live” on both MnDOT and MN GRR websites or make sure that visitors have a simple/automatic interface.

Ambassador Development – The CMP cost estimate was \$50,000 plus ongoing MN-MRPC and member agency time. First steps for implementation could include 1) confirming the wayshowing data and implementing corrective actions, and 2) reaching out to local contacts to confirm database content for 750+ byway resources on the Plan Your Trip tool, as well as overall relationship and capacity building with partners. Committee members noted that a detailed plan and timeline for Ambassador Development is needed before arriving at a budget. Anne Lewis and Sheronne Mulry volunteered to work with staff on the Ambassador Development plan with associated costs during 2017. Wayfinding signage and interactive mapping tools need to be in place before Ambassador Development begins.

## **Legislative Session**

**MN-MRPC Statute – Review Recommendation in CMP:** The Corridor Management Plan recommended addressing the MN-MRPC sunset date in Statute 161.1419. Recommendation was to explore longer terms or establish the Commission in permanence to reduce uncertainties related to funding, staffing, multi-year projects, grants, and CMP timeline. There was discussion regarding feasibility of permanence versus longer timeframes. General recommendation was to pursue a new sunset date ten years out. Term length for agency, regional and at-large members was also discussed with four year terms being preferential to facilitate Commission continuity and work. LCC will work on a possible statute amendment draft for review by the MN-MRPC Chair.

**MnDOT Statute Language – Review Recommendation in CMP:** The Corridor Management Plan recommended, “Revise MN Statute 161.20 Subd. 3 to delete ‘Mississippi River Parkway Commission’ as the Commission actively and in an on-going manner does further a highway purpose and does aid in the construction, improvement or maintenance of the highway system.” This recommendation has been discussed with MnDOT upper management who indicated they would support the change but felt that the request should originate from the MN-MRPC. LCC will provide process options to Chair Johnson for consideration.

**Biennial Budget – Discuss MN-MRPC Needs:** Discussion included CMP needs as listed above. Needs that would be beyond the scope of the current operating budget level – development of new MN

GRR maps/print pieces including a drivable map to aid in traveler navigation; redesign of the MN GRR website as noted above, additional staff hours; interpretive signage; local match for potential grants, and overall marketing/advertising. Cost estimates were discussed as available. It was recommended that staff prepare a total list of budget needs for consideration by the Chair and LCC. Projects being handled by agencies will also be included on the list to demonstrate support provided by Commission members in addition to any requests that might be carried forward.

There was discussion about MN GRR maps for the 2017 summer travel season. Carol Zoff and Chris Miller have been considering development of a new drivable map that could potentially be designed by the MnDOT student worker and then printed using MN-MRPC operating funds. Committee members expressed concern over the timeline for development of a new piece and advised a reprint of the current MN GRR Map/Travel Planner with minimal necessary revisions. Staff will proceed with plans for a reprint and distribution of the Map/Travel Planner, as has also been discussed at recent quarterly meetings. There was agreement that plans for a new map should continue, to assure completion for the following travel season if necessary funding is secured. It was also suggested that the newly developed print piece be available when the MN GRR website is re-launched after being updated.

### **Letters to Congress**

**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Scenic Byways Program:** The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Scenic Byways Program was celebrated in December 2016. It has been suggested that this provides an opportunity to highlight both the occasion and role of Scenic Byways, especially the Great River Road, to members of Congress. All agreed that a letter should be sent. Anne Lewis will work with staff on the letter, for consideration and approval of the Chair.

**National Scenic Byway Discretionary Grant Program:** This topic will be addressed via participation by MnDOT Commissioner Zelle, Carol Zoff and MRPC Representative Diana Threadgill of Tennessee on the National Advisory Committee for Travel and Tourism Infrastructure.

### **Next Meeting**

Summer 2017 date to be announced

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

## **MN-MRPC Membership on MRPC Board & Technical Committees February 2017**

### Board of Directors

Karl Samp, MRPC Pilot  
Rep. Sheldon Johnson, MN-MRPC Chair  
Sheronne Mulry, Culture & Heritage Co-Chair  
Carol Zoff, Transportation Co-Chair

### Communications & Marketing

Anne Lewis  
Sen. David Senjem (alternate)  
Chris Miller

### Culture & Heritage

Sheronne Mulry  
Nancy Salminen

### Environment, Recreation & Agriculture

Rep. Sheldon Johnson

### Transportation

Carol Zoff



## Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission Agency & Regional Updates March 2017

### Mississippi River Trail – Liz Walton

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#### **USBR 41 Ribbon-Cutting**

Event will be held on Saturday, May 20.

United States Bicycle Route 41 (<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/usbr41/visit.html>) meets USBR 45/MRT in downtown St. Paul. The ribbon-cutting will kick off a USBR 41 tour. MN-MRPC members are invited to attend and join along on a short bike ride.

#### **Planned speakers:**

- MnDOT Commissioner Charlie Zelle (or designated)
- DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr (or designated)
- Ramsey County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt
- St. Paul, Mayor Chris Coleman (or designated)
- Adventure Cycling Assoc. (Ginny Sullivan)

#### **Special guests to help cut ribbon:**

- Dick Thorud: 1 of the 3 men in a Star Tribune USBR 41 related story
- Dorian Grilley, Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota
- John Anfinson (or representative) from National Park Service

#### **Ribbon-cutting info:**

- o **Purpose:** Celebrate USBR 41 designation. The route begins at the junction of USBR 45/Mississippi River Trail in St. Paul, travels to Duluth, then generally follows Lake Superior to the Canadian border.
- o **Date/time:** Saturday, May 20 at 9:00 AM, lasting approximately 30 minutes.
- o **Location:** Near the intersection of Shepard Road and Sibley Street, where the two USBRs meet.
- o **Agenda:** 1) short speeches; 2) ribbon-cutting; and 3) start of 6-day bicycle tour to Canada

NOTE: All attending are invited to escort the bicyclists as they leave town, escorting them to/along the Bruce Vento Trail.

#### **Inquiries/Comments**

MnDOT continues to receive inquiries and comments about USBR 45/MRT. This text is taken from a recently received email. The sender bicycled the route with a dog in tow!

*This letter is to commend those persons in the State government and MNDOT responsible for the design, implementation and construction of the MRT in Minnesota. In the fall of 2016 I biked the entire length through Minnesota and all 10 states this trail passes through. I had the opportunity to compare the implementation of the trail in each state. By far, Minnesota has the most complete and well-marked section with signage. In addition, the trail has some of the best route selection. Kudos to you guys!*

#### **Rides**

Rides continue to occur along USBR 45/MRT. For example –

- 2017 BAM Bike Tour (<https://bambiketour.org/>) will be on parts of GRR and USBR 45/MRT, including two overnight stops in MRT cities (Walker and Bemidji). It will include a stop at the Headwaters. GRR/MRT are specifically mentioned in ride brochure
- Third annual Headwaters to Hills Ride, August 23 – 30 (<https://bambiketour.org/>). This year includes Amtrak back to St. Paul.



## Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota

300 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, Suite 101 • Waite Park, Minnesota 56387

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**Members of the House:** Sheldon Johnson (DFL – 67B) – Chair **Members of the Senate:** David Senjem (R – 25); Patricia Torres Ray (DFL – 63) **State Agency Appointees:** Paul Hugunin – Agriculture, Scott Bradley – Transportation, Adam Johnson – Explore Minnesota Tourism, Keith Parker – Natural Resources, Andrea Kajer – Historical Society **Regional Appointees:** Nancy Salminen – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids, Amanda MacDonald – Grand Rapids to Brainerd, Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River, Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings, Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border **Member at Large:** Anne Lewis

February 2, 2017

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
302 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar,

In December of 2016, National Scenic Byways celebrated 25 years of bringing residents and travelers closer to places of scenic, historic, natural, recreational, archaeological, and cultural value in their states and throughout the nation, enhancing the public's appreciation for their country and its iconic resources. The National Scenic Byways Program, established in 1991 and administered by the Federal Highway Administration, oversees 120 National Scenic Byways (as of 2010) and 31 All-American Roads in 46 states. Minnesotans are fortunate to host 21 Scenic Byways (including seven National Scenic Byways and one All-American Road), most accessing rural areas and small towns, but also offering access to thousands in our urban centers as well.

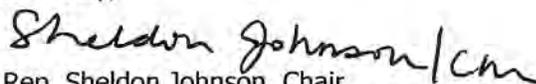
As the state commission that is organized by statute and, in partnership with MnDOT, oversees the Great River Road – an integrated, intermodal transportation artery providing access statewide to the Mississippi River – the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission wanted to share the significance of this national tourism and travel infrastructure program with you.

For Minnesota's Great River Road, we know that the impact of tourism in adjacent counties is evidenced by gross leisure and hospitality sales of over \$9.8 billion, and 180,091 jobs (MN Dept. of Revenue, and Dept. of Employee and Economic Development, 2014). Also special for our state is the length of the Great River Road: 565 miles of route touch 20 counties, 43 communities and three tribes, as it meanders down the center of the state and makes its way to the Iowa border. It intersects federal, state, county and township roads, as well as bike trails, 11 state parks, the only U.S. National Park dedicated to America's great river, and numerous waterway access points along the way. It is a complex collection of intermodal systems maintained to encourage travelers and residents to touch their great river.

One of the roles of the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission is to integrate National Scenic Byway programs into our management of the Great River Road. We do this through Corridor Management Plan implementation, localized grants support, statewide connections to Convention and Visitors Bureaus, and the constant input of our state partners at the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Explore Minnesota Tourism, Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Minnesota completed a new Minnesota Great River Road Corridor Management Plan in 2016, and we're enclosing a summary brochure for your reference. The full report and supporting documents are available at [www.mnmississippiriver.com/cmp](http://www.mnmississippiriver.com/cmp). Anne Lewis, MN-MRPC Commissioner At-Large, will be in Washington D.C. March 1. She will be contacting your office to request an appointment to further discuss the importance of Minnesota's Great River Road and specific opportunities to benefit your district, Minnesota and our nation. Thank you in advance for considering her request.

Sincerely,

  
Rep. Sheldon Johnson, Chair

## **MN-MRPC Great River Road Ambassador Program –Development Discussion**

As Recommended in the *Great River Road Corridor Management Plan 2016*

March 2, 2017 Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission – Qtly Meeting

“Resources, materials and training will be offered for MN-MRPC member facility managers, local road and attraction managers, local businesses and residents to improve corridor management, better serve tourists and encourage economic development.”

### Discussion Goal:

Consider approaches to fulfilling the Corridor Management Plan’s recommendation to develop a Great River Road “Ambassador Program”.

### Potential Program Objectives:

1. Confirm local partners for the Great River Road: Interpretive Centers, CVBs, local highway personnel, gov’t officials, farmers’ mkt., etc.
2. Engage local partners to help MN-MRPC track and record Great River Road visitors, amenities, events, and needs. (Accountability & Improvements)
3. Engage MN-MRPC in listening for traveler experiences through local partners. (Future promotion & Evaluation)
4. Build local community appreciation for the Great River Road as an important tourism and development asset in their midst.

### Potential Approach:

1. Start “Ambassador” program with a year-long test phase that would include not more than three Interpretive Centers and/or CVBs for each of Minnesota’s six Great River Road sections as initial-phase partners. Assign a Commission Member as liason to each of the six sections’ partners.
2. Produce a “test” Toolkit and contact plan for use by and with partners during the year.

### Additional Potential Approaches:

- Discuss

### Potential Toolkit Contents:

1. Case Statement for Great River Road incl. economic development and tourism stats
2. Maps of MN Great River Road
3. Thumb drive: maps, paddlewheel graphics, links to web site; National Geographic Geotourism links & graphics
4. CMP brochure
5. Window clings
6. 100-word & 200-word descriptions for insertion in local tourist publications
7. Elevator speech – 250 words for liasons
8. Byway Resource Confirmation form for partners to fill out and confirm accuracy

Forwarded Message -----

**Subject:**Partnership with Source Song Festival

**Date:**Tue, 6 Dec 2016 16:32:17 -0600

**From:**Mark Bilyeu <[mark@sourcesongfestival.org](mailto:mark@sourcesongfestival.org)>

**To:**[MRPC@pilchbarnet.com](mailto:MRPC@pilchbarnet.com)

Hello,

My name is Mark Bilyeu, and I am the Artistic Director of the [Source Song Festival](#), which takes place in Minneapolis-St. Paul August 7-12, 2017. Source is a classical music festival which focuses on Art Song, which is the intersection of poetry and music.

Source seeks to bring in world-class performing artists to both teach and perform for students we draw from across the country, and our local audiences here in the Twin Cities, while elevating the deep talent already here in the Twin Cities.

Our 2017 festival is entitled "**At the Headwaters**" and will focus on our reliance and relationship with water, celebrate Minnesota's environment and natural resources, and advocate for awareness and action in protecting and sustaining Minnesota's most valuable resources.

We will be featuring world premieres of McKnight Distinguished Artist **Libby Larsen**, and the late Stephen Paulus, host the internationally-recognized French baritone François Le Roux in a water-themed recital hosted at the **Minneapolis Institute of Arts**, and conclude with Schubert's famous "Die schöne Müllerin" which focuses on a man's relationship with a river, held at the **Ordway Center for Performing Arts**.

We are currently reaching out to organizations whose missions have a unique and valuable intersection with our 2017 festival. We are seeking partnerships which directly support our work (financial support which results in artist or event underwriting), and partnerships which enhance our offerings (pre-concert lectures, presentations, social media partnerships, etc).

Source Song Festival is committed to creating, growing, and fostering community here in Minnesota, and we would value an opportunity to speak with someone about the possibilities of including the Mississippi River Parkway Commission in this exciting project!

With many thanks for your time and consideration,  
-Mark Bilyeu