



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
3rd Quarter Meeting
August 11, 2016 • 2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building Basement Hearing Room
DRAFT AGENDA

- 2:30 p.m. Welcome & Introductions** S. Johnson
- 2:35 p.m. Approve Today's Agenda & Minutes from 5/19/16** S. Johnson/All
- 2:40 p.m. Commission Business**
- Budget Updates – FY '16 Final Report and FY '17 Allocation Miller
 - At-Large Member Election S. Johnson/All
 - Regional Elections – Update Miller/Zoff
 - Executive Committee and Commission Bylaws/Rules S. Johnson/Miller/LCC
 - Member Recognition S. Johnson/Samp
- 3:10 p.m. Corridor Management Plan**
- Grant Closeout Zoff/Miller
 - Initial Implementation Projects – Status & Needs Zoff/Miller/All
 - Explore Minnesota Marketing Grant Application – GRR Map All
 - National Advisory Council on Travel & Tourism Infrastructure Lewis/Samp/Zoff
- 3:40 p.m. National MRPC Updates**
- 2016 Annual Meeting – Natchez, MS, Sept. 14 – 16 Samp
 - GRR Interpretive Center Nominations Kajer/Miller
 - Drive the Great River Road Month Miller/All
- 4:00 p.m. Old Business**
- Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Rule Comments Miller
- 4:05 p.m. New Business**
- Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative Partnership Exploration Talks Lewis/Samp
- 4:15 p.m. Agency and Regional Updates**
- Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids Salminen
 - Grand Rapids to Brainerd Lewis
 - Brainerd to Elk River Samp
 - Elk River to Hastings Pierson
 - Hastings to Iowa Border Mulry
 - Agriculture Hugunin
 - Explore MN Tourism A. Johnson
 - Historical Society Kajer/Kelliher
 - Natural Resources Parker/Bonsignore
 - Transportation Bradley/Zoff
 - National Park Service/MISS Anfinson
- 4:45 p.m. Other Business**
- 5:00 p.m. Wrap Up and Adjourn**



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
2nd Quarter Meeting – May 19, 2016
State Office Building, St. Paul MN
MINUTES – Draft**

Commissioners Present

Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
Anne Lewis – Grand Rapids to Brainerd
Nancy Salminen – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids
Rep. Sheldon Johnson – Chair
Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings
Scott Bradley – Transportation Appointee
Andrea Kajer – Historical Society Appointee
Keith Parker – DNR Appointee
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border
Sen. David Senjem
Mark Anderson – At Large Member

Kristie Zeller – Explore Minnesota
Diane Henry-Wangensteen – LCC
Chris Miller – Staff

Commissioners & Technical Advisors

Absent

Paul Hugunin – Agriculture Appointee
Adam Johnson – Explore Minnesota Appointee
Sen. Patricia Torres-Ray
John Anfinson – National Park Service
David Kelliher – Historical Society

Technical Advisors & Staff Present

Carol Zoff – Transportation
Gina Bonsignore – DNR

Speakers Present

Jennifer Shillcox, DNR
Liz Walton, MnDOT

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 by Vice Chair Sheronne Mulry, followed by introductions. A quorum was present.

Review of Agenda and Minutes from 2/4/16 Meeting

The draft agenda was reviewed along with draft minutes from the 2/4/16 meeting. Motion by Anne Lewis and seconded by Scott Bradley to approve the 5/19/16 agenda and 2/4/16 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Rulemaking Update

Keith Parker introduced Jennifer Shillcox, DNR Land Use Supervisor, who provided an update on the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area rulemaking process and current status. A comprehensive process including public outreach has been underway, resulting in the current proposed rules. A series of public hearings will be held in June and formal public comment to the administrative law judge will be accepted until July 6, 2016. An agency response to the format comments will be prepared followed by a rebuttal period and eventual ruling by the Administrative Law Judge. The rules will likely be adopted late summer-early fall 2016. The proposed rules govern land use including where structures can be located, height, vegetation management, and design of facilities. Overall intent is to minimize impact on resources and clarify when permits would be necessary. After the proposed rules are adopted, local governments will update their zoning ordinances and rules accordingly.

Information about the process including the Statement of Need and Reasonableness and a full copy of the proposed rules is available at <http://dnr.state.mn.us/input/rules/mrcca/index.html>. The presentation was followed by discussion including mention of the comments provided by the MN-MRPC earlier in the rulemaking process. Examples of maps and details were shared via the website.

Commission Business

FY '16 Budget Status: A year to date budget status report was included in the meeting packet. Mark Anderson provided an overview including potential needs in FY '17 in case of any funding remaining from FY '16. Those needs include updating to the Minnesota Great River Road website which has been in place for many years, and development of a new print piece for travelers. The National Scenic Byway CMP grant and National Park Service grant will expire on June 30, 2016. Final documents and reports will be prepared as needed for each funding source.

Executive Committee and Commission Bylaws/Rules: Potential composition of a Commission Executive Committee was considered, in follow up to committee structure discussion at the last meeting. The Legislative Coordinating Commission provided a composition recommendation that would include the officers (Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary/Treasurer) as well as one agency representative and one regional representative. The MnDOT Great River Road Program Manager, Legislative Coordinating Commission and MN-MRPC Director would provide staffing support for the committee. The Executive Committee would provide overall guidance for Commission business and direction and handle issues that arise between quarterly meetings. Motion by Cordelia Pierson and seconded by Karl Samp to authorize creation of an Executive Committee comprised of five members with MN-MRPC officers serving as members and appointing agency and regional representation. Discussion included a recommendation that the first task of the committee be to develop a scope of duties and a goal of having a committee in place prior to the next quarterly meeting. Motion carried. Also, as recommended during the CMP process, Commission by-laws will be drafted for consideration by the Executive Committee and full MN-MRPC membership.

Regional and At-Large Member Elections: The past process for election of the Commission's at-large member was reviewed with the full Commission since an Executive Committee has not yet been formed. The process for regional member elections was also discussed. A recommendation was made that the term length of the at-large member be defined. Staggered terms for regional members were discussed and endorsed. The recommendation was that the at-large election and two regional elections should proceed at this time.

Revised Process for Letters of Support and Commission Comments: Members reviewed the proposed process revision included in the meeting packet. The proposed change is applicable in situations where a request is being considered between quarterly meetings; and would result in addition of special meetings to allow for public review and testimony of all letters of support/comment on local projects along the Minnesota Great River Road. Commission members could participate by phone in any special meetings as long as at least one member with staff would be present in a meeting room allowing the public to participate and testify. There was discussion on the importance of public participation and allowing time for agency members to review and consider proposed comments. A question was raised regarding the Commission's role in supporting or commenting on projects. The statute defining the MN-MRPC was reviewed online and it was noted that the statute and mission should always serve as guides when the Commission is considering support or comment on projects or issues. Motion by Anne Lewis and seconded by Cordelia Pierson to adopt the revised process for letters and comments as presented. Motion carried.

Letter of Support for Bruce Vento Bicycle & Pedestrian Bridge Project: The City of Saint Paul requested a letter of support as they seek TAP funding for the Bruce Vento Bridge project. The draft letter in the meeting packet was reviewed and discussed. Members spoke in favor of the project and the letter. Along with support, concern for impact on the flyway was noted. Motion by Cordelia Pierson and seconded by Anne Lewis to authorize a letter of support for the Bruce Vento Bridge project including language related to flyway concerns. Keith Parker and Chair Johnson agreed to work on edits to the letter. Vice Chair Mulry opened the meeting for public comment on the letter. Dan McGuinness of the Lower Phalen Creek Project spoke in support of the Bruce Vento Bridge project and the connectivity it will provide, also noting awareness of concerns related to the flyway and visual resources of the area. Mr. McGuinness asked the MN-MRPC to support the project and stated that the Lower Phalen Creek Project is working to address the concerns that have been noted. Additional public comment has been received by Rep. Johnson in the form of several emails in favor of the project. Vote taken and motion carried to provide a letter of support.

Letter to Congress Regarding Appropriation of Funds for Scenic Byways: Information was received from the MN Scenic Byways Office describing the potential for appropriations within the Federal Transportation Bill to support designation of new scenic byways. Byways are being asked to contact their members of Congress. Scott Bradley, member of the MN Scenic Byways Commission, encourages support for funding to allow designation of new byways as well as re-establishing funding for the overall byway program that includes existing byways. Carol Zoff and Scott Bradley provided background information on interest in new byway designation within Minnesota. There was discussion on whether Commission support should be for funding of new byway designations or focus first on existing byways. Consensus was that letters should request restoration of the full byways program which would

encompass both existing and new scenic byways. It was noted that the Great River Road goes through all eight congressional districts in Minnesota and so any letter should be sent to all of Minnesota's United States Senators and Representatives. Motion by Scott Bradley and seconded by Andrea Kajer to authorize a letter supporting restoration of the Scenic Byways program including appropriations. Motion carried.

Corridor Management Plan

CMP Final Report – Print and Online: Carol Zoff and Chris Miller reported on status of the Corridor Management Plan. The final report has been printed and copies are available for MN-MRPC members today and will also be distributed to Project Advisory Team members. The full report is posted online at www.mnmississippiriver.com/cmp along with all background materials from the project. Materials include the full sign inventory and resource inventory. The online information was shared and feedback was requested. Several suggestions were made and recorded. Additional comments were requested by June 2 to allow for incorporation on the website as much as possible prior to project close out.

Summary Brochure Distribution: CMP/GRR overview brochures have been finalized and printed. A few have been placed in each CMP binder and more are available from the MN-MRPC office upon request. Planning for distribution of the brochures will take place via email/phone calls with members or at the next meeting.

Next Steps – Grant Closeout and CMP Implementation: The National Scenic Byway and National Park Service grants both have end dates of June 30, 2016. Final expenses will be processed and required reports will be submitted. Implementation of the CMP will begin with the four initial implementation items defined in the report. Plan Your Project and Plan Your Trip mapping tools will be pursued first through partnerships with member agencies, wayfinding signage will be evaluated for potential implementation within existing MnDOT plans, with GRR Ambassador Development to follow. GIS contacts from each member agency will be requested to begin discussions on the Plan Your Project and Plan Your Trip data and mapping.

National MRPC Updates

2016 Semi-Annual Meeting, La Crosse: Sheronne Mulry referenced the report in the meeting packet and mentioned that minutes from all technical committee meetings are available at www.mrpcmembers.com. The visit checklist for Great River Road Interpretive Centers was highlighted with a reminder that all Minnesota centers should receive a visit prior to September. Anne Lewis expanded on information in the report including the La Crosse meeting presentation regarding the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI), a group of mayors from all ten Mississippi River states. Lewis suggested a meeting or conversation with involved mayors from Minnesota to discuss options for collaboration between the MRCTI and MRPC. It was also reported that the MRPC Marketing Committee has begun researching the concept of a ten state Mississippi River bicycle race/event. Feedback from Minnesota could be helpful to the process. "Mysteries of the Driftless," an Emmy winning video, was recommended by Mulry. Karl Samp reported that there will be upcoming revisions to the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative (MRCC) Memorandum of Understanding. The MRPC is a member of the MRCC and Samp will be reviewing the MOU, and also potentially attending the MRCC's June meeting in St. Louis. Pending changes to the Mississippi River Geotourism Project were discussed. The website will launch this summer and maintenance will be turned over to another organization. The RFP process to select that organization is underway, dependent on available funding. MRT Inc. continues work on a proposal to become part of the MRPC, which would then be considered by the MRPC Board and committees.

2016 Annual Meeting - Natchez, MS: There was discussion regarding Minnesota's current ban on executive branch and legislative branch travel to Mississippi. Karl Samp will be attending as National Pilot, with travel costs covered by the National MRPC. If any MN-MRPC members wish to attend at their own cost, they would be able to participate and vote in meetings. Information on out-of-state travel will be monitored and members will be advised of any changes to the current status.

Upcoming Nomination and Report Deadlines: A list of upcoming MRPC nomination and report deadlines was provided in the meeting packet. Staff will follow up on items as needed.

Old Business

Mississippi River Trail Report: Liz Walton provided an update. The nomination for the Minnesota MRT has been submitted to the Mississippi River Geotourism Project website, including a detailed shape file of the route. The Mississippi Blufflands Trail is in planning stages and in the future, could become the MRT route in part of the Bluffs Region. The International Winter Cycling Congress, held in the Twin Cities in February, included a well-received snowy mobile workshop along the MRT. Information was distributed about the 2nd Annual Headwaters to Hills Ride, Bemidji Loop the Lake Festival, and a project to develop the next U.S. Bicycle Route in Minnesota. Walton offered help as the MRPC considers options for a ten state bicycle event, and looks forward to the MRT partnering with the MN Great River Road as Wayfinding Signage is addressed.

Agency and Regional Updates

Hastings to Iowa Border: Sheronne Mulry reported that the City of Winona has voted to pursue a ban on silica sand mining. WCCO television is reporting today that The Common Closet in Wabasha was voted the best thrift store in Minnesota.

Brainerd to Elk River: Karl Samp announced that the St. Cloud, Sartell, Sauk Rapids area will be hosting the 2017 Governor's Fishing Opener, featuring the Mississippi River. A dedication ceremony for new MRT kiosk in Brainerd has been scheduled for July 12 in conjunction with the Headwaters to Hills Ride. The funding request for additional trails in the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area is currently included in the House bonding bill, though not the Senate or Governor's bonding bills. Crow Wing County is expected to act soon on a request to formalize ATV trails in the Mississippi Northwoods Area. It is likely the plan will move forward. Shore Excursions will be offering two Mississippi Headwaters tours in conjunction with American Queen cruise stops in the Twin Cities. One trip will take place in August and another in September. Initial conversations have also taken place regarding the possibility of future Great River Road tours.

Elk River to Hastings: Cordelia Pierson mentioned the May 31 opening of the St. Anthony Lock Visitor Center, now managed by the National Park Service after closure of the lock by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A suggestion was made that this site would make a wonderful National Great River Road Interpretive Center. Staff will follow up regarding a potential nomination. Revitalization continues to take place along the river – the Pillsbury A Mill is now artists' housing, fully occupied.

Grand Rapids to Brainerd: Anne Lewis reported that she has scheduled a meeting with the Great River Road Interpretive Center in her region – the Forest History Center. An article featuring the Crossings Region of the MN Great River Road was included in the spring edition of Lake Time Magazine. A copy was circulated for review. This article can be shared with others, featured on websites, utilized by CVBs, etc. A recent Minnesota Monthly travel blog showcased the Great River Road and also provides great information for sharing.

Tourism: Kristie Zeller reported that EMT spring-summer promotion is underway, and reminded everyone to use the hashtag #OnlyinMN in social media posts. In June, tourism representatives will be attending IPW in New Orleans, a major trade show for international travel. A new cruise ship will be coming to the Mississippi River in Minnesota soon – French American cruises plans to make a stop in Winona.

Transportation: Scott Bradley referenced MnDOT's recent grant process to transition scenic byways into the new structure of seeking funding through Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs). All three rounds of transitional byway grants have now been awarded and the first feedback is beginning to come in regarding byway participation in the ATP funding structure. Initial information is that relationships are being built and funding applications from byways will be coming in.

Natural Resources: Keith Parker noted the DNR's involvement with the Pillsbury A Mill redevelopment, working with permitting for the hydroelectric operation within, and also involvement with the Fort Snelling Upper Post redevelopment. State Parks and Trails are awaiting word on funding from the legislature. A budget gap for FY '17 will be partially addressed through movement to a self-service model for some formerly staffed services. Gina Bonsignore announced several upcoming events focused on connecting different audiences to the Mississippi River. Events will be held May 21 at Warner Road, June 1 at Powderhorn Park, July 30 in Stearns County (Take a Day OFF), and September 24 at Hidden Falls (Public Lands Day). Great news was shared at the recent NPS Trails and Open Space Partnership meeting. Funding has been received for canoe ride station pilot project.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, August 11, 2016
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building Room 500 North

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

MN-MRPC FY '16 Budget
8/5/16

| MN-MRPC FY '16 Operating Budget | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|--|
| Obj Code | Description | FY '16 Budget | Spent | Pending | Remaining | Comments |
| 41070 | Other Benefits (Per Diem) | \$ 4,000.00 | \$ 2,623.00 | | \$ 1,377.00 | Commissioner Per Diems: MN-MRPC quarterly mtgs, MRPC Annual Mtg & Semi-Annual Mtg, committee mtgs, commission representation at meetings and events, CMP project |
| 41110 | Printing & Advertising | \$ 1,000.00 | \$ 134.89 | | \$ 865.11 | Commission meeting copies, materials |
| 41130 | Prof/Tech Services | \$ 36,000.00 | \$ 31,567.47 | | \$ 4,432.53 | Admin contract, website design services, additional staff time for projects including CMP project admin, other services as needed |
| 41150 | Computer & System Services | \$ 1,000.00 | \$ 871.11 | | \$ 128.89 | Website hosting, stats and email |
| 41155 | Communications | \$ 1,000.00 | \$ 963.78 | | \$ 36.22 | Postage/deliveries, MN MRPC phone line and conference calls, shipping costs, Constant Contact email marketing service |
| 41160 | In-State Travel | \$ 4,000.00 | \$ 3,888.81 | | \$ 111.19 | Commissioners/Advisors/Staff: quarterly mtgs, committees, events, CMP project |
| 41170 | Out-State Travel | \$ 7,000.00 | \$ 4,723.73 | | \$ 2,276.27 | MRPC 2015 Annual Meeting - New Orleans and 2016 Semi-Annual Meeting - La Crosse |
| 41180 | Employee Development | \$ 1,150.00 | \$ 1,450.00 | | \$ (300.00) | Meeting and conference registration fees, including MRPC Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings |
| 41300 | Office Supplies | | \$ (242.50) | | \$ 242.50 | General office supplies for Commission projects. Donations for GRR maps are placed in this line item. |
| 43000 | Other Costs (MRPC Dues) | \$ 11,000.00 | \$ 7,708.51 | | \$ 3,291.49 | MRPC 2016 Dues |
| TOTAL | | \$ 66,150.00 | \$ 53,688.80 | \$ - | \$ 12,461.20 | |
| MN-MRPC Grants | | | | | | |
| | CMP - National Scenic Byways | \$ 81,920.82 | \$ 80,179.60 | | \$ 1,741.22 | CMP contract, MN-MRPC CMP project costs, final report printing, CMP/GRR Brochures |
| | CMP - National Park Service | \$ 8,481.12 | \$ 2,630.97 | | \$ 5,850.15 | MRT final costs, MN-MRPC CMP project costs |

Allotment of FY 16 Funds

Legal Citations: ML 2015 Ch 77, Art 1, Sec 2, Subd 4 (approp to LCC). General Funds/1000 Fund.

| | | |
|-------------|---|------------------|
| FY: | COMMISSION NAME: | AMOUNT: |
| 2017 | Mississippi River Parkway Commission Operations (MRPC) | 63,000.00 |

Object

| <u>Code</u> | <u>Description</u> | |
|--------------------|--|------------------|
| 41000 | Full-time | |
| 41030 | Part-time, Seasonal, Labor Services | |
| 41070 | Other Benefits | 3,500.00 |
| 41100 | Space Rental, Maintenance, and Utilities - Non-State Owned Space | |
| 41110 | Printing & Advertising | 500.00 |
| 41130 | Professional and Technical Services - Outside Vendor | 31,000.00 |
| 41145 | IT Professional and Technology - Outside Vendor Services | |
| 41150 | Computer and Systems Services | 1,000.00 |
| 41155 | Communications | 1,000.00 |
| 41160 | Travel & Subsistence - Instate | 4,000.00 |
| 41170 | Travel & Subsistence - Outstate | 6,000.00 |
| 41180 | Employee Development | 1,000.00 |
| 41190 | Agency Provided Prof/Tech Service | |
| 41300 | Supplies | |
| 41500 | Repairs to Equipment and Furniture | |
| 42010 | Statewide Indirect Costs | |
| 43000 | Other Operating Costs (MRPC State Dues) | 15,000.00 |
| 47060 | Equipment | |
| TOTAL* | | 63,000.00 |

Total must be equal to:* **63,000.00

Need to yet allot: **-**

Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC)

Working Draft 8/10/16

Full Commission

- Comprised of 15 voting members as defined in [Minnesota Statute 161.1419](#), along with staff from agencies (also known as technical members).
- Quorum is achieved by attendance of 8 voting members (50% of members plus one).
- The Commission meets quarterly at a minimum. Generally each meeting is 2.5 hours in length.
- State Commission meetings are open to the public, to the extent required by Minnesota Statute Chapter 13D, and audiotapes are posted online following the meetings.
- Meeting agendas, packets, minutes and audio are available at <http://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/mrpc/mrpc.html>.
- Staffing support provided by MN-MRPC Director, MnDOT Great River Road Program Manager, and Legislative Coordinating Commission.
- The Commission is a member of the ten-state national Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

Executive Committee

- Comprised of five members as authorized by the MN-MRPC. Membership to include the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary/Treasurer. Membership also to reflect one House or Senate member, one agency representative and one regional representative. Membership term is two years, with the committee membership elected by the MN-MRPC every other spring.
- Quorum is achieved by attendance of 3 voting members.
- State Commission meetings are open to the public, to the extent required by Minnesota Statute Chapter 13D, and audiotapes are posted online following the meeting.
- Meeting agendas, packets, minutes and audio are available at <http://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/mrpc/mrpc.html>.
- Staffing support provided by MN-MRPC Director, MnDOT Great River Road Program Manager, and Legislative Coordinating Commission.
- Generally meets twice per year and as needed between full Commission meetings.
- Maintains Commission membership – appointment/election process, recruitment, orientation.
- Maintains affiliation with National MRPC including staying current on dues payments, ensuring National Meeting and National Committee representation from MN-MRPC.
- Monitors Corridor Management Plan implementation progress and leverages resource needs.
- Facilitates coordination with House and Senate.



DRAFT for MN-MRPC Consideration

Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission

2017 Minnesota Great River Road Map Project

Background

- The Great River Road National Scenic Byway has celebrated the Mississippi River through ten states since 1938.
- Minnesota's Great River Road is a network of roadways spanning 565 miles, 43 communities, 20 counties, 3 tribes and 6 unique destination areas.
- In Minnesota, Mississippi River counties accounted for \$9.8 billion in leisure and hospitality industry gross sales and an estimated 180,000 leisure and hospitality jobs in 2014, representing 70% of statewide travel and tourism impact. (Source – 2016 Tourism and the Economy Brochure, Explore Minnesota Tourism)
- A Corridor Management Plan (CMP) was recently completed for the Minnesota Great River Road. The full plan and resource materials are available at www.mnmississippiriver.com/cmp.

Need

- The CMP identified wayshowing (guide signs) as a top priority with 22% missing and 32% needing maintenance, correlating with customer feedback they are getting lost.
- The CMP also recommends a printed and printable (online) drivable map to assist with navigation and trip planning.
- The CMP provided a database of over 700 attractions and resources and the route's alignment for use in print and online mapping.
- Results of a visitor survey indicated that 95% of respondents would probably plan to visit the Great River Road again, yet getting lost was noted as a complaint. Travelers said they learned about the Great River Road from maps and brochures, the website, local knowledge, friends/family, and the wayshowing signs. Brochures and maps can help draw visitors to our local communities and bring them back; and also build capacity of locals to encourage and assist with byway exploration.



Minnesota Great River Road Map Project

- A new promotional piece is needed for the Minnesota Great River Road, including a drivable map showing both the Great River Road National Scenic Byway and Mississippi River Trail bicycle route, and some of the 700 plus attractions and traveler resources.
- The map will be distributed through a partner network of 50 local CVBs/Chambers; Tourism Welcome Centers, Great River Road Interpretive Centers; State/National Parks and Historic Sites. Maps will also be distributed at meetings and events. The Minnesota Great River Road website and National Great River Road website offer individual maps to travelers upon request.



Cost

- Project cost is estimated at \$15,000 for map development and printing. Preliminary estimated quantity – 50,000 dependent on actual costs. 37,000 copies of a MN GRR brochure were printed in 2013, and 25,100 were printed in 2015, at costs of \$6,600 and \$5,700 respectively for re-printing costs of a previously developed piece. In both cases, demand exceeded supply after the initial shipment to distribution sites. This brochure did not include a drivable map.
- The Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC) can apply for an Explore Minnesota Marketing grant for \$7,500 of the total cost. For this grant, \$7,500 in matching funding is required from non-state sources.
- The MN-MRPC can contribute funds from its operating budget (state funding) for taxes and distribution costs which are not eligible expenses for this grant. The MN-MRPC will also provide project management and fiscal services which are not eligible expenses for this grant. The Commission does not have funding available for full development and printing of a new map without grant and other non-state funds.

Local Impact

- Maps will promote 43 communities, 20 counties, 3 tribes and local attractions and resources along Minnesota's Great River Road, identify and connect those communities as being part of the world renowned 10-state Mississippi River corridor, and provide exploration information for both travelers and community members.
- Maps will help travelers safely and confidently navigate Minnesota's Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail.
- Maps have traditionally been distributed as noted above and could also be available for distribution at community foundation offices and/or other local sites.
- If you have questions or would like more information, please contact: Chris Miller, Mississippi River Parkway Commission of MN, info@mnmississippiriver.com, or 651-341-4196.



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota

300 33rd Avenue South, Suite 101 • Waite Park, Minnesota 56387

Phone: 651-341-4196 • E-Mail: 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, Anne Lewis – 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:** Mark Anderson

July 5, 2016

Administrative Law Judge Eric L. Lipman
Office of Administrative Hearings
600 North Robert Street
PO Box 64620
Saint Paul, MN 55164-0620

Re: Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Proposed Rules

Dear Judge Lipman,

The Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota (MN-MRPC) would like to submit comments on the proposed rules for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA). The mission of the MN-MRPC, established under Minnesota Statute 161.1419, is to promote, preserve and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River Valley and to develop the highways and amenities of the Great River Road. The MRCCA rules play an important role in protecting these critical resources of the Mississippi River's Great River Road and surrounding corridor.

In fall of 2014, the MN-MRPC provided detailed comments on the draft MRCCA draft rules as related to the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byway intrinsic qualities and the Commission's mission. These comments were provided by the MN-MRPC with the exception of the Department of Natural Resources, since they are the agency developing the rules.

We support and are grateful for the efforts of our partners at the DNR in developing these proposed rules, including a comprehensive public outreach process. We have reviewed the proposed rules and appreciate the incorporation of several of the Commission's original comments. However the MN-MRPC encourages reconsideration of all comments in order to more fully preserve and enhance the intrinsic resources of the Mississippi River Valley. A copy of the 2014 transmittal letter and current comments are attached.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact the Commission office at 651-341-4196. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Rep. Sheldon Johnson, Chair



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission

300 33rd Avenue South, Suite 101 • Waite Park, Minnesota 56387

Phone: 651-341-4196 • E-Mail: 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, Anne Lewis – 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:* Mark Anderson

June 9, 2016

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

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

As Congressional appropriators continue work on the 2017 Department of Transportation appropriation to the Federal Highway Administration, we request your support for sufficient funds to fully restore the National Scenic Byways Program including both existing byways' projects and new byway designations. A recent letter to House Committee on Appropriations Leadership from Congressmen Cicilline, Farr, Blumenauer, Grijalva, DeSaulnier and Cartwright urged support for funding new byway designations and highlighted the importance of National Scenic Byways.

The Minnesota Great River Road received National Scenic Byway designation in 2000. All ten Mississippi River states hold National Scenic Byway designation for the Great River Road. In Minnesota, Mississippi River counties accounted for \$9.8 billion in leisure and hospitality industry gross sales and an estimated 180,000 leisure and hospitality jobs in 2014, representing 70% of statewide travel and tourism impact (2016 Tourism and the Economy Fact Sheet, Explore Minnesota Tourism). National Scenic Byways designation and funding offer partnering opportunities for local communities and regional groups to identify and complete significant projects that improve local quality of life and the tourists' experience. Since 1992 National Scenic Byway funds have facilitated Great River Road projects including improvements to overlooks, rest areas, interpretation, maps, marketing, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, wayshowing, historic preservation and more, making a positive difference in Minnesota communities.

A new Corridor Management Plan was recently completed for the 565 mile Minnesota Great River Road including a detailed assessment of the current condition of the byway and resulting in five themes and 90+ strategies that will help move the byway and its partners forward and benefit all involved. The plan also includes an investment inventory of 102 local projects along the byway, which shows the local commitment to and investment in byway related projects as well as the need for categories of funds formerly available through the National Scenic Byways program. A brochure providing background information about the Minnesota Great River Road, recent accomplishments and future plans is enclosed for your reference.

Dedicated funding opportunities for scenic byways would enable the Great River Road and 20 other Minnesota byways, most with new Corridor Management Plans, to continue the innovative programming and projects that benefit Minnesota and the nation. If you would like to learn more about the Minnesota Great River Road, please visit www.mnmississippiriver.com or contact us at 651-341-4196 if you would be interested in a tour. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request for support.

Sincerely,

Rep. Sheldon Johnson
Chair



Cutting the ribbon celebrating two new Mississippi River Trail/Great River Road interpretive map panels at Brainerd's Kiwanis Park are (from left) Mississippi River Parkway Commission Pilot Karl Samp, Brainerd Mayor Edwin Menk, Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce President Matt Kilian, Master of Ceremony Rod Osterloh, MnDOT's Great River Road Program Coordinator Carol Zoff, Crosby Mayor Joanna Lattery, Headwaters to Hills bicyclists, and other local celebrities.

On July 12 about 60 people gathered in Brainerd, Minnesota's Kiwanis Park for a ribbon cutting event celebrating the installation of two new Mississippi River-focused interpretive map panels, and their partnership with Aitkin and Crosby serving as co-host communities for the Mississippi River Trail (MRT), Minnesota's first state bikeway under the Commissioner of Transportation.

Since 1938 the Great River Road has told the river's stories through ten states and provides access to the Mississippi's scenic, natural, historic, archaeological, cultural and recreational intrinsic resources. Today one of these recreation resources is the MRT, also a ten state route, and often co-located on the byway. One of 16 National Millennium Trails reflecting "defining aspects America's history and culture," the MRT was recently signed state-wide along 800 miles of highways, local roads and trails by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, with funding provided by the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission's Federal Highway Administration and Department of Interior grants, and the Department.

These grants also paid to develop and fabricate the celebrated MRT Host Community kiosks. Bemidji, Little Falls, Ramsey, Hastings, Lake City and Winona also serve as host communities and have a set of these kiosks to help bicyclists, like the Headwaters to the Hills participants, know about the route, how and where to ride along it, and provide a taste of the places there are to see and do along Minnesota's mighty Mississippi River!

The MRT host community kiosks replicate the style of a series of Great River Road kiosks from the Headwaters to the Iowa boarder so that people can recognize them from the byway or bikeway as a source of Mississippi River information. The kiosks are also a tangible way to thank host communities for the work they have done to assess and improve their bike friendliness, refine the route, and for their partnership in establishing the MRT.

Also recognized were Brainerd, Aitkin and Crosby's efforts to acquire, plan and design for Mississippi riverfront engagement aiming to realize the river's potential for improving personal, economic and environmental sustainability, all with a big dose of fun.