



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Meeting  
November 21, 2024 • 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.  
Zoom and Centennial Office Building Room 101**

**DRAFT AGENDA**

<b>2:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	Housley/All
<b>2:10 p.m.</b>	<b>Approve Today's Agenda &amp; Minutes from 8/15/24</b>	Housley/All
<b>2:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Commission Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Budget Report</li><li>- MN-MRPC Classification in Transportation Statute</li><li>- Commission Needs &amp; Priorities – Refer to Executive Committee?</li><li>- Proposed 2025 Meeting Dates</li></ul>	Packet/Lewis/Miller LCC Miller/All Packet
<b>2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>2024 MRPC Annual Meeting, Winona</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review &amp; Follow Up</li></ul>	All
<b>2:40 p.m.</b>	<b>National MRPC/Great River Road Technical Committee Reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Communications &amp; Marketing</li><li>- Culture &amp; Heritage</li><li>- Environment, Recreation &amp; Agriculture</li><li>- Transportation</li></ul>	Christianson Anfinson Karnowski MacDonagh
<b>3:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Plan Your Trip &amp; Digital Travel Guides – Status &amp; Needs</b>	Karnowski/All
<b>3:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Itasca State Park GRR Interpretive Panel Review Results</b>	Zoff
<b>3:25 p.m.</b>	<b>Drive the Great River Road Month</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Report on 2024 Campaign</li><li>- Theme/Sponsor Suggestions for 2025</li></ul>	Packet/Miller/All
<b>3:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Transportation Alternatives Funding Applications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review Listing of Possible Projects along Great River Road</li><li>- Consider MN-MRPC Letters of Support</li></ul>	Zoff/Miller/All
<b>3:50 p.m.</b>	<b>National Scenic Byway Grant Applications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review Project Summaries</li><li>- Consider MN-MRPC Letters of Support</li></ul>	Miller/Wilcox/All
<b>4:10 p.m.</b>	<b>Commission Member Updates</b>	All
<b>4:20 p.m.</b>	<b>Other Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Member and Partner Recognitions</li></ul>	Lewis/All
<b>4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Wrap Up and Adjourn</b>	Housley



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
3rd Quarter Meeting – August 15, 2024  
Centennial Office Building Room 101/Zoom Hybrid  
MINUTES – Draft**

**Commissioners Present**

Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River  
John Anfinson – Elk River to Hastings  
Kate Carlson – Hastings to Iowa Border  
Sen. Karin Housley  
Sen. John Hoffman  
Paul Hugunin – Agriculture  
Lisa Havelka – Explore Minnesota  
David Kelliher – Historical Society  
Grant Wilson – Natural Resources  
Marni Karnowski – Transportation

**Technical Advisors/Staff Present**

Peter MacDonagh - Transportation  
Carol Zoff – Transportation  
Diane Henry-Wangenstein – LCC

Megan Voelke - LCC  
Chris Miller – MN-MRPC Staff

**Members & Technical Advisors Absent**

Rep. Sydney Jordan  
Rep. Leigh Finke  
Sally Fineday – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids  
Megan Christianson – Grand Rapids to Brainerd  
Anne Lewis – At-Large Member  
Kelli Bruns – Natural Resources  
Tucker Blythe – National Park Service

**Partners/Guests Present**

Tad Erickson – Region 5  
Austin Hauf - WSB  
Lauren Peck – Natural Resources

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The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m. by MN-MRPC Chair, Sen. Karin Housley, followed by roll call. A quorum was present. The meeting packet and recording are available at <https://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/mrpc/>.

**Approve Agenda and Minutes from 5/30/24 Meeting:** Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by David Kelliher to approve the draft agenda and meeting minutes as amended to specify that Winona-Dakota Unity Alliance will be invited to give a welcome at the MRPC Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

**Informational Presentation – Regions 5 and 7E Long Range Transportation Plans:** Commission Member Sally Fineday mentioned long-range transportation planning in her area at the May 30 MN-MRPC meeting, and the Commission requested action to reach out to the planning group and request that byways be included in the planning process. Tad Erickson of Region 5 Development Commission and Austin Hauf of WSB provided an overview including details on how byways will be addressed. Their PowerPoint presentation is available at <https://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/mrpc/Meetings24.html>.

**Budget Report:** Chris Miller referenced reports in the meeting packet, including a near final report for fiscal year 2024 and a new allocation form for FY 25. Unspent funds from FY 24 have not yet been carried forward into FY 25 but will be available after final close out of FY 24.

**MN-MRPC Classification in Transportation Funding Statute:** 2023 Minnesota Statute 161.045 includes the MN-MRPC on a list of organizations that do not fulfill a transportation purpose. Diane Henry-Wangenstein provided an update. The Legislative Coordinating Commission facilitated initial legal reviews of statutes mentioning the MN-MRPC and Great River Road. A team met in June to go over findings and discuss possible next steps. Additional review will be taking place and the MN-MRPC will be updated on any recommendations prior to the next legislative session.

**Interpretive Center Ambassador Outreach:** A Zoom meeting was held for Interpretive Center partners on July 31. This was a group session rather than the single site sessions held in the past, as requested by partners. Time was set aside for sharing and discussion including ways to partner and cross promote.

**National Great River Road – Review of Committee Voting Process:** The process for voting and Minnesota representation on National MRPC Technical Committees was reviewed. Designated voting members or alternates on the committees are authorized to vote on behalf of Minnesota but should feel free to reach out to other MN-MRPC members for review and comment on various topics as needed. Several members of the MN-MRPC often receive information on committee meetings, due to National MRPC leadership roles and general interest. Carol Zoff reminded members of the MRPC Policies & Procedures available at <https://mrpcmembers.com/>. A suggestion was made to confirm Minnesota's

voting committee members with the National Office. Committee representation will be included on the roster provided to the National Office with the Annual Report.

**MRPC Communications and Marketing Committee:** Chris Miller reported that the Summer Fun on the Great River Road events promotion is underway, including the opportunity for local communities to upload their events information; and noted that the committee is planning to work on regional itineraries and might be requesting information from states.

**MRPC Culture & Heritage Committee:** John Anfinson reported that the committee recently reviewed and accepted the Interpretive Center application from the Muscatine County Conservation Environmental Learning Center, with minor edits. The committee is also working with the Memphis River Parks Partnership on their application for Tom Lee Park, which would be a new type of Interpretive Center, setting a precedent for others.

**MRPC Environment, Recreation & Agriculture:** Marni Karnowski reported on discussions at the most recent meeting which centered on pollinator initiatives. She noted the need for more involvement at committee meetings. Grant Wilson suggested possible interest from other multi-state groups such as the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association and Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program. Carol Zoff mentioned the Pollinator Playbook developed by Mike McClanahan of the Tennessee Department of Transportation, which could serve as a guide to help build partnerships - <https://mrpcmembers.com/mississippi/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Pollinator-Playbook-9.20.23.pdf>. A ribbon cutting event was held on June 22 at the Brice Prairie Visitor Center, newly designated as a Great River Road Interpretive Center.

**MRPC Transportation:** Peter MacDonagh reported that the committee will meet again at the MRPC Annual Meeting. The committee is focusing on developing and signing the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) at a ten-state level and is working to obtain rights to the logo that was created and owned by an organization no longer in existence.

**National MRPC 2024 Annual Meeting – September 18 – 20 in Winona:** Members reviewed the draft agenda, discussed details and needs, volunteered for tasks, and confirmed giveaway items for welcome bags. Content and flow for the Effective Partnering panel of state agency members was discussed. Everyone was encouraged to register if they had not already done so and to keep in touch with each other and Chris as the meeting dates approach. Peter MacDonagh commended Senators Housley and Hoffman for their attendance at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

**Drive the Great River Road Month:** Lauren Peck of the DNR shared updates on plans for Drive the Great River Road Month 2024, with special focus on the details of the State Fair kick-off event scheduled for August 29 at 3:00 p.m. at the DNR Building's Outdoor Stage. Feedback and discussion followed. Details on the campaign will be sent to members via email and all were asked to help share information and promote the Great River Road in September.

**MN GRR Program Record Archive Project:** Peter MacDonagh reported that 24 boxes of records were inventoried, representing decades of foundational Great River Road information. One box of records will be digitized, and the remainder will be archived in hard copy at the Minnesota Historical Society. Records will be available to the public. Special thanks to MnDOT and the Minnesota Historical Society for their work on this important project.

**Northland Reliability Project Update:** The environmental assessment, schedule of public meetings, details on the comment period, and past comments submitted by the MN-MRPC were emailed to MN-MRPC members on July 2. The comment deadline was August 5 and there were no requests received from members for new comments. Additional information on this project will be shared as available if it appears to impact the Great River Road.

#### **Commission Member Updates:**

- David Kelliher noted that 2024 is the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Minnesota Historical Society as an organization. He also shared information on a land purchase at the Forest History Center in Grand Rapids that will allow for a buffer area, grazing/expanded animal area, protection of archaeological resources and expanded programming. Forest History Center is also planning for accessible on the water experiences. Information was also shared about a development planned adjacent to the Oliver Kelley Farm that may impact the site and riverfront.
- Grant Wilson reported that Fort Snelling State Park has reopened after being closed due to flooding this summer. He also noted that the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association Board held their latest quarterly meeting in St. Paul. MN-MRPC came up in discussion at this meeting and also in meetings of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program.

**Next Meeting:** November 21, 2024; 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.; location to be announced.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

# MN-MRPC FY 25 Activity Budget

11/11/24

<u>Activity/Item</u>	<u>FY 25 Funds</u>	<u>Spent 11/7/24</u>	<u>Pending</u>	<u>Remaining</u>	<u>% Spent</u>
Quarterly Meetings	\$4,500.00	\$55.00		\$4,445.00	1%
Commission Members - other meetings travel & per diem	\$2,500.00			\$2,500.00	0%
Dues & Memberships (MRPC - \$15,000; NSB Foundation \$150)	\$15,150.00			\$15,150.00	0%
National Meetings (sponsorship, member/staff attendance, planning)	\$14,900.00	\$8,523.35		\$6,376.65	57%
Communications including website hosting, phone, Zoom, Constant Contact, etc.	\$1,600.00	\$200.86	\$25.60	\$1,373.54	14%
Website Regular Maintenance Updates & Minor Changes	\$2,500.00	\$150.00		\$2,350.00	6%
Shipping	\$550.00	\$208.60	\$43.80	\$297.60	46%
General Material Printing & Supplies	\$2,514.25			\$2,514.25	0%
Admin Contract	\$38,400.00	\$9,600.00	\$3,200.00	\$25,600.00	33%
Professional-Technical Services - including additional staff hours, web services, graphic design services, etc.	\$3,350.00	\$800.00		\$2,550.00	24%
<b>Total Operating Budget</b>	<b>\$85,964.25</b>	<b>\$19,537.81</b>	<b>\$3,269.40</b>	<b>\$63,157.04</b>	<b>27%</b>
Notes:					
FY 25 funds column includes \$78,000 annual base allocation, plus \$7,964.25 in carry over from FY 24					
Funds will remain after costs are in for 2024 MRPC Annual Meeting					
MN GRR maps are currently out of stock					

## **MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission Proposed 2025 Quarterly Meeting Dates**

Meetings are generally on Thursdays, from 2:00 – 4:30 p.m., with the exception of meetings during the legislative session when Fridays work best to avoid conflicts.

Meetings will be hybrid with an in-person option at a meeting room in the Capitol complex and remote option via Zoom.

- Friday, February 21
- Thursday, May 29
- Thursday, August 14
- Thursday, November 20



## Great River Road Interpretive Panels at Itasca State Park







## **Drive the Great River Road Month 2024** **GO with the Flow on the Great River Road (GO = Get Outdoors)**

### **Goals**

- Promote traveling the Great River Road and engage with the amazing variety of outdoor recreation opportunities along the Mississippi and GRR in Minnesota
- Promote the variety of ways to recreate and different modes of accessibility – travelers can engage with recreation in the manner and at the pace that works for them
- Include easy and less expensive ways to get outdoors
- Build partnerships between the commission members

### **Content/Itineraries**

- Get Outdoors itineraries for MN Great River Road destination areas/regions developed by the DNR, highlighting DNR sites along the Great River Road, content provided by five communities, and national public lands.

### **Press Release**

- Release was distributed to state and local media list, Interpretive Centers, Community Tourism Offices, and MN-MRPC members.
- Articles, posts, and shares included Grand Rapids Herald Review, Visit Grand Rapids, Visit Winona, National Eagle Center, Visit Little Falls, Visit Lake City, Sen. Karin Housley, and a month-long social media partnership of the Mississippi Headwaters Board and Visit Grand Rapids featuring the Grand Rapids Drive GRR Month sweepstakes

### **Governor's Proclamation**

- Requested and received a proclamation calling out September as Drive the Great River Road Month in Minnesota. The MN-MRPC Chair read the proclamation at the State Fair Kick-Off event and the proclamation was posted on the MN GRR Facebook page.

### **Social Media**

- MN-MRPC Facebook – 16 posts throughout September using content provided by community partners and general campaign information, total reach of 2,282 (reach the month prior was 664).
- Top posts – Get Outdoors in Lake City, State Fair Kick Off & Proclamation, Get Outdoors in the Little Falls Area, Get Outdoors at a Unique St. Cloud Area Park

### **MN Great River Road Website**

- Itineraries were posted for download and will remain available at <https://www.mnmississippiriver.com/order-maps/>
- Website data for month – 2,300 page views and 1,700 sessions, average time 31 seconds. Month prior (August) – 5,400 page views and 1,900 sessions, average time 1 minute 5 seconds

### **Kick Off Event**

- A press event was hosted by the DNR at the Minnesota State Fair including brief remarks, proclamation reading, a trivia contest, and distribution of maps and pins. Participants – Grant Wilson, Kelli Bruns, Lauren Peck (DNR); Sen. Karin Housley, John Anfinson, Anne Lewis (MN-MRPC Officers); Kent Whitworth (MNHS); and Randolph Briley (Explore Minnesota)

### **Promotional Items & Materials**

- Maps, stickers, and lapel pins were shipped to partners upon request.

# GO with the Flow on the GREAT RIVER ROAD

GO stands for "get outdoors," and there are countless options along the Minnesota Great River Road! The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is partnering with the Great River Road to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors along the mighty Mississippi River. The Minnesota DNR has more than 70 public recreation sites along or near the Great River Road and a wide array of opportunities to choose from. From hiking to paddling, and from bicycling to picnicking, the Great River Road, Minnesota DNR and their partners offer Minnesotans some of the best outdoor opportunities the state has to offer.

Find fantastic opportunities close to home, at state and local parks, historic sites, and more.

Head to [mnmississippiriver.com](http://mnmississippiriver.com) and click "Plan Your Trip" to find your new favorite stop along the Great River Road.

Visit the DNR's Recreation Compass website to find numerous public spaces for recreation, including state parks and trails, public water accesses, scientific and natural areas, and much more. [mndnr.gov/maps/compass.html](http://mndnr.gov/maps/compass.html)

The Minnesota Great River Road is home to 13 National Great River Road Interpretive Centers—and many of them offer outdoor opportunities. Find out more at [mnmississippiriver.com/interpretive-centers](http://mnmississippiriver.com/interpretive-centers)



Visit Lake City  
September 24 at 10:52 AM · 🌐



Thank you Great River Road MN!



**Great River Road MN**  
Community Organization

Send message



**Great River Road MN**  
September 20 at 7:33 AM · 🌐

Get Outdoors in Lake City! Known as the birthplace of water skiing, Lake Pepin provides world-class sailing opportunities, beautiful and expansive sandy beaches, and endless water sport activities. [visitlakecity.org/lake-pepin](http://visitlakecity.org/lake-pepin) The lake is one of Minnesota's most prolific fisheries, boasting over 85 different species. Photo courtesy of Visit Lake City

Chamber of Commerce and 32 others 4 shares

Comment

Share

reat River Road MN



Visit Grand Rapids  
September 4 at 6:33 AM · 🌐

Enter for a CHANCE TO WIN our Go Get Outdoors Sweepstakes where you could win a trip for two for two-nights, that includes:

- Two nights at Loon's Landing
- \$100 gift card to Rapids Brewing Co.
- \$100 gift card to Hotel Rapids and HR Bar
- \$50 gift card to Benders
- Two VIP tours to The Judy Garland Museum
- Two Escape Room admissions at Itasca County Historical Society
- Welcome Basket from Visit Grand Rapids.
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Great River Road MN

ENTER NOW THROUGH September 30, 2024 [theoutdoormecca.com](http://theoutdoormecca.com) (must be 18 yrs of age to enter)

\*\*\*\*\*  
[www.visitgrandrapids.com/sweepstakes](http://www.visitgrandrapids.com/sweepstakes)  
\*\*\*\*\*

#getoutdoors #sweepstakes #fall #theoutdoormecca #lakes #trails #freshair #onlyinmn



# GO=GET OUTDOORS Sweepstakes

You and 18 others

5 comments 6 shares

Like

Comment

Share

Most relevant



Comment as Great River Road MN

4 shares



STATE of MINNESOTA

## Proclamation

WHEREAS, The Minnesota Great River Road spans 365 miles, 31 communities, 30 counties, three Tribes, 15 rivers, and our scenic Mississippi River; and

WHEREAS, The Minnesota Great River Road is a designated All-American Road, making it a distinctive and historic road;

WHEREAS, Minnesota's Great River Road is the birthplace of water skiing, Lake Pepin provides world-class sailing opportunities, beautiful and expansive sandy beaches, and endless water sport activities. [visitlakecity.org/lake-pepin](http://visitlakecity.org/lake-pepin) The lake is one of Minnesota's most prolific fisheries, boasting over 85 different species. Photo courtesy of Visit Lake City

WHEREAS, The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is partnering with the Great River Road to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors along the mighty Mississippi River. The Minnesota DNR has more than 70 public recreation sites along or near the Great River Road and a wide array of opportunities to choose from. From hiking to paddling, and from bicycling to picnicking, the Great River Road, Minnesota DNR and their partners offer Minnesotans some of the best outdoor opportunities the state has to offer.

WHEREAS, Minnesota's Great River Road is home to 13 National Great River Road Interpretive Centers—and many of them offer outdoor opportunities. Find out more at [mnmississippiriver.com/interpretive-centers](http://mnmississippiriver.com/interpretive-centers)

WHEREAS, Minnesota's Great River Road is a designated All-American Road, making it a distinctive and historic road;

WHEREAS, Minnesota's Great River Road is the birthplace of water skiing, Lake Pepin provides world-class sailing opportunities, beautiful and expansive sandy beaches, and endless water sport activities. [visitlakecity.org/lake-pepin](http://visitlakecity.org/lake-pepin) The lake is one of Minnesota's most prolific fisheries, boasting over 85 different species. Photo courtesy of Visit Lake City

WHEREAS, Minnesota's Great River Road is home to 13 National Great River Road Interpretive Centers—and many of them offer outdoor opportunities. Find out more at [mnmississippiriver.com/interpretive-centers](http://mnmississippiriver.com/interpretive-centers)

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TIM WALZ, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim September 2024 as:

### DRIVE THE GREAT RIVER ROAD MONTH

In the State of Minnesota

IS WITNESSED WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State to be hereunto affixed at the State Capitol this 20th day of August.

TIM WALZ  
GOVERNOR

Steve Simon  
SECRETARY OF STATE





## Greater Minnesota Transportation Alternatives Solicitation

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/ta/>

The [Transportation Alternatives Solicitation](#) replaces the funding from historical programs including Transportation Enhancements, [Scenic Byways](#), [Safe Routes to School](#), and several other discretionary programs with a competitive program to be developed by states.

The Transportation Alternatives Solicitation is a competitive grant opportunity for local communities and regional agencies to fund projects for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, historic preservation, Safe Routes to School and more. Minnesota will be soliciting projects for approximately \$12.5 million in available grant funding across the state where the total is sub-targeted to the seven area transportation partnerships.

- Monday, Oct. 7, 2024 – Announce solicitation process and open Letter of Intent period
- Friday, Nov. 1, 2024 – Deadline for applicants to submit Letter of Intent
- Monday, Dec. 2, 2024 – Official start of full application period
- Friday, Jan. 10, 2025 – Deadline for applicants to submit full applications

### MN-MRPC Process for Consideration/Letters of Support

- Letters of Intent submitted to MnDOT as described above, by November 1.
- MnDOT Great River Road Program Manager reviews letters of intent from Great River Road/Mississippi River communities/counties, evaluates and identifies projects that would benefit the byway and byway traveler and have connections to the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan. A summary is prepared for the MN-MRPC.
- MN-MRPC receives information prior to their November meeting, for review and consideration.
- MN-MRPC discusses and acts on requests for letters of support.
- MN-MRPC staff reaches out to local project contacts that have been approved for letters of support (if they move forward with the full application) and offers letters of support from the Commission.
- Letters are prepared, reviewed and signed by the MN-MRPC Chair, and provided to local contacts that respond. Letters focus on the projects' connection to the MN-MRPC mission, byway intrinsic qualities and the Corridor Management Plan.
- This process allows letters of support for this program to be discussed and considered at a regular quarterly meeting, rather than adding a special meeting for this purpose.

### Projects for MN-MRPC Letter of Support Consideration (Details on next page)

- City of Brainerd – TH 210/Lum Park Pedestrian Bridge
- City of St. Cloud – Heatherwood Road Multi-Modal Improvements

2024 Transportation Alternative Program Grant Solicitation - Letters of Interest Summary  
Projects below have been found to benefit the Great River Road experience.

Name of application organization:	Title of project:	Amount of funding requested:	Total project budget- please briefly explain the total estimated amount of funding needed for the project. Include the amount requested through this application and other sources. If interested in being consider for Transportation Alternatives funding, specifically identify how you will obtain the 20 percent match (100 words maximum):	Describe the work you want to do for which you are seeking support. Include a description of the project development activities for this project completed to date (250 words)	One sentence description of the work for which you are seeking support:	Byway Benefit
City of Brainerd	TH 210/Lum Park Pedestrian Bridge	\$800,000	The Feasibility Report identified a total project construction estimate of \$5,110,000. The City is requesting \$800,000 through the Transportation Alternatives program towards construction funding. The City has already been awarded \$1.336 million in Carbon Reduction Program funding towards this project. Other sources may include additional grant/bonding opportunities, partnership with MnDNR, Municipal State Aid and other local funding sources.	The City is requesting funding towards construction of the bridge. The City of Brainerd hired SRF in spring 2023 to complete a Feasibility Report for the bridge project. Development of the Feasibility Study included involvement by several different parties including City staff, City Council, Park Board, MnDOT, MnDNR, and others. The report includes identification of aspects that will need to be addressed through the preliminary engineering phase including concept layout and geometry, utility impacts, wetland and environmental impacts, and other considerations. Once construction funding has been secured for the project, it is anticipated that the City Council would authorize contracting for preliminary and design engineering services.	Construction funding for the TH 210/Lum Park Pedestrian Bridge over Highway 210 in Brainerd.	This project will benefit byway travelers by improving non-motorized access from TH 210 thereby improving traffic flow for drivers and non-drivers by seperating travel to and from Lum Park. Lum Park is on the Mississippi River and features camping, poating, picnicing, trails and community events.
City of St Cloud	Heatherwood Road Multi-Modal Improvements	\$600,000	Total Project budget is \$600,000. This entire amount is requested through this grant. This project would be tied to the Heatherwood Road Expansion project that includes the replacement of an out-of-service bridge. The 20% match will be covered through a combination of the general and municipal state aid funds.	This project will include the extending approximately a mile and a half of a major regional roadway and trail, which includes the replacement of a bridge that is currently out of service. The portion that the City is seeking support is for the construction of the 10' bituminous trial that will parallel the roadway. The trail will infill the current 1.5 mile gap in the 11 mile total Beaver Island Trail that will, once this portion is constructed, run from the City of Clearwater to St Cloud State University.	The installation of a multi-modal path that is the missing 1.5 mile link between the existing segments of the Beaver Island Trail from St Cloud State University to Clearwater Rd (5 miles) and Opportunity Drive to the City of Clearwater (3.5 miles).	This project will benefit byway travelers hiking and biking along the Mississippi River in St. Cloud by infilling the current 1.5 mile gap in the 11 mile total Beaver Island Trail that will, once this portion is constructed, run from the City of Clearwater to St Cloud State University.

# Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byway Program (NSBP) Grants 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328), enacted on December 29, 2022, appropriated \$20 million, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-42), enacted on March 8, 2024, appropriated an additional \$7.5 million in Highway Infrastructure Program funds for the NSBP under [23 U.S.C. 162](#).

Under 23 U.S.C. 162(b), grants and technical assistance are to be made available to States or Indian Tribes to

- (a) implement eligible projects on highways designated as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads (America's Byways®), State scenic byways, or Indian Tribe scenic byways; and
- (b) plan, design, and develop a State or Indian Tribe scenic byway program.

The National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) 2024 Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is now available - [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic\\_byways/grants/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic_byways/grants/). In Minnesota applications must be submitted electronically by MnDOT through [grants.gov](#) no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, December 16, 2024. **All eligible local Units of Government must submit application materials to MnDOT by December 2.**

## Grant Details:

- Funding Available: Up to \$26.95 million. Up to 80% of total project funding, with minimum of 20% local match required.
- If MnDOT submits more than one application, the applications will be ranked in coordination with the Mn Scenic Byway Commission.

## The following 8 project types are eligible for NSBP grants:

- State and Indian Tribe Scenic Byway Programs
- Corridor Management Plans
- Highway Safety Improvements
- Construction of Byway Facilities
- Access to Recreation
- Resource Protection
- Tourist and Interpretive Information
- Marketing Programs

## Merit Criteria - Applications address merit criterion which are ranked "Highly Qualified," "Qualified," or "Not Qualified":

- How the proposed project advances at least one of the **four NSBP goals**: (1) Safety; (2) Climate and Sustainability; (3) Equity; and (4) Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation.
- Describe how the project will benefit the byway community and/or traveler and how it will protect the intrinsic qualities that support the byway's designation.
- The proposed project timeline, identifying any planning or other efforts that have already been accomplished developing the project, and project implementation readiness if funding is awarded.
- The proposed project budget.

## FHWA Priority Selection Considerations

- After completing the technical review consisting of the Merit Criteria and Statutorily Required Project Selection Priorities, among projects of similar merit, FHWA may prioritize a Project that will address one or more of the following priorities:
  - ❑ The project will advance two or more of the NSBP goals.
  - ❑ The majority of the project's costs will be spent within or adjacent to a Census-designated rural area.
  - ❑ At least part of the project falls within an economically distressed community per the U.S. Economic Development Administration. See <http://www.statsamerica.org/distress/distress.aspx>.
  - ❑ Applicant has identified cost sharing and leveraging of non-Federal funds beyond the required 20 percent non-Federal match.

## Projects Requesting MN-MRPC Letters of Support (Details on following pages)

- National Mississippi River Parkway Commission – website and app development (details will be sent separately when available)
- Washington County – Point Douglas Park Trailhead Project
- City of Brainerd – Lum Park Trailway Access Project
- City of St. Paul – Downtown River Walk





## PUBLIC WORKS

Wayne Sandberg, P.E., Director, County Engineer  
Frank D. Ticknor, P.E., Deputy Director

November 13, 2024

Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 72  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commissioners,

We write to you today to request review and endorsement of Washington County's application to the National Scenic Byways Program via the Minnesota Department of Transportation. This application is for an upcoming project: Great River Road All-American Scenic Byway and St. Croix State Scenic Byway - Visitor Trailhead Facility at Point Douglas Park.

Point Douglas Park is a scenic, recreational, and historic park that resides not only at the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers, but also at the confluence of two National Parks, an All-American Road, a National Scenic Byway and a State Scenic Byway. While the park currently serves visitors of the Great River Road with a popular beach, scenic views, picnic areas, and connections to Point Douglas Regional Trail, its restroom facilities and parking lot have exceeded their useful life, no longer meet minimum standards, and are not resilient to river flooding. This project will address these issues by 1) constructing a new trailhead and recreational facility that includes a visitor lobby area, restrooms, and recreational amenities, 2) reconfigure the parking lot for safety, accessibility, and stormwater management, and 3) conduct site improvements, including interpretative signage, landscaping, trail connections, and bike parking.

This project advances the themes and objectives laid out in the 2016 Great River Road Corridor Management Plan. Investments in the trailhead facility, parking lot, and other site improvements like signage, landscaping, trail connections, and bike parking would both improve byway visitor experience and honor the Mississippi River corridor; this supports Objective 1 ("Develop coordinated byway investment, design, and maintenance schedules and programs to maintain the byway as a seamless travel experience that honors the Mississippi River corridor"). These investments will also promote Mississippi River exploration along the Point Douglas Regional Trail, which begins at Point Douglas and runs along the backwaters of the Mississippi. This multi-use trail supports both Objective 10 ("Promote active Mississippi River exploration that includes bicycling, walking, hiking, and boating") and Objective 15 ("Provide integrated multimodal travel options so travelers can focus on enjoying the journey"). Finally, by building an ADA-compliant facility, the byway and park will be more accessible and support Objective 8 ("Engage diverse populations of all ages, locally and afar, to experience the Mississippi River").

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to future collaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex McKinney".

Alex McKinney  
Parks Director, Washington County Public Works

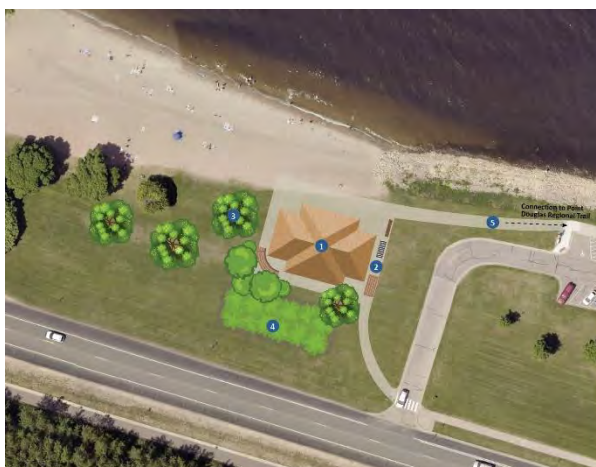
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*Washington County is an equal opportunity organization and employer*

Washington County is requesting funding to construct a new 2,000 square foot trailhead building and improvements to the adjacent parking lot at Point Douglas Park to better serve users of the St. Croix Scenic Byway and Great River Road.

The site is located at 14500 Pt. Douglas Drive South in Denmark Township, along the Great River Road, and currently serves as the southern terminus to the St. Croix Scenic Byway. Furthermore, the park resides at the confluence of two federally protected rivers – the Mississippi and St. Croix.



**Point Douglas Park Trailhead Facility – Site Map**

- Legend**
- 1 Trailhead Facility
  - 2 Trail Amenities (bike parking, kiosk, wayfinding, benches)
  - 3 Landscape Improvements
  - 4 Stormwater Improvements
  - 5 Trail connection



Currently, the park includes a parking lot adjacent to a popular beach, picnic areas, trails, and two small restroom buildings that are over 30 years old. These features have exceeded their useful life and no longer meet minimum standards.

The proposed facility would feature space for staff, storage, a lobby area, and public restrooms. Additional improvements will consist of interpretative signage, landscaping, trail connections, and bike parking amenities. The parking lot requires safety, circulation, and stormwater management improvements.

In addition to park users and Scenic Byway users, the trailhead facility will serve the Point Douglas Regional Trail, a 2.5 mile multiuse trail that connects Prescott, WI to Hastings, MN, and the future St. Croix Valley Regional Trail, a future 20 mile multiuse trail that will run parallel to the St Croix Scenic Byway.

The estimated total cost for the project is \$1.8 million. Washington County is requesting \$1.2 million of funding from the 2023-2024 National Scenic Byways Program. The county will provide \$600,000 of state/local funds to match.



## City of Brainerd – Lum Park Trailway Access Project

Estimated total project cost – approx. \$6 million

- National Scenic Byways Program funding request - \$1 million
- Transportation Alternatives funding request - \$800,000
- Carbon Reduction Program Grant awarded - \$1.33 million
- Additional grant funds will be sought for remaining costs

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is requesting \$1 million of National Scenic Byway Program (NSBP) Grant funding for its Lum Park Trailway Access Project in Brainerd, Minnesota. The project will include the construction of a multi-use trail along Trunk Highway 210 (TH 210) and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave NE which will connect to existing local and state trails within nearby Lum Park and other recreational facilities. Additionally, a multi-use trail bridge with approach ramps that parallel TH 210 consisting of short abutments, precast beam spans, and cast-in-place concrete slabs will be constructed. The bridge's main span will be a 210-foot-long prefabricated steel truss which will be assembled on site and then erected during a brief closure of the highway with minimal disruption to traffic.

The lack of adequate marked crossings in the project area has led to dangerous conditions for non-motorists trying to access trails within Lum Park where city and state-maintained trails are popular recreational destinations for residents and visitors alike. In July 2023, a juvenile bicyclist was involved in a serious injury crash as he was attempting to cross TH 210 from the south to the north at 10th Avenue NE in Brainerd. The bicyclist was hit by a vehicle in the presence of a large amount of other eastbound TH 210 traffic and then thrown over that vehicle's top before landing on the roadway. A second vehicle travelling right behind the first then drove over the bicyclist leading to several serious injuries. This crash highlighted growing concerns among residents and city officials about the lack of pedestrian facilities south of TH 210. Six months prior to the crash, the Brainerd City Council had approved the usage of COVID-19 relief funds to hire a private civil design and engineering firm to complete a feasibility study for a proposed bridge which would serve as a connection for the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail. In July of 2024, the City [received a \\$1.3 million grant](#) from MnDOT's Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) to assist with project costs.

Since receiving the CRP grant, the City has looked for additional funding sources to assist in the completion of the project. As a result, the City has partnered with MnDOT to apply for NSBP funding as the project closely aligns with the goals of the NSBP, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the USDOT by safeguarding motorists and non-motorists alike from collisions, as well as promoting sustainable transportation practices in and around a recreational area that is connected to the Great River Road National Scenic Byway. The Great River Road National Scenic Byway is a collection of state and local roads following the Mississippi River and spanning more than 2,069 miles through 10 states, including Minnesota. The Minnesota section of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway is designated as an "All-American Road" by the FHWA.

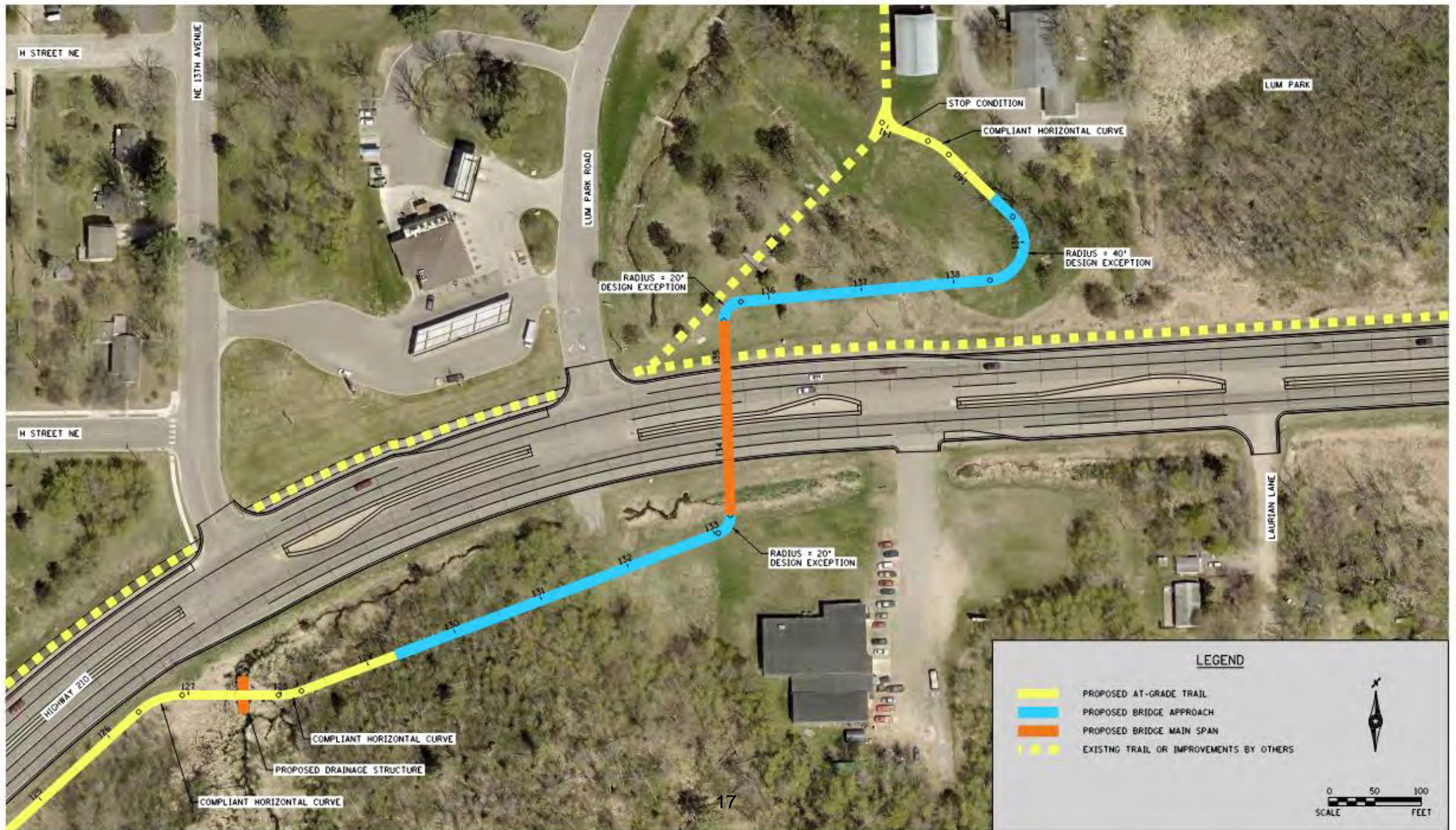




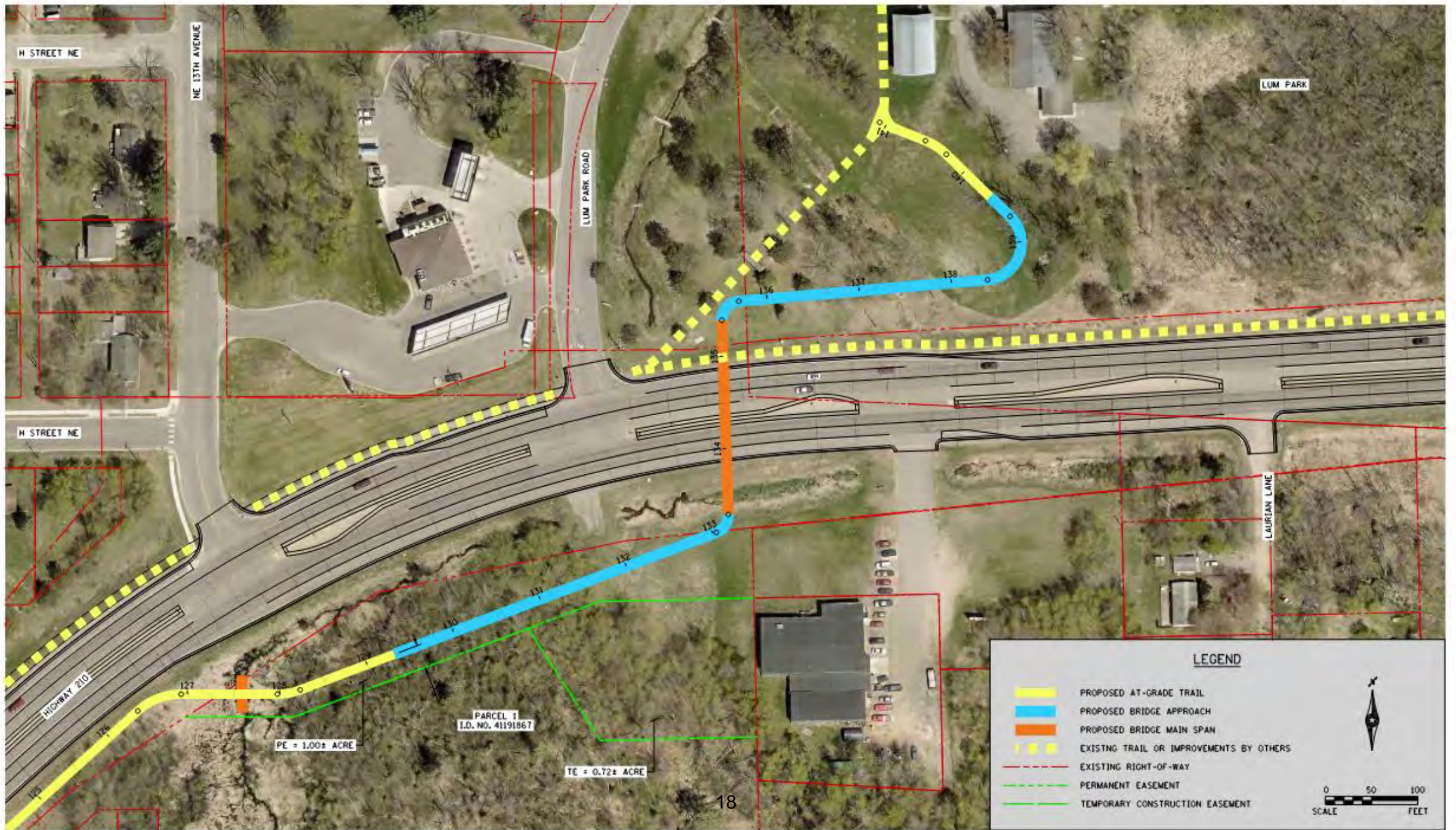




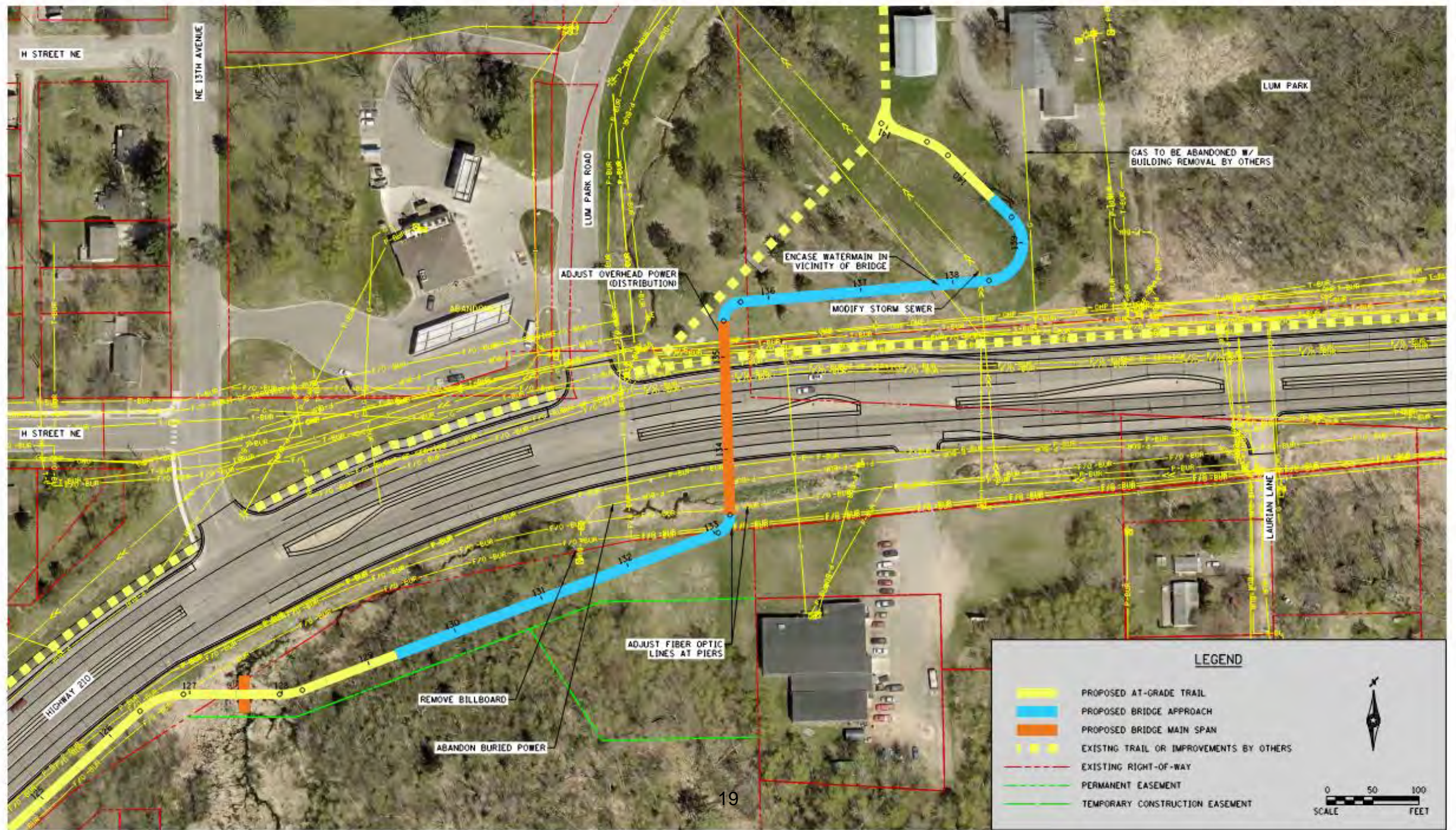














**DRAFT LETTER CONTENT**  
**PROVIDED BY CITY OF BRAINERD FOR MN-MRPC CONSIDERATION**

RE: Letter of Support for the 2024 National Scenic Byways Grant Program: Lum Park Trailway Access Project in Brainerd, MN

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing in support of the Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) Grant. The NSBP funding will provide safe and comfortable two-way connections for non-motorized users to existing local and state trails along Trunk Highway 210 (TH 210) and 10th Ave NE, and to Lum Park and other recreational facilities near Brainerd, MN. As part of the proposed project, a multi-use trail bridge with approach ramps that parallel TH 210 will be constructed, and a short trail section will then connect the north bridge approach ramp to the Lum Park trail facility. The expansion of active transportation infrastructure will increase the current number of regional and local bike and pedestrian users as more communities, destinations, and resources are connected.

The Lum Park Trailway Access Project aligns with the goals of the NSBP, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the USDOT by safeguarding motorists and non-motorists alike from collisions, as well as promoting sustainable transportation practices in and around a recreational area that is connected to the Great River Road National Scenic Byway. The Great River Road National Scenic Byway is a collection of state and local roads following the Mississippi River and spanning more than 2,069 miles through 10 states, including Minnesota. The Minnesota section of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway is designated as an "All-American Road" by the FHWA.

[PLEASE ADD ANY DETAILS YOU ARE COMFORTABLE SHARING ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION AND ITS OPERATIONS AND/OR EXPANSION PLANS AROUND PROJECT AREA. THIS CAN ALSO INCLUDE HOW THE PROJECT WOULD POSITIVELY IMPACT YOUR ORGANIZATION.]

I support MnDOT's application for the funding of this project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the NSBP. Please give this 2024 National Scenic Byways Program Discretionary Grant proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at [CONTACT INFORMATION].

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Company/Organization/Agency



**November 13, 2024**

Chris Miller  
Director  
MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
56 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave S, #283  
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Dear Ms. Miller,

We are writing to you to request support for our grant request to the National Scenic Byways Program via the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Our project, the *Downtown Riverwalk*, will create a connected, welcoming, and vibrant riverfront in Saint Paul, encouraging all ages to engage with the Mississippi River. By transforming underutilized areas into inviting spaces with public art and accessible pathways, we anticipate an increase in safe pedestrian activity and greater community use of Saint Paul riverfront areas.

For generations, the Mississippi River has been the heartbeat of Saint Paul, shaping our history and livelihoods. But today, many Saint Paul residents and visitors walk through downtown without realizing how close they are to the river that built this city. The Downtown Riverwalk project will create a vibrant, accessible two-mile pedestrian loop connecting downtown Saint Paul to the Mississippi Riverfront through signage, interpretive graphics, artwork, and places to rest.

The Downtown Riverwalk address multiple thematic goals within the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan:

**Facilities**—the *Riverwalk* will create much needed wayfinding and maps to direct people to the river from downtown Saint Paul

**Placemaking**—the *Riverwalk* will strengthen connections between the byway and the people and places that tell the story of the river by creating interpretation of people who have occupied this stretch of the river over time

**Health and Active Living**—the *Riverwalk* will inspire people to walk or bike a two mile loop by providing safe passageways, wayfinding, and good stories along the way.

A central feature of the *Riverwalk* will be the transformation of the railroad underpasses at Sibley and Jackson streets. Throughout a community engagement project about how to improve connections between downtown and the river, people often brought up the need to feel safe. Presently, the passageway from Kellogg Boulevard to the Port of Saint Paul is dark and uninviting. The city improved the pavement connection for a designated bikeway through these underpasses, yet the surrounding walls of concrete with peeling paint remain. By partnering with Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) and the talented artistic community in Saint Paul, we propose to advance artistic interventions through murals and light displays to enliven the passageway and provide a clearer connection between multiple modes of







transportation, including cycling, boats, Amtrak and light rail.

The Downtown Riverwalk will turn an underused trail into a vibrant destination, inviting people to explore the riverfront. This transformation will strengthen the connection between downtown and the river, creating a space that fosters both community and economic growth.

Sincerely,

Andy Rodriguez (Nov 13, 2024 15:23 CST)

Andy Rodriguez  
Director, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

