



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
1st Quarter Meeting
February 28, 2013
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
State Office Building Room 400 North

DRAFT AGENDA

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| 2:30 p.m. | Welcome & Introductions | S. Johnson |
| 2:35 p.m. | Approve Today's Agenda & Minutes from 11/29/12 | S. Johnson/All |
| 2:40 p.m. | Commission Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- FY '13 Budget Status- Legislative Session Updates | Anderson/Miller
House/Senate Members |
| 2:55 p.m. | National MRPC Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- MRPC Board- 2013 Semi-Annual Meeting, Apr 25-27, Bettendorf, IA- MPRC Committee Updates- GRR 75th Anniversary – Great Race, June 20-22 | S. Johnson
All
Committee Members |
| 3:15 p.m. | Old Business – Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Corridor Management Plan Project- Visual Resource Protection Plan- Silica Sand Mining- CapX 2020- MN GRR Map Reprint | Zoff/Miller
Zoff/Miller
S. Johnson/Zoff
Mulry
Miller |
| 4:00 p.m. | New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Great River Gathering, May 9 – Exhibit Booth & Dinner- Miller Black Bear Area Trail- GRR Hospitality Training | All
Schaubach/Samp
Wheeler/Zoff/Miller |
| 4:20 p.m. | Agency and Regional Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids- Grand Rapids to Brainerd- Brainerd to Elk River- Elk River to Hastings- Hastings to Iowa Border- Agriculture- Explore MN Tourism- Historical Society- Natural Resources- Transportation- National Park Service/MISS | Lucachick
Schaubach
Samp
Pierson
Mulry
Huginin
A. Johnson/Offerman
Kajer/Kelliher
Parker/Wheeler
Bradley/Zoff
Labovitz |
| 4:55 p.m. | Recognition of Service to the MN-MRPC – Frank Pafko | All |
| 5:00 p.m. | Wrap Up and Adjourn | |



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
4th Quarter Meeting – November 29, 2012
State Office Building, St. Paul MN
MINUTES - Draft**

Commissioners Present

Rep. Sheldon Johnson – MN-MRPC Chair
Frank Pafko – Transportation Appointee
John Schaubach – Grand Rapids to Brainerd
Mark Anderson – At-Large Member
Cordelia Pierson – Elk River to Hastings
Sheronne Mulry – Hastings to Iowa Border
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
Sen. David Senjem
Sen. Patricia Torres-Ray

Tech Advisors & Staff Present

Carol Zoff – Transportation
Cheryl Offerman – Explore MN Tourism
David Kelliher – Historical Society
Greg Hubinger – LCC

Diane Henry-Wangenstein - LCC
Chris Miller - Staff

Commissioners & Advisors Absent

Adam Johnson – Explore MN Tourism Appointee
Rep. Branden Petersen
Andrea Hart-Kajer – Historical Society Appointee
Paul Huginin – Agriculture Appointee
Jim Lucachick – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids
Keith Parker – DNR Appointee
Paul Labovitz – National Park Service
Cynthia Wheeler - DNR

Guests Present

Scott Bradley - Transportation
Tony Wotzka – Transportation
Andy Trcka – Transportation
Len Price – Conservation Corps

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 by Chair Johnson, followed by introductions. A quorum was present.

Special Topic – MN GRR Corridor Management Plan Project

Chairman Johnson introduced Carol Zoff, Technical Advisor from the Department of Transportation, who provided an overview of the project and requested feedback from Commission members. A summary of the discussion is attached.

Approval of Meeting Agenda and Minutes from 8/23/12 Meeting

Motion by Frank Pafko and seconded by Mark Anderson to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried. Motion by Frank Pafko and seconded by Karl Samp to approve the 8/23/12 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Commission Business

FY '13 Budget: Treasurer Mark Anderson referred to the budget summary showing FY '13 budget, expenditures to date, and proposed line item revisions for FY '13 reflecting requests and project needs. The most significant change is moving additional funds to printing/advertising for a possible reprint of the MN Great River Road map/travel planner and possible ordering of lapel pins, both as recommended by the Marketing Work Group. Discussion followed. Motion by Frank Pafko and seconded by Sherronne Mulry to accept the budget revisions. Motion carried.

Authorization of Chair to Approve Requests for Proposal and Contracts: There was discussion on timelines for upcoming requests for proposal and contracts. These items will likely require action between regularly scheduled Commission meetings. Motion by John Schaubach and seconded by Frank Pafko to authorize the MN-MRPC Chair to approve RFPs and contracts on behalf of the Commission. Motion carried.

Travel and Reimbursement Requests/Forms: Chairman Johnson referred to forms in the meeting packets, representing best practices for Commission travel and expense documentation. Commission members were asked to email the completed travel request form to the Chair, with a copy to the MN-MRPC office, one week prior to events. The post travel brief should be submitted with the expense

reimbursement request form following the event/activity. The forms are not required for regular quarterly Commission meetings. Out-of-state travel requests require additional lead time and approvals.

National MRPC Updates

MRPC Board: The next board conference call will be in December. Karl Samp served as proxy at the board meeting held during the MRPC Annual Meeting and reported that nine states were represented.

2012 Annual Meeting Report: The MRPC 2012 Annual Meeting was held in Louisville, Kentucky, September 27 – 29. Presentations included information on mobile applications (BarZ Adventures); the Kentucky Trail Towns Program; MAP-21 and impact to scenic byways (co-presented by Carol Zoff); community mapping (by Adeel Ahmed, U of M); the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (currently co-chaired by Mayor Kleis of St. Cloud and hoping to increase membership); partnership activities in Tennessee; and an update on the Iowa CMP project. It was announced that in the last round of National Scenic Byway Grants (2012) – 8 Great River Road states were awarded grants totaling just over \$8 million. Ideas for celebration of the Great River Road 75th Anniversary (2013) were discussed. There are limitations to activities that can be fully coordinated by the MRPC, but partnerships should make certain activities possible. Multiple standing committee meetings were also held, with Minnesota representation on each committee. Karl Samp received the 2012 MRPC Distinguished Service Award. The 2013 Semi-Annual Meeting will be held in Bettendorf, Iowa, April 25 – 27.

MRPC Committee Updates: Carol Zoff reported the Transportation Committee is recommending that state and local partners share information on MAP-21 with Departments of Transportation, local and county road agencies to better understand opportunities under the new bill. Sheronne Mulry reported that the Culture and Heritage Committee approved layout of banners for Great River Road Interpretive Centers and approved the Winona County History Center for designation as a new addition to the national Network of Great River Road Interpretive Centers.

Tasty Traditions Contest: Chris Miller shared a reminder on the National MRPC's Tasty Traditions contest, which is running until January 11. All were asked to encourage local partners and stakeholders to submit information. All entries are posted for viewing, providing an opportunity for communities to highlight local favorites.

Old Business – Updates

Visual Resource Protection Plan: The timeline for public input has been extended. Public input on favorite Mississippi River views in the Metro is currently being requested and view submissions will be accepted through February 22. The top 50 views will be evaluated in April (leaf-off) and June (leaf-on) and volunteers will be needed to assist. Training will be provided. Notify the MN-MRPC office if interested. A project overview and link to the public input website will be emailed out to Commission members as soon as it becomes available.

Frac Sand Mining: Sheronne Mulry presented MN-MRPC information at a meeting of the Isaak Walton League in her region. She reported concerns from attendees related to frac sand mining, and noted that many emails and comments have been received from stakeholders. A letter has also been received requesting MN-MRPC assistance as a GEIS is considered, to ensure that socio-economic impacts are included. Maps and data documenting Great River Road assets were also requested. Discussion on options/available information included development of maps of GRR intrinsic qualities similar to those prepared for CapX 2020, and possible language to be included in a GEIS stating that Great River Road impacts should be considered as local decisions are made. Scott Bradley and Carol Zoff will follow up on options and gather information on any related activities within MnDOT. It was noted that frac sand mining was raised as an issue by Wisconsin at the Annual Meeting.

CapX2020: No new information was shared and the topic will be carried to future agendas in case of updates related to the Great River Road.

Mississippi River Trail: An update on recent activities was included in the handout packets, as provided by Liz Walton of MnDOT.

New Business

Marketing Work Group Projects and Recommendations: Work Group Chair Sheronne Mulry referred to notes from a recent conference call (included in the meeting packet). Based on the group's recommendation, a Minnesota Tourism Award Nomination was submitted for the MN Great River Road videos released this year. After discussion on marketing grant projects yet to be completed, an opportunity came up to participate in Explore Minnesota efforts related to the American Bus Association group travel marketplace in January 2013. The MN-MRPC will be a co-sponsor and will receive a two page profile in Minnesota's publication for the event. The two pages will feature the 75th anniversary of the Great River Road, and Minnesota's Great River Road Interpretive Centers.

The group is recommending a reprint of the Minnesota Great River Road Map/Travel Planner (last printed in 2011) and purchasing of lapel pins. Supplies of both are running very low. The maps would be shipped to the MN-MRPC partner list of 50 distribution sites, used for general meetings, public outreach during the CMP project, sent to fulfill orders received from the MN GRR website, and to fulfill requests from group travel operators resulting from the 2013 American Bus Association marketplace. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by John Schaubach to approve the MN Great River Road map reprint and lapel pin purchase. Motion carried.

Great River Road 75th Anniversary Celebration: Carol Zoff referred to the Marketing Work Group notes listing possible activities being considered by the National MRPC, and requested ideas on celebration activities that could be implemented in Minnesota in addition to the any national activities that are selected. What "75's" could be promoted? Several ideas listed including 75 microbreweries, 75 famous folks along the river, 75 festivals, farmers markets, etc. Many lists are already available and should not be re-created, but utilized as appropriate. There was also discussion on the possibility of a multi-day effort – possibly designated by the Governor – featuring an event in each destination area, with dignitaries and a press conference. Regional Commissioners and state agency partners could share highlights from their areas/agencies. Cheryl Offerman will check into options. Suggestions were also made to do something on Earth Day; work with a Green Up initiative; request a Governor's Proclamation of Great River Road Week or Year; involved students in activities such as a photo contest or poster contest with many winners displayed at a public event. Other ideas should be forward to the Marketing Work Group. They will be asked to narrow the themes and options.

Agency and Regional Updates

Grand Rapids to Brainerd: John Schaubach reported that closing has been held for the Mississippi Northwoods Habitat Complex and a celebration is coming up; thanks were expressed to the Legislature for their support. The next step will be to turn the land into a destination for active recreation. The Upper Mississippi River Gathering 5 was held on October 6 in Crosby, sponsored by The Trust for Public Land, Nature Conservancy, Initiative Foundation and Mississippi Headwaters Board. Carol Zoff presented information on the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan project and Paul Labovitz spoke about impactful projects along the river. There is increasing evidence of the value of the river. Grand Rapids is now starting a project to look at the river. Usage of the Cuyuna Lakes Mountain Bike Trail has increased from 15,000 in the first year to 25,000 in the second year. Adventure and active recreation are important branding considerations.

Brainerd to Elk River: Karl Samp reported that the Brainerd-Baxter group continues to meet and he hopes that the local group can partner with Corridor Management Planning regional meetings to align efforts where possible. A group visited the McDougall Barn south of Little Falls, and is working to promote and preserve this site, which was built in 1877 and listed on the National Historic Register.

Elk River to Hastings: A flyer was distributed and all were invited to attend a meeting to review the Minneapolis "Above the Falls" Plan. The meeting is scheduled for December 10, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board offices.

Hastings to Iowa Border: Sheronne Mulry reported that the Mississippi Queen came up the river again this fall, after several years. Red Wing was the northernmost stop and communities look forward to

future visits. There was discussion on the possibility of linking any 2013 visits to the 75th anniversary of the Great River Road.

Explore Minnesota Tourism: Cheryl Offerman announced that the 2013 Minnesota Tourism Conference will be held February 12 – 13 at the Minneapolis Hilton. The exploreminnesota.com website has been upgraded recently to offer more for travelers. Much recent effort has been focused on electronic marketing. The Red Bull Crashed Ice event will be returning to St. Paul in January 2013.

Minnesota Historical Society: David Kelliher distributed a brochure on the U.S. Dakota War of 1862 including information on a cell phone tour. A presentation on the cell phone tour could be included on a future MN-MRPC meeting agenda. Scenic byways have been applying for Legacy funds (Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants Program) through the Minnesota Historical Society. Projects need to have a historical focus. Information was distributed. Three levels of projects are defined. Available funding for 2013 and beyond will be determined by the Legislature.

Department of Natural Resources: A written report was provided in the meeting packet.

Department of Transportation: Carol Zoff reported that the final four historic wayside restoration projects have been advertised, bids will be opened on December 14 and construction is to be completed by July 1. Camp Ripley is working with the State Historic Preservation Office on context sensitive solutions for fences on the property. MnDOT continues to partner with the National Park Service on the Alternative Transportation System and Visual Resource Protection Plan in the metro area. The Transportation Alternatives program in MAP-21 has resulted in a consolidation of 30 formerly allowed funding categories down to six. Opportunities for scenic byways remain. Final versions of Great River Road interpretive panel designs are nearly completed for Itasca State Park and Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area.

Conservation Corps

Len Price, Executive Director of the Conservation Corps - Minnesota and Iowa, distributed information about the organization and described possible opportunities for future partnerships. Next year will be the 80th anniversary and a recognition activity will be held during the State Fair. The Conservation Corps has worked with scenic byways, DNR, and Minneapolis Parks and Recreation, and is always looking for projects for young people. Crews work all over the state. They have completed river projects, shoreline restoration and a variety of other efforts. A partnership with the MN-MRPC would be welcome if there are projects needing to be completed. Chairman Johnson thanked Mr. Price for coming to the meeting and sharing information about opportunities.

Next Meeting

2013 meeting scheduled to be determined after January 1, 2013.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

MN-MRPC GRR Corridor Management Plan Project Discussion - 11/29/12

Draft Notes

Carol Zoff presented PowerPoint project overview and requested feedback.

Corridor Plan Leaders: MnMRPC, NPS – MNRRA, MnDOT, and LCC as leads, with potential partner coordination by Trust for Public Land.

Plan funders: FHWA National Scenic Byway grant 80% and NPS – MNRRA 20%. LCC serves as fiscal agent.

Current plan is to begin writing RFP after January 1, with contract(s) to begin in April and will inform the MnMRPC for the next 10 – 15 years.

Plan benefits: Great River Road (GRR) traveler benefits include increased enjoyment, ecological and economic sustainability, improved livability in 60 communities, preserved and enhanced intrinsic resources, context of a working river, engaging stories, technologically savvy, active lifestyle via transportation choices, experiences closer to and on the river, and a signed and marketed Mississippi River Trail (MRT).

Plan assumptions: 60 communities, 21 counties, 6 destination areas, ten state context. Should they remain?

- *John Schaubach – Ask local communities and then determine area.*
- *Mark Anderson – Is economic development included in the charge of the Commission and will economic development be included in the CMP?*
- *Carol Zoff – Mission is to improve quality of life, objectives are to develop and enhance the GRR and amenities, and to preserve and promote the Mississippi River valley and GRR.*
- *John Schaubach – noted October 6 Upper Mississippi Gathering – speakers included Paul Labovitz, “Conservation doesn’t cost, conservation pays.” All CMP issues are interconnected.*
- *Karl Samp - Discussion on connecting to local river initiative and plans, including possible alignment of regional meetings to meet local goals along with project goals.*
- *Cordelia Pierson – U of M interested in looking at impact of riverfront on a community – how do we foster and measure quality of life?*

Sen. Torres Ray – Has traveled the GRR all the way to New Orleans several times. In her district, the eastern side is more affluent than other areas. What is our capacity to assess the GRR route and tax capacity – has this been addressed in all ten states? Little towns are dying while other areas flourish – how can we build more level capacity when there is so much inequality now?

Carol Zoff – As a part of the Project task to update the GRR GIS database property value could be considered as a data field. We will need to identify what we want the information to inform and how other data relates. An example we are hoping to apply is from the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership which includes some tax and property value data in their Riverfront Vitality Indicators (see slide with various fields). The National MRPC could also consider addressing this as a ten-state Strategic Plan implementation task if the Minnesota Commission suggests it.

Cordelia Pierson – Maybe U of M could look at comparable types of communities and help them learn from each other.

Communication Framework: Likely utilize existing web developer to build project-related pages hosted within the current site www.mnmississippiriver.com . Feedback supported this approach.

Fabricate and install MRT signs statewide: Sign plans are complete and signs will be installed starting spring 2013 through 2015. *Feedback was to encourage possible installation of MNRRA signs earlier than 2015 and as soon as possible.*

Project Advisory Team: List of potential Project Advisory Team members shared – need input from Commissioners on how to best populate with members who have shared missions to help others add value to their work.

MRT/GRR and MNRRA maps: Task includes printing 30,000 MNRRA Mississippi River Companions (which show GRR and MRT) and develop printed or web-printable statewide GRR/MRT maps.

Cordelia Pierson – Right now it's very difficult to find the actual GRR route in the metro area – no drivable map and difficult to find on Google Maps.

GIS Inventory of GRR Resources – Carol placed posters of the six Mn GRR Destination Area maps around the room that illustrate much of the current GIS data. The maps show GRR as highlighted with MRT as red dash line that reads through when co-located on GRR. Also includes a legend showing intrinsic resources (parks, boat landings, historic sites, etc.) These can be the basis of new online maps to be further developed, used to conduct needs and opportunity analysis, and illustrate return on investment and change.

The Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership Vitality Indicators could be used as a starting template for additional data aimed at performance measure info to be gathered and analyzed corridor wide.

Cordelia Pierson – Provided background on the Riverfront Vitality Initiative. Idea is to determine – what is important, and what should we measure? A large list was developed for consideration but not all items will be included. Determining what has the most meaning. Seems to be a lot of alignment with language from the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment.

Carol Zoff – Noted that the Mississippi Headwaters Board is undertaking a GID database effort focused on water quality – this could align well with the CMP project, as could the Mississippi National River & Recreation Area's Alternative Transportation Plan and their GRR Visual Resource Protection Plan.

Visual Resource Protection Plan – Input needed on favorite Mississippi River views in the Metro area as well as volunteers for leaf off view point evaluations in April, and leaf on evaluations in June. Discussion on applying this project to the full length of the GRR as part of the CMP project.

Karl Samp - advised doing evaluations during peak fall color season.

Commission Business Plan will be developed – what needs to be done to assure organizational and resource sustainability and maximize return on investment? Input/advice requested.

Communication and Public Relations Plan will be developed to communicate and build community – input/advice requested.

Multi-modal transportation – MNRRA Alternative Transportation System is an example – “increase visitation without increasing congestion.”

Cordelia Pierson – mentioned that MNRRA does project scoping for TOSP – looking for funding opportunities to fit projects. This could be valuable for GRR/MN-MRPC moving forward.

Sen. Torres Ray – Chaired committee to look at parks and trails. Mary Vogel from the U of M provided important information – mapping parks & trails and importance of connectivity. Funding was secured to

complete the mapping. Connection with the U of M (and/or other institutions) is essential – they have instruments and processes that are useful and can help us connect with other areas of the river. Also mentioned the House Environmental Committee will be looking at environmental impacts.

Carol Zoff – Would like to see the project description for parks & trails mapping. We can look into partnering with the U of M/DNR and will need to talk with LCC regarding procedures.

Community Meetings/Focus Groups – A statewide CMP framework can add value to local efforts. These meetings will help confirm alignment and value added. While originally including 18 community meetings (3 each per Destination Area), does the Commission think there is benefit for a larger gathering: state wide, by task, etc?

Other project tasks include confirming the content of the remaining GRR interpretive panels; a visitor impression survey; the byway assessment for route adjustments and opportunities to incorporate the GRR/MRT and intrinsic resource context into transportation, public works and community development planning and design; use technology to partner more effectively and to enhance the visitor experience; and assess and adjust for changes in Personal/Global Economies.

Commission members would like to see the RFP before it is released.

MN-MRPC FY 13
Operating Budget Status - 2/22/13

Obj Code	Description	FY 13 Budget	Spent	Pending	Remaining		Comments
41070	Other Benefits (Per Diem)	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 887.00		\$ 4,113.00		Commissioners: quarterly mtgs, MRPC Annual Mtg & Semi-Annual Mtg, work group mtgs, Commission representation at meetings and events, special projects (such as CMP).
41100	Space Rental	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -		
41110	Printing & Advertising	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 212.33	\$ 9,725.00	\$ 3,062.67		Commission meeting copies, materials, ads, etc. Pending amount includes: GRR map reprint (7,000) and lapel pins (2,000), and GRR ad in MN Biking Guide 2013-14 (725).
41130	Prof/Tech Services	\$ 38,800.00	\$ 17,467.42	\$ 10,833.33	\$ 10,499.25		Administrative contract (26,000) + local match for marketing grant (2,700), other outside projects and/or hours for Commission projects outside of admin retainer (incl Visual Resource Protection Plan, admin or cash flow on CMP grant). Pending amount is remainder of administrative contract for the year.
41150	Computer & System Services	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 814.00		\$ 186.00		Website hosting, stats and email. Minor updates and programming changes.
41155	Communications	\$ 700.00	\$ 247.37		\$ 452.63		Postage/deliveries. MN MRPC phone line and conference calls.
41160	In-State Travel	\$ 5,026.21	\$ 1,487.71		\$ 3,538.50		Commissioners/Advisors/Staff: quarterly mtgs, work groups, events, related projects.
41170	Out-State Travel	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 2,473.15		\$ 4,026.85		MRPC Annual & Semi Annual Meetings. 2012 Annual Mtg - Louisville, 2013 Semi-Annual Meeting - Bettendorf, IA
41180	Employee Development	\$ -	\$ 847.00		\$ (847.00)		Registrations for the 2013 Minnesota Tourism Conference (Schaubach, Pierson, Zoff)
41190	Agency Prof/Tch Svcs	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -		
41300	Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ (65.00)		\$ 565.00		General office supplies for Commission projects. Funds received as donations for GRR maps are included in this line item.
43000	Other Costs (MRPC Dues)	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00		\$ -		National MRPC Dues (\$15,000 annual dues amount).
TOTAL		\$ 85,526.21	\$ 39,370.98		\$ 25,596.90		



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission CMP Project Management Team Meeting February 4, 2013

Attendees: Carol Zoff, Cordelia Pierson, Karl Samp, Liz Walton, Dan Collins, Susan Overson, Andy Trcka, Diane Henry-Wangenstein, Scott Bradley, Ben Rasmussen, Chris Miller

CMP Incorporated Projects Updates

MRT sign fabrication and installation – Liz Walton/Dan Collins

The completed statewide MRT sign plan is anticipated soon. The sign plan is divided into two parts – MnDOT roadways and trails and all other roadways and trails. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) controls requirements for signs as described in the MUTCD. The FHWA MUTCD Committee has determined that because the MRT in Minnesota has been designated as a US Bicycle Route, the US Bicycle Route numbered sign (US Route 45) must be used.

The USBR designation has compromised project delivery because it mandates a different sign than was originally intended and is installed in the other MRT states and in MnDOT's Metro District. This late switch in sign design jeopardizes the entire GRR CMP due to fiscal and schedule ramifications as well as impacts to other tasks intended to highlight the MRT signing as a part of the overall CMP project.

Scope: The USBR 45 sign in no way reflects the Mississippi River Trail sign. It connotes a number, not a place. The numbered sign does not allow the addition of the MRT logo. MRT branding, consistent way showing for Mississippi River cyclists in the ten partner states, sign proliferation, replacement costs, safeguarding MRT sign investment in MN and the other states, and a void of stakeholder input are concerns. MRT Inc., the route's lead champion, neither project funder, nor CMP managers were consulted and were told the decision is final. There is some discussion by FHWA about allowing use of both signs, but direction remains cloudy as the USBR program rules are currently being formulated.

Another scope change is to now fabricate as many signs as possible under contract with MnDOT Sign Shop prior to the end of the fiscal year, with installation to be voluntarily handled by MnDOT districts and local jurisdictions over time. The original plan was to contract for fabrication and installation by region, starting with south in 2013, north in 2014 and metro in 2015 assuring the cyclist a consistent and complete sign installation ensuring safe, reliable and standardized way showing along this very complicated route.

Budget: In addition current estimates reveal available project funds are inadequate to cover the originally planned MRT sign installation. The sign plans (post locations, etc.) do not allow for dual signage. Liz and Dan will prepare a budget summary reflecting the fabrication and installation plan described at the meeting.

Schedule: Dan and Liz reported that for now, sign fabrication and installation will be on hold. FHWA will take the lead to convene affected partners so that signage can proceed in a way acceptable to all involved and to fulfill the project scope. A recent meeting with FHWA indicated that human factor studies may be required to assure the appropriateness of the MRT sign, in place for almost a decade in up to eight states, prior to re-instating MRT sign design approval secured in 2009. A delay such as this will cause harm to the entire GRR CMP project.

Related to the previous schedule are also concerns about not signing the MNRRA corridor until 2015 which has negative impacts on the entire CMP and leaves a project funder unsigned for two years, with no apparent value. The potential change in fabrication/installation scheduling could allow for signs to be installed sooner on some areas, but at the cost of systematic way showing. There were questions about how signage would be tracked, how travelers would know when a printed map is needed vs. sign way finding, and how to ensure that the full route is signed by the end of the grant period. Past efforts that relied on voluntary installation were not systematically successful, so there is doubt about returning to this process when a contract would assure fulfillment of the project tasks.

- Liz and Dan will provide a summary of current status/plans, and team members will be kept updated on status of the sign decision and any actions that would be of help.

MNRRRA Visual Resource Protection Plan – Susan Overson

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRRA) received a National Scenic Byways grant to do a visual resource protection plan for the Great River Road in the National Park/metro area. Results and recommendations will be applied to the full length of the MN Great River Road as part of the Corridor Management Plan and information will also be shared with other byways. MNRRRA is one of few national parks with scenic byways included. The project is being handled by Otak, a firm with a visual resource assessment and scenic byway plans across the United States. The project team also includes National Park Service Denver staff, MNRRRA, and MN-MRPC representatives. An assessment process, which works in both urban and rural settings, has been developed to evaluate views. Public input is now being gathered to determine the top 50 Mississippi views in the metro area. Feedback will be accepted until February 22. The top 50 views will be evaluated by volunteers in April (leaf-off) and May/June (leaf-on). Favorite views can be submitted online at www.mymississippiview.crowdmap.com. A project information sheet is attached. Volunteers will be needed to assist with view point evaluations on April 19, 20 and 22 and also May 30 – June 1. Each half-day session will start with a one hour orientation followed by three hours of viewpoint evaluations with a small team. Transportation will be provided; volunteers can request north metro, central metro or south metro.

- All were asked to share the word, and notify Chris (chris@togpartners.com) if interested in volunteering (please indicate which date and whether morning or afternoon).

MNRRRA Alternative Transportation Plan – Ben Rasmussen

Susan introduced Ben Rasmussen of the Volpe Transportation Center, who is assisting MNRRRA with their Alternative Transportation Plan. Ben demonstrated an Alternative Transportation Online Mapping Tool currently in draft form. The maps utilize Google information. The tool focuses on nine nodes/hubs in the metro area. Each hub includes a variety of transportation options such as Nice Ride bicycle stations, bus stops, rail transit, MRT, and water access. The different options can be selected and details pop up for the user/traveler. The site will be linked to the Metro Transit trip planner. When the site goes live, it will likely be hosted somewhere on the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area website. The info is accessible on mobile devices, but a related mobile app will also be developed. A funding stream for that project is needed. Karl mentioned that the National MRPC is developing a mobile app and maybe efforts could be aligned. Explore Minnesota Tourism grants were also suggested as an option. The overall goal of the Alternative Transportation Plan is to get people to the river without using a car – more visits without more congestion.

- Team members liked the mapping tool and recommended that something like it be included in the Corridor Management Plan project – possibly related to the GIS mapping of resources. The mapping tool is still in draft form and not intended for general distribution, but team members can access it at <http://logannash.org/mnrra/>.

Request for Proposal for Corridor Management Planning Services

Overall RFP Process and Selection Committee

The Legislative Coordinating Commission has provided recommendations on overall RFP format and legal language to be included. It is also recommended that the final RFP be reviewed by House Counsel prior to release. Diane discussed a possible process that would involve accepting written questions from potential responders by a certain date and then holding an information meeting prior to the due date for proposals. The general approach would be to run an announcement about the RFP in the State Register, on the State Administration website, MN-MRPC website and LCC website. All announcements would refer to the full Request for Proposal available on the LCC website. Notice would also be emailed to all vendors who have indicated interest in the project and to lists of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise vendors provided by MnDOT. It is strongly recommended that references be required in all proposals.

- A selection committee will be needed to assist with review of proposals, possible interviews, and recommending the vendor to be contracted. Please notify Chris if interested in serving on the selection committee. Karl and Andy indicated interest at the meeting.

Stakeholder Communications Plan

The MnDOT Communications Department has recommended addition of a project tab (with a few new pages) to the existing MN Great River Road website for use during and after the planning process. This could potentially be done by the Commission's current web design provider. Discussions have been underway on possibilities. A suggestion was made that if we go this route, the tab be usable in the future for Commission member blogs, traveler information, general communications, etc. It was also suggested that the new pages would need to be workable for changes by staff and the CMP project consultant, not requiring programming changes as content needs to be added or modified.

- If these suggestions are workable and cost would be reasonable, would the team recommend this approach?

Timeline

The general plan had been to share the RFP at the next full meeting of the MN-MRPC (Feb 28) for review/comment, then release shortly afterward with several weeks allowed for the process involving written questions, information meeting,

receipt and review of proposals, and final selection. To work out the expenses under the National Scenic Byways Grant and National Park Service matching funds, all related projects need to occur in a certain order. At least some tasks eligible for use of NPS matching funds must occur prior to requesting National Scenic Byway funds since the MN-MRPC budget will not be able to cash flow the project. A working timeline/budget was distributed. Issues related to MRT signage need to be worked out before releasing the RFP for the Corridor Management Plan, since expenditure on the signs was one of the first planned expenses of the matching funds.

- The draft RFP will be shared with the MN-MRPC on February 28, but the release date will be on hold until the timeline for the first expenditures of matching funds are determined.

Review Draft RFP

Carol provided background and talked through a draft RFP with the team. Feedback is needed in a variety of areas, many of which are highlighted in yellow. The RFP provides information about the partners involved in the project, background on the Great River Road, information about related initiatives/agencies/needs, and a list of tasks to be completed. Verbal feedback given at the meeting was recorded and will be incorporated into the draft. Format/process/legal information from LCC will also be incorporated. Cordelia suggested that a list of key questions be developed for the MN-MRPC meeting on February 28, to assist the members in providing feedback. Dan requested addition of language noting that the MRT sign fabrication and installation may not occur in the form, process or time as described in the grant.

- All were asked to review the draft RFP, especially pages 3 – 11 which provide overall background information, project summary and scope of work and services. Please email feedback/additions/edits to Chris by February 11.



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; Branden Petersen (R – 49B) **Members of the Senate:** David Senjem (R – 29); Patricia Torres Ray (DFL – 62) **State Agency Appointees:** Paul Hugunin – Agriculture, Frank Pafko – Transportation, Adam Johnson – Explore Minnesota Tourism, Keith Parker – Natural Resources, Andrea Kajer – Historical Society **Regional Appointees:** Jim Lucachick – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids, John Schaubach – 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 20, 2012

The Honorable Mark Dayton
Governor of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Dayton:

The mission of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota 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 potential for rapid expansion of silica sand (frac sand) mining is of significant concern related to this mission, as it would directly affect the Mississippi River Valley and Great River Road. Issues have been noted by both Commission members and stakeholders. We believe that further study is warranted prior to permitting new mining operations in order to preserve the unique qualities of the southeastern Minnesota Mississippi River Bluffs Region and evaluate potential cumulative impacts on the Great River Road.

The Great River Road has achieved the esteemed designation of a National Scenic Byway because it possesses characteristics of regional and national significance demonstrating intrinsic qualities in each of the following areas – archaeological; cultural; historic; natural; recreational; and scenic. It is imperative for our state to protect the byway, its intrinsic qualities and the river it celebrates for current and future residents and byway travelers. The Great River Road is a National Scenic Byway through ten states. Activities on the Minnesota side of the river also impact the Wisconsin Great River Road – and vice versa – since the scenic and recreational experiences of travelers cross the entire river valley and include the majestic bluffs on both sides of the Mississippi.

The Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota requests that cumulative impacts of silica sand mining be studied, specifically including potential impacts to the Great River Road and the Mississippi River. Until the study is complete, we recommend a statewide moratorium on new silica sand mining operations along Minnesota Scenic Byways. This approach would help preserve not only the resources of the Great River Road but also other areas of the state similarly affected by potential silica sand mining; and would provide consistent information to be used by the various jurisdictions involved in decision making.

Topics to be addressed include:

- Landscape and cultural resource degradation
- Increased road and bridge pressures and potential damage
- Road and shoulder safety
- Pedestrian and bicycle conflicts
- Air and water quality
- Noise
- Reduced tourism activity and related economic losses
- Cumulative impacts on the Great River Road National Scenic Byway

We appreciate your consideration. Our Commissioners and Technical Advisors are available to provide further information as appropriate, and we would also welcome the opportunity to provide a representative to serve on a committee and/or assist with the cumulative impact study. We look forward to hearing from your office on its position on this issue. I can be reached via phone at 651-442-4658 or email at rep.sheldon.johnson@house.mn, or through the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota Office at 651-341-4196 or info@mnmississippiriver.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheldon Johnson /cm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small "cm" at the end.

For the MN-MRPC
Representative Sheldon Johnson, Chair

cc: Minnesota Great River Road Bluffs Region (Hastings to Iowa Border) Cities, Counties and Townships
Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission



Senate Energy & Environment Committee

Potential Silica Sand Industry Impact Testimony

- Local byway partners and the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission have requested MnDOT bring to your attention the **Great River Road National Scenic Byway**, which runs through the region of increasing silica sand industry activity, and to suggest frameworks to help permitting authorities assess potential impacts from silica sand industry development.
- 2013 marks the 75th year of Great River Road, a ten-state road network that celebrates the Mississippi River through a wide variety of opportunities for river exploration by residents and tourists alike. In 1938 Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes envisioned the Great River Road as a means to celebrate America's largest river, restoring it from an increasingly industrial paradigm to that of a parkway.
- Since that time local, state and Federal investment have developed facilities along the river valley that attract residents and tourists. Many of these are shown on the map titled *"Potential Resources and Impact Areas for the Silica Sand Industry."* The map does not reflect analysis, although GIS mapping of these and other agency data could serve as a tool for impact analysis related to the byway in the permitting process to identify potential impacts of silica sand development and options to avoid, minimize or mitigate them.
- A framework for assessing impacts of the silica sand industry could include the Federal Highway Administration's national scenic byway intrinsic qualities: **archaeological, natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and historic.**
- The **Mississippi River Trail, MnDOT's first state bikeway**, was established by Minn. Stat. 160.266 last session and shown on the map as a red dash. This route combines Mississippi exploration, active living and a new tourism product that adds value to existing roads and trails. This year MnDOT will install route signage.
- The map identifies transportation investments that have preserved scenic views, with significant scenic easements shown in yellow. Small wonder that last year a Huffington Post poll named Wisconsin's' GRR **America's prettiest drive.**
- Assessing the cumulative impact of landscape change resulting from silica sand, CAPX2020 and wind farms on the Great River Road's scenic quality is a concern of the Commission. All three are occurring along this scenic route in the absence of coordinated permitting.

For More
Information

Contact:

Carol Zoff
Environmental Stewardship
651-366-4705
carol.zoff@state.mn.us

Your Destination...Our Priority





Mississippi River Parkway Commission of MN Potential Silica Sand Industry Great River Road/MRT Impact

- 2013 marks the 75th year of Great River Road, a ten-state road network that celebrates the Mississippi River through a wide variety of river exploration by residents and tourists alike.
- In 1938 Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes envisioned the Great River Road as a means to celebrate America's largest river restoring it from an increasingly industrial use paradigm towards a parkway.
- Since that time local, state and Federal investment have developed facilities along the river valley that attract residents and tourists
- The Parkway Commission, the statutory champions of the Great River Road, and local byway stakeholders, are concerned that the byway, the resources it celebrates, the byway traveler experience, and the tourism economy the byway supports will be negatively impacted by silica sand development unless potential impacts are avoided, minimized or mitigated in the permitting process.
- To help inform local decision making about potential impacts to resources that extend beyond local boundaries the Commission wrote to Governor Dayton in June 2012 requesting **further study in order to preserve the unique qualities of the region**, and to **serve as a partner in this effort**.
- To help the Commission illustrate their concerns, your packet includes a map titled *"Potential Resources and Impact Areas for the Silica Sand Industry."* The map is not all inclusive.
- Please note that while impacts to the Great River Road may be similar to other Minnesota byways, we did not have ready access to GIS data from the other byways' resources.
- The map includes Great River Road GIS data from MnDOT's 2000 Corridor Management Plan, overlaid with silica sand deposits, and existing and proposed silica mines, transport and processing facilities.
- A framework for assessing silica sand industry impacts and for refining its development to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts could include the Federal Highway Administration's national scenic byway intrinsic qualities: **archaeological, natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and historic.**
- This framework organizes Minnesota's tradition of local, state and federal investments celebrate the river's intrinsic resources resulting in a legacy of place and experience that should be examined with each permit application to assure these investments are protected so that today's and tomorrow's residents and tourists can continue their enjoyment in a safe and welcoming environment.
 - **Archeological resources** are not mapped here due to the sensitive nature of the resource, but a MnDOT assessment indicates that southeastern Minnesota is a significant area for archaeological resources.

- **Mapped Natural resources** include parks, forests, refuges, riverways, and SNAs, WMAs.
- **Mapped Cultural resources** include some parks, refuges, riverways, and Amish byways, as well as museums, festivals, theaters, churches and schools not shown on the map.
- **Scenic resources** exist throughout the corridor. On the map you will see transportation investments have preserved scenic views with significant scenic easements shown in yellow. Small wonder that last year a Huffington Post poll named Wisconsin's' GRR **America's prettiest drive!** After all, Wisconsin drivers are looking at Minnesota!
- **Historic resources** listed by SHPO as eligible or on the National Register of Historic Places are indicated by blue diamonds. Towns like Red Wing, Lake City, Wabasha, and Winona have so many properties the diamonds are stacked deep on the map. As National Register eligibility includes the historic intactness of the surrounding landscape, permit review should include impacts to historic sites as well as those experienced from the sites.
- **Mapped Recreational resources** include parks, forests, refuges, riverways, and some SNAs and WMAs, as well as the byways and trails, Class V rest areas and the Mississippi River Trail – a ten-state bicycle route.

Following the priority set in MnDOT's 2000 Great River Road Corridor Management Plan, **Minnesota's newest recreation resource is the Mississippi River Trail, MnDOT's first state bikeway**, established by State Statute 160.266 last session and shown on the map as a red dash.

- The MRT is primarily on state and county highway shoulders, sharing these roads with all users, but also follows local roads and trails when available. Resident and touring bicyclists of all types will find their place on the MRT in Minnesota, route signing to begin this year.

- Stretching 575 miles in Minnesota from the headwaters at Lake Itasca State Park to the Iowa border, the Great River Road serves as the string upon which these local, state and Federal intrinsic pearls are explored. -In addition to providing a resource rich place for residents to live with high quality of life, the byway's critical mass of attraction yields returns supporting a vibrant tourism industry, an industry that added 5000 Minnesota jobs statewide in 2011.
- Assessing the cumulative impact of landscape change resulting from silica sand, CAPX2020 and wind farms on the Great River Road's scenic quality is a concern of the Commission. All three are occurring along this scenic route in the absence of coordinated permitting.
- *This information is intended to improve understanding of potential impacts so as to assure permitting that results in sustainable growth for all sectors, while protecting, enhancing and promoting the Great River Road and its resources.*

Mississippi River Parkway Commission of MN
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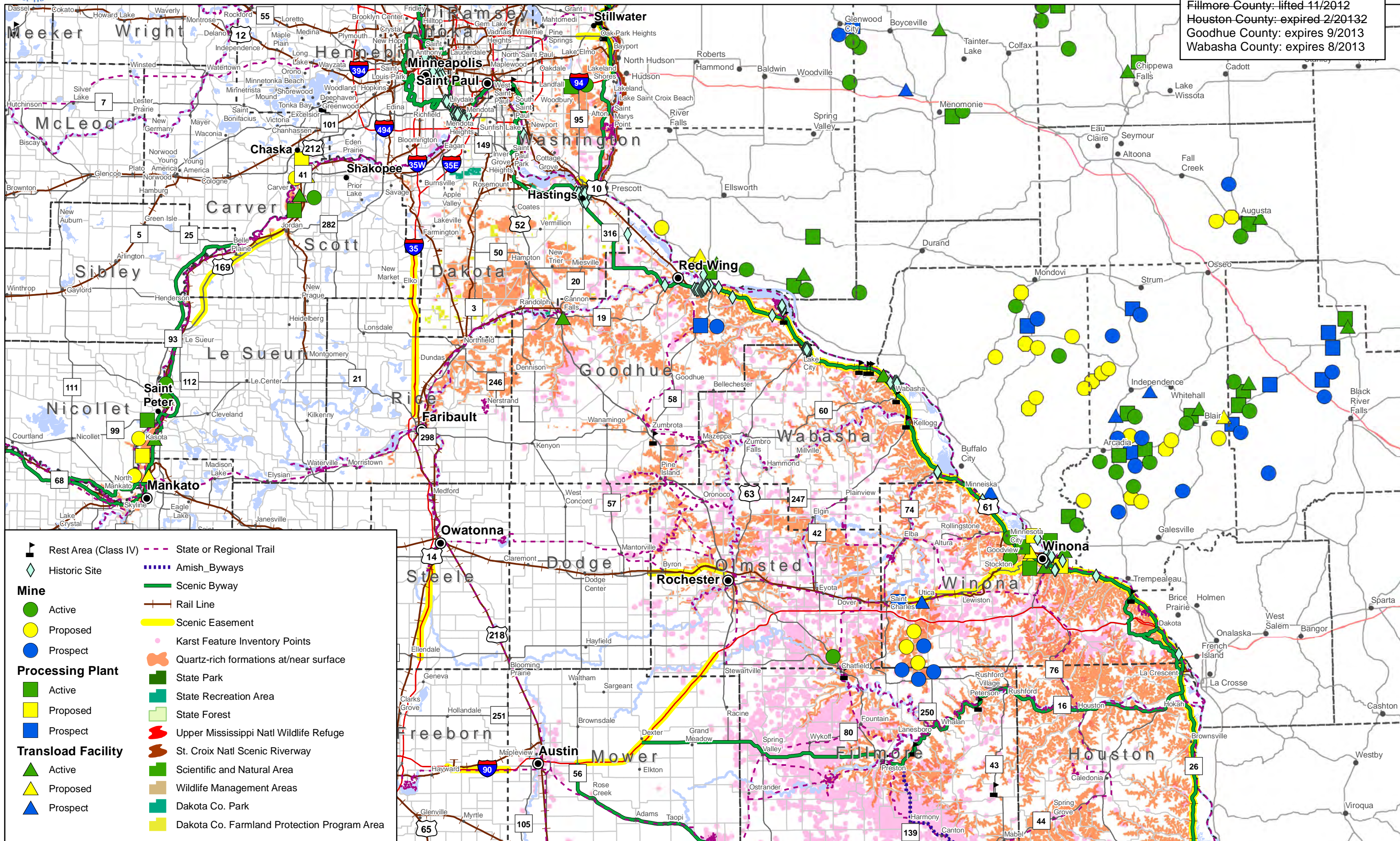


Potential Resources and Impact Areas for the Silica Sand Industry

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Moratoria:

City of Winona: expires 3/20/2013
City of Redwing: expired 10/28/2012
Fillmore County: lifted 11/2012
Houston County: expired 2/2013
Goodhue County: expires 9/2013
Wabasha County: expires 8/2013



Transportation Assets and Traffic Levels

Minnesota Department of Transportation

