

Agenda Items 1-20

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Staff Report on Projects for the Bimonthly Meeting on 12.9.2020

	Agenda Topic or Project Name	Purpose, Benefit, Project deliverables, and Contract Amount	Project Time Period	Project Status	Contact
1	Roll Call	Confirm a quorum	Today's Meeting	NA	NA
2	Minutes of last MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting	Confirm past meetings decisions and outcomes	Today's Meeting	NA	NA
3	Treasurer's Report	Present all financial transactions occurring in all accounts that includes: (1) Operational funds (checking, savings, CDs) (2) The four business Revolving Loan Funds and (3) the Disaster Recovery Microloan Fund.	Today's Meeting	(1) Review operational fund transaction activity that include: Checking, savings, and certificate of deposit transactions. (2) Review transaction activity in the four federally funded business revolving loan funds that were awarded to the MRRPC between 1989 and 1995 to assist in overcoming rural economic distress and flooding. (3) Review transaction activity in the Disaster Recovery Microloan program funded from Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation – WEDC.	Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com
4	Presentation by Kelliann Blazek, Office of Rural Prosperity	Presentation on the Office of Rural Prosperity which was created in April 2020	Today's Meeting	NA	Kelliann Blazek, kelliann.blazek@wedc.org
5a	EDA CARES Act MRRPC Supplemental Funding	MRRPC received a \$400,000 grant to assist the region with recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The award timeframe is July 1 st , 2020 through June 30 th , 2022.	July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022	The MRRPC received an EDA grant to assist us in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will be using the grant to do the following: Upgrade existing hardware and software to allow staff to maintain communications during this pandemic; Update county Hazard Mitigation Plans particularly the pandemic section; Upgrade our website to include RFL applications; Conduct webinars for small business websites; Contract out for a SMRT Bus Marketing Plan; Contract out for a Location Based Data project; and to update our existing CEDS to include pandemic resiliency.	Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com
5b	EDA CARES Act MRRPC RLF revitalization	MRRPC received and EDA grant in the amount of up to \$1,050,000 to establish a separate Revolving Loan Fund to assist businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The final amount will be based upon the amount of loan applications.	Continuous	EDA granted the MRRPC money based upon the original capitalization of its 3 revolving loan funds (The Business Capital Fund, the CMV Growth Development Fund and the La Crosse Economic Development Fund). In an effort to get the money out to businesses EDA also removed eased 3 of its lending criteria. First, the EDA requirement that the lending rate be at least of 75% of the prime rate is waived so we can offer whatever lending rate we choose, secondly there is no criteria of 2 to 1 private to public leveraging requirement and thirdly no bank turn down letter is required. These 3 criteria will be eased for the first 2 years after which they will go	Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com

				back into place. Loan application decisions will be made by the boards of the 3 existing RLF funds based upon the location of the applicant. For example CMV board members will make the decisions on application from Crawford, Monroe and Vernon Counties.	
6	EDA CARES Act Supplemental Funding – Website and Consultations	A portion of the CARES Supplemental funding will be used to redesign the MRRPC website and add modern features and functionality. This project will also include training opportunities for local businesses to enhance their web and social media presence.	Anticipated start date: November 2020	RFP released Firm will be selected by November 2020. Staff reviewed 3 proposals and selected the top 2 for interviews based on a scoring matrix. Staff will recommend one firm to the Executive Committee	Bob Gollnik Senior Planner 608.785.9396 bob@mrrpc.com
7a	EDA CARES Act Supplemental Funding – SMRT Bus Marketing Plan	A portion of the CARES Supplemental funding will be used to develop a marketing plan to increase ridership, enhance signage, and identify growth opportunities.	Anticipated start date: January 2021	RFP drafted and released in December 2020	Bob Gollnik Senior Planner 608.785.9396 bob@mrrpc.com
7b	EDA CARES Act Supplemental Funding – Location-based Data Project	A portion of the CARES Supplemental funding will be used to purchase data and travel pattern analysis to support community businesses, capture tourist opportunities, and support local planning and economic development efforts.	Anticipated start date: January 2021	RFP drafted and will be released in October 2020. Received 3 proposals and staff will select 1-2 firms for interview based on a scoring matrix. The proposals and matrix were also distributed to the LAPC and La Crosse County for input.	Bob Gollnik Senior Planner 608.785.9396 bob@mrrpc.com
8	MRRPC Build Grant	MRRPC submitted a planning grant proposal to USDOT in May 2020 to develop a “Freight Strategy” for its Counties. Notification of award was in September 2020. The study includes developing background information on freight transportation in the region, generating freight growth projects and system performance for major commodities in the region, and creating content to incorporate into County and local comprehensive plans	Anticipated start date: December 2020	Staff is working with Federal Highway Administration and WisDOT through the procurement process and developing and releasing an RFP and will play a large role in project tasks.	Bob Gollnik Senior Planner 608.785.9396 bob@mrrpc.com

9	<p>Report on US Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant for economic recovery planning, engineering, real estate appraisal, engineering, and environmental assessment activity for the Villages of Ontario, La Farge, Viola and Readstown.</p>	<p>Economic Recovery Planning is needed by the flood impacted communities of Ontario, La Farge, Viola and Readstown. The following Planning Activities are proposed to assist these communities with economic recovery and long term sustainability: (1) site relocation decision research, (2) site design for community economic development and resettlement, (3) community facility assessment engineering and design, (4) public infrastructure engineering assessment and design, (5) project cost estimating, (6) real estate appraisal, (7) environmental assessment and (8) public participation.</p>	<p>June 2020-December 2021</p>	<p>Grant application was submitted in June 2019. The total project will be \$925,000 with \$185,000 in local match. The MRRPC received a letter dated January 10, 2020 that EDA has approved the grant. RFP's were sent out in February. Each Village received 9 proposals. Each Village met separately and selected who they wanted to have as a consultant.</p> <p>Individual Consultants have been working with the Villages. Readstown selected SHC, Ontario selected MSA and both Viola and La Farge selected Vierbicher.</p> <p>Initial kickoff meetings have been held in each of the villages. Consultants have been working on gathering public input within each community.</p> <p>Readstown is still gathering public input through charettes, due to the Villages offices closing down for the month of December this process will go into January. Infrastructure assessments and business interviews have been completed.</p> <p>Ontario has identified a relocation site and is working on identifying costs associated with developing that site. Viola has a draft relocation plan developed but not yet approved by the Village Board. The consultant is working on cost associated with developing that site along with potential sources of funding for those costs.</p> <p>La Farge is still gathering put input on potential relocation sites. Infrastructure assessments and business interviews have been completed.</p>	<p>Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com</p>
10	<p>Report on City of Westby Industrial Park EDA Grant.</p>	<p>The Cities of Mondovi and Westby are both pursuing Federal EDA grants to develop new industrial parks. Mondovi's New Industrial Park will be located on the City's West side it will be 210 acres in size and serve an expanding industry that will locate there and create 25 jobs. Included within the boundary of the industrial park will be the City's new wastewater treatment facility that will use an anaerobic digester that will also generate electricity for the City. The total project cost is expected</p>	<p>Westby's grant application was submitted on Grants.Gov on October 3,2019. Requested additional information was submitted on November 30, 2019.</p>	<p>Westby's Grant application was submitted on October 3, 2019.</p> <p>EDA announced the financial award for Westby April 21, 2020.</p> <p>MRRPC is in communication with EDA on the progress of funding. Quarterly reports have been submitted and all checklist material for contracts with engineering and administration is complete. DOT has approved the plans, Westby City Council approved the bond issue, and are awaiting approval from EDA to go to bid.</p>	<p>Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com</p>

		to be \$7.5 million with 50% the costs hopefully covered by a Federal EDA grant. The City of Westby is planning a 74-acre industrial park on the north side with costs totaling \$4.3 million, hoping that an EDA grant will cover 80% the costs due to disaster declaration.			
11	Report on Village of La Farge EDA application to move electrical substation out of floodplain.	The EDA made nearly \$600 million available through its 2019 Disaster Supplemental Funding program. The Village of La Farge is eligible due to 2018 flooding events and has decided to move forward with an application to pursue funding for electrical substation relocation.	Submittal TBD	Staff is retrieving materials from the Village and working with regional EDA representatives to assemble the application package, to prepare for a TBD EDA Grant.	Bob Gollnik Senior Planner 608.785.9396 bob@mrrpc.com
12a	T. Campbell Comprehensive Plan Update	March 2020, the Town of Campbell signed a contract to update their Comprehensive Plan with MRRPC. This plan was a cost share agreement of \$12,000, half from MRRPC, half from the Town of Campbell.	March 1, 2020-December, 31, 2020	MRRPC staff has met with the Town twice to go over an outline for the plan update. Meeting times were postponed due to COVID-19. MRRPC staff is updating demographic information and coordinating new project plans and goals with the Town. Maps updates are in progress. MRRPC staff is developing a draft of the plan to be presented to the Town Planning Commission. A public survey was sent out with follow up to increase respondents.	Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com
12b	T. Holland Comprehensive Plan Update	September 2020, the Town of Holland signed a contract to update their Comprehensive Plan with MRRPC. This plan was a cost share agreement of \$12,000, half from MRRPC, half from the Town of Campbell.	September 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	MRRPC staff has met with the Town to go over an outline for the plan update. MRRPC staff is updating demographic information and mapping updates are in progress. MRRPC staff is developing a draft of the plan to be presented to the Town Planning Commission. A public survey was sent out with follow up to increase respondents.	Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com
13	T. Hamilton Comprehensive Plan Update	In October 2020, the Town of Holland signed a contract to update it's Comprehensive Plan with MRRPC.	November 2020 – June 2021	MRRPC staff has met with the planning committee and charted out the schedule and anticipated outreach. A flyer will be distributed with the utility bills in December 2020 and will include links for information and surveys.	Bob Gollnik Senior Planner 608.785.9396 bob@mrrpc.com
14a	Vernon County Outdoor Recreation Plan Update	As part of receiving annual county contributions, the MRRPC updates and maintains county outdoor recreation plans. The MRRPC is currently working with Vernon County on updating the county's outdoor recreation plan.	July 2020-February 2021	MRRPC staff met with Vernon County staff to go over an outline for the plan. Department staff are gathering data to create new goals, objectives, and projects. MRRPC has created a draft plan and compiled survey results. MRRPC staff will meet with Outdoor Recreation Committee to go over an action plan.	Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com

14b	Buffalo County Outdoor Recreation Plan Update	As part of receiving annual county contributions, the MRRPC updates and maintains county outdoor recreation plans. The MRRPC is currently working with Vernon County on updating the county's outdoor recreation plan.	October 2020-March 2021	MRRPC staff met with Buffalo County staff to go over an outline for the plan. Outdoor Recreation Committee and MRRPC reached out to recreation organizations for input. MRRPC developed a survey and updated existing elements in plan.	Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com
15a	Jackson County Hazard Mitigation Plan	Update the Jackson County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. \$30,000 federal grant approved requiring a \$10,000 match from MRRPC and Jackson County. The original plan was prepared to reduce costs and losses from natural disasters and some manmade disasters. This is an update to the existing plan. Inventories county's vulnerabilities to various types of disasters. The Plan Inventories and maps critical facilities and all structures in floodplains. The Plan develops projects and strategies to reduce losses from future disasters. Plans must be approved by DHS-FEMA and Wisconsin Emergency Management. Once the updated plan is approved, the county and other participating local governments are eligible for Federal and State Hazard Mitigation Grant programs.	August 2018 through March 2021	Jackson County received notification from FEMA in August that their grant application to update their existing plan has been approved. The final plan is due in March 2021. MRRPC staff has a draft of the plan finished. Public hearings and committee meetings were postponed due to COVID-19. The plan was reviewed by the Law Enforcement Committee and approved. The plan went to public forum and is being reviewed by WEM.	Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com
15b	La Crosse County Hazard Mitigation Plan	Update the La Crosse County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. \$31,331 federal grant approved requiring a \$10,444 match from MRRPC and La Crosse County. The original plan was prepared to reduce costs and losses from natural disasters and some manmade disasters. This is an update to the existing plan. Inventories county's vulnerabilities to various types of disasters. The Plan inventories and maps critical facilities and all structures in floodplains. The Plan develops projects and strategies to reduce losses from future disasters. Plans must be approved by DHS-FEMA and Wisconsin Emergency Management. Once the updated plan is approved, the county and other participating local governments are eligible for Federal and State Hazard Mitigation Grant programs.	August 2018 through March 2021	La Crosse County received notification from FEMA in August that their grant application to update their existing plan has been approved. The final plan is due in March 2021. MRRPC staff has a draft of the plan finished. Public hearings and committee meetings were postponed due to COVID-19. The plan is has been reviewed by the Emergency Management Committee and approved. The plan went to public forum and is being reviewed by WEM.	Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com

16a	Buffalo County Hazard Mitigation Grant submittal	Update the Buffalo County Hazard Mitigation Plan. A grant application was submitted to WEM in the amount of \$40,000. Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans are prepared to reduce costs and losses from natural disasters for counties and municipalities	2020-2022	The grant application was submitted to WEM in November 2019. WEM will review the application and select which plans will go to FEMA. The current Buffalo County Hazard Mitigation Plan expires in 2020. Due to number of disasters FEMA is behind in awarding grants. No timeline has been announced for awarding grants.	Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com
16b	Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit (SMRT) bus serving Crawford, Vernon, Monroe, and La Crosse counties	<p>Develop a fixed route public transportation service for Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon Counties. Bus transportation will service commuters, elderly, disabled, medical appointments, and personal travel.</p> <p>Projected operating costs for 2020 are approximately \$460,000. Funding comes from a federal DOT grant, local governments, corporate donations, Bremer Foundation Grants, and the fare box.</p>	Service Began on December 3, 2012 - present	<p>The SMRT Bus has been operating for over six years serving La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, and Monroe Counties. In 2017 ridership decreased by about 6%. In 2018 ridership rebounded on the SMRT system and increased by 9% over 2017 ridership. Ridership in 2019 decreased approximately 10% over 2018 ridership numbers. In 2020, ridership numbers have been dramatically impacted by COVID restrictions, but are slowly increasing. Ridership for the three medical facilities have been a large percentage of riders in recent months. SMRT has not reduced service due to CoVID. Our core ridership is health care employees, who obviously continue to need transportation. Having the Transit service available to them to reduce stress on their commute seems to be a significant factor in their quality of life. We have seen reduced ridership, but not significant reductions in demand.</p> <p>On July 19, 2019, The SMRT Bus system through La Crosse County as the applicant, was awarded a \$492,570 in federal funds to acquire 2 battery electric cutaway buses and associated infrastructure equipment to serve the SMRT system. SMRT routes continue to be analyzed by the WISDOT electric bus contractor to determine if electric buses are capable of serving its route distances and terrain. MRRPC staff assisted La Crosse County with the electric bus application and the successful Bremer Foundation grant to help cover operating costs. MRRPC has also assisted in electrification</p> <p>On May 13, 2019, the SMRT Bus system added a mid-day route between La Crosse-Tomah. The additional route will provide more flexibility for riders to use the bus for medical appointments, school, and daily activities. Providing three runs a day from La Crosse to Tomah and points in between.</p>	Bob Gollnik Senior Planner 608.785.9396 bob@mrrpc.com

16c	DOT Contract Work	WisDOT is beginning to update two long-range plans: Connect 2050 (the Long-Range State Transportation Plan), and the Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050. In addition, the LAPC is in the process of updating the MPO Plan, Beyond Coulee Vision 2040.	Ongoing through 2021	Staff will serve as a regional representative for MRRPC communities and will assist with Public Input and technical activities, as necessary. Staff is reviewing and providing comments on the MPO plan.	Bob Gollnik Senior Planner 608.785.9396 bob@mrrpc.com
17	Reports from Commissioners	An opportunity for commissioners to talk about what is happening or concerns within their county.	Today's Meeting	NA	NA
18	New Business	An opportunity for commissioners to identify new topics for discussion at upcoming meetings.	Today's Meeting	NA	NA
19	Adjourn	NA	Today's Meeting	NA	NA