

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Staff Report on Projects for the Bimonthly Meeting on 2.12.2020

	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	U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration Performance Review Preparation for February 12, 2019.	The MRRPC has been designated an Economic Development District (EDD) of EDA since 1977. There are hundreds of EDDs across the nation that undertake economic development initiatives and projects with EDA funding. To keep this EDD designation for this federal funding EDDs are evaluated every three years. EDA evaluates the staff, board of commissioners and its past, present and future economic development projects. Most of the region's industrial parks, revolving loan funds in the region have been funded by EDA as have business incubators and many feasibility and marketing studies. It is important to receive a good evaluation from EDA so we can continue to channel their funding to economic development projects in the region.	The evaluation is set for February 12, 2020, MRRPC Bimonthly meeting	Today's meeting will provide information on EDA, and some of the criteria they evaluate EDD's on. The CEDS, Economic Distress, past projects, existing projects, and future projects will be discussed.	Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com
5	Status on the submission of an US Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant application to fund economic recovery planning,	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		A grant application was submitted to EDA in the third week in June. EDA requested some additional information on the application in late July. The MRRPC provided this information to EDA on July 31. We received a letter from EDA notifying us that the project merits	Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com

	<p>engineering, real estate appraisal, engineering and environmental assessment activity for the Villages of Ontario, La Farge, Viola and Readstown. If approved as submitted up to \$200,000 per community will be available for the above mentioned activities.</p>	<p>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>further consideration on October 18, 2019.</p> <p>A December 2, 2019 e-mail from EDA requested information on: consultant selection process responsibilities, indirect rate budget adjustment, real estate appraisal, and staff time charged to federal projects.</p> <p>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.</p>	
6	<p>Report on City of Mondovi and City of Westby Industrial Park EDA Applications.</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 anerobic digester that will also generate electricity for the City. The total project cost is expected 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.</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>MRRPC staff is presently assisting with the grant applications.</p> <p>Westby's Grant application was submitted on October 3, 2019.</p> <p>An environmental narrative was developed for the City of Westby grant for NEPA. MRRPC staff is waiting to hear back from EDA on a decision for the grant application.</p>	<p>Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com</p>
7	<p>Report and acceptance of Executive and Administration Committee minutes and announcement of new Senior Planner</p>	<p>The Executive and Administration Committee interviewed 3 candidates on January 21, 2020 and selected Robert Gollnik as the New Senior Planner He started work on February 12, 2020.</p>	<p>Today's Meeting</p>	<p>The Senior Planner position description and salary range that was approved by the Executive and Administration Committee at their July 11, 2019 meeting will be used again for the hiring of the new Senior Planner. The Position will be posted in the La Crosse Tribune, the La Crosse Tribune on-line board, that then posts to Indeed, Zip Recruiter, Glass Door, LinkedIn, Job List Neuvoo, It was also posted on the American Planning Association Chapters of WI, IL, MN as well as Wisconsin Job Service. The application deadline is January 3, 2020.</p> <p>The Committee interviewed three candidates on January 21, 2020 and</p>	<p>Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com</p>

				selected Robert Gollnik as to be the Senior Planner. He will start work on February 12, 2020.	
8a	Trempealeau County Hazard Mitigation Plan update	Update the Trempealeau County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. \$30,000 federal planning grant approved requiring a \$10,000 match from MRRPC and Trempealeau County. The original was prepared to reduce costs and losses from natural disasters and some manmade disasters. This is an update to the existing plan. The Plan inventories the 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 Energy Management. Once the updated plan is approved, the county and other participating local governments are eligible for Federal and State Hazard Mitigation Grant programs.	2016-2018	A draft of the plan has been completed and a public hearing was held on August 14 th . The draft of the plan was sent to Wisconsin Emergency Management for review. The plan was approved by WEM and has been approved by Trempealeau County Law Enforcement and Emergency Management Committee on November 19, 2019. The plan is still awaiting more municipal resolutions.	Dave Bonifas Planner 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com
8b	Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Planning	A grant to DHS-FEMA was written by staff to update the Monroe County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans are prepared to reduce costs and losses from natural disasters for counties and municipalities. This is an update to the existing plan. The plan inventories the county's vulnerabilities to various types of disasters. Inventories and maps critical facilities and all structures in floodplains. Develops projects and strategies to reduce losses from future disasters. The Plan 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. The total project is in the amount of \$43,744, of which \$32,808 is the grant award and the remaining \$10,936 is a required match.	2016-2018	A draft of the plan has been completed and a public hearing was held on August 14 th . A draft of the plan was sent to Wisconsin Emergency Management for review. Wisconsin Emergency Management approved the draft and the plan was submitted to the Monroe County Board for adoption. The Monroe County Board adopted the plan at their December 18, 2019 meeting. Adopting resolutions were sent out to all municipalities and we are waiting for their adoptions.	Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com

8c	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 completed updating 90% of the demographic information and 95% of the risk assessment information for chapters 2 and 3 of the plan. In addition, updates have been made to maps of critical facilities in the county including updating historical occurrences of all the natural hazards. MRRPC has been in contact with the Emergency Management Director of Jackson County and will be organizing meeting for project goals.	Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com
8d	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 completed updating the demographic information, completed updating 90% of the demographic information and 95% of the risk assessment information for chapters 2 and 3 of the plan. In addition, updates have been made to maps of critical facilities in the county including updating historical occurrences of all the natural hazards. MRRPC staff has started to set up meetings with various country departments for input in the plan and are getting hazard surveys back for the plan.	Abbey Nicewander Planner 608.785.9396 abbey@mrrpc.com
8e	Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit (SMRT) bus serving Crawford, Vernon, Monroe, and La Crosse counties	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.	Service Began on December 3, 2012 - present	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 so far in 2019 has decreased approximately 10% over	Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com

		<p>Projected operating costs for 2019 are approximately \$420,000. Funding comes from a federal DOT grant, local governments, corporate donations, Bremer Foundation Grants and the fare box.</p>		<p>2018 ridership numbers. Weather issues in January caused the service to cancel around a week of service which impacted overall ridership numbers.</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 are being 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.</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> <p>Consultations have taken place to develop a marketing plan for SMRT Bus services.</p>	
8f	La Crosse County Outdoor recreation plan	<p>As part of receiving annual county contributions, the MRRPC updates and maintains county outdoor recreation plans. The MRRPC is currently working with La Crosse County on updating the county's outdoor recreation plan.</p>	November 2018 – June 2019	<p>MRRPC staff met several times with La Crosse County staff over the last nine months and gathered background information (recreation budget, projects, data, etc.) that assisted in updating the outdoor recreation plan.</p> <p>The final draft of the Outdoor Recreation Plan was provided to La Crosse County in March and was posted on the La Crosse County website. In March/April La Crosse County towns, and cities/villages were asked to review the plan and provide information on their municipality's future outdoor recreation projects. Information from local units of government was received and incorporated into the planning document. The Outdoor Recreation Plan was approved by the La Crosse</p>	<p>Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com</p>

				<p>County Board of Supervisors in May and the finalized document has been posted on the La Crosse County and MRRPC website.</p> <p>MRRPC staff will be working on an amendment to the plan to include the purchase of Blufflands parcels by town city, or county.</p>	
8g	<p>Report on the Wisconsin Department of Administration's proposed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Close Grant program involving terminating all CDBG Revolving Loan Funds across the state. Then allowing communities to apply for a guaranteed CDBG grant for the amount of RLF funds returned.</p>	<p>Due to compliance issues and over \$50 million sitting in bank accounts across the state the WI DOA is proposing to terminate the CDBG RLFs in all communities and counties. As an incentive for RLF communities and counties to participate it will allow counties and communities to apply for a CDBG grant in an amount that is equal to the amount of CDBG funds that are returned. This CDBG grant is guaranteed to be funded. Grants may be for road, water sewer, other public facilities, housing, planning, job training services and centers, food pantries, senior centers, services to the homeless, and public safety, child care, health services: substance abuse services-counseling and treatment (opioid treatment), fair housing counseling, education programs, energy conservation, services for senior citizens, and other similar projects approved by DOA. Projects must also benefit a population area that is at least 51% Low and moderate Income.</p>	<p>This program was rolled out by WI DOA in February 2019. Communities and counties have two years to return the funds and apply for CDBG grant for the amount of RLF funds that they returned to the State.</p>	<p>The Wisconsin Department of Administration received approval from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development roll out this program. DOA has sponsored meetings and webinars on this program and attended meetings in various counties to explain this program. Communities and counties will have two years to determine and apply for projects that are CDBG eligible and provide service to a population that is at least 51% Low and moderate income and/or a blighted project. Counties in the region that will need to address this program are: Pierce, Pepin, Buffalo, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe and Vernon Counties. Cities and Villages in the region that will need to address this are Tomah, Sparta, Kendall, Hillsboro and Osseo.</p>	<p>Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com</p>
8h	<p>Buffalo County Hazard Mitigation Grant submittal</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>2019-2021</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Dave Bonifas Director 608.785.9396 dave@mrrpc.com</p>
9	<p>Old Business</p>				
10	<p>New Business</p>				
11	<p>Adjourn</p>				