

Minnesota



Corridor Management Plan



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Minnesota Legislative Coordinating Commission

MINNESOTA GREAT RIVER ROAD CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

Funding Partners

Federal Highway Administration | National Scenic Byway Program
National Park Service | NPS Transportation Program

Project Managers

Carol Zoff | Great River Road Program Manager
Minnesota Department of Transportation

Chris Miller | Director
Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota

Consultant Team

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

2550 University Avenue West
Suite 238N
St. Paul, MN 55114

AND

Pawpaw Partners

Zan Associates

Deborah L. Myerson

CONTENTS

ES Executive Summary

SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION ES-2

THE CORRIDOR ES-3

THE PLAN ES-3

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION ES-5

Wayshowing Signage ES-5

Plan Your Trip Interactive Mapping Tool ES-6

Plan Your Project Interactive Mapping Tool ES-6

Great River Road Ambassador Development ES-6

01 Introduction

1.1 THE GREAT RIVER 01-2

1.1.1 History of the Great River Road 01-3

1.1.2 The National Route 01-4

1.1.3 Minnesota’s Great River Road 01-4

1.1.4 Federal Program Support 01-10

1.1.5 2016 Corridor Management Vision 01-11

1.2 CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN 01-12

1.2.1 Accomplishments of the 2000 CMP 01-12

1.2.2 Scope of Work 01-14

02 Support and Participation

2.1 AGENCY AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT 02-3

2.1.1 Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission 02-3

2.1.2 Minnesota Department of Transportation 02-5

2.1.3 Project Advisory Team 02-6

2.1.4 Member Agency and Partner Engagement 02-6

2.1.5 Draft Plan Review Meetings 02-9

2.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT 02-10

2.2.1 Public Open Houses 02-10

2.2.2 Public Online Engagement 02-12

03 The Corridor

3.1	ROUTE ASSESSMENT	03-2
3.1.1	Wayshowing Signage	03-4
3.2	SAFETY	03-10
3.3	TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS	03-12
3.3.1	State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	03-13
3.4	PLANNING PROJECTS	03-15
3.5	MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION	03-16
3.5.1	Mississippi River Trail	03-16
3.5.2	Other Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails	03-17
3.5.3	Mississippi River State Water Trail	03-18
3.5.4	Other Alternative Transportation Options	03-19
3.6	INTRINSIC RESOURCE INVENTORY	03-20
3.6.1	Intrinsic Qualities	03-20
3.6.2	Resource Inventory	03-21
3.6.3	Scenic Resources	03-25
3.7	SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASSESSMENT	03-30
3.7.1	Interpretation	03-30
3.7.2	Existing Great River Road Interpretive Panels	03-31
3.7.3	Diversity of Stories	03-32
3.7.4	Agritourism	03-33

04 The Plan

4.1	CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES	04-2
4.1.1	Background	04-2
4.1.2	Plan Framework	04-3
4.1.3	Thematic Goals	04-4
4.1.4	Objectives and Strategies	04-5
4.2	MN-MRPC BUSINESS PLAN	04-14
4.2.1	10-State Mississippi River Parkway Commission	04-14
4.2.2	MN-MRPC Organization and Mission	04-15
4.2.3	MN-MRPC Management and Operations	04-25
4.2.4	MN-MRPC Funding	04-26
4.3	EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT	04-29
4.3.1	Internal Management and Operations Communication	04-29
4.3.2	External Communication and Travel Promotion	04-33

4.4	FACILITIES MANAGEMENT	04-40
4.4.1	Route Adjustments.....	04-41
4.4.2	Roadside Storybook and Other Byway Interpretation ...	04-44
4.4.3	Design: Great River Road as Parkway	04-47
4.4.4	Safety.....	04-49
4.4.5	Visual Resource Protection.....	04-49
4.4.6	Multimodal Transportation	04-52
4.4.7	Health and Active Living.....	04-53
4.4.8	Outdoor Off-Premise Advertising - Billboards	04-57
4.4.9	Transportation Funding	04-58

05 Initial Implementation

5.1	WAYSHOWING SIGNAGE	05-2
5.1.2	Related CMP Strategies	05-2
5.1	Recommendations	05-3
5.2	PLAN YOUR TRIP INTERACTIVE MAP	05-4
5.2.1	Related CMP Strategies	05-4
5.2	Recommendations	05-4
5.3	PLAN YOUR PROJECT INTERACTIVE MAP	05-5
5.3.1.	Related CMP Strategies	05-6
5.3	Recommendations	05-6
5.4	GREAT RIVER ROAD AMBASSADOR DEVELOPMENT	05-7
5.4.1	Related CMP Strategies	05-7
5.4	Recommendations	05-7

A Appendices

- 1. VIEWSHED ASSESSMENT AND NOMINATION FORMS**
- 2. INVESTMENT PRIORITY SPREADSHEET**





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great River Road was established in 1938 to honor and celebrate the Mississippi River. The byway tells the river's stories and provides access to the Mississippi's scenic, natural, historic, archaeological, cultural and recreational intrinsic resources. This Great River Road Corridor Management Plan (CMP) serves as a guide for the next 10 to 15 years to preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the Mississippi River, to foster economic growth in the corridor and to develop the Great River Road National Scenic Byway as the envisioned parkway.

▲ **ABOVE:** Mill Ruins Park, Minneapolis



Active engagement of Great River Road travelers, the general public, MN-MRPC member agencies, and local agency and organizational partners was vital to developing and informing corridor management plan (CMP) recommendations.

Support and Participation

Active engagement of Great River Road travelers, the general public, MN-MRPC member agencies, and local agency and organizational partners was vital to developing and informing corridor management plan (CMP) recommendations.

Agency and organizational involvement included meeting regularly with the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC), a Project Advisory Team (PAT), and various current and potential partners representing state agencies, local jurisdictions, regional planning organizations, and tribal nations, among others.

Multifaceted and ongoing engagement with those who live, travel, and recreate along the Great River Road corridor occurred throughout the course of the project from summer 2014 through fall 2015. This outreach included a CMP project website, four social media platforms, public open houses, interactive online surveys, and print and online visitor impression surveys. In addition to informing the CMP, engagement developed synergy and buy-in that will facilitate CMP implementation.

Top Themes:

Nature
Recreational Activities

Top Areas of Focus:

Health and Active Living
Facilities Management
Placemaking

215
RIVER
STORIES 

20 KEY STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

87 VISITOR SURVEYS

16 PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETINGS

MN-MRPC MEETINGS **6**

ADVISORY TEAM MEETINGS **7**

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS **4**

132 PARTICIPANTS
12
PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

543 Specific #cantmiss locations

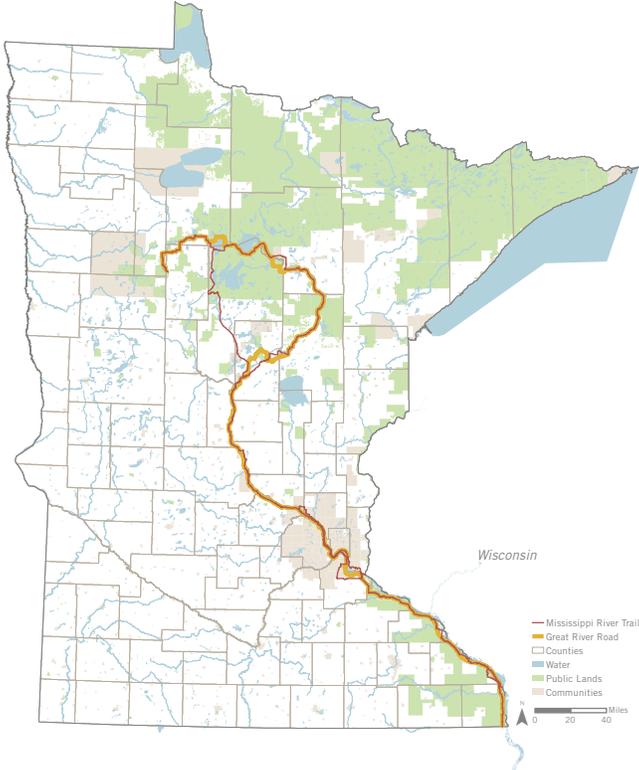
99 RIVER VIEWS IDENTIFIED **533** Online Survey Participants Aged 19-65+



The Corridor

Minnesota’s Great River Road is a National Scenic Byway comprised of 565 miles of federal, state, county, city, park, and forest roads. It begins near the Headwaters in Itasca State Park then follows the Mississippi River downstream to the Iowa border, where it continues through nine other states to its terminus at the Gulf of Mexico. These designated byway roads are generally close to the Mississippi River. In places though, the river landscape of wetlands, farmlands, forests, river bends, and oxbows route the byway away from the river’s edge. Always the byway leads to river places and stories.

The Great River Road corridor infrastructure was inventoried including wayfinding and other signage, crash data, pending and current projects, multimodal transportation options and Mississippi River Trail colocation. In addition, over 700 Great River Road scenic, natural, historic, archaeological, cultural and recreational resources were inventoried to describe and map the many places to experience Minnesota’s Mississippi River.



Great River Road Corridor

The Plan

The CMP includes corridor management themes, goals, objectives, and strategies based on concepts to carry forward from the previous CMP, stakeholder and public input, corridor assessment, and consultant recommendations. These support the mission of the MN-MRPC by recommending ways to develop the road as parkway, to promote, preserve, and enhance the byway’s intrinsic resources, and to foster economic growth over the next 10 - 15 years.

The CMP also includes a MN-MRPC Business Plan with recommendations for: alignment with the National MPRC Strategic Plan; organizational structure and operational sustainability needed for CMP implementation; internal and external education and engagement; facilities management guidance and potential funding sources.

Five themes emerged through the development of Goals, Objectives and Strategies.

Theme	Goals
 <p>Facilities Management</p>	<p>Assure safe travel through route signage, mapping, and traveler information. Maintain the byway as a seamless travel experience that honors the Mississippi River. Provide integrated multimodal travel options (air, rail, boat, vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) so travelers can focus on enjoying the journey.</p>
 <p>Technology</p>	<p>Use technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of byway management and measure the success. Enhance the visitor experience through web-based and mobile-based technology to promote travel experiences with easy-to-use travel information. Use social media to share river exploration insights from travelers and byway managers alike.</p>
 <p>Education and Engagement</p>	<p>Educate byway facility managers, intrinsic resource managers, businesses and residents about the opportunities and benefits of leveraging the Great River Road as a tool to improve the State's and their community's livability and economy. Engage travelers locally and from all over the world to travel here for Mississippi River exploration.</p>
 <p>Placemaking</p>	<p>Strengthen connections between the byway and the people and places that tell the story of the river. Protect, enhance, and promote the intrinsic resources available within and between communities. Develop itineraries that reflect the unique landscapes and activities offered by the Mississippi River as it flows through Minnesota.</p>
 <p>Health and Active Living</p>	<p>Promote active Mississippi River exploration that includes bicycling, walking, hiking, and boating. Promote healthy, local food options. Manage and promote the byway applying geotourism principles that simultaneously sustain place and advance tourism.</p>

Initial Implementation

Four initial CMP implementation projects were identified based on those that would 1) meet the most urgent needs and 2) provide the basis for accomplishing the greatest number of remaining strategies. Initial projects include improving wayshowing signange, developing a Plan Your Trip interactive mapping tool, developing a Plan Your Project interactive mapping tool, and developing Great River Road Ambassadors. The first initial implementation project was prioritized based on the visitor impression survey results, project engagement and complaints made to the MN-MRPC about visitors getting lost while traveling the byway. The latter three initial implementation projects were identified as efficient and sustainable tools that leverage primarily existing MN-MRPC and partner resources and technology.

It is critical to maintain corridor management momentum with such a wide-ranging and complex environment as the Great River Road.

Table ES.1. Summary of Initial Implementation Projects

Project	Timeframe	Responsible
Wayshowing Signage	2016-20, ongoing	MN-MRPC, MnDOT
Plan Your Trip Mapping Tool	2016, ongoing	MN-MRPC, MnDOT, EMT
Plan Your Project Mapping Tool	2016, ongoing	MN-MRPC, MnDOT
GRR Ambassador Development	2016-20, ongoing	MN-MRPC

Implementation of these four projects will help to meet over 40 of the 95 strategies listed in the Plan.

1) WAYSHOWING SIGNAGE

As of May 2015, 54 percent of Great River Road wayshowing signage was field-inventoried as either missing or in need of modifications. Wayshowing signage includes the Pilot’s Wheel and arrow signs that guide byway travelers along the route, turn by turn, in each direction. MN-MRPC and MnDOT, in partnership with city, county and park segment managers, will evaluate what planned maintenance and construction projects can address signs that are missing or need adjustment or replacement. Alternatively, a statewide signing project could address the need holistically and potentially more expeditiously, assuming funding can be identified to address both state and local transportation systems and include wayshowing as an eligible activity.



▲ ABOVE: Great River Road Wayshowing Signage

The Plan Your Trip internet mapping tool can help byway travelers plan their trips and can assist them while they are on their trips with information on destinations, web links and navigation assistance.

2) PLAN YOUR TRIP INTERACTIVE MAPPING TOOL

While getting lost along the Great River Road is the number one complaint, not having a drivable map is the second-ranking complaint received by the MN-MRPC. The Plan Your Trip interactive mapping tool will help byway travelers plan their trips, and will assist them while on those trips by providing to their PC, tablet or phone information on Mississippi River destinations, web links, printable maps and navigation assistance. The Plan Your Trip tool is envisioned as a compilation of available databases, including the CMP inventory of scenic, historic, archaeological, cultural, natural, and recreation resources, multimodal travel options, and the Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail routes.

3) PLAN YOUR PROJECT INTERACTIVE MAPPING TOOL

The Plan Your Project interactive mapping tool is envisioned as a geographic information system (GIS) database that will support MnDOT and city, county and park road management authorities in coordinating a context sensitive approach to planning, design, construction and maintenance efforts along the Great River Road. The byway resource database and prototype interactive map developed during the CMP project will require regular maintenance and periodic updates to provide the most up-to-date resources to road management authorities and assure long-term functionality. The tool will enhance facility management and help coordinate existing and potential multimodal travel options.

4) GREAT RIVER ROAD AMBASSADOR DEVELOPMENT

Great River Road Ambassadors will serve byway traveler needs as informed and welcoming hosts. They can connect river communities by cross-promoting one another thus extending length of stay or increasing revisitation to Minnesota. Ambassadors can serve the byway corridor in a vibrant and sustainable manner. This implementation item involves a wide range of corridor stakeholders including public agencies who manage and promote the byway and its attractions, private businesses who serve byway traveler needs, and non-profits whose work aligns with the goals described in this Plan. The Ambassadors can assist in planning, design, construction and maintenance efforts along the Great River Road, promote the byway's many unique and enriching experiences, and leverage value from the work of the MN-MRPC.



01

INTRODUCTION

This Corridor Management Plan (CMP) specifies strategies for managing Minnesota’s Great River Road National Scenic Byway, a series of roads that celebrate and provide access to the Mississippi River and its many amenities. The CMP includes an assessment of the road; its scenic, historical, recreational, cultural, natural, and archaeological resources; partners who manage it; and the travelers who explore it. The CMP recommends ways to develop the road, to foster economic growth, and to protect, enhance, and promote the byway’s resources during the next 10 - 15 years.

▲ **ABOVE:** As part of the first rounds of Open Houses along the Great River Road, held in July 2014, participants were encouraged to contribute their “6-Word Mississippi River Story.” The resulting postcards were on display, and their content helped inform the CMP.

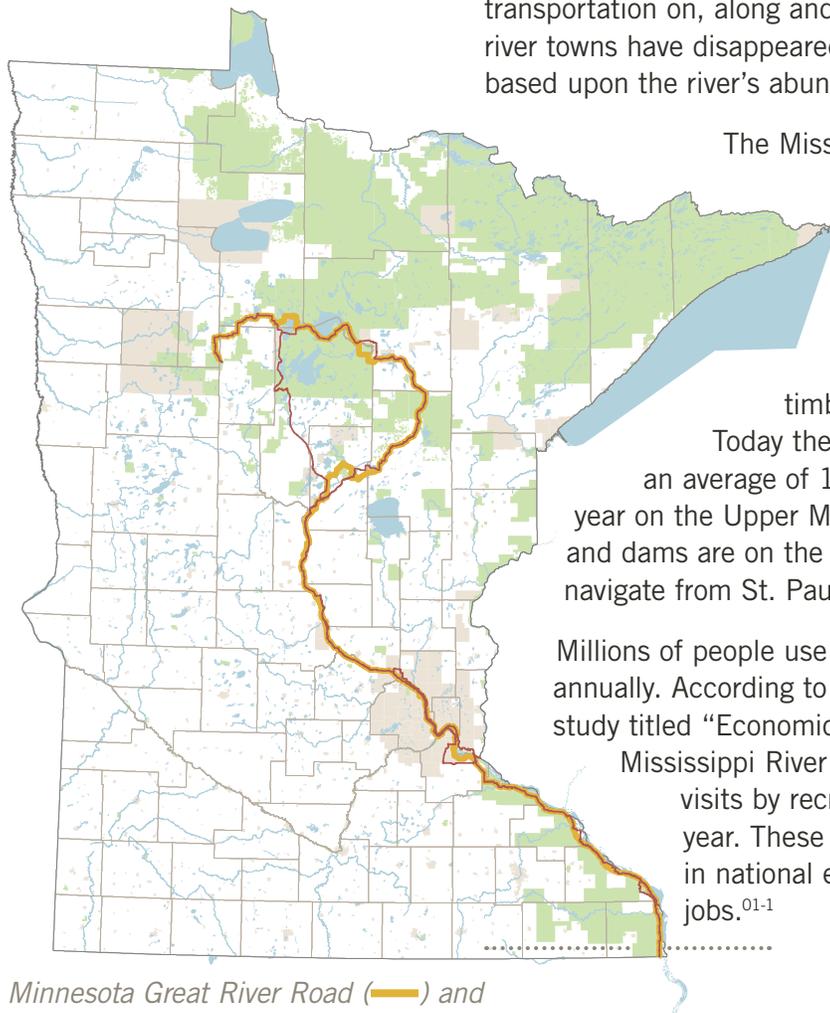


Long, winding, and relentlessly vast, the Mississippi River bisects North America as the continent's longest river. Did you know the Mississippi River captures half of the nation's rainfall? Its watershed drains all or parts of 33 states and two Canadian provinces.

1.1 The Great River

The Great River Road is a ten-state parkway celebrating America's great river: the Mississippi. It tells the river's story and provides access to hundreds of Mississippi River resources. The river has long served as a natural transportation corridor. The Mississippi River has acted, and continues to act, as a source of life for Native American Nations, providing opportunities for canoeing, hunting, fishing, and growing rice. The word Mississippi comes from the Ojibwe word *'misi-zibi'* meaning 'Great River.'

As population grew westward from colonial states, the Mississippi River was a gateway for prospecting pioneers. The river is also a passageway between the northlands and the Gulf of Mexico, and its fertile banks inspired some settlers to set down roots. River towns and cities have grown and shrunk in relation to commerce and transportation on, along and across the Mississippi. Although some river towns have disappeared, today many are reinventing themselves based upon the river's abundant amenities.



The Mississippi River is as important today as a multimodal transportation corridor as it ever has been, providing access to commercial, recreational, and cultural opportunities. Earlier the flowing river provided a fast way to transport goods and people across the country—from timber to coal to steamboat passengers.

Today the Mississippi remains a working river, with an average of 175 million tons of freight shipped each year on the Upper Mississippi. Twenty-eight operating locks and dams are on the Upper Mississippi, allowing ships to navigate from St. Paul, Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico.

Millions of people use the Mississippi River for recreation annually. According to a 1994 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers study titled "Economic Impacts of Recreation on the Upper Mississippi River System," an estimated 12 million daily visits by recreationists took place during the study year. These visits supported more than \$1.2 billion in national economic impacts and more than 18,000 jobs.⁰¹⁻¹

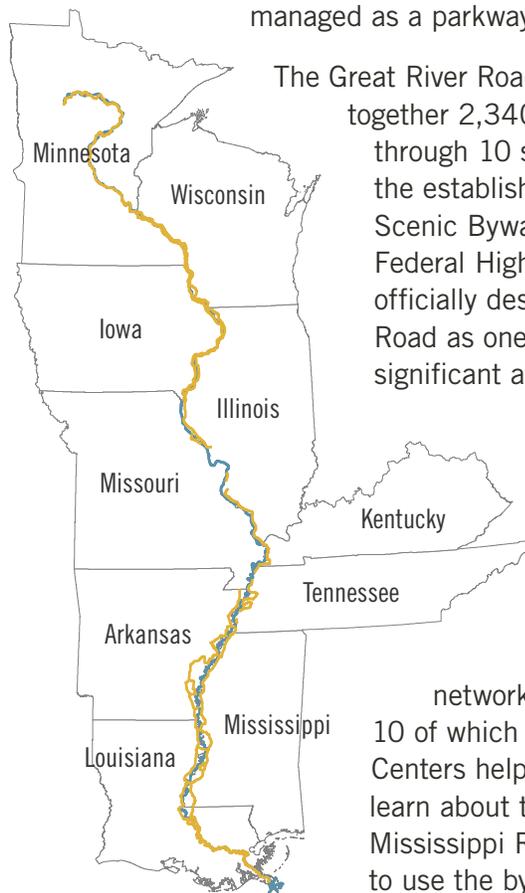
01-1 Executive Summary, Economic Impacts of Recreation on the Upper Mississippi River System, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1994

Minnesota Great River Road (—) and Mississippi River Trail (—)

The river has also made a significant impact on the culture of the United States. Artists have been inspired by the river since the beginning of time, creating art across every medium—from petroglyphs to Henry P. Bosse's photographs and maps to the sounds of the Delta blues to Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The Great River Road highlights vantage points that inspire creativity and lasting memories, such as Minneapolis' Guthrie Theater who's Endless Bridge catilevers directly over the byway.

1.1.1 HISTORY OF THE GREAT RIVER ROAD

In 1938, recognizing the Mississippi River's unique geographic and cultural place in this country and the need to preserve and provide access to its intrinsic resources, Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes initiated the concept of the Great River Road. The Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC) was established in the 10 river states to act as champions of this continuous road corridor managed as a parkway.



10-State Great River Road Corridor

The Great River Road is a signed route knitting together 2,340 miles of existing roads through 10 states. Having inspired the establishment of the National Scenic Byway program itself, the Federal Highway Administration officially designated the Great River Road as one, recognizing its nationally significant archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic resources.

To tell the river's stories and encourage exploration along it the MRPC developed a network of 76 Interpretive Centers, 10 of which are in Minnesota. The Centers help travelers experience and learn about the many facets of the Mississippi River corridor, and how to use the byway as a means of river exploration.

It is estimated that Mississippi River recreational visitors contributed more than an estimated \$1.2 billion in national economic impacts and 18,000 jobs.



▲ **ABOVE:** Wagon Bridge at Winona, 1892, cyanotype taken of the Mississippi River by Henry P. Bosse



1.1.2 THE NATIONAL ROUTE

In 1951, the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) conducted a feasibility study that concluded a Mississippi River parkway would benefit the nation. However, because an entirely new parkway would be too expensive, the BPR recommended that the route consist mostly of existing roads connected and upgraded to a parkway quality.

To develop the Great River Road as parkway the MRPC primarily leveraged federal transportation funds. Use of these funds was focused on a single continuous National Route from the Headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico which zigged and zagged through the ten states. When the National Route was on one side of the river, the other side was designated the State Alternate Route, which, while generally not eligible for Great River Road federal funds, allowed travelers to explore both sides of the river from beginning to end along a signed route. Then and now the Great River Road is managed by state and local agencies in a coordinated, yet independent manner, through the ten-state and each state's MRPC to leverage road, trail, bikeway, scenic overlook, historic preservation, interpretation and marketing projects to benefit byway travelers.

Of the 2,340-mile Great River Road, 565 miles are within the State of Minnesota. Through ten states, the route is marked by the Great River Road's iconic green pilot's wheel and steamboat logo plus signs for both the "National Route" and "State Alternate Route."

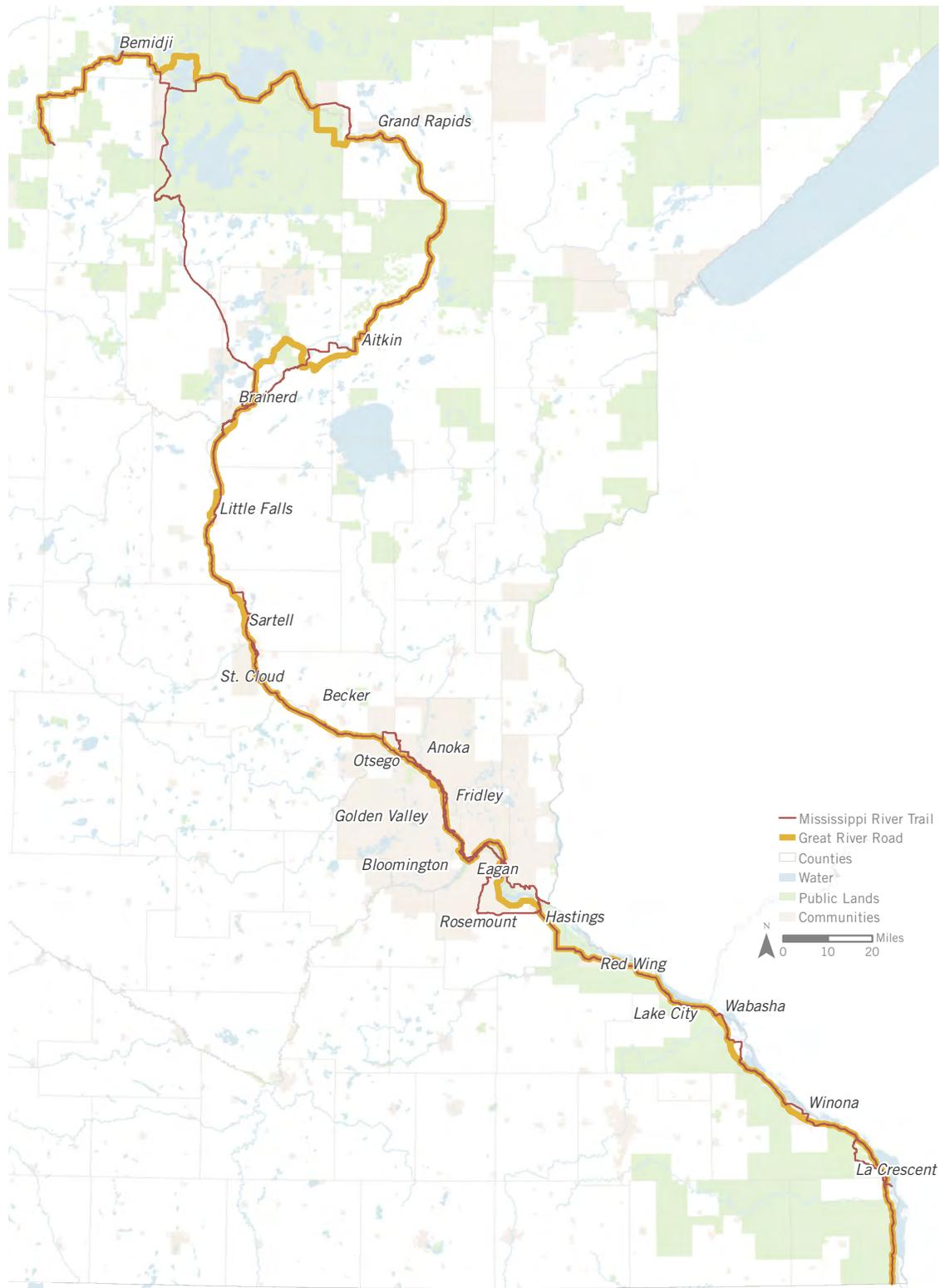
The ten MRPC state tourism agencies also partner on domestic and international marketing through Mississippi River Country, USA.

Mark Twain once commented *"Along the Upper Mississippi every hour brings something new. There are crowds of odd islands, bluffs, prairies, hills, woods and villages—everything one could desire to amuse the children."*

1.1.3 MINNESOTA'S GREAT RIVER ROAD

In 1886 Mark Twain commented ***"Along the Upper Mississippi every hour brings something new. There are crowds of odd islands, bluffs, prairies, hills, woods and villages—everything one could desire to amuse the children."*** Minnesota's Great River Road offers access to and interpretation of these iconic landscapes.

When applying for National Scenic Byway designation in 2000, Minnesota nominated the National Route from the Headwaters to Hastings, plus the State Alternate Route from Hastings to Iowa. This focused management and promotion on a singular route offering the best river experience. Amenities and communities along the State Route not receiving National Scenic Byway designation are still promoted and eligible for byway funding if a project helps implement the CMP and benefits byway travelers.



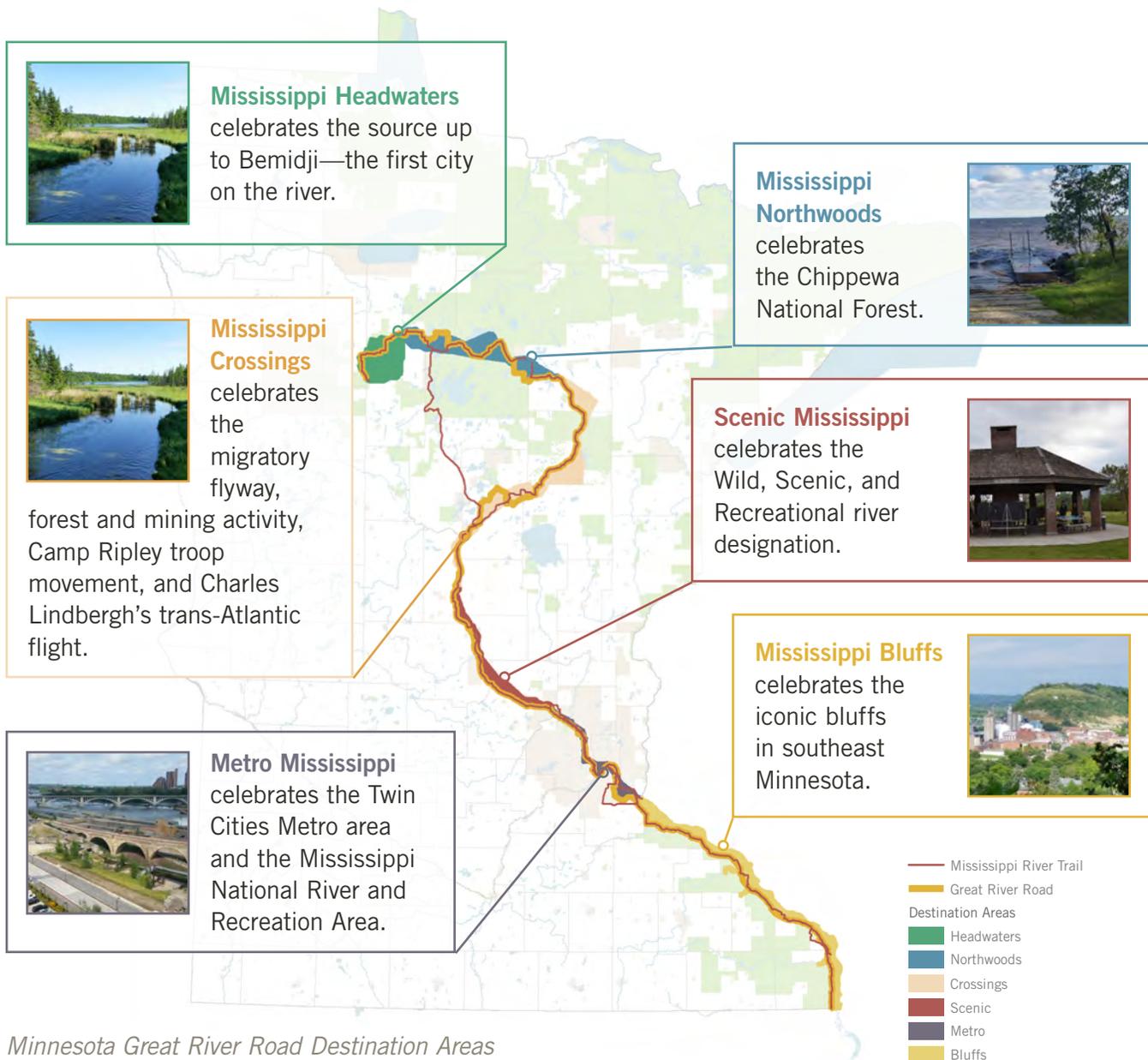
Mississippi River communities



Minnesota's National Scenic Byway designation includes the National Route from the Headwaters to Hastings plus the State Route from Hastings to Iowa in order to focus on the best river experience available.

Minnesota's 565-mile Great River Road is segmented into six unique destination areas, each anchored by communities that can support travelers with hospitality infrastructure while creating the critical mass of interest for smaller communities with river stories to share. The intent is to encourage longer stays or increase revisitation as tourists and residents "collect" enriched river experiences tailored to individual interests within the context of an evolving river landscape.

As first described in MnDOT's 2000 Great River Road CMP, Minnesota's Mississippi River Trail (MRT) is located on the byway's



Minnesota Great River Road Destination Areas

shoulders for much of its length where the MRT is along the river. Designating and signing the MRT implements a long-held principle that the Great River Road accommodate bicyclists. Signed in 2015, Minnesota's MRT is over 800 miles and also includes segments of the Paul Bunyan, Migizi, and Heartland State Trails, regional and local trails, and is in places on both sides of the river.

1.1.3.1 MINNESOTA MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION — CHAMPIONS AND STEWARDS OF THE GREAT RIVER ROAD

In 1963 the Minnesota Legislature established the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC) in statute as part of the larger 10-state MRPC. Five members are appointed by Commissioners of the Departments of Transportation, Natural Resources, and Agriculture; the Directors of Explore Minnesota Tourism and the Minnesota Historical Society; two members are appointed by House of Representatives leadership and two members by Senate leadership; 5 are elected by regional citizen committees; and an At-Large member is appointed by the Commission itself.

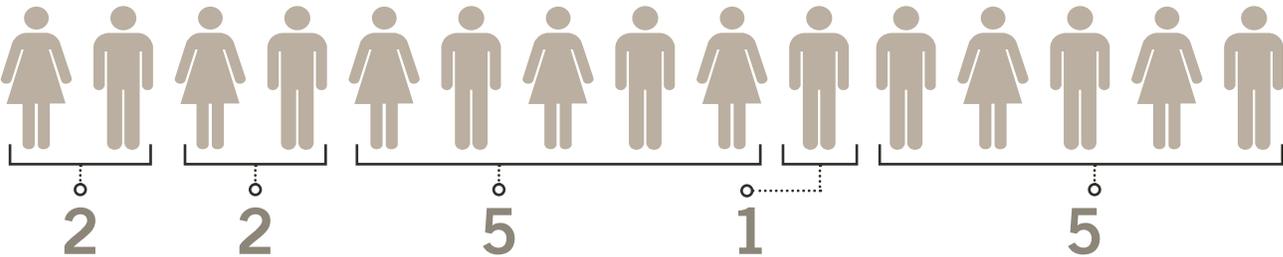
The MN-MRPC is comprised of these 15 voting members, plus non-voting technical members from the agencies and the National Park Service Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. The Commission's work is supported by the MN-MRPC Director, as well as the Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC) which provides administrative and fiscal support. The Commission's current expiration date is June 30, 2020.



▲ **ABOVE:** Roadside Storybook and 10-state Network of Interpretive Center Panels at Mary Gibbs Headwaters Center, Itasca State Park

The MN-MRPC was legislatively established in statute in 1963 as part of the larger 10-state MRPC.

Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission Organization Chart



2 members of the Minnesota Senate
 2 members of the Minnesota House of Representatives
 5 one from each of the five geographic segments of the Great River Road
 1 at-large appointed by MN-MRPC appointed commissioners
 5 one each from the Minnesota Departments of Transportation, Natural Resources, and Agriculture. Minnesota Historical Society, and Explore Minnesota Tourism

Technical: Transportation, Natural Resources, Historical Society, Explore Minnesota Tourism and National Park Service

Mn-MRPC Staff
 LCC Administrative and Fiscal Support

Minnesota Statute 161.1419 Mississippi River Parkway Commission, states in part:

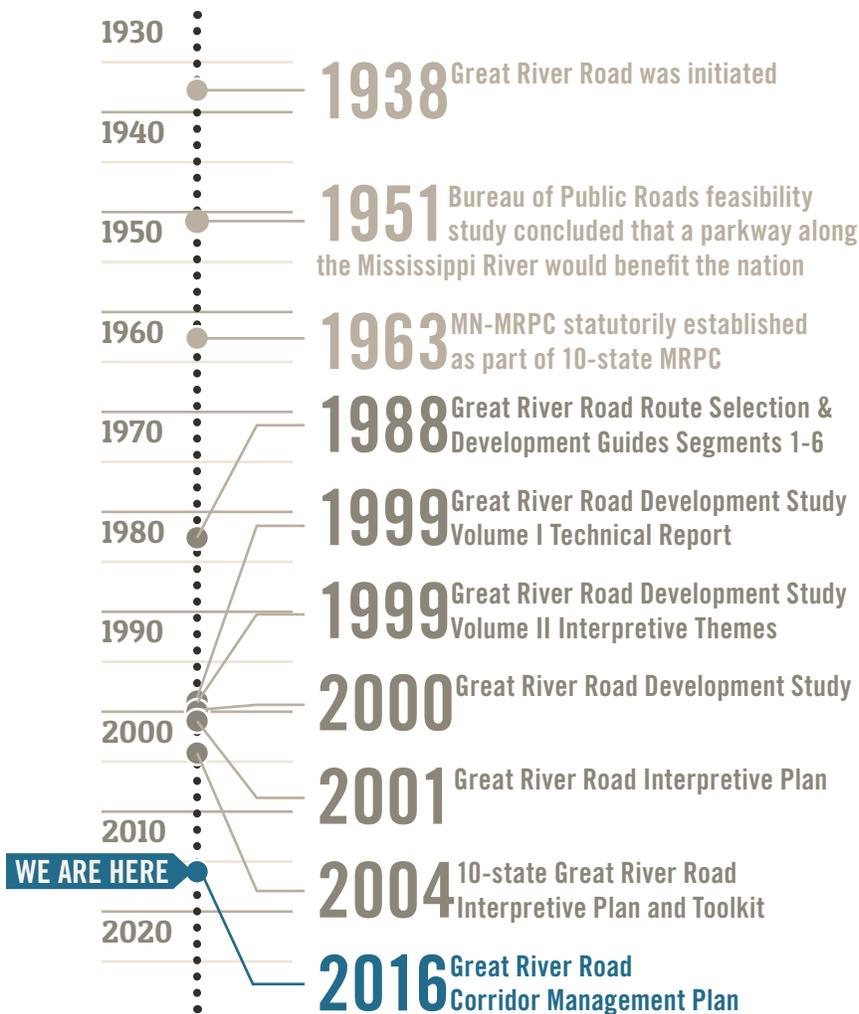
Subdivision 1. Policy: *It is declared to be the policy of the state and to be in the best public interest for the promotion of the public safety, recreation, travel, trade, and the general welfare of the people to cooperate with the federal government and with the interstate Mississippi River Parkway Planning Commission. To carry out such policy and to aid in the promotion and securement of a scenic parkway and highway for the state of Minnesota and to aid in securing the location of federal parks within Minnesota, a Mississippi River Parkway Commission is created. Such a commission shall also work toward planning, construction, maintenance, and improvement of the Great River Road or Mississippi River Parkway, which is to follow generally the course of the Mississippi River and extend from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.*

MN-MRPC Commissioner and Regional Commissioner Responsibilities

MN-MRPC Commissioner Responsibilities	Regional Commissioner Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enact the mission of the MRPC at national, state, and local levels, serving as liaison between the Commission and the state agency or region they represent To participate in four meetings of the MN-MRPC annually To participate, as schedule and funding allows, in National MRPC meetings and to serve on National Standing Committees as appointed by the MN-MRPC Chair To actively support special events related to the Mississippi River and/or Great River Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable their Regional Citizen Committee and regional stakeholders to maximize the benefits of the Great River Road To act as liaison between the MRPC/MN-MRPC and the regional Great River Road citizen committee from which he/she is appointed To foster partnerships and cooperation within their region, harnessing local resources to implement the mission To coordinate meetings and lead implementation of CMP strategies through their Regional Citizen Committee

Appointed Technical Member Responsibilities

Appointed Technical Member Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enact the mission of the MRPC at national, state and local levels To participate in four meetings of the MN-MRPC annually, and sub-committee meetings as assigned To participate, as schedule and funding allow, in National MRPC meetings and to serve on National Standing Committees as appointed by the MN-MRPC Chair To actively support special events related to the Mississippi River and/or Great River Road To enable their state agency stakeholders to maximize the benefits of the Great River Road To act as liaison between the MRPC/MN-MRPC and the state agency from which he/she is appointed To foster partnerships and cooperation within their state agency, harnessing resources to implement the mission in general and CMP strategies specifically



Timeline of Minnesota Great River Road including milestones and previous plans and studies

Minnesota Statute 161.142 Great River Road, states in part:

Subdivision 2. Location; construction; improvement; maintenance; acquisition of land: *The commissioner of transportation shall establish and locate the route or routes of the Great River Road and shall thereafter construct, reconstruct, improve and may maintain same. The commissioner may acquire by purchase, gift or eminent domain proceedings, in fee or such lesser estate as the commissioner may determine, all lands and properties needed in laying out, establishing, constructing, reconstructing, and improving the Great River Road in Minnesota.*



▲ **ABOVE:** Lock and Dam No. 7 near La Crescent

1.1.3.2 MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – MANAGERS OF THE GREAT RIVER ROAD

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) serves as the statutory manager of the transportation infrastructure that comprises the byway. MnDOT also serves as statutory manager of the MRT. Fulfilling this responsibility is accomplished through cooperation with other state and federal departments, political subdivisions, as well as the MN-MRPC and ten-state MRPC. With approximately 40% of the byway on the Minnesota Trunk Highway system, managing the location, construction, improvement and maintenance of the Great River Road is a multi-agency partnership involving 43 cities, 20 counties, three tribes and several federal agencies whose transportation facilities are designated a part of the byway by local resolution. The work is lead by MnDOT's Office of Environmental Stewardship, and is supported by many MnDOT functional areas and 5 of 8 MnDOT Districts.

Fulfilling this responsibility can help implement MnDOT's 50-year MinnesotaGO vision, embodies context sensitive solutions principles and Complete Streets policy and adds value to existing roads.

1.1.4 FEDERAL PROGRAM SUPPORT

This CMP is intended to guide corridor management for the next 10 to 15 years, and so anticipates future technical and financial support for plan implementation.

Beginning in 1938 federal and state transportation funds supported Great River Road planning, initial wayshowing signage, route and amenity development, interpretation and byway marketing. In the 1970's and 80's the Federal transportation bill included a category specifically for the 10 river states to further plan and develop the Great River Road and its amenities. Local match funds and technical support were provided by transportation, tourism, natural resource, and historic agencies.

In 1991 Congress passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act which included creation of the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byway Program, which was well used by the MN-MRPC and their local, state and federal partners to support further byway project planning and development.

In 2012 Congress passed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) which eliminated National Scenic Byway grants and closed the America's Byways Resource Center,

but sustained the program and route designations. While the remaining MAP-21 funding programs can address many road and trail construction needs, key byway activities such as corridor management planning, system wayshowing, interpretation, marketing and visitor centers are no longer eligible. This change dictates the need to identify other means to sustain the byway.

In December 2015 the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, a five-year transportation bill, was signed into law. FAST retains much of MAP-21’s structure and project eligibility. However, FAST establishes a new National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure, noting “1 out of every 9 jobs in the United States depends on travel and tourism, and the industry supports 15,000,000 jobs in the United States,” is broadly distributed across the nation, is our single largest export industry, and generates nearly \$2.100,000,000,000 in annual economic output. Like the findings of this CMP, FAST recognizes “the United States intermodal transportation network facilitates the large-scale movement of business and leisure travelers, and is the most important asset of the travel industry.” It calls for the development of a National Travel and Tourism Infrastructure Strategic Plan not later than 3 years after FAST enactment.

1.1.5 2016 CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT VISION

- Minnesota byway travelers benefit by cooperatively managing a multimodal transportation corridor where river ecology, economic sustainability and community livability are priorities.
- Byway travelers enjoy preserved and enhanced intrinsic resources within a working river corridor, and will take home engaging stories that attract others to explore our Mississippi.
- Technologically-savvy travelers and byway managers are engaged by offering online and mobile trip and project planning tools.
- Active lifestyles are promoted with more and better-coordinated transportation choices to get travelers closer to and on the river and in its natural environment for enhanced byway experiences.
- MN-MRPC and partner efforts that benefit the byway traveler are supported and coordinated—including new partnerships with three Native American tribes—so byway managers and partners have resources to implement this CMP.

This CMP includes strategies to continue to protect, enhance, develop and promote the byway through existing and new partnerships and funding sources.

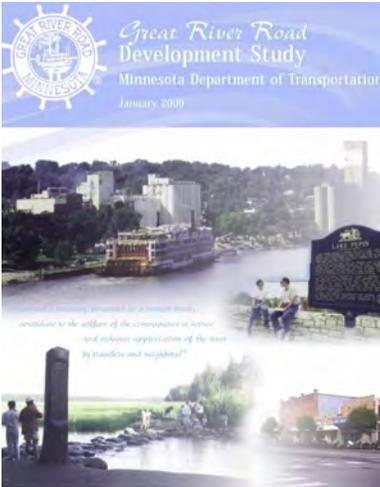


▲ ABOVE: Morrison County Courthouse, Little Falls



▲ ABOVE: Mississippi Crossings Destination Area open house participant





▲ ABOVE: 2000 CMP cover

1.2 Corridor Management Plan

1.2.1 ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 2000 CMP

The previous CMP, the Great River Road Development Study, was adopted in 2000. Since then, the MN-MRPC, MnDOT, and other partnering agencies have accomplished the following:

CMP Accomplishment	Details
Shortened Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused marketing and development on a single Great River Road route that best highlights the river • Achieved National Scenic Byway designation
Destination Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed six Mississippi River Destination Areas for improved organizational structure, targeted marketing campaigns and increased revisitation
Byway Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requested the Minnesota Scenic Byways Commission designate eligible gapped communities and segments to allow byway funding along the entire route and protect the byway’s scenic quality • Worked with “gapped” communities to gain designation which required off-premise outdoor advertising (billboard) control by ordinance
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed Destination Area tourism marketing and hospitality training • Developed Great River Road travel booth, Exploration Guide, 7 videos and 6 map tablets - all featuring the Destination Areas • Presented at Explore Minnesota tourism group travel conferences
MN-MRPC Statute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added Regional Commissioners and Regional Citizen Committees • Amended statute to allow non-traditional funds to be received and spent

Accomplishments of the 2000 CMP continued

CMP Accomplishment	Details
Capital Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified highway and amenity project needs • Secured funds and implemented 12 roadside historic property site restorations • Developed engineering estimates to restore seven more sites along the byway • Participated in river bridge and road project scoping and design teams • Designated and signed the Mississippi River Trail bicycle route
Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed 2001 Minnesota Great River Road Interpretive Plan • Implemented “Roadside Storybook” interpretive kiosk project in several byway counties • Developed 2004 Great River Road Interpretive Plan and Toolkit for the 10 states • Designated 10 Minnesota Great River Road Interpretive Centers as a part of the 10-state network of interpretive centers
Route Adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed National Scenic Byway route • Adjusted route in Brainerd, Little Falls and Otsego • Recommended route adjustments in St. Cloud, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and Hastings
Minnesota Great River Road Brochure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a travel planner for Minnesota’s portion of the Great River Road
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed CapX2020 permitting, silica sand toolkit, and Mississippi River Area Critical Area rules update



▲ **ABOVE:** Mississippi Bluffs destination area interpretive kiosks





▲ ABOVE: Soo Line Bridge, Palisade

1.2.2 SCOPE OF WORK

To support this CMP's mission to preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the Mississippi River, to foster economic growth in the corridor and to develop the national, scenic and historic byway known as the Great River Road, the project reached out to current and potential stakeholders, the general public and tourists. Public input plus an extensive assessment of byway infrastructure and operations helped to develop the plan. In its entirety, this CMP carries forward the accomplishments of the 2000 CMP and recommends new goals and strategies with specific actions and responsibilities for success over the next ten to fifteen years. Below is a summary of CMP chapters.



Chapter 02—Support and Participation documents the advice received from the MN-MRPC, MnDOT, the Project Advisory Team, two rounds of open houses, draft plan presentations, and online engagement.



Chapter 03—The Corridor describes the Minnesota segment of the Great River Road, its ten-state context, its National Scenic Byway qualities, how it presents the Mississippi River as its focal point, and how the intrinsic resources, wayshowing, and multimodal facilities along the route are incorporated into the byway experience to meet visitor needs. Chapter 03 includes:

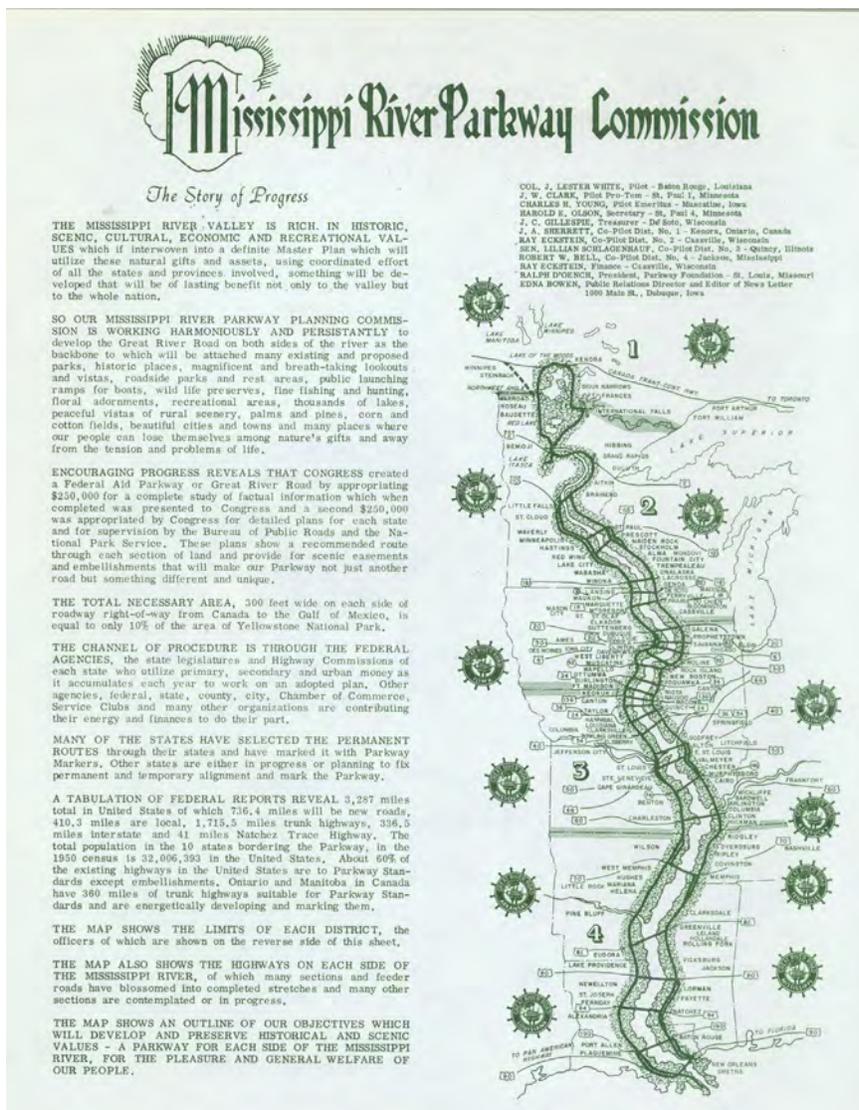
- Route Assessment
- Visitor Impressions
- Intrinsic Resource Assessment
 - ▶ Visual Resource Protection Plan
- Wayshowing Sign Inventory
- Alternative Transportation Plan



Chapter 04—The Plan includes themes, goals, objectives and strategies that provide direction for corridor management over the next ten to fifteen years. It also includes a business plan for the MN-MRPC, and recommendations for internal and external education and engagement, and a facilities management section.

05

Chapter 05–Initial Implementation addresses how the MN-MRPC and MnDOT can address urgent needs and develop tools to reach corridor management goals through the implementation of four initial projects.



This CMP honors past Great River Road guidance such as the 1963 MRPC Story of Progress



▲ ABOVE: Visual resource assessment in action



▲ ABOVE: Sign inventory





02

SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION

Active engagement of Great River Road travelers, the general public, MN-MRPC and member agency leadership and staff, tribal and local agencies, and current and potential partners was vital to developing and informing Corridor Management Plan (CMP) recommendations. This chapter summarizes the process and techniques for engagement including the project schedule, audiences reached, activities, and the results which directly informed plan development.

- ▲ **ABOVE:** Engagement with the general public—those who live, travel, work and play along the Great River Road corridor—was multifaceted and ongoing from summer 2014 until fall 2015.



Table 2.0.1 Great River Road CMP Engagement, Rounds 1, 2 & 3

	Destination Area	Date/Time	Open House Location	Attendance
ROUND 1	Metro	July 21, 2014, 4–6 PM	Boom Island, Minneapolis, MN	11
	Scenic	July 23, 2014, 4–6 PM	Riverside Park, St. Cloud, MN	23
	Bluffs	July 24, 2014, 3:30–5:30 PM	MN Marine Art Museum, Winona, MN	10
	Headwaters	July 28, 2014, 4–6 PM	Diamond Point Park, Bemidji, MN	20
	Northwoods	July 29, 2014, 4–6 PM	KAXE Bandshell, Grand Rapids, MN	10
	Crossings	July 30, 2014, 4–6 PM	Lum Park, Brainerd, MN	11
Interactive Online Survey: Available from July 15, 2014 to October 15, 2014				

	Destination Area	Date/Time	Open House Location	Attendance
ROUND 2	Scenic	May 5, 2015, 4 – 6 PM	Kiwanis Park, Little Falls, MN	9
	Metro	May 6, 2015, 4 – 6 PM	Harriet Island–Kelly’s Landing, St. Paul, MN	9
	Bluffs	May 7, 2015, 4 – 6 PM	Levee Park/Depot, Red Wing, MN	13
	Headwaters	May 19, 2015, 4 – 6 PM	Sanford Center, Bemidji, MN	7
	Crossings	May 20, 2015, 4 – 6 PM	Northland Arboretum, Brainerd, MN	3
	Northwoods	May 21, 2015, 4 – 6 PM	Grand Rapids Library, Grand Rapids, MN	6
Interactive Online Survey: Available from April 21, 2015 to July 18, 2015				

Stakeholder Meetings:

Explore Minnesota Tourism.....	Oct 9	Leech Lake Band Of Ojibwe.....	Jan 9
MN Department Of Agriculture.....	Nov 17	MnDOT Planning Management Group.....	Jan 14
MN Historical Society	Nov 24	Department Of Health/University Of MN ..	Jan 22
MN Department Of Natural Resources	Dec 15	Prairie Island Indian Community.....	Jan 28
White Earth Nation	Jan 8	MnDOT All-Planners Workshop.....	Feb 4

	Invited Stakeholders	Stakeholder Meetings	
ROUND 3	Local elected officials	Mill City Museum, Minneapolis.....	Sept 28
	Local agency staff (counties, cities, MPOs, RDCs, etc.) – Engineers, planners, economic development directors, active living managers, etc.)	Lake City, City Hall	Sept 29
	MN-MRPC member agencies	Heartwood Conference Center, Crosby ...	Sept 30
	Other state agencies	Forest History Center, Grand Rapids	Oct 1
	PAT members	Online meeting option	Oct 2
	Local CVBs and tourism organizations		
	Tribal elected officials and staff		
	National MRPC and Wisconsin MRPC		

2.1 Agency and Stakeholder Involvement

Agency and organizational involvement included meeting regularly with the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC), a Project Advisory Team (PAT), and various other partner groups representing state agencies, local jurisdictions, regional planning organizations, tribal nations, ten-state MRPC, and others.

Multifaceted, ongoing engagement with the general public occurred throughout the course of the project, from summer 2014 until fall 2015. These involvement efforts included a CMP project website, four social media platforms, public open houses, interactive online surveys, as well as print and online visitor impression surveys.



▲ ABOVE: Round 1 Open House, Bemidji

2.1.1 MINNESOTA MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION

Per Minnesota Statute 161.1419 the MN-MRPC currently has 15 voting members including Minnesota state legislators; appointees from the Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Transportation, Tourism, and Historical Society; and five citizen representatives. The National Park Service is an exofficio member.

The MN-MRPC quarterly meetings included CMP team presentations during the project. Three CMP workshops were held prior to the quarterly meetings to review project progress; inform planned tasks; confirm, refine or reject draft corridor management strategies; confirm alignment with agency, legislative and regional issues and opportunities; and identify resources and schedules for plan implementation. Some members participated in open houses and PAT meetings, as well as hosted the agency stakeholder meetings. MN-MRPC also featured the CMP when they hosted the 2015 Semi-Annual MRPC meeting in St. Cloud and received ten-state advice.



▲ ABOVE: MN-MRPC meeting

Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (15 voting members)



Table 2.1.1.1 2015 Commission Members Participating in CMP Development

2015 Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission Membership			
Member	Member Organization/Role	Member	Member Organization/Role
Representative Sheldon Johnson	MN-MRPC Chair; Minnesota House, DFL-District 67B	Open	Minnesota House of Representatives
Sheronne Mulry	MN-MRPC Vice Chair; Hastings to Iowa Border Region	Keith Parker	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Mark Anderson	MN-MRPC Secretary and Treasurer; Member at-Large	Cordelia Pierson	Elk River to Hastings Region
Scott Bradley	Minnesota Department of Transportation	Nancy Salminen	Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids Region
Paul Hugunin	Minnesota Department of Agriculture	Karl Samp	Brainerd to Elk River Region
Adam Johnson	Explore Minnesota Tourism	Senator David Senjem	Minnesota Senate, R-District 25
Andrea Kajer	Minnesota Historical Society	Senator Patricia Torres Ray	Minnesota Senate, DFL-District 63
Anne Lewis	Grand Rapids to Brainerd Region		

2015 Technical Advisors

Member	Member Organization
John Anfinson	Mississippi National River and Recreation Area/ National Park Service
Bill Von Bank	Explore Minnesota Tourism
David Kelliher	Minnesota Historical Society
Cynthia Wheeler & Regina Bonsignore	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Carol Zoff, Great River Road Program Manager	Minnesota Department of Transportation

2015 Administrative and Fiscal Support

Member	Member Organization
Chris Miller, MN-MRPC Director	Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Greg Hubinger	Minnesota Legislative Coordinating Commission
Diane Henry-Wangenstein	Minnesota Legislative Coordinating Commission



2.1.2 MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

According to Minnesota Statute 161.142, *“the commissioner of transportation shall establish and locate the route or routes of the Great River Road and shall thereafter construct, reconstruct, improve, and may maintain same.”* In addition Minnesota Statute 161.1419 states *“the commissioner of transportation shall designate one employee of the Department of Transportation who is an engineer or who has engineering experience... who shall advise with and assist the commission in carrying out its functions and duties”*

As with much prior Great River Road planning and design work, the 2000 CMP was funded and managed by MnDOT. For this CMP, MnDOT’s Great River Road program manager serves as the strategic and technical project manager.

To assure alignment of this CMP with MnDOT’s Great River Road statutory responsibility and statewide transportation system management, internal MnDOT project coordination included:

Table 2.1.2.1 Internal MnDOT Project Coordination

Coordination Item	Description
Project RFP development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included State Aid, bike/ped, GIS, communications, and environmental stewardship participation
Presentation to MnDOT Commissioner Zelle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed scope, approach, and goals are aligned with MnDOT
Conflict Scoping Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two sets of meetings with Districts 1, 2, 3, Metro, and 6, and division directors to identify potential conflicts and address them
MnDOT Planning Managers Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation to coordinate with statewide transportation planning
MnDOT All Planners Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual workshop general session and four breakouts featuring assigned role-playing representing intrinsic resource managers, tourists, and residents
MnDOT contracted with Regional Development Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated 17 other Minnesota Byway Corridor Management Plans and for the Great River Road developed a byway activities investment summary and an implementation resource summary
MnDOT GIS management staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMP GIS product coordination and implementation planning
MnDOT Mississippi River Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corridor management coordination; statewide signing project funds, local coordination and procurement; and 14 MRT kiosk panels
MnDOT Bicycle System Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail system coordination
MnDOT Tribal Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with White Earth Nation, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and Prairie Island Indian Community

The 2000 CMP was funded and managed by MnDOT. For this CMP MnDOT’s Great River Road program manager serves as the strategic and technical project manager.



The PAT was convened to solicit input from agencies and organizations not directly represented on the MN-MRPC, build CMP support, and develop partnerships for plan implementation.

2.1.3 PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM (PAT)

The PAT was convened to solicit input from potential and existing partner agencies and organizations. The PAT met every other month and had several key functions and duties to ensure the development of a comprehensive and implementable CMP:

- Provide scope, outreach, outcome, partnership, and implementation advice
- Confirm the stakeholder and public involvement process
- Help promote outreach events
- Project outreach to and feedback from their organization
- Inform corridor management strategies, schedule and implementation resources
- Confirm their organization's alignment with plan components

Table 2.1.3.1 Project Advisory Team Composition

2014–2015 Project Advisory Team			
Member	Member Organization	Member	Member Organization
John Anfinson	National Park Service (MNRRA)	Ann Long-Voelkner	U.S. Forest Service - Chippewa National Forest
Art Chase	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	Bob Miller	National Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Amber Dallman	Minnesota Department of Health	Michael Neusser	White Earth Nation
Ed Fairbanks	MnDOT - Tribal Liaison	Susan Schmidt	The Trust for Public Land
Anne Finn	League of Minnesota Cities - Intergovernmental Relations	Ingrid Schneider	University of Minnesota Extension Service
Gabe Miller	Prairie Island Indian Community	Jon Sobiech	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District
Andrew Horton	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Tim Terrill	Mississippi Headwaters Board
Jim Jones	Indian Affairs Council	Randy Thoreson	National Park Service

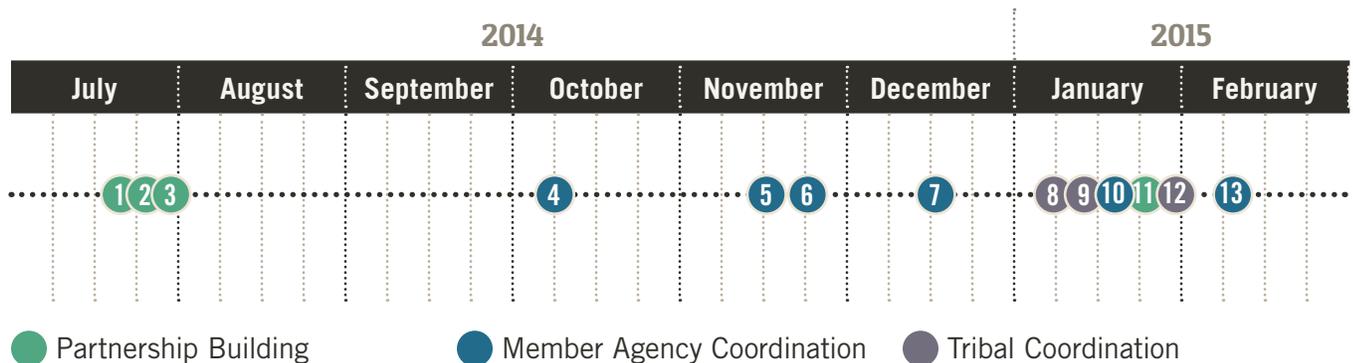
PAT stakeholders represent a diverse range of interests related to the corridor.

2.1.4 MEMBER AGENCY AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the PAT representative agencies and officials helping to guide the CMP process, a set of key MN-MRPC member agency and organizational partners were identified in collaboration with the PAT. The current and future partners represent a diverse range of interests related to the corridor including transportation, planning, tourism, historical, natural, tribal, education and health. The project team met with each of the groups shown in **Table 2.1.4.1**.

Table 2.1.4.1 Engagement Meetings

Member Agency and Partner Engagement Meetings			
	Member Agency	Purpose	Date
1	St. Cloud Area Planning Organization	Partnership Building	July 23, 2014
2	Headwaters Regional Development Commission	Partnership Building	July 28, 2014
3	Arrowhead Regional Development Commission	Partnership Building	July 29, 2014
4	Explore Minnesota Tourism	Member Agency Coordination	October 9, 2014
5	Minnesota Department of Agriculture	Member Agency Coordination	November 17, 2014
6	Minnesota Historical Society	Member Agency Coordination	November 24, 2014
7	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Member Agency Coordination	December 15, 2014
8	White Earth Nation	Tribal Coordination	January 8, 2015
9	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	Tribal Coordination	January 9, 2015
10	MnDOT Planning Managers Group	Member Agency Coordination	January 14, 2015
11	University of Minnesota Extension/Minnesota Department of Health	Partnership Building	January 22, 2015
12	Prairie Island Indian Community	Tribal Coordination	January 28, 2015
13	MnDOT All Planners Workshop	Member Agency Coordination	February 4, 2015



Meetings held with regional planning organizations in the corridor were initiated by the desire to coordinate byway management with local and regional planning. Representatives shared local priorities, current activities, future plans, and how their organizations work. They also learned about the CMP process, byway corridor management and discussed how some of their current initiatives and activities may complement the byway and vice versa.



The partner coordination meetings were more focused in on how agencies currently partner and how opportunities for collaboration can be expanded moving forward.

The MN-MRPC member and partner coordination meetings focused on how agencies currently partner and how opportunities for collaboration can be expanded moving forward. Discussion included:

- Current focus of partner and MN-MRPC member agencies
- Existing plans and projects and how these can or could address scenic byways, tourism, and intrinsic resources
- Suggestions on how to maximize integration of the CMP in agency activities
- How efforts of each partner and MN-MRPC agency can be coordinated and leveraged more effectively
- Measures each agency uses in decision making that could help show the benefit of Great River Road management and investment
- Other planning or return on investment data available
- Agency resources that can be applied to CMP implementation

Comments and suggestions gathered from these partners directly informed development of the overall CMP.

Comments and advice gathered from these meetings directly informed development of the overall CMP. A number of agencies offered opportunities that could be used to cross-promote activities and amenities including:

- Coordinating website, interactive mapping and social media
- Great River Road Ambassador Development for front-line staff at agency facilities to better serve the public and the program
- Coordinate printed material for agency cross-promotion
- Leverage resources and funding
- Develop consistent and coordinated mapping tools across state agencies
- Measure and promote economic benefits of the Great River Road
- Promoting multimodal transportation (driving, biking, walking, boating, air, transit, etc.)
- Meetings with tribal nations revealed opportunities to improve the health of their members; develop safe places to bike and walk; tell tribal nation stories; share their cultures and languages; and do the above without infringing negatively upon tribal resources, economies (e.g., wild rice, fish, game) and traditions.

2.1.5 DRAFT PLAN REVIEW MEETINGS

In fall 2015, the draft plan was shared with partner agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions. Four meetings co-hosted by state agencies and the MN-MRPC in signature locations in the corridor offered opportunities to communicate and collect input on how agencies can use the CMP to protect, promote, and enhance the Great River Road, its resources, and the communities along the corridor. In addition an online meeting was held and recorded for those unable to attend the in-person meeting. This key effort set the stage for ownership and partnership in plan implementation.

2.1.5.1 ROUND 3: INVITED STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Invitees

- Local elected officials
- Local agency staff (counties, cities, MPOs, RDCs, etc.)
 - ▶ Engineers, planners, economic development directors, active living managers, etc.
- MN-MRPC member agencies
- Other state agencies
- PAT members
- Local CVBs and tourism organizations
- Tribal elected officials and staff
- National MRPC and Wisconsin MRPC

Locations and Dates

- See Table 2.0.1 for a detailed listing

Meetings with tribal nations revealed a strong desire to improve the health of their members and the importance of safe places to bike and walk.



▲ ABOVE: Round 2 Open House, Grand Rapids





Top Favorite Places Nominated at Round 1 Open Houses and On-line



▲ **ABOVE:** Round 1 open house in the Scenic Mississippi Destination Area

2.2 Public Involvement

In addition to relevant agencies and organizational stakeholders, the general public was actively involved in the development of the CMP. This chapter summarizes the in-person and online forums through which the public could provide comments and suggestions, as well as some of the results from those efforts.

2.2.1 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

2.2.1.1 ROUND 1

In July 2014, six open houses—one in each Destination Area—introduced and solicited input on the Great River Road CMP process. For this first round, each two-hour-long meeting was conducted in an open house (i.e., come and go) format outdoors at a riverside location. Materials included display boards and five interactive stations where participants could learn about the project and provide input on key themes, favorite places, and “Mississippi River stories.” Project staff, consultant staff, and members of the MN-MRPC were available to guide activities and answer questions. The purpose of the first round of open houses was to:

- Generate awareness of the Great River Road and excitement for planning its future management
- Explain what the Great River Road is, where it goes, and why its local, state, federal, private, and public partnerships are critical
- Explain what a CMP is, what this one will do, and what has been accomplished with the previous plan
- Identify values, needs, and desires along the corridor by asking:
 - ▶ What travel experiences do you value along the Great River Road?
 - ▶ What resources and byway activities should be featured in the CMP?
 - ▶ In six words, why is the Mississippi River important to you?
 - ▶ Where should Mississippi River Trail information kiosks be located?

More than 80 people attended the open houses in Minneapolis, St. Cloud, Winona, Bemidji, Grand Rapids, and Brainerd. The three highest ranked themes on which focus the development of the CMP were recreational activities, nature, and history.

2.2.1.2 ROUND 2

In May 2015, six open houses were held, focusing on CMP strategy development, favorite views, and multimodal resource needs.

The two-hour-long, open-house-format meetings included display boards and five interactive stations where participants could review project progress, provide input on and prioritize themes and strategies, and identify favorite views and multimodal resource needs. Project staff, consultant staff, and members of the MN-MRPC were available to guide activities and answer questions. The purpose of the second round of open houses was to:

- Provide updates on the CMP process by sharing:
 - ▶ What has been accomplished since the first round of outreach
 - ▶ Field team observations
 - ▶ Analysis of missing (22%) and non-standard/worn (32%) Great River Road pilot's wheel wayshowing signs and assemblies
 - ▶ Intrinsic resource summary by type and Destination Area
- Share draft goals and strategies and seek public input by asking:
 - ▶ Are there any goals/strategies missing?
 - ▶ What should be accomplished in the short-, mid-, and long-term planning horizons?
- Gain input on areas for improvement along the corridor by asking:
 - ▶ What multimodal improvements are needed along the route in each Destination Area?
 - ▶ What river views should be protected, enhanced, and promoted into the future?



Location Of Round 1 Open Houses



Location of Round 2 Open Houses

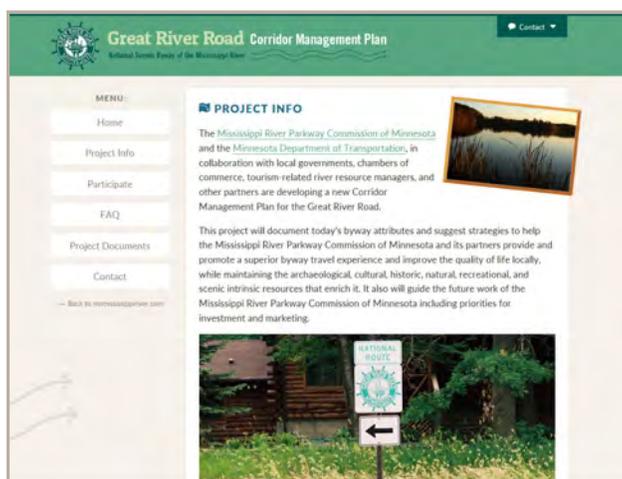


Prior to each open house, draft visual resource protection view assessment processes were field tested by convention and visitor bureau staff and regional commissioners at key river views.

Nearly 50 people attended the open houses held in Little Falls, Saint Paul, Red Wing, Bemidji, Brainerd, and Grand Rapids. Placemaking, education and engagement, and health and active living were the top ranked themes.

Prior to each open house, draft visual resource protection view assessment processes were field tested by convention and visitor bureau staff and regional commissioners at key river views. The results refined the public view nomination form and the view assessment form and confirmed targeted assessment participants to include local elected officials, city and county staff, convention and visitor bureau staff, interpretive center staff, and public land owners.

2.2.2 PUBLIC ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

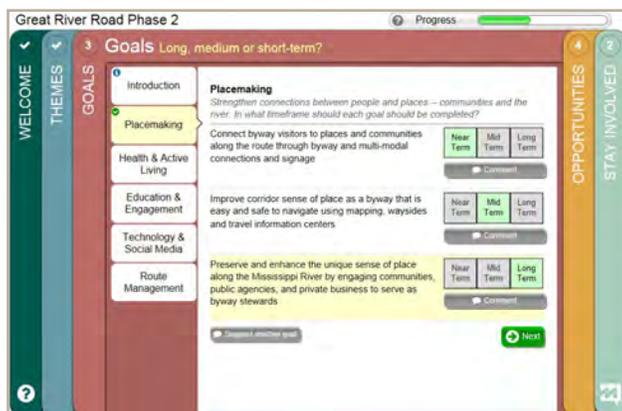


CMP Website

Online engagement reached people who could not attend the open houses or who learned about the outreach events after they happened. The online interactive survey had a total of 307 participants in Round 1 and 226 in Round 2.

2.2.2.1 WEBSITE

In the summer of 2014, a specific CMP project page was added to the existing www.mnmississippiriver.com website. The CMP page organized and displayed relevant information and updates throughout the CMP development process. As planning progressed, new tools were presented including an online interactive map showcasing the public's favorite views and the intrinsic resources in the corridor or related to the river. The website also showcased local events, integrated with the project's various social media accounts, and provided forms to join an email list or submit comments and questions to the project team.



Online interactive survey

2.2.2.2 ONLINE INTERACTIVE SURVEY

The project team used an interactive online engagement tool (MetroQuest) as the primary forum for online engagement as a part of the project website. The interactive site was active for two separate rounds of engagement.

2.2.2.2.1 Round 1 (July 2014 to October 2014)

The first interactive survey was developed to gain feedback consistent with the first round of open houses. It included project information and opportunities to provide feedback on Great River Road corridor management themes, favorite places, and river stories. A total of 307 people took the survey, of which 91 provided demographic data showing age ranges between 19 and 65+.

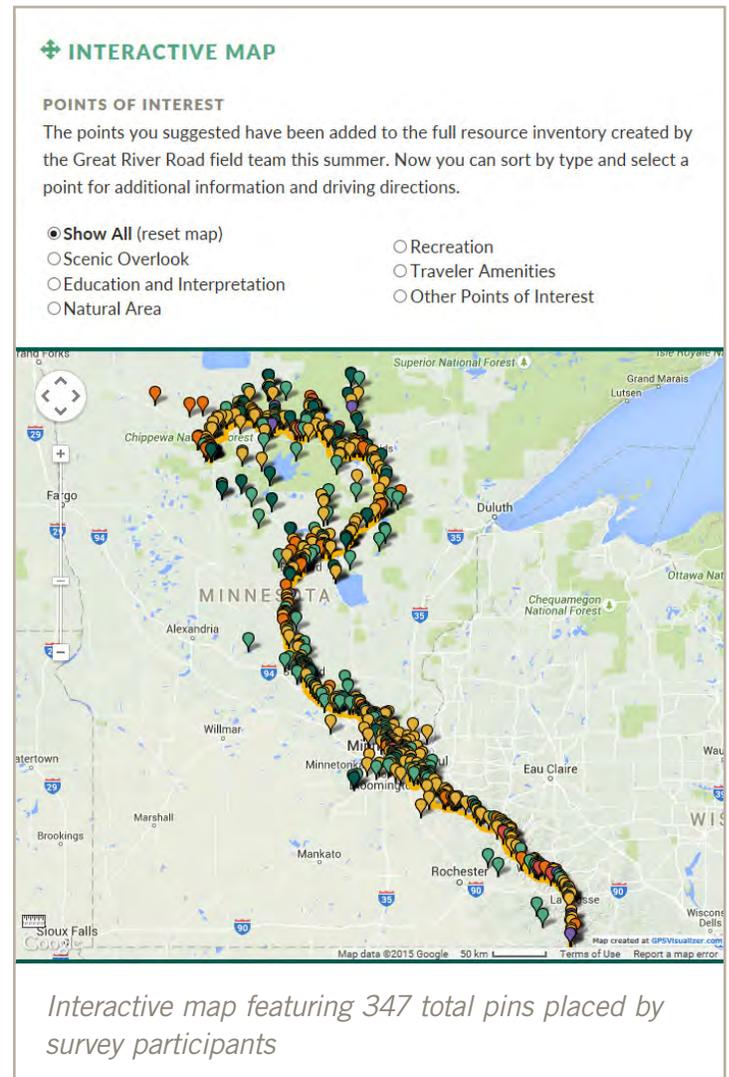
Survey respondents were invited to provide feedback on what river exploration experiences are important to them. Nature and recreational activities were the top-ranked travel themes. Additional travel themes suggested include fishing, learning about the resource threats, enjoying beautiful views of the river and other natural and cultural aspects of the Great River Road, safe travel, using the road to reach destinations, learning ecology, and mountain biking/hiking.

2.2.2.2.2 Round 2 (May 2015 to July 2015)

The second interactive survey solicited the same feedback as the second round of open houses, which took place in May 2015. It included opportunities to share areas for improvement along the Great River Road, learn about the project, and provide feedback on CMP goals and objectives.

Participants placed a total of 347 pins to suggest improvements related to multimodal travel, traveler amenities, and river views along the Great River Road. Of these pins, improving bicycle facilities and protecting cherished river views were prioritized.

Stakeholders and MN-MRPC members provided input to develop goals and objectives for the Great River Road. From these goals, five themes of focus emerged: **placemaking**, **health and active living**, **facilities management**, **technology and social media**, and **education and engagement**. While the MN-MRPC and PAT recommended that all of these are important and interrelated, on-line survey respondents and open house participants were invited to provide



More than 300 respondents participated in an online interactive survey in Round 1, and more than 200 in Round 2.



feedback on what should be completed first. The results are shown in Table 2.2.2.1.

Table 2.2.2.1 Themes of Work

	<i>Total Votes</i>
 <p>Education and Engagement TOP NEAR-TERM STRATEGY: Engage diverse populations of all ages, locally and afar, to experience the Mississippi River</p>	647
 <p>Health and Active Living TOP NEAR-TERM STRATEGY: Leverage existing state and local health initiatives to position the route as a walking, cycling, and paddling destination</p>	497
 <p>Facilities Management TOP NEAR-TERM STRATEGY: Assure safe travel through continuous and consistent route signage and mapping</p>	494
 <p>Technology and Social Media TOP NEAR-TERM STRATEGY: Develop the existing Great River Road web-based and mobile tools to serve PC, tablet, and phone</p>	489
 <p>Placemaking TOP NEAR-TERM STRATEGY: Connect visitors to places and communities, along the route, through trail connections and signage</p>	486

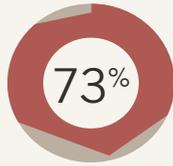
Visitors traveling along the Great River Road were surveyed to understand their general experience and impressions. The survey was also available online.

2.2.2.3 VISITOR IMPRESSION SURVEY

Visitors traveling the Great River Road were surveyed to understand their experience, who they are and how they travel, and opportunities to sustain or improve Minnesota's Great River Road experience. While most visitors received the survey in paper format at Great River Road attractions, to gain a broader geographic base, the survey also was available online and hard copies were also distributed at travel information centers.

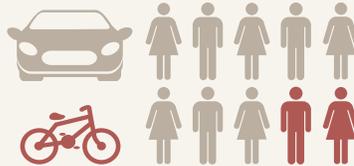
Key visitor survey results are summarized in the following overview:

Great River Road Visitor Survey Results Overview

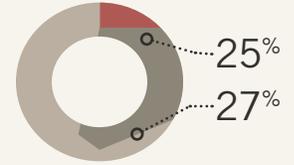


73%
of respondents were aware they were traveling on the Great River Road

Most respondents were traveling by car and 20% were traveling by bicycle



25 percent of respondents were over the age of 50



27 percent were under 18



75% of respondents visited or plan to visit the Headwaters of the Mississippi River

The top three activities in terms of enjoyment included:

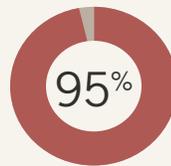
- 1 Touring by car
- 2 Headwaters/Itasca State Park
- 3 Hiking



75% of respondents were visiting friends and family or were vacationing

Many respondents would like to see more and better signs indicating they are on the Great River Road

Many listed getting lost as a least favorite activity or a need for improvement



95%
of respondents definitely will or probably would plan to visit again

Most travelers learned about the Great River Road from:

- 1 The website
- 2 Existing local knowledge
- 3 Friends/family
- 4 Brochures
- 5 Wayshowing signs

2.2.2.4 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful tool that can engage tech-savvy travelers on their PC, tablet or phone to promote the Great River Road as a natural, historic and recreational amenity through a variety of internet-based applications. New Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest accounts for Minnesota's Great River Road were created for this CMP and used in outreach and project promotion during CMP development.





▲ **ABOVE:** Great River Road Twitter Feed

Hundreds of users have liked, tweeted, and pinned content related to the Great River Road, forging connections to other agency and organizational platforms.

During the CMP development process hundreds of users have liked, tweeted, and pinned content related to the Great River Road, forging connections to other agency and organizational platforms. The intent is that the MN-MRPC continues to use at least one of these platforms to continue this momentum and expand byway supporter engagement and to also promote Minnesota Great River Road travel.

Table 2.2.2.4.1 Social Media Engagement

Platform	Primary Purpose	Usage
 Facebook	Sharing information, promotion	197 LIKES
 Twitter	Creating new content, sharing the content of other agencies, promotion	315 FOLLOWERS
 Instagram	Photo sharing, promotion	68 FOLLOWERS
 Pinterest	Trip planning	15 FOLLOWERS



03

THE CORRIDOR

This chapter assesses current corridor conditions that inform corridor management recommendations and strategies. Specifically it describes the Minnesota segment of the Great River Road highlighting its intrinsic resources, how the byway showcases the Mississippi River, wayfinding, coordination with its segment managers, multimodal travel options, safety, interpretation, health and active living opportunities, and transportation projects.

▲ **ABOVE:** Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge Half Moon Landing



The Great River Road in Minnesota uses a combination of federal, state, county, city, park, and forest roads as it makes its way from the Mississippi Headwaters at Itasca State Park downstream to the Iowa border.

3.1 Route Assessment

Like the other nine Mississippi River states, the Great River Road in Minnesota uses a combination of federal, state, county, city, park, and forest roads as this parkway makes its way from the Mississippi Headwaters at Itasca State Park downstream to the Iowa border. The designated roads created a route generally along the Mississippi River, though in some areas the landscape itself (wetlands, river bends, and oxbows), necessitate routing away from the river's edge.

Carrying forward direction in the 2000 CMP, this CMP's route assessment focused on the alignment designated as a National Scenic Byway. Minnesota's Great River Road is 565 miles long and makes a northerly loop from the river Headwaters across north-central Minnesota before turning southwest then south and finally south-southeast across the state. In keeping with the river's flow, this report lists cities and byway amenities from upstream to downstream. The general shape of the route, like the river, is much like that of a fish hook. The byway runs through 20 of 21 Minnesota Mississippi River counties, though the byway's intrinsic resources extend into several others.

For most of its length, the National Scenic Byway-designated Great River Road in Minnesota is on the same alignment as the 1970s-designated and signed National Route of the 10-state byway. At the time the National Route designation allowed roads and the adjacent river amenities to receive federal categorical transportation funds specifically allocated by Congress for use in developing and signing the Great River Road. Just north of Hastings,



Counties along the Great River Road

the National Route diverged to cross the St. Croix River into Wisconsin; the remainder of the Minnesota section, running from north of Hastings to the Iowa border, was designated the Minnesota State Route and since 2000 is also designated as a National Scenic Byway. There also was a State Route designation extending from Hastings to the Headwaters, which was considered a more expedient, but less river-oriented route to the Headwaters. Today the only signed Minnesota Alternate Route is a short segment along the east side of the river from Fort Ripley Junction south to Little Falls.

The CMP route assessment focused in length on Minnesota’s National Scenic Byway-designated route and assessed intrinsic resources between the Great River Road and the Mississippi River, and within a half-mile beyond each; river-related intrinsic resources outside of this area also were included.



Remaining Signed Alternative Route

Table 3.1.1. Basic Facts about the Great River Road in Minnesota

Great River Road in Minnesota Facts	
Length	565 miles
Road surfacing	Paved, hard-surface, except a 6.6-mile stretch north of Aitkin, MN
Seasonal accessibility	All portions are accessible throughout the year, except for years with short travel interruptions due to locally heavy snow or localized flooding
Counties through which the Great River Road passes in Minnesota	Hubbard, Clearwater, Beltrami, Cass, Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing, Morrison, Stearns, Benton, Wright, Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, Washington, Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona, and Houston Counties Byway intrinsic resources also are located in Sherburne, Scott, Carver, and Koochiching Counties
Incorporated communities through which the Great River Road passes in Minnesota	Bemidji, Cass Lake, Cohasset, Grand Rapids, Aitkin, Deerwood, Crosby, Brainerd, Baxter, Fort Ripley, Little Falls, St. Stephen, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud, St. Augusta, Clearwater, Monticello, Otsego, Dayton, Champlin, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Fridley, Minneapolis, Mendota, Mendota Heights, Lilydale, St. Paul, South St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights, Hastings, Red Wing, Lake City, Wabasha, Kellogg, Minneiska, Minnesota City, Goodview, Winona, Dakota, La Crescent, Brownsville
Tribal communities within Great River Road corridor	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, White Earth Nation, Prairie Island Indian Community





▲ **ABOVE:** Great River Road National Route Signage

3.1.1 WAYSHOWING SIGNAGE

The Great River Road National Scenic Byway in Minnesota follows a variety of federal, state, and local roads as it makes its way from the Mississippi Headwaters to the Wisconsin and Iowa borders. Along the way, it crosses the Mississippi River many times. The route continues in close alignment with the river highlighting river landscapes and taking travelers to points of interest. Except in a few areas where the river corresponds to a single highway for a sustained distance, travelers must be constantly watching for route changes. In recent years the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC) has regularly received complaints stating that the wayshowing signage is not effective and travelers who want to enjoy Mississippi River exploration instead are getting lost and frustrated.

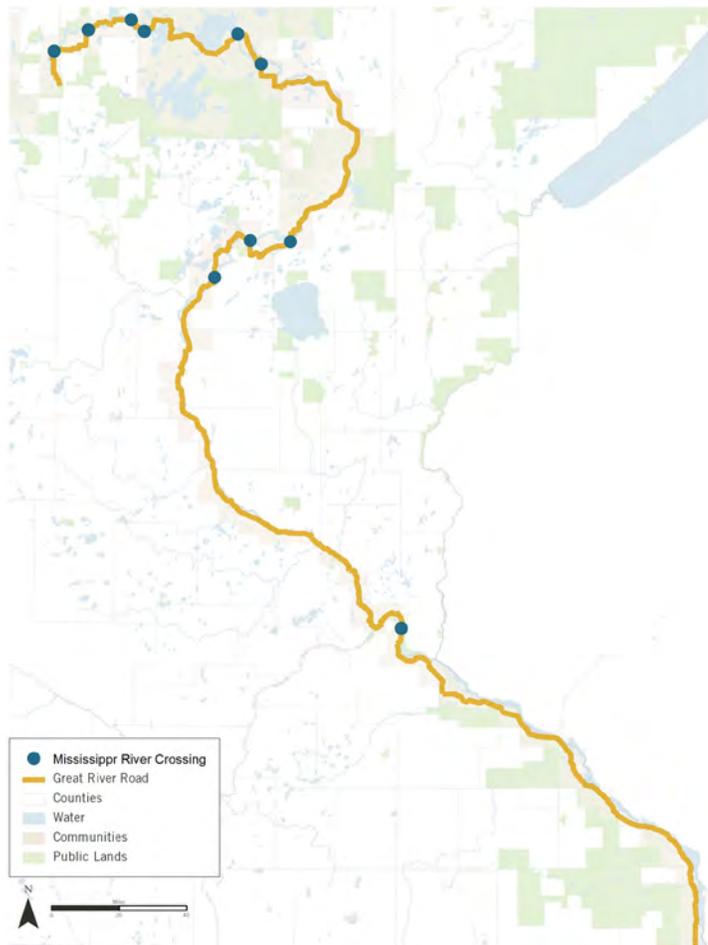
3.1.1.1 GREAT RIVER ROAD WAYSHOWING SIGNAGE STANDARDS

The Great River Road is meant to be signed throughout the corridor using standard, easily identifiable signs, featuring the iconic green on white Great River Road “pilot wheel” emblem developed in the 1950s, along with “National Route” and directional arrows, as specified in the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA’s) *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) and the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s (MnDOT’s) *Minnesota MUTCD*. A standard sign marking procedure calls for a directional change sign and a confirmation sign at all intersections on two-lane roads, as well as an advance directional change advisory sign on multilane roads.

3.1.1.2 RESPONSIBILITY

Under Minnesota Statute 161.142, the Commissioner of Transportation is charged with designating, establishing, and locating the route of the Great River Road with the approval of the MN-MRPC, and where the location is not on the state trunk highway system, with the approval of the political subdivision having jurisdiction of the road.

During the era of categorical funding, MnDOT took the lead in determining the best route,



River Crossings

designating the state segments of the byway, and securing local resolutions of approval for the route for roads not under its jurisdiction. MnDOT developed a statewide sign plan, secured funding and procured the signs, and then distributed them for installation by MnDOT Districts, county highway departments and other local road management authorities.

3.1.1.3 WAYSHOWING INVENTORY PROCESS

A comprehensive wayshowing sign inventory of Minnesota's Great River Road National Scenic Byway was conducted as a part of this project. Every wayshowing sign along the length of the byway was checked for information on its size, color, georeferenced location, condition, visibility, and placement with other signs. All signs were digitally photographed and the geolocated photos were appended to the CMP wayshowing sign database for analysis and mapping purposes.

Data on signs currently existing on state and federal roads had previously been collected as a part of MnDOT's SignTRACK database. SignTRACK data was pre-loaded into the CMP database and the field team verified the information and completed any fields missing information. Signs that were missing from where they should be and signs in the field but not in the SignTRACK database were added to the inventory.

The Great River Road follows county or local roads for approximately 61 percent of its length in Minnesota. Signs on these sections are traditionally not included in the MnDOT SignTRACK database, so compatible information on each of these signs was collected in the field for incorporation by MnDOT into SignTRACK after the CMP is complete. This will allow long term consistent sign asset management for the Great River Road state wide as a part of scoping, design, construction and maintenance, regardless of where on the Great River Road work is occurring.



Ownership

A comprehensive sign inventory of the entire length of Minnesota's Great River Road National Scenic Byway was conducted as a part of this project.



Together with compatible information gathered by contractors installing Mississippi River Trail (MRT) signs in Minnesota, MnDOT and local segment managers now have current data to better provide consistent and continuous wayshowing to assure Mississippi River explorer safety, confidence, and enjoyment.

As part of CMP implementation, placing this information on an interactive map available to all segment managers will increase their ability to help maintain wayshowing signage statewide.

3.1.1.4 WAYSHOWING INVENTORY RESULTS

The Great River Road in Minnesota started out consistently signed. Over time, inconsistent sign fabrication and placement, lack of replacement after construction, lack of maintenance, and lack of

Table 3.1.1.1. Breakdown of Sign Inventory

County	Missing	Modifications Needed	Meets Standards	Grand Total
Aitkin	5	19	12	36
Anoka	1	1	2	4
Beltrami	18	16	9	43
Benton	4	4		8
Cass	7	6	16	29
Chisago		1		1
Clearwater	5	9		14
Crow Wing	26	21	34	81
Dakota	15	6	46	67
Goodhue	1	2	16	19
Hennepin	26	29	28	83
Houston		1	11	12
Hubbard		10	3	13
Itasca	11	37	19	67
Morrison	1	11	21	33
Ramsey	3	1	14	18
Stearns	2	24	1	27
Wabasha		1	11	12
Washington	4	2	3	9
Winona	2		11	13
Wright	4	1	26	31
Grand Total	135	202	283	620
	22%	32%	46%	

statewide management has resulted in a pattern where wayshowing signage is no longer effective and is a top travelers' concern.

Over the course of 4 months, 512 signs were inventoried along the byway. Not all of these were National Scenic Byway wayshowing signs; 19 were park or amenity signs and eight were wayshowing signs to the Great River Road ("To National Great River Road").

485 of the signs are wayshowing signs, typically located at intersections to signal a change in direction, although reassurance signs are occasionally placed along the corridor. The Great River Road is signed both upstream-to-downstream and downstream-to-upstream.

3.1.1.4.1 Missing Signs

Locations also were noted where the Great River Road made a route change but there was no Great River Road sign to direct travelers. A total of 135 signs, or 22%, were noted as missing. In some places, finding one's way back to the correct route is almost impossible as typically there is no signing directing travelers to the route, only signing along it.

3.1.1.4.2 Inconsistent Sign Placement and Format

Where signs are in place, 32% of the time they do not follow uniform placement practices or use the proper colors and sizes described in the Manual On Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Adding to byway traveler confusion, signs are sometimes located above and sometimes below county or state road identification signs, or signs are separated from their arrows, and in a few cases, have arrows pointing in two different directions.

There are numerous variations among existing signs in terms of size, color, and even wording, resulting in an inconsistent graphic palette. Sign placement (on poles, frames, and traffic infrastructure) is also inconsistent along the byway. Other examples of inconsistency include byway signs without the companion route guide sign and signs either above or below a route guide sign (and in some counties, both formats exist). The type of arrow used can be inconsistent too, for instance, a "turn ahead" arrow placed where a directional arrow should have been used, or vice versa. In some places the arrow is missing altogether or there is an arrow but no Great River Road sign to indicate that the arrow depicts the travel direction for the byway. Signs at roundabouts can be especially confusing and are not consistent statewide.



In addition to assessing wayfinding signage along the National Scenic Byway designated route, the field survey captured data about remnants of the categorical funded signs including “Minnesota Alternate” route signs from Fort Ripley to Little Falls and other brown-on-white signs directing visitors to features that had received Great River Road categorical funds for site improvements.

3.1.1.4.3 Key Wayshowing Signage Issues

Table 3.1.1.2 summarizes issues identified with Great River Road wayshowing signs that need to be addressed to achieve a consistently and continuously signed National Scenic Byway and to meet the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards for size, color, material, placement, and condition. The specific condition of each of Minnesota’s Great River Road wayshowing signs is available at www.mnmississippiriver.com and will be featured in an interactive mapping tool for route managers.

Table 3.1.1.2 Inconsistent Sign Designs⁰³⁻¹

Inconsistent Sign Designs	
	<p>Standard Great River Road sign: According to the Minnesota MUTCD the square sign is white with the national symbol for the Great River Road, a green riverboat pilot wheel with a steamboat depicted in the center and “Minnesota” written at the bottom. North of Hastings, the accompanying National Route sign is green on white with a green band around the outer edge. The CMYK code for the green is C90 M40 Y91 K43. Of the 620 signs required to consistently and continuously sign the National Scenic Byway, 283 meet the standards for size, color, material, placement, and condition.</p>
	<p>Great River Road sign with colors reversed: In Clearwater County, near the source of the Mississippi, as well as locations along the Great River Road around Aitkin, the signs are reversed in color, with a white pilot wheel symbol superimposed on a green background, bordered in white.</p>
	<p>Great River Road Minnesota Alternate Route sign: In Morrison County, a segment of County Road 76/Haven Road from Minnesota Highway 115 at Camp Ripley south to Little Falls is signed as a Minnesota Alternate Route with Great River Road signs with dark brown pilot wheel emblems. (The National Route follows County Road 213/Grouse Road down the opposite side of the river.) Similar brown attraction signs mark turns into Morrison County Park and the Belle Prairie historic site. Alternate signs are not used for the Minnesota state route from Hastings to the Iowa border.</p>
	<p>Great River Road Park spur route signs: Minnesota has few remaining marked spurs to attractions off the main corridor. There are a few brown-on-white pilot wheel signs in places like the route from US 61 near Homer to the historic Pickwick Mill.</p>

03-1 <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/publ/mutcd/mnmutcd2015/appendix-a3-mnmutcd.pdf>

Table 3.1.1.2. continued

Inconsistent Sign Designs

Great River Road attraction or amenity signs: At several locations along the route, small brown signs, generally with arrows, lead visitors to parks or features off the road that received categorical funds for improvement. Examples can be found in downtown Brainerd and in St. Paul leading to Mounds Park and to Cherokee Regional Park.



Great River Road guide signs to amenities: Rectangular signs marking travel directions from other roads or features to the Great River Road can be found in a few places. Signs in Crosby and St. Paul (near Cherokee Park) are green with white pilot wheel emblems, while signs from the Stearns History Center in St. Cloud have the colors reversed.



Great River Road logo on other highway informational signs: In some spots, the Great River Road pilot wheel logo is used on rectangular informational signs. Good examples are a public water access area north of Jacobson and at Point Douglas Park near Hastings.

Great River Road logo used on other signs: The Great River Road pilot wheel logo is occasionally used on other signs as a form of branding. Examples can be found at some Wright County parks along the byway.

Table 3.1.1.3. Inconsistent Sign Assemblies

Inconsistent Sign Assemblies



Reassurance sign: These square Great River Road pilot wheel emblem signs mounted by itself on a post with no other highway signs to reassure travelers they are still on the route. A sign by itself without at least an arrow is uncommon, but instances occur.



Reassurance sign with National Route placard: According to the MUTCD, the rectangular National Route placards should accompany every directional sign north of Hastings; however, in many cases they are not used. National Route placards are not used in some of the other states, but when they are, they tend to be located above the pilot sign. Most National Route placards along the route in Minnesota are positioned above the Great River Road sign, but some are placed below it and are separated from it by other highway identifier signs, which can cause confusion for the traveler. There are three instances where the National Route placard was on a pole but there was no Great River Road sign.



Great River Road sign mounted with single road or highway delineation sign: One of the most common assemblies is a Great River Road sign mounted on a pole with a federal, state, county, or local highway identifier sign. In some cases, the county or other road sign is above the Great River Road sign; in other cases, the county sign is below. If there is a National Route placard, it may be separated from the Great River Road sign by the highway sign. Additionally, arrows are placed inconsistently.



Table 3.1.1.3. continued

	Inconsistent Sign Assemblies
	<p>Paired and multiple sign assemblies: Some jurisdictions pair the Great River Road signs with other signs on a separate adjacent pole. In some places, there can be three or four groups mounted side-by-side. On a busy road (and such signs are usually found in congested areas), this is a great deal of information for a traveler to process at one time and more consistent placement would aid legibility.</p>
	<p>Unusual variations: Some Great River Road signs are placed on poles with local municipal signs, such as “no parking,” snow route restriction, or neighborhood watch signs. The most confusing signs are found where the route encounters a roundabout or a radical change in direction—for example, one location in Brainerd is especially confusing where a traveler must negotiate two roundabouts in close succession reversing course, then making a right-hand turn. In Hastings, one has to make a 180-degree turn off the Mississippi River Bridge to get on the northbound Great River Road. Roundabout arrow signs should indicate the intended exit.</p>

3.2 Safety

Data obtained from MnDOT illustrates crash points within 50 feet of the Great River Road centerline during the 10-year period from December 2003 through December 2014. During this time a total of 14,144 recorded crashes occurred along Minnesota’s Great River Road corridor, including 274 involving pedestrians or bicycles. **Table 3.2.1** contains a corridor-wide summary of these crashes by injury or damage severity for each Destination Area.

By analyzing the data and applying MnDOT “Towards Zero Deaths” education and engineering strategies the MN-MRPC, MnDOT and corridor management partners can aim to reduce the number and severity of crashes of all types.

To help inform this analysis, developing an empirical understanding of tourists’ transportation needs was identified during the Conflict Scoping Process MnDOT conducted for the CMP as a suggested area of planning input that the entire family of MinnesotaGO transportation modal plans would benefit from as little to no tourism accommodation guidance currently is included. Understanding tourists and how they differ from cartage and commuters can inform planning, design, construction and maintenance of road, bicycle, pedestrian, air, boat, rail and transit systems. By anticipating tourists’ needs and designing for them Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail safety may also be improved.

Table 3.2.1. Great River Road Destination Area Crashes by Severity

By GRR Destination Area- All Crashes			Bike/Ped Crashes	
Fatal - K	6	3.3%	0	0.00%
Incapacitating Injury - A	10	5.5%	0	0.00%
Non-Incapacitating Injury - B	25	13.7%	1	4.00%
Possible Injury - C	34	18.7%	0	0.00%
Property Damage Only - N	107	58.8%	0	0.00%
Other - X	0	0.0%	0	0.00%
Headwaters Total	182	100%	1	0.55%
Fatal - K	6	0.6%	2	33.33%
Incapacitating Injury - A	17	1.8%	1	5.88%
Non-Incapacitating Injury - B	95	10.3%	8	8.42%
Possible Injury - C	189	20.4%	8	4.23%
Property Damage Only - N	618	66.8%	0	0.00%
Other - X	0	0.0%	0	0.00%
Northwoods Total	925	100%	19	2.05%
Fatal - K	20	1.3%	1	5.00%
Incapacitating Injury - A	38	2.5%	3	7.89%
Non-Incapacitating Injury - B	165	11.1%	15	9.09%
Possible Injury - C	337	22.6%	21	6.23%
Property Damage Only - N	931	62.4%	0	0.00%
Other - X	1	0.1%	0	0.00%
Crossings Total	1492	100%	40	2.68%
Fatal - K	11	0.4%	2	18.18%
Incapacitating Injury - A	62	2.4%	11	17.74%
Non-Incapacitating Injury - B	256	9.9%	26	10.16%
Possible Injury - C	580	22.5%	32	5.52%
Property Damage Only - N	1669	64.6%	2	0.12%
Other - X	4	0.2%	0	0.00%
Scenic Total	2582	100%	73	2.83%
Fatal - K	20	0.4%	4	20.00%
Incapacitating Injury - A	75	1.6%	9	12.00%
Non-Incapacitating Injury - B	401	8.6%	35	8.73%
Possible Injury - C	993	21.2%	44	4.43%
Property Damage Only - N	3185	68.1%	2	0.06%
Other - X	6	0.1%	0	0.00%
Metro Total	4680	100%	94	2.01%
Fatal - K	27	0.6%	0	0.00%
Incapacitating Injury - A	84	2.0%	4	4.76%
Non-Incapacitating Injury - B	363	8.5%	23	6.34%
Possible Injury - C	719	16.9%	16	2.23%
Property Damage Only - N	3056	71.8%	1	0.03%
Other - X	5	0.1%	0	0.00%
Bluffs Total	4254	100%	44	1.03%
Minnesota Great River Road Total	14144	99.89%	274	1.94%



3.3 Transportation Projects

This section of the CMP provides a brief overview of transportation improvement projects affecting the Great River Road. By applying Context Sensitive Solutions and Complete Streets principles and practices these Great River Road projects can better evoke a sense of place, provide access to and honor the byway’s intrinsic resources, assess potential project impacts, enhance the byway’s storytelling, welcome byway visitors, integrate the multiple modes travelers use when exploring the river, and maintain consistent and continuous wayshowing signage—all important to a positive experience.

These outcomes align with MnDOT’s MinnesotaGO, a 50-year vision for long-range, multimodal transportation systems that maximize the health of people, the environment and our economy.

The system:

- Connects Minnesota’s primary assets—the people, natural resources, and businesses within the state—to each other and to markets and resources outside the state and country
- Provides safe, convenient, efficient, and effective movement of people and goods
- Is flexible and nimble enough to adapt to changes in society, technology, the environment, and the economy

Table 3.3.1. MinnesotaGO 50-Year Vision for Transportation Principles

Quality of Life	Environmental Health	Economic Competitiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes and respects the importance, significance and context of place—not just as destinations, but also where people live, work, learn, play, and access services • Is accessible regardless of socioeconomic status or individual ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is designed in such a way that it enhances the community around it and is compatible with natural systems • Minimizes resource use and pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances and supports Minnesota’s role in a globally competitive economy as well as the international significance and connections of Minnesota’s trade centers • Attracts human and financial capital to the state

To help accomplish MinnesotaGO's vision through Great River Road corridor management, the "Plan Your Project" mapping tool has been initiated during the CMP. With training and ongoing refinement this tool is intended to provide the context for system planning and project scoping, design, construction, and ongoing maintenance. The following sets of data are or can be presented to byway segment managers and associated modal resource managers to help better integrate the ongoing investments and resources to achieve successful byway corridor management and a safe and enjoyable byway experience for residents and tourists alike.

Open house participant
6-Word Mississippi River
Story: "To thrive, we need
the river."

3.3.1 STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)

Minnesota's STIP is a four-year plan that identifies the scheduling and funding of state and local projects that use federal highway or federal transit funding or are completely funded by the state. It is developed by MnDOT with input from local units of government and community and business groups working through the eight-district Area Transportation Partnerships (ATP). The plan, which is based on the state fiscal year, is updated annually. The current Minnesota STIP covers fiscal years 2015–2018.

The current Minnesota STIP lists 72 trunk highway (TH) and 33 State Aid for Local Transportation (SALT) projects along the Minnesota Great River Road. Some involve direct construction on roads that are part of the byway, while others are closely associated with byway resources, such as improvements to connecting scenic byways or improvements to other roads providing access to features along the byway.

Projects involving the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) and other bike/pedestrian projects that benefit the byway traveler also are addressed in the STIP. Minnesota's MRT runs 816 miles. Of that, 468 is located on the Great River Road. In 2011 the MN-MRPC received FHWA National Scenic Byway and matching Department of Interior grants to pay for signing the MRT statewide in Minnesota, which was completed in Spring 2015. Other STIP-listed bike/pedestrian projects include extensions and work on the Soo Line Trail, the East-West connector trail in Bemidji, and a new bridge for the Grand Rapids Riverwalk.

Major projects in the current STIP in the Great River Road corridor are listed below. The Plan Your Project beta version illustrates





Colocated Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail

all individual projects that directly or indirectly relate to the Great River Road. Major projects include the Winona and Red Wing Mississippi River Bridges as well as an access road and parking area for the Pine Bend Bluffs Scientific and Natural Area. The complete Minnesota STIP is available online at the MnDOT website.

3.3.1.1 CURRENT PROJECTS ALONG THE GREAT RIVER ROAD

At the time of the CMP field survey, several highway projects were under construction along the Great River Road in Minnesota. Below are examples of how these projects can enhance or detract from the byway experience.

3.3.1.1.1 Interstate 90 (I-90) Bridge Replacement

One of the largest projects currently underway is the replacement of the I-90 bridge over the Mississippi River, at TH 61, north of La Crescent in Houston County. This multi-year project entails construction of two new spans upstream from the existing bridge. While the project was funded to address structural deficiencies and interchange needs, it also incorporates an aesthetic featuring significant amounts

of artificial stone that mimic the iconic limestone bluffs in this region, detracting from their authenticity. To better reflect and honor the authentic intrinsic qualities of the river, no artificial stone is recommended for future Great River Road designs. As preferred, the concrete piers of the bridge reflect the shape of spreading elms found in the river corridor, but do not try to look like artificial trees. While the bridge design did not accommodate bicycle and pedestrian modes, it will relocate an on-road MRT crossing at this junction to a safer off-road bicycle/pedestrian bridge over I-90/TH 61. The project benefits byway travelers with new approach roads to the Dresbach Travel Information Center, two boat landings and a Corps Of Engineers Lock and Dam visitor plaza, as well as repaving a segment of the MRT in the project area.

3.3.1.1.2 Hastings Bridge Replacement

The recently completed Hastings Bridge replacement project benefits the Great River Road. The dramatic span—the largest tied-arch bridge in the nation—makes a strong visual impact. Its color reflects the historic downtown brick buildings but does not mimic the brick, and its landscaping uses native plant material. The design creates a safe bicycle and pedestrian river crossing and enhances surface level accommodations. The bridge abutments incorporate natural materials, river interpretation and river art, and a natural stone-faced pillar and National Park entrance sign at the north bridge approach welcome and provide a photo op for travelers to the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area; all enhancing the Great River Road experience.

Open house participant
6-Word Mississippi River
Story: “Connects me to
nature in city.”

3.3.1.1.3 West River Parkway Reconstruction

A portion of West River Parkway below the bluffs at the University of Minnesota campus in Minneapolis is currently under construction. A landslide at this location occurred, necessitating a two-year closure.

3.3.1.1.4 County Road 10 Paving

Aitkin County Road 10, along the Mississippi River near Palisade, one of the two last gravel segments in Minnesota, was paved in 2015. The last gravel segment remaining in Minnesota is also in Aitkin County west of this project on County Road 21. Paving this last segment will allow more vehicle types, such as motorcycles, bicycles, and collector cars full accommodation along the entire length of Great River Road in Minnesota.

3.4 Planning Projects

In 2015, a summary of Minnesota Scenic Byway projects along were developed by Regional Development Commissions as a part of updating CMPs statewide through a contract from MnDOT. Region Five Development Commission developed the summary for the Great River Road. The 104 projects have been cataloged with information on project name, location, implementing agencies, contact information, project type, intrinsic resources, project cost, funding, and local priority. Local projects such as these provide ongoing improvement of the byway travel experience, protect and enhance intrinsic resources, and share the river’s stories or improve access to them, helping to implement the CMP. This summary is located in the **Appendix**.



Open house participant
6-Word Mississippi River
Story: “View of nature from
bike trail.”

3.5 Multimodal Transportation

The Great River Road was initiated during a time of romanticism with emerging automobile travel. While automobile travel increased for many decades, it has leveled off in recent years while modal options are increasing. Similarly while the term “National Scenic Byway” evokes a traditional focus on automobile-based tourism, this CMP includes a focus on multimodal access to the Mississippi River and its intrinsic resources. By planning for, coordinating, and encouraging byway travel by foot, bike, boat, transit, train, or air, Minnesota can offer more travel options, broaden accessibility and potentially reduce pollution and traffic congestion, providing sustainable and healthy possibilities for intimate and enriching Mississippi River experiences.

This section of the CMP describes alternative transportation options and highlights two other officially designated multimodal Mississippi River routes to enhance the Great River Road experience.

3.5.1 MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRAIL

The Great River Road from its early years was envisioned to be explored by bicycle. Early design guides recommended a 5-foot shoulder to accommodate this. Often on the Great River Road, the MRT continues into Wisconsin and Iowa following the Mississippi River through all 10 states.

Minnesota’s MRT, first proposed in the 2000 Great River Road CMP, today is a statutory state bikeway (160.266). Its development is championed by the MN-MRPC. Over 70% of the route’s wayshowing signage paid with funds provided to the MN-MRPC.

In Minnesota, approximately 60% of the MRT is collocated on the Great River Road where the bicycle route is along the river. In some areas, especially river cities, MRT is routed onto existing riverside trails. Wherever possible, the route follows low-volume roads, but in some areas it occurs on Interstate river bridges as well as U.S. and trunk highways.

In addition to its river-related alignment, a 100 mile shortcut runs south from Cass Lake to Brainerd on the Heartland and Paul Bunyan State Trails, bypassing 200 miles of MRT following the great northern bend of the river and avoiding the last gravel segment of the Great River Road on 7 miles of CSAH 21 in Aitkin County.

3.5.2 OTHER PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRAILS

The Great River Road provides connections to other state multi-use trails including the Cannon Valley Trail, Mesabi/Taconite State Trail, and Soo Line Trail (parts of which are dedicated to ATV use) as well as numerous municipal greenways and bikeways.

Multimodal transportation options are numerous in the Metro Mississippi destination area with its extensive network of bikeways, greenways, and regional trails. The expansive system of riverfront parks is generally accessible by interconnecting multi-use trails, ranging from the cycling trails paralleling the river parkways to the Big Rivers Regional Trail along the bluffs between Mendota and Lilydale. Others connect Great River Road explorers with attractions and communities in the Metro area.

For travelers without a bike, bike sharing services, like Nice Ride Minnesota, and numerous bike rental companies offer a healthy choice to experience the river corridor by bike. Originally confined to Minneapolis and St. Paul, under the “Greater Minnesota Vision” plan, Nice Ride Minnesota is expanding to outstate. The pilot project in Bemidji gives visitors to the northern part of the Great River Road corridor an opportunity to leave their cars parked and explore the community, the shores of beautiful Lake Bemidji, and the city’s East-West Trail and Paul Bunyan State Trail. Further collaboration with Pedal Minnesota, the state’s bicycle marketing group, and Nice Ride Minnesota can encourage expanded bicycling options along the MRT and elsewhere in the byway corridor.

Within the Metro Mississippi destination area, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) offers an online trip planning tool called www.rivertripplanner.org. An easy-to-use Google-based map, it describes park destinations plus bus, rail, bike, boat, and walking information that can help byway travelers determine how best to access the National Park without a car. The MRT alignment and live transit and Nice Ride station information is included. The Mississippi River Companion, also produced by the National Parks Service, is a print version of www.rivertripplanner.org. Together they aim to increase visitation to the National Park without increasing congestion.

The Great River Road was from its early years envisioned to be explored by bicycle. Early design guides recommended a 5-foot shoulder to accommodate this.



3.5.3 MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL

The entire Mississippi River Corridor in Minnesota is accessible by boat. The Great River Road offers access to many options that can serve a variety of abilities and interests. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers the Mississippi State Water Trail, which runs the entire length of the river through the state, providing a route for paddlers on the upper stretches of the river as well as other recreational boaters further south to travel along the river. The water trail is suited either for a trip of a few hours or for the entire length of the river—a challenging trip that can take a couple of months in a canoe. Local outfitters offer canoe, kayak, or sculling equipment for purchase and rental along with guided adventures ranging from short trips to full days along the river.

Along the way, DNR and partner agencies maintain a series of public water access points allowing easy access to the river. Designated water trail campsites are generally available at easy intervals from the Mississippi Headwaters south to just above the metro area, with a few other sites available downstream. The upper Mississippi, from the Headwaters south to Brainerd or Little Falls, is generally usable only by canoes or kayaks, except on impounded reservoirs or deeper stretches. Sections below Little Falls are generally navigable by boats with motors. From Minneapolis south, the river is controlled by a series of locks and dams. All of the public water access points, water trail campsites, and locks and dams were recorded in the CMP inventory.

The DNR has published an excellent series of water trail guides for the Mississippi River State Water Trail as well as other rivers in the corridor including the Pine, Crow Wing, Crow, Zumbro and Whitewater Rivers. The nine-part Mississippi Water Trail series includes color maps; a discussion of the river's character in each section; and marks for all public water access points, water trail campsites, river confluences, bridges, and



Mississippi River State Water Trail

other major features along the length. The guides are available at most state parks in the corridor, from DNR directly, or by download from the DNR website.

3.5.3.1 CAMPING ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL

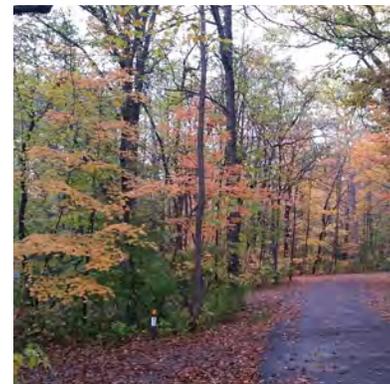
From Itasca State Park through the Scenic Destination Area, water trail campsites have been established every 8 to 12 miles to provide for overnight rest. These range from simple riverside clearings with a fire ring and a picnic table to more elaborate campsites with shelters and vault toilets. While fewer river-related camping sites are located in the Metro and Bluffs destination area, resourceful boaters find opportunities on islands and sandbars in the Bluffs area.

All water trail campsites and public water access points were inventoried along the length of the Mississippi in Minnesota. Each has a full description associated with its river mile marker. For instance, Morrison County's Belle Prairie County Park Public Water Access is noted at Mississippi River Mile 966.7 (L), the "L" meaning it is located on river left using the standard reference as pointing downstream.

3.5.4 OTHER ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

For those without a bicycle or boat, public transportation can offer access to many parts of the Great River Road corridor. As mentioned above, the National Park Service river exploration planning tool (www.rivertripplanner.org) is a model website offering transit, bike share, transit hubs, river access, MRT, and Great River Road travel options together with information on places to explore along the river. The goal is to increase visitation without increasing congestion. A next step is developing a system of canoe and kayak-share stations along the corridor. Imagine renting a canoe or kayak to paddle downstream and then renting a bicycle or taking transit to ride back to where you started.

The website and MNRRA Alternative Transportation Plan are models for future Plan Your Trip and Plan Your Project versions to provide Mississippi River explorers more travel options and experiences. While alternate transportation services are largely confined to urban areas, with increased examples of success along Minnesota's Great River Road more communities may find transit, bike and even boat rental are economically feasible services or businesses, benefitting tourists and residents alike.



▲ **ABOVE:** Lindbergh State Park Campground



Table 3.5.4.1. Alternative Transportation Options

Transportation Option	Description
Transit	<p>In the Twin Cities, Metro Transit’s extensive transit system provides bus and light rail connections to the river.</p> <p>The Northstar Commuter Rail also provides transit service near the river between Big Lake and Minneapolis. Connections further north can be made with the Northstar Link, which is a connecting bus service operating between Big Lake and St. Cloud. Brainerd, La Crescent, Red Wing, St. Cloud, and Winona also have fixed route transit systems that provide access to the river and the more rural counties have dial-a-ride systems that provide accessibility for residents.</p>
Passenger Rail	<p>Amtrak’s Empire Builder service (Chicago-Seattle/Portland) offers stops in Winona, Red Wing, Hastings, St. Paul, and St. Cloud. Historically, passengers have not been allowed to bring bicycles on board without packing them in a cargo container. By the end of 2016, all long-distance Amtrak routes will have luggage racks that can secure unboxed bicycles.</p>
River Cruises	<p>Private river cruise boats offer excursions along the Mississippi River. Currently, cruises depart from Lake Itasca, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Hastings. Additional river cruises lines are planning to offer excursions departing from St. Paul with premium shore excursions in Red Wing and Wabasha and to the Headwaters via St. Cloud.</p>
Airports	<p>River corridor airports are located in Winona, Red Wing, South St. Paul, St. Paul, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) in Hennepin County, Anoka, Crystal, Clear Lake, St. Cloud, Little Falls, Brainerd, Aitkin, Pine River, Grand Rapids, and Bemidji. Sea plane bases are located at Inver Grove Heights, East Gull Lake, Deerwood, and Bemidji.</p>

3.6 Intrinsic Resource Inventory

The Great River Road is abundant with intrinsic resources to be preserved, promoted, and enhanced. This section of the CMP describes those resources.

3.6.1 INTRINSIC QUALITIES

The Federal Highway Administration specifies six intrinsic qualities to describe a National Scenic Byway’s attributes. A National Scenic Byway must possess resources of national significance in at least one of the following categories:

- Archaeological
- Cultural
- Historic
- Natural
- Recreational
- Scenic

Minnesota's Great River Road received National Scenic Byway designation in 2000 highlighting its historic intrinsic resources, in coordination with the other nine river states for whom historic is a primary resource type. Minnesota's Great River Road traveler is fortunate to experience intrinsic resources in all six categories found along its length. The MN-MRPC and MnDOT are charged with maintaining and enhancing the intrinsic qualities that qualified it for this Federal Highway Administration designation. This CMP offers a number of specific recommendations for the MN-MRPC and MnDOT to fulfill this mission.

3.6.2 RESOURCE INVENTORY

While tourists and residents enjoying the act of traveling along the Great River Road is a measure of Minnesota's corridor management success, providing access to, telling the stories of and encouraging visitation to the Mississippi River's intrinsic resources are also measures of byway management. Byway resources attract travelers to the Great River Road and vice versa. Instead of driving through a community, the resources encourage travelers to stop, spend more time in corridor communities, return again and again as they collect experiences in six Minnesota Great River Road destination areas, thereby helping to sustain and grow local economies.

From the Mississippi Headwaters at Itasca State Park to the Iowa border, the Minnesota segment of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway runs through a corridor rich in natural and cultural resources. The byway connects numerous public lands and natural areas such as state parks and forests, the Chippewa National Forest, national wildlife refuges, state scientific and natural areas, regional and municipal parks, the unique Mississippi National River and Recreation area, and many other significant natural features.

The wide range of cultural resources includes sites associated with prehistoric and historic native villages, early pioneer forts and settlements, historic industrial and transportation resources, and areas associated with the cultures that give Minnesota its unique identity. One can watch the Mississippi River evolve from a narrow stream to the great river of America. Features associated with the Mississippi River include historic bridges, and locks and dams.

An inventory database was compiled as a part of the 2000 Great River Road Development Study. The inventory was based primarily on lists collected from public databases and field visits; however, the focus was limited to resources managed by public agencies as well



▲ ABOVE: Red Wing Pottery

The six intrinsic resource types specified for national scenic byways were used as a means to classify features along the corridor.





▲ **ABOVE:** Entrance to Camp Ripley near Little Falls

as properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The material was collated into a database listing various attributes for a variety of resources. A total of 6,276 resources were identified, with more than 200,000 total attributes among them.

This CMP used the 2000 CMP dataset as baseline information for the field inventory. Some resources were excluded from the inventory such as a number of sites located along the former East Canadian extension of the Great River Road, because the extension was not included in the scope of this project. The field inventory was restricted to the 20 counties along the Minnesota Great River Road National Scenic Byway corridor, with only a few exceptions. In addition, seasonal festivals and events from the 2000 database were excluded since frequently dates change or are discontinued. Current festival and event information can instead be provided by linking to local and Explore Minnesota Tourism websites.

Numerous features could fall into two or more resource types. For example Schoolcraft State Park features camping, picnic areas, boat access, and trailheads, yet the individual features were combined under the state park classification. Alternatively the St. Cloud Historic Wayside which features a restored 1930's roadside rest area is colocated with the trailhead for the Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area and Environmental Study Area. Each is inventoried separately because each is managed separately by MnDOT and DNR respectively.

To help travelers identify which byway resources serve their interests, a separate field for byway traveler interest theme was developed. Themes define a resource's specific or distinctive quality and classifying similar resources by thematic type. The themes identified in the inventory process are listed in **Table 3.6.2.2**.

Table 3.6.2.2 Byway Traveler Interest Themes

Byway Traveler Interest Themes	
Mississippi River	Ethnic heritage
Summer recreation	Military history
Winter recreation	History (other)
Environmental	Biography
Industrial/transportation working river	Architecture
Native American history	Arts and crafts
Exploration and settlement	Agritourism

Most individual features and attractions along the byway fall into multiple thematic categories. The Sibley House Historic Site, for example, exemplifies the themes of architecture, exploration and settlement, Native American history, and biography, while the Minnesota Fishing Museum represents summer recreation and winter recreation.

Finally, a ranking system was developed that classified resources by significance and potential visitor interest. A major site of nationally recognized significance would be placed in the first ranking group, while a site of limited local interest would rank in the fifth. The five ranking classifications are:

- National significance
- State significance
- Local significance
- Potential interest
- Limited interest

To simplify field recording and to ensure the finished inventory was comprehensive yet flexible and adaptable, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-enabled application was designed for field use. Data was recorded with Collector, a tablet-based software developed by Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) that uploaded data wirelessly to a cloud server (ArcGISOnline).

The inventory work began at the Mississippi Headwaters in late June 2014. During the next 4 months, more than 700 resources identified in the 2000 CMP were visited. Additional resources were added including features established since 2000 such as the Sheridan Veterans Memorial in Minneapolis, a few privately owned resources, and local public lands that had not been featured in the DNR's databases. Each resource was recorded with digital photography directly tied to the database using the built-in camera on the tablet housing the recording software and georectified cameras.

Resource land managers or administrators were asked to confirm locational information (addresses and GPS coordinates), contact information, e-mail, and website information (where available), hours of operation, and other data collected.

The database contains 130 fields or attributes for each resource including features such as byway destination area and MnDOT district, maintaining and erecting authorities, intrinsic resource and theme types, latitude and longitude coordinates, and distance from the Mississippi River or from the Great River Road. Features

Locational information (addresses and GPS coordinates), contact information, e-mail, and website information (where available), hours of operation, and other data were collected.





▲ **ABOVE:** Philander Sprague House, Red Wing

or amenities at each resource were noted, including the availability of free or paid parking, picnic tables, restrooms, campsites, miles of hiking or cross-country ski trails, carry-in canoe access, paved boat access, listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and numerous other fields. A short description and a longer statement of significance were written for each resource.

All public water access points along the Mississippi River were recorded individually for the benefit of those traveling the corridor by canoe or boat, and individual state scientific and natural areas encompassed within state parks or other public lands were separately recorded for their unique attributes.

The 753 resource sites inventoried were each assigned intrinsic quality types. As noted above, numerous sites featured more than one type of intrinsic resource, so the total number exceeds 753.

Table 3.6.2.2 MN GRR Resources by Intrinsic Quality Type

Intrinsic Quality	Count
Archaeological	25
Cultural	81
Historic	198
Natural	151
Recreational	502
Scenic	144
Total	1101

The 753 sites assessed for the CMP are listed in Table 3.6.2.3 MN GRR Resources by Facility Type. When a site’s amenities fit into multiple categories, only the primary site type was used. For example, while 22 campgrounds, 10 picnic areas, and 31 trailheads are counted in the list, there are additional campgrounds, picnic areas and trailheads at the 119 listed parks.

Implementation of this plan will include an interactive Plan Your Trip mapping tool to allow travelers multiple sorting options based upon their preferences by interest, intrinsic quality and facility type.

Table 3.6.2.3 MN GRR Resources by Facility Type

Resource by Facility Type	Count	Resource by Facility Type	Count
Beach	9	Native American sites	2
Boat Access	155	Other	15
Bridge	27	Park Preserve	13
Intersection with Other Scenic Byway	10	Picnic Area	10
Campground	22	Public Art	9
Campsite (Water Trail)	43	Recreation Area	9
City Park	82	Regional Park	15
County Park	17	Rest Area	24
Dam	24	Scenic Overlook	17
Fishing Pier	12	Scientific and Natural Area	19
State Forest	24	State Park	18
Historic Site	10	Tourist Information Center	24
Interpretive Marker	20	Trailhead	31
Multimodal Hub	5	Tribal Lands	1
Museum	60	Visitor Center	8
National Forest	1	Wildlife Area	15
National Park	2	Total	753

3.6.3 SCENIC RESOURCES

The scenic qualities that gained the Great River Road its coveted National Scenic Byway designation are being compromised in many sections of the corridor in Minnesota. While certain areas are reasonably protected, notably public lands or difficult-to-develop wetlands, other areas of high scenic value have been adversely impacted by development. The same scenic views prized by byway travelers are also attractive to homebuilders and commercial developers. Riverside and blufftop homes disturb once-cherished iconic river views and new housing and commercial developments now fill landscapes that were once woodland and agricultural landscapes. CAPX2020 electrical corridors and silica sand mining, processing, and transportation operations are other examples of developments whose scenic impacts have immediate and cumulative impacts affecting the byway scenic qualities and the traveler's experience.



3.6.3.1 VISUAL RESOURCE PROTECTION PLANS

In 1968, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was passed by Congress to protect wild rivers and scenic rivers from development that would substantially change their wild or scenic nature. In 1973, Minnesota established the Wild and Scenic Rivers Program to protect rivers that have outstanding natural, scenic, geographic, historic, cultural, and recreational values. In 1975 the Mississippi Headwaters Board recommended the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River also be included in the National Wild and Scenic River Program.⁰³⁻¹

By 1976, Minnesota DNR designated a segment of the Mississippi River as a wild and scenic river—“scenic” from St. Cloud to Clearwater and “recreational” from Clearwater to Anoka.

The importance of Minnesota’s Mississippi River scenic protection was addressed again in the 1995 National Park Service Comprehensive Management Plan for the MNRRA. The plan set forth policies for a coordinated effort to protect the unique features of the MNRRA corridor, which covers the same stretch of the river as the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA), from approximately the Crow River to the Vermillion River in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Together, these programs addressed a wide range of issues including river uses, sustainable economic development, and interpretation and visitor services, but stressed the protection of scenic and aesthetic vistas, which MNRRA considers some of the most highly valued resources in the park.

Protection of vistas and viewsheds has become a matter of increasing concern in recent years as the pace of development has accelerated and more significant scenic views have been impacted in a manner that does not benefit the byway experience. To address development pressure as a potential threat to the Mississippi River Corridor, the DNR’s 2004 Mississippi Scenic Riverway Management Plan recognizes development can reduce the overall scenic quality of the river through tree clearing, and building placement.⁰³⁻²

In 2007, the Minnesota legislature directed DNR to prepare a report on the status of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA). The act (Laws of Minnesota 2007, Ch. 57, Art. I, Sec. 4, Subd. 8) specified that the DNR commissioner was to

03-1 <http://mississippiheadwaters.org/files/resources/Moving%20the%20Needle%20Campaign%20template.pdf>

03-2 http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/wild_scenic/missplan_07-01-2004.pdf

make “recommendations that adequately protect and manage the aesthetic integrity and natural environment of the river corridor.”

Issued in January 2008, the report was based on surveys of communities in the MRCCA, DNR administrative review, consultation with the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, and stakeholder meetings convened by the Friends of the Mississippi River, in which MnDOT participated as the byway representative. Additional input was secured from Metropolitan Council and MNRRA.

Under the plan, DNR is charged with reviewing plans, ordinances, and amendments affecting lands within the corridor to ensure consistency with the standards as well as reviewing development proposals that require a hearing. The Metropolitan Council also reviews plans and provides technical assistance to communities in adopting or amending plans. The National Park Service (NPS) coordinates with the two agencies and encourages local government units to meet MRCCA standards and to incorporate MNRRA policies into their plans. Local government units are required to adopt regulations or ordinances that address MRCCA land use issues including aesthetic quality protection and view preservation among other items such as erosion and protection of surface water areas.

To facilitate this framework, in 2009 the Minnesota legislature directed the DNR to begin drafting MRCCA rules. In January 2014, a report on the rulemaking status was published for the Legislature. As of the time of this CMP report the final draft rules are being reviewed.

In its 2013 “State of the Park” report, park managers noted the MNRRA was experiencing increasing pressure from land uses associated with urban development, but admitted “protecting key visual resources is difficult, since MNRRA does not own much land and has very little regulatory authority.”

To more empirically and quickly review and comment on proposed development the NPS recognized the need for an assessment tool and development of a database of MNRRA scenic resources and their baseline qualities. MNRRA now has a Visual Resource Protection Plan (VRPP) to identify and protect high-quality views within the MNRRA/MRCCA boundaries. The MNRRA VRPP is a partnership with the MN-MRPC, funded in part by a National Scenic Byways grant. The aim is to develop a plan that will “preserve, protect, and enhance views along the Mississippi River and surrounding area.” Applying the results statewide along the Great River Road is another goal, and is furthered by this CMP project.



▲ **ABOVE:** Mississippi River near Ball Club



▲ ABOVE: View nomination and assessment forms

The VRPP project developed a baseline inventory that could be consistently applied throughout the project area and a methodology for assessing viewsheds and vistas. Threats and opportunities were evaluated for 50 viewpoints nominated by the public as favorite views; infrastructure improvements and land management techniques were proposed to improve the user experience at 20 of the nominated viewpoints. MN-MRPC and other byway stakeholders participated in the view evaluation process.

MNRRA used a National Park Service viewshed analysis methodology developed specifically for the VRPP project. Designed to be flexible enough for use in either rural or urban settings, the methodology uses four different data layers, each assigned numeric value, that are merged together to provide an overall value. The four datasets were:

- **Visual Character Unit (VCU):** This describes an area of land with similar visual characteristics and land use patterns. VCUs use the GIS-based National Land Cover Database produced by the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium. Each landform, vegetative cover, water, or built environment feature was given a description and a numeric value for the viewshed analysis.
- **Viewpoint Evaluation:** This assesses specific locations such as overlooks, pause points on trails, picnic areas, or other areas of high public interest based on visual experience. The specific viewpoints in the MNRRA area were selected through the public participation process and scored for cohesiveness, intactness, variety, complexity, pattern, visual interest, and uniqueness. Sites were evaluated both in “leaf on” and “leaf off” seasons.
- **Use Intensity and Duration (UID):** This takes into account that visitors experience views in different ways and for different amounts of time. For instance, a person looking out from a balcony at the Science Museum of Minnesota and a person picnicking at Harriet Island Regional Park have different experiences, even though they are both viewing the same segment of the river. UID ratings are based on two factors: use range, from low to high, and duration, from brief to extended.
- **Stability Risk Factor:** This recognizes that some landscapes are at higher risk of change than others. Using the same boundaries as the VCUs, viewsheds are rated low risk, like an area supported by zoning, or high risk, such as agricultural land subject to development.

This CMP used online and public open house “favorite view” nominations to identify views that are important to the public along the river throughout the state. The MNRRA assessment forms were consolidated into one streamlined form, which was beta-tested in the field with convention and visitor bureau staff and regional MN-MRPC members. A Great River Road view nomination form and view assessment form can be found in the **Appendix**.

3.6.3.2 OFF-PREMISE OUTDOOR ADVERTISING - BILLBOARDS

Assuring a positive visual experience while traveling National Scenic Byways is key to byway sustainability and fulfilling the mission of the MN-MRPC. While National Scenic Byway designation does not confer land use regulation or permitting authority, to encourage safeguarding scenic qualities, prior to 2012, National Scenic Byway grants required that no new off-premise outdoor advertising be permitted on the National Highway System segments of a byway, in compliance with the Highway Beautification Act.⁰³⁻³ The Act’s implementation continues with off-premise outdoor advertising permits managed by MnDOT, and local governments managing zoning that identifies where billboards are or are not allowed in each community.

To preserve, protect, and promote the Great River Road and specifically its scenic qualities, in the early 2000s MnDOT worked with 25 communities along the Great River Road that had commercial and industrial zoning to amend ordinances to no longer allow new off-premise outdoor advertising in these zones. Of the 25, two remain “gapped,” which means the communities are not eligible for National Scenic Byway grants, although the route should still be continuously and consistently signed, marketed, and managed as a part of the byway. It also means the scenic intrinsic quality, and thus the byway experience, is affected. This plan recommends working with these communities to eliminate the two remaining gaps.

3.6.3.2.1 Remaining Gapped Communities

- The City of Bena: MnDOT was not successful in making contact
- The City of Inver Grove Heights: deemed the surrounding industrial businesses were compatible with billboards

03-3 <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/billboards/files/oa-control.pdf>



▲ **ABOVE:** Clarence W. Wigington Pavilion, Raspberry Island, St. Paul



3.7 Social and Cultural Assessment

This section of the CMP provides a brief review of the social and cultural context along the Great River Road.

3.7.1 INTERPRETATION

Interpretation of the road and its intrinsic resources can provide opportunities for people to connect personally and meaningfully with a place. Each person will react in a different way. Some may connect immediately, while others may reflect on their experience later as part of their memory of the place. Interpretation creates emotional, intellectual, and even physical connections between Great River Road travelers and meanings inherent to the byway resources. Interpretation can be conveyed through a variety of tools and methods to help inspire these connections and make them memorable.

The 2000 CMP implementation included the development of an interpretive plan for Minnesota's Great River Road in 2001. While many methods of providing byway interpretation were addressed, the key strategy was to develop a roadside storybook that describes the river's stories, with a chapter in each of the 21 counties along the river in Minnesota.

Each county chapter included six panels which provided:

- A consistent overview of the 10-state and statewide context, plus a map of the county illustrating its intrinsic resources encouraging exploration around that county (one panel)
- Hydrology and geology (one panel)
- Flora and fauna (one panel)
- River-related human and natural history and sometimes its present or future story (three panels)

MRT host community interpretive panels developed as a part of this CMP effort reflect previous Great River Road interpretive panels' graphic, layout, and frame styles to reinforce them as recognizable sources of byway interpretation

Following Minnesota's Interpretive Plan, in 2004, Minnesota and the other nine river states developed a 10-state Great River Road Interpretive Plan and Tool Kit. This defined 11 major Mississippi River themes and identified which of the six FHWA intrinsic resources were applicable to each theme. The ten-state plan also initiated the Network of Great River Road Interpretive Centers. The 11 themes in **Table 3.7.1.1** were used as a framework for the resource inventory component of the CMP.

Table 3.7.1.1 10-State Great River Road Interpretive Themes

Themes
1 The Mississippi River is a ribbon of life for people, plants, and animals
2 As the river has influenced people, people have influenced the river
3 The Mississippi River has nurtured prehistoric and historic cultures
4 The Mississippi River inspires a variety of folk life, literary, fine art, and musical forms
5 The Mississippi River has profoundly shaped American history
6 The strategic importance of the Mississippi River has resulted in conflict between nations and people
7 Mississippi River architecture reflects distinctive styles affected by culture and natural resources
8 The Mississippi River is one of the world's great rivers noted for its beauty, grandeur, and diversity
9 The history of Mississippi River transportation is a dramatic story reflecting the river's economic and commercial importance
10 Mississippi River towns and cities reflect mid-19th century life
11 The Mississippi River is a working river sustaining many industries

3.7.2 EXISTING GREAT RIVER ROAD INTERPRETIVE PANELS

The CMP field survey revealed visitors desire more interpretation on the Great River Road itself so they can understand what they are seeing and experiencing. Some survey responses stated: “Need more signage and interpretive areas,” “Would like to see more information on the Ojibwe tribe,” and “Need more signs to talk about history and area. Did not know it was a scenic byway until the survey people told us.”

An interpretive sign turns facts into an experience that captures visitors’ interests, provokes their curiosity, and makes them emotionally and actively involved so they feel a part of the story and understand the significance of a site.

Many sites along the road already provide excellent interpretation including the Great River Road interpretive panels, the Network of Interpretive Centers, other park visitor centers, local museums, and other Minnesota Historical Society sites. However, visitors, MN-MRPC, PAT and public outreach tell us more interpretation directed specifically to Great River Road travelers is needed.



The purpose of Minnesota Great River Road interpretation is to:

Broaden awareness of the byway's collection of unique stories and characteristics among visitors and residents

Inspire personal stewardship and interest in preserving the characteristics that make the Great River Road special

Encourage extended length of stay and/or revisitation as visitors realize there is more to see and do

Enhance community along the byway through shared storytelling passed on to future generations

Encourage geotourism to sustain authentic river places and cultures by incorporating place- and culture-based stories and stewardship statements such as "leave only footprints" and "tread lightly"

Strengthen Great River Road brand awareness

Pass along Minnesota's and our nation's cultural and natural river heritage to the next generation

Enhance each person's enjoyment and understanding of the Mississippi River

3.7.3 DIVERSITY OF STORIES

During the inventory process, the field team noted relatively few opportunities for byway travelers to learn the roles played by many of the cultures that have contributed so much to Minnesota's identity. Only a handful of sites told the stories of the Ojibwe and Dakota Tribes that historically lived in the byway corridor and even fewer interpreted the Mississippian or other peoples that preceded them. Driving through the Leech Lake Reservation, for example, one sees the reservation boundary sign east of Bemidji, but never has an opportunity to learn more about the Leech Lake Band. Likewise, travelers pass by Mdewakanton lands at Mendota and Prairie Island without a chance to learn more about these historic communities while on the byway.

There also are limited opportunities for byway travelers to learn about the contributions of the various ethnic European groups that played pivotal roles in Minnesota's settlement. The role of the

Swedish, the Polish, and the Luxembourger are told at museums and cultural institutes off the byway, but there is little mention of them in Great River Road interpretation and limited or no signage directing byway travelers to these story-telling places.

3.7.4 AGRITOURISM

Minnesota boasts some of the nation's premier farm country and agritourism is a rapidly growing sector of heritage tourism in the state. From 2007 to 2012, almost 400 Minnesota farmers engaged in some form of agritourism; revenues grew from \$7.8 million to almost \$9 million.⁰³⁻⁴

The 2015-16 Minnesota Grown Directory boasts 1,027 farms and farmers markets. It also includes fun facts and family-friendly activity suggestions relating to agriculture.

Tribal communities play a unique role in Great River Road agritourism as wild rice, berries, maple syrup, fish, and game are closely aligned with tribal spiritual and cultural traditions. Travelers of the Great River Road can purchase native harvested food from the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, White Earth Nation and Prairie Island Indian Community.

Minnesota's wine industry is young, but growing quickly. In 1990, there were two licensed wineries in the state; today, more than 50 wineries are located throughout Minnesota, with many along the Great River Road. Wineries along the Great River Road fall within the world's largest officially designated viticultural area, the Upper Mississippi River Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA), established in 2009.

Craft brewing is one of the fastest growing industries in the United States including Minnesota, the "Land of Ten Thousand Beers." The state has a long, diverse history in the brewing industry. At one time, it boasted more than 100 small breweries that serviced their local communities. While the numbers of original commercial breweries have dwindled, numerous craft breweries have once again sprung up to serve fresh, locally produced beer, with many breweries along the Great River Road.



▲ **ABOVE:** Reads Landing Brewing Company

03-4 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Crop Reporting. "2012 Census of Agriculture, Volume 1, Chapter 2, Table 6. Income from Farm-Related Sources: 2012 and 2007." USDA: May 2014





04

THE PLAN

Previous chapters attempt to capture the breadth and depth of enrichment and enjoyment that the Mississippi River and its amenities offer Great River Road travelers, as well as the characteristics of the road itself. The truth is the river corridor is richer in resources and opportunities than is described. Features, like a now-signed Mississippi River Trail bicycle route, constantly evolve. Some benefit the byway experience, and some do not. Through this context, informed by public and stakeholder advice, the following plan for Minnesota’s Great River Road future corridor management is presented.

▲ **ABOVE:** View of Red Wing from Goodhue County History Center



Corridor Management Goals, Objectives, and Strategies developed for the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan (CMP) are based upon concepts carried over from the previous CMP, stakeholder and public input, corridor assessment, and consultant recommendations.

The Plan chapter includes five sections that support the promotion, preservation, enhancement of Mississippi River resources and development of the Great River Road to foster economic benefit. These are:

- Corridor Management Goals, Objectives, and Strategies – a summary listing of thematic goals, objectives and strategies established throughout the Corridor Management Plan process
- MN-MRPC Business Plan – addresses MN-MRPC alignment with the National MPRC Strategic Plan, organizational structure, staffing and funding, member agency contributions, and partner participation
- Education and Engagement – details internal and external communications with the MN-MRPC, MRPC, segment and amenity managers, partners, residents, businesses and byway travelers
- Facilities Management – addresses physical improvements, estimated costs, funding sources, and management guidance

4.1 Corridor Management Goals, Objectives and Strategies

4.1.1 BACKGROUND

Corridor management goals, objectives, and strategies developed for Minnesota's Great River Road Corridor Management Plan (CMP) are based upon concepts carried forward from the previous CMP, stakeholder and public input, corridor assessment, and consultant recommendations. They aim to directly support the mission of the MN-MRPC and MnDOT corridor management over the next fifteen years. Four initial projects that address crucial needs and will support implementation of the other listed strategies are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 Initial Implementation chapter.

4.1.2 PLAN FRAMEWORK

This Great River Road corridor management plan is intended to fulfill the MN-MRPC mission to preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the Mississippi River, to foster economic growth in the corridor and to develop the national, scenic and historic byway known as the Great River Road. The plan continues the tradition and necessity that corridor management be accomplished through partnerships, both internal and external.

Five thematic goals, 15 objectives, and 95 strategies are defined and organized as follows:

- Thematic Goal: General desired result the plan envisions and commits to achieve, organized by thematic area of work
- Objective: Targeted outcome or step to achieve a goal or goals
- Strategy: A means for achieving an objective or objectives

The five Great River Road corridor management themes are: Facilities Management, Technology, Education and Engagement, Placemaking, and Health and Active Living. Each theme is represented by a unique icon. Strategies fulfilling multiple thematic goals are noted in the Related Goals column.

During the plan development process, the public, Project Advisory Team and MN-MRPC concurred that all of the strategies are important and should be included within the plan. This input also established a general implementation timeframe of 0 - 5 years, 5 - 10 years, 10 - 15 years and ongoing for the strategies. The strategies are listed in order based on suggested implementation timeframe.



▲ ABOVE: Round 1 open house, Crossings Destination Area



▲ ABOVE: Round 1 open house participants prioritizing goals



4.1.3 THEMATIC GOALS

Themes	Goals
 <p>Facilities Management</p>	<p>Assure safe travel through route signage, mapping, and traveler information. Maintain the byway as a seamless travel experience that honors the Mississippi River. Provide integrated multi-modal travel options (air, rail, boat, vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian) so travelers can focus on enjoying the journey.</p>
 <p>Technology</p>	<p>Utilize technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of byway management and measure the success. Enhance the visitor experience through web-based and mobile-based technology to promote travel experiences with easy-to-use travel information. Utilize social media to share river exploration insights from travelers and byway managers alike.</p>
 <p>Education and Engagement</p>	<p>Educate byway facility managers, intrinsic resource managers, businesses and residents about the opportunities and benefits of leveraging the Great River Road as a tool to improve the State's and their community's livability and economy. Engage travelers locally and from all over the world to travel here for enriching Mississippi River exploration.</p>
 <p>Placemaking</p>	<p>Strengthen connections between the byway and the people and places that tell the story of the river. Protect, enhance, and promote the intrinsic resources available within and between communities. Develop itineraries that reflect the unique landscapes and activities offered by the Mississippi River as it flows through Minnesota.</p>
 <p>Health and Active Living</p>	<p>Promote active Mississippi River exploration that includes bicycling, walking, hiking, and boating. Promote healthy, local food options. Manage and promote the byway as a geotourism destination.</p>

4.1.4 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective	Strategies	Related Goals
<p>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</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Facilities Management</p> 	<p>1.1 Maintain and further develop the GIS Plan Your Project interactive map/database to apply a context-sensitive approach to planning, design, construction, and maintenance efforts along the Great River Road</p>	 
	<p>1.2 Digitally archive past Great River Road plans, design guides, and facility management documentation and incorporate into the Plan Your Project platform to safeguard and communicate the byway's institutional knowledge</p>	 
	<p>1.3 Train byway segment managers to use the Plan Your Project to incorporate Great River Road, Mississippi River Trail, multi-modal, visual and other intrinsic resource contexts in road and bridge scoping, design, construction, and maintenance</p>	
	<p>1.4 Coordinate management of the Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail</p>	
	<p>1.5 Work with federal, state, county, and local road management authorities to develop and implement a Great River Road scoping, design and maintenance plan and training for roads, trails, right-of-way landscape design and vegetation management, historic roadside properties, rest areas, travel information centers, scenic easements, and interpretive sites</p>	 
	<p>1.6 Work with federal, state, county, and local authorities to manage the byway right-of-way using best management practices to improve water quality, protect wildflowers and native species, promote natural reseeding, improve habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife, and support exotic species removal</p>	 
	<p>1.7 Pave the remaining gravel segment in Aitkin County</p>	
	<p>1.8 Work with the MnDOT to develop and implement a plan and schedule for ongoing review and maintenance of historic roadside properties along the byway; restore the historic roadside properties that were assessed with Chapter 152 Bonds, but not restored</p>	 
	<p>1.9 Install "Mississippi River" signs where the byway crosses the Mississippi and they are not already present</p>	 
	<p>1.10 Coordinate Trunk Highway (TH) and State Aid (SALT) system management to provide a seamless Great River Road parkway experience</p>	
	<p>1.11 Work with MnDOT, Bena, and Inver Grove Heights to eliminate the two remaining byway gaps</p>	
	<p>1.12 Encourage and facilitate new grant applications for corridor improvements by MN-MRPC, MnDOT and local partners</p>	
	<p>1.13 Redesignate stretches of the Great River Road to better highlight the river, intrinsic resources, historic river towns, and tribal culture, where appropriate</p>	 

THEMATIC GOALS:



Facilities Management



Technology



Education and Engagement



Placemaking



Health and Active Living



Objective	Strategies	Related Goals
<p>2 Strengthen connections between the byway and the people and places that tell the story of the river through byway and multimodal connections and signage</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Placemaking</p> 	<p>2.1 Improve signage for public access to the river</p>	
	<p>2.2 Enhance the Network of Great River Road Interpretive Centers by coordinating promotions</p>	
	<p>2.3 Encourage DNR, MNHS, county museums, and other interpretive facilities to apply for national Great River Road Interpretive Center designation</p>	 
	<p>2.4 Create a Great River Road Passport Club for people of all ages to earn rewards for visiting resources</p>	
	<p>2.5 Partner with local businesses and attractions to display Great River Road logos, signs and maps and/or incorporate into their online marketing</p>	
	<p>2.6 Purchase advertisements in local tourism materials that feature thematic Great River Road experiences</p>	
<p>3 Enhance the visitor experience through web-based and mobile-based technology to promote Mississippi River exploration with easy-to-use travel information</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Technology</p> 	<p>3.1 Develop Plan Your Trip with dynamic Great River Road routing for navigational purposes and/or work with mapping vendors to create a 'scenic' option that routes travelers along all designated scenic byways</p>	
	<p>3.2 Work with the national MRPC to further develop the 10-state Great River Road mobile application to add a feature that allows visitors unlock badges by visiting corridor destinations</p>	 
	<p>3.3 Develop a podcast that highlights local and unique Great River Road experiences for travelers</p>	 
	<p>3.4 Encourage cellular providers to increase 3G, 4G, and LTE coverage</p>	
	<p>3.5 Assess wi-fi gaps and encourage installation of wi-fi hotspots in Great River Road interpretive centers, local attractions, and traveler information centers where needed</p>	 
	<p>3.6 Use URLs and QR codes on interpretive panels to link visitors to more information online</p>	 
	<p>3.7 Drive travelers to the www.mnmississippiriver.com website and social media platforms</p>	

THEMATIC GOALS:



Facilities Management



Technology



Education and Engagement



Placemaking



Health and Active Living



Objective	Strategies	Related Goals
<p>4 Further develop and enhance Great River Road-related information services and technology</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Technology</p> 	<p>4.1 Partner with MnDOT to host and manage Plan Your Project and Plan Your Trip mapping linked to www.mnmississippiriver.com.</p>	 
	<p>4.2 Update and manage location-specific Great River Road data, resource and signage inventories and planning documents, on an ongoing basis to maintain the Plan Your Project and Plan Your Trip interactive mapping tools</p>	 
	<p>4.3 Refine online mapping and website as a multi-platform, fully responsive website that works for computers, tablets, and mobile devices</p>	
	<p>4.4 Continuously refine the drivable and printable mapping on the Great River Road website as technology and data evolves</p>	
	<p>4.5 Work with MnDOT, including Mississippi River Trail, and other MN-MRPC agencies to continue coordination of online mapping tools and partner agency databases</p>	
	<p>4.6 Coordinate with MnDOT to include the Great River Road in discussions with Google and other mapping platforms to incorporate the byway and the Mississippi River Trail in their online mapping products</p>	
	<p>4.7 Use search engine optimization to ensure the Great River Road is appearing to those seeking Mississippi River experiences or information</p>	
<p>5 Manage and promote the Great River Road as a geotourism destination</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Health and Active Living</p> 	<p>5.1 Encourage tourism and resource management that sustains or enhances the geographical character of the Mississippi River and the byway—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of residents</p>	
	<p>5.2 Partner with the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative to develop and promote www.mississippiriver.natgeotourism.com</p>	
	<p>5.3 Work with convention and visitor bureaus to identify and promote businesses and intrinsic resources that 1) do no harm, 2) protect the river, 3) conserve resources, 4) respect local culture and tradition, and 4) aim for quality—not quantity</p>	

THEMATIC GOALS:



Facilities Management



Technology



Education and Engagement



Placemaking



Health and Active Living



Objective	Strategies	Related Goals
<p>6 Assure safe travel through route signage, mapping, and traveler information</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Facilities Management</p> 	<p>6.1 Develop and implement a plan to install consistent and continuous Great River Road Pilot's Wheel wayshowing signage to address the 22 percent of signs missing and 32 percent that are past their useful life</p>	
	<p>6.2 Develop and implement a plan and schedule for ongoing review and maintenance of wayshowing signage utilizing the MUTCD for guidance and coordinate with the Mississippi River Trail on sign placement and management</p>	
	<p>6.3 Use STIP and SALT GIS data to track federal, state, and local roadway projects and identify opportunities to install and maintain consistent and continuous Great River Road Pilot's Wheel wayshowing signage</p>	
	<p>6.4 Provide a printable and printed drivable map highlighting each destination area in addition to online interactive maps</p>	
	<p>6.5 Complete the Roadside Storybook project from the 2001 Minnesota Great River Road Interpretive Plan including new content for the three tribal nations, repair or replace existing interpretive panels that are damaged and worn, and develop/install remaining panels included in the interpretive plan</p>	
	<p>6.6 Work with MnDOT, EMT, and local CVBs to encourage weekend staffing of travel information centers, stock with Great River Road collateral materials, and provide Great River Road hospitality training for staff</p>	
<p>7 Protect, enhance, and promote the intrinsic resources available within and between communities</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Placemaking</p> 	<p>7.1 Develop byway design guidance to encourage federal, state, and local authorities as well as private landowners to promote use of native vegetation, control exotic and invasive species, screen or bury utility structures, establish setbacks and landscape screening, etc. to protect and enhance scenic views from the byway, bikeway, and blueway</p>	
	<p>7.2 Solicit Great River Road Visual Resource Protection nominations from the general public and invite those who are responsible for preserving, enhancing, and promoting scenic resources to participate with the assessment process and apply the results</p>	
	<p>7.3 Support intrinsic resource protection and enhancement by informing land use decision making about the byway context of those resources</p>	
	<p>7.4 Encourage land owners to establish conservation easements or use other tools for the further development and expansion of intrinsic resources</p>	
	<p>7.5 Support state and local purchase of land to increase intrinsic resource protection and enhancement along the corridor</p>	

THEMATIC GOALS:



Objective	Strategies	Related Goals
<p>7 <i>continued</i> Protect, enhance, and promote the intrinsic resources available within and between communities</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Placemaking</p> 	<p>7.6 Use the Plan Your Project mapping tool to assess and communicate potential development impacts to the byway, its intrinsic resources, and the byway traveler</p> <p>7.7 Partner with agencies on promotion initiatives, such as the National Park Service's Find Your Park, MnDNR's I Can, and MNHS's Get Out and Go! campaigns</p>	 
<p>8 Promote healthy, local food options</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Health and Active Living</p> 	<p>8.1 Identify and partner with Mississippi River valley wine, beer, and spirits businesses to promote their locally produced products</p> <p>8.2 Promote Minnesota Grown farmers markets, community-supported agriculture farms, garden centers, wineries, fruit and vegetable growers, pick-your-own farms, livestock producers, meat processors, Christmas tree growers, and producers of honey, wild rice, maple syrup, cheese, and other gourmet products</p> <p>8.3 Work with convention and visitor bureaus to identify local restaurants, groceries, and other food venues that promote healthy food options or specialties</p>	    
<p>9 Engage diverse populations of all ages, locally and afar, to experience the Mississippi River</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Education and Engagement</p> 	<p>9.1 Encourage people of all ages to explore the Mississippi's parkway</p> <p>9.2 Partner with tribal nations to develop itineraries that provide tribal and public access to native story and place; safeguarding sacred or endangered resources for tribal access only</p> <p>9.3 Leverage CMP Project Advisory Team agency efforts that improve diversity- and age-related engagement</p> <p>9.4 Provide traveler feedback opportunities so visitors can help promote byway travel and offer suggestions for improvement</p>	 

THEMATIC GOALS:



Facilities Management



Technology



Education and Engagement



Placemaking



Health and Active Living



Objective	Strategies	Related Goals
<p>10 Promote active Mississippi River exploration that includes bicycling, walking, hiking, and boating</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Health and Active Living</p> 	<p>10.1 Develop and/or publicize itineraries for mountain, road, and family-friendly bicycling, paddling, walking, hiking, golfing, birding, hunting, fishing, photography, and other river-focused activities using the Plan Your Trip tool</p>	 
	<p>10.2 Highlight the connection between the health of the river and the health of people</p>	
	<p>10.3 Partner with bicycle share programs across the state to increase the pick-up and drop-off locations adjacent to the Great River Road or the Mississippi River Trail</p>	
	<p>10.4 Leverage Minnesota Department of Health initiatives to increase and improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodation along the Great River Road</p>	
	<p>10.5 Encourage businesses to be more bicycle-friendly by offering bicycle parking adjacent to their businesses</p>	
	<p>10.6 Explore the expansion of www.rivertripplanner.org statewide along the byway to promote Northstar, METRO Green and Blue Lines, other local transit, airport, water ports, and Amtrak as multimodal travel options, in addition to bicycling along the Mississippi River</p>	
	<p>10.7 Work with Amtrak to revise their bicycle policy (bicycles are currently allowed only in bike boxes—they cannot be carried on board)</p>	
	<p>10.8 Work with Rochester Destination Medical Center and healthcare providers to develop “prescriptions” for targeted activity options available along the Great River Road as an aid in managing health and to enhance daily routines for residents and travelers alike</p>	
	<p>10.9 Partner with Pedal MN and other multimodal advocacy and nonprofit organizations to encourage Great River Road/Mississippi River Trail bicycling, walking, hiking and alternative transportation</p>	

THEMATIC GOALS:



Facilities Management



Technology



Education and Engagement



Placemaking



Health and Active Living



Objective	Strategies	Related Goals
<p>11 Educate byway facility managers, intrinsic resource managers, businesses, and residents about the opportunities and benefits of leveraging the Great River Road as a tool to improve the state's and their community's livability and economy</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Education and Engagement</p> 	<p>11.1 Partner with tribal nations to promote the sharing of culture through oral history and storytelling</p>	
	<p>11.2 Partner with colleges and universities in river communities to conduct and share byway management-related river corridor studies, research, and activities and to develop byway management curriculum for engineering, planning, landscape architecture, and intrinsic resource management coursework</p>	
	<p>11.3 Collaborate with federal, state, county, and local owners of forest areas to provide improved interpretation and public information on ecological and economic values of sustainable forest management techniques</p>	
	<p>11.4 Conduct Great River Road hospitality training for staff at Great River Road interpretive centers, MNHS, and DNR sites as well as MnDOT Travel Information Centers, other EMT welcome centers, and local tourist information centers</p>	 
	<p>11.5 Educate property owners and visitors on vegetative buffers and pollinator gardens to help minimize runoff and increase habitat</p>	
	<p>11.6 Partner with non-profits and environmental advocacy groups to encourage volunteerism that preserves, enhances, or promotes the byway and its intrinsic resources</p>	
	<p>11.7 Establish a map and signage plan for Great River Road wildflower sites to increase awareness, enjoyment and stewardship</p>	
	<p>11.8 Utilize the Regional Citizen Committees and destination areas to organize local implementation of the Corridor Management Plan and to elect Regional Commissioners</p>	
	<p>11.9 Educate MN-MRPC members through participation at MRPC meetings and encourage Minnesota partners to attend or present on their related work</p>	

THEMATIC GOALS:



Facilities Management



Technology



Education and Engagement



Placemaking



Health and Active Living



Objective	Strategies	Related Goals
<p>12 Utilize technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of byway management and measure the success</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Technology</p> 	<p>12.1 Incorporate and maintain links to MN-MRPC member and other partner agency datasets in the Plan Your Project tool</p>	
	<p>12.2 Train byway managers and partner agencies to use the Plan Your Project tool to analyze and connect existing and potential modal resources during project scoping and design</p>	 
	<p>12.3 Use MN-MRPC member agency websites to enhance Great River Road promotion and inter-agency cross-promotion</p>	
	<p>12.4 Respond to mail, email, phone, and web-based travel inquiries and track to measure inquiry trends and assure adequate staffing</p>	
	<p>12.5 Utilize technology to communicate between five MnDOT districts, 21 counties, 43 communities, and three tribes, as well as MN-MRPC members and agency staff</p>	
<p>13 Utilize social media and other web-based platforms to share river exploration insights from travelers and byway managers alike</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Technology</p> 	<p>13.1 Use Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to share stories, photos, and videos of Great River Road experiences</p>	 
	<p>13.2 Build Pinterest content that relates and links to the Plan Your Trip online mapping and encourage private businesses along the byway to contribute with their own Great River Road themed “Pins”</p>	 
	<p>13.3 Use ESRI’s Story Map—an online, interactive application—to share geolocated photos and stories</p>	 

THEMATIC GOALS:



Facilities Management



Technology



Education and Engagement



Placemaking



Health and Active Living



Objective	Strategies	Related Goals
<p>14 Train public agencies, private businesses, residents, and visitors to be Great River Road Ambassadors that promote the byway's many unique and enriching intrinsic resources</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Education and Engagement</p> 	<p>14.1 Educate river community leaders and stakeholders on how to maximize the effectiveness of the Great River Road for local benefit</p>	
	<p>14.2 Develop Ambassador byway tours to engage and educate targeted ambassador audiences</p>	
	<p>14.3 Provide online and in-person Great River Road Ambassador Development training for private businesses, residents and public agencies</p>	
	<p>14.4 Collaborate with convention and visitor's bureaus/chambers to facilitate joint activities and promotion</p>	
<p>15 Provide integrated multimodal travel options (air, rail, boat, vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) so travelers can focus on enjoying the journey</p> <p>PRIMARY GOAL Facilities Management</p> 	<p>15.1 Maintain and refine the GIS Plan Your Project and Plan Your Trip interactive maps for facility management and traveler use, respectively, to illustrate existing and potential modal resources</p>	 
	<p>15.2 Use STIP and SALT GIS data to track and inform federal, state, tribal and local roadway and trail projects to identify opportunities for multimodal facility/travel coordination</p>	 
	<p>15.3 Institute Complete Streets principles in reconstruction and rehabilitation projects along the Great River Road to facilitate coordinated multimodal travel options in a parkway setting</p>	 
	<p>15.4 Manage the route to maintain safe, multimodal access to byway intrinsic resources</p>	 
	<p>15.5 Include sidewalks, trails, bicycle lanes, and/or shoulders in road and bridge improvement plans</p>	 
	<p>15.6 Utilize the Hennepin County Active Living Toolkit as a multimodal reference when implementing route improvements</p>	
	<p>15.7 Partner with Amtrak, Metro Transit, outstate transit operators, Mississippi River cruise lines, and Minnesota airports to encourage Great River Road exploration</p>	
	<p>15.8 Partner with Blue Cross Blue Shield's Active Living Initiative to make infrastructure improvements</p>	



The spirit of the 2000 CMP and previous ten-state and Minnesota Great River Road guidance lives on in this plan, maintaining a focus on protecting, promoting, and enhancing the Great River Road, the Mississippi River and its corridor communities.

4.2 MN-MRPC Business Plan

The MN-MRPC Business Plan provides recommendations to sustain and strengthen the organization and the Great River Road, and to assure CMP implementation.

4.2.1 10-STATE MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION

The MN-MRPC is part of the larger 10-state National MRPC, which represents the Great River Road in all 10 states through which the Mississippi River flows. Minnesota statute acknowledges the MN-MRPC has national responsibilities as part of this 10-state group. Implementation of the 2015-2017 National MRPC Strategic Plan within the State of Minnesota is integrated in the goals, objectives and strategies of this CMP.

4.2.1.1 2015-2017 MRPC STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

- Educate and advocate to policy makers about the opportunities and threats to the GRR and its amenities
- Continue involvement in the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative (MRCC) Geotourism project
- Expand existing partnerships and create new partnerships
- Improve the name recognition (branding) of the Great River Road
- Increase the economic impact of overnight travel in Great River Road communities
- Support 10 states with full funding and full membership
- Further develop the Great River Road Network of Interpretive Centers
- Improve www.mrpcmembers.com as an archive and vehicle for strategic plan implementation and partner participation
- Develop a 10-state corridor management plan

4.2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

MRPC Participation

Provide fiscal support and permission to travel to MRPC Annual and Semi-Annual meetings to assure Commissioners, technical members and staff are knowledgeable about the ten-state context, develop relationships and synergy to actively support Strategic Plan

implementation, and position Minnesota to leverage ten-state accomplishments.

MN-MRPC Committee Structure

Adopt the MRPC standing committee structure to improve efficiency and leverage increased value from coordinated implementation of both the MRPC Strategic Plan and this CMP. Standing MRPC committees are: Executive; Transportation; Communications and Marketing; Culture and Heritage; and Environment, Recreation and Agriculture.

4.2.2 MN-MRPC ORGANIZATION AND MISSION

The MN-MRPC is defined by Minnesota Statute 161.1419. It currently includes 15 voting members, one part-time staff person, and technical members who work to fulfill their mission to “preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the Mississippi River, to foster economic growth in the corridor and to develop the national, scenic and historic byway known as the Great River Road.”

MN-MRPC work includes managing, as well as supporting others who manage, the planning, construction, maintenance, improvement and promotion of the Great River Road and its amenities. The organization utilizes a limited state-funded budget to leverage a broad range of technical resources and grants, working closely with its member agencies, federal, county and local governments, non-profits, and other stakeholders.

Since its inception, the MN-MRPC has worked to develop and implement a series of national and Minnesota corridor management plans and parkway design guides. Additionally, it has developed and supported byway capital improvement projects, interpretation plans and projects, ongoing marketing as well as intrinsic resource preservation, enhancement and promotion. The MN-MRPC serves Minnesota in a non-partisan manner. It enjoys the mindful support of the legislature, citizen members, five state agencies, and the National Park Service, each participating because cooperatively their respective missions are better met because of Great River Road benefits.



National Mississippi River Parkway Commission States



MN-MRPC serves Minnesota in a non-partisan manner and enjoys the mindful support of the legislature, citizen members, five state agencies, and a National Park who participate because cooperatively their respective missions are better met because of Great River Road benefits.

While this work has been accomplished with the help of all Commission members, Minnesota Statute 161.1412 assigns responsibility for managing the Great River Road to MnDOT because it is first and foremost a series of roads in the very complex nationwide Mississippi River transportation corridor. MnDOT works in partnership with MN-MRPC and MRPC to provide a continuous, safe, recognizable 10-state parkway providing access to America's Mississippi River.

4.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

MN-MRPC Organization and Mission

During the CMP development process, the Minnesota and National MRPCs and the Project Advisory Team confirmed that MN-MRPC mission, membership and organizational structure requires no revision in order to guide the next 15 years of Great River Road corridor management.

MN-MRPC Term

Explore longer terms or establish the Commission in permanence. The MN-MRPC is scheduled to sunset in 2020. The current short timeframe brings uncertainty to Commission funding, staffing and multi-year and phased project implementation. Further, potential grant opportunities may be precluded when sunset asserts the Commission will not exist to carry out proposed projects over the fifteen years this CMP encompasses.

MN-MRPC Highway Purpose

Revise MN Statute 161.20 Subd. 3 to delete "Mississippi River Parkway Commission" as the Commission actively and in an on-going manner does further a highway purpose and does aid in the construction, improvement, or maintenance of the highway system.

4.2.2.1 MEMBER AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS

MN-MRPC member agency contributions vary by expertise and resources needed to accomplish corridor management plan implementation. The following recommendations offer opportunities for each member agency to:

- Leverage CMP implementation outcomes from work they are already doing
- Improve inter-agency coordination
- Plan for additional targeted effort to achieve new mutually beneficial outcomes identified in this plan

4.2.2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.2.1.1 Minnesota Department of Agriculture

As a member of the MN-MRPC helping to implement this CMP the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) can:

Help develop and maintain the “Plan Your Project” and “Plan Your Trip” tools.

Participate in Ambassador Development within its Minnesota Grown membership

Promote agritourism itineraries in the Great River Road corridor

Develop Great River Road promotions and partnerships with Minnesota Grown pick-your-own operations, tours on working farms, roadside farm stands, harvest festivals, bed and breakfasts, and farmers markets

Link the “Plan Your Trip” interactive mapping tool to websites such as Minnesota Grown, the agritourism sections at Explore Minnesota, MRPC, and local tourism agency websites to broaden the byway’s outreach to visitors seeking agritourism experiences.

Market byway corridor wineries, breweries and distilleries as agritourism attractions by:

- Encourage corridor wineries, breweries, and distilleries to become Minnesota Grown members
- Develop a Great River Road/Mississippi River valley region on the Minnesota Grape Growers Association (MGGA) “Locate a Winery” map and/or link on the Plan Your Trip map
- Promote the MGGA’s Wine Passport that offers free tastings and other benefits at selected wineries, eight of which are located along the Great River Road
- Promote the “Lake Pepin Wine Trail” to showcase the Flower Valley and Great River Vineyards in the Bluffs destination area
- With the Minnesota Craft Brewers Guild develop a Great River Road craft brewery tour/region on their interactive map of breweries. and list the Great River Road as a “Brewcations” region, as well as link to the “Plan Your Trip” interactive map
- Promote farm- and food-related festivals, such as the Wild Rice Festival in Deer River, the Great Minnesota Pie Extravaganza at the Forest History Center in Grand Rapids, and Brainerd’s Country Sampler, county fairs and the Minnesota State Fair

CMP recommendations offer opportunities for each MN-MRPC member agency to:

- Leverage CMP implementation outcomes from work they are already doing
- Improve inter-agency coordination
- Plan for additional targeted effort to achieve new mutually beneficial outcomes identified in the CMP

MDA mission:

Enhance Minnesotans’ quality of life by ensuring the integrity of our food supply, the health of our environment, and the strength of our agricultural economy



MnDNR mission:

- Work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources
- Provide outdoor recreation opportunities
- Provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life
- Encourage economic growth through multimodal transportation

EMT mission:

Promote and facilitate travel to and within the state of Minnesota by marketing Minnesota tourism, including destinations, lodging, museums, attractions, restaurants, events and outdoor recreation, to consumers.

Develop CMP strategies to educate byway stakeholders about using vegetative buffers and pollinator gardens to help minimize runoff and increase habitat along the Great River Road

4.2.2.1.2 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

As a member of the MN-MRPC helping to implement this CMP the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can:

Apply for national Great River Road Interpretive Center designation for Minnesota DNR parks, forests and trails along the Mississippi River that are not already so designated

Use the CMP to support the state and local purchase of land for intrinsic resource protection along the Mississippi River corridor

Help develop and maintain the “Plan Your Project” and “Plan Your Trip” tools

Use the DNR “I Can” campaign to promote destinations and activities along the Great River Road

Help develop DNR facility staff as Great River Road Ambassadors to promote byway exploration to enrich the experience of those visiting their sites and encourage revisitation

4.2.2.1.3 Explore Minnesota Tourism

As a member of the MN-MRPC helping to implement this CMP Explore Minnesota Tourism (EMT) can:

Help develop and maintain the “Plan Your Project” and “Plan Your Trip” tools

Promote the Mississippi River Headwaters as one of Minnesota's top tourist attractions

Lead collaboration with convention and visitors bureaus to promote the Great River Road

Feature a standing Great River Road session at the Annual Tourism Conference

Lead new initiatives, such as a Great River Road Passport Club

Provide a podcast that highlights local and unique experiences for travelers along the Great River Road

Introduce the Great River Road to more diverse populations through EMT outreach initiatives

Interact with and promote the Great River Road on social media

Research and analyze EMT priorities and work in common with the MN-MRPC to facilitate funding and technical support partnerships

List Great River Road amenities and activities under the following www.ExploreMinnesota.com drop-down menus:

- ▶ Places to Stay
- ▶ Things to Do
- ▶ Where to Go
- ▶ Drink and Eat
- ▶ Festivals and Events
- ▶ Ideas and Resources
- ▶ Wine, Beer and Spirits Tours

4.2.2.1.4 Minnesota Historical Society

As a member of the MN-MRPC helping to implement this CMP the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) can:

Apply for national Great River Road Interpretive Center designations for the remaining undesignated MNHS sites along the Mississippi River

Help develop MNHS facility staff as Great River Road Ambassadors so they promote byway exploration to enrich the experience of those visiting their sites and encourage revisitation

Help develop and maintain the “Plan Your Project” and “Plan Your Trip” tools

Promote MNHS’s “Get Out and Go!” campaign on the “Plan Your Trip” interactive mapping tool

Promote or provide technical assistance and sharing of best practices that preserve, enhance and promote the byway’s historic and archaeological resources

Convene Great River Road historic resource training workshops including the Institute for Museum Services, American Association for State and Local History, or other organizations in communities along the byway

Provide technical assistance to archive Great River Road institutional knowledge and make available through the Plan Your Project tool

MNHS mission:

Using the power of history to transform lives by

- Preserving
- Sharing
- Connecting

Interpretation connects visitors with the meaning of the places they visit along Minnesota’s Great River Road.



Minnesota GO envisions a multimodal transportation system that maximizes the health of people, the environment, and our economy.

4.2.2.1.5 Minnesota Department of Transportation

Reflecting its statutory responsibilities individually and as a member of the MN-MRPC helping to implement this CMP the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) can:

Use this CMP to manage the Great River Road in coordination with the MN-MRPC, the MRPC and the byway’s many jurisdictional partners

Develop CMP implementation strategies and innovative tools to realize the Minnesota GO vision of a multimodal transportation system that maximizes the health of people, the environment, and our economy along 565 miles of roads and more than 800 miles of Mississippi River Trail

Use the CMP to inform management of the state-wide scenic byway system

Use Great River Road CMP initial implementation activities as examples or grow into tools serving Minnesota’s 20 other scenic byways.

Enhance implementation of this CMP by applying examples of success from 17 Minnesota byway corridor management plan updates completed in 2015

Use this CMP to inform a proposed system of state bikeways described in the Statewide Bicycle System Plan, specifically encouraging ongoing Great River Road coordination by MnDOT, EMT and DNR related to Mississippi River Trail corridor management

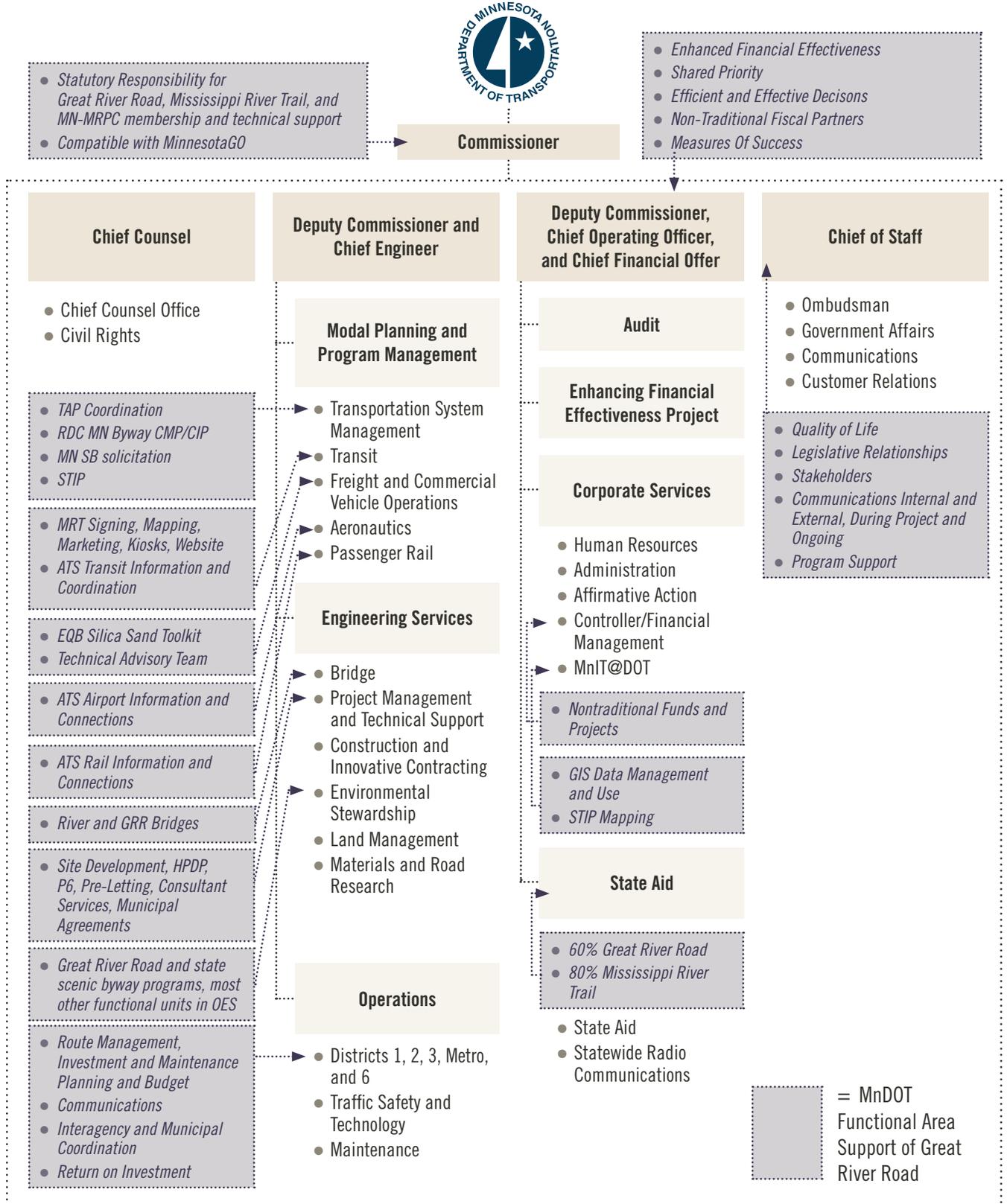


▲ ABOVE: Pilot’s Wheel and National Route Wayshowing Signage

Table 4.2.2.1.5 Areas of MnDOT Concern

Concern	How it will be addressed
54 percent missing or deficient wayshowing signs	Develop the “Plan Your Project” tool to assess opportunities to address the current wayshowing deficiencies as maintenance and/or construction and to assure long-term wayshowing system integrity.
Lost institutional knowledge	Develop the “Plan Your Project” tool to include archived plans, design guides and contextual documents for application in scoping, design, construction and maintenance.
A national route that is 40 percent state, 60 percent local and includes tourists as an intended user group	Develop a tourism modal plan to provide a seamless travel experience by integrating state and local jurisdictional responsibility as well as bicycle, pedestrian, transit, boat, air, and rail modes as seen through the lens of a tourist.

MnDOT Organizational Support of the Great River Road



MnDOT Environmental Stewardship’s mission:

- Protect and preserve the quality of our environment
- Support healthy communities
- Conserve natural resources
- Encourage economic growth through multimodal transportation

Leverage the full range of MnDOT’s technical expertise annotated on the MnDOT organization chart

Support MnDOT’s scenic byway and Great River Road program management as led by the Office of Environmental Stewardship (OES)

Use this CMP to help fulfill OES’s mission to provide environmental resources for pre-construction, construction, and maintenance of state highways, roadsides, mass transit systems, and more to:

- Protect and preserve the quality of our environment
- Support healthy communities
- Conserve natural resources
- Encourage economic growth through multimodal transportation

Use CMP implementation to address wayshowing, institutional knowledge and tourists’ needs, concerns identified using a MnDOT conflict scoping process during the CMP development that examined potential corridor management conflicts, both internal and external, as summarized in Table 4.2.2.1.5 Areas of MnDOT Concern

Integrate tourism modal plan findings into the MnDOT family of modal plans bridging state, local, and multimodal systems to present Minnesota’s Great River Road as a seamless, enjoyable, and safe travel experience facilitating further economic development and improving quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Target MnDOT’s resources to better serve the tourism segment of Minnesota’s economy, which in 2013 was a \$13 billion industry with 250,000 employees and 69 million person-trips⁰⁴⁻¹.

Use this CMP to align MnDOT with FAST Act’s new National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure and inform the National Travel and Tourism Infrastructure Strategic Plan.

4.2.2.2 REGIONAL CITIZEN COMMITTEES

Regional citizen committees are intended to include representatives from chambers of commerce and tourism/convention and visitors bureaus, managers of historical, recreational and natural resources, local government representatives, media, community development foundations and planning organizations, and tourist-related businesses along the byway. These committees enable participation by citizens who are interested in supporting the Great River Road,

04-1 Source: Explore Minnesota Tourism “Tourism and the Economy 2015. Fact Sheet” January 29, 2015

but are unable to travel to MN-MRPC meetings, or are interested in supporting specific CMP strategy implementation locally rather than the broad range of MN-MRPC state-wide responsibilities. The five regional committees will be a useful local forum for public and private collaboration and will work with the MN-MRPC through their Regional Commissioners. Regional Citizen Committees help both local economies and quality of life, as well as benefit the byway corridor as a whole.

Emphasizing the Regional Citizen Committees will help implementation of the CMP leverage greater value to each region.

4.2.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

MN-MRPC Regional Citizen Committees

Increase the use of Regional Citizen Committees to help implement the CMP, facilitate MN-MRPC sustainability and improve local results. Consider incorporating attributes that the suggested “Friends” group could provide, as described below to enhance MN-MRPC Regional Citizen Committee function and sustainability.

4.2.2.3 CMP PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM MEMBERS

The MN-MRPC established a PAT comprised of 16 members representing tribal communities along the river, Federal and state agencies and a non-profit with missions complementary to the MN-MRPC’s (see Chapter 2, Support and Participation). This expert team was organized to guide the CMP process, assessment and recommendations.

4.2.2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing Project Advisory Committee Participation

Incorporate the Project Advisory Committee member or agency expertise into the Regional Citizen Committee membership to ensure their ongoing advice and encourage implementation assistance. Valuable coordination in the conservation, promotion, and development of byway attributes and resources will result. Coordination could include: federal or tribal land managers applying for specific grants that the MN-MRPC, state agencies or local governments cannot; byway resource managers along the corridor jointly developing a byway passport promotion; or events coordinated featuring multiple public lands.

4.2.2.4 TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

The Great River Road passes through or near the White Earth Nation, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and Prairie Island Indian Community reservations. The Sovereign Nation of Red Lake, and the



Partnerships with native communities would help ensure that a critical part of the Great River Road story is properly presented to byway visitors and encourage tourism opportunities on tribal lands.

Mille Lacs Reservation are also partially located in byway corridor counties. To better understand how these communities can benefit from Great River Road corridor management and how byway travelers can be enriched by tribal stories and places, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and White Earth Nation, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and Prairie Island Indian Community representatives served on the Project Advisory Team.

This CMP includes specific recommended strategies regarding additional interpretation developed in conjunction with the tribal nations, multimodal trail improvements to benefit residents and travelers alike, and rerouting the byway through the Prairie Island Indian Community.

4.2.2.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing Tribal Community Participation

Maintain and grow ongoing corridor management partnerships with the tribal communities to help ensure that an authentic and compelling part of the Great River Road story is properly presented to byway visitors, that appropriate byway tourism opportunities on tribal lands are developed and encouraged with the caveat that any development honors traditional tribal uses, and that multimodal enhancements providing access to river resources serve residents and tourists alike.

4.2.2.5 FRIENDS OF THE GREAT RIVER ROAD

A “Friends of the Great River Road” group with membership from along the state byway corridor could include residents and businesses within corridor counties, interested byway travelers and others invested in the river corridor. The group could raise funds for Great River Road projects and facilitate promotions; advocate for byway-related legislation; and hold seasonal or annual events such as clean-up days, special trips or tours, and seasonal food tours—many that may be limited by the current MN-MRPC structure or work load.

This group could be funded by member fees or other similar sources reinforcing a local ownership. A member-driven Friends group with active business participation could place an increased emphasis on economic development associated with the corridor, particularly with the river communities that act as gateways to the Great River Road Destination Areas. Another advantage of the group (if structured as a tax exempt non-profit organization such as a 501(c)(3)) is the



▲ **ABOVE: Beaver lodge along Wilderness Drive at Itasca State Park**

ability to apply for and receive donations, grants and other sources of funding that may not be accessible to the MN-MRPC and could serve as matching funds for grants.

4.2.2.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Friends of the Great River Road

Consider adding a Friends group or incorporate the desired Friends group functionality to the Regional Citizen Committees.

4.2.3 MN-MRPC MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

The MN-MRPC coordinates efforts on federal, state, and local levels to leverage millions of dollars for highway improvements, land and water trails, bikeways, scenic overlooks, and historic preservation. Recent efforts include MRT wayshowing signage, historic wayside restorations and informing highway development context.

Through the 10 states MN-MRPC partners on domestic and international marketing through Mississippi River Country USA, Minnesota marketing in cooperation with Explore Minnesota Tourism, byway marketing with other Minnesota Scenic Byways and has participated in river community marketing efforts, in addition to Minnesota Great River Road marketing and the www.mnmississippiriver.com website.

The MN-MRPC and MnDOT developed and have implemented some of the work identified in the 2001 Minnesota Great River Road interpretive plan, and the 2002 ten-state interpretive plan and toolkit. Establishing the Roadside Storybook, the six destination areas and ten-state Network of Interpretive Centers are examples of interpretive plan implementation.

MN-MRPC efforts aim to enhance economic development and Mississippi River and Great River Road resource awareness.

4.2.3.1 MN-MRPC STAFF

When the 2000 CMP was developed the MN-MRPC had four part-time staff to support the Great River Road. Current appropriations support one part-time director which the MN-MRPC contracts for and is administered under the Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC). This contract has been renewed through fiscal year 2016. LCC also provides the MN-MRPC fiscal and administrative support for ongoing operations, contracts, purchases, requests for proposals, fiscal oversight and legislative coordination.

Historically, the MN-MRPC has coordinated efforts on federal, state, and local levels to leverage millions of dollars for highway improvements, recreation trails, bikeways, scenic overlooks, interpretation, planning and historic preservation.



Per Minnesota Statute 161.1419 MnDOT provides one engineer (traditionally a licenced landscape architect) who advises with and assists the MN-MRPC in carrying out its functions and duties. MnDOT’s Great River Road Program Manager also fulfills Minnesota Statute 161.142 which includes Commissioner of Transportation establishing and locating the route or routes of the Great River Road and thereafter constructing, reconstructing, improving and maintaining same in cooperation with other state departments, public corporations and political subdivisions.

4.2.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

MN-MRPC Staff

Review the initial CMP implementation work and the Director’s role in that work, as well as ongoing operations, in advance of the next contract renewal in June 2016. Develop a business brief identifying what staff, funding and other resources are needed for implementation work. Secure adequate staff funds and other resources through the legislature or other sources. Assess staffing and resource needs annually to reflect new implementation projects as they are planned. Report implementation accomplishments to those who supported the MN-MRPC staff fiscally or in-kind.

4.2.4 MN-MRPC FUNDING

4.2.4.1 CURRENT MN-MRPC FUNDING

The Minnesota Great River Road improvements and management are currently supported by several funding sources including state appropriations and grants, as well as leveraging partner efforts that benefit the byway, river amenities and the byway traveler.

Table 4.2.4.2 Potential Byway Funding and Technical Resources

Funding and Technical Resource	Responsible Entity	Infrastructure	Non-Infrastructure
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	ATPs/MnDOT	✓	
Regional Sustainable Development Partnership	University of Minnesota		✓
Community Development Funding	DEED	✓	
Greater Minnesota Public Infrastructure Program	DEED	✓	
Explore Minnesota Grant Program	Explore Minnesota		✓
Parks and Trails Legacy Grant Program	DNR	✓	

Table 4.2.4.2. Continued

Funding and Technical Resource	Responsible Entity	Infrastructure	Non-Infrastructure
Outdoor Recreation Grant Program	DNR	✓	
Outdoor Recreation Grant Program	MnDOT	✓	
General transportation programming	MnDOT; Counties; Cities	✓	
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office	MnGeo		✓
Minnesota State Demographic Center	Admin Minnesota		✓
State Health Improvement Program (SHIP)	MDH	✓	✓
County Fair Arts Access and Cultural Heritage Grants	MDA		✓
Recreational Trails Program	DNR	✓	
Local Trail Connections Program	DNR	✓	
Regional Trail Grant Program	DNR		✓
Other DNR Grants	DNR	✓	✓
Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants	MnHS		✓
RDC Transportation Planning Grants	MnDOT/RDCs	✓	
Private Foundation Grants	Varies	✓	✓
Chambers of Commerce	Varies		✓
Byway Membership Fees	Byway groups		✓
Advertising Revenue	Byway groups		✓
Regional Arts Councils			✓
Hazard Mitigation Assistance	Federal Emergency Management Agency	✓	
Federal Land Access Program (FLAP)	Federal Highway Administration	✓	
Minnesota Design Team	American Institute of Architects - Minnesota		✓
State Historic Preservation Office Grants	MnHS		✓





▲ ABOVE: Kiosk in Mississippi Bluffs Destination area

Transparent and inclusive communication builds lasting partnerships and helps ensure efficient and effective preservation, promotion, and enhancement of the Great River Road and Mississippi River corridor.

Since the MN-MRPC’s establishment the amount and breadth of its operational and special project work has exceeded its appropriation, which in recent years has ranged from \$63,000 to \$66,000 annually. Byway management efforts have also been supported by MN-MRPC project-related grants and legislative appropriations, member agency in-kind support, and Federal, state and local transportation, marketing and interpretive funding or services.

As of the completion of the CMP project the MN-MRPC has no other grants with which to supplement their appropriation. Accordingly staff time will be reduced, as will be the ability of the MN-MRPC to implement the CMP or provide the local match required for grants that could help implement the CMP. See Table 4.2.4.2 for potential grant and technical resources that may facilitate byway management and may require a local match.

4.2.4.2 FUTURE FUNDING

While the MN-MRPC can operate from a modest state appropriation, implementing the CMP requires the appropriation be increased and/or be supplemented by ongoing or specific project in-kind resources from member agencies, local agencies and stakeholders, as well as grants.

With the elimination of the National Scenic Byway grant program, a vital resource for managing the Great River Road, new funding and technical resources will need to be identified. At a minimum the MN-MRPC appropriation will need to incorporate the local match requirements for future CMP implementation grants.

4.2.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

MN-MRPC Funding

Determine capital and staffing budget estimates for the four initial implementation strategies and other ongoing Mn-MRPC work

Identify potential technical assistance and funding sources

Secure commitments for technical assistance, appropriation and grant local matches

Apply for funds following member agency budget, grant solicitation and legislative schedules, and other resource requirements

Reassess funding needs annually as CMP implementation continues and repeat the process above to secure them

4.3 Education and Engagement

The following section builds upon the education and engagement goals, objectives and strategies listed in Section 4.1 by providing examples of implementation techniques. As illustrated in 4.1.4 these techniques can also fulfill or support Placemaking, Health and Active Living, Facilities Management and Technology outcomes.

Education and engagement strategies collectively and individually intend that the correct information is delivered to the correct people at the correct time in order to achieve mission-fulfilling outcomes.

Education and engagement is divided into two sections—internal and external. The internal section is intended for the MN-MRPC members, byway segment and river resource managers, cities, counties and tribes, and others whose work in the corridor affects the byway experience. The external section is primarily aimed toward the local businesses, residents, byway travelers and others who can benefit from corridor management awareness or byway exploration.

Regional Citizen Committees offer a direct invitation and opportunity for local residents, agencies and businesses to be involved in implementing elements of the CMP and to be a part of the MN-MRPC internal communications.

4.3.1 INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS COMMUNICATION

The following recommendations are meant to foster collaboration among partners and help MN-MRPC successfully manage and promote the Great River Road through its member agencies.

Internal communication reinforces the coordination framework between MN-MRPC, member agencies, National MRPC and partners to achieve CMP implementation and reinforce lasting partnerships that preserve, promote, and enhance the Great River Road corridor.

4.3.1.1 CURRENT INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The MN-MRPC currently meets on a quarterly basis in the State Office Building in St. Paul, MN, although from time to time meetings are held in other river communities or member facilities. Meeting agendas typically include MN-MRPC operations and finance,

Develop an “elevator speech” for the MN-MRPC and Great River Road ambassadors to explain the mission, responsibilities and current management efforts. This consistent and concise introduction will allow existing and potential partners to more quickly understand opportunities for plan implementation and related collaborations. It was recognized during the CMP process that the MN-MRPC mission is quite broad, and as such, many interactions between members and potentially interested parties can get lost in the breadth of Great River Road issues and opportunities.



Table 4.3.1.1.1 Internal Communications

Key Communicators	Target Audience	Methods
<p>MN-MRPC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed Commissioners • Technical members • MN-MRPC staff • LCC staff • Regional Citizen Committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local organizations and jurisdictions • MN-MRPC member agency supporting staff • National MRPC • Network of Interpretive Centers • Businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MN-MRPC quarterly meetings and National MRPC meetings • Phone calls • Newsletter e-mail, via Constant Contact or other listserv method • Website: updates, map tools, agenda, meeting minutes, materials and reports • On-site tours • Social media • Attend member agency meetings

Minnesota legislative session updates, National MRPC updates, capital improvement and planning project work or updates, regional and agency member updates and occasional corridor issue or request for support presentations.

Between quarterly meetings the MN-MRPC communicates through email, telephone and tele-conference, and on-site meetings as needed for day-to-day operations, MRPC and MN-MRPC project implementation and partner project support. The Commission’s website www.mnmississippiriver.com serves marketing, the CMP project development and archive purposes. The website will also serve as a CMP implementation tool.

The National MRPC hosts two in-person meetings each year. The location of the meeting, when possible, is in a community on or near the Mississippi River. Meeting locations rotate between the 10-states. The host state and National MRPC office coordinate the agenda, presentations, tours and meeting logistics. These meetings act as forums for: sharing national and state accomplishments and challenges; on-site tours to reinforce institutional knowledge; and committee time to progress on strategic plan implementation.

The National MRPC conducts committee and Board of Director teleconference meetings between on-site meetings to continue the work of the Commission and its partners. The ten-state website www.mrpcmembers.com serves meeting, committee, project and archive purposes.

The overarching objective is to communicate internally between MN-MRPC, National MRPC, member agencies and corridor management partners in a clear, informative, sustainable and engaging manner.

The CMP process revealed a need to tailor messages, internally and externally, to the subject matter expertise of the audience so they can assist or benefit from specific MN-MRPC efforts without being overwhelmed by the breadth of Commission work.

While today's economics and industry trends require use of technology to reach many with less, CMP engagement was most effective for both the Commission and local partners when on-site meetings were included.

In addition, Regional Citizen Committees can be better used to offer a direct invitation or opportunity for local agencies and businesses involved in implementing certain elements of the plan as a part of the MN-MRPC internal communications.

4.3.1.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

MN-MRPC Communications

- Maintain MN-MRPC agency buy-in and support at the highest level (beyond attending meetings) through active CMP and National MRPC strategic plan implementation collaboration
- Regularly review member agency and legislative priorities to align with and leverage value from Great River Road corridor management
- Clearly define the value of the Great River Road and the work of the MN-MRPC by developing an “elevator speech” that all Commission members know and will relay
- Enhance how local agencies and jurisdictions have a more direct line of communication and involvement with the MN-MRPC and benefit from its activities through Great River Road Ambassador Development, Plan Your Project and Plan Your Trip interactive mapping and Regional Citizen Committee participation
- Attend MRPC and partner meetings and report out to the full Commission on results and follow up actions MN-MRPC members can contribute
- Utilize on-site visits for Great River Road Ambassador Development and Regional Citizen Committees to understand partner contexts, verify byway conditions, connect the network of Interpretive Centers and understand river resources
- Report back to funding and resource partners on progress made and positive benefits of projects they have supported

Educating the public about Great River Road's economic, cultural, and historic significance will cultivate an appreciation of the road and what it means to the community.



- Tour the byway with member agency and legislative leaders to develop understanding, synergy and confirm shared priority
- Build corridor management synergy and competence amongst MN-MRPC and member agencies with a monthly newsletter that may include:
 - ▶ A “Did You Know...” section on Great River Road
 - ▶ A “How To” section with agency corridor management tips and resources, projects, best practices, etc.
 - ▶ A rotating spotlight featuring a different member agency each month and a current corridor management success
 - ▶ A frequently asked corridor management question/answer
 - ▶ A CMP question or poll (What is your favorite thing about corridor management?)
 - ▶ Updates from MN-MRPC, member agencies and MRPC
 - ▶ A suggestion box to collect (and respond to) feedback
- CMP implementation project monthly call/e-meeting with a consistent agenda where each MN-MRPC member agency reports on implementation accomplishments, coordination, partner assistance, resource needs and next month’s implementation commitments
- Demonstrate the Commission’s value of local resources by:
 - ▶ Volunteering in communities as Commissioners (e.g., Adopt the Great River Road clean ups)
 - ▶ Promoting local and member agency river stewardship events
 - ▶ Supporting the National Geographic-branded effort led by the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative, which includes the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and MRT, Inc. to promote the culture, heritage and ecological diversity of the people and places that are connected to the Mississippi River through the voices and stories of the people that live there
 - ▶ When they affect the Great River Road, participating in local comprehensive plans, river front redevelopment plans, county plans, and tribal nation plans as a way to further enhance and connect the Great River Road with local communities along the river. The following are a few examples:
 - ▶ St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan
 - ▶ Brainerd Mississippi River Partnership Plan

Conservation on a much larger scale throughout the byway corridor will be essential to maintain the core byway values and its intrinsic qualities.

- ▶ St. Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework
- ▶ RiverFirst Initiative by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, City of Minneapolis, and Minneapolis Parks Foundation
- ▶ Holding geotourism-themed photo competitions between Regional Citizen Committees featuring Great River Road eco-friendly places or activities and congratulate winners on www.mnmississippiriver.com, eblast, newsletters, social media platforms and on-site events



▲ ABOVE: View of St. Paul from Mounds Park

4.3.2 EXTERNAL PUBLIC COMMUNICATION AND TRAVEL PROMOTION

A strong foundation of internal communication will set the stage for successful external communication. External communication includes educating the general public about Great River Road’s economic, cultural, historic and future significance in order to cultivate an appreciation of the byway and its current and potential value to river communities and attractions. External communication also includes promoting travel along the Great River Road.

External communication efforts aim to benefit the byway traveler experience, directly (website, brochures, signage, interpretation) and indirectly (front desk and general public ambassadors).

Resources in the Great River Road corridor vary widely, not only by intrinsic resource type, but also in the quality of experience afforded to visitors. Some draw national attention for the quality of

Table 4.3.2.1 External Communications

Key Communicators	Target Audience	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MN-MRPC • Mn-MRPC partners • Non-member agencies • Non-profits and interest groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Byway travelers • Residents • Youth, young adults, families • Diverse populations • Tribal community members • Businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MN-MRPC quarterly meetings, and National MRPC meetings • Constant Contact or other listserv • Online publications • Websites • Social media accounts • Conversations with partners • Attend partner meetings



interpretation or exhibits; others may be difficult for byway travelers to know about or find. Many could provide a much better Mississippi River experience with improvements ranging from simple wayfinding or interpretive enhancements, to inclusion on the Plan Your Trip map, to facility renovations.

4.3.2.1 CURRENT EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Currently the MN-MRPC mostly communicates with the public, byway travelers, and residents through the Minnesota Great River Road website www.mnmississippiriver.com, email, phone, social media, printed maps and brochures, and by staffing a Great River Road booth at river-related events.

The National MRPC, EMT, and NPS' www.rivertripplanner.org websites all also provide Great River Road information and links to the MN-MRPC website. Attending local meetings that relate to byway management or affect the byway traveler experience help the Commission understand the contexts of local decision-making, funding, schedules and opportunities.

All four initial implementation projects will help support external communications. The increased use of technology is critical as a current and future means of communication. While technology can increase efficiency and effect, it will require staffing, member agency support and consultant services to develop and maintain.

The techniques listed below could help the MN-MRPC support and leverage their own and local efforts achieve state and national outcomes. Placemaking and health and active living strategy implementation are also facilitated several of the following recommendations.

4.3.2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase perceived value of Great River Road as a tool to foster economic development along the Mississippi River

- Engage Regional Citizen Committees to:
 - ▶ Continue to appoint and assist the five Regional Commissioners and to represent local interests
 - ▶ Identify current and planned local economic activities that benefit the economy, the riverfront and the Great River Road to better leverage and coordinate
 - ▶ Develop thematic tours showcasing byway intrinsic resources tailored to specific interests of visitor groups such as

- birdwatchers and watchable wildlife enthusiasts, history buffs, naturalists, campers or recreational boaters
- ▶ Use the Plan Your Trip resource inventory to populate pre-filtered thematic tour itineraries and maps
- ▶ Create thematic tour brochures or webpages for Great River Road destination areas
- ▶ Train MN-MRPC agency member front desk staff, residents and businesses to serve as Ambassadors and encourage participation in byway promotion, tours, events and hospitality activities
- ▶ Partner with local businesses and attractions to display Great River Road logos, signage or brochures and maps
- Incorporate economic impact information on the current website
 - ▶ Leverage research on scenic byway and general tourism economic impact
 - ▶ Work with cities, organizations, and businesses to use Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail as amenities to attract and retain young professionals in rural areas
- Reinforce destination areas that highlight six unique river landscapes and provide travelers targeted and preferred experiences packaged in convenient manageable segments
- Update www.mnmississippiriver.com to
 - ▶ Use technology to communicate between the five MnDOT districts, 21 counties, 43 communities, three Tribal Nations, and MN-MRPC members and agency staff
 - ▶ Incorporate dynamic design for use by PC, tablet and mobile devices to facilitate the interactive “Plan Your Trip” map to serve as Ambassador tool and travel aid
 - ▶ Improve search engine optimization so website appears when “Mississippi River” is searched
 - ▶ Consider a second domain name such as <http://www.mngreatriverroad.com/>
 - ▶ Drive travelers to www.mnmississippiriver.com in all print material, press releases, advertisements, business cards, email signatures, videos, itineraries, social media accounts, etc.
 - ▶ Create content (short blurb and link) to provide to partners to include on their websites
 - ▶ 10 Hidden Gems Along the Great River Road

Open house participant
6-Word Mississippi River,
Story: “Movement Life Art
Beauty Bridges Minnesota”





▲ **ABOVE: Great River Road signage near Brainerd**

- ▶ Why Great River Road is the Best Drive in America
- ▶ Add Great River Road logo with hyperlink on MN-MRPC agency and partner websites
- ▶ Develop content sharing website capability
- ▶ Create alerts when something new is added to the site
- Ask MN-MRPC Commissioners to include MN-MRPC website link in email signatures when conducting Commission business

Strengthen the Great River Road brand to increase its effect

- Reinforce the Mississippi Headwaters, Mississippi Northwoods, Mississippi Crossings, Scenic Mississippi, Metro Mississippi, and Mississippi Bluffs Great River Road Destination Areas branding
- Adjust the route to best showcase Minnesota's Mississippi River by getting people closer to the river, intrinsic resources and multimodal travel options
- Develop giveaways that serve byway traveler needs emblazoned with the Pilot's Wheel logo and www.mnmississippiriver.com
- Use in-state and out-of-state media to strengthen the brand
 - ▶ Create database of local, national, and industry-specific publications for advertisements and press releases
 - ▶ Develop news release template
 - ▶ Build relationships with local media (send press releases; send updates; invite to events; invite to serve as Citizen Committee members)
- Develop comprehensive marketing strategy to brand
 - ▶ Minnesota as the Mississippi River Headwaters state
 - ▶ Great River Road as an enjoyable and enriching way to get from point A to point B
 - ▶ Great River Road and Mississippi River as national and international icons
 - ▶ The byway as an active living corridor
 - ▶ Multimodal byway exploration options
 - ▶ Healthy MinnesotaGrown food and beverage
- Reinforce branding on social media platforms
 - ▶ Maintain social media beyond the life of the CMP
 - ▶ Measure what platforms produce the most traffic

- ▶ Adequately fund staffing and/or consultant contracts to manage website and social media platforms
- ▶ Gain new followers by following others, responding to comments, liking posts, etc.
- ▶ Create campaigns that encourage others to join: “Tag us in your favorite Great River Road pic!”
- ▶ Align with EMT’s #OnlyinMN marketing

Host Annual Great River Road Partner Summit

- Convene MN-MRPC member agencies, regional and local partners and businesses at an annual summit, possibly as part of the Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference
- Discuss CMP implementation accomplishments and future goals
 - ▶ Review previous year: What went well? What could be improved?
 - ▶ Set goals for upcoming year, related to the CMP and local/regional partner needs: What can we accomplish together?
 - ▶ Recognize partners that assisted with CMP implementation
- Connect with private businesses to
 - ▶ Inventory and map outfitters, lodging, restaurants, private resorts and campgrounds, and similar services along the byway
 - ▶ Add inventory to Plan Your Trip map so byway visitors can readily rent a bike or a canoe, engage a fishing guide, or stay in a distinctive destination overnight, thereby enjoying their byway experience more and contributing more to local economies
- Use Plan Your Project interactive map to assure road projects maintain or enhance access from the byway to the MN-MRPC member, Interpretive Center and byway resource facilities

Cross-promote with partners for mutual benefit

- Coordinate corridor management and cross-promote from MnDOT’s Mississippi River Trail website, maps and activities
- Use the Regional Citizen Committees and destination areas to organize local implementation of the CMP
- Partner with MN-MRPC agencies on promotion initiatives
 - ▶ National Park Service’s “Find Your Park”
 - ▶ Minnesota DNR’s “I Can”



Open house participant
6-Word Mississippi River,
Story: “There’s always
something new to explore”

- ▶ MNHS’s “Get Out and Go!”
- ▶ MNRRA Rangers/volunteers on Amtrak train serve as Ambassadors and highlight the Great River Road and MRT
- ▶ Promote the Great River Road in pedalmn.com MRT content
- Use MN-MRPC member agency websites to
 - ▶ Link to www.mnmississippiriver.com Plan Your Trip interactive map
- Work with tourism councils, convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce and visitor centers to:
 - ▶ Identify local restaurants, groceries, and other food venues to promote healthy food options or specialties
 - ▶ Leverage local events
 - ▶ Promote Great River Road as a local national treasure
- Continue meeting with regional development organizations to coordinate with regional planning
- Coordinate with and support National Park Service-led effort to designate the Mississippi River as a national water trail
- Develop targeted marketing such as:
 - ▶ Active living itineraries for mountain biking, road biking, family-friendly biking, golfing, hiking, birding, hunting, fishing, boating, paddling, photography, and other active recreation using the intrinsic resource database and Plan Your Trip interactive map
 - ▶ Great River Road school field trips or passport to encourage Mississippi River exploration as part of school day or with their families
 - ▶ Partner with the White Earth Nation, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and Prairie Island Indian Community to develop “Culture Quests” that provide tribal and public access to Native stories, events and places on the reservations featuring active modal options; safeguarding sacred or endangered resources for Tribal access only
 - ▶ Byway-friendly businesses destination by city or destination area
 - ▶ Ecotourism by destination area
 - ▶ “Best Drive in America”

- ▶ “In Pursuit of Happiness”
- Develop corporate partnerships to offer byway travelers discounts or coupons, to distribute Great River Road brochures at corporate locations and to sponsor active living strategy implementation
 - ▶ Sporting goods
 - ▶ Gander Mountain
 - ▶ REI
 - ▶ TrekUSA
 - ▶ Healthcare providers
 - ▶ United Health Group
 - ▶ Health Partners
 - ▶ Sanford Health
 - ▶ Fairview Health Services
 - ▶ Blue Cross Blue Shield
 - ▶ Medtronic
 - ▶ Mayo Clinic
 - ▶ Allina
 - ▶ Park Nicollet
 - ▶ Bicycle companies
 - ▶ Quality Bike Products
 - ▶ DERO
 - ▶ Erik’s Bike Shop
 - ▶ Park Tool
 - ▶ Surly Bikes
 - ▶ Penn Cycle
- Work with health care providers to develop “prescriptions” for targeted activities along the byway that can enhance health and daily routines for residents and travelers alike and track health outcomes
- Work with the Rochester Destination Medical Center to incorporate Great River Road and Mississippi River Trail exploration and track health outcomes





▲ ABOVE: Vermillion Falls, Hastings

4.4 Facilities Management

Facilities management is ongoing and involves scoping, design, construction and maintenance of the Great River Road itself. This section provides additional guidance on how to implement strategies to adjust the route, fully develop the Roadside Storybook, design, safety, multimodal travel, active living, view management, outdoor advertising control and facility funding.

The following section builds upon the facilities management goals, objectives and strategies listed in Section 4.1 by providing examples of implementation techniques. As illustrated in 4.1.4 these techniques can also fulfill or support Placemaking, Health and Active Living, Education and Engagement and Technology outcomes.

Chapter 5, Initial Implementation, describes a facilities management focus on Wayshowing Signage, Plan Your Project interactive mapping tool, and Great River Road Ambassador Development (focused on facility managers). The first was prioritized based on byway visitor survey results and complaints made to the MN-MRPC about getting lost while traveling the byway. The last two initial action items arose out of a need to preserve and protect the byway's sense of place as parkway. Chapter 5 also lists the many other CMP strategies that will be supported by initial CMP implementation work.

Table 4.4.1 Initial Facility Management Implementation

Project	FY	Responsible
Wayshowing Signage	2016-20, ongoing	MN-MRPC, MnDOT
Plan Your Project Interactive Map	2016, ongoing	MN-MRPC, MnDOT
GRR Ambassador Development	2016-20, ongoing	MN-MRPC, MnDOT

The implementation of the range of strategies in **Chapter 4, The Plan** will assure ongoing success of the Great River Road as parkway. Implementation of facility management strategies will be led by the MN-MRPC and MnDOT, in cooperation with local governments. A key objective is to maintain consistency with facility improvements, especially with regard to wayshowing, but also regarding its status as a parkway including view management, multimodal travel options and system integration, aesthetic treatment, access to river resources, interpretation, use of native vegetation and natural materials, mapping and traveler services such as rest areas and waysides.

4.4.1.1 RELATED CMP STRATEGIES

1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10, 1.13, 4.6, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5

4.4.1 ROUTE ADJUSTMENTS

Minnesota's Great River Road route in general presents byway travelers with an excellent platform for experiencing the Mississippi River as it grows from its source as stream to America's major commercial thoroughfare. Visitors encounter significant intrinsic resources. Byway travelers watch the river grow in size and witness its increasing utilization for industry and transportation; experience distinct natural ecosystems; learn about the history of the river and river communities; and are treated to a wide variety of cultural, scenic and recreational opportunities.

Since it was first designated and signed, the Great River Road in Minnesota has undergone minor adjustments as roads have been relocated or reconstructed, to better showcase the river and byway communities, or to provide improved MRT bicycling.

The scenic byway revision process includes:

- 1) MN-MRPC, MnDOT and local segment manager(s) review the current and recommended routes in the field to determine if the recommendation should be acted upon, modified or other,
- 2) MnDOT develops mapping and turn by turn descriptions of the existing and recommended routes, plus justification for the change,
- 3) distribute for review by each jurisdiction that currently manages the alignments as well as by each jurisdiction who currently do, as well as would, manage the segments if the revision were adopted,
- 4) upon concurrence by all, each jurisdiction adopts by resolution the revisions to dedesignate and designate,
- 5) MnDOT compiles all resolutions and supporting documentation for Commissioner signature to finalize the route adjustment,
- 6) route adjustment documentation is sent to FHWA for incorporation in records, maps and marketing,
- 7) revise new electronic and hard copy maps and other collateral materials, and
- 8) fund, design and implement a new sign plan including old alignment sign removal.





▲ **ABOVE:** Mississippi River below Lake Itasca

4.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Headwaters

- No recommended route adjustments

Northwoods

- Cass Lake:
 - ▶ From Lake Andrusia through Cass Lake then by Cass County Road 10 to West Winnie Road
 - ▶ Existing route from Lake Andrusia via Mission Lake to Pennington is very scenic and provides the best associations with river but bypasses Cass Lake community resources and Norway Beach Recreation Area
- Grand Rapids:
 - ▶ County Road 63 to US 2 to downtown, then out via US 169/ Pokegema Avenue to Great River Road at County Road 3
 - ▶ This route will present Blandin Dam, riverside park areas, and the historic downtown
- Jacobson to Palisade:
 - ▶ Minnesota 200 east to Jacobson, then 65 south from Jacobson, then via Grouse St. to 480th St. into Palisade
 - ▶ This route will present Big Sandy Lake Recreation Area, Aitkin's fur trading post, 1850 Sandy Lake Tragedy interpretation and beautiful route through Savanna State Forest and other public lands

Crossings

- Brainerd
 - ▶ No recommended route adjustments, but do improve clarity of wayshowing near the traffic roundabouts on College Drive

Scenic

- St. Cloud
 - ▶ Upstream from Wright County Rd 75, onto TH 24, to Sherburne County Road 8, to Minnesota Blvd, to Kilian Blvd, to 13th St. SE, to Riverside Dr, to TH 23, to 4th Ave S, to 1st St. N, to 6th Ave N, to 3rd St N, to 5th Ave, to 12th St. N, to 6th Ave N, to 9th Ave N, to Stearns County Road 1
 - ▶ Improved association with the river and several local parks including Munsinger and Clemens Gardens

Metro

- Elk River to Anoka County Regional Park:
 - ▶ Cross river between Otsego and Elk River on TH 101, then follow US 10 to Anoka, then Minnesota 1/East River Road to junction with Great River Road at Anoka County Regional Park
 - ▶ Route would showcase MNHS's Oliver Kelley Farm, East Coon Rapids Dam, historic downtown Anoka, Manomin Park, Springdale Nature Center, Islands of Peace Regional Park
- Downtown Minneapolis North Side:
 - ▶ Continue down Marshall Street south from Broadway Avenue to Main Street, then along waterfront to 6th Avenue NE, then by University Avenue SE and 14th Street SE to East River Parkway
 - ▶ Route would present Boom Island County Park, access to Nicollet Island, Father Louis Hennepin Park, and parklands along East River Parkway
 - ▶ Downside: Existing scenic route presents key resources
- Minnehaha Park:
 - ▶ Continue through park down South Minnehaha Drive to E 54th St, then onto Hiawatha Avenue
 - ▶ A simpler and more scenic route closer to river that presents the Longfellow House/Byway Information Center, Minnehaha Depot, John Stevens House, Coldwater Spring and other park features
- St. Paul
 - ▶ From Great River Road on I-35E Bridge continue northeast through Lilydale Regional Park via Harriet Island, crossing Wabasha Street Bridge to north side to rejoin Great River Road
 - ▶ Extremely scenic route with intimate river views, Pickerel Lake, and Harriet Island
 - ▶ Downsides: Park road hours limited after dark and existing designated route features other key resources

Original wayshowing signs no longer compliant can be found along the Great River Road in Minneapolis and St. Paul. These should be salvaged as historical program artifacts when replaced.

Bluffs

- Hastings to Red Wing, past Prairie Island Indian Community:
 - ▶ From TH 61 to Ravenna Trail, then County 18 to TH 61
 - ▶ Route includes scenic bottomlands adjacent to North Lake embayment of Mississippi, historic Mdewakanton community, access to Lock and Dam No. 3



4.4.2 ROADSIDE STORYBOOK AND OTHER BYWAY INTERPRETATION

The vision of the roadside interpretive program was to create a “book” that tells engaging stories with each county representing a single “chapter”.

Great River Road interpretation aims to be creative, enjoyable, interactive, and conveyed through a variety of media including roadside exhibits, the 10-state Great River Road Network of Interpretive Centers (Minnesota currently has 10), YouTube videos, www.mnmississippiriver.com and other electronic media technologies, maps and publications, living history, itineraries, scheduled programs and events, services such as guided hikes and tours, and the road infrastructure. In addition to what the Commission accomplishes on its own, promoting partner interpretation provides an almost limitless depth of ever-changing interpretation that the Great River Road can leverage.

Benefits of Great River Road interpretation include fostering an appreciation of and care for the byway and its resources; educating travelers about the significance of cultural, historical, and natural resources; encouraging visitors to stay longer or return again and again; and to increase revenue from tourism. Interpretation also can generate community pride, pass on knowledge to children and encourage local byway enjoyment.

Since developing a graphic layout and streetscape motif for Great River Road interpretive panels in the 1990’s the panels have been placed in 15 locations from the Mary Gibbs Headwaters Center at Itasca State Park to the Iowa border. Some placed prior to the Roadside Storybook effort were not located directly on the Great River Road, but, rather, at rest areas and traveler information centers to drive visitors to the byway. More often panels are located within sight of the byway at a river amenity.

Minnesota’s 2001 Interpretation Plan initiated the vision of a Great River Road Roadside Storybook. Building upon the previous Great River Road interpretive signs at ten locations, byway interpretation has been enhanced by development of a roadside “book” that tells compelling stories giving meaning to place, with each of Minnesota’s 21 river counties representing a single “chapter.”

The goal of Minnesota’s Roadside Storybook is to place each set where they can be seen from the byway if possible. Similarly the MRT host community interpretive panels developed as a part of this CMP reflect the Great River Road panel motif and are placed to be seen from the MRT and byway where possible.

Storybook county chapters are told in six panels mounted in three distinctly designed aqua-colored frames, colocated to serve the interests of a broad range of river explorers. The set also increases the ability to be seen from the byway and be recognized at a glance that river stories are told there. The more counties that the panels are installed in, the more effective the body of work will be as they attain critical mass. County chapters that include the full Roadside Storybook content have been placed in Clearwater, Crow Wing, Sherburne, Dakota, and Houston counties.

Related CMP Strategies

1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 6.5

4.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Complete the Roadside Storybook

Using 2015 actual costs, the estimated budget for design and fabrication of the remaining 16 county chapters is \$710,400. This includes \$4,500 per panel for content finalization and design, \$1,500 per panel for fabrication and shipping, and \$3,000 per frame for fabrication and shipping. The budget assumes installation will be accomplished as an in-kind material and service contribution provided by the entity whose site the panels are installed on. Prior to soliciting financial resources, confirm local in-kind resources are available, and if not available, adjust the project costs. Adjust for inflation as well.

Counties where Roadside Storybook installation is still needed:

- Hubbard
- Beltrami
- Itasca
- Aitkin
- Cass
- Morrison
- Stearns
- Benton
- Wright
- Anoka
- Hennepin
- Ramsey
- Washington
- Goodhue
- Wabasha
- Winona



▲ ABOVE: Great River Road Interpretive Panel

Individual interpretive signs will draw visitors to Great River Road amenities and communities, helping generate direct positive economic impact and enriching the travel experience.



The MN-MRPC has taken an important step forward by including representatives from Leech Lake, White Earth and Prairie Island as well as the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council on the CMP PAT.

Increase Ethnic Story Content

Develop additional interpretation of, and improve access to, the stories of Minnesota's many historic and contemporary ethnic groups. Encourage point-of-interest signs directing travelers from existing byway to resources, such as the Luxembourg Heritage Museum or the Polish Cultural Institute. When developing new content, work with those whose stories are told to ensure the traditions, symbols, and places are shared with byway travelers in an appropriate manner.

The MN-MRPC has taken an important step to accomplish this recommendation by including representatives from Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, White Earth Nation, Prairie Island Indian Community and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council on the CMP PAT. A strategy to develop Great River Road Roadside Storybook "chapters" with each of these three tribes will continue this partnership into plan implementation. As with any community, this interpretation of the Mississippi River's tribal heritage can generate increased local pride and encourage local byway involvement and enjoyment.

Enhance Great River Road Interpretive Center Experience

Provide wayshowing signage to each Great River Road Interpretive Center signage, byway collateral materials and Ambassador Development for center staff.

Enhance Great River Road Interpretive Center visits with internet interpretation downloaded to hand-held devices before, during or after visits, or with downloaded programs available on-site. While traditional means such as static displays and brochures can be effective, hand-held technology can offer additional opportunities to tell the byway's stories, both while in the river corridor or at home.

To enhance recognition as a byway resource, in addition to the existing ten-state network sign, each Center could receive a Roadside Storybook-like panel with information about the Minnesota Great River Road as a whole, as well as destination area information.

Expand Minnesota's Great River Road Interpretive Center Network

Expand the network designation to all MNHS and DNR facilities that meet the criteria to assure these Minnesota treasures' stories are told, to increase visitation, and to celebrate as a ten-state resource. Also consider designating non-MN-MRPC member state agency and local resources that tell the river's stories.

4.4.3 DESIGN: GREAT RIVER ROAD AS PARKWAY

Predating the Minnesota and National Scenic Byway program, the Great River Road is intended to be developed and managed as a parkway. Today it is one of 21 scenic byways in Minnesota. The designation is meant, in part, to identify those roads intended to specifically serve tourists and residents as amenity corridors providing a pleasure ride highlighted by six types of intrinsic resources, resulting in improved quality of life and economic benefit to Minnesota's Mississippi River communities.

National Scenic Byway designation helps road managers focus resources that may not be warranted on non-designated roads. Tourists are travelers with unique needs who seek an enriched travel experience with a sense of place and meaning, often utilize multiple modes, and are encouraged to slow and stop frequently.

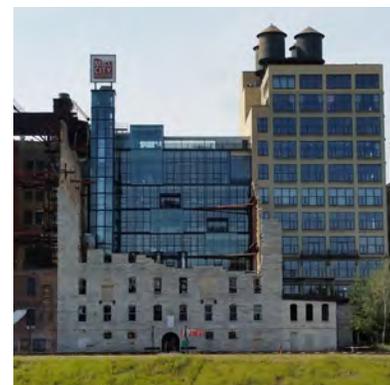
To meet these needs the Great River Road's management includes showcasing and providing access to over 700 intrinsic resources, modal integration, wayshowing, and intrinsic resource protection and enhancement, including accommodating and welcoming Mississippi River Trail bicyclists. The following recommendations can be incorporated during transportation system planning and road project scoping to achieve the mission and statutory responsibilities and to avoid scope creep, as well as during maintenance operations.

Under MnDOT leadership facilities management should apply Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Solutions principles by engaging the local segment managers, MN-MRPC, Great River Road intrinsic resource managers and byway travelers. Understanding wayshowing, multimodal connections, views, intrinsic qualities and the needs of tourists will help refine projects to ensure a safe and enjoyable parkway experience that honors place, tells stories and leverages economic and quality of life benefits.

4.4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Restore Great River Road wayshowing to a continuous and consistent system. Wayshowing is a critical need of those traveling the byway. Without it travelers get lost and are unlikely to return.

Coordinate with Mississippi River Trail wayshowing to help partners manage the signs over time, especially where the routes are colocated, to simplify traveler wayfinding, reinforce cross promotion and branding, avoid sign and post proliferation, and reduce maintenance costs.



▲ ABOVE: Mill City Museum, Minneapolis





▲ **ABOVE:** Lake Pepin,
Goodhue County

Identify places within the right of way to tell the river's stories and to offer visual and physical access to Minnesota's Mississippi River.

Incorporate the Roadside Storybook chapters in the right of way, where possible, so they are seen and accessed from the road as an intended part of the parkway experience. Maintain existing Storybook and other previous Great River Road interpretive panels.

Reflect and honor the scenic and natural intrinsic qualities of the Mississippi River by using native materials and no artificial stone on Great River Road and river bridge infrastructure. The Great River Road markets intrinsic resources include highly valued natural bluffs, granite outcrops, sand plains, and other geological features. Artificial stone imitates, rather than displays, Minnesota's natural attributes that Mississippi River tourists and residents are attracted to. Road designs should not replicate natural features in order to preserve, enhance and promote what is authentic in its authentic setting. The I-90 bridge piers offer an example of this philosophy, inspired by but not imitating the shape of spreading elms found in the river corridor. The piers are not designed to be artificial elms and instead express the concrete material that they are. This type of expression of place without artificial mimicry is encouraged.

Manage vegetation to protect water quality, stabilize slopes, steward native plants in new designs and maintenance operations, increase habitat for pollinators and native and migratory species, disperse precipitation impacts, act as living snow fences, calm traffic, preserve or enhance views to and from the river and enhance Minnesota's curb appeal.

Maintain scenic easements and incorporate them in the Plan Your Project mapping tool so they are known to transportation project managers and local decision makers.

Pave Minnesota's last gravel segment, 6.9 miles on Aitkin County State Aid Highway 21, to allow all potential byway travelers, including those with collector cars, trailers, motorcycles, tour buses, and bicycles, whether individually or as tours or group rides, full access to a continuous byway that their vehicles can tolerate.

Restore the remaining seven MnDOT historic roadside properties along the Great River Road and maintain the 12 that were restored according to the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Expand and connect modal options along the length of the byway.

4.4.4 SAFETY

The Great River Road carries a mix of motorists, pedestrians, and bicycles, as well as cartage and commuters, with the percentage of leisure travelers dependent on the season and location within the state. A better understanding of the needs of leisure travelers is needed to manage this network of roads generally designed for cartage and commuters, so that the Great River Road provides a safe place for travelers not familiar with the route or the area, who may use multiple modes to arrive, depart or explore, who may be trailering or drive motorcycles, collector cars or tour buses, and who are here to look, slow, stop and get out of their vehicles so they can experience Minnesota's Mississippi River.

The Great River Road provides numerous opportunities for visitors to explore from taking a short walk at a rest area to a long backpacking trek on State and Federal lands.

4.4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain state-wide Great River Road wayshowing signage and amenity wayshowing to allow for ease of wayfinding for travelers
- Provide maps online and in print
- Provide pedestrian access and crossing of the Great River Road, particularly near local attractions and multimodal facilities
- Provide bicycle accommodation (shoulder, shared lane or separate path) along the entire length of the corridor, but, particularly in areas that share the Mississippi River Trail designation
- Incorporate traffic calming near amenity access points, pedestrian and bicycle crossings, overlooks and waysides
- Integrate and promote multimodal options and connection points
- Provide and maintain safe pull-offs and parking areas for motorists to observe the Mississippi River from the roadside
- Pave Minnesota's only unpaved Great River Road segment remaining (in Aitkin County)

4.4.5 VISUAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

Representative Jim Oberstar cited the Great River Road, along with the Blue Ridge Parkway and Natchez Trace, as his inspiration when authoring the first federal transportation bill that established the National Scenic Byways Program.

The program name, National Scenic Byways, is emblematic of how important the scenic context of America's byways is meant to be.



Resources along the Great River Road vary widely, not only by intrinsic resource type, but also in the quality of experience afforded to visitors.

Protecting and enhancing Minnesota's Great River Road valuable and valued visual resources is part of the MN-MRPC mission and referenced in MN-MRPC, GRR and MRT statutes. Yet because the MN-MRPC as a body own none of the lands or roads, and state roads comprise only 40% of the byway, this CMP offers MN-MRPC agencies, byway communities and partner segment managers visual resource management tools and guidance to meet this shared mission.

Byway visual resources are challenging. The Great River Road's 565-mile network of roads, like the river itself and the land along it, is constantly evolving in places, while static in others. Unlike a view from a building, byway visual resources are in fact a series of views primarily seen while in motion. Varying from momentary, to extended over distance, byway views are also those you soak in while out of the vehicle at a wayside or riverfront.

Minnesota's seasons open, close and frame Mississippi River views too. From open winter white and ice, to airy pastels of new spring budding, to dark leafy summer overstory, to quintessential glowing fall foliage.

Great River Road visual resources have the added dimension of being seen from the byway, bikeway and riverway. Views from the Mississippi River Trail have a longer view duration due to a slower speed of travel. Historically, and in growing measure, water-based travel can be the crown jewel of a Great River Road itinerary. Therefore it is important to protect views from the river, while looking towards the byway, in order to protect the byway explorer's scenic resources regardless of mode of travel.

During the CMP outreach the public and partners identified placemaking and facilities management as the top two areas to focus corridor management on. To achieve both requires coordinated facility design and maintenance that extends beyond aesthetic treatment and results in transportation infrastructure fitting within the historic and natural Mississippi River landscape.

The roads views include stunning agricultural and forested lands, lakes, bluffs and backwaters that are increasingly subjected to development. If significant views of the river and surrounding countryside are not protected, visitors will lose a key part of Minnesota's Great River Road experience and are less likely to return.

Scenic easements were purchased when the Great River Road was initially established to protect iconic landscapes for generations

to come. While purchasing new scenic easements is no longer an activity eligible for Federal transportation funds, active enforcement of the existing easements is an important corridor management tool.

But how can views be protected and enhanced when they are not controlled through land ownership? And how do you form consensus that a view is of value for the public good?

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) Visual Resource Protection Plan was a partnership with the MN-MRPC, funded in part by a National Scenic Byways grant. The aim was to develop a plan that will “preserve, protect, and enhance views along the Mississippi River and surrounding area” within the MNRRA corridor. The process was intended to be refined as part of the CMP for application along the byway throughout Minnesota.

During the CMP 99 favorite views were nominated by the public using on-line surveys and at open houses. A beta test of refined view nomination and view assessment forms and refinement of the on-site view assessment processes was completed in six communities as part of the CMP project.

The on-site assessment is intended to be replicated over time as a part of corridor management, led by the MN-MRPC and including local decision makers such as elected officials, permitting authorities, road and land managers, and convention and visitor bureau staff. As this process is repeated over time an empirical database of views and their qualities will be developed and mapped to inform local decisions to protect or enhance the views, to market the collection of scenic resources on the “Plan Your Trip” map tool and inform road management on the “Plan Your Project” map tool.

4.4.5 RELATED CMP STRATEGIES

1.3, 7.2, 12.1

4.4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Expand View Nominations and Assessments

Expand visual resource protection utilizing the refined nomination and assessment forms and process. Display the resulting data base on the “Plan Your Trip” and “Plan Your Project” map tools. Both forms deliver responses into a standard Excel spreadsheet which can also be shared with byway partners.

Open house participant
6-Word Mississippi River,
Story: “Adds to the beauty
of Minnesota.”



Place Great River Road brochures and maps in airports and train stations and work with the marketing and front desk staff so they can serve as Great River Road Ambassadors

Incorporate byway view nomination and assessment as part of Great River Road Ambassador Development. Work with river communities and road authorities to encourage application of the findings to land use decision-making, road management and byway marketing.

Establish Long-Range Strategies

Expand the Visual Resource Protection process to help preserve a crucial part of Minnesota's Mississippi River experience. Conservation on a much larger scale throughout the byway corridor is encouraged to maintain this core intrinsic resource. MN-MRPC could partner with organizations such as the Trust for Public Land, Minnesota Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club and Izaak Walton League to establish long-range strategies to protect open space and riparian zones along the Great River Road through conservation or scenic easements, transfers of development rights, or guidelines for development to ensure that future byway travelers experience the unique scenic qualities of Minnesota's Mississippi River.

4.4.6 MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

Many CMP strategies involve accommodating and promoting biking, walking, transit, water, rail and air travel as safe, convenient, and dependable forms of byway exploration. Long-term solutions should target improvements for tourists whose needs differ from commuters and cartage, but who use the same modal systems. The goal is to offer seamless, welcoming, intuitive and connected multimodal travel options within the byway corridor for enhanced visitor experiences that are also healthy and environmentally sustainable.

4.4.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Promote tourists use of transit services in Minnesota's Mississippi River communities that offer them, and track the results. Local tour and casino buses may also be an opportunity. Use "Plan Your Project" map analysis to better understand existing opportunities and underserved sections of the corridor.

Explore FHWA's Federal Lands Access Program grant opportunities. While generally intended for federal agencies or tribal governments, transportation projects that connect corridor communities with federal public lands, such as the Chippewa National Forest, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, or National Wildlife Refuges might be eligible for funding. Eligible activities include shuttles, transit or rail services, and pedestrian or bicycle trails. MNRRA has successfully used these funds to increase park

visitation without increasing congestion through development of an alternative transportation plan. Additional grants funded plan implementation including www.rivertripplanner.org and Mississippi River Companion development, NiceRide bicycle share stations along the river, improved bus stops including ADA enhancements and information describing how close stops are to river resources.

Enhance byway travel that includes air travel by placing GRR brochures in airport information areas; offering Ambassador Development for marketing and front desk staff; developing a GRR passport for pilots; and working with MnDOT Aeronautics to develop Great River Road content for their maps, directory, travel guide and website; including airport locations on the Plan Your Trip map; and adding reciprocal links on the Aeronautics' websites.

4.4.7 HEALTH AND ACTIVE LIVING

Although driving is one way to experience the Great River Road, getting out of the car to hike, bird watch, fish, or swim, and using other transportation modes can have a positive impact on a person's health and a community's health. Many initiatives are already in place to battle obesity and the lack of physical activity in Minnesota. MnDOT is a partner in many of these initiatives such as The Minnesota Plan to Reduce Obesity and the Healthy Minnesota Partnership's Healthy Minnesota 2020. The Great River Road National Scenic Byway can contribute to these efforts.

4.4.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Encourage children, adolescents, and adults, whether tourists or residents, to engage in physical activity as a part of their Great River Road experience. This is consistent with Minnesota Statute 174.01 (14), a clause of the enabling legislation that established MnDOT, which states that one of the state transportation goals is "to promote and increase bicycling and walking as a percentage of all trips as energy-efficient, nonpolluting and healthy forms of transportation."

Mississippi River Trail

Minnesota, nationally known for its avid bicycling and outdoor activities, is a near perfect cyclist's destination. The Mississippi River Trail route in Minnesota, developed by MnDOT, MN-MRPC, NPS and MRT, Inc., has been designated as the state's first US bike route. By linking the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) with state and local bike trails, cyclists can plan trips for a day, a week, a month or longer.



▲ ABOVE: St. Anthony Falls, Minneapolis





▲ **ABOVE: Winnie Dam Campground Recreation Area, Deer River**

MnDOT provides a MRT Map Book online on its website. It offers the maps in a format downloadable to a smartphone. The Great River Road route is not shown on MnDOT's Mississippi River Trail maps nor is the Great River Road acknowledged on MnDOT's MRT webpages.

Marking the Great River Road route and reciprocal promotion of the Great River Road, like the MN-MRPC does for the MRT, would be beneficial as many MRT travelers are likely interested in the same natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources the byway markets. Because MnDOT is responsible for managing both routes, coordinated mapping and promotion would eliminate redundancy of effort. Coordination further benefits MnDOT and local segment managers of both routes so they can efficiently and effectively maintain wayshowing signage, scope and design route improvements and provide maintenance, etc.

There remains a need to educate Great River Road travelers about the availability of the MRT. MnDOT, the MN-MRPC, and local partners can work together to implement the MRT marketing strategies outlined in MnDOT's 2011 plan. In addition, small displays or mini-kiosks about the MRT and Great River Road at visitor centers and local chambers of commerce would help raise awareness about both routes. The MRT can be, as MnDOT states on its website, "an unforgettable bicycle adventure."

Bicycle Rentals

In the Twin Cities bike rental facilities provided by Nice Ride Minnesota (many by the Mississippi were funded through MNRRA) provide pick-up and drop-off locations adjacent to the Great River Road. A smaller program is also operating in Bemidji. Visitors who want to experience the byway by bicycle can also rent bikes at many local bicycle shops or outfitters.

Walking and Hiking

Walking is an easy, inexpensive way to be active. Some shoes, a water bottle, and a place to walk are all that are needed. The Great River Road provides numerous opportunities for visitors to take a short walk or a long backpacking trek. Whether seeking a leisurely stroll to the Headwaters of the Mississippi, a quiet walk through the Chippewa National Forest, or a steep climb to the top of the bluff at John Latsch State Park, there is a trail for everyone who travels the Great River Road. Minnesota State Parks offer visitors a chance to earn patches and even a free night of camping through the park

hiking clubs. Visitors can purchase a hiking club passport at the parks, hike the designated trail, and enter a password found on the trail to get great exercise and a Great River Road experience!

Paddling

The Mississippi River itself offers endless canoeing and kayaking opportunities and the Great River Road provides numerous access points for this paddling resource. Dozens of boat launches and ramps allow paddlers access to nearly every major stretch of the river giving multiple paddling experiences from narrow and winding near the Headwaters to deep pools formed by locks and dams below Minneapolis. Paddlers should be encouraged to bring their own boats or to rent one from the many outfitters along the river's route, which also boosts the local economy. A list of outfitters can be found on the DNR website⁰⁴⁻².

The DNR publishes an excellent series of nine Mississippi River State Water Trail guides, as well as guides for other tributary rivers in the corridor including the Pine, Crow Wing, Crow, Zumbro, and Whitewater Rivers. The guides include maps; a discussion of the river's character in each section; and marks all public water access points, water trail campsites, river confluences, bridges, and other major features along the length. The guides are available at most state parks in the corridor, from DNR directly, or by download from the DNR website. Link to these from www.mnmississippiriver.com and add any resources not already included to the Plan Your Trip and Plan Your Project maps.

Mississippi River Companion

Within the Metro Mississippi destination area, MNRRA offers an online planning tool called www.rivertripplanner.org with information on various options for accessing the river via alternative transportation modes. This tool allows travelers to zoom to various locations along the river and highlights the Mississippi River Trail, transit stops, transit routes, bike routes, Nice Ride stations, and water access points. The Mississippi River Companion, produced by the National Parks Service, is the book version that also details the river within MNRRA and alternative modes for accessing it.

Destination Area Guides

To further promote active adventure in the great outdoors, Great River Road destination area print and website guides could include cycling routes or hiking trails of varying lengths and difficulty.

04-2 www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/outfitters.html

Historically, and in growing measure today, water-based travel can be the crown jewel of a Minnesota Great River Road itinerary

The Mississippi River itself offers endless canoeing and kayaking opportunities and the Great River Road provides numerous access points for this paddling resource.





▲ ABOVE: Brainerd Travel Information Center

Incentive Programs

The MN-MRPC could develop an incentive program such as a passport, offering recognition for accomplishing various physical activities along the Great River Road. For instance, hiking a trail of one-mile or more in each destination area could qualify travelers for a small gift, while longer or more demanding activities could result in a nicer prize. Incentivizing byway travelers to take part in outdoor activities not only would promote healthier lifestyles, but could encourage longer stays, thereby boosting local economies.

Passenger Rail

Enhance passenger rail travel by working with the National Park Service step-on guides to highlight the Great River Road, Mississippi River Trail, and river amenities they might not already feature. Place brochures in train stations and offer Ambassador Development to marketing and staff who interface with the public. Improving the visitor platform, station, welcome experience and ground transportation connections were suggested by MRPC Semi-Annual meeting participants who arrived and departed there on Amtrak.

National Active Living Initiatives

Link to [Let's Move!](#), [The President's Challenge](#) and SuperTracker on www.mnmississippiriver.com to encourage residents and tourists to get out and get physical on the Great River Road. *Let's Move!* includes a section where visitors can search for public lands that provide walking, biking, and other outdoor activity opportunities. The President's Challenge provides participants a place to track their activity and fitness goals. The U.S. Department of Agriculture SuperTracker also provides a system to track physical activity.

In 2012, the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Subcommittee of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition suggested a range of ways that communities could make their neighborhoods more active living-friendly. The MN-MRPC is already engaged in a number of these activities.

Guideline recommendations applicable to byway management:

- Implement traffic-calming measures, such as traffic circles and speedbumps
- Increase access to parks and recreation facilities
- Improve walking and biking infrastructure, such as sidewalks, multiuse trails, and bike lanes

- Increase walkability of communities
- Improve pedestrian safety structures, such as traffic lights
- Increase vegetation, such as trees along streets
- Decrease traffic speed and volume to encourage walking and biking for transportation⁰⁴⁻³

4.4.8 OFF-PREMISE OUTDOOR ADVERTISING - BILLBOARDS

Assuring a positive visual experience while travelling National Scenic Byways is key to byway management and fulfilling the mission of the MN-MRPC. While National Scenic Byway designation does not confer land use regulation or permitting authority, to encourage safeguarding scenic qualities, prior to 2012, National Scenic Byway grants required that no new off-premise outdoor advertising be permitted on the National Highway System segments of a byway, in compliance with the Highway Beautification Act.⁰⁴⁻⁴ The Act's implementation continues with off-premise outdoor advertising permits managed by MnDOT, and local governments managing zoning to identify where billboards are or are not allowed.

To preserve, protect, and promote the Great River Road and specifically its scenic qualities, in the early 2000s MnDOT worked with 25 communities along the Great River Road that had commercial and industrial zoning to amend ordinances to no longer allow new off-premise outdoor advertising in these zones. Of the 25, only Bena and Inver Grove Heights remain “gapped.” As such the scenic intrinsic quality, and thus the byway experience, is affected.

The Big Winnie Store RV Park and Campground in Bena is a federally recognized historic landmark. Adopting this protection could safeguard it as well. Along the gap in Inver Grove Heights, the context and land use has evolved significantly in the last ten years with the new DNR Pine Bend Bluffs SNA and Dakota County trails within sight of and abutting the byway.

If significant views of the river and surrounding countryside are not protected, visitors will lose a key part of the scenic byway experience

4.4.8 RECOMMENDATION

Contact Bena and Inver Grove Heights to encourage the adoption of an ordinance amendment that prohibits new billboards along the Great River Road in their community.

04-3 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Subcommittee of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Midcourse Report: Strategies to Increase Physical Activity Among Youth. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012

04-4 <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/billboards/files/oa-control.pdf>



4.4.9 TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) identifies the schedule and funding of state and local transportation projects by state fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) over four years, updated annually. Depending upon the category of facility a project occurs on Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and the Metropolitan Planning Program funds are listed as the fund source. These programs are funded by contract authority from the Highway Account of the Federal Highway Trust Fund, subject to the overall Federal Aid obligation limitation.

In June 2012 the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) federal transportation bill eliminated the National Scenic Byway grant program which since its inception funded Minnesota's Great River Road planning, marketing, and interpretation as well as capital enhancements, especially for bicycle facilities. Although the majority of Great River Road road construction has been, and will continue to be, funded by the programs listed above, funding has been generally eliminated for:

- Byway corridor management plans
- Marketing plans and marketing
- Interpretive plans
- Acquisition of scenic easements or scenic or historic sites
- Landscaping or scenic beautification
- Historic preservation projects, other than preservation of historic transportation facilities
- Establishment of transportation museums

Projects involving the Mississippi River Trail and other bike/pedestrian projects that benefit the Great River Road traveler are listed in the STIP

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is a five-year transportation bill signed into law in December 2015, retaining much of MAP-21's structure and project eligibility requirements. However, FAST establishes a new National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure, noting "1 out of every 9 jobs in the United States depends on travel and tourism, and the industry supports 15,000,000 jobs in the United States," is broadly distributed across the nation, is our single largest export industry,

and generates nearly \$2,100,000,000,000 in annual economic output. Like the findings of this CMP, FAST recognizes “the United States intermodal transportation network facilitates the large-scale movement of business and leisure travelers, and is the most important asset of the travel industry.” It calls for the development of a National Travel and Tourism Infrastructure Strategic Plan not later than 3 years after FAST enactment.

STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)

The current Minnesota STIP covers fiscal years 2015 to 2018 and lists 72 state and 33 local projects along or affecting the Minnesota Great River Road. Some involve direct construction on roads that are part of the byway, while others are closely associated with byway resources. For example the STIP included three projects that install Mississippi River Trail wayshowing sign statewide for which the MN-MRPC received FHWA National Scenic Byway and matching Department of Interior grants.

To understand and support individual and statewide byway needs a list of projects that were previously eligible for Scenic Byway grants was developed for each of the 21 Minnesota scenic byways, concurrent with updating corridor management plans. Some of these are funded and in the STIP, but many are without a current or complete funding source. The Great River Road project list, developed by Region Five Development Commission, reflects the full range of activities previously funded by the FHWA National Scenic Byway grant program as shown in the **Appendix**.

Assuming FAST Act would not reestablish the National Scenic Byway grant program and aiming to sustain the range of activities needed for successful byway management MnDOT, Region Five and other development agencies working on the CMP updates developed a summary of potential funding sources as shown in Table 4.2.4.2.

Developing and maintaining a parkway designed to serve as a tourist amenity along a 565-mile byway that incorporates roads managed by five MnDOT Districts, 20 counties, dozens of communities, as well as state parks and federal forests and refuges requires sustainable funding for byway management activities as well as systematic tools to guide the STIP-listed transportation project’s scoping, design, construction and maintenance.



4.4.9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Match potential funding sources listed in 4.4.9.1 through 4.4.9.5 with individual corridor management strategies.

Assess the STIP to apply Context Sensitive Solutions and Complete Streets principles and practices to projects listed in the STIP along the Great River Road in order to support Minnesota GO, incorporate parkway design qualities, evoke a sense of place, provide access to and honor the byway’s intrinsic resources, assess project impacts to byway travelers, enhance the byway’s storytelling, welcome byway visitors, integrate the multiple modes travelers use when exploring the river, and maintain consistent and continuous wayshowing signage, all of which are key to a positive byway experience.

Incorporate byways in the implementation of Minnesota Statutes 174.75 which defines Complete Streets as the planning, scoping, design, implementation, operation and maintenance of roads in order to reasonably address the safety and accessibility needs of users of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets considers the needs of motorists, pedestrians, transit users and vehicles, bicyclists, and commercial and emergency vehicles moving along and across roads, intersections and crossings, recognizing that needs vary in urban, suburban and rural settings.

Engage with the National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure and provide input on the National Travel and Tourism Infrastructure Strategic Plan to seek restoration of the National Scenic Byway grants or eligibility of the range of byway activities within other transportation programs.

Table 4.4.9.1 Context Sensitive Solutions Principles

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary teams • Involve stakeholders • Broad public involvement • Full range of communication strategies • Consensus determining purpose and need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address alternatives and all modes of transportation • Safe facilities for all users • Environmental harmony • Community and social issues • Aesthetic concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full range of design choices and flexibility • Document project decisions • Track and meet all commitments • Use agency resources effectively • Create lasting value for communities
---	---	--

4.4.9.1 TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP)

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) consolidated a variety of highway programs including Transportation Enhancements, the Safe Routes to Schools Program, Historic Structures, and Scenic Byways into the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), a formula highway grant process. FAST Act continues this general structure.

In Minnesota, TAP projects are solicited, ranked and selected by Area Transportation Partnerships (in the Metro District by the Metropolitan Council and its Transportation Advisory Board). The 2013-2014 TAP solicitation yielded 37 local grants totalling over \$13 Million statewide. Scenic Byway projects now compete for TAP funds and project selection is by the ATPs, though the Scenic Byway Commission still prioritizes projects and makes recommendations to the ATPs.

TAP funding generally follows the same 80 percent federal funding matched by 20 percent local funds as did the National Scenic Byway grants.

TAP-eligible activities that could support Great River Road:

- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities such as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals and lighting, and projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Conversion of abandoned railway corridors into trails for pedestrians, cyclists, or other non-motorized transportation
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas
- Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising
- Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities
- Vegetation management in transportation rights-of-way including projects to improve roadway safety or to combat invasive species
- Reducing vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to maintain connectivity between terrestrial and aquatic habitats
- Note: The Recreational Trails Program is administered through a separate process.



▲ **ABOVE: Lake Pepin, Goodhue County**





▲ **ABOVE:** Historic Cass Gilbert Depot, Little Falls

4.4.9.2 NATIONAL HIGHWAY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM (NHPP)

NHPP provides support for the condition and performance of the National Highway System (NHS), for the construction of new facilities on the NHS, and to ensure that investments of Federal Aid funds in highway construction are directed to support progress toward the achievement of performance targets established in a state's NHS asset management plan. Approximately 40% of the Great River Road is on the state system and most of that is designated as NHS.

NHS-eligible activities that could support Great River Road:

- Construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, preservation, or operational improvements of NHS
- Construction, replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, and protection of NHS bridges and tunnels
- Construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, and preservation of, and operational improvements for, a Federal Aid highway not on the NHS, and construction of a transit project eligible for assistance under chapter 53 of title 49, if the project is in the same corridor and in proximity to a fully access-controlled NHS route, if the improvement is more cost-effective (as determined by a benefit-cost analysis) than an NHS improvement, and will reduce delays or produce travel time savings on the NHS route and improve regional traffic flow
- Bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways
- Highway safety improvements on the NHS
- Capital and operating costs for traffic and traveler information, monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs
- Development and implementation of a state asset management plan for the NHS including data collection, maintenance and integration, software costs, and equipment costs
- Infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems (ITS)
- Environmental restoration and pollution abatement
- Control of noxious weeds and establishment of native species
- Environmental mitigation related to NHPP projects
- Construction of publicly owned intracity or intercity bus terminals servicing the NHS

Workforce development, training, and education activities also are an eligible use of NHPP funds.

4.4.9.3 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (STP)

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides flexible funding that may be used by states and localities for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal Aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects including intercity bus terminals. Some of the Great River Road is eligible for these program funds.

STP-eligible activities that could support Great River Road:

- Construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, restoration, preservation, or operational improvements for highways including designated routes of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) and local access roads under 40 USC 14501
- Replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, protection, and anti-icing/deicing for bridges and tunnels on any public road including construction or reconstruction necessary to accommodate other modes
- Construction of new bridges and tunnels on a Federal Aid highway
- Capital costs for transit projects eligible for assistance under chapter 53 of title 49 including vehicles and facilities used to provide intercity passenger bus service
- Carpool projects, fringe and corridor parking facilities and programs including electric and natural gas vehicle charging infrastructure, bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways, and ADA sidewalk modification
- Highway and transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs, installation of safety barriers and nets on bridges, hazard eliminations, mitigation of hazards caused by wildlife, and railway-highway grade crossings
- Highway and transit research, development, and technology transfer
- Surface transportation planning
- Transportation alternatives, newly defined, includes most transportation enhancement eligibilities
- Environmental mitigation efforts (as under National Highway Performance Program)
- Infrastructure-based ITS capital improvements

Simple wayfinding devices, such as standard tourist-oriented directional signs (TODS) would benefit byway travelers and incidental state or local travelers alike and not only increase visitation at the resources, but would help hold visitors in the area longer, thereby boosting local economies.



By promoting transit services in river communities that do offer them, and tracking the results, river communities that currently do not offer transit may find that an economic model which includes tourist-derived income may advance transit service establishment along more of the corridor, thereby making it a more viable byway travel option

- Environmental restoration and pollution abatement
- Control of noxious weeds and establishment of native species
- Recreational trails projects
- Construction of ferry boats and terminals
- Development and implementation of state asset management plan for the NHS and similar activities related to the development and implementation of a performance based management program for other public roads
- Surface transportation infrastructure modifications within port terminal boundaries, only if necessary to facilitate direct intermodal interchange, transfer, and access into and out of the port
- Construction and operational improvements for a minor collector in the same corridor and in proximity to an NHS route if the improvement is more cost-effective (as determined by a benefit-cost analysis) than an NHS improvement and will enhance NHS level of service and regional traffic flow
- Actions to preserve or reduce the impact of a project on the historic integrity of a historic bridge under specified conditions. [§1111; 23 USC 144(f)-(g)]

Workforce development, training, and education activities also are an eligible use of STP funds. [§1109; 23 USC 504(e)]

4.4.9.4 HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HSIP)

MAP-21 continues the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads including non-state-owned public roads and roads on tribal lands.

HSIP-eligible activities that could support Great River Road:

A highway safety improvement project is any strategy, activity or project on a public road that is consistent with the data-driven state Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and corrects or improves a hazardous road location or feature or addresses a highway safety problem. MAP-21 provides an example list of eligible activities but HSIP projects are not limited to those on the list.

Workforce development, training, and education activities also are an eligible use of HSIP funds. [§1109; 23 USC 504(e)]

4.4.9.5 CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ)

Jointly administered by FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the CMAQ program provides a flexible funding source to state and local governments for transportation projects and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Funding is available to reduce congestion and improve air quality for areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter and for former nonattainment areas that are now in compliance (maintenance areas).

Most of the communities along the Great River Road will not qualify due to their good air quality. Examples of projects receiving CMAQ funds include the City of Minneapolis to enhance traffic management systems, and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for installation of 'up to' 76 electric vehicle charging stations in the Twin Cities.

CMAQ-eligible activities that could support Great River Road:

- Projects that shift traffic demand to nonpeak hours or other transportation modes, increase vehicle occupancy rates, or otherwise reduce demand
- Facilities serving electric or natural gas-fueled vehicles (except where this conflicts with prohibition on rest area commercialization) are explicitly eligible
- Some expanded authority to use funds for transit operations

Workforce development, training, and education activities also are an eligible use of CMAQ funds.



▲ **ABOVE: Mississippi River Crossing, Itasca State Park**





INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter outlines four recommended initial action items. The first is based on meeting the most urgent corridor need, restoring Great River Road wayshowing signage. Three other actions will harness both technology and human relations to manage the Great River Road with efficient, sustainable and improved corridor outcomes, as well as lay the base for accomplishing the remaining corridor management strategies.

▲ **ABOVE:** Mary Lake, Lake Itasca State Park



Initial Great River Road Corridor Management Plan implementation projects include Wayshowing Signage, Plan Your Trip Interactive Map, Plan Your Project Interactive Map and Great River Road Ambassador Development.

Initial CMP implementation projects include Wayshowing Signage, Plan Your Trip interactive map, Plan Your Project interactive map, and Great River Road Ambassador Development. The first two initial projects were prioritized based on the visitor impression survey results and complaints made to the MN-MRPC about getting lost while traveling the byway. The last two initial action items arose out of a need to promote, preserve and protect the byway.

Table 5.0.1 Summary of Initial Implementation Projects

Project	FY	Responsible
Wayshowing Signage	2016-20, ongoing	MN-MRPC, MnDOT
Plan Your Trip Tool	2016, ongoing	MN-MRPC, MnDOT, EMT
Plan Your Project Tool	2016, ongoing	MN-MRPC, MnDOT
GRR Ambassador Development	2016-20	MN-MRPC, MnDOT

The following text describes each initial project in greater detail, and indicates which additional CMP strategies these projects will support (as laid out in **Chapter 4, The Plan**). The implementation of all goals, objectives and strategies listed in **Chapter 4, The Plan**, are critical to the ongoing success of the Great River Road and are recommended for implementation over the next ten to fifteen years.

5.1 Wayshowing Signage

Great River Road wayshowing in Minnesota began nearly 40 years ago. Minnesota's original procedure for marking the Great River Road relied on MnDOT districts, county, and local road authorities to erect the signs following standards developed by the Minnesota Department of Highways (after 1976, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, or MnDOT). This was formalized by the initial resolutions that adopted the byway route, which also specified all jurisdictions would maintain the signs on their respective sections.

The CMP's wayshowing sign inventory confirms what travelers are reporting: sign replacement and maintenance along the byway has been inconsistent and travel along the route can be extremely difficult as a result.

5.1.2 RELATED CMP STRATEGIES

1.10, 4.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use the Great River Road sign inventory to analyze all the specific locations that need improvement, what type of improvement is needed, and in what District, city and/or county it is located
- MnDOT and local byway segment managers should identify planned construction or maintenance projects that correspond with the location where improved wayshowing is needed and integrate wayshowing restoration into these projects
- Prepare a byway-wide plan of action and cost estimate to restore wayshowing
- Secure commitments and funds to implement the plan of action
- To ensure consistency across the entire 565-mile length of the Great River Road in Minnesota MnDOT’s statutory responsibility for the Great River Road as noted in MN Statute 161.142 reads “the commissioner of transportation shall establish and locate the route or routes of the Great River Road and shall thereafter construct, reconstruct, improve and may maintain same.” Therefore MnDOT is positioned to coordinate wayshowing systemwide to ensure consistent signing using uniform standards for byway sign placement and work through the five MnDOT districts for local implementation as needed
- Salvage original “Canada to Gulf,” wayshowing signs found along the Great River Road in Minneapolis and St. Paul as historical program artifacts when replaced with MUTCD-compliant signs. They are similar to the compliant Great River Road sign, except that in place of the state name of Minnesota, the text at the bottom reads “Canada to Gulf,” reflecting the earlier concept of a road extending into Kenora, Ontario as an international route.



▲ **ABOVE:** Great River Road signage

Table 5.1.1 Wayshowing Signage Implementing Agencies

Coordination	MN-MRPC
Implementation	MnDOT, local agencies
Funding	MnDOT, State, and FHWA grants
Technical Resource	Traffic Engineers
Management	MnDOT, local agencies
Maintenance	MnDOT, local agencies
Sign Fabrication Cost	Approximately \$100,000

Additional details for the necessary comprehensive wayshowing sign improvement plan can be found at www.mnmississippiriver.com.

Reestablishing Great River Road wayshowing signage and offering the Plan Your Trip interactive map will help travelers reliably find their way along the byway and focus on enjoying the multitude of places to explore Minnesota's Mississippi River



▲ ABOVE: Schoolcraft State Park Mississippi River interpretation

5.2 Plan Your Trip Interactive Map

The CMP development process included further development of a GIS database of traveler amenities along the Great River Road, complete with descriptions, photos, and links to amenity websites when available. Such a robust database is only valuable to the traveler if it is accessible and user-friendly. “Plan Your Trip” (PYT) is the concept for an easy-to-use interactive web-based mapping tool that features this database, along with the Great River Road and MRT alignments, other modal travel facilities, parks, trails, historic sites, MinnesotaGrown vendors, visitor centers and other traveler resources. The map is intended for trip planning purposes as well as for use while travelers are on their trip.

The tool aims to share some features available on the National Park Service's <http://rivertripplanner.org>, such as the ability to provide bicycling and transit directions to byway amenities.

Once PYT is established develop a “Best of the Byway” map and guide for each of the six regions. Include three scenic views, three heritage sites, three hikes of varied distance or difficulty, and three must-see natural areas. Develop new guides periodically to keep information current and broaden tourist appeal and local benefit.

Plan Your Trip could include links to podcasts for particular resources along the byway to add interpretive opportunities for the traveler. The tool could have a game element to it; for instance, travelers receive virtual rewards or badges for visiting resources along the Great River Road.

Inventorying and mapping river-related and hospitality businesses was beyond the scope of this CMP. To provide this function the MN-MRPC has encouraged businesses to nominate themselves for inclusion on the new Mississippi River Geotourism website. While suggested as a useful feature by the public, the addition of businesses on the www.mnmississippiriver.com PYT map will require increased funding for development and maintenance.

5.2.1 RELATED CMP STRATEGIES

2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 6.4, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 9.4, 10.6, 12.3, 15.1

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Coordinate PYT development by the MN-MRPC, MnDOT, MN.IT, MNHS, MnDNR, MDA and EMT to link agency GIS data to the PYT mapping tool for public access at www.mnmississippiriver.com
- Upgrade and update www.mnmississippiriver.com technical capabilities to host PYT
- Plan for and fund the follow up promotion, maintenance, training, regular traveler amenity database updates and partner and amenity link maintenance
- Develop for mobile users and be a location responsive website
- Consider developing a downloadable application to avoid the limitation of needing access to WiFi or cellular service for operation, which in some areas along the byway are not reliably available
- Promote use of PYT on social media platforms

Table 5.2.1 Plan Your Trip Tool Implementing Agencies

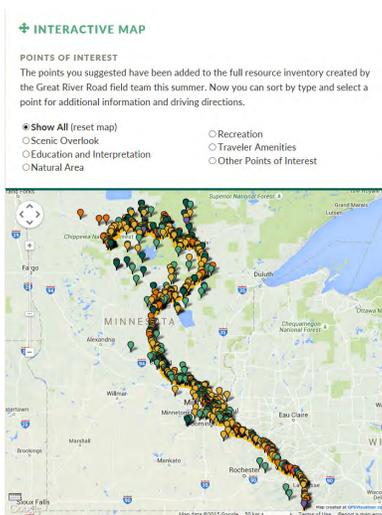
Coordination	MN-MRPC, MnDOT, EMT
Implementation	MnDOT, EMT
Funding	State and related organization grants/in-kind service
Technical Resource	MN.IT
Management	MnDOT, EMT
Cost	Approximately \$250,000 for user interface development

The Plan Your Project interactive map will help MnDOT and local road managers scope, design, construct and maintain the Great River Road so that today and tomorrow's byway travelers enjoy a safe, enriching and relaxing travel experience.

5.3 Plan Your Project Interactive Map

During the CMP update process, access to reliable and up-to-date GIS data was a consistent need. When working with several agencies over multiple years, static copies of GIS databases can quickly become outdated. Recognizing that this will continue to be an important issue for all agencies working on the Great River Road, the concept for the “Plan Your Project” (PYP) interactive map was generated. PYP is intended to serve as an interactive tool to support MnDOT and other road management authorities to coordinate a context sensitive approach to planning, design, construction, and maintenance efforts along the Great River Road. The PYP tool places an emphasis on potential multimodal resources and incorporates





▲ ABOVE: Plan Your Project interactive map

comprehensive datasets as available through partner agencies. Once operational, the PYP interactive mapping tool will require regular maintenance and periodic updates in order to provide the most up-to-date resource. This tool will enhance facility management, and illustrate existing and potential modal resources.

As noted in the in the Corridor chapter, the PYP mapping tool has been initiated during the CMP, working with MnDOT and MN.IT to identify the key databases to be included. With training and ongoing refinement this tool is intended to provide the context for system planning and project scoping, design, construction, and ongoing maintenance. The included data sets are or can be presented to byway segment managers and associated modal resource managers. This will help to better integrate the ongoing investments and resources to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of byway corridor management.

5.3.1 RELATED CMP STRATEGIES

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.10, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 7.6, 12.1, 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Coordinate PYP development by the MN-MRPC, MnDOT, MN.IT, MNHS, MnDNR, MDA and EMT to link agency GIS data to the PYP mapping tool for segment manager access at www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/great-river-road available to MN-MRPC and local agencies
- Plan for and fund the followup promotion, maintenance, training, regular traveler amenity database updates and partner and amenity link maintenance
- Develop for mobile users and be a location responsive website
- To facilitate use by road authorities in the field avoid the limitation of needing access to WiFi or cellular service for operation
- MnDOT and other agencies use this tool to digitally archive past plans, design guides, and historic facility management documentation.
- Develop PYP training for MnDOT and local agencies so they can use this tool to inform transportation planning, scoping, design, construction and maintenance along or affecting the byway

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDY EXAMPLES

- MN Great River Road Route Selection & Development Guides Segments 1-6 (1988)
- MN Great River Road Development Study Volume I Technical Report (1999)
- MN Great River Road Development Study Volume II Interpretive Themes (1999)
- MN Great River Road Development Study (2000)
- MN Great River Road Interpretive Plan (2001)
- MRPC Great River Road Interpretive Plan and Toolkit (2004)

Table 5.3.1 Plan Your Project Tool Implementing Agencies

Coordination	MN-MRPC, MnDOT, MN.IT
Implementation	MnDOT, local agencies
Funding	State and related organization grants/in-kind service
Technical Resource	MN.IT
Management	MnDOT, MN.IT
Cost	Ongoing MN-MRPC and member agency staff time in-kind contributions: plus \$50,000 for development

5.4 Great River Road Ambassador Development

Development of educated and engaged Great River Road “Ambassadors” will result in higher quality river exploration experiences, and will help communities and byway corridor managers add value to the work they are already doing.

Potential Ambassadors can include transportation staff involved in planning, scoping, designing, constructing and maintaining the byway, public agencies whose resources are a part of the byway experience, local businesses, and Mississippi River community residents. MN-MRPC Regional Citizen Committees are also ideal Ambassadors who can connect byway management and promotion to local efforts aiming for compatible outcomes.



▲ **ABOVE:** Ft. Snelling State Park describing birding opportunities

Source: MnDNR



5.4.1 RELATED CMP STRATEGIES

6.6, 11.4, 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a Great River Road Ambassador Development program
- Educate potential Ambassadors about the unique characteristics and needs of byway tourists and the economic benefits associated with the Great River Road
- Use PYT and PYP for Ambassador Development activities
- Drive or bike the Great River Road with state and local transportation staff so they better understand opportunities to manage the byway as a parkway and serve byway traveler needs
- Create Destination Area Ambassador tours emphasizing local activities, promotions, and celebrations
- Provide Ambassadors with Great River Road logos, signs, brochures, maps, and give-aways
- Other methods to implement the hospitality training include:
 - ▶ Invited Ambassador Development Workshop
 - ▶ Self-guided Ambassador education programs
 - ▶ Partner-led training (EMT, NPS-MNRRRA)
 - ▶ Field test target market itineraries

Table 5.4.1 Ambassador Development Implementing Agencies

Development Task	Implementing Agency
Coordination	MN-MRPC and member agencies, local/regional Destination Marketing Organizations
Implementation	MN-MRPC, MnDOT, local and regional partners
Funding	State funds and grants
Technical Resource	N/A
Management	MN-MRPC, MnDOT, local and regional partners
Cost	Ongoing MN-MRPC and member agency staff time; plus \$50,000 for travel, resource development and training activity costs





APPENDICES

Appendices include the Great River Road viewedshed nomination and assessment forms, and the 2015 Minnesota Great River Road Investment Summary which describes MN-MRPC partner projects that will benefit the byway traveler.

▲ ABOVE: Mill Ruins Park, Minneapolis



Assessment Form

Control Number (From Submittal)

General:

View

View Direction/Compass Bearing

Location or Address

Primary Modal Accessibility Parking Available
Primary Modal Accessibility ADA Accessible

City County

Landowner/Managing Agency:

GPS Coordinates

Landowner Managing Agency

Anything Else?

Assessment:

View Type

Landform/Cover

Landscape Type

Land Use (Zoning/Type)

Scenic Quality Rating (1-5, 5 being best)

Suitability for GRR Viewpoint (1-5, 5 being most suited)

Threat Level (0-5, 0 being no threat)

Discuss how any threats might be mitigated, or any infrastructure needs to develop vistas as by byways viewpoint/overlook

Other Notes
Best season, environment details (background noise, site details), sensory experience, wildlife, etc.)

Your Information (Optional):

Submitted by

Submit by Email

Or, mail to:
MPRC
MPRC Mailing Address
Address, AD

Email

Date

Nomination Form

(Office use only)
Control Number

General: (Publicly Accessible Views Only)

Suggested View Location

Location or Address

City

County

GPS Coordinates

View Direction/Compass Bearing

Insert a photo...

Landscape Information:

View Type

View Type

Land Use (Zoning/Type)

Land Use (Zoning/Type)

**Landowner/Land Manager
and Contact Information**

View Description

Why is this view significant?

Is this view likely to change?

If so, how?

Your Information (Optional):

Submitted by

Email

Date

Submit by Email

Or, mail to:

MPRC
MPRC Mailing Address
Address, AD



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)								Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking	
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural	Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?		Other Fund Sources Anticipated To Fulfill Project Needs?
			EXAMPLE: Project xyz	County, City, Township																		
Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park - General Park Upgrades/Improvements	Brooklyn Park	Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park	Ann Rexine	Planner	Three Rivers Park District	arexine@threeiversparkdistrict.org			X	X			X	X		\$3,000,000	No		\$3,000,000	TRPD GO Bonds	Met Council: CIP grant Parks and Trail Legacy	
Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park - Pavement Improvements	Brooklyn Park	Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park	Ann Rexine	Planner	Three Rivers Park District	arexine@threeiversparkdistrict.org		X		X						\$1,625,000	No		\$1,625,000	TRPD GO Bonds	FLAP	
Mississippi River Regional Trail	Dayton, Champlin, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Minneapolis	Dayton (Confluence) to Brooklyn Center (North Mississippi Regional Park)	Ann Rexine	Planner	Three Rivers Park District	arexine@threeiversparkdistrict.org		X	X	X						\$13,000,000	No				Various: State - Legacy and Bonding, Federal	
Mississippi River Regional Trail - Trailheads (4 total)	Dayton, Champlin, Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park, North Mississippi Regional Park	Dayton, Champlin, Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park, North Mississippi Regional Park	Ann Rexine	Planner	Three Rivers Park District	arexine@threeiversparkdistrict.org		X	X	X						\$1,000,000	No				Various: State - Legacy and Bonding, Federal	
Wabasha County Road 77	Wabasha County, Pepin Twp	On CR 77, from 207th Ave to 202nd Ave and south junction with TH 61.	Dietrich Flesch	County Engineer	Wabasha County	dflesch@co.wabasha.mn.us		X				X	X			\$200,000	No	-	\$200,000	Local County Funds	Unknown	1
CSAH 21 Paving	Spencer, Morrison Township, Aitkin County	CSAH 1 to US Hwy 169 - 7 mile length	John Welle	Aitkin County Engineer	Aitkin County	jwelle@co.aitkin.mn.us		X		X						\$4,000,000	No	\$1,000,000	\$3,000,000	Local Funds, CSAH Funds	Unknown	1
SAP 015-640-xxx	Clearwater	CSAH 40 from CSAH 2 to E. County Line	Dan Sauve	County Engineer	Clearwater County	dan.sauve@co.clearwater.mn.us		X								At time of publication, information not available						-
Lake Wobegon Trail Connection	St. Cloud		Scott Zlotnik	Park & Rec. Director	City of St. Cloud	scott.zlotnik@ci.stcloud.mn.us	X	X	X	X						At time of publication, information not available						-



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)										Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural	Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?	Other Fund Sources Anticipated To Fulfill Project Needs?		
			Beaver Island Trail Phase V	St. Cloud		Scott Zlotnik																Park & Rec. Director	City of St. Cloud
Beaver Island Trail Phase IV	St. Cloud		Scott Zlotnik	Park & Rec. Director	City of St. Cloud	Scott.zlotnik@ci.stcloud.mn.us	X	X	X	X						At time of publication, information not available						-	
Riverside Park Trail Phase I	St. Cloud	Riverside Park	Scott Zlotnik	Park & Rec. Director	City of St. Cloud	Scott.zlotnik@ci.stcloud.mn.us	X	X	X	X						\$520,000	No	-	\$520,000	Unknown	CSAH	-	
Munsinger Gardens Renovation	St. Cloud	Munsinger Gardens	Scott Zlotnik	Park & Rec. Director	City of St. Cloud	Scott.zlotnik@ci.stcloud.mn.us	X		X	X						At time of publication, information not available						-	
River's Edge Convention Center Renovation	St. Cloud	River's Edge Convention Center	Tony Goddard	Comm. Services & Facilities Director	City of St. Cloud	Tony.goddard@ci.stcloud.mn.us	X									\$1,500,000	Yes	-	-	Local Sales Tax	-		
Riverfront Plaza	St. Cloud	Riverfront Plaza	Matt Glaesman	Comm. Develop. Director	City of St. Cloud	Matt.glaesman@ci.stcloud.mn.us	X		X	X						\$1,000,000	No	-	\$1,000,000	Unknown	Local Sales Tax	-	
Cathedral Field Plaza / Amphitheater	St. Cloud	Cathedral Field Plaza / Amphitheater	Matt Glaesman	Comm. Develop. Director	City of St. Cloud	Matt.glaesman@ci.stcloud.mn.us	X		X	X						\$2,000,000	No	Unknown	\$2,000,000	-	Local Sales Tax	-	
CSAH 9	HUBBARD	3.4 MILES	David A. Olsonawski	County Engineer	Hubbard County	dolsonawski@co.hubbard.mn.us		X						X		\$500,000	No	-	\$500,000	-	Local Sales Tax	-	
CSAH 74	Cass County	CSAH 65 to CSAH 3	David Enblom	County Engineer	Cass County	dave.enblom@co.cass.mn.us		X					X	X	X	Unknown	No	At time of publication, information not available				-	
CSAH 9	Cass County	TH 2 to Itasca County Border	David Enblom	County Engineer	Cass County	dave.enblom@co.cass.mn.us		X					X	X	X	\$2,500,000	No	-	\$2,500,000	-	Unknown	-	
CSAH 91	Cass County	TH 2 to Beltrami County Border	David Enblom	County Engineer	Cass County	dave.enblom@co.cass.mn.us		X								At time of publication, information not available						-	
CSAH 42 Reconstruction along Great River Road	Dakota County (Nininger Twp)	Hwy 55 to Lock Blvd (3.5 mi)	Brian Sorenson	Assistant County Engineer	Dakota County	Brian.sorenson@co.dakota.mn.us		X								At time of publication, information not available						-	
Mississippi River Trail	Dakota County (Rosemount)	Pine Bend Trail	Chris Hartzell	Project Manager	Dakota County	Chris.hartzell@co.dakota.mn.us		X	X	X						\$500,000	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)										Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural	Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?	Other Fund Sources Anticipated To Fulfill Project Needs?		
			Spring Lake Regional Park Riverfront Day Use Area	Dakota County (Nininger Township)	Below Schaar's bluff	Josh Kinney																Project Manager	Dakota County
Spring Lake Regional Park Boat Landing and Picnic Area	Dakota County (Nininger Township)	Fischer Ave	Josh Kinney	Project Manager	Dakota County/DNR	Josh.kinney@co.dakota.mn.us		X	X	X						\$1,616,600	No	-	-	-	-	1	
Mississippi River Trail Overlooks in Spring Lake Regional Park	Dakota County	Spring Lake Regional Park	Chris Hartzell	Project Manager	Dakota County	Chris.hartzell@co.dakota.mn.us			X	X						At time of publication, information not available					2		
Mississippi River Trail Pine Bend Trailhead	Dakota County	117th Street at Pine Bend Bluffs SNA	Josh Kinney	Project Manager	Dakota County/DNR	Josh.kinney@co.dakota.mn.us		X	X	X		X				\$5,762,000	No	-	\$5,762,000	CSAH funds (not yet programmed)	-	-	
Mississippi River Trail Cultural and Interpretive Nodes (10 locations)	Dakota County	South St. Paul to Hastings at 10 locations	Josh Kinney	Project Manager	Dakota County	Josh.kinney@co.dakota.mn.us		X	X	X	X	X				\$3,000,000	No	-	\$3,000,000	Federal TAP	-	-	
Mississippi River Trail (Ravenna Twp) feasibility study	Dakota County	Hastings to Redwing in Ravenna Township		Project Manager	Dakota County	John.mertens@co.dakota.mn.us	X						X	X		Total Cost unknown at time of publication	-	-	-	Metro Council Parks Funds	-	-	
Sauk River Regional Park Development	City	100 County Road 1	Mary Degiovanni	City Administration	Sartell	mary@sartellmn.com	X		X	X		X				At time of publication, information not available					-		
Shay Property	City	600 County Road 1	Mary Degiovanni	City Administrator	Sartell	mary@sartellmn.com			X	X		X	X	X		\$800,000	No	\$400,000	\$400,000	Scenic Byways	-	-	
Paper Mill Redevelopment and Pedestrian Bridge	City	100 Sartell Street	Anita Rasmussen	Planning Director	Sartell	anita@sartellmn.com	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		\$3,500,000	No	-	\$3,500,000	History & Cultural Legacy Funds	-	-	
Mississippi River Portages	City	Riverside Avenue	Anita Rasmussen	Planning Director	Sartell	anita@sartellmn.com	X	X	X	X						\$150,000	Unknown	-	-	Metro Council Parks/Dakota County	-	-	
Riverside Commercial Redevelopment	City	River Oaks and Riverside Avenue	Anita Rasmussen	Planning Director	Sartell	anita@sartellmn.com	X	X	X	X						At time of publication, information not available					-		



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)								Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking						
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural	Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?		Other Fund Sources Anticipated To Fulfill Project Needs?					
			Lane Reduction for US HWY 61/multimodal transportation improvements	City of Lake City	The full length of the 4-lane portion of HWY 61	Scott Jensen															Public Works Director		City of Lake City	sjensen@ci.lake-city.mn.us	X	X	
Outdoor Transportation Exhibit, Weyerhaeuser Museum	Morrison County, Little Falls, MN	2151 S. Lindbergh Drive, Little Falls, MN 56345	Jan Warner	Executive Director	The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum,	staff@morrisoncountyhistory.org				X	X	X		X	X	Total Cost unknown at time of publication	No										-
Mississippi River Fishing Pier	LaPrairie	Mary Ann Drive	Mike Fall	Mayor	LlaPrairie	mayor@paulbunyan.net			X	X						\$150,000	-	\$0.00	\$150,000	-	yes					3	
Neighborhood Park Development	LaPrairie	Mary Ann Drive	Mike Fall	Mayor	LlaPrairie	-								X	X	\$400,000	-	\$0.00	\$400,000	No	yes					2	
Mississippi River Multi-Use Trail	LaPrairie	E. Project Limit: Miss. And Prairie River	Mike Fell	Mayor	LlaPrairie	-		X	X	X				X		\$150,000	No	\$0.00	\$150,000	-	yes					1	
Wabasha Area GRR Resource Inventory & Use Plan	Wabasha – Kellogg communities	Wabasha Kellogg area	Chad Springer	City Administrator	City of Wabasha	cityadmin@wabasha.org	X									\$150,000	No	\$0.00	\$150,000	-	-					-	
Tourism Plan & Marketing	Wabasha – Kellogg communities	Wabasha Kellogg area	Chad Springer	City Administrator	City of Wabasha	cityadmin@wabasha.org	X									At time of publication, information not available						-					
Wayfinding Signage from Byway to River	City of Wabasha	Major Routes into Wabasha	Chad Springer	City Administrator	City of Wabasha	cityadmin@wabasha.org		X		X						At time of publication, information not available						Local and other	-				
Fish Cleaning House	City of Wabasha	DNR Boat Launch	Chad Springer	City Administrator	City of Wabasha	cityadmin@wabasha.org				X						At time of publication, information not available						Local and other	1				
Expansion of Trail (Wabasha to Kellogg)	City of Wabasha	Along CSAH 30/MRT	Chad Springer	City Administrator	City of Wabasha	cityadmin@wabasha.org		X		X						At time of publication, information not available						MN DNR, local, other	2				
Trail Bridge over Zumbro River	Wabasha County	CSAH 30	Dietrich Flesch	Highway Engineer	Wabasha County	dflesch@co.wabasha.mn.us		X		X						\$35,000	No	0	\$25,000	-	-						3
City Dock	City of Wabasha	Mississippi River Downtown	Chad Springer	City Administrator	City of Wabasha	cityadmin@wabasha.org				X					X	\$50,000	No	0	\$50,000	-	-						-



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)								Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking	
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural	Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?		Other Fund Sources Anticipated To Fulfill Project Needs?
			Re-pavement of Heritage Park	City of Wabasha	Downtown Wabasha	Chad Springer															City Administrator	
Sidewalk along Bridge Ave/Slough	City of Wabasha	Athletic Field/Mississippi Backwaters	Chad Springer	City Administrator	City of Wabasha	cityadmin@wabasha.org		X		X						\$25,000	No	0	\$20,000	-	-	-
Ped. Bridge over Slough	City of Wabasha	CSAH 30/Hiawatha	Chad Springer	City Administrator	City of Wabasha	cityadmin@wabasha.org		X		X						\$415,225	No	0	\$415,225	-	-	-
Rain Gardens	City of Wabasha	Wabasha Riverfront/Slough	Chad Springer	City Administrator	City of Wabasha	cityadmin@wabasha.org							X			\$750,000	No	0	\$750,000	-	-	11
Overlay & pave shoulders	HUBBARD	CSAH 9, 3.4 MILES	David A. Olsonawski	County Engineer	Hubbard County	dolsonawski@cohubbard.mn.us		X					X	X		\$60,000	No	0	\$60,000	-	-	-
Access	Brainerd	E. River Road	Mark Ostgarden	City Planner	City of Brainerd	mostgarden@clbrainerd.mn.us		X	X	X						\$90,000	No	0	\$90,000	-	TAP, Legacy	2
Public Park or Plaza	Brainerd	E. River Road	Mark Ostgarden	City Planner	City of Brainerd	mostgarden@clbrainerd.mn.us			X	X		X		X		\$45,000	No	0	\$45,000	-	-	-
Wetland Boardwalk	Brainerd	Rotary Riverside Park	Mark Ostgarden	City Planner	City of Brainerd	mostgarden@clbrainerd.mn.us			X	X						At time of publication, information not available						-
Presence of Public Art	Brainerd	E. River Road	Mark Ostgarden	City Planner	City of Brainerd	mostgarden@clbrainerd.mn.us				X		X				\$580,000	No	Unknown	Unknown	Great River Road Funds		-
Business Development	Brainerd	E. River Road	Mark Ostgarden	City Planner	City of Brainerd	mostgarden@clbrainerd.mn.us		X								At time of publication, information not available						-
Repurpose High Value Properties	Brainerd	E. River Road	Mark Ostgarden	City Planner	City of Brainerd	mostgarden@clbrainerd.mn.us				X				X		\$2,000,000	No	No	All	Local, Legacy and Bonding, Federal		-
Outdoor Public Amphitheater	Brainerd	E. River Road	Mark Ostgarden	City Planner	City of Brainerd	mostgarden@clbrainerd.mn.us			X	X			X	X		\$1,000,000	No	No	All	Local, Legacy and Bonding, Federal		-
Performing Arts Center	Brainerd	E. River Road	Mark Ostgarden	City Planner	City of Brainerd	mostgarden@clbrainerd.mn.us								X		\$500,000	No	No	All	Local, Legacy and Bonding, Federal		-



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)								Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural	Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?	
			Interpretative Center	Brainerd	E. River Road	Mark Ostgarden															City Planner
Hastings Riverfront Renaissance Phases 2-3 (2015-2016)	Hastings	Downtown Hastings and Riverfront (Levee Park)	Nick Egger	City Engineer	City of Hastings	nickegger@hastingsmn.gov		X	X	X						\$1,000,000	No	No	All	Local, State – Legacy and Bonding, Federal	-
Great River Landing	Hastings	North of 200 2nd street west (CR 42/ Hwy 61)	John Hinzman	Comm. Development Director	City of Hastings	jhinzman@hastingsmn.gov	X		X	X		X	X			\$3,000,000	No	No	All	Local, State – Legacy and Bonding, Federal	-
Mississippi Pedestrian Bridge	Beltrami County	Bruce Hasbargen	Bruce Hasbargen	County Engineer	Beltrami County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us		X		X			X			\$1,000,000	No	No	All	Local, State – Legacy and Bonding, Federal	-
Nuska Interpretive Site	Beltrami County/Cass County	Beltrami County/Cass County	Bruce Hasbargen/Dave Enblom	County Engineer	Beltrami County/Cass County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us			X	X						At time of publication, information not available					-
Interpretive Signs	Beltrami County/Cass County	Beltrami County/Cass County	Bruce Hasbargen/Dave Enblom	County Engineer	Beltrami County/Cass County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us				X			X	X		\$3,950,000	No	\$400,000	\$400,000	City Bonding, City Utility Funds, Municipal State Aid for Local Transportation, City Parks Capital	-
Entrance signs for all Interpretive Sites	Beltrami County/Cass County	Beltrami County/Cass County	Bruce Hasbargen/Dave Enblom	County Engineer	Beltrami County/Cass County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us		X		X						\$980,000	No	0	\$980,000	City bonds and Developer of adjacent historic building - finance	-
Introduce Orchids to Cass County	Cass County	Cass County	Dave Enblom	County Engineer	Cass County	dave.enblom@co.cass.mn.us										At time of publication, information not available					-
Harden trail Mississippi Orchids	Beltrami County	Beltrami County	Bruce Hasbargen	County Engineer	Beltrami County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us				X						\$800,000	No	At time of publication, information not available			-
Bike Trail from Norway Beach to Pennington	Beltrami County/Cass County	Beltrami County/Cass County	Bruce Hasbargen/Dave Enblom	County Engineer	Beltrami County/Cass County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us		X					X			\$150,000	No	At time of publication, information not available			-
Mississippi Overlook at Current Amenity Site	Beltrami County	Beltrami County	Bruce Hasbargen	County Engineer	Beltrami County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us			X				X			\$10,000	No	At time of publication, information not available			-
Mississippi Canoe Landing at Current Amenity Site	Beltrami County	Beltrami County	Bruce Hasbargen	County Engineer	Beltrami County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us				X						\$10,000	No	At time of publication, information not available			-



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)								Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking	
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural	Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?		Other Fund Sources Anticipated To Fulfill Project Needs?
Camp Rabideau Historic Landmark Sign on Highway	Beltrami County	Beltrami County	Bruce Hasbargen	County Engineer	Beltrami County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us		X		X		X		X		\$11,000		At time of publication, information not available				-
Clean up Junk on the Highway	Beltrami County	Beltrami County	Bruce Hasbargen	County Engineer	Beltrami County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us			X					X		\$2,500	No	\$500		FS	-	-
Historic Train Trestle	Beltrami County	Beltrami County	Bruce Hasbargen	County Engineer	Beltrami County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us		X		X		X				Total Cost unknown at time of publication	No	At time of publication, information not available				-
Picnic Table and Toilet at Lady Slipper Interpretive Site	Beltrami County	Beltrami County	Bruce Hasbargen	County Engineer	Beltrami County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us				X						\$10,000	No	\$2,000		FS	-	-
Extend Boardwalk	Beltrami County	Beltrami County	Bruce Hasbargen	County Engineer	Beltrami County	bruce.hasbargen@co.beltrami.mn.us						X				\$8,000	No	\$1,600		FS	-	-
Nokasippi River Bike Trail Pt #1 Connect to Crow Wing State Park	Crow Wing County	CW St Park to Fort Ripley	Tim Bray	County Engineer	Crow Wing County	Tim.Bray@crowwing.us		X	X	X						Total Cost unknown at time of publication	No	At time of publication, information not available				-
Nokasippi River Bike Trail Pt #2 Connection to Camp Ripley	Morrison County	Fort Ripley to Camp Ripley	Tim Bray	County Engineer	Crow Wing County	Tim.Bray@crowwing.us		X	X	X						Total Cost unknown at time of publication	No	At time of publication, information not available				-
Battle Creek(BC) Park Entrance Road Reconstruction (narrowing), off-road bituminous trail for Mississippi River Trail, site amenities, and signage.	Saint Paul	SW corner of BC Reg. Park between Lower Afton Road and Lower BC parking lot adjacent to Hwy 61	Scott Yonke	Director of Planning and Development	Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department	scott.yonke@co.ramsey.mn.us		X								\$30,000	No	At time of publication, information not available				-



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)								Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking	
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural	Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?		Other Fund Sources Anticipated To Fulfill Project Needs?
			Lower Battle Creek Overlook. Improve view sheds to Pigs Eye Lake, pedestrian access connections, interpretive signage and site amenities.	Saint Paul	SW corner of BC Reg. Park between Lower Afton Road and Lower BC parking lot adjacent to Hwy 61.	Scott Yonke	Director of Planning and Development	Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department	scott.yonke@co.ramsey.mn.us		X								At time of publication, information not available			
Lower Battle Creek Trail Head and Picnic Area. Const. of trail head, restroom facility, informal picnic areas, parking lot redevelopment, improved pedestrian connections, site amenities and signage.	Saint Paul	SW corner of BC Reg. Park near Lower BC parking lot.	Scott Yonke	Director of Planning and Development	Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department	scott.yonke@co.ramsey.mn.us		X						X		\$600,000	No	At time of publication, information not available		Miss River Great River Rd	-	
Const. of a new entrance road off of BC Park Entrance Rd, visitor center parking lot and picnic facility, outdoor recreation amenities, site amenities, and signage.	Saint Paul	SW corner of BC Reg. Park between Lower Afton Road and Lower BC parking lot adjacent to Hwy 61.	Scott Yonke	Director of Planning and Development	Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department	scott.yonke@co.ramsey.mn.us		X						X		\$800,000	No	At time of publication, information not available		Miss Riv Great River Rd	At time of publication, information not available	-
TH61/Huff Street Pedestrian Improvements	City of Winona	Intersection of Huff St./Highway 61	Brian Defrang	City Engineer	City of Winona	bdefrang@ci.winona.mn.us		X								\$2,000,000	No	-	\$2,000,000	Metropolitan Regional Park and Trail CIP Funds, Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment Funds, Federal STP or TAP Funds, National Park Service Funds	-	
Lake Winona Signage Improvements	City of Winona	Lake Park	Julie Fassbender	Program Recreation Director	City of Winona	jfassbender@ci.winona.mn.us			X	X						\$500,000	No	-	\$500,000	Metropolitan Regional Park and Trail CIP Funds, Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment Funds, National Park Service Funds	-	
Winona Dakota Unity Alliance Annual Homecoming Event	City of Winona	Unity Park	Maynard Johnson	Recreation Director	City of Winona	mjohnson@ci.winona.mn.us						X				\$800,000	No		\$800,000	Metropolitan Regional Park and Trail CIP Funds, Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment Funds, National Park Service Funds	-	



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)								Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural	Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?	
			Sugar Loaf Activity Area Improvements	City of Winona	Highway 61/Highway 43	Chad Ubl															Community Services Director
Garvin Heights Stairs, Signage and Trail Improvements	City of Winona	Intersection of Huff St./Highway 61 and Garvin Heights Road	Julie Fassbender	Program Recreation Director	City of Winona	jfassbender@ci.winona.mn.us			X	X						\$178,000	No	-	\$178,000	City of Winona	-
Heritage Village Park	Dakota County, Inver Grove Heights	4321 – 65th St.	Eric Carlson	Parks & Recreation Director	City of Inver Grove Heights	ecarlson@invergroveheights.org	X		X	X						\$10,000	No	-	\$10,000	City of Winona	-
?	City of Winona	City of Winona	Keith Nelson	Assistant City Manager for Public Works	City of Winona	knelson@ci.winona.mn.us							X			\$55,000-\$95,000 Annually	Yes for 2014, but funded annually	-	-	SE MN Arts Council, Winona Foundation, SE Technical College, RTP, native American reservations	9
?	City of Winona	City of Winona	Keith Nelson	Assistant City Manager for Public Works	City of Winona	knelson@ci.winona.mn.us										\$65,000	No	-	\$65,000	City of Winona Metropolitan Regional Park and Trail CIP Funds, Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment Funds, Federal STP or TAP Funds, National Park Service Funds	-
?	City of Winona	City of Winona	Keith Nelson	Assistant City Manager for Public Works	City of Winona	knelson@ci.winona.mn.us										\$1,000	No	-	\$1,000	City of Winona Metropolitan Regional Park and Trail CIP Funds, Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment Funds, National Park Service Funds	1



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)										Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking	
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Intrinsic Resource					Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?	Other Fund Sources Anticipated To Fulfill Project Needs?		
Riverfront Renaissance Project website: http://www.boltonmenk.com/clients/Hastings/MasterPlan	City of Hastings	Levee Park	Melanie Mesko Lee or Nick Egger	City Administrator/City Engineer	City of Hastings	mmesko_lee@hastingsmn.gov or nickegger@hastingsmn.gov	X		X	X								\$10,000,000	No	\$2,000,000	\$8,000,000	State of MN Bonding Grant City Funds	Metropolitan Regional Park and Trail CIP Funds, Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment Funds, National Park Service Funds	2
Lady Slipper Scenic Byway Pedestrian Walkway	Beltrami County	T146 N R30 W Sec 22 Adj. Mississippi River Hwy bridge	Patti Hines	Recreation Technician	USDA Forest Service	phines@fs.fed.us			X	X								At time of publication, information not available						-
Cuyuna Lakes State Trail	Aitkin, Crosby Ironton, Brainerd	Length of Mississippi River between Aitkin and Brainerd	John Schaubach	-	-	Johnschaubach@gmail.com			X	X								At time of publication, information not available						-
?	City of Hastings	City of Hastings	Melanie Mesko Lee or Nick Egger	City Administrator/City Engineer	City of Hastings	mmesko_lee@hastingsmn.gov or nickegger@hastingsmn.gov												\$4,700,000	No	2014—fully funded 2015 & 2016—funding allocation still TBD	\$4,000,000	Bonding-City of Hastings Park Capital—City of Hastings Utility Funds-City of Hastings		-
National Geographic Geotourism Project	MN		Suzanne Pepin	MN Representative	Mississippi River Trail, Inc	chezpepin@me.com			X	X								At time of publication, information not available						-
MN Forest Highway 3 (MNFH3)	Beltrami, Cass Counties	27 mile route within Chippewa National Forest, Leech Lake Reservation . Between Blackduck and US 2	Nancy Salminen	-	-	njsalminen@gmail.com			X	X								\$120,000	No	\$30,000	-	LLBO	Grants	-
Babcock Memorial Park*	MN DOT Dist. 38	TH 15	TBD	-	MnDOT	-		X	X	X								\$78.199	No	-	\$78.199	At time of publication, information not available		-



Great River Road National Scenic Byway Investment Needs Summary

Project Information			Project Manager				Which Category Describes Your Project? (select all that apply)										Funding						Local Project Priority Ranking
Project Name	Location: Municipality	Location: Address or Project Limits	Name	Title	Entity	E-mail	Planning	Transportation	Scenic	Recreational	Intrinsic Resource						Marketing	Total Estimated Project Cost	Fully Funded	Partially Funded (list amount funded)	Additional Funding Yet To Secure	What Specific Sources Will Fund This Project?	
											Archeological	Historical	Cultural	Natural									
Daytonport Roadside Parking Area*	MN DOT Dist. MW	TH 10	TBD	-	MnDOT	-		X	X	X			X				\$88,934	No	-	\$88,934	At time of publication, information not available	-	
Point Douglas Road Retaining Wall*	MN DOT Dist. ME	TH 61	TBD	-	MnDOT	-		X					X				\$242,270	No	-	\$242,270	At time of publication, information not available	-	
Mendota Granite Arrow Marker*	MN DOT Dist. ME	TH 13	TBD	-	MnDOT	-		X					X				\$5,344	No	-	\$5,344	At time of publication, information not available	-	
Frontenac State Park Gates*	MN DOT Dist. 6B	TH 61	TBD	-	MnDOT	-		X					X				\$28,865	No	-	\$28,865	At time of publication, information not available	-	
Frontenac Roadside Parking Area/Maiden Rock (aka Lake Pepin rest area)*	MN DOT Dist. 6B	TH 61	TBD	-	MnDOT	-		X	X				X				\$198,016	No	-	\$198,016	At time of publication, information not available	-	
Wabasha Overlook*	MN DOT Dist. 6A	TH 60	TBD		MnDOT			X	X	X			X				\$363,293	No	-	\$363,293	At time of publication, information not available	-	

- Estimate based upon October 2009 Treatment Recommendation Report with no inflation or deterioration adjustments since then.

Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Minnesota Legislative Coordinating Commission

