



Mississippi River Parkway Commission

P.O. Box 7395
Madison, WI 53707



Mississippi River Parkway Commission Transportation Committee Teleconference Meeting January 26, 2024 | 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85089475760?pwd=c2lRNW5meFhsZlNCd3Fna0RnL0V3dz09>

Meeting ID: 850 8947 5760

Passcode: 056479

One tap mobile: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

MINUTES

Introductions

Arkansas – no representatives
Illinois – John Paris
Iowa – Lisa Walsh
Kentucky – James LeFevre
Louisiana – Jessica Deville
Minnesota – Peter MacDonagh, Anne Lewis
Mississippi – Callie Rush
Missouri – Brenda Harris
Tennessee – Michael McClanahan
Wisconsin – Francis Schelfhout, Liat Bonneville

Minutes from 11/17/23

Meeting minutes, agendas, handouts, future meeting dates are posted online at
<https://mrpcmembers.com/committee/transportation/>

Mississippi River Trail (MRT) – U.S. Bike Route

- AASHTO Steps to Designation as U.S. Bike Route
 - Draft Route
 - Existing Route
 - Existing maps, routing – will build a database of examples provided by state (links, maps, resources, etc.) – WI example at: [The Great River Road - Mississippi River Trail Bicycle Map - WisDOT \(wisconsindot.gov\)](#)
 - Could include details like vertical rise, shoulder widths, traffic volumes or other details that would benefit users/conversations with locals.
 - ACTION: send Francis all links, maps, resources regarding your state's MRT as it exists**
 - Mapping/KMZ of Existing/Alternative Routes
 - “How to...” completed – review – Q&A



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KMZ can be created in most GIS applications, help document shows creation of KMZ using GoogleMaps – recommend leveraging Transportation Department resources if possible.

ACTION: provide Francis with KMZ file for your respective state's MRT (KY confirmed that their MRT is exactly the same as the GRR)

- Displays of Existing/Alternative Routes
This will be the next help document and is a much quicker way to show/prepare for the public outreach. It can be completed in Bluebeam or Adobe. Recommend showing existing route, some alternative routes to consider, can in some instances include routes that were considered and dropped for good reason. Routes considered should include those closest to the river or the GRR and in some state this might be on levees or other “off system” trails/facilities.

- o Local Agreements/Support
AASHTO requires/shall have local agreement/resolution/letter of support from every community that the route runs through. This is regardless of jurisdiction of the roadway or facility on which the route will be designated. Example is routed along a state/US highway through a town. Although the roadway is the Transportation Department jurisdiction, local support from the town must be attained of the route through their municipality.

Sample materials will be added to the Transportation Committee website:

PowerPoint Presentation
Draft Resolutions
Draft Maps

The local meetings to attain this support are probably best served is presented/attended by a Transportation Department representative and at least one representative from the State MRPC (Wisconsin has had state chair or county commissioner in attendance).

Tourism departments may also be an attendee and even lead the effort, but keep in mind that the final application to AASHTO must come from the Transportation Departments

- o Submit Application
Formal dedication of the route in Wisconsin is estimated to be a 3-5 year process (250 miles, 76 communities) – keep this in mind.
Intention is to continue to work at this at each state level with the intent to file a 10-state (in whole or in parts) application for a US Bike route. View this similarly to the AAR applications – get as many states to participate as possible.

- Trademarked

Francis, Sherry (WI Chair) and Susanne (NO) met with a LaCrosse trademark attorney to review situation and look for next steps. Below is the summary of discussion. Note that this information will be discussed at the next board meeting in March.

1. The “MRT” mark used in conjunction with bicycling/trails is currently held by Mississippi Trail, Inc, a Tennessee non-profit that has been dissolved. The federal trademark is still active, however, because the owner has been dissolved, there is not an easy way to

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transfer that mark to the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, Inc. The next maintenance document is due on February 24, 2024 and if this does not get filed the mark will be considered “dead” (there may or may not be a short waiting period in there), and can be claimed by another organization. Acquiring this mark is really the #1 goal of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, Inc and should be planned for. I would estimate the cost to do so at \$4,000 to \$5,000. A part of acquiring the federal trademark that my firm recommends is hiring a 3rd party contractor to perform a “current use” search which details the current use of the mark in the country at the time it is prepared. This allows us to know that nobody else is using it, and to have a source of proof that at the time we applied, we are the first to use it which helps immensely in the enforcement of a trademark. USPTO registration is the “gold standard” for enforcement of a trademark within the US.

2. Prior to February 24, 2025, The Mississippi River Parkway Commission, Inc should also probably acquire state trademarks over “MRT” as used in conjunction with bicycling/trails in each of the 10 states. State trademarks serve as a way to publicly file a declaration that you are using a mark as of a certain date. i.e., it’s an easily provable first usage date. However, they are limited in geographical scope (hence, why it needs to occur in each state) and they do not help you in defending against somebody else’s claim that they used it first (this is the purpose of the 3rd party service described above). I would consider this as a “stop gap” while we wait for the federal mark to be killed by the USPTO.
 3. For all trademarks acquired by the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, Inc, there should be some sort of license agreement with the state organizations that details the allowable uses of the trademarks. I would envision that there would be some sort of “membership agreement” that includes the use of the trademarks as a perk. This does not need to be complicated and may be able to be inserted into something which already exists.
- Sign Plate
[No update provided.](#)
 - Route Status
 - [No update provided.](#)

Interpretive Centers – Strengthen Relationships

- Update – Sample Inventory from Francis Schelfhout
[Will Post full inventory of signs per affiliated Interpretive Centers for WI](#)
[Confirmed that we are looking to establish a baseline level of signage for the different locations that an IC may be in relation to the GRR \(Adjacent would have minimum of Ahead/At or just At?\)](#)
- Wayfinding signage inventory (including pictures)
 - “Ahead”, “At”, “Turns”
 - Including turn by turn directions, distances, etc.



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- o Detailed map documenting locations, signs, directions
First "How to" document will talk about creating the parcel map. Parcel map is important to describe the IC's site, how it functions, multiple access points, changing directions depending on direction of travel, etc.
Francis will be working with National Office to create a working page for IC signage work also.

Next Meetings

- 2024 Transportation Committee Meetings (4th Friday – Bi-Monthly @ 9am CST)
 - o January 26 - March 22 - *May 17* - July 26 - September 27 - *November 15*

Noted that:

May 17 is the third Friday due to the Memorial Day Holiday

September 27 will likely be adjusted to align with the annual meeting date/time

November 15 is the third Friday due to the Thanksgiving Holiday weekend