

# ATP TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



2/2/2011

Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) –  
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

A prescriptive plan to develop an alternative transportation system.

Prepared by

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# ATP Transportation Implementation Plan

PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK THAT SUPPORTS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VISION AND GOALS OF THE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Mississippi National River and Recreational Area (MNRRA)<sup>1</sup> Alternative Transportation System represents a series of connections to the Mississippi River. Connections to, along, and on the Mississippi River will provide the visitor with multi-modal access to MNRRA destinations, river access points, bike commuting and recreational opportunities, and transit options. The primary feature of this system is the Mississippi River Trail, Inc. (MRT), a 3,000-mile network of trails that run between northern Minnesota and the Gulf of Mexico. In the Twin Cities metro area, 72 miles of this multimodal National Millennium Trail are located on both sides of the Mississippi River (144 miles total).

In addition to the 72-mile section of the MRT, the MNRRA Alternative Transportation System will be made up of a network of bike trails, commuter trails, bike stations, river access, non-motorized and motorized transit access (bus, light rail, commuter trains, boat services, etc.), and connections between these modes. The ultimate objective is to create a well-defined and seamless network of multimodal opportunities in this urban river corridor that is recognized by all visitors as the means to navigate the MNRRA corridor in its entirety.

Implementation of the system will require multiple partners and funding sources, collaboration with stakeholders, and creative marketing to successfully identify the MNRRA corridor as having

a world-class multimodal transit system.

The system will bring all entities together to provide access to and celebrate the river in the Twin Cities metro area. Key partners include the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), Metropolitan Council, Port Authorities, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), local park implementing agencies and jurisdictions, Transit for Livable Communities, Nice Ride Minnesota, Metro Transit, Minneapolis/St. Paul Airports Commission, Mississippi River Fund, Wilderness Inquiry, and numerous public and private partners through the National Park Service's (NPS) Trails and Open Space Partnership (TOSP).

*“The term ‘alternative transportation’ means transportation by bus, rail, or any other publicly or privately owned conveyance that provides to the public general or special service on a regular basis, including sightseeing service. Such term also includes nonmotorized transportation systems (including the provision of facilities for pedestrians, bicycles, and nonmotorized watercraft).”*  
—49 U.S.C. § 5320(b)(3), as amended by SAFETEA-LU (section 3021)



The Multi-modal Transportation Planning Team on project kick-off ride, which began in downtown St. Paul

<sup>1</sup> This resource is locally known by the acronym MNRRA; however, the NPS official acronym is MISS; both are appropriate and interchangeable. This document will use the acronym MNRRA from this point forward to avoid potential confusion.

## 1.1 Planning Process Background

The purpose of this project is to develop a multimodal Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) for MNRRRA to get people to, along, and onto the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities metro area. The ATP project team, which included NPS staff from MNRRRA and the Denver Service Center (DSC), a Transportation Scholar, and a local transportation consultant, began working together in the summer of 2009. Since then, the following items and activities have been completed:

- Partners' Plans Summary Analysis
- Data Collection Summary Report
- GIS Data Collection Summary Report
- Consolidated geospatial database with GIS files from 18 coordinating agencies
- Large format hard copy and electronic map of transportation systems in the region
- Large format map identifying gaps in the planning corridor
- MNRRRA ATP Workshop (occurred March 29–March 30, 2010 in St. Paul, Minnesota)
- Public open house in April 2010
- Workshop Summary Report

Additional details summarizing the ATP process undertaken in 2009–2010 can be found in Appendix A.

Using the findings from the March–April 2010 meetings and other resources, NPS will utilize the Transportation Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan) for NPS staff and partners as a springboard for bringing to life the vision and goals identified for the ATP. The purpose of the Implementation Plan is to:

- Provide an open and transparent planning process at MNRRRA where partners have multiple opportunities for input;
- Establish a planning process for the recreation area that maximizes organizational resources; and
- Create a path to implement the mission, vision, and goals of the ATP process.

The Implementation Plan includes descriptions of work and activities to be accomplished (planning, partnership building, funding strategies, etc.) and anticipated related results (annual selection of partner projects, partnership and collaboration, etc.). It identifies park staff roles and responsibilities, highlights timeframes for completing the work, and provides potential costs and grant source(s) for ATP projects.

This Implementation Plan will be available to NPS staff and partnering agencies as a communication tool to help local governments, non-profit organizations, and other groups understand how to best work with the NPS to support the ATP implementation, and how the NPS can support their efforts.

## 1.2 Mission, Vision, and Goals

At the March 2010 workshop, the ATP Mission, Vision, and Goals, presented below, were further refined to guide project selection and meet NPS goals.

### 1.2.1 Mission

At the workshop, I believe we decided to use the park mission from either the General management Plan or the enabling legislation.

### 1.2.2 ATP Vision

*Working with partners, the MNRRRA ATP will promote a leadership framework for the development of a multimodal transportation system to and along the river that serves as a catalyst for the region's sustainable cultural, economic, and environmental future.*

The five defined goals were prioritized and are listed below in order of priority.

### 1.2.3 ATP Goals

1. Improve and enhance the visitor experience by integrating and enhancing opportunities for transportation, recreation, education, and scenic enjoyment along the Mississippi River.
2. Provide access to the MNRRA for everyone through integration into surrounding transportation systems.
3. Integrate MRT with area transit and trails to increase visitation to MNRRA without increasing congestion.
4. Establish a transportation system to and in the MNRRA that preserves, enhances, and interprets natural and cultural resources.
5. Promote development of environmental, economic, and socially adaptable and sustainable transportation and recreational facilities.

## 1.3 How to Use This Document

### 1.3.1 If you are an NPS staff member

This Plan was developed to provide NPS with a framework for implementing the development of an alternative transportation system that serves both NPS staff and MNRRA visitors, and for identifying projects in the 72-mile corridor that could support the vision and goals of the ATP. The Implementation Plan describes the tools developed during the 2009-2010 ATP effort to prioritize projects. It provides recommendations on how to collect information about potential projects on an annual basis and prioritize them so that the NPS can focus on promoting the projects that best align with their vision and goals. NPS staff could provide the following support to the annual ATP implementation process:

- Participate on the Project Advisory Board to review potential partner projects.
- Be responsible for entering projects identified as priorities into the NPS Project Management Information System (PMIS).
- Support the NPS ATP project leader, in promoting selected partner projects.
- Apply for potential federal funding grants for partner projects and/or prepare letters of support.
- Provide coordination for posting ATP information on the NPS website.
- Work with consultants to help apply for potential funding grants or collaborating with partners.
- Develop an ATP website with current projects, ATP goals and vision etch

### 1.3.2 If you are an NPS Partner

The MNRRA achieves most goals and objectives through partnership efforts, since local jurisdictions own the vast majority of land along the river. This Implementation Plan is intended to serve as a guide for NPS and partners as they work to support the implementation of projects that reflect the ATP's vision and goals. Partnership is a broad term used here to include: public support, promotion of projects or events on the NPS website, having an NPS staff member speak on behalf of or represent a project, helping partners seek funding for relevant projects that can help accomplish the ATP's vision and goals, or collaboration among NPS and partners on projects that are mutually beneficial.

The NPS is an experienced and respected Federal agency with a history of promoting values that serve visitors and emphasize the history, protection, and access to our nation's most important scenic landscapes such as the Mississippi River. On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the "Organic Act," which established the National Park System. The Organic Act states that the fundamental purpose of the NPS "is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

As a part of this project, NPS is willing and able to provide support, contribute time and resources, and coordinate with outside resources to help promote selected projects as park resources allow. If the NPS is ineligible to apply for funds as a Federal agency, they can provide letters of support to agencies and communities applying for funding to promote their involvement.

## 1.4 How do you get NPS to consider supporting your project?

If your community, agency, or non-profit has a project listed on the State Transportation Improvement Plan that could support the ATP vision and goals, it can participate in this process. NPS plans to create an application to collect data about potential projects using a web-based tool. After this system is developed, an annual call for projects is anticipated. As a part of this Implementation Plan, a project advisory board will be formed to review and prioritize candidate projects. Ultimately, this board will promote ATP values in the project using the methods described in this document.

## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Mississippi National River and Recreational Area

In 1988, Congress designated the 72 miles of the Mississippi River (between the cities of Ramsey and Hastings) along with four miles of the Minnesota River, as the MNRRA, which encompasses 54,000 acres of land. A true partnership park, the NPS owns very little land and works with 25 local governments, several state agencies, and numerous organizations to protect the globally significant resources along this 72-mile stretch of the Mississippi River running through the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The MNRRA plan addresses preservation, recreation, conservation, and development.

The MNRRA is a unit of the national park system, which is composed of more than 393 Units administered by the NPS, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). The MNRRA was established by Congress to (1) protect, preserve, and enhance the significant values of the Mississippi River corridor through the Twin Cities metropolitan area, (2) encourage coordination of federal, state, and local programs, and (3) provide a management framework to assist the state of Minnesota and units of government in the development and implementation of integrated resource management programs, and to ensure orderly public and private development in the area.



Portions of the 3,000-mile MRT are locally designated scenic routes.

#### 2.1.1 Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area

In 1976, Minnesota declared the Mississippi River corridor through the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area to be The Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA)

The purposes of designating the Mississippi River as a state critical area include the following:<sup>2</sup>

- a. protecting and preserving a unique and valuable state and regional resource for the benefit of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens for the state, region, and nation;
- b. preventing and mitigating irreversible damage to this resource;
- c. preserving and enhancing its natural, aesthetic, cultural, and historical value for public use;

<sup>2</sup> Information about the MRCCA Program can be found at:  
[http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt\\_section/critical\\_area/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/critical_area/index.html)

- d. protecting and preserving the river as an essential element in the national, state, and regional transportation, sewer and water, and recreational systems; and
- e. protecting and preserving the biological and ecological functions of the corridor.

A Comprehensive Management Plan developed for the MNRRRA adopts and incorporates the MRCCA Program, Shoreland Management Program, and other applicable state and regional land use management programs (16 U.S.C. Chapter 1 Subchapter CXI). Currently, the MN DNR, Metropolitan Council, and NPS work in partnership in various roles on the MRCCA and MNRRRA Programs to protect and preserve the corridor.

## 2.2 Mississippi River Trail

The idea for the designation of a trail associated with the Mississippi River began in the 1990s. Groups from Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana became interested in collaborating to develop a bicycle route that would promote the use of the Mississippi River in the states from Missouri south to the Gulf. The main group providing direction and development criteria is the MRT. MRT, Inc., is a 10-state, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization<sup>3</sup> whose main office is in Fayetteville, Arkansas. It serves the river communities with technical assistance in “trail planning, route development, and promotion.”<sup>4</sup> MRT helps local, state, and federal agencies to find funding. Interest in extending the route north to Lake Itasca started in 1999, and the extension of the MRT from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico is now in process.

In 1999, Mn/DOT and MNDNR were authorized to assign staff and resources to MRT route development. Mn/DOT took the lead because of its roadway and transportation management capacity. In 2004, an MRT feasibility report, *The Mississippi River Trail in Minnesota – A Masterpiece in the Making*, was prepared by Mn/DOT with background information to help develop implementation strategies, which was distributed to river communities. The report had a goal of designating at least 80 percent of the route as “bikeable” by 2008, including signage. The report also outlined general cost estimates for improvements of the route segments under consideration, but deemed deficient for safe travel. NPS has been a planning partner and supporter of the MRT since the initial efforts.

### 2.2.1 Current Status/Present Mission

In Minnesota, Mn/DOT is leading the effort to identify the MRT route and provide signage for the route from Lake Itasca to the Minnesota-Iowa border. The first signed portion of the trail opened on June 6, 2009. An online map (<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html>) identifies the streets and trails where MRT signage is being considered by Mn/DOT from Ramsey and Dayton on the north end of the MNRRRA to Hastings in the south.<sup>5</sup>

The MRT is the primary alternative transportation facility for the MNRRRA corridor. During publication of a 2004 feasibility report, Mn/DOT recognized the MN stretch of the MRT as part of a 3,000-mile National



**Figure 1. The Mississippi River Trail.**  
The trail route runs between northern Minnesota and the Gulf of Mexico

<sup>3</sup> <http://stlbiking.com/Trail-MRT.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://mississippirivertrail.org/join.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/miss/mrt.htm>

millennium Trail, from the Mississippi River headwaters in Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana. Mn/DOT is in the process of determining parameters for an on-road and off-road MRT facility.

## 2.2.2 Mn/DOT's Relationship to the NPS Alternative Transportation Plan

During the March-April workshop, the following MRT topics were raised by participants:

1. Is the park's objective to develop MRT as a preferred alternative transportation mode –OR- can NPS identify a better route?
2. Is MNRRA's preferred route for the MRT on-road or off-road?
3. NPS could coordinate with Mn/DOT to emphasize the NPS ATP goals.
4. NPS can continue to work with partners to communicate their vision statement for the MRT as both a transportation facility and a recreational facility.

The following table provides a comparison of how the NPS's objectives differ from Mn/DOT's stated objectives and the areas in which both agencies' objectives are similar.

**Table 1 – MRT Objectives  
(overlapping and diverging objectives between NPS and Mn/DOT)**

NPS	SHARED	Mn/DOT
Multimodal facility		Bicycle facility
Metro network (the MNRRA, which extends from Ramsey/Dayton to Hastings/Ravenna Township)	Part of a national network	State network (from Lake Itasca to the Minnesota/Iowa border)
Family and recreational rider appropriate		Experienced biker, long distance rider appropriate
Guidebook: "Mississippi River Companion" hard copy and web available: <a href="http://www.nps.gov/miss/planyourvisit/mrtg.htm">http://www.nps.gov/miss/planyourvisit/mrtg.htm</a>		Draft maps available on website: <a href="http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html">http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html</a>
Continued development through active prioritization of projects and funding application		Identification of routes for use now and in the future
	Working directly with local communities	
	Trail locations	
	Signage	
	Both sides of the river	

Mn/DOT has refocused efforts to define the MRT as an on-road, long distance bike route. It considers the MRT through the Twin Cities area as a component of the overall 3,000-mile MRT system that stretches the length of the United States from the Mississippi headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico. Mn/DOT held public meetings around the state in 2010 to review routes and future management and promotion of the trail.

NPS recognizes that their vision for the MRT varies from Mn/DOT's in the MNRRA corridor, where transportation objectives are blended with ATP goals such as providing opportunities for users to access the river and combining recreation and education opportunities with mobility and connectivity to multiple modes of transit. NPS also recognizes that an off-road MRT could promote these objectives better for a broader range of users such as families, pedestrians, or in-line skaters.

At publication of this document, NPS plans to acknowledge the MRT as defined by Mn/DOT, but may promote alternate options for MRT in the MNRRA. Specifically, within the MNRRA the NPS may promote segments or alternate segments that it feels better serve the ATP's vision and goals.

## 2.3 Trails and Open Space Partnership

The Trails and Open Space Partnership (TOSP) is a coalition of more than 50 agencies and organizations (including NPS) working to achieve a common vision.

### TOSP Vision

"Achieve a continuous linear trail and open space system along the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities metro area while protecting the corridor's natural, cultural, and economic resources."

### TOSP Goals

TOSP's goals, updated in 2010, are:

- Complete the Mississippi River Trail on both sides of the river by 2016, the NPS' Centennial.
- Improve access to the Mississippi River so that it can be reached without a car.
- Enhance the Mississippi River water trail.
- Improve visitor experience.
- Protect the river's nationally significant resources.

Susan Overson, who is also the ATP project manager, leads the TOSP for NPS and is the primary contact. Information about the TOSP is available on the Park's website at: <<http://www.nps.gov/miss/parkmgmt/tosp.htm>>. For more information about the TOSP, see Appendix C.

## 2.4 Comprehensive Management Plan

The Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) was established and issued in 1995 by NPS as a general management plan for the MNRRA. The NPS administers implementation of the CMP in partnership with state and local agencies that have land management authority in the area. The CMP included sections covering general concepts and corridor-wide policies for land and water use, resource management (including natural, cultural, and economic resources), visitor use and interpretation, general development needs, park operations, and plan implementation strategies. It provides guidance for managing this area for 10 to 15 years.

### CMP Vision

- Preserve, enhance, and interpret archeological, ethnographic, and historic resources.
- Enhance opportunities for public outdoor recreation, education, and scenic enjoyment.
- Preserve, enhance, and interpret natural resources.
- Provide for continued economic activity and development.
- Improve the public's understanding of the river and promote public stewardship of its resources.
- Recognize and strengthen people's relationships with the river as a dynamic part of our heritage, our quality of life, and our legacy for future generations.

## 3 MNRRA PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS, STEP 1: DATA COLLECTION

In an effort to collect complete and consistent information about potential projects, and give NPS partners an opportunity to provide specific detail and feedback, a partner outreach process is outlined in this section. As a result of the 2009-2010 ATP efforts, it was determined that the process for collecting information about potential candidate projects could be improved. Rather than using the project team to research planning documents, capital improvement plans, and online resources, the NPS could better communicate its intentions to partners and solicit project information if it developed a web-based tool.

It is anticipated that NPS will initiate an annual application period during which potential partners could submit information about candidate projects. As proposed below, the data could be collected and managed on a dedicated server and managed by a dedicated data administrator. After the application period is

closed, data could be organized and provided to the NPS ATP team and a Project Advisory Board to review. Communication tools to inform partners about this process are outlined in Section 3.2.

### 3.1 Data Collection and Management

A consultant could develop the online application, which could be hosted by a provider such as DatStat (a secure, flexible online database information collection tool). This tool allows for electronic collection of information for potential projects. Using this project data collection tool would provide easy access for the MNRRA NPS partners to provide specific information about their potential projects that match the ATP's vision and goals. This tool has been used to collect information for other NPS projects, including the *Functional Analysis Summary Report for the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan*.

The public website interface of the project data collection tool would be very similar to an online survey tool (application). It would take NPS partners through a list of questions regarding their project. A consultant would coordinate with NPS to develop entries for pertinent data points and a list of questions to be included in each application. The March–April 2010 meetings generated several ideas for potential questions and a list of pertinent information that participants thought would help them make informed decisions when prioritizing projects. A sample list of questions has been developed for this project (Appendix D).

The application would collect project information such as project name, type, contact information, project description, and funding needs. Further, the application would allow NPS to ask questions to help determine how the project would align with ATP's vision and goals. It also allows partners to join the mailing list even if they do not have a project to submit. This will give NPS the opportunity to develop a more thorough contact list. The data administrator can generate reports about the data at any time in the process. When the project solicitation period is completed, project reports would be generated for the Project Advisory Board to use in the evaluation process.

While free online survey tools, such as Survey Monkey™, are available to capture information, for this project, using a free online tool for the annual call for project information is not recommended as they may limit the security features for the site and data inputs. Because of their limited versatility, a free online tool may increase time and labor when evaluating project inputs.

The cost for the data collection tool would decrease after the first year because the initial development stages would be complete. As with most online data collections, NPS may identify ways to streamline the process or modify the project criteria over time.

### 3.2 Communication Tools

Communicating with the partners is essential in promoting the ATP vision and goals and moving a project forward. Effective communication can be managed by crafting clear messages sent at appropriate times. E-mail and informational postings on the NPS website are recommended for efficient and economical communication of ATP notices. The communication plan should be considered annually by the NPS staff to determine if procedures are maintaining their effectiveness.

To manage NPS efforts related to the ATP project, a separate web page at <http://www.nps.gov/miss/> is recommended. (NPS has an existing web-based system, the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment [PEPC] website. See Appendix E for information on that system.) The ATP project team should collaborate with staff responsible for managing website content for MNRRA to provide the following support:

#### 3.2.1 WEB

- Develop an informational home page for the ATP (with NPS staff members Nate Edwards and Stan Zoblehead)
- Post an annual call for projects on the main NPS homepage: <http://www.nps.gov/miss/>

- Flash tool—to highlight a new item on the page—post “coming soon” (15 days), “active” (30 days), “post-event” (7 days) call for projects annually on the “Park News” link or similar: <http://www.nps.gov/miss/parknews/index.htm>.
- Link to electronic online “application” form that partners will complete to submit project information.
- Provide a link to this guiding Implementation Plan document in correspondence and on the web page where the ATP project is discussed to illustrate the project, the park’s purpose, and how it works with partners.

### 3.2.2 Contacts

- Review and refine the current partner lists (contact list) to ensure that information is current and available for e-mail distribution.
- Designate an individual to manage the contact list (this could be managed by the NPS or by the party responsible for candidate-project data collection). Provide an opportunity on the NPS website to join the contact list.
- Update the park’s media contact list for promoting projects when appropriate. Consider developing a Facebook or Twitter account dedicated to the ATP project.

### 3.2.3 Newsletters

- Consider developing an electronic newsletter for the ATP project.

### 3.2.4 Communication Plan

A communication plan identifies all stakeholders interested in a particular project and outlines how and when communication will take place with each group of stakeholders.

- Over the course of a five-year program, it will be important to stay present in the communities on a quarterly or bi-quarterly basis so that none of the education and project development is lost over time, rather, it will continue to build.
- A formal communication plan could be developed for individual candidate projects if appropriate.

### 3.2.5 Marketing

- Develop a marketing strategy for the MNRRA ATS.
- Consider a branding campaign for MNRRA ATS high profile projects
- Cross market the NPS ATS with other project publications such as transit schedules, brochures, press releases, or signage.

If NPS has limited resources to develop and manage their communication tools, it should consider enlisting a project consultant. Marketing consultants with transportation experience in the metro area could provide contacts to key stakeholders, agencies, and political representatives. The NPS letterhead and the NPS logo should be included on all correspondence and products developed for the NPS. While correspondence could be developed by the supporting team, ultimately, any correspondence distributed should come directly from the local NPS office.



## 4 MNRRRA PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS, STEP 2: EVALUATION

This section provides guidance on how to manage and evaluate the information provided with candidate projects. It is recommended that the Project Advisory Board oversee the evaluation process that determines selection.

The goal is to gain a complete understanding of the potential advantages of each project. This is done by clarifying project goals and comparing the projects using a matrix. The matrix will enable users to rank projects based on how well they meet the ATP goals established at the workshop. The resultant ranked list of projects will help focus and prioritize resources.

### 4.1 Project Advisory Board

As stated previously, it is recommended that a project advisory board be formed to provide the local NPS office with a group of diverse professionals to screen and help review and prioritize candidate projects that emerge from the selection process. A project advisory board would be a committee, task force, or group made up of volunteer partners and NPS staff.

The group would act as a forum for discussion of projects and opportunities. The objective of the Project Advisory Board would be to provide a consistent source of technical input on candidate projects with respect to prioritizing based on the ATP vision and goals. The results of their review and ranking of projects, using the Preliminary Priority Project Evaluation Matrix tool developed by the ATP team (Appendix A), will provide NPS with a basis for prioritizing projects and an opportunity to collaborate on projects with partners to implement and potentially seek funding through available resources.

Generally, only a limited number of individuals can devote time to be effective board members. It would be important to include individuals who are unbiased and capable of providing objective evaluations of candidate projects. Members would be responsible for learning about the ATP process and objectives, and would need to understand and support the ATP vision and goals. Members would be encouraged to talk to NPS partners to gain a broad understanding of opportunities along the entire 72-mile corridor. The ATP process is designed to provide as much information about each project as possible; however, the nature of projects varies regionally and each would be at various phases of development.

A formal application or selection process for populating the Project Advisory Board is not recommended. There is no required size for the board; however, the workshop and discussions with NPS recommended approximately 10 members to provide a productive level of discussion for evaluating projects and results. Potential candidates for the Project Advisory Board would be invited by MNRRRA Superintendent and the ATP project leader in St. Paul. The invitation would reference the ATP project and could include a PDF version of this document to provide potential members with an understanding of the need and commitment. Following is a list of organizations that could be solicited to provide potential members for the board. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive, but does represent the types of organizations that should be represented on the board.

- Transit for Livable Communities
- Bike Walk Twin Cities
- Mn/DOT
- Metropolitan Council –
- Transportation Advisory Board
- Regional Park planning and implementation agencies
- Metro Transit
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Trails and Roads Coordinator NPS
- MNRRRA Superintendent
- TOSP representatives

- University of Minnesota - Center for Transportation Studies
- University of Minnesota - Humphrey Institute (Congressman Oberstar, Visiting Professor)
- Light and commuter rail representatives
- MN Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Trails Division
- Mississippi River Trail, Inc.
- Minnesota Bicycle Alliance
- Others, as appropriate

As a result of the data collection efforts described in Section 3.0, a list of projects would be generated along with the corresponding partner information. NPS would present the data in a report format that would be suitable for efficient review.

#### 4.1.1 Clarifying Project Goals

While evaluating the priority list of projects, the Project Advisory Board should try to answer some key questions about the desired outcomes of the project, the local planning and political environment, realities of time and resources available, and flexibility in the ultimate design of the project. After these questions are answered, the board members will have an understanding of each project's potential challenges and available resources and be able determine the appropriate approach and scope of each project. Depending on the number of projects that the board has to prioritize, this exercise may need to be conducted for only a few projects for comparison purposes. The intent of this exercise is to ask questions that may stimulate discussion which would identify some projects as better candidates than others.

- What are the goals of the project?
- What would a successful project achieve?
- What is the political history in the community? Any recent planning conflicts? Who are the main players? (Check the local media; call public relations people if it is a particularly high-profile project).
- Who are the ultimate decisions makers?
- Who are the public stakeholders that need to support the plan?
- How widespread are the stakeholders?
- How much time and money will be needed?
- How much flexibility is there for the NPS to help shape the design or determine the outcome of the project?

#### 4.1.2 Evaluation Matrix

The Project Advisory Board would be responsible for completing a Preliminary Priority Project Evaluation Matrix (Figure 2) and updating the priority project list. This could be completed by the group during a meeting or by individuals over a period of time to provide some flexibility to members.

Based on the individual results of the matrix, a list of projects will be generated. The ATP project team could manage and disseminate the results, providing an initial "ranking" of projects with respect to the ATP vision and goals.

**Figure 2. Preliminary Priority Project Evaluation Matrix**

Project ID	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5	RESULTS
	Improve and enhance the visitor experience by integrating and enhancing opportunities for transportation, recreation, education and scenic enjoyment along the Mississippi River.	Provide access to the MISS for everyone and be integrated into surrounding transportation systems.	Integrate MRT with area transit to increase visitation to MISS without increasing congestion	Establish a transportation system to and in the MISS that preserves, enhances and interprets natural and cultural resources.	Promote development of environmental, economic and social adaptable and sustainable transportation and recreational facilities	
	<b>weighted value</b>	<b>weighted value</b>	<b>weighted value</b>	<b>weighted value</b>	<b>weighted value</b>	
	0-5	0-4	0-3	0-2	0-1	
NE1d						
NE1f						
NE1g						
CE1a						
CE1j						
CW1d						
CW7e						
CW7f						
CW11b						
CW12k						
SE7a						
SW1i						
SW1j						
SW2e						
SW5g						

### 4.1.3 Project Priority List

The Project Advisory Board would be asked to review and discuss the results as a group. It is essential that the board meet in person to carry out this task. The Advisory Board will be responsible for making recommendations to modify the list using available information. In an effort to provide flexibility to the group, especially during the pilot year of this process, grouping projects into tiers would be acceptable. Because of the diverse technical expertise expected to be present in the group, there may be debate or disagreement over priority projects. In such a case, it may be helpful to revisit the discussion in Section 4.1.1: “Clarifying Project Goals.”

If the Project Advisory Board is in conflict on which projects to prioritize, it would not be unreasonable for projects to tie. Ultimately, it will be up to the ATP project team to make the final determination of which projects to prioritize using the input from the Advisory Board.

The resulting Project Priority List will be made up of the completed applications for the highest ranked candidate projects. See Appendix D for examples of application content. The Project Advisory Board will determine the size of this list, and may opt to filter the information in each application into a more concise list for easy reference.

## 4.2 Support Resources

The local NPS staff will continue to collaborate with partner agencies and organizations to develop the ATP. In addition to NPS resources, support for the ATP implementation process could come from consultants, students, volunteers, or non-profit organizations. Teaming with academic resources or providing internships with local university graduate degree candidates in landscape architecture, planning, and/or outdoor recreation could provide potential technical assistance resources at no/low-cost. These are discussed in the following sections.

### 4.2.1 GIS Mapping Resources

An opportunity will be provided for applicants to submit supporting information, including maps and graphics, for candidate projects. If that information is not provided, however, the Advisory Board may require additional mapping or context information about the vicinity of the project. If possible/necessary the group could reconvene at a later time when supporting information is available. The ATP project team would need to coordinate the collection of any additional data.

### 4.2.2 Local NPS Staff

In 1995, the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) for the MNRRRA was approved by the Secretary of the Interior as the Park's general management plan... At the time, the plan estimated NPS staffing needs for the MNRRRA to be approximately 34 full-time equivalent positions at an estimated annual cost of about \$1.5 million. This included salaries, benefits, and support costs (equipment, utilities, etc.). No updated estimates have been made. When the CMP was published, a transportation chapter was not included and no positions were designated for transportation related activities.

Currently, there are 35 permanent staff positions at the NPS St. Paul office. Additionally, there are 18 term/temporary /seasonal staff positions. Of the 35 permanent positions, 11 are vacant and of the term/temporary/seasonal staff positions, 7 are vacant.

**Susan Overson** is the local ATP project leader. She is also facilitates the TOSP. Ms. Overson is an outdoor recreation planner and has an MLA in Landscape Architecture. She is also experienced in securing grant funding for partner projects. During the ATP project, Susan was primarily supported by a transportation scholar<sup>6</sup>. Other than Susan, no local NPS staff members are tasked with transportation planning duties.

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 National Park Service  
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 Email: Susan\_Overson@nps.gov'

Park Superintendent Paul Labovitz has provided oversight and guidance throughout the ATP project. He will continue to serve as a resource and authority on park initiatives and visions. Further, all staffing roles or needs would be coordinated directly through Mr. Labovitz prior to approval by the NPS regional office..

The MNRRRA has the following organizational structure:

- Park Superintendent
- Park Administrative Division
- Interpretation Division
- Resource Management Division

Table 2 identifies NPS staff, as of 2011, that can potentially help support the ATP.

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<sup>6</sup> In 2010, for the eighth consecutive year, the National Park Foundation, Ford Motor Company and the National Park Service teamed with the ENO Transportation Foundation to place transportation experts as well as undergraduate students working in the transportation field in national parks. These Transportation Scholars and Transportation Interpreters work as partners with the National Park Service to consider ways to resolve some of the most significant transportation challenges in our national parks and to encourage park visitors to use alternative transportation.

**Table 2 – NPS Staff Positions**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Status</b>
Susan Overson	Outdoor Recreation Planner	ATP Team Leader	St. Paul NPS	Full-time
Alan Robbin-Fenger	Geographer	Mgr. former Bureau of Mines site	St. Paul NPS	Full-time
Rory Stierler	Physical Scientist	GIS Specialist	St. Paul NPS	Half-time
Stan Zoebel	Information Technology	Information Technology Specialist	St. Paul NPS	Full-time
Nate Edwards	Information Technology	Information Technology Specialist	St. Paul NPS	Full-time
Kathy Swenson	Tng Spec/CIPMgr	Volunteer Coordinator	St. Paul NPS	Full-time
OPEN	Community Assistance Planner	Outdoor Recreation Planner	St. Paul NPS	Full-time
OPEN	Physical Scientist	GIS Specialist	St. Paul NPS	Full-time
OPEN	Park Ranger	Park Ranger	St. Paul NPS	Full-time

### 4.2.3 National NPS Staff - Denver Service Center (DSC)

The Denver Service Center (DSC) is the NPS centralized planning, design, and construction project management office providing environmentally responsible and fiscally sound products jointly with private industry. DSC staff have provided project management, participated in the development of the ATP project deliverables, and participated in the ATP March–April meetings.

DSC is committed to preserving the natural and cultural resources in the national park system while ensuring their use and fostering their appreciation. The DSC is a collaborative professional office employing more than 225 individuals at the Lakewood, Colorado, site. The workforce consists of the following:

- Architects
- Landscape Architects
- Engineers
- Planners
- Project Managers
- Construction Specialists
- Natural Resource Specialists
- Cultural Resource Specialists
- Graphic Artists
- Contract Specialists
- Technical Information Specialists
- Administrative Personnel

DSC provides specialized services for national parks, regions, architecture/engineering firms, and other partners.

#### 4.2.4 Denver Service Center Key Team Leaders

Lilly Hardin is the professional engineer who has served as the ATP project manager. Linda MacIntyre is the project specialist and transportation planner who has provided guidance on project scope development, input on deliverables and participated in the March–April 2010 workshop. Because DSC works with parks all over the nation, they can provide insight on implementation tools and opportunities to enhance the National Park’s significance in projects.

#### 4.2.5 NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA)

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects. RTCA staff provide technical assistance to communities so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. RTCA provides a variety of assistance tailored to the partner’s needs, but does not provide direct grants. The RTCA program has two staff members in the MNRRA office that participated in the development of the ATP and is available to assist with MNRRA and partners with the development the ATS and other projects. (For more info see: <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/>)

#### 4.2.6 Consultant Resources

Consultants can offer a broad range of planning and technical expertise to the NPS. Consultants may be called on to provide:

1. Planners
2. Landscape architects
3. Engineers
4. Public relations,
5. Marketing
6. Economists

These additional resources can take on specific tasks as necessary to further the development of the ATP.

#### 4.2.7 Academic Resources

The Twin Cities hosts a world-class academic community that includes the University of Minnesota. The Gopher Ranger program often has unpaid volunteer and intern positions available. If available, they are listed online at [http://www.nps.gov/miss/supportyourpark/gopherranger\\_internships.htm](http://www.nps.gov/miss/supportyourpark/gopherranger_internships.htm) and include opportunities like “Planning Assistant” for work related to the Saint Anthony Falls area. Duties would include working with partners to coordinate meetings and reviews, researching examples in other locations, coordinating with NPS and other agency staff working on related planning efforts, and assisting in the writing and editing of planning reports and graphics. These types of opportunities could be crafted to complement the needs of the ATP implementation process. **David Wiggins** manages the Gopher Ranger program and can be contacted using an online interface on the NPS website. If funding can be obtained through the ATP, opportunities could be listed as student park ranger positions on the NPS’s Jobs page available online at <http://www.nps.gov/miss/parkmgmt/jobs.htm>.

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 Phone: (612) 676-9486  
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An individual who has worked with NPS in the past is **Pat Nunnally**, the director of the Telling River Stories Collaborative who coordinates the River Life Program at the Institute on the Environment at the University of Minnesota (U of M). Mr. Nunnally works to establish lasting relationships among the University of Minnesota and the communities engaged in riverfront revitalization along the Mississippi River. Since 1999, he has served on the U of M faculty, teaching classes in landscape planning and urban studies. This experience could provide opportunities to engage landscape planning and urban studies students in the ATP implementation process. Mr. Nunnally can be contacted at River Life phone (612) 626-7014 or email [pdn@umn.edu](mailto:pdn@umn.edu).

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**Pat Nunnally**  
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The **Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs** is a graduate school at the University of Minnesota. The highly ranked institute is widely recognized for its role in examining public issues and shaping public policy at the local, state, national, and international level, and for providing leadership and management expertise to public and nonprofit organizations. While the NPS does not presently engage with any staff or students in the institute, the program offers a Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP), which could complement the ATP goals if a relationship can be established.

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**Humphrey Institute**  
Career Services  
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Email: [hhcs@umn.edu](mailto:hhcs@umn.edu)

During the summer of 2010, students from the University of Minnesota's **College of Design** presented "Imagining the Mississippi: 30 Ways to Transform the Riverfront" at an exhibition at the Mill City Museum in Minneapolis. Beginning in January 2010, undergraduate architecture research assistants Daniel Carlson, Andy Cleven, Julia Hill, Kevin Lang, Michael Nickerson, and Davidson Ward have worked with Professor of Architecture Leslie Van Duzer, and the university's Mississippi River expert Patrick Nunnally, to assemble a state-of-the-art design book, complete with plans, sections, and photo-realistic images of what the proposed designs would look like in today's environment. The exhibit included a design book that offered 30 separate visions of how the public can get closer to the Mississippi River along the Minneapolis Central Riverfront, transforming the vision of the river and city. The public was invited to comment on the designs. The project focused on the riverfront between Boom Island in the north and the University of Minnesota campus in the south. The projects outlined in the students' proposal serve as a social catalyst by creating a clear vision for what "could be." This project aimed to spur social discourse surrounding what could be one of the most compelling and vibrant riverfronts in the world. More information about "Imagining the Mississippi," is available online at [www.imaginthemississippi.com](http://www.imaginthemississippi.com). This type of visioning and research experience could complement efforts of the ATP or provide potential candidates for the ATP Advisory board.

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#### 4.2.8 Non-Profit Resources

The Mississippi River Fund's mission is to strengthen the enduring connection between people and the Mississippi River and to build community support for the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River Fund supports stewardship and community engagement programs that fill the gap between federal funding realities and core programs of the Mississippi River, including:

- Education programs like Junior Rangers that enhance understanding and appreciation of the river
- Water quality protection that is vital to the health of the river and our community
- Habitat restoration that preserves and protects the park's globally significant resources
- Our shared heritage and the significant role our national parks play in American history and culture

The organization could support the ATP implementation process through the coordination of volunteers. **Katie Nyberg** is the executive director of the Mississippi River Fund. **Kathy Swenson** is the NPS staff volunteer coordinator.

## 5 MNRA PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS, STEP 3: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION/IMPLEMENTATION

Prior to initiating the “call for projects” process, it is not possible to determine how many or what types of candidate projects might be submitted for consideration. No limitations are suggested on the number of projects NPS may decide to support. The only true limitation is the amount of resources NPS would be able to dedicate to the project(s).

Because this document is providing guidance on this process, some options should be considered when generating a preferred priority project list.

- Grouping priority projects – such as top three, top ten, or top twenty projects
- Selecting a single pilot project for year one
- Providing letters of support for any projects that meet the ATP vision and goals
- Focusing additional NPS resources, such as writing grant applications, on the highest priority projects

### 5.1 NPS Project Management Information System

The Project Management Information System (PMIS) is a service-wide intranet application within the NPS that is used to manage information about requests for project funding. It enables parks and NPS offices to submit project proposals to be reviewed, approved, and prioritized at park units, regional directorates, and the Washington, D.C. office.

Any project identified by NPS as a candidate ATP project would need to be included in the annual PMIS. Applications need to be entered by NPS staff into the PMIS each December. Typically, the submittal is completed in January, but in recent years it has been delayed to early summer due to a delay in the approval of the national transportation bill. Local park staff members are authorized to enter projects into the PMIS in multiple funding categories.

### 5.2 Partner Coordination

In addition to coordination with the project advisory board, NPS staff will need to coordinate with local agencies on an individual project basis. In some cases, NPS staff will not be able to submit grant applications on behalf of the local agencies, but NPS staff can work in partnership with the local agencies to develop a strong application for the selected project. NPS staff can also seek support from public agencies that have technical expertise in transportation, transit, and planning such as Mn/DOT and the Metropolitan Council.

There may be instances where the NPS’s best opportunity for collaborating on a project that supports the ATP vision and goals would be by providing support and public recognition of a project. For example, if a project is already in a competitive process to receive funding, a letter of support from the NPS may be beneficial to that partner. Further, NPS could promote their support of projects by using the dedicated ATP website. This could be in the form of a “projects we like” category or links to projects the park supports. Figure 3 illustrates a potential project timeframe that can be used to implement the ATP.

For the purposes of the ATP, and in an effort to provide adequate time to enter potential candidate projects into the PMIS annually, the following framework is suggested for scheduling ATP efforts.



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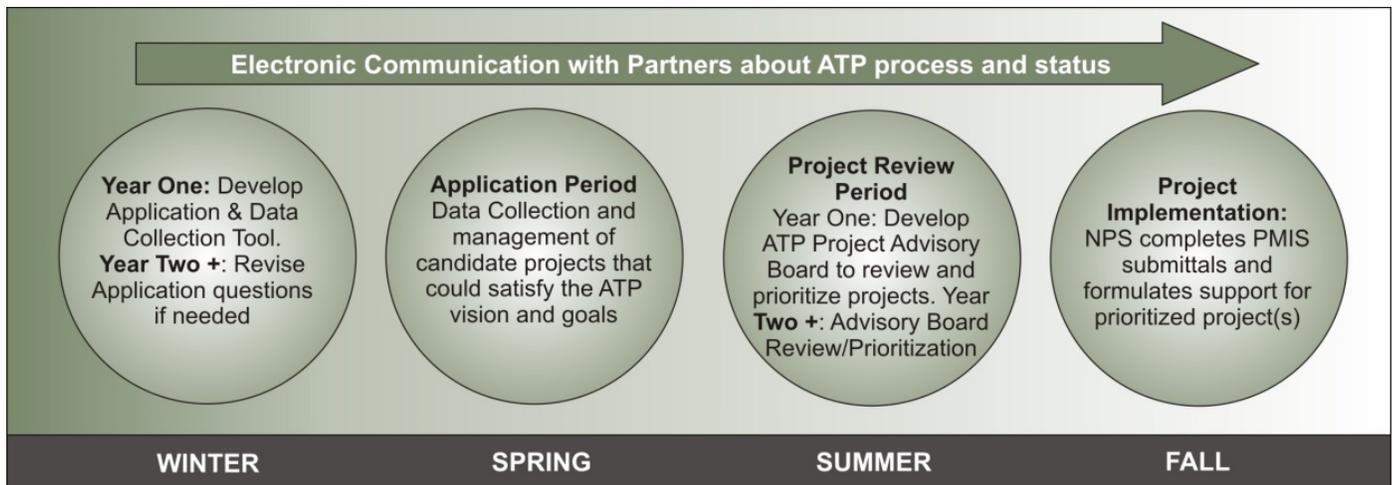
**Kathy Swenson**

NPS Volunteer Coordinator  
Phone: 290-3030 ext. 303



1. Begin advertising ATP on the web and send e-mail to partners about the process.
2. Update web posting weekly beginning 60 days (or some other defined period) prior to the official “call for projects” start date.
3. Provide a comfortable period for project applications to be completed by partners (60 to 90 days).
4. A week before closing the application period, e-mail and post thank you notes on the web to partners who submitted projects and to confirm the application was received and processed.
5. Share statistics about the number of applications received using e-mail and web postings at application period closure –. Include anticipated review and decision notification schedule.
6. Process applications according to the method NPS determines most appropriate; a period of time for processing and organizing data and generating information/reports about projects for review will be needed.
7. Project Advisory Board reviews and prioritizes projects.
8. NPS staff enters desired priority projects into PMIS

**Figure 3. ATP Process and Status Schedule**



### 5.2.1 Public Outreach

Public involvement requirements would be determined by individual projects. In cases where a project receives federal funding, there is typically a prescribed public process that dictates public notices and meetings. Unless the NPS is the contracting project manager for a project they will not be legally responsible for public involvement activities. The NPS, however, may elect to promote various projects through public outreach. Common public involvement tools are discussed in Appendix F.

### 5.3 Funding Opportunities

Some of the issues that emerged from the March–April 2010 meetings included how to help partners apply for funding (federal and state) for projects that meet the ATP vision and goals, and how to help shape partner projects so they would be good candidates to apply for funding. As stated earlier, any project identified by NPS as a candidate ATP project would need to be included in the annual PMIS. Because the local NPS office does not have an ongoing budget to help fund projects, the goal is to assist partners in competing for federal funding through dedication of staff resources and technical assistance. The information provided on transportation formula and discretionary funds is meant to inform NPS staff and other agencies of the potentially available funding sources. Some of the funding programs are geared toward local agencies; this does not mean, however, that NPS staff cannot assist in the application process.

Because many of the discretionary funding programs need to be applied for by a federal agency, NPS staff can take the lead in submitting grant applications for projects that are recommended by the advisory board. For example, after NPS staff members have solicited and selected a preferred project, they can become project champions for that project. For grant applications requiring a federal agency applicant, NPS can partner with the local agency and prepare a grant application on their behalf. This could be accomplished by NPS staff or through a consultant.

### 5.3.1 Transportation Funding

The primary federal source of transportation funding has been federal fuel taxes, which have been deposited into the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) since 1956. Other funds, such as a tax on tires and trucks, contribute substantially smaller amounts to the HTF. In recent years, the use of these funds has been set by a series of transportation authorizing legislations such as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which was in effect from 1997 to 2003, and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was enacted in 2005 and was in effect through September 30, 2009.<sup>7</sup> SAFETEA-LU continues the TEA-21 concept of guaranteed funding, keyed to HTF receipts. In essence, it defines the least amount of the authorizations that may be spent. The following list is a summary of potential transportation funding sources that could be used for candidate ATP projects. For a more detailed description of potential funding programs, see Appendix G.

The three federal formula funding programs that NPS might apply for grants from are:

- Surface Transportation Program
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
- Surface Transportation Program Transportation Enhancements

Some of the federal discretionary funding programs that NPS Staff might apply for grants from include:

- Federal Lands Highway (FLHP) Program
  - Public Lands Highway (PLH) Program
  - Park Roads and Parkways (PRP) Program
- Coordinated Technology Implementation Program (CTIP)
- National Scenic Byways Program
- Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program
- Challenge Cost Share Program (CCSP) (Note: This program is currently not funded)
- Recreation Fee Program

## 6 NEXT STEPS

### 6.1 Shaping the Project Scope of Work

While the NPS values all stakeholders and respects all projects that could make meaningful contributions to the MNRRA, the objective of this process is to ensure that the local NPS office has the opportunity create an Alternative Transportation System that serves the MNRRA and its visitors while influencing development that promotes the interests, visions, and goals of the ATP.

#### NPS

Below is a summary of actions NPS could take to promote the ATP vision and goals. NPS and the Project Advisory Board could:

- Make specific recommendations to an applicant to help a candidate project better match the ATP vision and goals,

<sup>7</sup> *Funding Surface Transportation in Minnesota: Past, Present, and Prospects* (Zhao, Das, and Becker, 2010)

- Promote the inclusion of the NPS logo on partner projects,
- Identify additional connectivity opportunities with transportation and recreation facilities,
- Identify educational opportunities, such as integrating rangers into a candidate project and leveraging U of M resources and volunteer opportunities,
- Use negotiations and discussions to shape a project with a partner,
- Offer technical assistance to partners/projects,
- Apply for grants or additional government funding, and
- Help leverage with other projects.

The following items would be initiated in the next steps of the project.

- NPS should secure funding for ATP project coordination to continue for 2011/2012 through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Transit in the Parks “Planning” category.
- Develop ATP scope and contract.
- Define the MNRRA Alternative Transportation System
- Begin Phase II of the GIS database development (Refer to Appendix H).
- Develop the online partner project application tool and secure consultant to implement.
- Begin to implement recommendations for communication.
- Communicate the ATP project identification selection process to the partners and public.
- Update partner list-serve – include all potential partners, agencies, non-profits, communities, and other stakeholders. Assign a list-serve/contact manager.
- Assemble the Project Advisory Board.

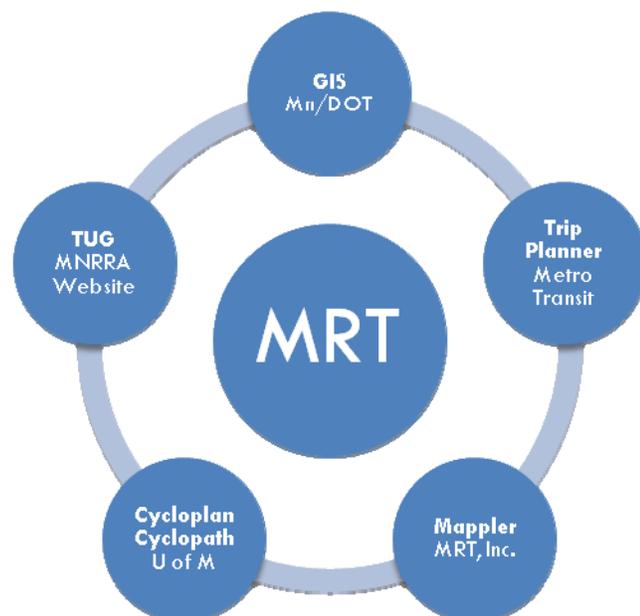
## 6.2 Additional Opportunities

The ATP project team also discussed other web-based tools to help get users to and along the river. One of these opportunities included online mapping or wiki tools. The following discussion highlights some of those opportunities that could be explored as the ATP progresses.

### 6.2.1 Capitalizing on Existing Technology Platforms

Figure 4 (at right) illustrates possible technology platforms and potential providers working in partnership to develop and disseminate information about alternative transportation in the MNRRA.

**Figure 4. Technology Platforms and Potential Providers**



#### Platform Descriptions

##### National Park Service (NPS) Trail User Guide (TUG)

<http://www.nps.gov/miss/planyourvisit/mrtg.htm>

The “Mississippi River Companion: A Guide to the Mississippi River and Recreation Area” was published in 2010 as a hard copy map for river corridor users to have with them when they are visiting the river. This website is the digital version of the booklet.

Associated websites:

<http://www.nps.gov/miss/planyourvisit/ptgkeybiking.htm> Provides information about bike rides in the national park. The website listed above links back to the original NPS website <[www.nps.gov/miss/mrt.htm](http://www.nps.gov/miss/mrt.htm)>

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/index.html> Provides information about use of 32 State Water Trails around Minnesota, including the Mississippi River. It also provides detailed river segment maps for watercraft users.

### **Mn/DOT GIS Mississippi River Trail**

Website location: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html>

In Minnesota, this bicycle route is largely along the shoulders of low-traffic paved roads (existing state and local roads), but includes segments of scenic state and regional trails. There are 62 draft maps on the website for viewing and downloading during this planning phase of changes to the location and management strategy of Mn/DOT's MRT. The MRT in MNRRA will serve as the park's primary recreation and transit facility.

### **Metro Transit: Trip Planner**

Metro Transit Trip Planner: <http://www.metrotransit.org/TripPlanner/Default.aspx>

If the NPS is interested in connecting park users to the river corridor through transit, this is a basic website for the park to make available. The buses and light rail make it easy for bike riders to enter a start and end location to reach the corridor. From there, users can load the next website onto their iPhone or other smart-phone and follow the MRT.

An alternative and/or link to the Trip Planner is St. Paul's Smart Trips, which promotes transit use, bicycling, walking, and reduced use of single occupant vehicles. <http://www.smart-trips.org/>

There is a new alternative to travelling through town known as "Nice Ride." This is the largest public bike-sharing system in the U.S. Currently the service area is focused on Downtown Minneapolis and the U of M East and West Bank Campus, which coincidentally borders the MNRRA. <<http://secure.niceridemn.org/map/>> This website map shows the locations of the Nice Ride bike stations and contains links to further information about the system.

### **Mappler®**

<http://www.imtrails.com/mrt>

Mappler® provides interactive maps using web-based map technologies for the Twin Cities area developed by MRT, Inc., in partnership with the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). Users can create and click on points along trails and upload data, pictures, or videos regarding that spot. This pilot project is a community participatory interactive mapping tool. With one click, a potential MRT rider can plan an excursion lasting anywhere from a few hours to a few months.<sup>8</sup> While on the trail, users are also able to access the maps by using iPhone and other smart-phone technologies for quick and easy orientation. A printable map of each section of the trail system is also available for download.

The drawback of this site is that it does not include the complete MRT on both sides of the river.

### **Cyclopath**

<http://cyclopath.org/>

Cyclopath is a geowiki, which is an editable map where anyone can share notes about roads and trails, enter tags about special locations, and fix map problems such as missing trails. Cycloplan is an extension of Cyclopath, a web-based wiki application that allows users to create, edit, and rate their own bike routes on a regional basemap.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.imtrails.com/home/?page\\_id=216](http://www.imtrails.com/home/?page_id=216)

There are numerous additional websites with information linking to the MRT corridor website information and trail events taking place around the region that could be encouraged to include the NPS logo on their sites.

### 6.2.2 Other

NPS Park Ranger Mary Blitzer has been inventorying data in a Microsoft Excel format. She has developed a detailed inventory sheet for almost all of the access points to the Mississippi River that currently exist, and a multiple site inventory sheet which combines most of this information. During Phase II of the GIS database development, coordination between Ranger Blitzer and the GIS database manager could translate the data into a digital geo-referenced format. This data will need to be formatted and metadata will need to be created.

Further, including landmarks destinations and boat access along the river in the GIS database has been discussed by the local NPS staff. While this was a part of the recommendations for Phase II of the GIS database (Refer to Appendix H), it could be a new opportunity. Collecting this data may require a separate effort and may be a current pursuit of the NPS and an opportunity to engage the academic community or seasonal/temporary NPS staff.

# Appendix A

## List of Acronyms





## Acronyms

ATP	Alternative Transportation Plan
CCSP	Challenge Cost Share Program
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
CMP	Comprehensive Management Plan
CTIP	Coordinated Technology Implementation Program
DOI	Department of the Interior
FHP	Forest Highway Program
FLHP	Federal Lands Highway Program
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HTF	Highway Trust Fund
IRR	Indian Reservation Roads
Mn/DOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
MNDNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
MNRRRA	Mississippi National River and Recreational Area
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MRCCA	Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area
MRT	Mississippi River Trail
MURP	Master of Urban and Regional Planning
NPS	National Park Service
PEPC	Planning, Environment, and Public Comment
PLH	Public Lands Highway
PMIS	Project Management Information System
PRP	Park Roads and Parkways
RR	Refuge Roads
RTCA	Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SGN	Smart Growth Network
SIP	State Implementation Program
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Plan
STP	Surface Transportation
TMP	Transportation Management Program
TOSP	Trails and Open Space Partnership



## **Appendix B**

### **ATP Process 2009/2010**



## ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROCESS 2009–2010

One of the desired outcomes of the Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) was to create a list of potential projects for the National Park Service (NPS) to support. To develop this list, more than 90 documents were collected and catalogued for additional research in the Project Partners' Plans Summary Analysis Report (NPS, December 2009). Based on this initial report, NPS recommended that its consultant study 46 of the 90 documents to identify potential projects. In reviewing the documents the consultant developed a list of more than 300 planned or programmed project opportunities that connected to, or were located on or along, the Mississippi River Trail, Inc., MRT and the Mississippi River or provided connectivity to the MRT or the Mississippi River. After the consultant coordinated with agencies to confirm the list of projects was current and accurate, it applied the following five questions to each potential project:

- Does the project support development that completes a gap(s) in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) Alternate Transportation System?
- Does the project propose a facility in the MNRRA where it is currently undeveloped or underdeveloped?
- Does the project provide opportunities that connect both sides of the river or connect people to the river?
- Does the project have distinct multimodal components?
- Does the project improve circulation and visitor access within the MNRRA?

If the response was “yes” to any of these questions, the project qualified for further consideration. This process reduced the project pool from more than 300 to 160. The results of the consultant’s research and available data collection for each project are documented in Section 4.0 of the Data Collection Summary Report (HDR, March 29, 2010).

To refine the list of 160 projects further, each was subjected to 12 screening filters developed by the project team. Each filter was assigned a point value. Any time a project satisfied one of the criteria listed below it would receive two points.

- Already programmed
- Closes a gap in the MRT
- Makes progress toward completing the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) by 2016
- Some matching funds exist
- Provides non-motorized and transit opportunities in/to the MNRRA

When a project met any of the criteria below it received one point.

- Includes multimodal components (trails are considered single-modal)
- Provides additional or improved access to the MNRRA
- Offers connections to and/or serves as a commuter route
- Removes barriers to the river (i.e. provides tunnels, bridges, land use change from private to public, etc.)
- Improves circulation
- Improves safety related enhancements
- Creates a destination (increases visitation to the MNRRA)

This screening was independently completed by the local NPS staff and the consultant for each project. The results were averaged, discussed, and finalized collectively. Of a total possible 17 points, 14 points was the highest score a project received. In an effort to provide a manageable number of projects for the workshop participants to review on day two, the project team determined projects that received a score of 9.5 or higher would be discussed at the workshop. This resulted in a total of 15 projects for prioritization at the workshop.

At the workshop, the ATP Vision and Goals were further developed to guide project selection and meet NPS goals.

### ATP VISION

*Working with partners, the MNRRRA ATP will promote a leadership framework for the development of a multimodal transportation system to and along the river that serves as a catalyst for the region's sustainable cultural, economic, and environmental future.*

The five goals that were defined were prioritized using a dot-weighting system and are listed below, beginning with the most important.

### ATP GOALS

1. Improve and enhance the visitor experience by integrating and enhancing opportunities for transportation, recreation, education, and scenic enjoyment along the Mississippi River.
2. Provide access to the MNRRRA for everyone and integration with surrounding transportation systems.
3. Integrate MRT with area transit and trails to increase visitation to MNRRRA without increasing congestion.
4. Establish a transportation system to and within the MNRRRA that preserves, enhances, and interprets natural and cultural resources.
5. Promote development of environmental, economic, and socially adaptable and sustainable transportation and recreational facilities.

These goals were used to create a prioritization matrix (next page) to evaluate projects. The ATP project team determined that each goal would have a value and projects could be compared to the goal and assigned a weighted value based on how well the project fulfilled each goal. The highest priority goal has the greatest potential value and the lowest priority goal has the least potential value. Depending on how well each project satisfied the goal the following values could be assigned:

- Goal 1 could have a weighted value between 0-5
- Goal 2 could have a weighted value between 0-4
- Goal 3 could have a weighted value between 0-3
- Goal 4 could have a weighted value between 0-2
- Goal 5 could have a weighted value between 0-1

This matrix can be used for evaluating potential projects as the ATP progresses.

**Preliminary Priority Project Evaluation Matrix**

Project ID	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5	RESULTS
	Improve and enhance the visitor experience by integrating and enhancing opportunities for transportation, recreation, education and scenic enjoyment along the Mississippi River.	Provide access to the MISS for everyone and be integrated into surrounding transportation systems.	Integrate MRT with area transit to increase visitation to MISS without increasing congestion	Establish a transportation system to and in the MISS that preserves, enhances and interprets natural and cultural resources.	Promote development of environmental, economic and social adaptable and sustainable transportation and recreational facilities	
	<b>weighted value</b>	<b>weighted value</b>	<b>weighted value</b>	<b>weighted value</b>	<b>weighted value</b>	
	0-5	0-4	0-3	0-2	0-1	
NE1d						
NE1f						
NE1g						
CE1a						
CE1j						
CW1d						
CW7e						
CW7f						
CW11b						
CW12k						
SE7a						
SW1i						
SW1j						
SW2e						
SW5g						



# Appendix C

## TOSP Information



## TOSP Organizational Structure and Accomplishments

The Trails and Open Space Partnership (TOSP) is an informal coalition of regional, state, and national organizations involved in trail and open space planning and development.

### Structure

- The National Park Service (NPS) provides overall coordination and facilitation.
- Subcommittees handle funding, advocacy, and interagency coordination.

### Accomplishments

- The TOSP has successfully helped to build consensus and create awareness for its vision to local communities, the State Legislature, U. S. Congress, and various national organizations and decision-makers primarily through the development of promotional tools and public outreach.
- The TOSP's collaborative structure and process has been used as a model for various national projects and is a true example of a successful partnership working to achieve common goals.
- The TOSP coordinates with various resource protection agencies and organizations to ensure the natural, cultural, and economic resources of the Mississippi River Corridor are protected. Many of these organizations are members of the TOSP. (In addition, and separate from the TOSP, the NPS-MNRRRA's Stewardship Division is implementing and funding many resource protection efforts within the corridor.)

## TOSP Collaboration

- Involvement in the TOSP increases visibility of an agency's or organization's individual goals and its role in achieving the overall vision.
- Partners are able to share information, pool resources, and collaborate on developing common goals and the tools to promote them, thereby increasing their agency's efficiency.
- Collaboration has proven to be a useful tool to achieve both individual and corridor-wide goals, and for resolving conflicting issues.
- Various projects have received more than 35 million in state and federal funding due primarily to the coordinated efforts of TOSP members and the individual project's relationship to the overall vision.

## TOSP Tools/Products

- Connections to the River – Map (paper or electronic—not a wiki)
- Mississippi River Companion
- Corridor Trail Slide Library
- Trail User Guide (produced by NPS with support of TOSP partners) (paper or electronic—not a wiki)
- Technical Assistance, including identification of available funding opportunities
- TOSP selection criteria for identifying priorities, issues to address, and funding needs



# **Appendix D**

## **Sample Candidate Project Application Questions**



## SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR WEB BASED APPLICATION

### Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) Annual Call for Candidate Partner Projects Application

#### Basic Project Information

1. Project name
2. Project type (pull down categories to be defined)
3. Project location (city, county)
4. Project limits (description of area, length, limits, boundary, etc.)
5. Project status (pull down category such as: conceptual, planning, preliminary design, final design, construction, postconstruction")
6. Is the project located on public or private land?

#### Contact Information

1. Contact name
2. Project Manager name (if different)
3. Contact information (e-mail, phone, address)
4. Project owner (agency, department)

#### Requirements

1. Is this project on the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)? (Yes/No)
2. Other? (TBD)

#### Basic Project Data

1. Project description (define number of words—should be a couple of paragraphs; provide an opportunity to upload supporting documentation/graphics at the end).
2. If the project is proposed in phases, please describe.

#### Project Funding

1. Project cost
2. Funding source/sponsor (could have multiple sources—must have opportunity to complete for each potential source—up to 5?)
3. Could the number entered in (2) generate the next boxes for each sponsor?
  - a. Amount funded
  - b. Year funded
  - c. Amount and source of matching funds if applicable
4. Outstanding funding needs
  - a. Amount
  - b. Year needed
5. If project is unfunded, list key project partners and stakeholders including political partners.

### ATP Vision and Goal Alignment

1. How does the project support the ATP Vision? Working with partners, the ATP will promote a leadership framework for the development of a multimodal transportation system to and along the river that serves as a catalyst for the region's sustainable cultural, economic, and environmental future. (Define number of words—should be a couple of paragraphs; provide an opportunity to upload supporting documentation/graphics at the end).
2. How would the project improve the visitor experience to the MNRRA? (Explain—provide space)
3. How would the project provide transportation opportunities into or within the MNRRA?
4. How would the project provide recreational opportunities in the MNRRA?
5. Does the project provide access onto the river? How?
6. Does the project close a gap to or along the MNRRA?
7. How would the project provide educational opportunities in or about the MNRRA?
8. How would the project provide/promote scenic opportunities in the MNRRA?
9. Would the project be integrated into existing or planned transportation systems (i.e. bus, trails, light rail transit)? (Explain)
10. How would the project provide or improve access to the MNRRA?
11. Is the project accessible? Does it meet Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines?
12. How could the project increase visitation to the MNRRA?
13. How would the project impact congestion in the park?
14. How would the project promote the development of environmental, economic, and socially adaptable and/or sustainable transportation and recreational facilities?

### Additional Data

1. Provide an opportunity to upload additional project documents in PDF format. Ask for photos, maps, or graphics (jpeg, bmp, pdf, etc.)

Have questions? Contact the application administrator at: (e-mail address)

# **Appendix E**

## **Planning, Environment, and Public Comment Website**





## PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC COMMENT WEBSITE

For an (National Park Service (NPS) managed project, a variety of planning and environmental documents will be prepared to help guide management of park resources. The NPS has developed a web-based tool for informing the public about projects and plans that are being considered or developed by NPS. The Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website contains all of the currently active projects for the NPS. Because the Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) project is managed by the NPS, documents pertaining to the ATP project are published on the PEPC site.

PEPC is a web-based system that has been created for and adopted by the NPS to be used nationwide. The system allows people to gain access to current plans and related documents that are available for review and open for comment. Public comments can be submitted through the PEPC system. The public will also be able to access schedules for particular projects, as well as specific information about public meetings. Although the PEPC system will become the primary vehicle to submit and review comments on planning efforts and projects, the NPS will continue to accept comments from the public as it always has, by mail, fax, and e-mail. Staff at NPS is regularly adding plans and projects to PEPC. With time, this system will be used with increasing frequency; therefore, the public is encouraged to visit the website regularly.

Anyone with an internet connection can access the site to find out what projects are available for public review and to submit comments. PEPC is available on line at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> and the following sections are located in the main navigation menu of PEPC:

- **Home:** Access all projects and parks in which you are interested.
- **Parks:** Find projects by park. To narrow the list, select a park or region and click “Show Parks.”
- **Plans/Documents:** You can select listed plans/documents on this page to see more information about that plan or document. To limit the list to only those that are available for public comment, select “Only Plans/Documents Open for Public Comment.” To further narrow the list, select a project type, park, or state. After making your selection, click “Show Plans/Documents.”
- **Policy:** From this page you can access policies, reference material, and other information related to the NPS and its administration.
- **Links:** This page contains links that provide sources of additional information about planning, resources and the environmental impact analysis process for the NPS.
- **Search:** Publicly available plans and environmental documents for the NPS can be searched.

To submit comments through PEPC, an individual must complete the following steps:

- Click on the name of the particular project or plan that they are interested in
- Click on “Documents and Links”
- At this point, they will find general information about the plan or project
- To comment, they must click on “Comment on Document” in the left-hand column



# Appendix F

## Public Outreach Strategies





- **Public Meetings:** A public meeting is an announced meeting designed to facilitate public participation in the decision-making process and to assist the public in gaining an informed view of a proposed project.
- **Public Hearings:** A public hearing is a special meeting, which allows the public to comment on proposed plans and projects before officials make a final decision. As implied by the title, public hearings are open to the public. All members of the public wishing to testify regarding an action may do so.
- **Charrettes:** A charrette, or design workshop, is a popular way to get people together and put a large array of ideas on the table. It gives the participants the advantage of speaking directly to the designers. In this way, the designs produced can reflect a true collaboration between designers and the public.
- **Open Houses:** An open house can be a day, or several days, when planners and designers are present and drawings and plans are displayed for viewing in an open setting. The public and other interested stakeholders have an opportunity to communicate with planners and designers and provide feedback.
- **Steering Committees and Task Forces:** Steering committee and task force members are usually appointed by a governing official. Generally, people making up these committees have some interest, vested or otherwise, in the outcome or direction the project takes. If a steering committee is well formed, it can be a boon for the process. An effective task force will build community consensus and take ownership of the issues they are examining. They can hold public meetings, tours, solicit comments, and report back to elected officials. If the committee members are active in representing their communities, their neighbors will feel that they were part of the process.
- **Focus Groups:** Focus groups are generally small groups of selected representatives of various constituencies, organized to solicit feedback from the public. Focus group discussions provide excellent opportunities to exchange information and opinions, and participants will know that their ideas are heard.
- **Panels and Forums:** Panels and forums provide an overview of the planning and design issues to explain how these issues may affect the particular project in question. An expert panel can frame and inform the public discussion.
- **Informal Contacts:** Informal contacts are an important part in the public process. Door-to-door public process and kitchen-table conferences can make a real difference in winning public acceptance and negotiating details.
- **Websites:** Virtual participation by way of the internet is highly successful. A website devoted to the project serves as an electronic town meeting, bringing information, drawings, and simulations into individual homes, and collecting feedback and ideas on the project.
- **Print Materials:** Printed materials such as brochures, reports, minutes, agendas, and posters can be used to convey information, frame the discussion, and manage the process. People generally like to be able to take away something from a meeting, so it is always advantageous to have printed materials ready with all the relevant information provided in an edited, quick-read format. The project's website address and contact information should be prominently displayed on the handouts.



## Appendix G Funding



## FORMULA FUNDS

Federal funds are distributed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and other federal transportation agencies. These federal funds are apportioned between states through formula funds and designated earmarks. Formula highway funding programs for Minnesota include Interstate Maintenance, National Highway System, Surface Transportation (STP), Bridge, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Metropolitan Planning, Recreational Trails and Equity Bonus, as well as new/restructured programs for Highway Safety Improvement, Safe Routes to School, and Coordinated Border Infrastructure. Formula transit funding programs for Minnesota include the traditional programs such as Urbanized, Non-Urbanized/Rural, Elderly & Disabled, Metro Planning and Statewide Planning, as well as new/restructured programs for FFY 2006-09, such as Growing States, High-Density Urbanized Areas, Transit-Intensive Small Cities, Job Access & Reverse Commute, and the New Freedoms Initiative.

The Metropolitan Council has a regional solicitation of federal transportation projects. This regional solicitation is part of the Metropolitan Council's federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The funding programs and their related rules and requirements are established by the U.S. Department of Transportation and administered locally through collaboration with FHWA, FTA, and Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT). The Twin Cities metropolitan area selects projects for funding from three federal programs: STP, CMAQ, and STP Transportation Enhancements. In accordance with Metropolitan Council policy, these funds are to be invested to help implement the Regional Development Framework and the regional growth strategy, as well as to support the region's economic vitality and quality of life.<sup>9</sup> Information about these three federal programs and who can apply to them for funds follows.

### Surface Transportation Program

The STP provides the greatest flexibility in the use of funds. STP funds may be used (as capital funding) for public transportation capital improvements, car and vanpool projects, fringe and corridor parking facilities, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and intercity or intracity bus terminals and bus facilities. As funding for planning, these monies can be used for surface transportation planning activities, wetland mitigation, transit research and development, and environmental analysis.

STP funds are available to all Minnesota state agencies, the Metropolitan Council, other transit providers, Indian tribal governments, the seven counties, all cities and towns within the Twin Cities seven-county region, and the ten Regional Park System implementation agencies. Other local nonprofit agencies or parties, and special governmental agencies, are eligible, but must have a public agency sponsor. The agency sponsor is the local unit of government of record. The local unit of government is responsible for making arrangements with the agency sponsor to ensure all project requirements are met.<sup>10</sup>

### Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

The CMAQ Program has the objective of improving the nation's air quality and managing traffic congestion. CMAQ projects and programs are often innovative solutions to common mobility problems and are driven by Clean Air Act mandates to attain national ambient air quality standards. Eligible activities under CMAQ include transit system capital expansion and improvements that are projected to realize an increase in ridership; travel demand management strategies and shared ride services; pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and promotional activities that encourage bicycle commuting.

Transportation activities in approved State Implementation Programs (SIPs) are generally considered to be eligible activities and must be given the highest priority for CMAQ funding. Their air quality benefits will generally have already been documented. If not, such documentation is necessary before CMAQ funding can

<sup>9</sup> *Draft Package for 2007 Solicitation for Federal Transportation Project Funding*, (Metropolitan Council, May/June 2007)

<sup>10</sup> *Draft Package for 2007 Solicitation for Federal Transportation Project Funding*, (Metropolitan Council, May/June 2007)

be approved. Further, the transportation activity must contribute to emission reductions necessary to bring the area into attainment.

CMAQ funds are available to all Minnesota state agencies, the Metropolitan Council, other transit providers, Indian tribal governments, all cities and towns within the Twin Cities seven-county region, the seven counties, and the ten Regional Park System Implementation agencies. Other local nonprofit agencies or parties, and special governmental agencies, are eligible, but must have a public agency sponsor. The agency sponsor is the local unit of government of record. The local unit of government is responsible for making arrangements with the agency sponsor to ensure all project requirements are met.<sup>11</sup>

### Surface Transportation Program Transportation Enhancements

The STP includes ten percent set-asides for safety construction projects and Transportation Enhancements. Transportation Enhancements are transportation-related activities designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the nation's intermodal transportation system. This program provides for the implementation of nontraditional transportation projects. Eligible Transportation Enhancement projects include:

- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety education
- Acquisition of Scenic or Historic Sites
- Scenic or historic highway programs
- Landscaping
- Historic preservation
- Rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities
- Rail-trails
- Outdoor advertising
- Archaeological planning and research
- Environmental mitigation
- Transportation museums

Transportation Enhancement funds are available to all Minnesota state agencies, the Metropolitan Council, other transit providers, Indian tribal governments, all cities and towns within the Twin Cities seven county region, the seven counties, and the ten Regional Park System Implementation agencies. Other local or special governmental agencies and private groups are also eligible, but must have a public agency sponsor. The agency sponsor is the local unit of government of record. The local unit of government is responsible for making arrangements with the project proposer to ensure all project requirements are met.<sup>12</sup>

### DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

Discretionary funding programs are set up to provide funds through competitive grant programs, although much of the funding in these programs has been, or will be, earmarked for specific projects. Discretionary funds are separate from formula funds; although, in Minnesota, some of the formula funds are distributed and administered by state agencies that then use the funds as discretionary funds and award them to projects through a competitive grant process. For example, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) receives federal funds from the Recreational Trails Program for recreational trails and trail-related facilities for nonmotorized and motorized trail uses. The MNDNR solicits project applications and awards grants on a competitive basis. (MNDNR grants are also discussed under the discretionary funds section.) Some of the federal discretionary funding programs to which NPS Staff could potentially apply to receive grants include:

<sup>11</sup> Draft Package for 2007 Solicitation for Federal Transportation Project Funding, (Metropolitan Council, May/June 2007)

<sup>12</sup> Draft Package for 2007 Solicitation for Federal Transportation Project Funding, (Metropolitan Council, May/June 2007)

- Federal Lands Highway (FLH) Program
  - Public Lands Highway (PLH) Program
  - Park Roads and Parkways (PRP) Program
- Coordinated Technology Implementation Program (CTIP)
- National Scenic Byways Program
- Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program
- Challenge Cost Share Program (CCSP)

Descriptions of these funding programs are in the following sections. All discretionary grants offered by the 26 federal grant-making agencies can be found online at [grants.gov](http://grants.gov).

### **Federal Lands Highway Program**

The Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP) is subdivided into five core areas: the Forest Highway (FH) Program, Park Roads and Parkways (PRP) Program, Public Lands Highway (PLH) Discretionary Program, Indian Reservations Roads (IRR) Program, and the Refuge Roads (RR) Program. FLHP funds can be used for transportation planning, research, engineering, and construction of highways, roads, and parkways and transit facilities within public lands, national parks, and Indian reservations. In addition, FLHP funds can be used as the state/local match for most types of federal-aid highway funded projects. The two applicable programs, PLH and PRP, are described in more detail in the following sections.

### **Public Lands Highway Program Discretionary Funds**

The PLH Program was originally established in 1930 by the Amendment Relative to Construction of Roads through Public Lands and Federal Reservations. Funding was provided from the General Fund of the Treasury. The intent of the program is to improve access to and within the federal lands of the nation. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970 changed the funding source for the program from the General Fund to the Highway Trust Fund, effective in fiscal year (FY) 1972. The program has been continued with each highway or transportation act since then.

PLH funds are available for transportation planning, research, engineering, and construction of the highways, roads, and parkways, and of transit facilities within the federal public lands. PLH funds are also available for operation and maintenance of transit facilities located on federal public lands. Eligible projects under the PLH program may include the following:

- Transportation planning for tourism and recreational travel, including the National Forest Scenic Byways Program, Bureau of Land Management Back Country Byways Program, National Trail System Program, and other similar federal programs that benefit recreational development
- Adjacent vehicular parking areas
- Interpretive signage
- Acquisition of necessary scenic easements and scenic or historic sites
- Provisions for pedestrians and bicycles
- Construction and reconstruction of roadside rest areas, including sanitary and water facilities
- Other appropriate public road facilities, such as visitor centers

Only state departments of transportation may submit applications for funding under this program; however, NPS staff could partner with Mn/DOT and help prepare a grant application for an appropriate project.

### **Park Roads and Parkways**

The PRP Program provides funding for the design, construction, reconstruction, maintenance, or improvement of refuge roads and bridges that provide access to, or are within, a unit of the NPS. PRP funds can be used for any type of transportation project providing access to or within NPS lands and may be used for the state/local matching share for apportioned Federal-aid Highway Funds, as described in 23 U.S.C. 120(l). The

U.S. Department of Transportation Office of FLH and the NPS jointly administer the Refuge Roads (RR) Program as part of the FLH Program.

Most funds are allocated to projects in three categories:

1. Rehabilitation (3R) and Reconstruction (4R) Projects
  - a. Paving
  - b. Bridge rehabilitation, painting and replacement
  - c. Safety improvements
  - d. Drainage
  - e. Tunnel rehabilitation
2. Congressionally Mandated Parkway Completion Projects:
3. Transportation Management Program (TMP)

The TMP, formerly the Alternative Transportation Program (ATP), integrates all modes of travel within a park including transit, ferries, rail, bicycle and pedestrian linkages, and personal vehicles. Under 23 USC 204(h), eligible projects under the PRP program may also include the following:

- Transportation planning for tourism and recreational travel, including the National Forest Scenic Byways Program, Bureau of Land Management Back Country Byways Program, National Trail System Program, and other similar federal programs that benefit recreational development
- Adjacent vehicular parking areas
- Interpretive signage
- Acquisition of necessary scenic easements and scenic or historic sites
- Provisions for pedestrians and bicycles
- Construction and reconstruction of roadside rest areas, including sanitary and water facilities
- Other appropriate public road facilities, such as visitor centers, as determined by the Secretary

### **Coordinated Technology Implementation Program**

The CTIP is a cooperative technology deployment and sharing program between the FHWA FLH office and the federal land management agencies. It provides a forum for identifying, studying, documenting, and transferring new technology to the transportation community.

Many innovative technologies have been funded through the CTIP program. These include a variety of concentration areas such as pavement, bridges, and low volume roads. CTIP funds are normally used for technology projects related to transportation networks on federal public lands. Projects related to the transportation infrastructure, transit, safety, public use, and natural environments are considered.

CTIP's call for proposed study areas is always open. Study areas must meet the following criteria to receive CTIP funding:

- Innovative, unique, or underused transportation technology
- Doesn't require research
- Adds value
- Meets a specific need
- Supports public roads or facilities
- Costs less than \$200,000
- Time frame less than three years

### **National Scenic Byways Program**

The National Scenic Byways Discretionary Grants program provides funding for byway-related projects each year, as part of the FHWA Discretionary Grants Program. Projects to support and enhance National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads, and state-designated byways are eligible. Applications are prepared online, but submitted through the state's byway program agency. There are eight categories of eligible project activities:

1. State and tribal programs
2. Corridor management plan
3. Safety improvements
4. Byway facilities
5. Access to recreation
6. Resource Protection
7. Interpretive information
8. Marketing program

### **Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program**

The Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program was established to address the problem of increasing vehicle congestion in and around national parks and other federal lands. America's national parks, wildlife refuges, and national forests were created to protect unique environmental and cultural treasures, but are now facing traffic, pollution, and crowding that diminishes the visitor experience and threatens the environment. To address these concerns, this program provides funding for alternative transportation systems, such as shuttle buses, rail connections, and bicycle trails. The program seeks to conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources; reduce congestion and pollution; improve visitor mobility and accessibility; enhance the visitor experience; and ensure access to all, including persons with disabilities. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, together with the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service.

Eligible funding recipients include federal land management agencies that manage eligible areas, including, but not limited to:

- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service

Eligible recipients also include state, tribal, or local governmental authorities with jurisdiction over land in the vicinity of an eligible area, acting with the consent of the federal land management agencies.

Eligible project areas include any federally owned or managed park, refuge, or recreational area open to the general public, including national parks, national wildlife refuges; Bureau of Land Management recreational areas; Bureau of Reclamation recreational areas; and national forests. Eligible projects may also include the communities and land surrounding these. Federal program funds may support capital and planning expenses for new or existing alternative transportation systems in the vicinity of an eligible area. Alternative transportation includes transportation by bus, rail, or any other publicly available means of transportation and includes sightseeing services. It also includes nonmotorized transportation systems such as pedestrian and bicycle trails. Operating costs, such as fuel and drivers' salaries, are not eligible expenses.

A Notice of Availability (Solicitation of Project Proposals) is posted in the Federal Register announcing funding for projects through the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program.

### Challenge Cost Share Program

The purpose of the Challenge Cost Share Program (CCSP) is to increase participation by qualified partners in the preservation and improvement of NPS natural, cultural, and recreational resources; in all authorized Service programs and activities; and on national trails. NPS and partners should work together on CCSP projects with mutually beneficial, shared outcomes.

The CCSP is a matching fund program. An equal amount of eligible and matching share (minimum 50 percent) of cash, goods, or services from non-federal sources is required. Currently, the maximum CCSP award is \$30,000. Projects selected should generally be able to be completed within one year.

One-third of CCSP funding is set aside for National Trails System projects, supporting work under the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241-51). National Trail System projects include those associated with National Scenic and Historic trails, National Scenic and Historic Trails in Parks, National Recreation Trails, and rail-trails.

### Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

The MNDNR has four grant programs that could be funding sources for projects: Parks and Trails Legacy Grant, Local Trail Connections Program, Regional Trail Grant, and the Federal Recreational Trail Program. As discussed previously, the MNDNR receives federal funds from the Recreational Trails Program for recreational trails and trail-related facilities for non-motorized and motorized trail uses. The MNDNR solicits project applications and awards grants on a competitive basis. Descriptions of these grant programs follow.

#### Parks and Trails Legacy Grant Program

Funding for this grant program is from the Parks and Trails Fund created by the Minnesota Legislature from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment passed by voters in 2008. This program is established in Minnesota Statutes 85.535. Its purpose is to provide grants to local units of government for projects to support the acquisition, development, restoration, and maintenance of park and trail facilities considered to be of regional or statewide significance. All park projects must meet requirements for perpetual outdoor recreational use. Trail acquisition projects require a perpetual easement for recreational purposes. Trail development projects require a 20-year maintenance commitment by the project sponsor.

Eligible applicants include counties, cities, townships, and legislatively designated regional parks and trails taxing authorities. Grants are reimbursed up to 75 percent of the total eligible project costs, and recipients must provide a nonstate cash match of at least 25 percent. Project costs must be incurred and paid before reimbursement can be made. Project costs become eligible for reimbursement once a contract agreement is established between the DNR and the grantee. Priority funding will be given to projects that provide connectivity, enhanced opportunities for commuters, and enhanced safety. Other significant considerations are trail length, expected use, and resource quality and attractiveness.

#### Local Trail Connections Program

The Local Trail Connections Program provides grants to local units of government to promote relatively short trail connections between where people live and desirable locations—not to develop significant new trails. Funding for this grant program is from "In Lieu Of" lottery proceeds. This program is established in Minnesota Statutes 85.019.

Eligible projects include acquisition and development of trail facilities. Projects must result in a trail linkage that is immediately available for use by the general public. Trail linkages include connecting where people live (residential areas within cities, entire communities) and significant public resources (historical areas, open space, parks and/or other trails). Acquisition of trail right-of-way is eligible only when proposed in conjunction with trail development. Acquisition projects require a perpetual easement for recreational purposes. Development projects require a 20-year maintenance commitment by the project sponsor. Projects inside state

park boundaries, state recreation areas, on state trail corridors, and elements of the Regional Open Space System in the Twin Cities Metro System are not eligible.

Eligible applicants include counties, cities, and townships. Grants reimburse applicants for up to 50 percent of the total eligible project costs, and recipients must provide a nonstate cash match of at least 50 percent. Other state funds or grants, such as Parks and Trails Legacy Grants, or Metropolitan Council Grants cannot match these grants. Project costs must be incurred and paid before reimbursement can be made. Project costs become eligible for reimbursement once a contract agreement is established between the MNDNR and the grantee. The minimum grant request is \$5,000, and the maximum grant award is \$100,000.

### **Regional Trail Grant**

The Regional Trail Grant provides grants to local units of government to promote development of regionally significant trails outside the seven-county metropolitan area. Funding for this grant program is from "In Lieu Of" lottery proceeds. This program is established in Minnesota Statutes 85.019.

Eligible projects include acquisition and development of trail facilities outside the seven-county metropolitan area that are considered of regional or statewide significance. Acquisition projects require a perpetual easement for recreational purposes. Development projects require a 20-year maintenance commitment by the project sponsor.

Eligible applicants include counties, cities, and townships. Grants reimburse applicants for up to 50 percent of the total eligible project costs, and recipients must provide a non-state cash match of at least 50 percent. Other state funds or grants, such as Parks and Trails Legacy Grants, or Metropolitan Council Grants cannot match these grants. Project costs must be incurred and paid before reimbursement can be made. Project costs become eligible for reimbursement once a contract agreement is established between the MNDNR and the grantee. The minimum grant request is \$5,000, and the maximum grant award is \$250,000.

Priority for trail project funding will be given to projects that develop trails of significant length. Other significant considerations are expected amount and type of use, and quality and attractiveness of natural and cultural resources.

### **Federal Recreational Trail Program**

The purpose of the Federal Recreational Trail Program is to encourage the maintenance and development of motorized, non-motorized, and diversified trails by providing funding assistance. Funding comes from revenue received by the Federal Highway Trust Fund.

Eligible projects include motorized and non-motorized trail projects; maintenance/restoration of existing recreational trails; development/rehabilitation of recreational trail linkages, including trailside and trailhead facilities; environmental awareness and safety education programs relating to the use of recreational trails; and redesign/relocation of trails to benefit/minimize the impact to the natural environment. Condemnation, trail construction in federally designated wilderness areas, and facilitating motorized trail use on trails predominantly used by nonmotorized users prior to May 1, 1991, are not eligible activities.

All projects must be sponsored by a unit of government, preferably in cooperation with a local trail organization. The Minnesota Recreational Trail Users Association annually prioritizes funding categories prior to the solicitation process. Projects that involve urban youth corps workers such as the Minnesota Conservation Corps will be given special consideration.

A 50 percent cash- or in-kind-match for eligible elements of the project proposal is required. Costs must be incurred and paid for before reimbursement. Neither this funding source nor the cash match may be used to meet existing payroll; only contract services, materials, and supplies are reimbursable. Approximately \$2 million is available for projects annually. The minimum grant amount is \$1,000 and the maximum is \$150,000. Federal funds can, in some cases, be used as match for this program.

### American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

On Feb. 13, 2009, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act). The objectives of the Recovery Act include preserving and creating jobs and promoting economic recovery, investing in transportation infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits, and assisting those most affected by the current economic downturn. Title XII of the Recovery Act appropriates \$1.5 billion, available through September 30, 2011, for Supplementary Discretionary Grants for a National Surface Transportation System. These grants are awarded on a competitive basis for capital investments in surface transportation projects that will have a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area, or a region.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is calling these Supplementary Discretionary Grants for a National Transportation System “TIGER Discretionary Grants” (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery). Funds under this program are awarded to state and local governments, including U.S. territories, tribal governments, transit agencies, port authorities, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), other political subdivisions of state or local governments, and multistate or multijurisdictional applicants.

To date, there have been two rounds of TIGER Discretionary Grants:

- TIGER Discretionary Grant recipients were announced on February 17, 2010, and
- TIGER II Discretionary Grant recipients were announced October 20, 2010.

Although no additional opportunities to apply for TIGER Discretionary Grants have been specified, there could be an opportunity to apply for future rounds of this grant. For more information about the Recovery Act and the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program, visit: <[www.dot.gov/recovery/index.html](http://www.dot.gov/recovery/index.html)>.

### OTHER POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

In 1996, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency joined with several nonprofit and government organizations to form the Smart Growth Network (SGN). The network was formed in response to increasing community concerns about the need for new ways to grow that boost the economy, protect the environment, and enhance community vitality. Working with communities and stakeholders, network partners found that smart-growth successes share common attributes. The partners pooled their experience and agreed on the following principles as a framework for smart-growth discussion and action:<sup>13</sup>

- Mix land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

The Smart Growth website, <<http://www.smartgrowth.org/default.asp>>, lists many funding opportunities for communities that have a project or goal that is consistent with the identified Smart Growth principles. Funding opportunities vary from agency competitive grants to Active Living grants (funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota). This potential resource could provide an additional opportunity to obtain funds outside of transportation funding sources.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/overview.asp>.

# **Appendix H**

## **Phase II GIS Database Development**





## PHASE II GIS DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

A necessary component of the Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) was assembling the most current and detailed data pertaining to area transportation and recreation systems. The objective was to collect this data in digital format compatible with geographic information systems (GIS), in this case using ArcMap 9.3 software by ESRI™. The GIS Data Collection Technical Memorandum (HDR, April 2010) contains a detailed discussion on the datasets received. The GIS databases are routinely created and managed by local, regional, state, and federal government organizations; therefore, information collected in November of 2009 could be outdated.

Currently, the NPS has a compilation of all available GIS information and a contractor's recommendations on how the information should be organized. Future funding should be secured for a comprehensive multimodal-facilities map and GIS database for the MNRRRA. This geodatabase would contain shapefiles representative of facilities identified in the current MNRRRA ATP that NPS will use to create printed maps. It is assumed that the NPS has software and hardware capable of running GIS and producing maps.

The following narrative proposes the main tasks involved with Phase II of the GIS database.

### Modify Data Collection as Necessary

Prior to organizing the data into a geodatabase, it is recommended that all relevant agencies be contacted to inquire about data updates or additions since the completion of the 2009–2010 project. There may be other organizations that could be contacted for additional information, such as Fort Snelling, the Minnesota River National Recreation Area and Wildlife Refuge, and Fort Snelling State Park (MNDNR). It would be helpful to combine this task and the next task (database design) with the work being done in association with planned and programmed projects to develop the ATP. The information contained in the local governments' plans would add a useful dimension to the basic GIS data.

Communication between the consultant and NPS would be ongoing during the development of the geodatabase.

### Design Database and Attributes

The GIS data received from government agencies located within MNRRRA is not organized consistently. Each agency has developed a unique structure for the arrangement and inclusion of data categories (for example, on-street bike trail, off-street bike trail, or sidewalk). This task would involve a review of the data and attributes within each dataset. A geodatabase would be designed to incorporate the fields (or attributes) that are appropriate to the implementation of the ATP into a standard structure. Attributes would be determined in conjunction with the NPS. Shapefiles with existing data and attributes would be generated as necessary. In addition, new fields added during the design of the geodatabase may be populated during the course of the study (for example, identification of areas of inadequate connectivity or priority areas for connection with the transportation network).

The database would be developed using ESRI ArcGIS software products, version 9.3 (or higher).

### Consolidate Collected Data

As the collected data is reformatted and installed in the geodatabase, data accuracy issues would be determined and resolved to the highest level practical to achieve data consistency and reliability. Maps would be produced for review and discussion.

### Quality Control

Review of the geodatabase at various stages would be completed. Revisions based on the results of the review would be incorporated. Field verification of the data and surrounding land use should be conducted to maintain the confidence level in the data and for NPS to become familiar with trail locations and associated

facilities. This also helps to ensure that the mapping and analysis reflect existing conditions. This can be done on a limited basis at randomly selected sites.

### **Map Display**

One of the major considerations for the final output of this database is its presentation to the public. In this task the design of the graphic effects, such as fonts, line weights, colors, and type of background display would be addressed.

### **Prepare Metadata**

Metadata (reference data for shapefiles such as date, source, and proprietor) would be created and updated on a regular basis for the final database. Metadata is summary information providing content, quality, type, creation, and spatial information about a data set.

### **Final Map Production**

The preceding steps lead to the production of a standardized map for use in publications and additional studies. This map might not be presented in every publication exactly as developed in this task, but it would provide a consistent baseline and theme for the project. An additional alternative to one standard map would be to generate a mapbook. This would be a series of maps (breaking the one map into multiple pages) at a higher resolution with an accompanying index map to highlight the location of the current page within the series.