



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

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Thursday, February 10, 2022  
3:30 pm



Lower Sioux Intergenerational Cultural Incubator

Center for Regional Development  
2401 Broadway Ave, Slayton, MN



## Southwest Regional Development Commission

### **Commissioner**

Rick Anderson  
Bob Byrnes  
Miron Carney  
Keith Elbers  
Donna Gravley  
Eric Hartman  
Dennis Klingbile  
Myron Koets  
Mike Kuhle  
Paul Langseth  
Richard Peterson  
Bob Van Hee  
Dennis Welgraven

### **Representing**

Lyon County  
City of Marshall  
Murray County  
Rock County  
Cottonwood County  
Region 8 School Boards  
Lincoln County  
Pipestone County, SRDC Chairman  
City of Worthington, Immediate Past Chair  
Nobles County, SRDC Vice Chair  
Jackson County, SRDC Secretary  
Redwood County  
Murray County, SRDC Treasurer

#### **SRDC Full Commission Membership**

- One (1) County member from each of the nine counties.
- One (1) Township member from each of the nine counties.
- One (1) Mayor/Council member from each municipality over 10,000 in population.
- One (1) Mayor/council member for each of the nine counties representing cities under 10,000.
- Two (2) School Board members.
- One (1) Lower Sioux Indian Community member.
- Five (5) Public Interest Groups

#### **SRDC Board of Director Membership**

- SRDC Chairman & a regional commissioner from each county elected by the regional commissioners from each county and:
- One (1) Elected commissioner from each city over 10,000 in population.
  - One (1) Elected commissioner from any county with a population of more than 20,000 but without a city over 10,000 in population nominated by the regional commissioners of that county.
  - One (1) School board member selected by the Commission as a whole.



**SRDC**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Thursday, February 10, 2022  
 3:30pm

SRDC Board Room  
 2401 Broadway Ave, Slayton MN

**AGENDA**

<b>#</b>	<b><u>Time</u></b>		<b><u>Page</u></b>
1	3:30pm	<b>Call to Order &amp; Pledge of Allegiance</b>	
2	3:32pm	<b>Introductions</b>	
3	3:35pm	<b>Additions to and Approval of Agenda</b> <b>Action Needed: Approve Agenda</b>	
4	3:37pm	<b>Finance Reports</b> — <i>Treasurer Welgraven &amp; Finance Director Swart</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• December Receipts &amp; Expenditures Report <span style="float: right;"><i>Handout</i></span></li> <li><b>Action Needed: Approve December Receipts &amp; Expenditures Report</b></li> <li>• Treasurer’s Report, including bank accounts &amp; investments <span style="float: right;"><i>Handout</i></span></li> <li><b>Action Needed: Approval of Treasurer’s Report</b></li> <li>• Administrative Report through December 2021 <span style="float: right;"><i>Handout</i></span></li> <li><b>Action Needed: Approval of Administrative Report</b></li> </ul>	
5	3:42pm	<b>Project Reviews</b> — <i>Development Planner Bruce-White</i> As of the mailing there is one Project Review for consideration <b>Action Needed: Accept Project Review</b>	5-6
6		<b><u>Committee &amp; Staff Reports</u></b>	
6a	3:45pm	<b>Audit Committee Report</b> — <i>Committee Chair Welgraven &amp; Finance Director Swart</i>	<i>Handout</i>
6b	3:55pm	<b>Legislative Committee Report</b> — <i>Committee Chair Carney</i>	
6c	4:05pm	<b>Economic Development Report</b> — <i>Deputy Director Weis &amp; Development Planner Bruce-White</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resiliency Plan Matrix <span style="float: right;"><i>Handout</i></span></li> </ul>	7-9
6d	4:15pm	<b>Revolving Loan Funds Report</b> — <i>Committee Chair Byrnes &amp; Deputy Director Weis</i>	10-11
6e	4:25pm	<b>Physical Development Report</b> — <i>Development Planners Bruce-White &amp; Walker</i>	12-13
6f	4:30pm	<b>Community Development Report</b> — <i>Communications Specialist Welu</i>	14
6g	4:35pm	<b>Transportation Report</b> — <i>Development Planners Bruce-White &amp; Walker</i>	15-16
6h	4:40pm	<b>Executive Director’s Report</b> — <i>Executive Director Trusty</i>	
6i	4:50pm	<b>Chairman’s Report</b> — <i>Chairman Koets</i>	
7	5:00pm	<b>Unfinished Business</b>	
8		<b>New Business</b>	

9           **Other Issues**  
Lincoln, Lyon, and Redwood County Delegations will need to caucus prior to the March Full Commission Meeting to determine their representative (three-year term) on the SRDC Board of Directors.

10           **Announcements**  
SRDC Commissioner vacancies exist from the following representation: Nobles County Municipalities, Pipestone County Townships, Redwood County Municipalities, and Region 8 Cultural Diversity.

- SRDC Office closed Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup> in observation of Presidents' Day
- SRDC Full Commission Meeting: Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm at the Murray County 4-H Building
- SRDC Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm at the SRDC Office

11 5:05pm **Adjourn**

**Southwest Regional Development Commission Project Reviews**

**February 2022**

**Environmental Assessment Worksheet**

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Murray County	Improvement project of CSAH 13 (Valhalla Road)	NA

## Southwest Regional Development Commission Project Review

**Agenda Item:** 5

**Meeting Date:** February 10, 2022

**Project Name:** Environmental Assessment Worksheet for improvement project of CSAH 13 (Valhalla Road) in Murray County

### Project Description:

Preparation of the EAW is considered mandatory under Minnesota Rule Minn. R. 4410.4300, subpart 27 (A) Public waters, public waters wetlands, and wetlands: For projects that will change or diminish the course, current, or cross-section of one acre or more of any public water or public waters wetland except for those to be drained without a permit according to Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103G.

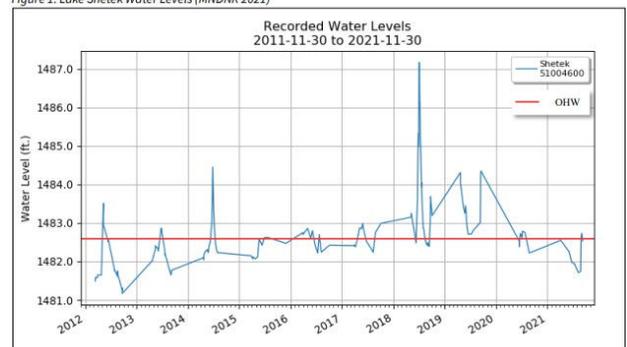
The Murray County Highway Department is proposing a construction project that will provide safe access across Dikes 1, 2, and 3 to Valhalla and Keeley Islands during highwater events. The project includes widening the roadway to have 12-foot lanes, 4-foot shoulders and a separate pathway for non-vehicular traffic.

### Staff Comments:

- This includes a complete reconstruction of CSAH 13. This includes raising CSAH to a minimum of 1488.20 feet.
- Lake Shetek's water levels fluctuate above its Ordinary High-Water Level (OHW) on a yearly basis. Currently, the elevation of CSAH and its dykes is inadequate during larger rain events. The proposed projects will raise the elevation of the roadway above the water levels reached during the 2018 flood events.
- Project EAW timeline:
  - Submittal to EQB: January 2022
  - Published in EQB Monitor: January 2022
  - 30-Day Comment Period: January 2022-February 2022
  - ROD/Board Approval: February 2022



Figure 1: Lake Shetek Water Levels (MNDNR 2021)



**Project Review Time:** 1 hour

**Income to the SRDC as a result of this Review:** \$0

**Reviewer:** Rosemary Bruce-White, Development/Transportation Planner

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

February 2022

CEDS | EDA PLANNING | CARES ACT EDA (C-EDA)

## **COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)**

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) brings together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies and to create an environment for economic resiliency and prosperity. The CEDS analyzes the regional economy and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources. Our revised 5-year CEDS was submitted. It can be found at <http://www.swrdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/CEDS-2022-2027.pdf>. If you'd like to be a part of future CEDS committee meetings, please contact staff for details.

Developing and revising the regional CEDS is one of the many allowable activities within our 3-year EDA planning grant. Our next grant application for these funds, \$210,000 over three years, is due February 11.

## **EDA PLANNING**

**Friends in the Field:** Quarterly, economic and community development professionals in Minnesota get together to learn and collaborate. The January 12 Zoom meeting focused on housing with City of Pipestone (Myron Koets) and SWMHP (Chad Adams) on the panel. This group will next meet on April 13 and will focus on childcare.

**Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC):** The coordinating council last met on January 19 to work on action steps, relevance, needed changes, emerging needs, etc. as it pertains to our Local Human Services Public Transit Plan that is currently being revised. The committee has set the next meeting for April 4 from 9-3:30.

**Southwest Minnesota Youth Committee:** The committee meets in February, May, August, and November. The February 3 meeting will focus on goals and objectives for PY22 and PY23. It is the vision of the Youth Committee to work in partnership to ensure youth have access to the services they need to become self-sufficient and successful. It is the mission of the Youth Committee to guide the coordination of services that fully develop the employment potential of youth in Southwest Minnesota. The mission of this group aligns with many areas within our CEDS.

**MN Marketing Partnership:** The group next meets on March 24. The first ever comprehensive Minnesota economic development marketing campaigns, <https://joinusmn.com/> has been created, a new marketing website has launched, and a national advertising campaign is currently underway to promote Minnesota as the premier location for business startups and expansions. The Minnesota Marketing Partnership is a public-private partnership working together to develop initiatives to promote Minnesota and its business economy through marketing campaigns, site selector events, Minnesota familiarization tours and more. Learn more about MMP at <https://mn.gov/deed/joinusmn/resources/marketing/>.

**Cultures on the Prairie:** SRDC will be a sponsor for this event on February 15. The event is being held at SMSU and online. Details can be found at <https://swmnarts.org/opportunities/cultures-on-the-prairie-conference-in-marshall-mn/>.

**World Fest:** SRDC will be a sponsor for this event on April 30. This event is being held at the Red Baron Arena and Expo in Marshall and will include informational booths, various foods, and entertainment.

**SMSU Entrepreneurial Advisory Council:** SRDC has been asked by Dr. George Taylor to participate on this advisory council. The council next meets on February 18. The SMSU Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship promotes developing the entrepreneurial mindset through experiential learning and community outreach with a goal to enhance the economic viability of the 18-county area of the Southwest Minnesota Region.

**Workforce Solutions Summit:** Workforce shortages are affecting every region and industry and are affecting both business sustainability and growth. COVID-19 has changed the make-up of workforce in Minnesota. Data shows a decrease in the 55+ workforce and an increase in the 18-25 workforce. SRDC will be one of the sponsors in a similar event held in Redwood County.

## **CARES ACT EDA (C-EDA)**

SRDC staff are available to provide support and technical assistance to businesses and local units of government. Contact staff if you need research completed, maps developed, surveys compiled, grant reviewed, etc.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic created a number of new challenges for businesses, workers, and government. For a list of state and federal programs (SBA, Unemployment and DEED) for businesses, visit <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/press-releases/?id=425890>. Several e-mails and calls have been received for technical assistance.

Current activities include:

1. Map assistance for a Rock County community.
2. Providing technical assistance in drafting a Minnesota Rail Service Improvement (MRSI) Grant Program application to build a grain handling facility to transload corn and soybeans onto rail cars to be shipped to California.
3. Assisting a county EDA's staff in researching DEED's Main Street Economic Revitalization Program.

**EDA Funding Opportunities:** There are several grant opportunities still available through the federal EDA. More information can be found at <https://eda.gov/arpa/>. Contact staff with project ideas. Staff can assist with application review, project partner facilitation, regional and local data, etc.

Programs that may be of interest within EDA's Investing in America's Communities includes:

1. **Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation:** \$750 million. Accelerate communities impacted by COVID-related travel and tourism decline through state grants (\$510 million) and competitive grants (\$240 million).
  - Staff have completed and submitted an application for the development of a regional trails plan.
  - SRDC submitted a letter of support for a statewide application being put together by the U of MN Extension Tourism Center that will develop, pilot, and deliver three workforce training programs for the tourism industry, including basic skill level customer service training, workforce inclusiveness, and nurturing future industry leaders.
2. **Economic Adjustment Assistance:** Includes assistance, planning, and revolving loan programs through competitive grants available to every community.
  - The City of Tracy submitted a co-working application.
  - Conversations are in the process of creating an industrial park space for hemp processing.
  - Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.
3. **Indigenous Communities:** \$100 million. Additional Economic Adjustment Assistance funds to specifically support Indigenous communities.
  - Conversations are in the process of developing a workforce development proposal. Many trades, as

well as aviation, are possibilities. Four high schools have expressed interest thus far.

4. Statewide Planning, Research & Networks: \$90 million. Invest in economic plans, research to assess the effectiveness of EDA's programs, and support for stakeholder communities around key EDA initiatives.

**Regional Economic Resiliency Plan:** Over the last year, staff have been working on the region's first Economic Resiliency Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This effort began with a comprehensive review of available planning documents and available data packages, including local and county Comprehensive Plans, One Watershed One Plan Water Management Plans, Census Bureau Data, USDA Census of Agriculture Data, and much more. This review assisted staff in identifying three overall priority issues impacting economic resiliency. Those issues are: the deficit between employment projects and regional population growth; the mismatch of desired skills and the skills of the available workforce; and the delicate balance between land stewardship and agricultural productivity.

After the initial analysis, staff hosted regional workshops using priority issues as guides for each discussion. Workshop participants included family farming operations, business owners, local government officials, first responders, and economic development professionals. During these workshops, participants talked about the successes and resiliency in their communities. During these efforts, four themes rose as foundations of economic resilience. These themes include the importance of community resilience/social capital, business community diversity, access to adequate and diverse workforce, and the importance of having an inviting community for young professionals to live.

During 2021, resiliency planning shifted from technical analysis of available resources to establishing SRDC's role in fostering economic resilience for the region. This effort started in the business community with a COVID-19 Business Response survey. SRDC heard from 56 businesses around the region on the resources they were aware of, technical assistance needed, and how the pandemic has impacted their businesses.

The information and input collected in the first phase of the planning process has been used to establish draft goals and objectives to support economic resilience in Southwest Minnesota. The three goals aim to address the three priority issues, and the objectives are intended to support the foundations noted by workshop participants and survey respondents. Each set of objectives includes opportunities to build upon SRDC's capacity to support each overall goal.

During the Board Retreat, the SRDC Board of Directors assisted staff with the prioritization and assessment of draft strategies. Strategies noted by the Board to have the most impact per SRDC resources were prioritized. Action steps were then determined for the next 18 months. (See Handout)

# REVOLVING LOAN FUND REPORT

February 2022

COVID-19 RLF | TRADITIONAL RLF | CONTRACTED RLF | PACE

## RLF COMMITTEE

The committee consists of five members and meets as needed. The committee covers both the COVID-19 RLF and Traditional RLF. The committee intends to meet in-person prior to May 2022 to discuss the future of the C-RLF and Traditional RLF.

## RLF PLANS AND FLEXIBILITIES

EDA provided flexibilities to recipients of EDA-funded Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) awards in light of the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses, the increasing demand for RLF loans, and the need for RLFs to provide credit quickly and efficiently to their communities. These flexibilities, discussed further below, continue to be available under our Traditional RLF through June 30, 2022:

- Establish a minimum interest rate for RLF loans (13 CFR 307.15(b)(1))
- Require RLF loans to leverage additional capital (13 CFR 307.15(c))
- Require evidence demonstrating credit is not otherwise available (13 CFR 307.11(a)(1)(ii)(H))

**Application and Checklists:** The Application (fillable — same application for both RLF programs) and Requirements Checklist for both SRDC RLF and COVID-19 RLF are online and can be found at <http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/revolving-loan-funds/>.

## COVID-19 RLF (C-RLF)

**Funds Available:** Funds on hand, uncommitted, are in the approximate amount of \$18,414.94.

Original funds available to SRDC were \$1.48 million. We have closed on 100% of our original funds with 25 C-RLF loans thus far. SRDC no longer needs to submit requests to EDA for funds to close approved COVID-19 RLF loans.

The committee has approved, but has not yet closed on, one loan in Nobles County totaling \$50,000. At this point, the amount of funds available goes up by approximately \$17,000 per month based on principal repaid.

## Traditional RLF

**Funds Available:** Funds on hand, uncommitted, are in the approximate amount of \$95,614.19. The committee has approved, but has not yet closed on, one loan in Jackson County totaling \$75,000, which will close March 2022. At this point, the amount of funds available goes up by approximately \$13,000 per month based on principal repaid. Conversations are occurring with multiple potential loan clients.

## RLF Success Stories

To promote RLF programs, success stories can now be found at <http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/revolving-loan-funds/rlf-business-spotlights/>.

## Contracted RLFs

Staff continues to assist inquiries made regarding business start-ups, retentions, and expansions and financing.

Staff assist with three additional revolving loan fund programs within the region.

1. Jackson County RLF: JCRLF now has four active loans. An application in the amount of \$100,000 was approved by the committee and county commissioners and will close March 2022. There are still available funds for businesses in Jackson County with gap financing needs.
2. Heron Lake RLF: HLRLF now has three active loans. HLRLF focuses on economic development within a 20-mile radius of Heron Lake. These are Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. SRDC continues to assist them with GMS entry and amortization schedules as requested. Staff is currently working with city staff to finalize a loan modification request. Two projects have come forward and may be future projects of HLRLF.
3. Falcon Development Corporation (FDC): Information on FDC can be found online at <http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/falcon-development-corporation/>. FDC focuses on economic development improvements within a 30-mile radius of Heron Lake. These funds are de-federalized; therefore, Davis Bacon does not apply to construction projects. Approximately \$100,000 is available for lending. Façade programs were discussed at their meeting on December 14. FDC met on February 1 and approved one new board member. There is room on the FDC board for one additional member. There are several projects in discussion phases and may be future applicants for FDC.

## **PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY (PACE)**

**Funds Available:** Funds are currently available in the approximate amount of \$129,047 (PACE ARRA Funds) and \$267,623 (PACE SEP Funds). Thirty-one loans have closed thus far, totaling \$1,142,192.06. Please help spread the word about PACE to property owners looking to make improvements that lower their energy usage.

**PACE Committee:** The committee meets as needed or in conjunction with the RMEB. Committee members are Metz, Wildermuth, Wachal, VanDeVere and Paap.

**General Information:** PACE is available to property owners of small businesses, including agri-businesses and some non-profits based on usage.

**Upcoming Outreach:** Local grocers and gas stations will be a focus of an upcoming regional business blitz.

Energy assessments/audits are informational to property owners and may be the start to cost saving energy improvements. Contractor estimates and the energy assessment/audit are the two first steps to PACE financing. Energy assessments/audits are often free and there is no obligation to submit a PACE application for financing.

The PACE application and brochure can be found at <http://rmeb.org/pace.htm>.

If you have groups in your area that would benefit from hearing about PACE, please contact Robin.

*If you have questions about the RLF, PACE, or about energy audits, please contact Robin Weis, Deputy Director, at 507-836-1638 or via email at [robin@swrdc.org](mailto:robin@swrdc.org).*

# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT

February 2022

ENERGY | LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING | SOLID WASTE & NATURAL RESOURCES

## ENERGY

**Rural Minnesota Energy Board (RMEB):** The Board met on January 24. Christina Brusven and Chris Hill presented and answered questions on behalf of Summit Carbon Solutions for about 1.5 hours. Thus far, they have over 30 facilities signed up to participate in their project. The basic idea is to take carbon from the scrubber to the pipeline after removing water and then transporting the liquified carbon via a pipeline to North Dakota where it will be injected deep into the ground for permanent sequestration. Ethanol plants in Minnesota cannot inject carbon locally at site due to unfavorable geologic conditions.

The current plan includes approximately 153 miles of pipeline (between 4” and 8” in diameter) that would be in Minnesota (out of about 2,000 miles total). No mainline, trunk line or pump stations would be in Minnesota. Lines would go through 6 counties: Jackson, Martin, Cottonwood, Redwood, Yellow Medicine, Renville and Chippewa in Southwest Minnesota, and Otter Tail and Wilkin in West Central Minnesota.

The business model is built on getting 45Q credits from the federal government and from selling the ethanol produced at participating plants to low-carbon markets that pay a premium.

To acquire easements in Minnesota, they stated that they are not able to use eminent domain. Their presentation claims that “compensation is based on a fair market value for land in the county – Summit will be utilizing recent comparable sales data for each county to determine the fair market value. Summit is offering 100% of the fee value based on that comparable sales analysis for its permanent easement. Summit Carbon Solutions will pay for anticipated damages to crops or lands prior to construction and work directly with landowners to address their specific concerns related to the impact of construction on their property.” They are paying 100% estimated crop loss in the first year; 80% estimated crop loss in the second year, and 60% estimated crop loss in the third year.

Brusven requested that the RMEB act as a Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). Board members stated that they would investigate procedures for making this decision and would take the information to their respective county boards for further input before voting.

Their presentation will be uploaded to [rmeb.org](http://rmeb.org).

The next scheduled meeting is for March 28 and NextEra will present information about current and future projects in the region.

**Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs):** Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership Ideas Briefs are due February 14. Staff submitted a brief on behalf of WorldMart to investigate efficiency and solar for her bus. For more information, visit [Z.umn.edu/RSDPideabrief](http://Z.umn.edu/RSDPideabrief).

Staff continue to work on electric vehicle education outreach. The next step is to contact all the utilities in the region to see what they are doing from EV programming (if anything) and then create a peer-to-peer event for them to share ideas and resources followed by outreach to area car dealerships.

On February 10, Gene Metz and Dan Wildermuth, along with staff, will present about the effects of transmissions constraints in Southwest Minnesota for a monthly CERTs Lunch & Learn Series.

## **Land Use, Planning & Zoning**

**City of Pipestone Comprehensive Plan Update:** Staff sent city officials a list of issues impacting Pipestone, and their corresponding goals. The City, along with its departments, are tasked with creating their own action plan to achieve each goal and identifying responsible parties/positions.

**City of Tracy Comprehensive Plan Update:** Staff recently conducted a focus group regarding economic development and the MN-14/Craig Avenue corridor. The next focus groups will discuss overall transportation infrastructure in Tracy and community facilities.

SRDC will meet with the planning steering committee on February 3 to discuss the City of Tracy and its current context, feedback heard so far, and goal structure.

## **Solid Waste & Natural Resources**

**Solid Waste Commission:** The Solid Waste Commission will meet March 28. The commission voted on a resolution supporting 100% Solid Waste tax revenue being used for recycling and solid waste activities.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

February 2022

LOCAL ASSISTANCE | COMMUNITY PLANNING | COMMUNICATIONS

## LOCAL ASSISTANCE

**Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail:** The Friends met with Senator Weber via Zoom on January 21 to discuss trail development. There is a bonding bill request at both the House and Senate for trail expansion which was authored by Senator Weber and Representative Schomacker. Staff is working with the Friends on the development of a monthly column in local newspapers, collecting trail testimonials, developing a Friends online resource file, and other outreach tasks. The Friends will next meet on February 3.

## COMMUNITY PLANNING & ACTIVITIES

**MADO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Group:** Met January 5 with a discussion on conflict, discomfort, and effective communication. The next meeting will take place February 2.

## SRDC COMMUNICATIONS

**Newsletter:** The next issue of the newsletter is planned for mid-March. If there is information that you would like shared in the SRDC newsletter, please reach out to staff. An archive of SRDC newsletters can be found at: <http://www.swrdc.org/category/newsletter-archive/>.

**In the News:** Check out the latest issue of the Minnesota Cities Magazine for a feature on the City of Tracy's Comprehensive Planning project and hear how Tracy's community leaders and SRDC staff are working to create a vision for the future of Tracy. Read the feature on page 23: <https://www.lmc.org/news-publications/magazine/jan-feb-2022/>.

**Website Redesign:** Staff has started working on recommendations for a redesign of the SRDC website. Staff met via Zoom with RVTech to talk through a website audit on January 31 and received the website redesign proposal on February 1. Staff is working with them on follow-up information on the proposal, along with information on changing our website hosting for increased security.

**Communications Plan/Certified Public Communicator Training:** During the Board Retreat, the SRDC Board of Directors assisted staff with the prioritization of communication strategies over the next year. Staff will be presenting a final list of priorities and action items at the December Board meeting. This list will then be presented at the March Full Commission meeting.

*If you have questions about the Communications Report, please contact Jessica Welu, Communications Specialist, at 507-836-1644 or via email at [jessicaw@swrdc.org](mailto:jessicaw@swrdc.org).*

# TRANSPORTATION REPORT

February 2022

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE | ATPs | TRANSPORTATION PLANNING | ACTIVE LIVING & SRTS

## **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)**

Staff is currently coordinating with both MnDOT districts to schedule the spring TAC meeting. During this meeting both MnDOT districts will present their draft ATIP, and the staff will present the draft MnDOT/SRDC workplan.

## **AREAS TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIPS (ATP)**

**ATP 7:** MnDOT D7 ATP 7 will meet March 11 via Microsoft Teams.

**ATP 8:** MnDOT D8 ATP 8 will meet March 4 via Microsoft Teams.

ATPs have officially kicked off their CHIP cycle and MnDOT districts are working on programming (scheduling and acquiring funds for) the next five years of projects. Local opportunities such as the TAP, Local HSIP, MnDOT HSIP, and some local rail safety projects are part of the CHIP cycle and are used to select projects for the next programmable year (2026).

Stay updated on MnDOT road projects, construction progress, and detours at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadwork/>. The South-Central District (District 7) includes Cottonwood, Jackson, Nobles, and Rock Counties. The Southwest District (District 8) includes Pipestone, Murray, Lincoln, Lyon, and Redwood Counties.

Currently, MnDOT is not holding in-person meetings, and public-outreach is being conducted online through virtual open houses and project websites. SRDC is available to assist in navigating and disseminating information as needed.

## **JOINT SMTP-MNSHIP EQUITY WORK GROUP**

Staff accepted an invitation to serve on the Joint Statewide Multi-Model Transportation Plan (SMTP)-Statewide Highway Improve Plan (SHIP) Equity Work Group. The work group will advise MnDOT on how to use its plans and investments to advance equity throughout Minnesota. SRDC staff, along with other volunteers, co-authored the equity review that will be used for all strategies in the SMTP.

## **DISTRICT 7 FREIGHT PLAN**

Staff accepted an invitation to serve on the MnDOT District 7 Freight Plan Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Team. This committee is an opportunity to provide regional input, perspective, and expertise that will be crucial in shaping the strategies and goals of the freight plan.

The Technical Advisory Team met January 3 and discussed the results of the gap scoring and prioritization process. The consulting team is working with SEH architects to do some preliminary design/engineering on a final 10-15 projects in the districts.

## **LOCAL HUMAN SERVICES PUBLIC TRANSIT COORDINATION PLAN (LHSPTCP)**

Staff presented the LHSPTCP at the October RTCC meeting. Staff presented on the timeline, steering committee events and duties, and planning timeline. Staff is currently working with the RTCC on evaluating the efforts from the previous planning process.

## **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

**Transportation Alternatives Program:** Three total Letters of Intent (LOIs) were received from the region. Staff immediately reached out to each potential applicant with preliminary notes. So far, one applicant completed an LOI review, and has been recommended to fill out a full TA application.

**Portable Counter Borrowing Program:** MnDOT has portable counters that are freely available to partner agencies such as cities, counties, MPOs, RDCs, and active transportation advocacy groups. These counters help collect important pedestrian traffic data that can be used to plan projects, apply for funding, and much more. Counters are available through each MnDOT District Office and can be reserved online. More information can be found at <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike-ped-counting/borrow.html>.

**Quarterly Transportation Planners Meeting:** Transportation Planners from across MADO (and MnDOT districts not represented by an RDO) will meet virtually March 2022.

## **ACTIVE LIVING & SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS)**

**Safe Routes to School (SRTS):** The next scheduled planning meeting for Adrian is February 16 at 2pm to present current conditions and brainstorm goals for the 6 E's.

- SRTS Planning Grants: Tracy submitted an application.
- SRTS Infrastructure Grants: Tyler, Jackson, and Adrian submitted applications.

## **REGIONAL TRAILS PLANNING**

Staff submitted the revised regional trails plan application on October 22. Staff received a letter from EDA in December notifying us that the application has been reviewed and selected for further consideration. Staff sent an email response in January that included requested documents and answers to their questions. We await response from EDA.

Staff have attended all nine county meetings to request resolutions of support and a \$3,000 match. Of the nine counties, seven approved the resolution and \$3,000 match. Cottonwood and Redwood Counties did not.









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