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## NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2015

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## **Public Comment Being Accepted on Scope of Industrial Sand Mining Strategic Analysis**

*What topics, issues, alternative approaches, and potential impacts should be considered and addressed as part of an analysis of industrial sand mining in Wisconsin? What concerns related to sand mining has your community faced that you wished you had more information on?*

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is conducting a strategic analysis on industrial sand mining to reassess the latest scientific, environmental, and socio-economic information related to this industry. This analysis will update, and potentially expand upon, the 2012 WDNR document entitled, "Silica Sand Mining in Wisconsin." Public comment is now being accepted on the scope of this analysis.

To provide your input, visit the project's special webpage at:  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/EIA/ISMSA.html>

The WDNR is inviting public input through an online survey form available at the above website. Also available at the webpage is a draft topic outline for your review. Check out the draft topic outline prior to completing the survey and let the WDNR know if the analysis should cover all of the listed topics lists or if you have additional topics that should be covered in the analysis.

The public comment period runs through April 20, 2015.

## Tell Us How You Roll!

The Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization is updating the Long Range Transportation Plan for the area.

Please join us for a public input meeting:

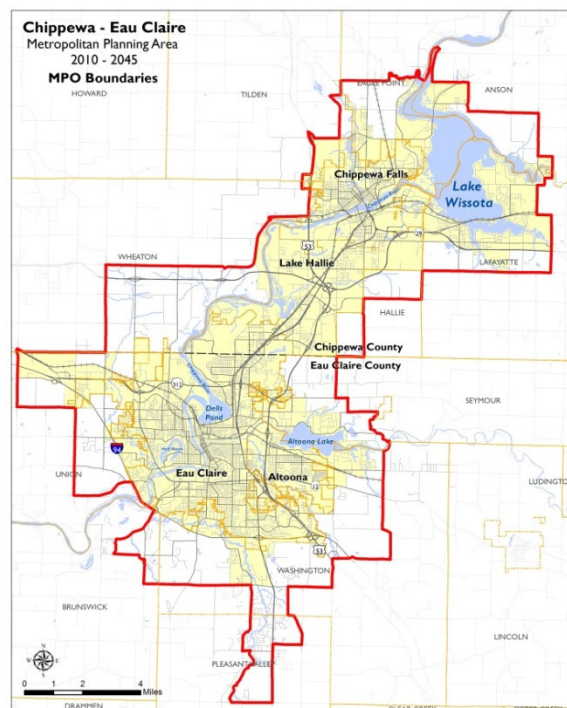
Monday, April 13, 2015  
5:30 - 7:00 PM  
in the Eau Claire Room (downstairs)  
L.E. Phillips Public Library  
Eau Claire, WI

There will be a brief presentation, followed by your input on the future of the area's transportation system. Come and share your thoughts. Also, take our online survey:

- Tell us how you travel.
- Give us your input on transportation in the Chippewa-Eau Claire area.

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/mpotravel](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/mpotravel)

For more information, contact [Jason Duba](#).



## Bring Back the Puddle-Jumping on a Safe Route to School

Remember the joy of splashing in Spring puddles, avoiding cracks in the sidewalk for the sake of mom's orthopedic health, catching up with friends on the events of the day, an impromptu race to the next corner? Unfortunately, as time progresses, fewer and fewer of us can claim the memory of that daily glimpse of independence as we walked or biked to and from school. In 1969, 89% of children, kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, who lived within one mile of school walked or biked to school on a regular basis. In 2009, only 35% of the children living within one mile of their school regularly walked or biked that short distance.<sup>1</sup>

There is a long list of reasons for these trends and, for the past eight years, WCWRPC staff has been working with communities and school districts on solutions through Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) planning. SRTS planning and implementation can make a walking or biking trip to school safe, and encourage this healthy behavior on a daily basis.

Currently, WCWRPC staff is working with school district and community officials and staff, public safety officers, health professionals, parents, and others in Chippewa Falls (Chippewa Co.), Abbotsford (Clark Co.), Cumberland, and Cameron (both in Barron Co.), to develop SRTS plans. Later in 2015, and into 2016, seven additional communities<sup>2</sup> are slated for SRTS planning efforts with WCWRPC assistance. All eleven plans are funded through a successful Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant application submitted by WCWRPC to Wisconsin Department of Transportation. TAP is a federal program, administered by the State, which funds 80% of the cost of plan development, with 20% matched by the local communities.

If your community is interested in improving biking and walking safety for your school children (K-8) and developing plans to encourage walking and biking, WCWRPC is expecting to submit of another regional TAP grant application in the Fall of 2015, to be awarded in 2016. If your community if interested in participating, call Ann Schell at (715) 836-2918 Ext. 22, or email [aschell@wccwrpc.org](mailto:aschell@wccwrpc.org), for more information.

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Disease Control, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Other communities included in the current SRTS program include the communities of Clayton, Clear Lake, Frederic, and Luck (Polk Co.); Baldwin-Woodville and New Richmond (St. Croix Co.); and Unity (Clark Co.).

## Safe Bicycling for Kids

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is hosting free classes about teaching safe bicycling to kids. This Train the Trainer Workshop will be held in Eau

Claire on Saturday, May 9 from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. More details and a brochure with registration information can be found [here](#).

## Funding Requested for Construction of St. Croix Valley Business Incubator

After years of discussion and planning, the City of River Falls (City), River Falls Economic Development Corporation (RFEDC) and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) jointly submitted an Economic Development Administration (EDA) Public Works grant application on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The co-applicants are seeking \$1.4 million



in funding to construct the St. Croix Valley Business Incubator, a business incubator that will be targeted to mixed-use businesses and entrepreneurs and will fulfill the following goals:

1. Foster an entrepreneurial culture;
2. Create jobs;
3. Accelerate the growth of new, existing, and spin-off businesses;
4. Encourage the commercialization of University research;
5. Improve small business access to campus resources including facilities, faculty, and students; and,
6. Capitalize on opportunities for partnership and collaboration due to the close proximity of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The proposed business incubator will offer business services that will include affordable rental space; business planning; coaching and mentoring assistance; business software; financial advisory services; market development assistance; export assistance; networking opportunities; and access to UWRF and Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) resources. Many of these services will be offered to businesses located outside the physical business incubator space as well.

The City of River Falls and its surrounding counties were involved in a regional planning effort in 2010 that found:

1. Significant numbers of business start-ups;
2. High percentages of small business failures;
3. High population growth compared to the rest of the State;
4. Below average earnings;
5. Established companies interested in spinning off new business ventures;
6. A desire to better connect university resources with the business community.

These findings led to the establishment of a more formalized working group composed of representatives from the City, UWRF, RFEDC, CVTC, University of Wisconsin-Extension, area economic development corporations, the business community, and others. Discussions started to point in the direction of a need for a business incubator/accelerator. After a feasibility study, tours, interviews, and other

research, it was determined that there was a market for a business incubator targeted to mixed-use businesses in the City.

WCWRPC assisted with preparing and submitting the EDA application. The Regional Business Fund, Inc. (RBF, Inc.) has committed to providing a \$400,000 loan, if the EDA funding is awarded. If you're interested in talking about potential EDA funding, please contact [Tobi LeMahieu](#); if you're interested in learning more about funding and programs offered by the RBF, Inc., please contact [Beth Waldhart](#) or [Levi Wagner](#).

## 2015 Farm Fresh Atlas

In mid-April, the WCWRPC will start distributing the 2015 Farm Fresh Atlas of Western Wisconsin. This will be the fifth year that the WCWRPC has put together the local food directory for an 18-county region in western Wisconsin. This year, there are over 100 farms, farmers' markets, and businesses listed in the Atlas. Look for the Atlas at your local library and other places in your community. In addition, the Atlas can be found [here](#).

For more information, contact [Eric Anderson](#).



## RBF, Inc. Activity Report (2015)

### January - March

**Loans Closed:** 9

**Total Amount:** \$808,300

**Jobs Created/Retained:** 99

**Leverages:** \$4,910,200