

A G E N D A

**Dakota County Board of Commissioners
Administration/Finance/Policy Committee of the Whole**

March 1, 2011

9:30 a.m.

(or following County Board Meeting)

Conference Room 3A, Third Level, Administration Center, Government Center, Hastings, MN

1. Call To Order And Roll Call

Note: Any action taken by this Committee of the Whole constitutes a recommendation to the County Board.

2. Audience

Anyone in the audience wishing to address the Committee on an item not on the agenda or an item on the consent agenda may come forward at this time. Comments are limited to five minutes.

3. Approval Of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

4. Introduction Of New Employees

CONSENT AGENDA

5. Approval Of Minutes of meeting held February 1, 2011 2

6. County Board/County Administration

6.1 *Administration* – Update On 2011 National Association Of Counties Achievement Award 4

REGULAR AGENDA

7. Operations, Management And Budget

7.1 *Information Technology* – Review Of Draft Guiding Principles For Dakota County Broadband Projects 25

8. County Administrator’s Report

9. Adjournment

The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, April 5, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.
in Conference Room 3A, Administration Center, Government Center, Hastings

For more information, call 651-438-4417.

Dakota County Administration/Finance/Policy Committee of the Whole meeting agendas are available online at
<http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/CountyGovernment/CountyBoard/AFPCalendar/default.htm>



**DAKOTA COUNTY
ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE/POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2011

Administration Center, Government Center, Conference Room 3A, Hastings, Minnesota

1. **Call To Order And Roll Call.** Commissioner Kathleen A. Gaylord, Chair of the Administration/Finance/Policy (AFP) Committee of the Whole, called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. Roll was noted with the following members present:

Commissioner Joseph A. Harris, District 1
Commissioner Kathleen A. Gaylord, District 2
Commissioner Thomas A. Egan, District 3
Commissioner Nancy Schouweiler
Commissioner Liz Workman, District 5
Commissioner Paul J. Krause, District 6
Commissioner Willis E. Branning, District 7

Others present included:

Brandt Richardson, County Administrator
Karen Schaffer, County Attorney's Office
Kelly Olson, Sr. Administrative Coordinator

2. **Audience.** Commissioner Gaylord asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to address the Committee of the Whole on an issue not on the agenda or to discuss an item on the consent agenda. No one appeared.
3. **Approval Of Agenda.** On a motion by Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Egan, the agenda was approved.
4. **Introduction Of New Employees.** There were no employee introductions.

CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Gaylord, the consent agenda was unanimously approved as follows:

5. **Approval Of Minutes** of meeting held on January 4, 2011.

REGULAR AGENDA

- 6.1 **Briefing On Options For Morgue Services.** Management Analyst Deb Miller presented this item. The Committee also received comments from Medical Examiner Dr. Lindsey Thomas, County Attorney Jim Backstrom and Regina Medical Center Board member Lynn Moratzka. This item was for information only; no action was requested.
- 6.2 **Quarterly Update On 2010 Annual Board Goals.** This item was introduced by Management Analyst Deb Miller and ICMA Fellow Catherine Durham. Members of the Senior Management Team presented updates on specific goals. This item was for information only; no action was requested.

Commissioner Krause left the meeting at 11:49 a.m.

- 6.3 **Update On Employee Opinion Survey.** Employee Relations Manager Andy Benish presented this item. This item was for information only; no action was requested.

7.1 Approval Of 2011 Federal Legislative Program. Office of Planning and Analysis Manager Heidi Welsch presented this item.

On a motion by Commissioner Schouweiler, seconded by Commissioner Egan, the following resolution was unanimously recommended to the County Board:

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the citizens of Dakota County that initiatives beneficial to the County be advocated before the United States Congress and federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners has retained the services of the Lockridge Grindal Nauen Federal Relations Group to represent the interests of the County to Members of Congress and before federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, eighteen policy and appropriation initiatives have been proposed for inclusion in the Dakota County federal legislative program for 2011.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Dakota County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the recommended federal legislative positions for 2011 as presented in to the Administration/Finance/Policy Committee of the Whole on February 1, 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVLED, That the County Administrator is hereby directed to cause to be prepared the recommended federal legislative program elements for distribution to the County's Congressional Delegation and other members of Congress and officials of federal executive agencies, as appropriate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVLED, That the recommended federal legislative program shall guide the work of the Lockridge Grindal Nauen Federal Relations Group in representing the interests of Dakota County with Members of Congress and federal agencies.

7.2 Update On Residential Survey And Survey Questions. Office of Planning and Analysis Manager Heidi Welsch presented this item. This item was for information only; no action was requested.

8. County Administrator's Report. The County Administrator had no report.

9. Adjournment. On a motion by Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Egan, the meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly D. Olson
Senior Administrative Coordinator to the Board

6.1 - Update On 2011 National Association Of Counties Achievement Award Applications

Meeting Date: 3/1/11
Item Type: Consent-Information
Division: COUNTY BOARD/COUNTY ADMINISTRATION
Department: Administration
Contact: Brandt Richardson Telephone:651-438-4528
Prepared by: Kelly Olson
Reviewed by: N/A N/A

Fiscal/FTE Impact:

- [X] None
[] Amount included in current budget
[] Budget amendment requested
[] FTE included in current complement
[] New FTE(s) requested
[] Other

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

- Update the Committee on County programs which were submitted for 2011 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards.

SUMMARY

The annual Achievement Award Program is a non-competitive awards program which seeks to recognize innovative county government programs. Only county governments and state associations of counties are eligible to submit applications. By Resolution No. 96-104, the County Board delegated the authority to approve NACo Achievement Award applications to the County Administrator.

The following programs were submitted for 2011 NACo Achievement Awards:

- Greenway Collaborative
Smart Choices: Creating a Healthy School Environment
Vermillion River Corridor Plan

Application abstracts are attached.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT

None.

Supporting Documents:
Application Abstracts

Previous Board Action(s):
96-104; 2/6/96

- :
- :
- :
- :

RESOLUTION

Information only; no action requested.

Administrator's Comments:

- Recommend Action
- Do Not Recommend Action
- Reviewed—No Recommendation
- Reviewed—Information Only
- Submitted at Commissioner Request

Reviewed by (if required):

- County Attorney's Office
- Financial Services
- Risk Management
- Employee Relations
- Information Technology

Brandt Richardson / ko
County Administrator

Smart Choices: Creating a Healthy School Environment

Abstract of the Program

For the first time in the past century, our children are expected to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents. Childhood obesity rates have tripled in the past three decades, and today, nearly one in three children is overweight or obese. These children are at increased risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer in their lives. Improving eating and activity habits of our children can have tremendous health, academic and economic benefits. To promote the health of children in the county, the Dakota County Public Health Department staff partnered with all nine public school districts to create the Smart Choices initiative which focuses on policy, system and environmental changes to support healthy choices. This initiative began as an effort to increase the access and availability of healthy food choices, especially fruit and vegetables, to improve the eating habits of students and staff and improve health and academic outcomes. Smart Choices now includes opportunities for physical activity before, during and after school. Working with wellness committees and key stakeholders in each district, we have seen substantial and measurable improvements to the school environment that support healthy choices. The support among parents and key stakeholders is growing.



The Problem/Need for the Program

Childhood obesity rates have tripled in the past three decades, and today, nearly one in three children is overweight or obese. These children are at increased risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer in their lives. Too many of our children are unhealthy and it is expected that 1 in 3 American children born in 2000 or later will develop diabetes. According to the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey, less than one in five students ate five or more servings of fruits and vegetables the previous day. The U. S. Department of Health and Human Service recommends 5-13 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Research consistently shows that the majority of American children do not consume diets that meet the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, nor do they achieve adequate levels of daily physical activity. According to the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey, by the time they reach 12th grade only 20 percent of Dakota County students report being physically active for at least 30 minutes every day. Girls tend to be less active than boys, with only 13 percent meeting this level of activity. These statistics are even more troubling when you consider that the national recommendation is for children and adolescents to be active for at least 60 minutes per day.

Schools offer many opportunities to promote children's health by creating an environment in which children eat healthy foods, engage in regular physical activity and learn lifelong skills for healthy eating and active living. While schools alone cannot solve the obesity epidemic, without their support it is unlikely that we will succeed in reversing these trends. Children spend more time in schools than in any other environment away from home and consume a substantial portion (19 to 50 percent) of their total daily calories while at school (Gleason and Sutor 2001). Furthermore, obesity and poor diet disproportionately affect low-income and minority children and these children are much more likely to participate in the school breakfast and lunch programs, making schools a great avenue to improving the lives of those at greatest risk. (USDA Data, 2008)

In 2004, Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 requiring all schools to develop a wellness policy including goals for physical activity and nutrition. All districts in Dakota County developed wellness policies that were implemented in the 2006-2007 school year. Although some progress was made there was no funding provided to support this mandate. Most districts did not maintain their wellness committees or actively work on implementation, especially outside of the school breakfast and lunch program. Today, schools face intense pressure to focus on standardized tests and as a result have placed less emphasis on the broader view

of a healthy mind in a healthy body. This coupled with budget cuts in most districts makes it difficult for schools to dedicate the staff time and resources necessary to facilitate substantial and sustainable changes. Nonetheless, there is strong support among educators for the ideal of healthy children. "Health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not healthy and fit physically, mentally, and socially." (National Association of State Boards of Education).

Description of the Program

Smart Choices is designed to support the health of students and staff by creating an environment that encourages healthy choices. It began as a healthy eating initiative in February 2009 through a partnership that included five public school districts in Dakota County with 43 school buildings, the Dakota County Public Health Department, and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. It has since expanded to include all nine public school districts in Dakota County reaching 72,851 school-aged children in over 70 schools. Smart Choices now addresses both physical activity and healthy eating. Smart Choices was originally funded through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota through its Prevention Minnesota initiative and now includes support from the Minnesota Department of Health's Statewide Health Improvement Program.

The guiding vision for Smart Choices is the idea that as a community we can make a difference by making it easier to make healthy choices for both our children and those who influence them, including staff and parents. The Dakota County Public Health Department has taken the lead on assisting schools in the formation and revitalization of District Wellness Committees to assess the school environment and facilitate sustainable changes that will increase access to appealing healthier foods, reduce access to less healthy foods and increase opportunities for physical activity.

Goal – Healthy Eating

A key goal of Smart Choices is to facilitate policy, systems and environmental changes that increase the access, availability and intake of appealing and affordable healthy foods (especially fruits and vegetables) and decreases access to less healthy foods and beverages resulting in improved health among students, staff, their families and the broader community within the respective school districts.

Goal – Physical Activity

A second key goal is to create active schools by integrating more physical activity into the day (before, during or after school), and increasing access to school recreation facilities.

Key Objectives

1. Increase the percentage of healthy foods available to students and staff
2. Increase consumption of healthy foods, especially fruits and vegetables, by students and staff
3. Increase the number of students eating school breakfast and lunch, especially low-income students
4. Increase the time in which students are physically active throughout the school day
5. Increase the number of teachers incorporating active learning opportunities for their students
6. Facilitate measurable policy, systems and environmental (PSE) changes in each district

Creating a Supportive Infrastructure

Each district was asked to identify two key leaders in the district to support this work and attend regular county-wide Smart Choices leadership team meetings. To address the variety of areas influencing the school environment it was requested that these individuals were not in the same work area (e.g., two food service leaders). A Dakota County community health specialist is assigned to provide technical assistance to each district and assist in the formation of their district wellness committees and attend those meetings. Each wellness committee was expected to recruit a variety of key stakeholders to serve on the wellness committee, such as food service, health services, curriculum, physical education, administration, parents and students. These committees typically meet monthly.

In addition, each building in each district was asked to identify a "wellness champion" to support the Smart Choices activities and communication at the building level.

The Assessment Process

In March 2009 a comprehensive baseline assessment of the school nutrition environment was conducted in the original five school districts in Dakota County following a specific protocol. Counts were taken of the foods available for purchase in various venues to identify the relative availability of healthier choices, especially fruits and vegetables. Cafeteria sales data of healthier options was provided by district food service directors. "Healthier" choices were defined based on Nutrition Standards for Foods in School developed by the Institute of Medicine. In 2010, this survey process was conducted using a web-based application to streamline the process and all nine school districts participated. This assessment will be repeated again in 2012 and 2014 to monitor progress.

It was found that there were far more unhealthy options available to students outside of the school meal program than healthy options. Only 28% of the food choices available outside the school meal program, often referred to as competitive foods, met healthy criteria. Only 10% of these healthy options were fruits and only 5% were vegetables. Only 39% of beverages available met healthy criteria.

Sales from students choosing to purchase the healthier items available on the cafeteria a la carte line were also quite low with only 5% and 19% of items sold in middle and high schools meeting healthy criteria. Overall, only 1.3% of foods sold were fruits and 0.6% were vegetables. Clearly, the environment was not supporting the healthy choice.

Data was also gathered from building leaders about current best practices related to a healthy food environment and the importance of adopting such practices in each building. In year two, when physical activity was added, parents were surveyed to determine their interest in adopting key policy and practice changes to support healthy eating and physical activity. The overall support was quite positive. This data was used to assist districts in identifying opportunities for improvement and to develop strategic plans. We are in the process of developing a physical activity assessment for districts to monitor progress.

Strategic Planning

Data gathered during the assessment process was used to identify opportunities for improvement and areas where support for change existed among building leaders. Wellness committees in each district worked with public health staff to develop strategic plans based upon assessment data specific to each district and best practices. A menu of options for sustainable and effective policy, systems and environmental changes was shared with districts and they were asked to select among these different focus areas. Intervention options for healthy eating included: school breakfast, school lunch, cafeteria a la carte, snacks, classroom rewards, farm to school, school gardens, school fundraising, concessions, parties and celebrations and vending. Intervention options for physical activity included: active recess, active classrooms, before and after school physical activity opportunities, and Safe Routes to School. The original five district partners developed their plans in May 2009 for implementation during the 2009-2010 school year. Four new districts joined our partnership in the summer of 2009 school year and attended orientation to PSE change. They developed plans after conducting their assessments in March of 2010.

A communications plan was developed to raise awareness and build support among key stakeholders. The Smart Choices logo was developed with input from the school districts and the target audience. Brochures targeted to engage parents were developed for physical activity and nutrition. District communications leaders were invited to attend meetings and learn about how they could support this initiative.

Schools were provided with funding to support this initiative at both the district and the school building level based on population and a competitive grant process. Some districts were able to hire part-time coordinators or pay stipends to key staff.

Implementation

Several conferences and trainings were offered to school staff to increase their capacity to facilitate PSE changes. Successful strategies were highlighted at these events and school staff exchanged programming ideas. In addition, a Smart Choices tool kit was developed to provide technical assistance and resources to support the targeted strategies and provide resources for communication to key stakeholders. Many districts used these resources to develop Smart Choices web pages and communicate with staff and parents. Dakota County provided technical assistance to districts. Utilizing the communications plan, many districts and the county received media attention for their efforts, increasing public awareness and support for the positive changes being made in the schools.

Use of Technology

The Smart Choices program utilizes an Internet/Intranet-based website assessment tool that is connected with a SQL Server database to guide staff members conducting the assessment through the building enabling them to record the requested data. The website has been custom-built to assist the data entry people by directing them to the required information and prompting them when more information is needed. It also incorporates logic to reduce the opportunity to enter data that does not make sense or that is invalid based on a set of defined business rules. Several reports are also made available through the website which can be run at any time. Additional reporting for the Smart Choices program is provided through an Intranet-based scheduler that emails reports to the participants in the program with the data specific to the participant's school. Program-wide summary data is available through scheduled reports and ad hoc reports. In addition, many items in the Smart Choices tool kit referenced above are posted on the Dakota County public website and are accessible by school staff and parents. Participating schools have also posted Smart Choices information on their websites.

The Cost of the Program

The budget for Smart Choices is complicated due to the fact that the program has received support from two funding sources over multiple years. In addition to the data listed, both Dakota County and the school districts have contributed significant in-kind staff support.

Funding from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota

The Smart Choices program began officially in 2009 with funding from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota through its Prevention Minnesota Initiative. During the first year, or preparation phase, the budget was \$75,000 and included 0.3 FTE of staff time, mileage, program costs, and \$25,000 for funding to schools. Ten percent of the annual budget is required to be used for evaluation each year and can be used for direct expenses or donated in-kind. The subsequent four years are in the implementation phase with a budget of \$125,000 and a required 0.5 FTE of staff time. To illustrate the annual cost, the table below includes the budget for the second year (2010).

Funding from the Minnesota Department of Health

In July, 2009, the Dakota County Public Health Department received additional funding through the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) from the Minnesota Department of Health. This enabled us to recruit four more school districts for a total of nine districts and to expand beyond healthy eating to include physical activity. With this came a large infusion of funding, much more in the second year than the first year. The budget from SHIP dedicated to Smart Choices for years 1 and 2 is included in the table below.

Budget Category	BCBS - 2010	SHIP Year 1	SHIP Year 2
Salary and Benefits	0.5 FTE: \$41,738	2.0 FTEs: \$185,135	2.0 FTEs: \$185,135
Mileage	\$800	\$0	\$0
Direct funding to schools	\$60,000	\$47,000	\$300,000
Evaluation (required 10%)	\$12,500	\$18,500	\$55,900
Program expenses (materials, printing, supplies, etc.)	\$5,916	\$9,000	\$50,000
Contractual (Safe Routes to Schools plan)	\$0	\$20,000	\$24,000
Indirect	\$4,046	\$23,502	\$50,322
TOTAL:	\$125,000	\$303,137	\$665,357

The Results/Success of the Program

Overall, schools in Dakota County made significant progress toward achieving the key program goals of improving the school environment to support healthy eating and increase physical activity through sustainable policy, system, and environment (PSE) changes.

Progress on Key Objectives

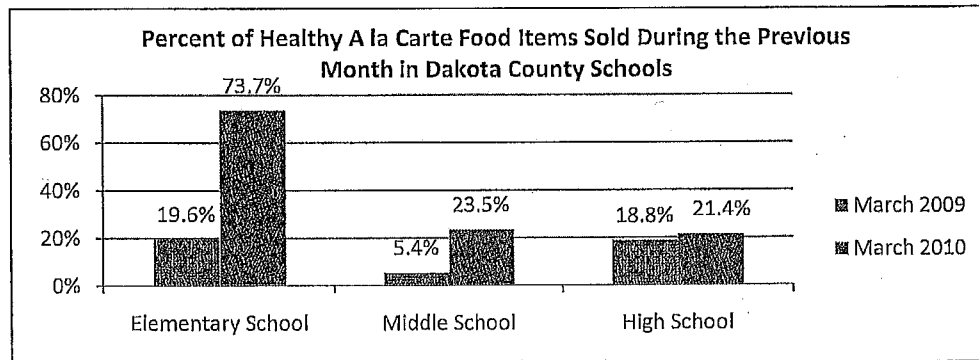
1. Increase the percentage of healthy foods available to students and staff

The one-year follow-up assessment of the original five districts found:

- Choices available for fruit increased 40.0% and 33.3% in the school meals at middle and high schools.
- Choices available for vegetables increased 23.5% and 27.1% in school meals at middle and high schools.
- Access to whole grains increased 41.8%, 44.1% and 15.4% at elementary, middle and high schools.

2. Increase consumption of healthy foods, especially fruits and vegetables, by students and staff

The one-year follow-up assessment of the original five districts found that sales of healthy items more than tripling on the a'la carte lines in elementary and middle schools, with a slight increase in the high schools.



3. Increase number of students eating school breakfast and lunch, especially low-income students

- After the introduction of a “grab and go” breakfast option, a middle school reported a 7% increase and a high school reported an 83% increase in breakfast participation from 2009 to 2010.
- One district observed an increase from 53% to 81% of students eating school lunch after drastically reducing their a'la carte options in all three middle schools.

4. Increase the time in which students are physically active throughout the school day

- 18 schools have completed a comprehensive Safe Routes to School plan (for walking and biking to school) and five more will be completed in May 2011.
- In one district all elementary and middle schools have improved the quality of recess, with one school increasing the length to 30 minutes. All have purchased new outdoor equipment to encourage students to be active instead of standing around socializing.

5. Increase the number of teachers incorporating active learning opportunities for their students

- “Fitness Centers” have been implemented in some kindergarten classrooms, students have been taught how to use the equipment, and teachers are incorporating the equipment into curriculum (120 kindergarteners).
- One school is implementing Activity Works/SMART program which is a curriculum that helps increase the amount of time students are active daily (364 students in grades one through three).
- One elementary school purchased equipment for an empty room and trained teachers on strategies to increase physical activity during the school day; 11 teachers (69%) reported doing so.

6. Facilitate measurable policy, systems and environmental (PSE) changes in each district

As of June 2010, Dakota County schools have made 21 district-level PSE changes reaching 96 schools (an additional 7 district-level PSE changes are in progress in 30 schools), and 37 building-level PSE changes in 21 schools (an additional 17 building-level PSE changes are in progress in 15 schools).

Worthiness of an Award

There is an urgent need to reduce and prevent the growing problem of childhood obesity. Two major contributing factors to obesity, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, are directly addressed by this initiative in research-based, comprehensive and sustainable ways. Smart Choices is an innovative and successful partnership including the county public health department and nine public school districts serving almost 73,000 students plus the staff. It has increased the knowledge of citizens and engaged staff, parents, and students in making healthier choices. Significant and sustainable policy, systems and environmental changes have already been made, increasing healthy eating and physical activity. Strong assessment and evaluation tools are in place. There have been documented results and outcomes in a short time. The program has funding through 2013 and will continue to build upon its success and deepen the commitment to systemic and lasting changes. The Smart Choices program is a model that can be replicated in other counties in the United States.

Attachments

- Smart Choices Brochure (Nutrition)
- News coverage of Smart Choices:
 - *District 191 Students 'buzzing' about Smart Choices segment - Savage Pacer, 1/7/2011*
 - *Smart Choices aims for better nutrition, healthy kids - Hastings Star Gazette, 12/29/2010*
 - *Henry Sibley's Cafeteria Embraces Healthy Helpings - Mendota Heights Patch, 12/2/2010*

2011 NACO Award Application

Application: Dakota County Greenway Collaborative

Abstract (200 words)

Dakota County established a Greenway Collaborative to deliver 200 miles of greenways for its residents. The greenways will provide desired trails, natural habitat, improved water quality and nonmotorized transportation in attractive, connected open space. The Greenway Collaborative combines shared interests of the county, city, state and federal agencies and attracts complementary funding for the four benefits from varied sources. Working together and using the strengths and resources of each partner, the Greenway Collaborative can deliver better greenways more cost effectively than any individual partner could.

The collaborative went beyond meetings of interested partners to create a framework that has cemented working relationships and program guidance. In coordination with its greenway partners, Dakota County developed a Greenway Collaborative Guidebook that clarifies the roles of each partner in planning, funding, developing and operating greenways. The guidebook identifies greenway alignments and defines typical greenway widths and cross-sections in urban, suburban and rural contexts. A video visualization was also prepared to illustrate greenway concepts for county, city and agency officials as well as residents.

As a result of these efforts, Dakota County is currently working on 10 separate greenway projects and is well on its way to delivering the countywide greenway vision.

Problem Statement (3/4 page)

In 2008, Dakota County adopted a Park System Plan that envisioned a 200-mile network of regional greenways with additional local greenway feeders. The greenway plan was prepared in response to increasing resident interest in:

- 1) trail-based recreation
- 2) protecting remaining natural areas
- 3) improving water quality
- 4) high quality nonmotorized transportation

Dakota County also recognizes many additional benefits of an extensive greenway system, including a regional or national tourism draw, improved health of residents (and less burden on county services), improved quality of life, attraction/retention of businesses and increased property values.

Greenways address all these public purposes in a single corridor, but each of these purposes is handled by different jurisdictions and departments within entities. In Dakota County, there are 34 municipal jurisdictions, numerous watershed districts, school authorities and state and federal agencies that all have a stake in the planning, development and operation of greenway corridors.

Without the Greenway Collaborative, each agency would pursue their missions piecemeal without regard for how the systems and agencies can work together. Cities would plan for local parks and recreation trails where opportunities arise, state and federal agencies would protect natural areas in another place, watersheds would fund water quality improvement projects somewhere else, and transportation departments would install sidewalks and bike trails along transportation corridors. This inefficient old model is uncoordinated, duplicative and needlessly expensive.

Clearly, Dakota County — or any county — cannot deliver an extensive greenway system without close coordination with other agencies. The Greenway Collaborative formed to address this question of how to work collaboratively toward common goals by using each other's strengths and overcoming the challenges of turf protection.

Description of Program (2-3 pages)

The Greenway Collaborative is a program to deliver a 200-mile regional greenway network in Dakota County. It is a system of open space corridors that perform multiple public functions: trail based recreation, habitat, water quality and nonmotorized recreation.

The Greenway Collaborative is a multiagency approach to address:

- Governance and funding
- Land protection
- Greenway design
- Operations and stewardship

Beginning in 2008, Dakota County planners engaged city and agency staff about how to collaborate toward shared objectives. The group consisted of planners, park directors, engineers and staff from natural resource agencies. Representing broad perspectives of varying professional interests, this group discussed ways to align efforts to create a system of greenways and maintain partnerships to operate the system. The following elements were instrumental to the program.

Governance and Funding

As part of the project, a governance and funding model was developed to address issues of:

- Leadership
- Project prioritization
- Land protection
- Planning
- Capital improvement planning
- Cost share relationships
- Ownership

The following tables were developed to address ownership and cost-share roles

Table A: Ownership Matrix

Component	Ownership
30' regional trail easement	County easement, fee title, MOU or joint powers agreement
Minimum corridor (100-300')	City or County easement, fee title
Connected natural areas	City or others own fee title, County may hold easement if funded through Farmland and Natural Areas Program
Trailheads	City or County fee title

Table B: Cost share Matrix

Actual roles and responsibilities will vary by project and will be established by joint powers agreements

Component	Acquisition	Design/engineering	Construction/restoration	Operations/Maintenance
30' regional trail easement	County w/ city help using parks, ROW, ponding or park dedication (County will reimburse or negotiate terms)	County unless city is ready to advance project	County; cities can advance for later reimbursement by prior agreement if up to standards	County. May be contracted.
Minimum corridor (100'-300')	City can contribute existing park, park dedication, PUD, ponding, etc. Land not secured by city or others could be secured by County through grants	Shared. City or County contribution can be in-house design and engineering	County may fund natural areas in easements, city may fund active use areas within city parks	Land owner or by agreement
Connected natural areas	County helps city or owner seek funding	NA	County may assist if funded through FNAP	Land owner
Trailheads	Shared when in city parks and master-planned	Shared if facility serves joint use	Shared if facility serves joint use	Shared if facility serves joint use

Greenway Design

Greenway design standards needed to be sensitive to each unique context and allow flexibility without sacrificing greenway elements. Dakota County land use ranges from medium-density urban, to medium-density suburban, to low-density rural. Three templates were designed to provide guidance while recognizing the challenges of these varying contexts.

Urban greenways are defined as corridors that primarily would be retrofitted into existing neighborhoods or established concurrent with development in dense urban districts. Their minimum width of 100 feet reflects the challenge of weaving greenway corridors through a dense fabric of land use and transportation networks. The design standards also reflect the different types of use in a greenway corridor, e.g. more emphasis on nonmotorized transportation and recreation and less emphasis on habitat. Higher intensity also creates opportunities for more lighting, dual trails and public art.

Suburban greenways are typical in single-family neighborhoods and can take greater advantage of locating next to natural features, ponds and through existing city parkland. They have a minimum width

of 200 feet and may be located at the time of development through park dedication or negotiation with developers. Suburban greenways also create more opportunity for habitat restoration, ancillary nature-based recreation and connections to activity centers such as schools, parks and civic buildings.

Rural greenways are found in undeveloped areas of Dakota County and may be surrounded by agricultural land use. They have a 300-foot minimum width and have the greatest opportunity to serve as water quality and habitat corridors.

These typical greenway types are described using diagrams on pages 40-43 in the attached Greenway Guidebook.

Preparation of the Greenway Guidebook

A Greenway Guidebook was developed in coordination with project partners to summarize the collaborative to that point and define roles and responsibilities going forward. Much like a transportation program, the Greenway Guidebook contains diagrams for how to prepare greenway master plans, fund greenways, prioritize spending and coordinate among different agencies. It describes techniques for securing land and identifies sources of external funding that advance greenway principles.

Perhaps most importantly, while the Greenway Guidebook provides a framework to address typical situations, it also maintains enough flexibility for project partners to work through the unique challenges of individual greenway segments. The Greenway Guidebook calls on partners to use the strengths of each agency to deliver the greenway system. These strengths may be in design and engineering expertise, land use authority, maintenance and operations capacity, natural resource restoration, etc. Similarly, the guidebook recognizes that agencies can contribute by providing either funding or in-kind services, according to their individual circumstances. Joint powers agreements are used to solidify the role of each agency for each greenway segment.

Use of Technology (1/4 page)

Early in the process county staff used GIS to identify conceptual greenway alignments that connected parks, natural resources, public property and activity centers. Greenways were carefully chained together to maximize investments in existing parks, ponding areas, school land and unused right of way while avoiding areas unsuitable for the four greenway elements, especially trail construction. Through the use of GIS, greenway corridors were selected so that 75 percent of the land needed for the system (within the urban and suburban areas of Dakota County) is already in public ownership.

A first-person video visualization was prepared to illustrate greenways in different contexts and settings. Planning staff used the visualization in presentations to the County Board, city councils, planning commissions, park commissions and residents. The visualization has been very effective at demonstrating the public benefits of a greenway system and has alleviated concerns about how greenways could be integrated into existing urban settings. The greenway visualization can be viewed on YouTube by searching for "Dakota County Greenways."

The greenway collaborative has begun work on two master plans and created a Web site to facilitate agency and public engagement (www.hkgi.com/projects/dakota). Materials related to the two corridors and the greenway collaborative are readily available there and visitors can participate in a virtual open house.

Cost of the Program (3/4 page)

The cost of the program can be broken into two phases:

Program Development

\$28,000	Greenway Guidebook consultant development
\$29,000	First-person visualization
\$20,000	Dakota County staff time
<u>\$20,000</u>	Partner staff time
\$97,000	Total

Program Delivery (200-mile greenway system)

Priority Regional Greenway Trails for the Next Ten Years

1. Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT) – Inver Grove Heights to Hastings	14 miles
2. North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) – final segment	1 mile
3. Minnesota River– Savage to 494	7 miles
4. Rosemount River Access (discuss/propose regional status with Metropolitan Council) – Rosemount to MRRT	5 miles
5. Mississippi River Regional Trail – South St. Paul to St. Paul	1 mile
6. Cannon Valley Regional Trail – Byllesby East to Cannon Falls	1 mile
7. North Creek Greenway (discuss/propose regional status with Metropolitan Council) – MN Zoo to Vermillion River	9 miles
8. Lake Marion Greenway – Lake Marion to Cedar Avenue	7 miles
9. Vermillion River Greenway – Cedar Ave. to Vermillion Park	6 miles
	Total = 51 miles

<i>Ten year priority greenway trails:</i>	\$6.7M County	\$13.6M Federal & Local	\$20.3M Total
<i>Long range (2030) greenway trails:</i>	\$10.1M County	\$22.9M Federal & Local	\$33.0M Total

Results/Success of Program (3/4 page)

In a relatively short period, Dakota County is now working with its greenway partners on 10 individual greenway projects. Progress has been made in the following areas:

- 70 miles of greenways have completed master plans

- Over 50 miles of greenways are either in place or are funded
- Numerous greenway projects are currently being led by cities

The Greenway Collaborative approach has strategically aligned Dakota County with the goals and objectives of its partners. As such, Dakota County and its partners are positioned and have secured funds from trail-based recreation, natural habitat, water quality, and nonmotorized transportation sources. Specifically, Dakota County greenways have secured funding from the State of Minnesota Legacy Amendment, a 3/8 cent dedicated sales tax intended to be used to protect land, water, and provide nature based recreation. Dakota County's greenways have also secured millions of dollars of federal nonmotorized transportation funds, often matched with regional park funding.

Perhaps most importantly, the Greenway Collaborative has political support and a high level of intergovernmental staff buy-in. Cities are using their park dedication ordinances and negotiating with developers to secure greenway alignments. At least 12 new projects have been identified by partners for future funding applications. City and county staff meet regularly to discuss shared facilities and coordinate services.

These are early indications of the success of the Greenway Collaborative program. Over the next 10 years, as more greenway segments are assembled, the results of the program will become even more evident: residents will enjoy a connected system of trails and recreation, wildlife populations will become more abundant and diverse as a result of connected habitat, water quality will improve through filtering and infiltration, and people will have attractive nonmotorized transportation options. In the long run greenway corridors will help people remain healthy by providing an attractive network of trails that lure people to recreate, countering national obesity trends. Greenways may also retain residential value and provide economic development benefits as highly mobile and educated professionals seek out attractive places to live. We expect the Greenway Collaborative to grow in numbers and involvement as partners realize the greater efficiencies and value and residents recognize the multiple benefits of a greenway system.

Worthiness of an Award (1/4 to 1/2 page)

The Greenway Collaborative is a model of intergovernmental coordination. Each partner and the people they serve benefit from greater efficiencies and improved services. It works because Dakota County and its partners were able to identify a mechanism — greenways — that could accommodate the multiple public benefits of trail-based recreation, natural habitat protection, water quality and nonmotorized recreation, all within efficient multipurpose corridors. This was accomplished using an interdisciplinary approach that combined the expertise of planners, park directors, engineers and natural resource experts from different agencies. Despite the inherent difficulties of bringing together this diverse group of disciplines, there was too much to be gained not to work together, and through collaboration and compromise these groups are now all headed in the same direction.

Having established a common vision and clearly defined roles, the Greenway Collaborative is bigger than just Dakota County. While Dakota County planners played a prominent leadership role in forming the collaborative, other partners are leading individual greenway segments, accelerating the timeframe in which the greenway network will be complete.

2011 NACo Award Application

1. Abstract of the Program

In approximately 200 words or less, summarize your program (approximately 1/4 page). Abstracts of award winning programs will be published, so please be sure that what you have written is comprehensive, but concise.

The Vermillion River is a "prairie river" that drains 335 square miles in the southern portion of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. Adjacent land use across nine corridor communities varies from wetlands and row crop agriculture to historic downtowns and rapidly developing suburbs. Recognizing the River as a complex natural system and a place where many contrasting interests converge, Dakota County worked with stakeholders to create a shared vision for River's future - The *Vermillion River Corridor Plan*. In a context-sensitive manner, the Corridor Plan integrates multiple benefits: improving water quality, protecting riparian and upland wildlife habitat, and providing outdoor recreation in a way that demonstrates that these goals can be compatible and create a framework for more sustainable economic development.

The plan recognizes that much of the corridor will remain in private ownership among many landowners, and that change will occur over time. Each landowner has a role in what happens to the river and in the corridor. The plan developed information tools to assist landowners with enhancement projects and best management practices. The plan also is a guide for local jurisdictions and agencies, and provides a foundation for cooperation and strategic investments to protect and enhance the corridor.

2. The Problem/Need for the Program

Discuss the problem/need that prompted the development of the program and the county's legal obligation, if any, to take action (approximately 3/4 page).

The Vermillion River, cited by Trout Unlimited as one of the best trophy trout streams in a major metropolitan area, is a very high quality natural resource in a very diverse, multi-jurisdictional and regulatory landscape. Beginning in Scott County and flowing through the center of Dakota County to the Mississippi River, it passes through five cities and six townships - each with land use control and individual zoning and ordinances. Dakota and Scott Counties formed the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (JPO) to implement the 2005 Watershed Plan developed by a disbanded watershed district. The JPO, comprised of three county commissioners, has legal responsibility and levying authority to protect and improve water quality. It operates within a complex, regulatory framework involving the federal government (Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Agricultural and Army Corps of Engineers); State of Minnesota (Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency and Board of Water and Soil Resources); the Metropolitan Council; and Dakota County (shoreland and floodplain).

The river itself is complicated, but well researched. The main channel begins in a series of wetlands and small lake and is fed by significant groundwater sources along its upper reaches. As it flows eastward and is fed by many tributaries, it passes through rural residential properties, rapidly developing suburbs and a historic downtown with well established trail systems. The central portion is surrounded by thousands of acres of recently protected public land. Further to the east there are large tracts of corn and soy bean agriculture and the lower portion begins losing water to the underlying aquifer. Eventually it reaches another city with a combination of new suburban residences and parkland before plunging 90 feet over a dramatic waterfall. The combination of the main river, the South Branch and the principle tributaries totals approximately 263 miles with another 182 miles of contributing waterways. Significant portions of the river system are impaired with excess bacteria, nitrates and turbidity. Increased runoff is degrading the channel and warms the water, thereby threatening trout populations. Upland and riparian habitat have been lost, degraded and fragmented. Cities independently develop trail systems within their jurisdictions,

creating more demand, but rural landowners are not supportive of trails. There is growing interest in trout fishing and canoeing/kayaking which in themselves create conflicts. Yet, the majority of the land is privately owned with very little public access resulting in trespass and other property right issues. Land protection management and improvement investments have not been adequately coordinated and prioritized among jurisdictions and agencies.

3. Description of the Program

Provide a description of the nominated program, including its objectives, the time frame for development and implementation, the clientele being served, the county's role in devising and implementing the program, and the contribution, if any, of other partners (e.g., state and federal government, consultants, private partner(s)) (approximately 2 to 3 pages).

Development of the Vermillion River Corridor Plan involved many stakeholders from 2008 until 2010, building a shared vision and encouraging cooperative and coordinated efforts among the many people who care about the River's future. The purpose of developing the Plan was to identify and focus on functions of the river corridor to create a resilient natural framework in which to live and work. In addition, the Plan's goal was to establish a foundation for future growth or development through improved water quality and in-stream, riparian, and upland natural habitat, while also providing opportunities for compatible outdoor recreation. This shared vision addresses what the corridor can become in the future. The plan was designed to be a model for other similar projects and demonstrates how that vision can become reality by providing an implementation framework based on collaboration, realistic strategies, and carefully weighed priorities. The plan can be viewed at:

http://vermillionriverwatershed.org/attachments/058_Vermillion%20Corridor%20Plan%20October%202010.pdf

I. Objectives

A. *Water Quality: A Stable and Healthy Hydrologic Regime*

The plan includes the following mapped components:

- **Riparian Buffers:** a continuous riparian buffer of perennial native vegetation of adequate width along the full length of the Vermillion River and its tributaries.
- **Wetland Management, Restoration or Enhancement:** Re-create drained wetlands, remove sediments from existing wetlands, establish vegetative buffers around wetlands and restore native vegetation near and within wetlands.
- **Nutrient Management:** Nutrient management, especially for nitrates, is a key initiative. Monitor nutrient levels in soils and adjust fertilizer rates, introduce and maintain perennial vegetation, and practice no-till farming.
- **Streambank and Channel Improvement:** Restore degraded streambanks, re-grade slopes, re-meander the stream, stabilize erosion, and plant native vegetation.
- **Urban Storm Sewer Retrofits:** Address volume control, sediments, pollution and water temperature with effective stormwater treatment methods to infiltrate rainwater where it falls, and cleanse and chill runoff before it can reach the Vermillion River.

B. *Stewardship and Protection Objective: A Healthy Ecological Balance*

A new and healthier ecological balance can be sustained by protecting and managing more resilient, natural landscapes. The plan illustrates two levels of priority:

1. Protecting and restoring continuous, native habitat on both sides of the Vermillion River
2. Protecting and restoring adjoining lands including steep slopes, erodible soils, sensitive aquifer recharge areas, and upland habitat that links the River to the broader landscape.

C. *Recreation Objective: Connected, Compatible, Supportive Recreation*

Facilitate supportive recreation opportunities that enhance active lifestyles, co-exist with healthy river ecology, and respect private property interests by including and improving:

- **Existing and Future Parks:** Local comprehensive plans for recreation have been integrated into the Plan to build strategic connections to experience the Vermillion River corridor.
- **Wildlife-Oriented Recreation:** State Wildlife or Aquatic Management Areas are designated for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing, and will be managed for native habitat and wildlife.
- **Trout Fishing:** DNR designated trout stream reaches will be managed for trout fishing as its primary recreational use, superseding other recreational interests and public access will be designed to emphasize fishing and supportive uses such as birding and picnicking.
- **Vermillion River Water Trail:** The Vermillion River from near Highway 52 to above the falls in Hastings will be managed as a water trail for canoeing and kayaking. Unlike the designated trout stream, this reach will be minimally-maintained for navigation. Access to the River via public lands will be designed to accommodate canoe and kayak, as well as fishing.
- **Vermillion River Greenways and Key Greenway Connections:** Urban reaches of the River will be connecting “greenways” or multi-functional trail, water quality, and habitat corridors.
- **Vermillion River Conservation Corridors:** Public and private lands within rural areas along the River that focus primarily on land and water protection and habitat stewardship. For the immediate near-term, conservation corridors are not intended to include recreational trails.
- **Vermillion River Access Sites:** Opportunities for access on public and private land for fishing and canoeing/kayaking will be increased.

D. Economic Objective: A Vibrant Local Economy

- **Provide a strong natural framework:** Strengthening the Corridor’s qualities as a natural and recreational amenity can support diverse private investments that sustain value over time.
- **Grow a river-centric sustainable micro-economy:** As a largely rural landscape within a metropolitan area, the Corridor could offer a market advantage in sustainable agriculture and industry, farm-to-market foods, recreation services and farm-stay tourism.

II. Implementation Principles

The following key principles speak to how new and ongoing efforts will implement the Corridor Plan vision over time:

- **Develop an Effective Coordination Framework** to foster improved coordination within existing governance structures of local, state, watershed and county entities
- **Collaborate** among public agencies, private landowners, and non-profit organizations to integrate efforts and implement and sustain corridor projects
- **Educate the Public** about the River, project and assistance opportunities, and existing regulations
- **Leverage Investment Resources** from existing and new sources, public and private
- **Identify, Prioritize, and Develop Projects** by building opportunities for corridor enhancement into existing efforts, (re)defining project funding criteria, and allocating resources
- **Maintain and Monitor** projects over time to protect initial project investments
- **Enforce Regulations** to preserve key public values
- **Review Development Proposals** and identify opportunities to achieve goals through incentives and other approaches.

IV. Project Approaches

A. Individual Landowner Projects to protect water quality and habitat are vital to the vision of a healthier Vermillion River Corridor. Landowners are encouraged to undertake stewardship projects and adopt best management practices, with incentives such as cost-sharing and technical assistance from public agencies and nonprofits.

B. Small Area Projects with Multiple Landowners strategically engage groups of landowners to work together with a coordinating entity to improve a stretch of the River and address high priority issues.

C. Demonstration Projects can be very helpful for landowners and agencies considering similar practices or projects. Landowners and agencies willing to share information with others can effectively communicate the benefits, costs, and lessons learned from a specific project or practice. Projects can range from individual landowner improvements to urban development or redevelopment projects, major restorations, and infrastructure improvements that incorporate corridor enhancement elements. Partner organizations can also assist with information sharing and evaluation of the effectiveness of a practice or project over the long-term.

D. Integrated Development and Redevelopment Solutions. Developers have a unique position among private landowners, as their work can permanently affect adjacent and on-site natural resources at a larger scale. Incorporating design techniques that address sensitive on- and off-site, natural resources and systems, often yields higher quality development that sustains value over time.

E. Public Sector Corridor Preservation. Several cities in the Corridor have actively protected portions of the corridor and its major tributaries as an amenity and framework for high-quality development. The Corridor vision calls for continuing public efforts to protect urban reaches for public benefit and access, using a variety of tools, such as park dedication, development guidelines, ordinances, fee acquisition, conservation easements, transfer of development rights, deed restrictions, covenants, developer agreements, and Official Mapping.

F. Joint Planning Initiatives is a cornerstone approach to implementing the Corridor Plan. Consideration of Corridor enhancement opportunities for multiple benefits should be a consistent element of planning and implementation for every capital project.

V. Implementation Resources

The Plan seeks greater adoption of “best practices” that improve water quality and wildlife habitat, and provide appropriate recreation in the Corridor. Practices are intended to be implemented by willing landowners and local governments, in priority locations that will improve the Corridor in multiple ways. An online resource was developed to provide a searchable database of practices with descriptions, information, and cost-sharing and technical assistance resources. Landowners can also upload imagery and information about their own project and practice implementation to the website for others to view. This resource is online at: <http://www.improvethervermillionriver.org>.

VII. Funding Assistance, Guidance, Project Team and Consultants

A. The plan was prepared with funding assistance from:

- Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources
- The Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization
- Active Living Dakota County: Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota
- University of MN Center for Urban and Regional Affairs

B. The following entities provided project guidance and input:

- Dakota County Board of Commissioners
- Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO)
- Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission
- Vermillion River Watershed Technical Advisory Group
- Dakota County Planning Commission
- Dakota County Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Program Advisory Committee
- More than 300 participants in 12 public workshop sessions, five focus group meetings, and multiple peer watershed organization discussions

C. The project team consisted of:

Staff from Dakota County, Scott County, the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization, Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, and interns; assistance funded by the University of MN Center for Urban and Regional Affairs

D. The project consultants were:

Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc.
Friends of the Mississippi River

4. Use of Technology

Describe all items of technology that your program utilized in its implementation. This could include intranet, internet, website, GIS, GPS, cable, kiosks, software, LAN, WAN, databases, etc. You may provide this information in a list or paragraph form. This information will be useful in helping NACo highlight how big a role information technology plays in local community programs (approximately 1/4 page).

Internet (international precedent and applicable research), Aerial Photography and Pictometry (graphics and analysis), Digitized Land Cover Classification System (determining priority natural areas), LIDAR (determining floodplain boundaries and steep slopes), GIS (more than 30 data layers for graphics and analysis), Thermal Loading Model (water temperature analysis), Website (announcements, meeting summaries, draft and final plan), Audience Participation System (public meeting participant profiles and responses), Intranet (managing documents, staff and consultant communications), and the Web-based Best Management Tool (landowner resource).

5. The Cost of the Program

Describe both the operating and capital costs incurred in developing and implementing the program (list all costs that would be incurred by a county attempting to replicate the program) (approximately 3/4 page to 1 page).

The total cost of developing the plan was \$260,000. Consultant costs were \$95,000 and provided by the State of Minnesota, Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization and Active Living. \$15,000 of intern stipends was provided by the University of Minnesota. County in-kind costs for staff from the Office of Planning and Analysis, Parks and Open Space, Water Resources, and GIS totaled \$150,000.

The aforementioned costs do not reflect the many hundreds of thousands of dollars expended, and thousands of hours of staff time, spent on past Vermillion River research, land cover mapping, geomorphological assessments, and developing and updating both the technology and information used for this project.

6. The Results/Success of the Program

Provide a description of the results and the success of the program in meeting its objectives (provide specific examples and measurements of that success) (approximately 3/4 to 1 page).

The final plan was only adopted by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners in October 2010 so the document itself is so new that an objective assessment of its results is difficult. It was purposely designed to provide a vision and framework for **long-term** and comprehensive improvements with applications to other jurisdictional natural resource projects in Minnesota and elsewhere. However, both the pre-planning which began in 2006 and the ongoing development of the plan have already resulted in the following:

- Development and adoption of a new 200-mile multi-purpose water quality, habit and recreational greenway system as part of the most recent County park system master plan.

- Creation of a state-of-the-art greenway simulation that fostered support for the Greenway Collaborative among 11 cities and the County.
- Led to the creation of the County's new Riparian Buffer Initiative and the receipt of more than \$3.5 million of state funds for use on more strategic and effective land protection and restoration.
- More landowner interest in the overall river quality and their role in its protection, and the many direct and indirect benefits that will result from that interest.
- Introduction of the electronic Audience Participation System to the County, and demonstration of its benefits and application for enhanced public participation.
- Development of a governance "job description" for other multi-jurisdictional, natural resource corridors, and elevation of the critical importance of effective governance in complex land and water issues.
- Diffusion of heated private property rights issues throughout the Corridor.
- More integrated working internal working relationships between various County departments.
- New and enhanced partnerships between traditional and non-traditional partners.
- Application of "prescriptive conservation" - targeting limited public and private resource on the most important issues and lands to achieve multiple benefits.
- Providing a model for a very similar, but a much more extensive and recently funded project along the St. Croix River - one of the first designated National and Scenic Rivers in the United States.

7. Worthiness of an Award

Give justification for why this program meets outlined criteria and should be awarded a 2011 Achievement Award (approximately 1/4 to 1/2 page)

This project meets many of the award criteria as follows:

- This project provides a new, comprehensive, integrated framework that addresses many of the inherent conflicts and interests associated with land use and water that previously did not exist.
- It has allowed the county to begin tapping millions of dollars of new revenue sources and provides greater opportunities for public private partnerships.
- It has capitalized on previous investments in technology and will enhance the cooperation and effectiveness of not only county, but federal, state, regional and local government, government as well.
- A key element of the plan was to engage citizens in meaningful participation and better understanding of the complex issues and the multiple government programs associated with the river.
- This project package a tremendous amount of technical and diverse information into an understandable form that has and will lead to changes in public policy.
- Intergovernmental cooperation has already been improved to address a number of shared problems.
- This plan relies on cooperation, incentives and strategic investments to augment legal water quality and other requirements.
- From extensive internet searches, we have not found any other county plans similar to the Vermillion River Corridor Plan, in part, due to its unique features. Nevertheless, the plan was designed specifically to be replicated in terms of the approach and elements.

7.1 - Review Of Draft Guiding Principles for Dakota County Broadband Projects

Meeting Date: 3/1/11
Item Type: Regular-Information
Division: OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT, AND BUDGET
Department: Information Technology
Contact: James Strommer Telephone:651-438-4285
Prepared by: James Strommer
Reviewed by: N/A N/A

Fiscal/FTE Impact:

- None
Amount included in current budget
Budget amendment requested
FTE included in current complement
New FTE(s) requested
Other

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Review of draft guiding principles for the development of broadband infrastructure projects involving Dakota County.

SUMMARY

Since 1998, Dakota County has developed a fiber optic cable network infrastructure to connect State, County, City, and School locations within Dakota County. The development of this network has occurred through several methods, including the use of cable franchise agreements, and leveraging partnerships with entities that mutually benefit from the installation and use of this infrastructure.

Dakota County Information Technology proposes principles to guide future development of County installed broadband networks (Attachment A). These principles cover four general areas. 1) How Dakota County is involved in, and promotes collaboration with public entities. 2) Development of a Commercial network (C-Net) to promote economic development, and to provide for appropriate private partnerships. 3) Installation of conduit in conjunction with County highway and County parks projects. This will provide for less expensive fiber deployment in these areas in the future. 4) Promote the development of Wi-MAX and other wireless broadband infrastructures.

The Guiding Principles for Dakota County Broadband Projects document will be presented for adoption at a future meeting.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT

Each project will be evaluated individually regarding partners, and shared costs between them. Funding for projects requiring County contribution will be submitted via the Building Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process, and be subject to Board review as part of the CIP process. All spending on projects involving more than \$50,000 of County funds will require additional board approval.

Supporting Documents:
Guiding Principles for Dakota County Broadband Projects

Previous Board Action(s):

- :
- :
- :
- :
- :

RESOLUTION

Information only; no action requested.

Administrator's Comments:

- Recommend Action
- Do Not Recommend Action
- Reviewed—No Recommendation
- Reviewed—Information Only
- Submitted at Commissioner Request

Brian Richardson

County Administrator

Reviewed by (if required):

- County Attorney's Office
- Financial Services
- Risk Management
- Employee Relations
- Information Technology

Guiding Principles for Dakota County
Broadband Projects

Developed by Dakota County Department of Information Technology

March 1, 2011

Guiding Principles for Dakota County Collaborative Broadband Projects

Purpose

Dakota County I.T. is charged with the development of broadband infrastructure to connect County buildings with a high speed data infrastructure. The development of this infrastructure will be done in a cost effective manner, and in partnership with other public entities within Dakota County, to allow the partners to leverage each other's investment. This document outlines the guiding principles governing the process for the development of this infrastructure, cost sharing with partners, disposal and revenue sharing of unused fiber, and methods of introducing public/private partnerships in the delivery of Internet service to Dakota County with the intent to promote economic development for business and residents of Dakota County.

Principle 1: Collaboration for the development of fiber optic networks

1. In general, for all fiber projects, the following steps are taken:
 - a. Sponsor requests fiber connection
 - b. I.T. reviews the current fiber install, to determine the nearest connect point
 - c. Search for public entities near the area to identify potential partners
 - d. Create initial design
 - e. Request initial quote based on design
 - f. Identify cost sharing opportunities based on the design path
 - g. Contact potential partners to determine interest
 - h. Begin Joint powers agreement discussions
 - i. Negotiate costs between partners
 - j. Decide on number of fiber strands
 - k. Meet with Dakota County Management (I.T.)
 - l. Submit CIP budget request for the County's portion of the project
 - m. Begin work with State Office of Enterprise Technology to refine the design
 - n. Finalize negotiations for cost sharing
 - o. Write a bid document if necessary (>\$50,000)
 - p. Finalize JPA
 - q. Write RBA to request authorization for Contract, JPA
 - r. Write contract, involve our Attorney's office
 - s. Obtain City, County and/or State Right of Way permits if needed
 - t. Order project materials
 - u. Obtain signatures on contracts
 - v. Install the fiber,
2. Cost sharing for I-Net collaborative projects generally follow these guidelines:
 - a. After a project scope has been defined, and interested partners identified, an initial quote for the cost of the project will be solicited by Dakota County I.T.

- b. Each segment will be identified as being of shared benefit, or of benefit to a subset of partners.
 - c. Maintenance costs for each segment will be negotiated with the collaboration partners;
 - i. State OET is the preferred partner to monitor the fiber infrastructure as they can leverage their 24 x 7 help desk for this.
 - ii. Relocation maintenance costs are to be shared among the collaboration partners
 - iii. Gopher State One-Call support shall be negotiated among the collaboration partners with the State being the preferred partner to provide this support.
 - d. Partners identified for each segment will contribute a fair share of financial capital for that segment.
3. After initial costs are identified for each participant, Dakota County I.T. will review the project with the County Administrator for additional input in the negotiation process.
 4. Communication on all active projects will be provided quarterly to the County Administrator
 5. Most projects will be funded via County Building CIP; however, CIP funding approval is not necessarily approval to move ahead with the project.
 6. If CIP funding is denied for a particular project, I.T. will continue to find additional partners, and additional cost saving measures to reduce the County cost for the project, and re-apply for CIP, or find other funding sources.
 7. The installation of a fiber optic network lays the foundation for additional technologies to be deployed within Dakota County such as Wi-Max. The installation of these add-on technologies will be based on the required need and application of these technologies, with appropriate review and approval by County administration.
 8. The design of the fiber network will allow for reasonable over-capacity for future use. A minimum of 32 strands of fiber are to be installed in all future projects.

Principle 2: Development of a Commercial Network (C-Net) – To promote economic development

1. Collaboration partners will form a working committee under the auspices of a JPA to participate in the formation of a C-Net for the purpose of leasing some unused fiber optic assets for the purpose of private commercial use.
2. The working committee will meet periodically to provide oversight of the C-Net, and will be tasked with:
 - a. Determining the fiber assets available to contribute to the C-Net
 - b. Determine the method of obtaining maximum value for the asset
 - c. Formulate how revenues are to be distributed fairly to participating collaboration partners.

- d. Partner participation in the C-Net will be based on ownership of the fiber optic path used, and weighted by the linear feet of fiber optic cable owned that is used by the C-Net.
3. Partners will be recruited from existing participants in I-Net projects within Dakota County
4. Participating partners will inventory unused assets, and where possible, contribute two unused fiber strands to be used for the C-Net.

Principle 3: Installing conduit along county highway and parks projects

There is a possibility for cost savings by installing conduit in conjunction with planned County highway and parks projects. For this reason, Dakota County I.T. proposes the following:

1. Dakota County Information Technology will arrange an annual review of County highway projects and County parks projects in the County's adopted capital improvement program for the purpose of evaluating cost and usefulness of installing conduit in conjunction with these projects. The evaluation will determine how well the path fits into future fiber development plans, and establish the additional cost to the project to install the conduit, as well as determining the potential cost savings if fiber is installed along this path.
2. Dakota County I.T. proposes the establishment of a fund to pay for conduit installation for approved projects, with expenditures reviewed by County Administration and the County Board as part of the RBA process for each Highway or Parks project. The amount put into the fund will be determined by the annual evaluation of highway and parks projects.
3. Dakota County will be responsible for locate and relocation costs of unused conduit. Additional funding will be required to maintain this asset.

Typical fiber optic cable installation projects have a cost component for digging a trench that averages over 80% of the cost of a project. This fact has led to the suggestion that there may be substantial cost savings if conduit can be installed in conjunction with County highway and parks trail projects. Our experience indicates that there may be some projects where this is true, but this does not hold true for all projects. In some cases, if an area of highway is being worked on, and utilities are being relocated, there may be an opportunity to share trenching costs with other utility providers. In some cases, a trench must be dug for other new utilities and we may be able to take advantage of this. However, if a project does not involve digging a trench, then there is no financial advantage to placing conduit as part of the project.

The placement of conduit should be evaluated for every highway and parks trail project by the Information Technology department, with a cost analysis performed indicating the cost savings introduced by placing conduit in conjunction with the project. This analysis will be reviewed by the project manager (from Parks or Transportation), I.T. Management, and County Administration.

Principle 4: Wi-Max infrastructure development in conjunction with C-Net

1. The establishment and promotion of Wi-Max wireless technology shall be the responsibility of the C-Net collaborative, as the successful deployment of Wi-Max requires an established fiber infrastructure to back-haul the data transmitted by Wi-Max access points.
2. Wi-Max is a technology best developed and distributed by private industry, and is already established in parts of Dakota County by private industry. Private entities have already secured the licensed radio spectrum required to deploy Wi-Max.

3. The C-Net collaborative shall make the C-Net infrastructure available to private entities to promote the expansion of their Wi-Max infrastructure.

Projected infrastructure roadmap

To better coordinate and take advantage of opportunities for infrastructure development, Dakota County I.T. will maintain a map that indicates existing fiber optic infrastructure, as well as planned infrastructure construction 5 years into the future. A link to this map is here: _____