

River District Development Foundation of Merrill (RDDF)

2019 Plan of Work

Lincoln County Board Room

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*Meeting led by Art Lersch
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I. Introduction

Fifteen River District Development Foundation of Merrill stakeholders attended the seventh annual planning session for the organization. In attendance were representatives from the organization's working committees and interested public. Members in attendance reviewed accomplishments from the past year, set goals for the upcoming year and identified tasks to complete them. **The primary focus area for 2019 is to secure funding and support to enable easement acquisition and development of the Lincoln Wood trail extension.**

Additional details related to achieving this goal can be found beginning on page 3 of this report.

The meeting began with introductions and a quick review of the RDDF's current mission statement.

"The River District Development Foundation of Merrill provides resources, initially through the creation and upkeep of the River Bend Trail, that encourage residents and visitors to enjoy the natural beauty and precious spaces of the city's river corridors."

II. Committee Structure

The following were identified as active committees. Each currently has a chair or co-chairs.

- Operations/Executive Committee
- Real Estate
- Construction
- Friends/Marketing
- Capital Campaign

Updates on Trail Development

- Park Street redevelopment and Rotary Park trail head; Eric Malm reported that to his knowledge the city is still planning to conduct the redevelopment of Park Street near the trail this coming summer. There are several projects besides Agra Pavilion interior construction taking place or that have been recently completed in the Rotary Park area.
 - Bridge abutment concrete repair and sidewalk to Pavilion was completed
 - Park Street overlook concept plan was completed and RFQ developed for cost estimates
 - Working on landing area and fishing pier design and with DNR to remove concrete debris in that area
 - Also working to install river handicap access ramp near the landing area/fishing pier

- Agra Pavilion; Eric Malm reported construction of the interior would be complete the first week of June and management would be transferred to the City of Merrill at that time.

- Cooper Street to Walmart-Bluebird Lane; Eric Malm relayed that the property owner was not interested and the project was on hold.

- West from 64; Jim Wedemeyer communicated that he anticipated easements for this project would be negotiated in 2019 and that once complete, cost estimates for trail construction and grant application could be developed for the 2020 funding cycle with construction also occurring in 2020.

- Trail Amenities/Friends projects; Greg Hartwig stated that the bricks for the patio/fire pit have been received from the City and additional memory bricks were on sale. The bench swing has been received and will be installed this Spring.

- City bike/pedestrian updates; Jim Wedemeyer relayed that the he was working with the City on this issue. The primary goal should be to designate more shared lanes around the city, several of which could help create greater access to the River Bend Trail.

- Other trail initiatives and events; the Friends of the River Bend Trail Annual meeting will be 6:30 PM on April 17th at the Eagles Club. The Pig Roast occurred August 24, 2018, and the Fall Festival was September 21, 2018.

III. 2018 Primary Accomplishments - Status

Completed 2018 Goals

The following goals listed in the 2018 plan of work have been achieved.

- ✓ *Work with the city to amend the City Bike Plan to create a bike route traveling west from Cooper Street along Logan Avenue and returning to Park Street (allowing cyclists and pedestrians to take this loop rather than having to turn back on the straight portion of the trail to get back to Park Street)*
- ✓ *Sell D&L property and use funding for building trail from Cooper further east and enhancing the river district (accomplished- proceeds now likely to fund west trail extension)*
- ✓ *Maintained positive working relationship with the City during changes in local officials. Relationship is reciprocal with the City taking greater ownership in projects.*
- ✓ *Relationship with the Bierman Foundation has continued to be strong, building from multiple successful projects.*

In Progress from 2018

Below are goals listed in the 2018 report that are in progress as of early 2019.

- ✓ *Support city development of a Pine Ridge connector (monitor City's progress)*
- ✓ *Complete Agra Pavilion interior (anticipated to be complete by June 2019)*
- ✓ *Complete Park Street overlook (additional fundraising necessary to complete)*
- ✓ *Review/update list of previous donors and potential donors and develop contacts for new capital campaign with the goal of raising \$200,000 (not complete – will be a goal for 2019)*
- ✓ *Make Agra Pavilion useable enough to hold for instance fund-raising events (construction to be complete June 2019, need to reach revenue agreement with the City)*
- ✓ *Recruit more active members for the Marketing/Friends Committee (ideal time for recruitment will be after securing western easement)*
- ✓ *Organize Friends records with the objective of accurately identifying the number of friends and kinds of affiliations (mainly complete, needs to be reorganized into new Friends categories)*
- ✓ *Increase the visibility and membership of the Friends Group (using completed list recruit and engage membership)*

On Hold (from 2018)

Below are goals listed in the 2018 report that are on hold as of early 2019.

- ✓ *Obtain easement to provide trail access through Merrill Sand & Gravel property (on hold)*
- ✓ *Obtain \$200,000 grant/donation from the Bierman Foundation to assist in completing the Sand & Gravel area of the Cooper east trail (on hold until 2020 funding cycle)*

IV. 2019 and Beyond – Goals

Members of each RDDF active committee developed 2018 goals and indicated general plans for after that year. The information is included in the tables below. To assist in the process, committee members were asked to answer the following questions:

- a. *What can each committee do to facilitate the identified objectives?*
- b. *What other goals should the committee be pursuing in 2019?*
- c. *What goals are ongoing or should be accomplished at a later date? (Is there anything that should be accomplished in 2019 related to these ongoing or future goals?)*
- d. *Prioritize goals (most to least important based on potential impact and timelines).*
- e. *Who specifically will work toward achieving these goals? (Each goal should have a point person, likely the chair, within the committee)*

Real Estate

Active committee members: **Jim Wedemeyer (chair), Jon Krohn, Craig Nienow, Eric Malm**

Goal	Tasks	Responsible Parties
1. Secure trail easement on Lincoln Wood property (Note: As of early 2019, sample easements were being reviewed by the City Attorney’s Office) First Quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support City Attorney in negotiations and conflict resolution• Review final documents• Communicate project status with Construction Committee for seamless project transition	Real Estate Committee Chair Jim Wedemeyer to take the lead on all objectives (coordinate with Construction Committee)

<p>2. Work with City to obtain rights to designate a multi-user path from Grand Avenue to the MARC</p> <p>(Note: Designation of sidewalks in this area as a multiuser path, would allow for bicyclists to be on the sidewalk without violating the Merrill Municipal Code)</p> <p>Second Quarter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the City Parks & Recreation Department to present a resolution for the Common Council to adopt • Educate City officials on the need for the path designation 	<p>Real Estate Committee Chair Jim Wedemeyer with assistance from Dan Wendorf, City Parks and Recreation Director</p>
<p>3. Begin planning for trail route from Lincoln Wood property to MARC</p> <p>Fourth Quarter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsequent to Lincoln Wood easement acquisition begin planning for future trail extension • Examine GIS mapping for potential trail routes • Identify key property owners 	<p>Real Estate Committee Chair Jim Wedemeyer with assistance from the Operations/Finance Committee and Board</p>
<p>4. Plan and develop a community asset on the Semco property</p> <p>Fourth Quarter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential uses of the property include development of an orchard 	<p>Real Estate Committee Chair Jim Wedemeyer facilitate process with interested parties</p>

Construction

Active committee members; **Eric Malm (chair), Marty Anderson, Gary Bartz, Pete Tabor, Dan Wendorf, Rod Akey, Dave Johnson, Heather Young, Art Lersch**

Goal	Tasks	Responsible Parties
<p>1. Oversee construction interior pavilion construction and, once complete, transition management to the City</p> <p>June 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with contractor to ensure that project remains on schedule • Coordinate with the City to develop a mutually beneficial revenue sharing agreement 	<p>Construction Committee chair Eric Malm to take lead with assistance from Jim Wedemeyer</p>
<p>2. Construct accessible fishing access/fishing pier.</p> <p>Second Quarter, depending on grant funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Capital Campaign Committee to prepare grants necessary to fund project in full 	<p>Construction Committee chair Eric Malm to take lead</p>
<p>3. Design, obtain costs estimates for, and pursue funding for Park Street Overlook</p> <p>(Note: Funding and Construction will likely continue into 2020)</p> <p>Begin Fourth Quarter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize Overlook design and construction costs • Secure project sponsor 	<p>Construction Committee</p>
<p>4. Shoreland Restoration</p> <p>Summer 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites 1, 2, and 3 to be completed in 2019 • Secure sponsor of the Fisherman Trail 	<p>Construction Committee</p>

<p>5. Pergola Outlook/Shoreland Development</p> <p>Throughout the year, with most work completed in the summer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize design and budget • Project donor has been identified 	<p>Construction Committee</p>
<p>6. Develop West 64 Trail Corridor</p> <p>Major 2019 goal, with design and funding secured in 2019 and construction anticipated to begin in 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design trail • Establish project budget • Obtain WisDNR approval 	<p>Construction Committee</p>

Marketing and Friends

Active committee members; **Greg Hartwig, Sharon Anderson (co-chairs), Sarah Williams, Brenda Mamer, Shelley Hersil, Erik Pfantz, Kyle Gulke, Derek Woellner, Heather Young**

Note: It is assumed that various committee members will step in to help with the items below depending on their interests and time available.

Goal	Tasks	Responsible Parties
<p>1. Complete Community Patio</p> <p>By end of summer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Rotary to inform them of the project and ask for their assistance • Acquire bricks from the City of Merrill • Sell \$14,000 in bricks to fund the anticipated project \$21,000 	<p>Marketing and Friends Committee (Greg Hartwig to take the lead)</p>

<p>2. Incentivize and energize RDDF Membership</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase income from members by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retaining members ○ Restructuring membership to create additional benefits ○ Increase membership by engaging with trail users 	<p>Marketing and Friends Committee (Sharon Anderson to take the lead)</p>
<p>3. Prioritize Amenity Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a database of amenities and associated cost. Amenities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trail lights on the east ○ Bench swing (installation) ○ Plantings ○ Interpretative signage 	<p>Marketing and Friends Committee</p>
<p>4. Assist in Development of Bebel Park/Woods Area</p> <p>Note: This potential project in honor of former RDDF president Gene Bebel is in its very early stages. Mr. Bebel and others should be consulted related to project specific.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule waterfront area to be cleared (with assistance from WisDNR) • Coordinate with the City • Volunteer projects • Brenda/Packer Grant (\$10,000) for development east of SEMCO site 	<p>Marketing and Friends Committee in collaboration with Construction Committee</p>
<p>5. Develop New Brochure</p>		<p>Sarah Williams</p>

Capital Campaign

Active committee members; **Brenda Muleller (chair), Tom Mueller, Steve Dahm, Jodi Hahn, Mark Crapster-Pregont, Gene Simon, Sue Weith**

Goal	Tasks	Responsible Parties
1. Obtain specific construction details to allow for writing complete grant requests		Steve Dahm, with assistance from City Engineer
2. Identify and present specific trail segments and projects for fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential projects to be funded through funds raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Natural playground ○ Fishing pier ○ Overlook ○ Western Trail 	Capital Campaign Committee
3. Contact previous donors who gave \$500 or more		Jodi Hahn to take lead
4. Obtain \$200,000 in funds through grants or private donations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dudley, Greenheck, and Community Foundation are potential partners 	Capital Campaign Committee
5. Develop updated presentation to target specific organizations to approach and re-approach for donations		Gene Simon and Tom Mueller to take lead

Operations/Executive Committee

Active committee members; **Jim Wedemeyer (acting president and Vice President); Jon Krohn (Secretary)**

Goal	Tasks	Responsible Parties
<p>1. Facilitate Communication and Cooperation</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of meetings between Committee Chairs and Officers • Facilitate communication between committees • Continue to build relationship with the City of Merrill 	<p>Operations/Executive Committee</p>
<p>2. Assist in Development of Park Street/Rotary Park</p> <p>Spring – Fall 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of pavilion construction • Work with the City to provide curb/gutter on the north side • Construction of the patio/fire pit on the north park side (\$7,600 in bricks have been purchased, total project budget of \$14,000) • Development of ADA accessible fishing pier • Construction of Park Street overlook, including Park Street Bridge replica • Restore four areas of the shoreline (remove 	<p>Operations/Executive and Construction Committees</p>

	<p>invasive species and re-plant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop fishing pier east of overlook	
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