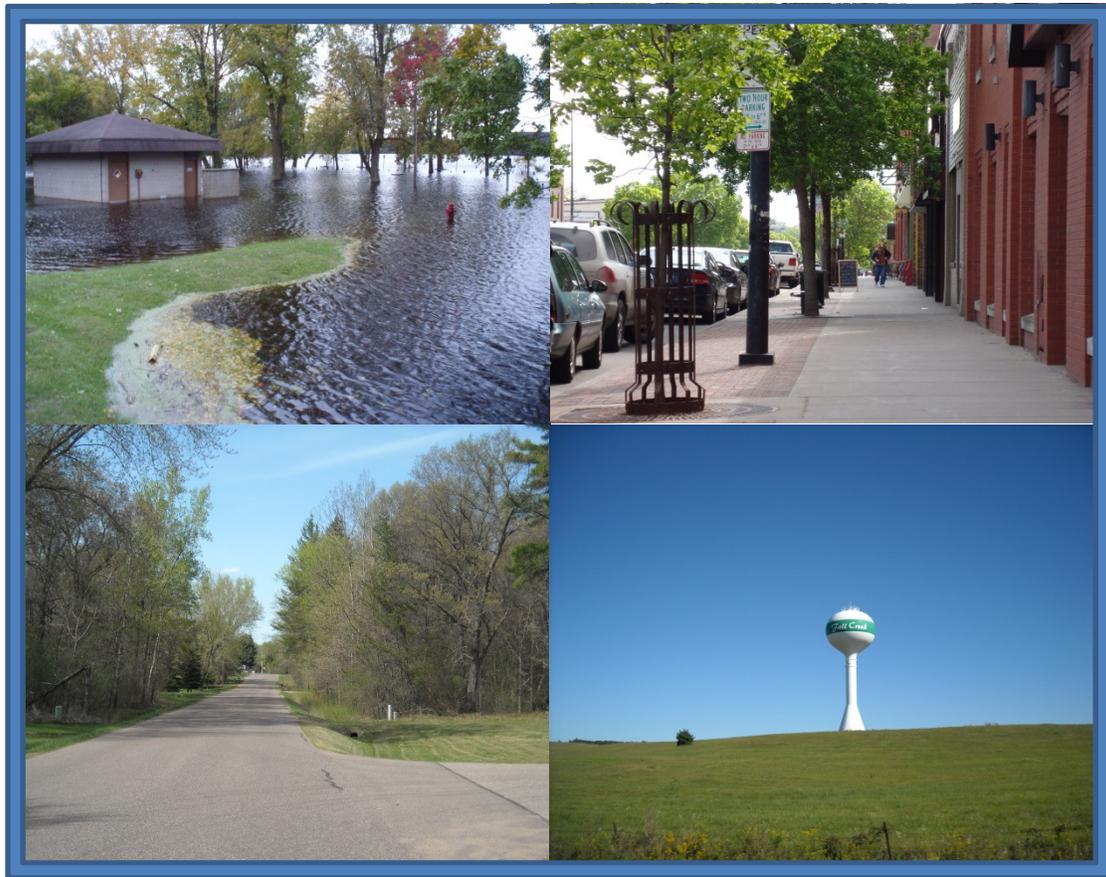


2017 IN REVIEW – EAU CLAIRE COUNTY

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission



ABOUT WCWRPC

The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) is a multi-county planning agency serving local governments in the counties of Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk, and St. Croix. The Commission was created in 1971 by these seven counties and derives its authority from Wisconsin Statute 66.0309.

The general purpose of WCWRPC is to assist in the resolution of intergovernmental issues and coordinate area-wide planning and development. To complement area-wide efforts, a variety of technical services are offered to members on an individual basis. The overall goal of the Commission is to improve the economic and physical conditions in the region.

2017 REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Economic Development Administration—Economic Development District Program

- Prepared the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy annual update. This document allows WCWRPC to continue to receive Economic Development Administration (EDA) planning funds and creates EDA project funding eligibility for units of government in the region.
- Provided communities with updates and guidelines on programmatic and infrastructure funding.
- Met with communities, counties, non-profit entities, and businesses to discuss ways to move economic development projects forward.
- Prepared grant applications, administered projects, and provided other types of technical assistance to businesses and municipal units of government.
- Assisted the Economic Development Administration, WI Economic Development Corporation, WI Department of Administration, WI Department of Transportation, USDA Rural Development, state representatives, and others in identifying projects for programmatic funding.
- Updated county economic profiles as well as community profiles for each of the Region's cities and villages. Collected and analyzed information on population, housing, real estate value, income, labor force, transportation, utilities, taxes, and industrial parks.
- Prepared and distributed a regional housing survey.
- Assisted with financial administration for the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center located in River Falls.
- Prepared a feasibility study and EDA application for a Fabrication Laboratory and Workforce Development facility in Osceola.
- Assisted the University of Wisconsin-Stout with a potential EDA application that would provide business consultation assistance in distressed areas of the region.
- Upon request, provided economic development corporations and communities with information from EMSI and ESRI Community Analyst, two web-based tools that provide employment and local labor market data and analysis.
- Served on the Board of Directors of Momentum West, the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Association.

Regional Business Fund, Inc. (RBF, Inc.)

- Awarded loans to 73 businesses, with loans totaling \$4,152,318. These loans assisted with the creation and retention of 275 jobs, the leveraging of \$21,734,146 of private funds, the renovation of 13 commercial properties in the region's historic downtowns, and the start-up of 24 businesses.
- Worked with state, local, and federal representatives to ensure the continued defederalized status of the RBF loan pool.

Transportation

- Prepared several amendments to the 2014-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Chippewa-Eau Claire Urbanized Area.
- Prepared an urban transportation planning work program for the Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization to maintain eligibility for federal transportation funds.
- Maintained local involvement in urban transportation planning and programming initiatives by coordinating the activities of the MPO's Policy and Technical Advisory Committees.
- Completed a Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
- Prepared a transportation and aging white paper.
- Participated on the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition supporting future passenger rail service to the Chippewa-Eau Claire Urban Area.

Community Planning and Development

- Continued to disseminate data to local governments and their agents.
- Maintained a standard set of region-wide maps and produced custom maps for both public and private agencies.
- Continued to monitor state and federal legislation regarding areas of concern such as comprehensive planning, community and rural development, transportation, solid waste, water quality, and economic development.
- Worked with economic development corporations, local communities, and others to conduct numerous placemaking presentations and workshops throughout the region.
- Served as regional coordinator of the Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) 13-county western Wisconsin Region Interoperability Council.
- Continued the monthly WISCOM radio roll call in the WEM region.
- In coordination with the Public Service Commission, continued to provide administration and outreach to the region's Broadband Implementation Group, including Chris Straight's participation on the State Broadband Advisory Committee.
- Hosted a Strong Towns workshop with guest speaker Chuck Marohn.
- Assisted counties in investigating options for updating county floodplain maps.
- Distributed a monthly events and funding e-newsletter.
- Participated in American Planning Association (APA) and Association of Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission activities.
- Provided general support to Disaster Ready Chippewa Valley (DRCV) in Eau Claire, Chippewa, and Dunn Counties.

2017 EAU CLAIRE COUNTY ACTIVITIES

- Through the Regional Business Fund, Inc. (RBF), and the consolidated Regional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Revolving Loan Fund program that WCWRPC staff administers, ten loans were provided to Eau Claire County businesses for a total of \$607,500, creating and/or retaining a total of 71 jobs, and leveraging \$5,845,335 in private investment.
- Completed the Eau Claire River Watershed Community Action Strategy to address surface water quality and related soil health. The planning effort was guided by a broad coalition of watershed residents, governmental units, and other stockholders with support from county land conservation offices, and the Department of Natural Resources.
- Assisted the Eau Claire River Watershed Implementation Team with securing an Xcel Energy Natural Resources Fund grant to conduct two soil health classes for up to 40 farmers, agronomists, and county land and water conservation staff in the Augusta and Thorp areas.
- With Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources assistance, worked on policy updates to the Chippewa-Eau Claire Sewer Service Area Plan.
- Provided water quality management planning review and consultation for the Chippewa Falls-Eau Claire Urban Area as required through the sewer service area plan.
- Commenced work on an Eau Claire County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This plan will be coordinated with those being completed in Chippewa and Dunn County, and one previously completed in St. Croix County, to create a regional trail network.
- Completed Safe Routes to School Plans for the Cities of Eau Claire and Altoona.
- Completed a Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) application to fund a City of Eau Claire and Altoona Safe Routes to School implementation program.
- Commenced work on an Eau Claire County Hazard Mitigation Plan update. These updates allow the county to maintain eligibility for Federal Emergency Management Agenda (FEMA) mitigation grant funding when a hazard or natural disaster arises.
- Staffed the Storm Water Outreach Coordinator position for the Rain to Rivers Coalition. Members of the Coalition include Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties; Cities of Altoona, Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Menomonie, Rice Lake, and River Falls; Village of Lake Hallie; and Towns of Eagle Point, Lafayette, Seymour, Union, and Washington.
- Worked with Friends of the Chippewa River State Trail on an update to a Chippewa Falls-Eau Claire bike map.
- Worked on a bus stop condition and handicap accessibility assessment in the City of Eau Claire.
- Assisted supporters of the Confluence Project in investigating potential state and federal funding sources for public and private construction components.
- Provided funding information to Eau Claire County communities eligible for CDBG public facility and planning funds inclusive of the Village of Fairchild and City of Augusta.
- Provided administration of loans through the Near Equity Fund on behalf of the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation.
- Participated in several Eau Claire County Economic Development Summit meetings.
- Provided general support to Disaster Ready Chippewa Valley (DRCV) in Eau Claire, Chippewa, and Dunn Counties.