

# **St. Croix County Citizen Participation Plan**

## **St. Croix River Crossing Mitigation Activities**

### **Introduction**

The new St. Croix River Crossing Bridge located in Oak Park Heights, Minnesota and Houlton, Wisconsin will create significant impacts and changes to St. Croix County and the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and its watershed, including stimulating additional residential growth and related business development, and changes to the surface water, groundwater, landscape and other resources.

To mitigate these and other potential impacts, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), National Park Service, St. Croix County, Town of St. Joseph and University of Wisconsin-River Falls entered into two Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). The Growth Management MOU is available to assist in managing accelerated growth in St. Croix County. The MOU provides financial support for the development of various studies, plans, tools and activities to help address the needs of local governments to improve their abilities to manage growth and to promote natural, cultural and historic resource protection in the watershed, thus preserving water quality and scenic values. The Riverway Mitigation MOU is available to mitigate the negative and adverse effects of the new St. Croix River Crossing on the scenic and recreational values of the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. A dedicated interactive project website will be established to accommodate information exchange throughout the project. SCC will aim to increase the level of public impact on decisions made by not only informing and consulting with members of the public but also involving and collaborating to make important funding decisions.

### **The *What* and *Why* of Public Participation**

The Public Participation process allows government officials to engage the public to jointly:

- increase understanding of complex issues,
- determine possible options,
- generate new ideas,
- discover and explore possible compromises, and
- gauge the greater public's support for various solutions and concepts.

Authentic and successful public participation should result in additional trust between government and citizens, decisions that reflect a thorough consideration of community issues and perspectives, transparent and trackable decisions with stated accountabilities, and a common understanding of issues and appreciation for complexity. St. Croix County's residents offer an incredible body of knowledge and by engaging with those voices, local government, agencies, and residents can guide decisions openly.

### **Funding Categories and MOU Responsibilities**

St. Croix County is committed to transparently fulfilling the requirements and implementing the respective mitigation activities within each of the two MOUs, Growth Management and Riverway Mitigation Items. Within the Riverway Mitigation MOU, MnDOT is providing St. Croix County 2,000,000 to help mitigate the damages to the bluffs. Within the Growth Management MOU, \$750,000 has been slated for the county to better its ability to manage growth through the development of additional

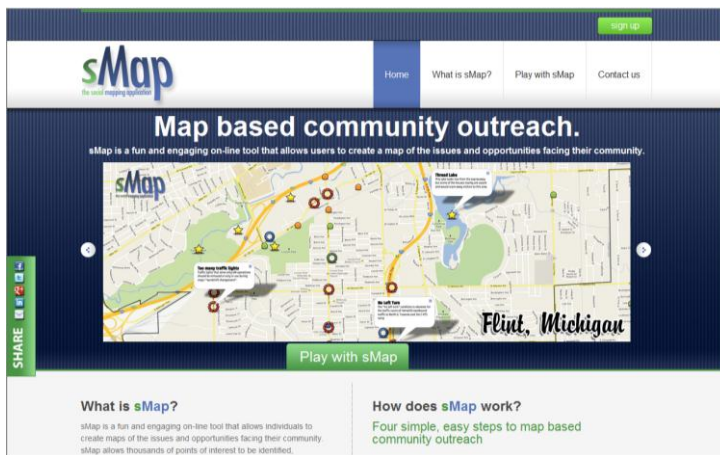
plans, ordinances, or other tools. The Growth Management Mitigation also includes a Greenspace Protection Program (\$400,000) aimed at protecting the quality of both ground and surface waters, preserving the wildlife habitat base, as well as the existing rural character.

Full MOUs can be reviewed within Appendix H & I located here <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/stcroix/docs/sfeis.html>.

## Outreach

SCC will engage community input and proposals by openly communicating the scope of responsibilities, clear decision criteria, process and timeline, and the ways to be involved.

In an effort to encourage creative and effective citizen participation, SCC may introduce its first map-based community outreach called sMap (the social mapping application).



This innovative on-line tool allows individuals to map issues, opportunities, and project ideas.

SCC will maintain an up-to-date project website [www.sccwi.us/rivermitigation](http://www.sccwi.us/rivermitigation) so anyone interested may obtain information, offer suggestions and comments, download application forms, review project review criteria, and follow progress of potential projects.

Additional methods of outreach are identified below in an adapted table from the International Association for Public Participation. Levels of public participation increases as you move from left to right.

Public Awareness	Public Education	Public Input	Public Interaction	Public Partnership
<p><b>Objective:</b> Increase public awareness of the County's role in the St. Croix River Crossing mitigation projects and responsibilities.</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Provide public with balanced and objective information and assist them in understanding process and results.</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Obtain public feedback on potential projects, alternatives, and/or decisions.</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Work directly with the public to ensure their concerns, ideas, or aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Place funding decision-making responsibilities in the hands of the public.</p>
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact Sheets</li> <li>• Project website</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Association Meetings</li> <li>• Bill inserts</li> <li>• Newspaper releases</li> <li>• Public presentations to targeted groups &amp; Boards/Committees</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive Social Mapping Tool</li> <li>• Deliberative online polling</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Development Public Comments</li> <li>• Social Mapping trends and analysis</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Development Committee</li> <li>• Growth Management Advisory Team</li> </ul>

## St. Croix County Activities -- St. Croix River Crossing Timeline

- 2013-2014 1<sup>st</sup> Round Activities
- Riverway Mitigation for Damages to Blufflands, Growth Management, Greenspace

### Jan. - Feb. 2013

- Criteria to Prioritize Funding Options Developed
- Process & Timeline Developed

### March - Apr. 2013

- CDC Review and Recommendation on funding criteria and process
- Discuss with local communities to review criteria and process

### May/June 2013

- Funds dispersed by MNDOT
- Promote process, criteria to local communities

### May - Sept. 2013

- 1st Round of Funding Proposals Received, Internal & External

### Aug. - Dec. 2013

- Evaluate/Rank Proposals based on criteria.
- Recommendations on proposal to Community Development Committee
- Proposals reviewed w/ Advisory Team, WDNR, Local Communities

### Oct. - Nov. 2013

- Grant applications developed
- Community Development Committee recommends projects & grant applications
- County Board approves grant submittals

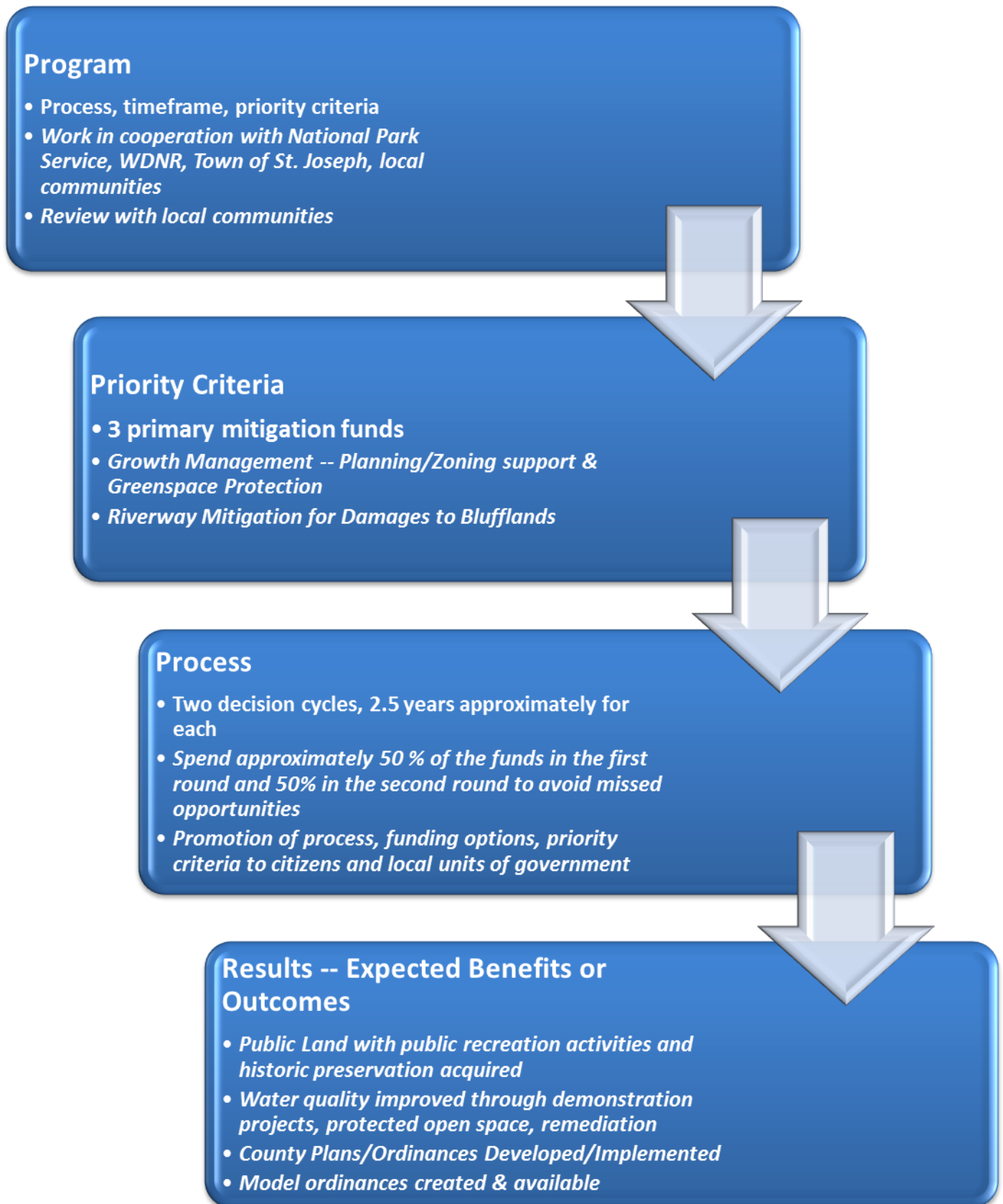
### March 2014

- Grant application results reviewed
- Submit proposals & funding package to Community Development Committee
- Community Development Committee makes recommendation to County Board
- County Board & WDNR final approval

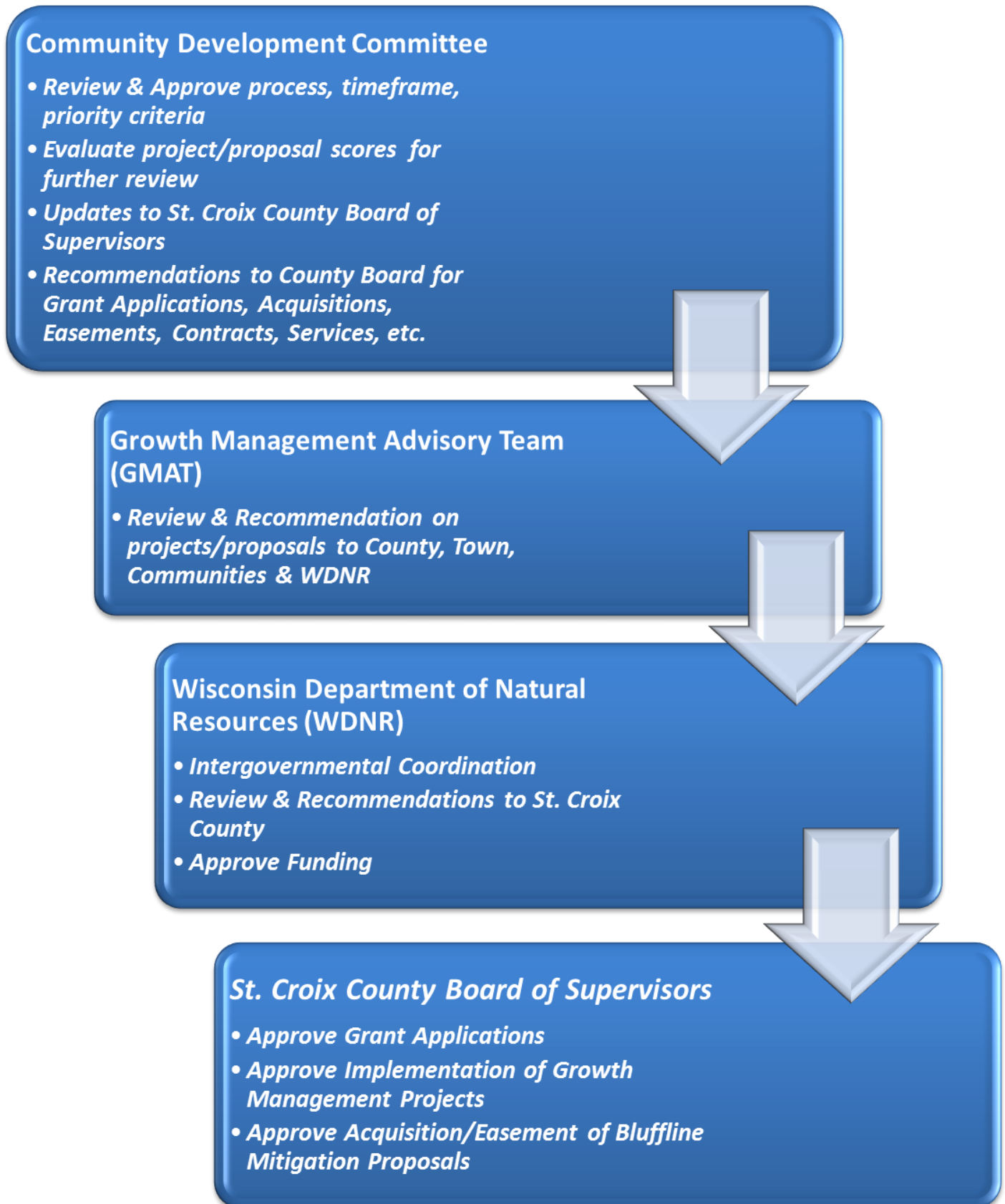
### April - May 2014

- Proceed w/ Acquisition or Development Project
- Proceed w/ Growth Management Project

## St. Croix County Program, Process & Results



## St. Croix County Review & Approval Process



## Dissemination of Information

Applications and criteria for project evaluations can be found on the website at [www.sccwi.us/rivermitigation](http://www.sccwi.us/rivermitigation) or by e-mailing the Community Development Department at [cdd@co.saint-croix.wi.us](mailto:cdd@co.saint-croix.wi.us) or by phone at 715-386-4680.

The County Board and Community Development Committee will receive periodic updates on the progress of the Growth Management Advisory Team (GMAT).

SCC will actively promote the process for each round of funding through the project website, publications, newspapers, etc.

Respectively, WDNR or SCC will provide MnDOT with quarterly progress reports detailing the status of the Riverway Mitigation efforts. These quarterly reports will be available by request of the Community Development Department until all expenditures are completed.

Annual reports of MOU funding and related activities can be requested by contacting WisDNR.

Quarterly project reports submitted to WisDNR and MnDOT can be requested by contacting WisDNR.

## Decision-making Authority

St. Croix County Board of Supervisors takes action on project funding requests recommended by the Community Development Committee (CDC). WisDNR has final approval over release of mitigation funds. Each relevant committee and/or agency is defined below and measures for public participation are outlined.





## **Growth Management Advisory Team (GMAT)**

The GMAT has been created for the purpose of providing advice to the WisDNR in its review of all proposals by St. Croix County, the Town of St. Joseph, UW-River Falls, the STH 64 Corridor Communities, etc. to implement actions described in the Growth Management MOU. Members of the GMAT were identified in the MOU's and includes WisDNR, National Park Service, WisDOT, St. Croix Basin Water Resources Planning Team, St. Croix County, the Town of St. Joseph, UW-River Falls, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Officer, St. Croix Economic Development Corporation, Riverward Group, Hudson Chamber of Commerce, St. Croix River Association, Town of Somerset, UW-Extension, Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, Village of Somerset, City of New Richmond. WisDNR leads and convenes the Team. The TEAM meets as needed to review proposals, provide feedback, hear progress reports, and help resolve such disputes or other issues as may arise concerning the implementation of the MOU.

Meetings of the GMAT are open to the public, both verbal and written comments relating to their recommendations are encouraged.

## **Community Development Committee (CDC)**

The CDC oversees the Community Development Department which is responsible for administering three program areas: Land Use and Conservation, Planning and Land Information, and Resource Management. Further information regarding the Community Development Department and its three program areas can be found at [www.sccwi.us/cdd](http://www.sccwi.us/cdd).

All CDC meetings are published according to law and public comments are allotted for and encouraged. Agenda, minutes, and content for all committee and board related county business is available online at: <http://stcroixcountywi.igm2.com/Citizens/Default.aspx>.

CDC will recommend resolutions to the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors to request funds for projects.

## **SCC Board of Supervisors**

The St Croix County Board of Supervisors consists of 19 Supervisors elected by district, for a two-year term, on a non-partisan basis. The Board operates under a committee system and county administrator form of government. Responsibilities include meeting monthly and on special occasions as required, exercise policy supervision of County activities through its committee system, and adopt the annual County Budget and establish a tax rate for the support of County services.

All meetings of the County Board are open to the public; and occur generally the first Tuesday of every month. Public comment period is provided and encouraged. The calendar of all Board and Committee meetings including agenda, content, and minutes can be found online at [www.sccwi.us](http://www.sccwi.us).