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July 16, 2024

Iowa County Board of Supervisors
222 N. Iowa St.
Dodgeville, WI 53533

Dear Supervisors,

Thank you for the on-going partnership that exists between Iowa County and the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC). This 54-year relationship began when you created us in 1970, and we continue to partner in delivering value to your residents.

Enclosed with this letter is a summary of benefits and financial return from our work in Iowa County during the past five years. We've organized this information around the three unique services we provide:

- **Capacity Building** to help off-set workforce and revenue constraints.
- **Economic Development** services that complement local efforts to create and retain jobs, and generate private investment.
- **Planning** services designed to help communities compete for residents and workers, and make strategic investments.

The SWWRPC Strategic Plan directs us to "*create resilient rural communities.*" We believe the continuation of our partnership will be a crucial asset as you serve the residents of Iowa County, now and into the future.

Thank you for our 54-year partnership, and for considering us in your future plans.

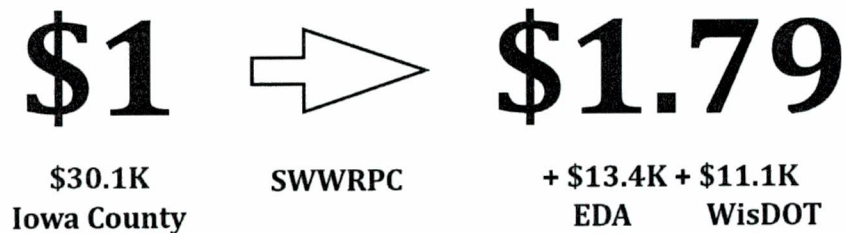
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Maggied".

Troy Maggied
Executive Director

County Benefits and Return on Investment

For every \$1 Iowa County provides to SWWRPC, the county receives \$1.79 in annual capacity building, economic development, and other planning services. This figure excludes contractual work and competitive grants.



Iowa County's 2024 investment of \$30,998.79 amounts to \$1.31 per county resident, and enables us to provide \$55,488.25 of planning and economic development services to the county. This is due to our ability to leverage your investment for an additional \$13,392.74 from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and \$11,096.72 from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT).

Working with us also results in savings due to billable rates that are lower than those offered by private, for-profit consultants. On average, our services cost between \$60-\$80 per hour, compared to \$100-\$180 per hour from private firms performing similar work. This is due to our diverse revenue streams, a lean staffing model, and a non-profit structure which is affordable for small communities lacking funds for private consultants.

\$9,245,000

\$8.6M CARES & ARPA + \$645K Operations

One of the most significant benefits of our partnership, and the one that is most difficult to calculate, is having access to our staff for additional capacity on local projects. This is critical during any period, and during economic hardships it becomes more so. During the COVID pandemic, we secured over \$8.6 million for the region from CARES and ARPA stimulus packages. This funding includes \$1.5 million in new revolving loan funds (RLF) and \$6.36 million to develop 39 acres of new industrial land. We also secured \$645,000 across 3 years for SWWRPC operations, which dropped county contributions from 27.5% of our total funding in 2020, to 15.7% in 2023. Your investment enables our staff to be present and responsive to these opportunities.

SWWRPC Scope of Services

CAPACITY BUILDING

- ADRC Transit Plan
- NR-135 Reclamation
- Data & GIS Maps
- Rail Transit
- University Design Projects
- Opioid Needs Assessment
- Technical Training
- County Best Practices
- Emergency Management Survey

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- EDA Investments
- Main Street Bounceback Program
- Revolving Loan Funds
- Prosperity Southwest Initiatives
- WEDC Funding
- Connect Communities Program

SWWRPC

PLANNING

- Housing Study
- Elected Official On-Boarding
- Strategic Planning
- Transit and Mobility Grants
- Climate Change Preparedness
- Outdoor Recreation Plans
- Data Insights
- Other Regional and State Plans

Capacity Building Projects

- **ADRC Transit Plan:** SWWRPC uses county and WisDOT funding to write the 5-year Locally Developed Coordinated Transit Plans required for grant funding to support vehicle purchases and operating expenses. In 2023, we provided Iowa County over 200 hours valued at \$15,500 in public engagement, data analysis, meeting facilitation, and plan writing services. Due to the creation of previous plans, Iowa County transit providers received \$445,845 between 2020 and 2024 to fund operations, equal to an annual average county revenue of \$79,889 only eligible through the creation of these plans.
- **GIS Mapping:** SWWRPC applies county and EDA funds for a variety of GIS maps used by partners throughout the region. All of these programs are cost-effective due to efficiencies created by our regional GIS platform, staff expertise, and processes.
 - We provide our economic development partners with a variety of mapping tools, including a regional Constructability Map, Financial Asset Map, and Broadband Asset Map. Over 280 hours of staff time valued at \$18,200 were spent on the creation of these maps during the past three years. We have also used our GIS tools to support private businesses seeking to locate into the county.

- Our GIS Coordinator Jaclyn Essandoh worked with the Driftless Area Land Conservancy on two on-line, interactive mapping projects. The Lowery Creek watershed map was developed using county contributions to fund 62 hours valued at \$3,720. DALC's partner the Southern Driftless Grasslands contracted with us to develop a 6-county grasslands preservation map identifying development pressures and priority grasslands. Together, these maps will be used to identify for restoration and preservation priorities.
 - In 2020 and 2021, Jaclyn worked with Iowa County Extension Agent Barry Hottmann and County Administrator Larry Bierke to map broadband survey responses used to plan and prioritize broadband investments. To date, this project has taken 160 hours valued at \$9,600 and was funded by our EDA planning grant and county contributions.
 - In 2021, we provided the Town of Pulaski with data needed to update their Comprehensive Plan. Jaclyn spent approximately 22 hours valued at \$1,320 to provide this service, funded by county contributions.
 - We provide ATV route mapping assistance to Iowa County Highway Commissioner Craig Hardy. Since 2019, our staff has spent 130 hours valued at \$7,710 to support this project.
- **Rail Transit Administration:** Our Local Government Services Specialist Misty Molzof administers three Rail Transit Commissions (RTC), all of which include Iowa County as a member. These RTCs own and manage approximately 380 miles of Class II short-line rail corridor and 105 miles of rail-banked multi-use trails that connect ten counties. Funded in-part by the counties they serve, the RTCs ensure that freight rail remains viable across the region, including approximately 5,500 annual carloads of freight passing through Arena and Avoca. The RTC's role – and our role as Administrator – is to ensure the long-term viability of freight rail along this system, and to ensure the trails are maintained in good condition should rail ever return. Until that time, the trails are heavily used for recreation. The Cheese Country Trail alone generates approximately \$15 million in annual economic impact, over \$13 million of which is from non-local users.
 - **UW-Platteville Design Support:** SWWRPC staff frequently connect communities with UW Platteville (UWP) Senior Design initiatives that apply student and professor knowledge to local issues. Each project is estimated to provide the equivalent of \$10,000 of professional services. We have engaged or partnered to engage UWP students to analyze the long-term historic and projected solvency of municipal finances (2023). These projects resulted in \$10,000 of free technical assistance to the county.
 - **Opioid Needs Assessment:** Iowa County partnered on a regional Opioid Needs Assessment in 2022, providing \$3,000 for interviews, data analysis, and plan writing. We used your county contributions to cover the cost of interviewing state and national experts, and seek opportunities for coordination. The per-county fee for this work would be approximately \$10,000 if not for the efficiencies of a regional approach.

- **Technical Training:** SWWRPC staff serve as the liaison for regional technical assistance trainings offered by state partners. In 2021 and 2022, we partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for sessions on Community Redevelopment Grant Funding, and Managing Flood Damage to Roadways. Together, the coordination, marketing, and managing of this event was valued at \$1,500.
- **Regional Coordination:** Beginning in 2022, we facilitated regional meetings designed to foster cross-county collaboration and best-practice sharing. GIS Coordinator Jaclyn Essandoh facilitated two meetings of the region's GIS staff, continuing a practice we began in 2015. Executive Director Troy Maggied facilitated eight meetings of county broadband staff and three meetings of county board chairs and administrators. Our staff time was paid for by county contributions and equaled 165 hours valued at \$5,500.
- **Emergency Management Survey:** In late 2022, we helped county Emergency Management Directors (EMD) develop a survey for their Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop. Each county is required to develop and deploy this survey, and we facilitated a regional process to develop the survey, deliver it in an online format, collect responses, and analyze the results. Our additional capacity reduced each county's workload and provides a regional picture of natural hazard risks and vulnerability. This process took approximately 38 hours of staff time valued at \$2,850.

Economic Development Projects

- **EDA Investments:** SWWRPC is recognized as the EDA's Economic Development District (EDD) and serves as the broker for EDA grant funding. Iowa County also participates in the five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy required to secure future EDA investments. The historic benefits of this partnership are significant, and include:
 - Our staff have secured three Public Works grants worth \$2.28 million to fund the development of 190 new industrial acres across Iowa County. These projects created \$37.01 million of property value and annually generate \$757,000 in property taxes.
 - EDA planning grants fund the administration of our regional RLFs discussed below, annually providing 150 hours of staff time valued at \$11,250.
 - We provide no-cost grant opportunity analysis to help communities determine if they are eligible and competitive for grants. This removes the risk of wasted time and effort pursuing grants they will not secure. In 2020, SWWRPC staff worked closely with Dodgeville on an EDA grant opportunity. This work took approximately 40 hours valued at \$3,380.
- **Main Street Bounceback Program:** From 2020-2022, SWWRPC administered the Main Street Bounceback Program which provided 50 businesses with \$10,000 grants to start or expand in ten communities across Iowa County. Administering this \$500,000 was paid for in-part by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), but required hours of up-front set up, scoping, contracting, and administrative preparation which was funded by your county contributions and our EDA funding.

- **Revolving Loan Funds:** SWWRPC administers a \$1.8 million RLF portfolio. From our three RLFs, \$677,790 has been lent to Iowa County businesses, leveraging an additional \$1,452,055 in private financing and resulting in the creation or retention of 28.75 jobs. We use our EDA funding and county contributions to cover the cost of RLF administration, marketing, and application processing. We also conduct follow-up meetings with borrowers to ensure they're successful and identify additional support they may need. Additionally, we are the contracted administrator of the Barneveld RLF and helped them develop its RLF Manual and process two applications worth \$505,000 since 2021.
- **TIF Planning:** In 2023, our Local Government Specialist Misty Molzof is working with Mineral Point to develop a new Mixed-Use Tax Increment District to fund infrastructure and developer incentives for residential, commercial, and light-industry development.
- **Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin:** SWWRPC staff serve as the administrator for Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin (PSW), the six-county Regional Economic Development Organization. Working closely with PSW's Iowa County representative Barry Hottmann, we assist with procurement of regional grants and projects that have a multi-county impact. These include the regional housing studies mentioned below, administration of a \$121,000 BEAD Broadband Planning grant, a regional workforce needs mapping project valued at \$50,000, and a Talent Marketing Grant valued at \$60,000. All of these projects were secured by our grant writing efforts.
- **Entrepreneurship Accelerator:** In 2021, SWWRPC partnered with UWP to create a local entrepreneur accelerator called the IDEA Hub, located in Platteville and serving southwest Wisconsin. This \$1.1 million project is funded in equal parts by the EDA and local partners. We were able to bring \$70,000 of cash match funds from PSW, and provide staffing support for the project.
- **WEDC Funding:** As a result of our dual role as an EDD and Administrator of PSW, our Executive Director Troy Maggied has been asked to participate in a statewide process to align state and federal funding programs. Our goal is to improve the development and acquisition of EDA and WEDC grants, and to increase communities' access to this funding. This process involves weekly meetings, two statewide events, and two national workshops. It will take approximately 296 hours valued at \$27,232.

Planning Projects

- **Housing Studies:** In 2018, Iowa County Economic Development Corporation provided \$5,000 to participate in a six-county housing study project, which was leveraged to secure an additional \$30,000 from WEDC. The result was a county housing study and

housing studies for 8 municipalities. These plans are each valued at \$15,000 of staff time each. They will be updated in 2023.

- **Transit Planning Grants:** We have used Iowa County contributions as local match for two back-to-back regional transit studies and mobility management grants. The local matches of \$1,326.77 in 2019 and \$1,680.58 in 2020 resulted in grants equal to \$46,100 each year. These grants supported data analysis and asset mapping to identify future locations for volunteer driver recruitment. These grants also provided funding for regional volunteer driver recruitment and training efforts.
- **Long-Range Planning:** Long-range planning continues to be one of our core functions, and we provide a diversity of contractual and grant-funded planning services to our communities. We've completed several recent projects in Iowa County.
 - The Iowa County Hazard Mitigation Plan requires updates every five years in order for the county and its communities to have access to mitigation and recovery funding from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). SWWRPC has worked with Iowa County Emergency Management Director Keith Hurlburt on three cycles of these plans since 2012. The 2023 update was led by our Community Resiliency Planner Ellen Tyler and focused on climate change-related risks and vulnerabilities, and also engaged school districts. This work is valued at over \$50,000, with 75% coming from a FEMA grant. Our staff also updated Grant and Lafayette County plans, enabling these counties to benefit from a systems approach that delivers cost savings.
 - The Dodgeville and Arena Comprehensive Plans were completed in 2017 and 2019, respectively, and focus on helping these communities leverage their greatest assets, including the natural beauty of Arena's location in the Wisconsin River valley, available industrial and commercial land in Dodgeville, quaint downtowns, and its strategic locations along a state road (Arena) and 4-lane highway (Dodgeville). We offer assistance with implementation using a plan-do-study-act continual improvement process to ensure they move forward with proposed initiatives.
- **Climate Change Preparation:** SWWRPC is currently developing a work plan to support counties and municipalities prepare for the pending impacts of climate change. Few consultants in the region are prepared to work on these issues or have access to funding and relationships to meet these future needs. Our primary areas of focus are economic resiliency, energy security, climate migration, and asset management.
- **Recreation Planning:** In 2022, SWWRPC staff assisted the county and seven communities develop Outdoor Recreation Plans required for them to be eligible for DNR recreation grants. This project cost each community \$3,000 and was leveraged to bring in an additional \$6,000 of EDA funding for each community, returning \$42,000 to an initial \$21,000 investment.
- **Data Insights:** One of our primary duties is to collect, analyze, and present findings on data. We do this both proactively and upon request. In the past two years, we have

helped Avoca, DALC, Iowa County, Pulaski Township, and Ridgeway by providing data insights used to address their needs and pursue grant funding. Collectively, these projects have taken over 50 hours valued at \$4,600.

- **Regional and Statewide Support:** In addition to local projects, we are also involved in regional and statewide planning efforts that ultimately benefit Iowa County.
 - In 2022, SWWRPC staff facilitated a statewide strategic planning process for the Badger State Sheriffs Association (BSSA) to help them identify ways to effectively train, fund, and support sheriffs throughout Wisconsin. This process was funded by BSSA and valued at \$5,000.
 - Every three years, we develop the Needs Assessment for the Southwest Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP). This year-long process identifies the poverty-related needs and is used to inform SWCAP's mission, investment decisions, grant funding, and overall strategic plan. This data-heavy process is funded by SWCAP for approximately \$8,000.