



VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.

To: Common Council, City of Wisconsin Rapids
Plan Commission, City of Wisconsin Rapids
Recovery and Reuse Project Steering Committee

From: Scott Harrington, AICP, Principal Planner
Sonja Kruesel, AICP, Associate Planner

Date: May 27, 2022

Re: Recovery and Reuse Plan Progress Report

Vandewalle & Associates and a sub-consultant team have contracted with the City of Wisconsin Rapids to develop a Recovery and Reuse Plan and Implementation Strategy in response to the idling of the Verso Papermill. This memo provides a status update as project work continues to progress, and supplements previous reports submitted.

Task Updates

- “Forest Industries of the Future” industry symposium coordination. Together with sub-consultant Eric Singaas, detailed planning of invitees, symposium format, and coordination of industry speakers is in progress. An earlier date was initially targeted for this event. However, after discussions regarding other regional efforts occurring through March, specifically the EDA Grant application lead by the Wisconsin Paper Council related to forest industry products, we determined a later date was best suited to avoid any scheduling conflicts between symposium participants and grant writing participants, or confusion of efforts. This event will be held virtually, and invites will be extended to a broad group of industry, legislative, and economic development leaders. All Plan Commission and Common Council members will receive an invitation. Confirmation of speakers is currently in progress.
- A joint work session of the Plan Commission and Common Council was held Tuesday May 10, 2022. Members heard a presentation from the planning consultant and engaged in an exercise to identify individual and group priorities. Through a sticky-dot voting system, the meeting concluded by identifying the top priorities of the group in regard to mill’s future. These priorities will be incorporated into visioning and reuse or redevelopment scenarios for the mill.
- A public visioning work session is scheduled for Wednesday June 1, 2022.
- The sale of the property to Billerud Corporation has been finalized. As such, Vandewalle & Associates is seeking additional feedback from the new owner regarding the future of the property. Billerud has noted willingness to discuss but has not yet provided additional information.
- Completing detailed inventory of structures on the Rapids site and analyzing reuse potential.
- Completed initial report on workforce data and supply chain analysis and impacts. Findings from these reports will be summarized in the upcoming events and public work sessions listed above.

120 East Lakeside Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715 • 608.255.3988 • 608.255.0814 Fax
247 Freshwater Way, Suite 530 • Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204 • 414.988.8631
www.vandewalle.com

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