West Michigan Airport Authority

60 Geurink Boulevard, Holland, MI 49423 P (616) 368-3023

Comprising City of Zeeland, Park Township and City of Holland



West Michigan Airport Authority

Special Meeting Agenda

Consultant Review

January 4th, 2024

9:30 a.m. -2:00 p.m.

60 Geurink Blvd. Holland, MI 49423

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83777032853

SUMMARY: This meeting is being held by the West Michigan Regional Airport Authority, at the Direction of the Airport Authority Board to interview three selected consultants to assist the authority in research regarding upcoming Airport Millage Initiatives in surrounding communities.

- 1. Call Meeting to Order
- 2. Public Comment.
- 3. Consultant Interview Schedule
 - A. 10:00 AM: Frost Research Center; Brook Callaghan*
 - B. 11:30 AM: Mitchell Research & Communications, Inc.; Steve Mitchell*
 - C. 01:00 PM: EPIC-MRA; John Cavanagh*
- 4. Closed Session for Committee to review final comments.
- 5. Adjourn.

*All times are approximate



West Michigan Airport Authority New Millage Approval Survey

Holland Township 2023-2024

West Michigan Airport Authority seeks to understand the prospects of gaining approval for a new millage on the ballot in August 2024 within Holland Township. To facilitate this understanding, the Frost Center for Social Science Research proposes to conduct a comprehensive phone survey with a representative sample of 300-500 eligible voters residing in Holland Township. An additional survey will collect responses of 50 businesses.

Phone Survey objectives:

- Determine the estimated approval percentage of the proposed new millage among eligible voters in Holland Township
- Identify and understand the factors that drive support for the millage
- Understand potential disapproval rationale and factors that may influence perceptions of the millage or the West Michigan Airport Authority

Frost Center for Data and Research recommends the following scope of work.

Scope of Work

Task	Estimated Cost
Research Design & Project Management (30 hrs.):	\$4,500
 Work with West Michigan Airport Authority representatives to design the New Millage Approval Survey. Survey will take approximately 12 minutes and will be conducted over the phone. Program and test surveys for phone survey format Overall project management, monitoring, administration 	

<i>Data Collection</i> (320 hrs.) Qualtrics fee: \$750 Call list fee: \$950	
Selection of respondentsChoose one of the following options:	Option A: \$16,700
Option A: Estimated 300 hours of calling to conduct phone survey for sample of 500 eligible voters	Option A : \$16,700
 Option B: Estimated 240 hours of calling to conduct phone survey for sample of 400 eligible voters Option C: Estimated 180 hours of calling to conduct phone survey for 	Option B: \$13,700
 sample of 300 eligible voters 50 completed surveys for businesses 	Option C: \$10,700
Respondent management and troubleshooting Data Cleaning, Coding, and Analysis (30 hrs.)	\$4,500
 Data cleaning Data cleaning Data analysis and tabulations 	
 Deliverables (30 hrs.) Final written report Written report will include all open-ended responses, survey instrument, survey response breakdowns as requested 	\$4,500

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300 completed residential phone surve	Estimated Costs for Option A: s and 50 online business surveys	\$24,200
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Timeline

March 2023	Initial meeting between Frost Center staff and West Michigan Airport Authority.
October 2023	Survey development and editing, elicit feedback from WMAA, survey testing, establish call center list.
November 2023 – February 2024	Conduct residential phone interviews and distribute online business survey.
March, 2024	Begin data cleaning and analysis.
April, 2024	Data analysis and reporting.
May 2024	Final survey results and report sent to WMAA.

October 9, 2023

Date

Daryl R. Van Tongeren, Ph.D. Director, Frost Center for Social Science Research Hope College Frost Center for Data and Research 100 East Eighth Street, Suite 260 Holland MI 49423

Acceptance:

I select: ____ Option A ____ Option B ____ Option C as the agreed upon scope of work.

I accept the conditions of this proposal and request the Frost Center for Data and Research at Hope College to proceed according to the scope of work herein. Any change or addition to the above scope of work will be in writing with signed acknowledgement by both parties.

For: West Michigan Airport Authority Name: Title: Date



PROPOSAL West Michigan Airport Authority October 17, 2023

Primary Contact

Steve Mitchell Mitchell Research & Communications, Inc. Cell: 248-891-2414 Email: <u>stevemitchell40@gmail.com</u> Client Contact Aaron Thelenwood West MI AA Phone: 248-410-1402 A.thelenwood@wmraa.org

I. BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

The West Michigan Airport Authority has expressed interest in pursuing a millage campaign in Holland Township and would like to get a baseline assessment of the likelihood of success. They have reached out to our company to provide a proposal to complete a phone survey on behalf of the Airport Authority.

They anticipate a 10-12 minute survey (if called).

They are looking at sample sizes of N=200, N=300, and N=500. They are also considering polling corporate entities in the community too.

Mitchell Research has conducted a number of surveys in West Michigan, and specifically in Holland Township. More importantly, our company has also conducted prior surveys for WMAA.

Given the population of Holland Township (38,000) we recommend a sample size of N=200+. It will be very difficult to complete an N=300 or N=500 poll with this few numbers. We also recommend that we conduct an SMS-Web survey.

That type of survey sends a text message to a cell phone, and it directs the respondent to take a Survey Monkey poll.

We conducted more than 150 surveys working for the Michigan House Republican Campaign Committee in 2022, we could see what type of polling is most accurate. We believed that the most accurate was the SMS-Web polling because we were able to compare it to live phoning and to Interactive Voice Response (IVR) polling, and we concluded that the SMS-Web was more accurate.

Scope of Research:

- Survey questions will be based on a millage election on the August 2024 primary election ballot.
- Survey questions would be designed to gain information regarding a millage proposal in Holland Township for WMAA.
- Project timeline April 2024.

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II. PROFILE OF THE COMPANY AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL/PAST EXPERIENCE

- a) Full Name and Address: Mitchell Research & Communications, Inc. 5034 Champlain Circle West Bloomfield, MI 48323 and 101 S. Washington Square Suite 500 Lansing, MI 48933
- b) Mitchell Research & Communications, Inc. is a C-type Corporation that has served clients in more than 40 states since 1985.
- c) Mitchell Research was ranked as one of the Top 10 most accurate State/Regional pollsters in the United States by RealClearPolitics.com.
- d) We have conducted surveys for a wide variety of local governmental and school entities to help develop an understanding of their residents' attitudes, priorities, and general support for various services. They include clients such as:
 - 1. West Bloomfield Township
 - 2. West Bloomfield Township Parks & Recreation Department
 - 3. Kent District Library
 - 4. Hartland Township
 - 5. Bloomfield Township
 - 6. City of Southfield
 - 7. Dearborn Public Schools
 - 8. West Michigan Airport Authority
 - 9. Wayne RESA
 - 10. Harrison Township Library
 - 11. Bloomfield Township Library
 - 12. Muskegon Area District Library

Our principals work closely with clients to determine the most effective approach to their challenges and develop the tools they need to overcome obstacles. While we offer many services, Mitchell Research is especially good at capturing data and providing clients with insightful analyses of that data.

We have a proven record of accuracy. As one of the most accurate polling companies in the country, Mitchell Research has correctly predicted statewide election results in Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, California, South Carolina, and Florida since 1986.

Our accuracy is as a direct result of our rigorous sampling methods and strict screening process. We take great care to ensure that our samples reflect the demographic makeup of the area or market we are targeting both in political polling and market research. Our screening processes help us identify the precise target we are studying.

Our analysis procedures are precise and thorough. Our conclusions and recommendations are valuable, useable, and realistic. We have extensive experience working for a wide range of clients.

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Staff Allocation

Steve Mitchell, CEO of Mitchell Research, will be the point person on this project.

One of the features of retaining our company is that you get to work with the main principal, not with a less experienced person.

Steve has been CEO since the company's founding in 1985. He has worked in more than 40 states for governmental, corporate, media, and association clients. His political clients have included governors, U.S. Senators, members of Congress, state legislators, libraries, mayors, townships, cities, school districts and state governments.

He has been a consultant on hundreds of winning campaigns for political candidates and for governmental organizations seeking passage of millage or bonding proposals.

Steve Mitchell has served as on-air analyst and pollster for WJBK-TV in Detroit, KSDK-TV in St. Louis, KCAL-TV, and KCBS-TV in Los Angeles, KFSN in Fresno, and KOVR in Sacramento . His company polled for the Detroit News or Detroit Free Press and WDIV-TV from 1996 – 2014. For almost 14 years he was a regular guest on Devin Scillian's weekly Sunday morning "Flashpoint" program on WDIV-TV. He left WDIV-TV after being retained by Fox 2 Detroit (WJBK-TV) to be its pollster starting in September 2014 and returned to WDIV-TV in 2016.

He has served as an analyst for NBC, MSNBC, ABC, BBC, CBS, Fox News Channel, Fox Business Channel, Financial Times of London, Washington Post, Washington Times, Houston Chronicle, Newsweek Magazine, New York Times, Chicago Tribune, and other media around the country and the world.

He has overseen the conducting and analysis of thousands of surveys for his clients since 1985.

<u>Emma Caramella</u> has a degree in Marketing with special emphasis on Marketing Research from Michigan State University. Emma worked with Mitchell Research during the last election cycle and was an integral part of the team that conducted 150 statewide, congressional, and legislative polls from June to November last year.

III. Work Plan

Quantitative Research

As mentioned above, Mitchell Research recommends using three different methodologies to capture data. They are: 1) Live telephone operator assisted interviewing, 2) SMS-WEB interviews (a text message is sent to cell phone directing respondents to a Survey Monkey poll), and 3) Interactive voice response (IVR) automated polling. We believe this polling provides the best opportunity to gather all the required data for the survey.

Based on all the surveys conducted last year, we recommend a combination of IVR and www.MitchellResearch.net

SMS-WEB methodologies to capture the data. Because we were able to determine accuracy of the various methodologies, we believe that this is a more accurate as well as cost-efficient way to conduct the West MI AA survey.

It is likely we can save WMAA at least \$10,000 using this methodology as opposed to live phoning.

Sample Selection:

Mitchell Research maintains an up-to-date database of every landline and cellphone number in Michigan. We will use that database to draw a sample in Holland Township. Given the difficulty in getting sufficient responses, it is likely we will call every landline and cellphone in Holland Township at least once.

The sample will be stratified based on voter turnout in Holland Township. For example, if onefourth of all likely voters live in the SW quadrant of Holland Township, one-fourth of those polled would be from the SW quadrant.

(This will take place simultaneously with the questionnaire drafting and takes no longer than 7 days.)

Drafting of Questionnaire:

- We will talk with key stakeholders of the WMAA and discuss issues related to a survey.
- Then, based on that meeting, we will draft a questionnaire and return it to the point person for the department. The department's point person will then circulate it to all the other stakeholders for feedback.
- After receiving feedback from the key stakeholders, we will prepare a second draft to be circulated.
- Drafts will go back and forth until we have reached an agreement on the final draft. WMAA has final approval of any survey. <u>No questionnaire will be called unless WMAA</u> has given written approval of it.

(We recommend a 72-hour timeframe for feedback to be provided. Work tends to be completed in the time allotted to it. If someone cannot respond within 72 hours, chances are they will simply not respond.)

Fielding the Survey:

• The poll will be conducted over a period of seven days using the two methodologies described above.

Analysis

- The day after phoning has been completed, we will send the West Bloomfield Parks & Rec a field copy with aggregate percentages (often called "topline percentages") of the survey.
- We will then prepare a comprehensive PowerPoint analysis of the data with significant cross tabulations.

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IV. Fees

Telephone Survey

N=200 Likely Voters

Combination of: 1) SMS-Web/IVR Polling (N=200)*

Fee: \$7,950

*SMS-Web – A text message is sent to a cell phone directing respondent to a Survey Monkey Poll

V. REFERENCES

I include the following references because they, like several of our other clients, have used Mitchell Research for multiple polls.

Name of Contracting Client: West Bloomfield Township

Location: West Bloomfield, MI Client Contact: Steve Kaplan Title: Supervisor Phone Number: 248-451-4800 (O) 248-410-0919 (C)

Services Performed: We have conducted several surveys to help pass millage or bonding proposals for the township. Because of our accuracy, they have had us conduct several other surveys.

Name of Contracting Client: Kent District Library

Location: Kent County Client Contact: Lance Werner, Director Phone Number: 616-784-2091 Email: <u>LWerner@kdl.org</u>

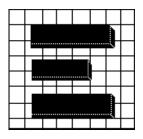
Services Performed: Over the past decade, we conducted a use survey designed to test attitudes and opinions of a renewal millage and a new millage. Our polling, coupled with our political advice, resulted in KDL winning both the renewal and a new millage, the first time they had ever won an increase. Our most recent survey for KDL was April 24-26, 2023.

Name of Contracting Client: Oakland Community College

Location: Oakland Community College, 2480 Opdyke Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304 Client Contact: Tim Meyer Title: Former Chancellor Phone Number: 248-894-9332 Email: <u>trmeyer@comcast.net</u>

Services Performed: We have conducted several surveys for the college testing attitudes and opinions of Oakland County residents. Our initial survey was to help the college pass a millage proposal. Because of our accuracy, they had us conduct several other surveys.

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EPIC • MRA

4710 W. Saginaw Highway Suite 2C Lansing, MI 48917 P: 517-886-0860 F: 517-886-9176 C: 517-449-4648 E: <u>kelly@epicmra.com</u> W: <u>www.epicmra.com</u> September 28, 2023

Aaron Thelenwood Airport Authority Director West Michigan Regional Airport Authority 60 Geurink Boulevard Holland, MI 49423

Mr. Thelenwood:

Thank you for reaching out to EPIC • MRA to inquire about conducting a statistically valid survey of voters residing within the Holland Township taxable boundaries of the West Michigan Regional Airport Authority (WMRAA) about voter perceptions of the WMRAA, and the willingness of voters to support a possible bond proposal that fund the WMRAA that is being considered for placement on an election ballot in 2024. For nearly three decades, as you may already know, county and municipal entities have been using our firm's research services to assist in measuring policy direction, guidance for strategic planning, budgeting priorities, public outreach and education efforts, and voter support for bond proposals or other ballot issues.

Such a survey can also measure voter awareness and use of WMRAA services and offerings; perception of the level of taxes and funding earmarked for the WMRAA; views about financial management; reasons "why" voters may either support or oppose a potential future bond proposal; how voters feel about the way a previous bond proposal may have been administered; which election date - or dates - could prove the most advantageous should a proposal be placed on a future ballot; and where voters get the information that influences their opinions the most about the WMRAA, among other things.

- Educational
- Political
- Industrial
- Consumer
- Market
- Research
- Analysis

Our constituent contact databases have also been widely used by clients to help advance their objectives as a proven effective and efficient means to communicate information gleaned from the research to the general public, whether simply educational in nature, or to communicate directly to voters about a ballot election issue. Further to that conversation, I write to offer an outline of the typical process for conducting a public opinion survey. First, some brief background information about our company.

COMPANY BACKGROUND

EPIC • MRA is the assumed name for Michigan Researchers Associates, Inc., a for-profit corporation formed in 1991 with headquarters in Lansing, Michigan. It is the successor entity to the partnership, Michigan Research Associates, formed in 1985. The principal officers of EPIC • MRA have been active in governmental, political, marketing, business, and health issues at the state and national levels for over 40 years. Since its inception, the firm has provided services to a broad range of clients, including: state, county, township and municipal legislative bodies and planning commissions; public school districts, intermediate school districts, school boards; community colleges and universities; non-profit organizations; financial institutions; transportation authorities; public libraries and library boards; political and business leaders; professional associations; the legal and judicial communities; and members of the health care industry.

 $EPIC \bullet MRA$ takes great pride in the accuracy of our survey research. Nate Silver's 538 website has given us a B+ grade for the accuracy of our polling on statewide election races, which is a ranking and grading system for all polling firms that are recognized nationally. $EPIC \bullet MRA$ ranks higher than any other Michigan-based polling firm, and we also rank higher than but a handful of much larger national polling firms. In the November 2022 election, $EPIC \bullet MRA$ also held the distinction of being the most accurate polling firm in predicting the outcomes of the races for Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State - and the three ballot proposals - in Michigan, on surveys conducted for our media clients.

EPIC • MRA provides a statistically valid sampling of residents, not only throughout the taxable boundaries of the Township as a whole, but also within any desired sub-regions - such as by "jurisdiction" and/or Zip Code - as well as among several major demographic subgroups representative of the population, including race, gender, age, etc. In addition, should placement of a proposal on a future election ballot be in question, survey participants can further be screened to include only respondents that are registered to vote within the taxable boundaries of the geography in question and self-identify as being *at least* "likely" to cast a vote in a particular tested election. Consistent with the aim of providing a statistically valid result, EPIC • MRA's *preference* is to utilize live operator telephone interviews as its exclusive methodology, in order to offer properly stratified and actionable data.

We also do our best to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to keeping on top of the industry's best practices in polling and market research. We always include a *minimum* of 50 percent cell

phone only respondents in our polling samples - and often much higher percentages when the project requires - in order to make sure that all age groups, especially younger respondents, are appropriately represented in our sample frame; without the need to re-weight data once survey data collection is complete. In this way, residents that have forgone traditional land line usage in favor of the exclusive use of mobile devices are able to be reliably reached.

Because of its attention to sampling detail, its in-house capacity to generate customized telephone sample draws, and the incorporation of cell-only respondents, EPIC • MRA rarely finds it necessary to re-weight the results of its surveys. Post-data collection weighting usually involves replicating responses from a relative handful of target respondents in one or more demographic subsets in order to match those subsets' proportion of the population tested – thus somewhat diminishing the influence of responses from the remaining subsets. While sparing use of this technique is appropriate in some circumstances, the practice carries the potential of producing findings that can be misleading, and at worst, wildly inaccurate; an outcome that becomes increasingly likely when multiple subsets are subject to even moderate post-data-collection weighting.

PROCEDURAL PROCESS

Once a survey has been commissioned, we begin close consultation with the client to develop a survey instrument. The initial draft is then presented to the client for review and comment; with the review and re-draft process continuing until a questionnaire that is satisfactory to all parties is developed. Typically, this phase consumes the lion's share of what is normally a *six-week* timeline for completion of the research, from initial consultation through presentation of the final deliverables. However, presuming the construction and finalization of the survey instrument to be used can be expedited, a more contracted timeline can often be accommodated. A potential timeline for the survey research contemplated in this proposal could be:

DATE	ACTIVITY	
Week 1	Contract Award	
	Initial and ongoing consultation with designated staff	
Weeks 1 through 2	Presentation of 1 st questionnaire draft for review and comment	
	Receive final comments and suggested amendments to questionnaire	
Weeks 2 through 3	Live operator calls/data collection	
Weeks 3 through 4	Process data, present frequency report Present cross-tabulation report	
Weeks 4 through 5		
Weeks 5 through 6	Analyze data; develop and present textual report with recommendations	
TBD	Oral presentation of survey findings; if desired	

The presentation of the draft questionnaire would include an estimate of the average interview length. As can be seen from the price chart that follows, interview length is one primary factor in determining the overall price of the research. Sample size, or the number of interviews to be completed, is the other main variable that determines the cost of a survey.

Once a survey instrument is completed and approved, we set about conducting the interviews. Typically, for example, the interview administration for a 400 sample, 12-minute survey, takes approximately five-to-seven days to complete. As each shift's production is completed, data entry is performed so that by the end of the phoning, the data is ready to apply to our aggregation and tallying software. The results of the tabulations are known as:

- •Frequency results the percentage of <u>all</u> respondents saying "yes, no, undecided, don't know/refused, etc." or all other responses to survey questions; and,
- •Cross tabulation tables the tabulation of responses to individual questions by segment (that is, demographic subgroup) such as; absentee vs. poll voters, gender, age, race, education level, geographic location, income, etc.

The frequency results are useful in gauging overall reaction to specific questions posed, and for garnering an understanding of what the attitudes of the population are as a whole. The cross tabulations are beneficial in getting a handle on how particular segments (e.g. lower-income residents, homeowners, non-parents, men under age 50, etc.) of the population react to any given

question in comparison to the entire sample. The comparison of frequency results with the cross tabulations is useful in analyzing the attitudes of subgroups toward various issue questions and questions about a bond proposal.

Moreover, if the survey includes detailed questions about the rationale behind pursuing or not pursuing certain specific ventures, one is able to see what information, and even which messages, resonate the most with all voters, as well as within specific subgroups.

EPIC • MRA is well aware of the fact that the survey, its cost, and its results, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act when commissioned by a public entity, and thus, open to public scrutiny. However, our firm has great experience with taking on public entities as clients, and we pride ourselves on our ability to craft an unbiased survey instrument and present results in a manner that justifies the expenditure of public dollars. Moreover, our services include offering an oral presentation of results, if desired, which, more often than not, can be delivered as part of a regularly scheduled board meeting; a feature that goes a long way toward calming any concerns that may arise in the community about the expenditure of tax dollars on a public opinion survey.

SAMPLE FRAME

To generate a sample, EPIC • MRA maintains an in-house database of published telephone numbers, both landline and cell phone, and appends this database with Secretary of State's qualified voter file and Bureau of the Census information - depending on the nature of the project - to generate the desired sample pool. For example, if the survey is to be conducted among registered voters residing within Holland Township, then the telephone file is matched against the voter file to identify addresses located within the geographic sub-areas of the Township that participate in elections. From this matched file, numbers are randomly pulled in a manner that ensures proper stratification (i.e., proportional to each subunit's contribution to the total) across the entire geography.

After our conversation about the possible variety of topics and lines of inquiry that ultimately may be examined in a live operator telephone survey, EPIC • MRA recommends a N=400 sample (a margin of error of 4.9 points), but also presents pricing for a sample size of N=300 (a margin of error of 5.7 points) on the following page.

As for interview length, from our experience with similar prior work and what is known at this time, it is our expectation that the interview will necessarily be <u>at least</u> 12 minutes, and quite possibly range up to 15 minutes, in order to accurately cover the topics under consideration.

Obviously, there are many possible permutations of sampling frames that could ultimately be chosen, and the same is true for the yet-to-be-determined lines of inquiry to be pursued. Ultimately, settling on an interview length is as much a balance between the reality of the available research budget as it is by the need for accurate and actionable information.

LIVE OPERATOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS OF LIKELY VOTERS

With the foregoing given as a brief background primer, the following chart illustrates our firm's prices for live-operator, telephone survey research services:

Survey Length	300 Samples (Margin of error 5.7 points)	400 Samples (Margin of error 4.9 points)	Typical Lines of Inquiry	Approximate Number of Questions (Including screening and demographic questions)
Up to 12 Minute Interview	\$15,175.00	\$18,000.00	Warm-up atmospheric questions, presentation of "cold" and "informed" proposal info.	22 to 28
13 to 15 Minute Interview	\$18,500.00	\$21,985.00	Further includes presentation of itemized proposal components, testing multiple proposals, and/or message test battery.	26 to 33

The prices shown reflect the fee for all survey-related services, including:

- Pre-survey client consultation
- Ongoing telephone consultation to develop the questionnaire
- Final survey instrument drafting and programming
- Telephone sample draw and stratification
- A minimum of fifty percent cell-phone-only respondents as part of the sampling
- Telephone interview administration and supervision
- Data entry of results
- Coding and grouping of any open-ended responses
- Frequency Report and Cross Tabulation tables
- Textual Executive Report with recommendations
- PowerPoint Presentation of results; if desired
- Post-survey oral presentation of results; if desired

PLEASE NOTE: The prices quoted above also include an electronic voter contact database, which includes the name and address of all registered voters within the geography in question, along with other designations, such as individual vote history, absentee-voter status, and other information for mailing purposes.

Voter contact databases are also available for purchase as a stand-alone product if survey research services are NOT commissioned (starting at \$500). In addition, commercially available telephone numbers (both landline and cell phone), can be appended to the voter contact database for an additional nominal fee of 3 cents per match.

It is hoped that the forgoing information is helpful, and on behalf of all of us at EPIC • MRA, we appreciate the opportunity to offer our services to meet the survey research needs of the WMRAA. Of course, should you have any questions, the need for further detail or clarification, or require a list of prior client references, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Yours truly,

Kelly Sullivan, Project Director EPIC • MRA