

**Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
HARBOR TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Summary**

December 3, 2008

WITC Conference Center, Superior, WI

**HTAC Voting Members Present**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
City of Duluth	Chuck Froseth
City of Superior	Jason Serck ( <i>Chair</i> )
Duluth Seaway Port Auth	Jim Sharrow
Industry-General Cargo	Denise McDougall
Industry-Grain sector	Doug Christianson
Industry-Harbor Services	Ed Montgomery
Industry-Pilots/ Vessel Ops	Bob Libby
Industry-Recreation	Joel Johnson
Isaak Walton League	Gary Glass
MIC	Ed Anderson
MN DNR	Patty Fowler
Save Lake Superior Assoc	Nancy Paisley
St. Louis River CAC	Ted R. Smith
USCG Duluth MSU	CDR Michael Lebsack
Wis DNR	Nancy Larson
WisDOT	Martin Forbes
WLSSD	Jack Ezell

**HTAC Voting Members Absent**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Douglas County	(vacant)
Industry-Coal sector	Marshall Elder
Industry-General Bulk	Mike McCoshen
Industry-Harbor Engineering	Ted Smith ( <i>Vice-Chair</i> )
Industry-Ore Sector	Tom Steele
MnDOT	Denny Johnson
MPCA	Marc Hershfield
NWRPC	Jason Laumann
St Louis County	Scott Smith
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Steven Brossart
USDA-NRCS	Danny Weber
US EPA	David Cowgill
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Dave Warburton

**Others Present**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Barr Engineering	Guy Partch	MN Sea Grant	Dale Bergeron
CBP	Rick Olson	St. Louis River CAC	Howard McCormick
City of Duluth	Chris Kleist	Technical Advisor	Bill Majewski
GLMRI	Carol Wolosz	UMD	Rodger Brannan
GLMRI	Richard Stewart	UMD	Jim Skurla
GLMRI	Stacey Carlson	WI Sea Grant	Gene Clark
MIC staff	Ron Chicka	Wis DNR	Megan O'Shea
MIC staff	Andy McDonald	UW-Superior	Seth Reda
MIC staff	Rondi Watson	UW-Superior	Patti Stalvig
MIC – WI Co-chair	Nick Baker		

**1. Agenda Review / Introductions**

HTAC Chair Jason Serck called the meeting to order at 9:06 am. All participants introduced themselves. No changes to the agenda were put forward.

**2. Committee Business**

**September 3, 2008 HTAC Meeting Summary**

Chair Serck called for changes to the previous month's Meeting Summary as presented.

Gene Clark clarified that the harbor tours, as reported in the Subcommittee Reports section, should have listed the Wisconsin Sea Grant as the sponsor.

*Motion by Ted Smith/Joel Johnson to approve the September 3, 2008 Meeting Summary with revision as noted. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **Nominating Committee for 2009 Officers**

Andy McDonald announced that Jim Sharrow and Jason Serck will poll members to present a nomination for vice-chair for next two years, to be put forward at the March 4, 2009 meeting. Per HTAC precedent, current vice-chair Ted Smith will be nominated as chair.

#### **2009 HTAC work program**

Andy presented the harbor planning portion of the MIC work program. MIC Director Ron Chicka noted that as harbor planning continues to grow as part of the MIC's work program, he may be requesting small financial contributions from member organizations, in accordance with the Harbor Partnering Agreement.

#### **2009 HTAC meetings calendar**

Rondi Watson distributed the calendar of 2009 quarterly HTAC meetings and asked that members make note of next year's meeting dates and locations.

### **3. Great Lakes Sea Grant Network's Climate Change Research Project**

Gene Clark and Dale Bergeron of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Sea Grant programs, respectively, began by handing out a survey to meeting participants to gauge levels of interest and knowledge about the topics of global warming and climate change generally and Great Lakes impacts specifically.

They reported that the two programs are partnering to conduct a new research project, *Preparing Coastal Communities for Climate Change: Translating Model Results to Prepare Ports, Harbors and Stormwater Management Facilities in an Era of Climate Variability and Scientific Uncertainty*.

Funded by a 2-year \$300,000 NOAA grant, its focus will be to increase awareness about possible climate change impacts on the Great Lakes region, and to provide outreach and engage stakeholders in thinking through and adopting new adaptive practices and management decisions to their areas of operation. Identified primary stakeholders include ports and harbors, marinas, coastal community planners, stormwater managers and property owners.

Major tasks will include climate scenario modeling (predicting water levels, temperatures, ice cover, storminess, sedimentation); economic impact analysis (including case studies of Duluth-Superior, Toledo and Port Washington harbors); data visualization (GIS-based visualizations of water levels and shoreline changes); communication products (uniform message, web-based delivery, education and outreach); and, hopefully, integration of this information into organizational strategic planning processes.

Potential roles for HTAC member will include participation on an industry focus team to review results and comment on outreach strategies, prioritize impacts, evaluate potential costs and recommend appropriate responses to a variety of port operations.

Dale commented that another outcome hoped for is that major state and federal agencies will understand who in their organizations are best positioned to address these issues, and to plug into existing groups and current efforts.

Nancy Larson asked if they were aware of the International Joint Commission's Upper Great Lakes Study currently underway. Gene replied that there are aspects of that study that pertain to this effort, also he is involved in one of the IJC subcommittees and there will be an IJC rep on the task force.

Dale reiterated that the impetus for this study was to ensure the Great Lakes aren't left behind in the topic of climate change, with a broader goal of changing awareness and encouraging groups and organizations to take ownership in formulating adaptive responses.

#### 4. Erie Pier Process Re-Use Facility Cost and Market Analysis Research Project

Rodger Brannan from the UMD economics department gave an overview of the work he and fellow researcher Jim Skurla had conducted on a market analysis for the dredge materials at the Erie Pier confined disposal facility. He noted that the issue is not with the coarse dredge materials, because there is an existing market and it already sells--the problem is with marketing the fine (silt) materials. One primary task of their project is to identify all potential customers, and then to narrow the list down to those which are most feasible. He noted that those customers, however, also have competing suppliers, and the timing of available materials with the business cycle of the customer is significant.

He stressed that the focus of this cost analysis is cost minimization rather than profit maximization, and transportation costs comprise almost the entire cost of the material. A potential customer who could take the maximum number of yards of material wouldn't necessarily compare with the cost saving of a customer in closer proximity to the facility, as minimizing transportation time is the most cost effective principle.

Phase II of this project, to be completed in 2009, will propose a cost-effective strategy for increased transport and handling of the fine materials, as well as suggest needed infrastructure improvements. In determining the optimal mode of transport, the feasible options are pretty much limited to hiring trucking companies (which are paid by the hour, the more time and distance involved, the higher the cost), although another more recent option is the RailMate system, which for distances over 100 miles becomes the more affordable option. RailMate, however, requires significant up-front fixed costs and may not be an option, given limitations in rail options to some delivery or construction sites, i.e., the DOTs in both states.

He noted also that the largest economic impact may be in the "greening" of the CDF to create products that will meet the demands of the construction, habitat creation and

restoration, agriculture, forestry, and mining industries. It is anticipated that findings from this project will apply not only to the Erie Pier site in Duluth but to be used as a model for other Great Lakes ports.

## 5. Tour of Finland's Maritime Community

Stacy Carlson, Associate Researcher at the Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute (GLMRI) program at UWS, presented information about the Institute's week-long tour, in September 2008, of Finland's maritime industry. The trip brought Great Lakes and coastal shipping advocates to the Baltic Sea to observe maritime operations.

The foundation for this tour was a partnership, formed in June 2007 and based on the similarities of environment, climate, and industries of the Great Lakes and the Baltic Sea regions, between (GLMRI) and the Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences in Kotka, Finland.

Tour participants included representatives from GLMRI, the Great Lakes Commission, the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, and CPCS Limited of Halifax, Nova Scotia. They were based primarily in Helsinki, but ventured outward from there to tour the Finnish ports of Vuosaari, Kotka, and Turku, as well Tallinn, Estonia, where they met with the Port Director.

Vuosaari Harbor was notable in that cargo operations will relocate there from existing Helsinki ports, while passenger services will remain in Helsinki. Construction began in 2003 and provided environmental mitigation solutions including a noise barrier and a 1.6 km rail and road tunnel. The new seaport facility opened November 2008.

Research presentations were provided by the Kymenlaakso University and the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, and focused on winter navigation, icebreaking operations, ballast water research, and AIS/VTS systems. GLMRI staff also presented to faculty and students at Kymenlaakso University on recent research, maritime education efforts and Great Lakes port operations. The group also visited the Aker shipyard in Turku, where they received a tour of a huge cruise ship under construction, the Oasis of the Seas. Stacy added that there would be continued opportunities for student exchange between the Great Lakes and Finnish ports.

## 6. Dredged Material Management Plan Update

Gene Clark, chair of the HTAC's Dredging subcommittee, presented the prioritized list of projects to be recommended to the Army Corps of Engineers for its update of the Dredged Materials Management Plan (DMMP) for the Duluth-Superior harbor. He noted that the current disposal facility, the Erie Pier CDF, has at most 4 or 5 years of capacity, which necessitates this update. He explained that projects must be specifically listed in the DMMP to enable the Corps to program funds for future dredging efforts.

The Dredging subcommittee has been working to identify potential projects, starting first with those listed in the 1998 DMMP, then adding as many new viable projects as they

could envision, and most recently, developing a project matrix and working as a group to review and prioritize those projects.

He explained that the point is to present the Corps with a refined (i.e., realistic) list of stakeholder-driven projects so their investigations can be more efficient. The Corps will then conduct project site evaluations: including geotechnical data, surveys, concept design, cost estimates, real estate plans and environmental assessments. The final projects approved by the Corps will provide the required 20 years of capacity.

They are proposing 18 final projects to be forwarded to the Corps. Those identified as having the best chance of being implemented are listed as the top six recommended projects:

1. Erie Pier Transfer Site for Dredged Material
2. Reuse Hydraulically Sorted Dredged Material from Erie Pier Site
3. Beach Nourishment
4. Habitat Creation/21st Ave West Channel (new/divided project)
5. Interstate Island Habitat Enhancement (new/removed deep hole)
6. Hibbard Steam Plant Land Creation

He added that these projects also ranked high due to inter-agency support and existing information about the projects. The next 12 recommended projects, in order of priority, include:

7. Mineland Reclamation Using Dredged Material
8. CN Dock Stabilization
9. Erie Pier Annex
10. Habitat Creation / Capping Spirit Lake
11. Lakehead Dock Fill
12. Sky Harbor Airport
13. Expanded Version, Habitat Creation/21st Ave West Channel
14. Hearing Island Habitat Creation
15. Douglas County Dock
16. C Reiss Superior Dock
17. Estuary Flats
18. Erie Pier Super Filling

He noted that the final list also identifies any issues associated with each of the potential projects – the idea was to include them, not to simply rule them out.

In discussing the changes that were made to list since the draft was presented in September, he explained that in the process of reviewing all proposed projects, the committee recognized that the 21st Avenue West project needed to be separated into a project focused on the west channel (projects #4 and #13).

Chris Kleist from the City of Duluth pointed out that the 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue West project needs a local sponsor, but it is uncertain that the City could provide the needed 35% match.

Gene responded that they will be meeting again next week, and they were hoping to build on previous support from prior administrations; also the possibility exists that grants could be acquired to allow the city to be the sponsor for little or no cost.

*Joel Johnson/Ed Anderson moved to approve the prioritized list of dredging projects as presented.*

Ted R Smith commented that the cost also includes environmental and social benefits; the Corps is talking about changing their accounting methods – if true costs are considered, transitioning Erie Pier to a Processing and Reuse Facility (i.e., from a CDF to a PRF) will be easier to sell.

Jim Sharrow commented that he would like to emphasize the value of HTAC members participating in this process, that it was not the normal procedure for the Corps to follow in doing an update like this. But they recognized the great advantage in gaining local buy-in for the final projects as well as the significant cost savings by involving local stakeholders in conducting the pre-assessments.

Ted Smith noted that if some of these projects are approved, they might require more dredge materials than we can provide; the key will be to stage them properly. A new problem might become, where will we get additional materials?

*Motion carried, unopposed.*

Jason Serck thanked the subcommittee for its work on this valuable process.

## **7. Great Lakes Commission Annual Meeting**

Dale Bergeron from the MN Sea Grant Institute reported on the Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission that he attended on behalf of local port interests. There was concern that the Commission was antagonistic to the ports and lake carriers association--their policy coordination and advocacy role was a big point of contention, as well as ports and navigation issues being relegated to minor issue status.

He noted that the original setup was supposed to bring parties together, but as the meeting was pretty much boycotted by local port interests, and tensions between groups, that didn't really happen. Dale noted that the Canadian presence was a positive feature, and a strong reminder to the Commission that other countries are involved, as well.

There were also research projects Dale was asked to attend and comment as appropriate. He reported on some of these, some of which were well received, some not. Highlights included the keynote presentation talked about Quebec's aggressive renewable energy initiatives. Dr. Hugh MacIssac's research on the impacts of invasive species and enhancing maritime transportation concluded that closing the Seaway was not an option, would not prevent introduction of new invasives anyway, also likely prevented by international treaties. He suggested that what needed to happen was to devise standards and implement best management practices.

A presentation by Dr. John Taylor and James L. Roach compared the transportation cost of "ocean direct" shipping into the Great Lakes vs. use of laker, rail, barge, or truck

alternatives from an ocean or St. Lawrence River port. They concluded that ocean vessels save shippers \$55 million annually compared to the use of alternative modes; however, this study was widely criticized for utilizing inaccurate research methodologies, and generally determined to be less than useful.

## 8. Subcommittee Reports

### **Bylaws and Membership Subcommittee**

Andy McDonald stated that he will be organizing a meeting within next month or so to look at HTAC participation and to suggest possible updates to membership and bylaws.

### **Dredging**

Gene Clark reported that other than the work on the DMMP update and the UMD study, he is participating on the Great Lakes dredging team along with Patty Fowler and Jim Sharrow. Their recent meeting focused on dredging window consistency (i.e., times when you can't dredge due to states having different standards). However, progress has slowed due to Corps funding, which will be withheld until March 2009.

He added that the Wisconsin Sea Grant-sponsored harbor tour aboard the LL Smith research vessel was well attended by HTAC and port stakeholders and had great weather on September 16, but the second scheduled tour had to be cancelled, twice, due to unfavorable weather conditions.

## 9. Roundtable Discussion / Project Updates

Jason Serck reported that new ballast water regulations had been taken up by the State of Wisconsin, modeled on Minnesota's PCA rules. The City of Superior has submitted comments – although the National Wildlife Federation and the Lake Carriers Association have asked for a contested hearing

Jim Sharrow added that a New York state proposal is consistent with the federal EPA permitting process, but proposed state add-ons would require vessels that are just transiting to have permit and equipment; ballast water exchange would require diversions of 50 miles. The Canadian government is seeking an injunction due to the trade restrictions it would impose.

Ed Montgomery reported on a new project that brought in state-of-the-art equipment to conduct a geo-probe, replacing core sampling with a laser analysis that revealed a significant absence of pollution in the harbor. The project had MPCA involvement, and was the first time this type of soil analysis has been used in the water via a barge.

## 10. Adjourn

*No other items were brought forward for discussion and the meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rondi Watson, MIC Planning Assistant