

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

**Meeting Summary**

September 2, 2009

Inn on Lake Superior Conference Center, Duluth, MN

---

**HTAC Voting Members Present**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Jim Sharrow	NRCS	Danny Weber
Industry-Coal sector	Marshall Elder	NWRPC	Jason Laumann
Industry-General Cargo	Denise McDougall	St. Louis River Alliance	Bill Majewski
Industry-Harbor Engineering	Ted Smith ( <i>Chair</i> )	St Louis County	Scott Smith
Industry-Pilots/ Vessel Ops	Bob Libby	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Steve Brossart
Industry-Recreation	Joel Johnson	Save Lake Superior Assoc.	Nancy Paisley
Izaak Walton League	Gary Glass	USCG Duluth MSU	Michael Lebsack
MIC	Ed Anderson ( <i>Vice-Chair</i> )	Wis DNR	Nancy Larson
MnDOT	Denny Johnson	WisDOT	Martin Forbes
MPCA	Marc Hershfield	Wisconsin Sea Grant	Gene Clark
		WLSSD	Dan Belden

**HTAC Voting Members Absent**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
City of Duluth	Chuck Froseth	Industry-Harbor Services	Ed Montgomery
City of Superior	Jason Serck	Industry-Ore Sector	Mark Erickson
Douglas County	(vacant)	MN DNR	Patty Fowler
Industry-General Bulk	Mike McCoshen	MN Sea Grant	Dale Bergeron
Industry-Grain sector	Doug Christianson	US Fish & Wildlife Service	Dave Warburton

**Other Stakeholders Present**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
AMI Consulting	Chad Scott	MIC staff	Rondi Watson
ASL-RailMate	Patrick Dorin	MnDOT-St. Paul	Dave Christianson
ASL-RailMate	Betty Juntune	NRRI	Marsha Patelke
Barr Engineering	Eric Dott	Technical Advisor	Ted R. Smith
City of Duluth	Chris Kleist	US ACOE – Detroit District	Dave Bowman
Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Adele Yorde	US ACOE – Detroit District	Lt Col James Davis
GLMRI	Carol Wolosz	US ACOE – Detroit District	Wayne Schloop
GLMRI	Stacey Carlson	USCG Duluth MSU	Larry DiDomenico
JPG Group	Lisa Neitzel	UMD	Hongyi Chen
MIC staff	Ron Chicka	UWS/DSPA	Patti Stalvig
MIC staff	James Gittemeier	UWS/GLMRI	Dr. Richard Stewart
MIC staff	Robert Herling	Western GL Pilots Ass'n	Don Willecke
MIC staff	Andy McDonald	WisDNR	Megan O'Shea

---

**1. Agenda Review / Introductions**

HTAC Chair **Ted Smith** called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. All participants introduced themselves. No changes to the agenda were put forward.

## 2. Committee Business

### June 3, 2009 HTAC Meeting Summary

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

*Motion by Bob Libby/Joel Johnson to approve the June 3, 2009 Meeting Summary with no changes. Motion carried unanimously.*

## 3. Duluth-Superior Long Range Transportation Plan

**Robert Herling and James Gittemeier**, planners from the Metropolitan Interstate Council, presented information about the MIC and the current effort to update its Long Range Transportation plan. Their current consultation process involves outreach to many constituencies, including the HTAC and affiliated port and harbor interests, to gain input into the development of local transportation goals, objectives, and policies.

They explained that the MIC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Duluth-Superior area; MPOs are federally mandated for population areas of 50,000 to ensure that there is a process to gain local input into federally-funded transportation projects. The MIC planning area is defined by FHWA based on the most recent Census data about population demographics.

They noted that recent MIC planning activities related to port and harbor interests include facilitating the HTAC and its subcommittees and developing the Duluth-Superior Port Land Use Plan (2006) and the Erie Pier Management Plan (2007). Two projects that were funded by the MIC-area Transportation Improvement Program or TIP include Port Terminal Drive (1999) and Helberg Drive (2007).

Long range transportation objectives that have been identified that are relevant to the port include:

- Increasing freight activities and intermodal facilities for freight
- Ensuring security of non-highway transportation facilities
- Reducing negative environmental impacts
- Reducing intermodal conflicts
- Ensuring longevity of infrastructure and optimizing investments

They noted that major port-related short- and mid-range projects currently programmed include lift bridge rehabilitation and painting; Highway 35 reconstruction; re-decking work on the Bong and Blatnik bridges; and engineering work to extend the Munger Trail to Canal Park from its current terminus in West Duluth near the zoo. The latter project involves a detailed process to determine the trail alignment and minimize conflicts with bikes and pedestrians within a dense industrial area.

Dr. Richard Stewart asked if the MIC's LRTP is formally coordinated with the two state plans. Robert responded that the MIC aligns its goals with the goals of the state DOTs for this region. For example, MnDOT emphasizes the need to preserve and maintain existing transportation infrastructure (as compared to new construction), and the short-, mid- and long-range project lists for local jurisdictions reflect this.

Dr. Stewart commented that he would like to see waterways explicitly defined as transportation corridors in our LRTP, to better describe this mode of transport as a viable alternative to shipping goods by truck and rail. He added that the waterborne mode of transport offers benefits that are consistent with the broader transportation goals for this region, including reducing negative environmental impacts and promoting economic development.

He added that he had made this same suggestion during the recent public input process for the Wisconsin Long-Range Plan, but did not see it reflected in the final document. He hoped we would consider it for inclusion in the Port/Harbor/Waterways section of our LRTP.

#### 4. Report from Army Corps of Engineers

Lt. Col. James B. Davis, Commander of the Detroit District Office, explained that General Peabody had been scheduled to tour this port and address the HTAC today, but was called away to Washington DC to deal with funding and invasive species issues related to a fish barrier demonstration project in the Chicago area.

He noted that a key issue for the Great Lakes is that carriers are concerned about the backlog of dredging projects. He added that the Corps is very interested in finding sustainable ways to store and/or reuse the dredge materials; if materials cannot be placed, shipping will come to a halt. He commented that CDFs are probably the very last option to consider; they are actively seeking beneficial reuse options.

Statements originally planned for Gen. Peabody, who wanted to touch on specific points:

**GLRI:** Lt. Col. Davis described the new Great Lakes Restoration Initiative as a huge boon for the Great Lakes in general and the Duluth-Superior area in particular. Several project level approvals are pending; local sponsorship and a 65-35 cost split will be required; several projects have been nominated for the Duluth area.

**Budgets:** He described 08-09 as some of the best years ever, funding-wise. Including ARRA (stimulus) funding, \$47 million was allocated for the Detroit district. The problem was, only a limited number of projects met the need to obligate funds very quickly (i.e., were shovel-ready). The Corps' perspective is that there need to be established partnerships for federal funding to come to an area (exception: Soo Locks).

**Erie Pier:** A project that is "near and dear to our hearts" – they see it as a key strategic issue for Duluth and they want to move forward with partnership/sponsorship portion. They've been saying for many years now that there is limited capacity in this facility. Beneficial

reuse has been an important part of keeping it functioning up to this point—but we’re getting to a critical point on this, for example, some of the GLRI projects will involve dredging—an unforecasted requirement that will impact the capacity of Erie Pier.

Ted Smith commented that staffing changes at the local and district levels have resulted in improvements, good projects, good partnerships.

**Environmentally friendly navigation systems**—shipping currently has a small carbon footprint, and new fuels are improving that. Invasive species are now definitely on the radar of private industries. Commented that the Great Lakes are the heartland of manufacturing in this country—significant economic contributors; our ports and vessels are all about jobs. The goal is “US-made, US-crewed ships carrying US-based products for US manufacturing needs.”

**Jim Sharrow** commented that Erie Pier is owned by the Duluth Seaway Port Authority and they don’t consider it to be a CDF anymore—to the degree they are successful in moving accumulated materials into local construction projects is the degree to which capacity will be maintained. There is a demand for hydraulically sorted fine materials; need also improved dockage, water filtration, etc., to get it to function as a PRF (Processing and Reuse Facility) instead. But for this project to move forward, they need annual funds to be budgeted within construction general funds—rather than O&M funds. They want to work with the Corps on this; also on a hydrodynamic analysis of shore where beach nourishment takes place. He commented that they are really pleased with funding for the ongoing corrosion study. But he added that how they will continue to receive annual budgeted funds is a major issue.

**Gene Clark** stated that he represents the dredging team of this committee. He stated that he appreciated Col. Davis’ comments about the CDF-to-PRF conversion – and hopes that Gen. Peabody understands it similarly. He commented that thousands of hours have been spent on the DMMP, but most of the funding comes from O & M budget and he seconds the message that they need specific annual construction funding.

**Ted Smith** commented that he and many others in this community were disappointed that the Soo Lock did not receive stimulus funding. He asserted that the current benefit/cost analysis for the Soo Locks is out of date, suggested we could get that ratio up with more input, especially from industry. He added that the Corps should consider the research capabilities that are available right here in this harbor (i.e., UMD/UWS, GLMRI).

**Bill Majewski** inquired into the status of the DMMP— Col. Davis responded that we have \$60,000 budgeted this year and that it will be a 3-year process the way it’s being funded. That’s the soonest it will be finished; what’s most important is that it’s been started.

## 5. Harbor Partnering Agreement

**Andy McDonald**, Principal Planner at the Metropolitan Interstate Council, reported that it is a good time to renew or update the Harbor Partnering Agreement, which was last revisited in 1999. HTAC activities have traditionally focused on planning but more implementation activities are taking place. Also, federal and funding opportunities are becoming available. For these reasons, it would be a good idea to strengthen the current good working relationships among HTAC stakeholders.

He described the history of the Partnering Agreement beginning in 1996 when the Army Corps requested that signatory agencies enter an agreement to work toward developing the Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) which was in progress at that time. The interest areas were 1) beneficial reuse of dredged materials, 2) state and federal regulatory programs, and 3) environmental protection.

Andy also outlined HTAC accomplishments and changes since 1999. They include the reworking of membership and a transition to a subcommittee structure to focus work by members on specific issues. Some current and recent work has had an implementation focus with projects such as Hog Island Inlet Remediation, St. Louis River/Duluth Tar Superfund Site and the Erie Pier Dredged Materials Reuse Strategies.

The strategy to update the Partnering Agreement is to organize a subcommittee of the HTAC and take from 4-6 meetings to develop a statement of purpose, areas of interest, and goals and objectives. This subcommittee will also determine the signatory groups/agencies, document accomplishments since 1999 and identify an event that will celebrate the new partnering agreement.

## 6. Northern MN/NW WI Regional Freight Study

Dave Christianson, Mn/DOT Freight Planning Manager, presented findings and draft recommendations from the freight plan. Stakeholder input sessions pointed out opportunities to develop intermodal facilities in the Duluth-Superior area. Rail congestion in the Chicago area could be bypassed through development of an intermodal terminal in the port terminal area that would utilize short sea shipping to move goods to the lower Great Lakes areas. A rail-truck intermodal facility could also take Twin Cities bound freight by truck instead of the current practice of it going by rail to Chicago and then by much longer truck trips to the Twin Cities.

Port related recommendations include supporting the expansion of the Garfield Elevator C&D Dock expansion. This project would support movement of wind turbine equipment, new steel making activities on the Iron Range and potentially handling materials used in the paper making industries. Preliminary designs include upgrades to the dock faces, developing a new loop road and installing rail spurs to the dock.

Dave also outlined three recommendations that support the movement of freight by roadways, much of it moving to and from the port of Duluth-Superior. Designating a tiered truck network, identifying commercial corridors designating super-haul corridors would improve this area's freight infrastructure that ultimately facilitates movement of freight through the port. A tiered truck network would provide a method of prioritizing investments in routes where the most freight is moving. Identifying commercial corridors would allow industries critical to the northern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin economy to more efficiently move freight along specific corridors. Designating super-haul corridors allows large pieces of industrial and wind energy equipment to more efficiently move to and from the port through this area's highways.

Dave concluded the recommendations by describing some of the "quick start" projects listed in the plan. These projects are intended to be low cost projects (usually under \$50,000) that show the private sector that participated in the freight plan process that results can happen in the short term. A few local projects described include improving turning radius at 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue West and Oneota Street and removing the abandoned rail bridge at Jenswold and Michigan Streets.

The final freight plan is still in the final editing and review process. It will be sent to the study committee in October for final review. The anticipated date of final release will be in November 2009.

## **7. Erie Pier Re-Use Facility Phase II: Study Update**

Hongi Chen, Assistant Professor, UMD Dept of Mechanical & Industrial Engineering, presented information from the second phase of GLMRI-funded research into the costs of converting Erie Pier to a processing and reuse facility. This research compared costs of moving materials to sites identified in the first phase by looking at truck and rail options. A number of projects identified are assumed to utilize a significant amount of material. The sites within the Duluth area will most likely use trucks given the short distance. For sites farther away such as mineland reclamation projects on the Iron Range, RailMate service was examined. RailMate is a system is connecting multiple semi trailers together as rail cars. This system allows the efficiency of rail combined with the flexibility of trucking at the origin and destination. For the longer distances, options that include RailMate were more cost effective.

## **8. Adjourn**

No other items were brought forward for discussion and Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rondi Watson, Planning Assistant