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**DULUTH-SUPERIOR  
METROPOLITAN INTERSTATE COUNCIL**

***MEETING SUMMARY***  
**Wednesday, June 15, 2005**

Hampton Inn Starboard Room  
310 Canal Park Drive, Duluth, Minnesota

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***Voting Members Present:***

Broc Allen  
Nick Baker, *Wisconsin Co-Chair*  
David Bilden  
David Conley  
Esther Dalbec  
Bill Eckman  
Earl Elde, *Secretary*  
Bob Finsland  
Keith MacDonald  
Kay McKenzie  
Jim Stauber  
Peg Sweeney

***Representing:***

Douglas County Suburban Townships  
Douglas County  
City of Superior Citizen Rep  
Douglas County  
City of Superior  
Douglas County  
St. Louis County Suburban Townships  
City of Superior  
City of Hermantown  
Douglas County  
City of Duluth  
St. Louis County

***Voting Members Absent:***

Ed Anderson  
Wayne Jordahl \*  
Richard Kieren \*  
Isobel Rapaich  
Rob Stenberg, *Minnesota Co-Chair*  
Russ Stover \*

***Representing:***

Douglas County  
St. Louis County Suburban Townships  
City of Proctor  
Duluth Transit Authority  
City of Duluth  
City of Duluth

\* = Excused

***Others Present:***

Sherry Berhow  
Lynne Bly  
Holly Butcher  
Ron Chicka  
John Chell  
James Gittemeier  
Sarah Koepke  
Andy McDonald  
Susan Moe  
Rondi Watson  
Gerry Weiss

***Representing:***

ARDC / MIC Intern  
MnDOT-OIM / St. Paul  
ARDC / MIC Staff  
ARDC / MIC Director  
ARDC  
ARDC / MIC Staff  
FHWA-MN Division  
ARDC / MIC Staff  
FHWA-MN Division  
ARDC / MIC Staff  
MnDOT-Transit / St. Paul

**1. Introductions/Agenda Review**

Wisconsin Co-chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and all meeting attendees introduced themselves. Guests included Lynne Bly and Gerry Weiss from the MnDOT-St. Paul office and Susan Moe and Sarah Koepke from the Federal Highway Administration-MN Division.

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Ron Chicka noted that they had participated in the MIC's annual mid-year review session held earlier that day.

## **2. Committee Business**

### **Meeting summary of May 18, 2005**

Chair Baker announced that MIC staff had requested an addition to the meeting agenda, an approval item to consider an amendment to the 2004-2006 Minnesota TIP. Hearing no objections, he stated that it would be included on the agenda after John Chell's presentation.

Chair Baker then called for amendments or corrections to the previous month's meeting summary. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

*Peg Sweeney/Bob Finsland moved to approve the meeting summary from the May 18, 2005 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.*

## **3. 2005 Work Program Revisions**

Ron Chicka presented a revised budget and project descriptions for the 2005 Work Program. He explained that the overall budget was not changed but the dollars were reallocated to include two major additions to the 2005 Work Program. The Duluth Heights Circulation Study follows on the heels of the recent Miller Trunk Study and will look into the issues surrounding mall-bound traffic in the upper Duluth Heights neighborhood. The Rice Lake Road Corridor Study (from Arrowhead to Hwy 194 / Central Entrance) will examine traffic impacts and recommend mitigation measures for this heavily used arterial route. In both cases, work will begin later this summer and will continue into early 2006.

He noted that other changes include the Traffic Impact Reports line item, which has been put toward the Hermantown Section 13 Traffic Impact Study for additional consulting assistance in small area modeling. Additionally, the Duluth Port Plan and the Long Range Plan budgets were increased to account for staff and consultant time. Studies being eliminated include two corridor studies in Duluth and one in Superior (the Grand Avenue, London Road and East Second Street Access Management Plans), which will be postponed for consideration for inclusion the 2006-2007 Work Program and Budget. The budget for the Safe Routes to School Study in Duluth was reduced by approximately 30% since it will begin in late summer or fall instead of spring, as suggested by the school district Transportation Director.

*Peg Sweeney/Earl Elde moved to approve the revised MIC Work Program and Budget for 2005. In response to a question about the Grand Avenue project that had been deleted, Ron explained that both the City of Duluth and MnDOT representatives on the TAC had supported the postponement of both studies until after the road work currently underway has been completed. There was no further discussion and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.*

## **4. Great Lakes Regional Collaboration**

ARDC Director John Chell reported that in May 2004, President Bush signed a Presidential Executive Order calling for the creation of a task force to find a way to coordinate the many (148 federal and 58 state) initiatives that currently exist to address environmental and natural resource

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issues involving the Great Lakes. He added that over \$2.2 billion had been allocated for a variety of projects over the last decade but there was no overarching, coherent approach and no venue for local municipal level input and participation. As a result, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) convened in Chicago, IL on December 3, 2004, and members of the President's Cabinet, the Great Lakes Congressional delegation, and Great Lakes governors, mayors and tribal leaders met and forged an intergovernmental partnership and officially voiced their support for a coordinated strategy to further protect and restore the Great Lakes.

He added that he was participating on one of the resulting Great Lakes Issue Area Strategy Teams, the working bodies responsible for producing draft strategic action plans to address the issues considered by the specific teams. The strategic action plans from the Strategy Teams will be combined into a draft of the comprehensive strategy that will be provided to the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration members for review and consideration.

The eight Issue Area Strategy Teams are Habitat/Species, Indicators and Information, Persistent Bio-Accumulative Toxics Reduction, Invasive Species, Sustainable Development, Coastal Health, Non-point Source and Areas of Concern Restoration/Sediments. As a participant on the Sustainable Development team, he added that he foresaw a role for MPOs to play a greater role in environmental management and land use planning, with initiatives similar to the MIC's recent Duluth Urban Area Growth Impact Study. Other recommendations would likely include the promotion of short-sea shipping and intermodal transport.

He closed by announcing that the first summit of the GLRC would be held this summer in Duluth, on July 7-8, to release the Great Lakes Restoration and Protection Strategy and make it available for public comment.

## **5. Amendment #7 to the 2004-2006 Minnesota TIP**

James Gittemeier reported that MIC staff had received an amendment request from MnDOT District One to add two Scenic Byway projects for the City of Duluth into the 2004-2006 Duluth Metropolitan TIP for 2005 funding. The first project (SP# 91-060-57) is for a North Shore Scenic Drive Council project to implement three cairn signs at: Glensheen, Lester River, and at Sugar Loaf Cove (\$64,800 in FHWA and \$16,200 local for a total of \$81,000). Other funds from this project will be used to develop a scenic byway brochure that will be developed by Iron Range Resources (IRR) for the North Shore Scenic Drive Council. The second project (SP# 91-060-51) is for a North Shore Scenic Drive Council "seed grant," funds of which are used for operations and to support an ARDC Regional staff person (Bryan Anderson) who serves as the region's staffing resource for Byways projects (\$25,000 in FHWA and \$6,250 local for a total of \$31,250). He added that ARDC is listed as the eligible grant recipient for Scenic Byway funds since groups such as the North Shore Scenic Drive Council are not eligible to receive federal funds; therefore, ARDC applies for these grants on their behalf.

*Earl Elde/Bill Eckman moved to approve MIC Resolution 05-03 amending the FY 2004-2006 Duluth Metropolitan Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include funding for two 2005 Scenic Byways projects as described. There was no further discussion and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.*

## **6. Duluth Heights Traffic Circulation Plan – Scope Development**

Andy McDonald explained that given the high profile nature of this study (County Commissioner

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Dennis Fink had approached Ron on behalf of neighborhood residents to conduct this study and it has already gotten attention in the local paper), he wanted to gain some technical input on the study goals and methodology before presenting the scope of work for approval. To that end, he had conducted a brainstorming session with the Transportation Advisory Committee the previous day and had received some good input. Study goals included reducing traffic impacts on the neighborhood, improving traffic flow and improving safety. Specific tasks included identifying the study area; documenting cut through traffic; identifying and engaging stakeholders; identifying (all) possible solutions (options would include do nothing, traffic calming, new roadways, capacity improvements to the current system or a combination); choosing and implementing the solution(s) and identifying possible funding sources.

He noted that documenting cut through traffic would be one of the largest tasks utilizing the largest amount of staff time and likely requiring help from sources beyond MIC staff. Suggested methods included using tube counters at specific locations to determine base traffic volumes supplemented by turning movement counts at locations where traffic enters neighborhoods from arterials; documenting cut-through traffic using tape recorders to record partial license plate numbers; and using aerial photos to count housing units and comparing ITE trip generation rates to real traffic numbers.

He added that stakeholders include not only residents living within the study area but also roadway users primarily residing in areas east and north of the study area driving to the Miller Hill area.

Suggested methods to engage stakeholders included the use of focus groups and open houses instead of public meetings; providing information and gathering input via websites; surveying residents to determine neighborhood views on cut through traffic, traffic calming, and new arterials; Conducting on site surveys at the Miller Hill and/or Stone Ridge malls to determine the routes shoppers used to get to the area; and utilizing Chamber of Commerce and/or mall management to obtain marketing/demographic data to determine where customers live and travel from.

He noted that consensus on the solution from the City of Duluth and study area residents will be critical to the success of this project. He closed by stating that he would be presenting the scope for approval at the July MIC and TAC meetings.

## **7. 2030 MIC Long Range Plan - Draft**

Holly Butcher distributed the draft version of the Duluth-Superior Long Range Transportation Plan, *Mobility for People and Freight 2030*, and described the various public involvement strategies planned to gain public input on the draft plan. These strategies include publishing the plan on the MIC website ([www.ardc.org/mic](http://www.ardc.org/mic)) as well as on other MIC jurisdiction websites (county, city, state) as feasible. Public meetings on the Draft Plan will be held in late June in Duluth and Superior and advertised in a variety of formats. . She added that the final plan will be presented for approval at the August annual joint MIC and TAC meeting and picnic. She closed by asking the MIC to officially release the plan for 45-day public comment.

***Kay McKenzie/Bob Finsland moved to release the Draft Plan for 45-day public comment. There was no further discussion and the motion was passed unanimously.***

## **8. Port Planning Update**

Andy McDonald reviewed the topics presented at the June 1st quarterly meeting of the MIC's

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Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC). In addition to John Chell's presentation about the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, topics included an update from WisDNR about the Hog Island Inlet cleanup in Superior and a presentation by SEH consulting about the Arthur Avenue construction project near the Port Authority in Duluth. He also noted that the draft version of the Duluth Port Land Use Plan is in production and will be presented soon to the study advisory committee and then to the MIC and TAC in the coming months.

## **9. Hermantown Section 13 Traffic Circulation Analysis**

James Gittemeier reported that based on last month's discussion at the TAC meeting with modeling consultant Jim Henriksen, he had been updating the trip distribution tables to include future as well as current business and residential development in that one-mile square area. He displayed the possible future development scenarios being used to analyze the traffic impacts from a fully built out Section 13 model.

He added that next month at the July MIC and TAC meetings, he would be presenting a draft version of the Circulation Analysis.

## **10. Munger Trail Extension Update**

Andy McDonald reported that MIC staff held a meeting with City of Duluth staff as well as a few city councilors to discuss progress on the Munger Trail-to Lakewalk-connection. Topics of discussion included potential new trail options, funding, trail management issues and next steps in this process. He noted that two separate advisory committees had been founded to help facilitate the Policy/Advocacy and Technical aspects of this effort. He added that the city hoped to include \$200,000 for this project in its upcoming state bonding request.

He added that there was a new development affecting this project in relation to the Federal transportation reauthorization bill. The House version includes \$3.2 million for the Munger Trail project and the City of Duluth, with the consent of St. Louis County, the City of Hermantown and MnDOT, is interested in using \$700,000 of that allocation to put towards the Cirrus Road project instead. The thinking is that \$3.2 million won't cover the entire cost of the Munger Trail project and a separate funding source will need to be utilized in the future anyway.

## **11. Project Updates**

### **Duluth Transit Gaps Assessment**

Holly Butcher reported that she had, in conjunction with the ARDC Area Agency on Aging, facilitated a second meeting on June 8th to discuss and address gaps in existing Duluth transit services, including paratransit, regular route, and other programs. This meeting, like the first one held on April 15<sup>th</sup>, was scheduled in response to a regional meeting sponsored by the MnDOT Office of Transit that focused on coordination of public transit programs and human services transportation. The June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting focused on strategic action planning and identified a clear set of action steps and who will carry out each one; set forth a timeframe; and determined a communication strategy for Duluth Metropolitan transit services. MIC staff will be facilitating this meeting. New invitees to this meeting included representatives from Northern Access and the Director of the Duluth Rainbow Senior Center.

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**2006-2008 Minnesota TIP**

James Gittemeier reported that the 30-day comment period on the draft TIP runs through June 17, 2005 and requested any additional comments from TAC and MIC members. At the July monthly meetings, the TAC and MIC Policy Board will be asked to approved the final FY 2006-2008 Duluth Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He added that the draft plan is available online with a direct MIC email link for public comments at [www.ardc.org/mic/](http://www.ardc.org/mic/), the Duluth Public Library or by request.

**2006-2008 Wisconsin TIP**

James Gittemeier reported that project solicitation letters, for new and revised transportation project information to be included in the 2006-2008 WI TIP, were distributed to local units of government and other organizations within the Superior Urbanized Area on May 24. He added that the contact person for the WI TIP is Sheldon Johnson at NWRPC, who could be reached at 715-635-2197 or via email at [sjohnson@nwrpc.com](mailto:sjohnson@nwrpc.com).

**12. Adjournment**

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rondi Watson*  
MIC Division Secretary