
**DULUTH-SUPERIOR
METROPOLITAN INTERSTATE COUNCIL**

**MEETING SUMMARY
Wednesday, October 18, 2006**

Hermantown Public Safety Building
5111 Maple Grove Road, Hermantown, Minnesota

Voting Members Present:

Ed Anderson
Nick Baker, *Wisconsin Co-Chair*
David Bilden
David Conley
Esther Dalbec
Earl Elde, *Secretary*
Richard Kieren
Garry Krause
Keith MacDonald
Kay McKenzie
Dean Miller
Nick Milroy
Cindy Moe
Russ Stover, *Minnesota Co-Chair*
Peg Sweeney

Representing:

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

Voting Members Absent:

Broc Allen
Andy Peterson*
Isobel Rapaich*

Representing:

Douglas County Suburban Townships
City of Duluth Citizen Rep
Duluth Transit Authority

* = Excused

Others Present:

Ron Chicka
James Gittemeier
Robert Herling
Sheldon Johnson
Andy McDonald
Rondi Watson

Representing:

ARDC / MIC Director
ARDC / MIC Staff
ARDC / MIC Associate Planner
NWRPC / MIC Deputy Director
ARDC / MIC Staff
ARDC / MIC Staff

1. Introductions/Agenda Review

Minnesota Co-Chair Russ Stover called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and all meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. Committee Business

Meeting summary of September 20, 2006

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

Ed Anderson/Dick Kieren moved to approve the meeting summary from the September 20, 2006 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Proposed Revision to TAC Bylaws Adding New Representative

Ron Chicka requested approval of a revision to the TAC Bylaws to include a third State of Minnesota representative. The position would be filled by Heather Rand, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Program Specialist in the Duluth office. He noted that the addition of a DEED representative would enable the MIC to comply with the new SAFETEA-LU requirement that MPOs consult with local economic development entities. In addition, Heather brings a direct connection to the City of Duluth Planning Commission and the recently completed Comprehensive Plan, as well as an overall understanding and enthusiasm for the planning process. He added that the total voting membership of the TAC would increase from 17 to 18, but that the quorum would remain unchanged at six.

John Foschi/Susan Thompson moved to amend the TAC Bylaws to include another voting member representing the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, as described. Some discussion ensued as to whether an even number of members could pose a problem in the (unlikely) event of a tie vote over a controversial issue. Ron responded that if that were ever the case, a tie vote from the TAC would be acceptable to forward to the MIC, because both sides of the issue would be presented and the Policy Board would ultimately make the final decision. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Nominating Committee for 2007 Officers

Keith McDonald and David Bilden volunteered to serve as the nominating committee. They will poll members from their respective states in order to put forward nominations for 2007 officers at the December meeting.

3. Final 2007-2010 Superior Metropolitan Area Transportation Improvement Program

Sheldon Johnson presented the final Superior Urbanized Area Transportation Improvement Program for approval. He reported that no public comments had been offered during the 30-day review period that began in early September. He noted that the document had been modified, since it was presented in draft form, to remove most references to TEA21 and ISTEA and to comply with some new SAFETEA-LU language. Additionally, one new project was added to take the place of the OCR Rail Project in 2007 and is referenced as project 113-05-02.

David Bilden/Ed Anderson moved to approve the final 2007-2010 Superior Metropolitan Area TIP as presented. Ed Anderson expressed concern that due to increased costs, DTA service to Superior was likely to be cut in 2007. He commented that he wished there was a process to allocate transit dollars similar to the way that the Minnesota TIP process does. Sheldon Johnson noted that the Human Services Transportation Plan, to be discussed later, was intended to identify and meet the

transit needs of low-income, disabled and elderly populations. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. Draft Public Involvement Plan

James Gittemeier reviewed the Draft Public Involvement Plan, which is an update to the 2002 plan to reflect new SAFETEA-LU requirements which specify that all MPOs improve their public input processes by involving more agencies & organizations; integrating public comments into plans and programs, and reach out to the public in ways that are more accessible, including a greater emphasis on website and online communication.

He noted that MIC staff would be the primary users of this plan, therefore he was seeking to develop 'structured yet flexible' guidelines that would clearly define public involvement requirements while being able to adapt them to the MIC's many different types of plans and stakeholder groups. As an example, he compared the extensive neighborhood involvement that was required for the recent Duluth Heights Traffic Circulation Study, as opposed to the narrower stakeholder group of business owners impacted by the upcoming Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Plan, versus the broad community involvement that would likely be necessary to reach the multiple stakeholders in the upcoming UMD Area Transportation Study.

James noted that there was a public involvement process required in the development of this (public involvement) plan, and instead of scheduling meetings that might be poorly attended, he was considering convening a more structured focus group of interested citizens to elicit comments about the draft plan. He asked committee members for their input into the draft.

Garry Krause commented that what seemed to be missing in the draft plan was a way to identify relevant stakeholders. Peg Sweeney cautioned against spending too much time on fruitless efforts, because in her experience as an elected official, it's very difficult to get people involved in the planning phase—stating that most people only start to pay attention when there is something specific to react to, and even then only if there's some controversy involved. Ed Anderson noted that the MIC website was the likely "go-to" reference for most of our planning efforts, commenting that he had difficulty earlier in the day finding some basic information on the website about where tonight's meeting would be held. James stressed that a key component of improving our Public Involvement efforts in 2007 would be to ensure that the information on the website is up-to-date and to provide a mechanism for eliciting public comment.

James thanked committee members for their input and asked that any other comments be forwarded comments to him by Friday, December 8. He closed by requesting approval of the draft document for a 45-day public comment as federally required.

Kay McKenzie/Nick Baker moved to release the draft Public Involvement Plan for a 45-day public comment period. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. Draft 2007-2008 MIC Work Program and Budget

Ron Chicka handed out and reviewed the 2007 – 2008 Work Program and Budget. Work items include the mandatory elements of the TIP and the Long Range Plan as well as modal projects including harbor planning and bike and pedestrian planning. Planned short-term (discretionary)

projects will include the UMD/Woodland Avenue transportation study, which is being carried forward from 2006 to 2007; and also the Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Plan, for which the Scope of Work will be introduced today and will continue into 2007. New projects to be initiated in 2007 will include a London Road study (from 10th to 26th Avenue E) with a focus on potential redevelopment in the western segment and a Grand Avenue Access Management Plan, both in Duluth, and an East Second Street Access Management Plan in Superior. Projects slated for 2008 include a study of ramp options at foot of Blatnik Bridge in Superior, an update to Proctor's Comprehensive Plan, a study of downtown Duluth's modal connections and an urban growth study for the Superior area.

He stressed that the planned projects needed to be kept to a flexible schedule because, as is often the case, various state and federal initiatives and well as project requests from local jurisdictions can delay project start dates. He closed by requesting approval of the draft version of the Work Program and asked committee members to review it closely and get back to him with comments prior to the December TAC and MIC meetings, when the final version will be presented for approval.

Peg Sweeney/Nick Baker moved to approve the draft 2007-2008 MIC Work Program and Budget. Ed Anderson asked about the possibility of studying potential rail connections between the harbor and the airport. Ron stated that this topic, along with a possible region-wide freight movement study and updates to the Duluth and Superior Pedestrian Plans, were included not as full-blown plans or studies but as brief project options in the Plan Implementation, Long Range Plan and Administrative sections. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. Scope of Work – Highway 2/Susquehanna Access Management Plan

Andy McDonald presented the Scope of Work for a new study, noting that its title had been changed to the Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Study. He explained that this study was developed in anticipation of increased and proposed development in northwest Superior near Susquehanna Avenue and Winter Street, as the City of Superior has targeted this area for additional industrial development. The intensification of the land use means that roads in this area will see increased traffic including more trucks.

He added that he and Associate Planner Robert Herling had met with WisDOT personnel as well as Jason Serck, Planning Director for the City of Superior, in developing the specific tasks contained in the Scope. He added that the project has an estimated completion date of summer 2007. He closed by requesting approval of the Scope of Work.

Kay McKenzie/David Bilden moved to approve the Scope of Work for the Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Study. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

7. Human Services Transportation Plan

Robert Herling (in Holly Butcher's absence) reported that the Steering Committee for the Human Services Transportation Plan met in September to discuss the results of a survey given to regional transportation providers. The Committee used the survey results to develop action strategies for the plan. Once the plan is completed, any organization in the region that applies for future JARC,

New Freedom or 5310 funding will need to relate their proposals to one or more of these action statements.

He added that the ARDC Regional Planning staff had completed a draft document of the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan on October 16th. It contains both a regional section and a section specific to the MIC planning area. The draft is currently available for public review and comment on ARDC's website: www.ardc.org. A final version of the plan will be completed for the November 1st deadline.

Sheldon Johnson reported that he had worked on the plans for the ten counties in northwest Wisconsin (including Superior/Douglas County planning area). In August Douglas County held its meeting to review and develop action statements for the Human Service-Public Transportation Plan. A summary of the meeting information is available online at nwrpc.com under 'Community Development' then 'Transportation Planning.' A final plan document was submitted to the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation by the end of September. He commented that the counties had done a good job of assessing unmet needs but that a common problem was that they did not have a vision or mission statement about how to address these needs.

Peg Sweeney commented that there an opportunity exists to try some innovative approaches to maximize on limited resources, such as using school buses to transport low-income workers in rural areas.

8. On-Street Bike Route Planning Update

James Gittemeier reported that MIC staff had finalized the Phase 2 on-street bike routes for Duluth and St. Louis County. He highlighted certain segments where designating routes has been problematic because bikes must be briefly routed along very busy roadways (such as Woodland Avenue) in order to maintain connectivity between different areas of the city. He added that he is working with St. Louis County to fine-tune the wayfinding portion of the project; the project plans will be finalized in November and a Project Memorandum submitted to MnDOT in December for implementation (i.e., production and installation of bike route signage) in Spring 2007.

He added that the next phase, Phase 3, will focus on a designated and signed on-street bike route system in Superior, which will then complete the on-street bike route system for the metropolitan area.

9. Announcements

Rondi Watson reminded committee members that there was no meeting scheduled for November and that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 13, at 7:00 p.m. at the WITC Conference Center.

10. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Stover adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rondi Watson
MIC Division Secretary