
**DULUTH-SUPERIOR
METROPOLITAN INTERSTATE COUNCIL**

**MEETING SUMMARY
Wednesday, March 21, 2007**

WITC Conference Center
600 N. First Street, Superior, WI

Voting Members Present:

Broc Allen
Ed Anderson
Nick Baker, *Wisconsin Co-Chair*
David (Mike) Bilden
David Brenna
Mike Coyle
Earl Elde, *Secretary*
Garry Krause
Kay McKenzie
Dean Miller
Steve O'Neil
Andy Peterson
Tari Rayala

Representing:

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

Voting Members Absent:

Esther Dalbec*
Keith MacDonald
Nick Milroy*
Cindy Moe
Russ Stover, *Minnesota Co-Chair**

Representing:

City of Superior
City of Hermantown
City of Superior
St. Louis County Suburban Townships
City of Duluth

* = Excused

Others Present:

James Gittemeier
Robert Herling
Andy McDonald
Todd Pierson
Rondi Watson

Representing:

ARDC / MIC Staff
ARDC / MIC Associate Planner
ARDC / MIC Staff
MIC Intern
ARDC / MIC Staff

1. Introductions/Agenda Review

Wisconsin Co-chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and all meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. Committee Business

Meeting Agenda Change

Chair Baker reported that staff requested the addition of a voting item to the meeting agenda and asked for a motion to approve.

Dean Miller/Broc Allen moved to amend the meeting agenda to include a voting item, Amendment # 2 to the 2007-2010 Superior Metropolitan Area TIP. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting summary of February 21, 2007

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

Earl Elde/Broc Allen moved to approve the meeting summary from the February 21, 2007 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Amendment #2 to the 2007-2010 Superior Metropolitan TIP

Andy McDonald presented information about the three projects requested by the WisDOT central office for inclusion in the current Superior area Transportation Improvement Program. He added that all three were related to truck turning movements and repairing damage to curbs and other roadway features as were recommended by the local Northwest Region DOT office.

Andy Peterson/Ed Anderson moved to approve Amendment # 2 to the 2007-2010 Superior Metropolitan Area TIP as presented. Discussion included the following points:

Project #1 / Belknap Street: USH 53 to Poplar Avenue Preliminary Engineering

MIC Comment: Board members reported that a previous repair or reconstruction project (on a different section of Belknap) was torn up shortly thereafter for utility work. They want to ensure that this TIP project, scheduled for construction in 2011, is coordinated with the City of Superior to avoid repeating this kind of inefficiency between road work and utility work.

Project #2 / Intersection of USH 2/53 & 18th Avenue

MIC Comment: Board members commented that the signal timing sensor at the stoplight on 18th Avenue is placed too close to the intersection. They report that drivers often sit there for extended periods because they don't stop at a point that is forward enough to trip the sensor. They hope that this will be corrected in the scheduled reconstruction.

MIC members requested that the comments, above, be forwarded to the WisDOT Central Office along with the Resolution approving the Amendment. There was no further discussion and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

4. On-street Bike Routes-Phase 2

James Gittemeier reported that on February 6, he had met with project partners (the City of Duluth, St. Louis County, and the City of Proctor) to determine the final routes, fine-tune the wayfinding signage, and discuss the steps toward implementation. He added that the final project memo, project plans, and the inter-jurisdictional agreement are near completion.

He also reviewed the existing and planned bike routes. He added that once the project memo and

plans are approved by MnDOT, a consultant will be hired to help the local jurisdictions implement the project in the spring and summer months.

5. Endion Transportation & Land Use Study

In Holly Butcher's absence, James Gittemeier presented an update of the planning process for this study. He reviewed the study goal, *to identify solutions to improve safety, traffic flow, multi-modal options & access on London Road between 10th to 26th Ave E and adjacent connections into the Endion neighborhood in an effort to support flexible land use reinvestment within the City of Duluth*. He reported that Study Advisory Committee had met for the first time on February 28th to bring stakeholders together to discuss the future vision for this study area, data collection items needed, public and business involvement strategies, and future steps.

In addition, intersection locations for turning movement counts were selected by the committee, which will be conducted from March 20th through April 3rd. The goal of this data collection effort is to accurately model the cumulative impact of planned development on the study area.

He noted that the steering committee will meet again on Friday, March 30th, when the consultant from URS will attend to give an overview of the small area transportation modeling software that would be used to devise a series of travel scenarios for London Road and around the St. Luke's Medical Campus and Plaza/Armory area.

He added that turning movement counts had begun today between 3:30 and 5:00 p.m. and will continue for about 3 weeks. The comment was made and assented to by several members that turning movement counts need to be taken for the a.m. peak period as well. Steve O'Neil mentioned that a big issue for the Endion neighborhood is the difficulty that pedestrians experience in crossing the large expanse of London Road, to access the overpasses to the Lakewalk. Andy McDonald noted that this issue was part of what drove the study in the first place. James added that a sizeable public involvement component will be included as part of the study process, to get at this and other resident concerns.

6. Harbor Planning Update

Andy McDonald presented an update on a variety of recent port planning activities. At the March 7th HTAC meeting, Matt TenEyck, Ph.D. student at UMD and Associate Researcher at UWS, gave a presentation about the Great Ships Initiative. He described the Initiative as a coordinated effort among regulatory agencies, industry and the scientific community to evaluate promising ballast water treatment technology and provide input into policy development. The ultimate goal of this industry-led research project is to develop technologies to prevent the introduction of aquatic nuisance species into the Great Lakes by ocean-going ships on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system. A \$3.5 million specialized facility, overseen by UWS, was recently constructed on the Superior waterfront (near Elevator O) to provide a research and development component for promising ballast water treatment technologies. He explained that the tanks are designed to simulate oceangoing ship ballast water conditions to test the viability of proposed systems; this type of controlled research environment was needed because on-board testing conditions and results are difficult to control and replicate.

He added that a complete report on the Great Ships Initiative, along with details about proposed ballast water treatment solutions, can be found online at <http://www.nemw.org/scopingreport.pdf>.

Ed Anderson commented that there is current pressure to develop a marina in that same area; he would like the MIC to support the use of this waterfront area to capitalize on this initiative, with a possible expansion of the research facility if needed.

Andy also noted that progress continues on the Erie Pier Management Plan, although the deadline for the final plan was pushed back to early June to allow more time to address the issue of managing Purple Loosestrife and other invasive perennial plant species.

He also reported on the meeting that MIC Director Ron Chicka attended in early March. The Lake Michigan Forum, which provides input to the US EPA on the Lakewide Management Plan, invited the MIC to present information about the HTAC model of inter-agency cooperation. He added that the Coast Guard and the Sea Grant programs are interested in seeing more groups like this one operating throughout the Great Lakes.

He closed by reporting that on February 22nd the MIC, on behalf of the HTAC's Great Lakes Ports Advocacy Coalition, sponsored a luncheon at the DECC with Congressman Jim Oberstar as the featured speaker. With approximately 50 representatives of local maritime industry and government agencies in attendance, Representative Oberstar's message was that Great Lakes infrastructure projects such as dredging and developing a second lock at Sault St Marie to handle 1,000-foot ships are of significant national importance and that he was working to get them funded by the federal government through increases in the Army Corps of Engineers budget.

7. Transportation System Management (TSM) / Safety Planning

Robert Herling reported on the MIC's effort to analyze crash sites on local roadways and identify low-cost alternatives to improve their safety and efficiency. In December 2006, the MIC completed a crash analysis of area roadways. Two lists of "high-crash" locations were produced (one for Minnesota roadways and another for Wisconsin roadways) using 5 years of accident data. The locations were ranked in order of their crash rate, average crash severity, 5-year crash trend, and roadway congestion.

Since completing the crash analysis, the MIC staff has been further examining conditions at each of the "high-crash" locations in order to determine what, if any, TSM strategies may be applied. To date, MIC staff has met twice to analyze the conditions at 22 of these locations. He noted that after all the locations have been examined, staff will be meeting with jurisdictional representatives to fine-tune and formalize recommendations for these identified sites in greater detail. Their input will be incorporated in a final TSM document, which is tentatively scheduled for completion in the summer of 2007. The final findings will be presented at that time to the TAC and MIC.

8. Introduction to Roundabouts

James Gittemeier presented the Mn/DOT video "How about a Roundabout? The Minnesota Experience." After the video, he reiterated the concepts that a modern roundabout, defined as a circular intersection with yield control of all entering traffic, channelized approaches, specific geometric curvature and travel speeds typically less than 30 mph, differ from other circular intersections such as rotaries and neighborhood traffic circles.

He noted that roundabouts generally cost more and take up more space than conventional intersections, but that they have a big advantage in improved traffic flow and safety. Safety is

significantly improved because the movement is counterclockwise and vehicles must yield to traffic inside the circle. Left turns are eliminated, thereby eliminating head-on collisions. He also gave examples showing that engineers and public officials can expect strong public opposition to be expressed prior to the construction of a community's first roundabout. Strikingly, nationwide studies show that after drivers adjust to the structure, public opposition switches over to an equal or greater level of public support for that type of intersection, and calls for them to be constructed in other locations. Locally, this has particular relevance to the current Mn/DOT London Road study, in which two roundabouts are likely to be recommended to define the transition points from the freeway and manage the traffic flow along that roadway.

9. Project Updates

Functional Classification: Andrea Diamond reported that MIC staff had submitted a map of the updated road network for the MIC area to Mn/DOT Central Office as a supplement to the Functional Classification update approved in January. This GIS file is the result of an in-depth road network review and will now contain local roads, private roads, and rustic local roads that had not previously been included. Addition of the local roads will affect the total mileage in the MIC area and alter the percentage of each classification. James noted that our region continues to have a high percentage of collector roads. Andrea noted that any changes from this point forward are likely to be small updates.

Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Study: Robert Herling reported that MIC staff met with staff from WisDOT, the City of Superior and URS on January 31st to provide an update on the NW Superior Traffic Circulation Study. They reviewed the study objectives, presented preliminary findings, and identified information still needed. Additionally, a survey will be sent out to area businesses to supplement the data being gathered and to help identify any infrastructure/network needs, as perceived by the local businesses and trucking firms.

DTA-Superior Route Analysis: Holly Butcher reported that MIC staff is in the process of designing rider, driver and non-rider surveys to gain input on DTA service issues for Superior routes 16 and 17. She plans to administer in the surveys in April.

MnDOT London Road Project: James Gittemeier reported that this study is currently in the evaluation stage. At the steering committee meeting in February, a discussion regarding the movement of hazardous cargo along the route was a focal point. It was noted that, aside from fuel, very little amounts of hazardous material is moved within this corridor. This material may also include blasting agents for mining operations or biomedical waste; however, no current commodity flow data is available. A study is not anticipated, either, as there are some security concerns that information may be breached by conducting a public study and the data used for potentially illegitimate purposes. This issue will be examined further in the upcoming district-wide freight study that ARDC and the MnDOT Central Office will be conducting.

With regard to the possible roadway alternatives, the steering committee chose to table the large-scale and very costly options of an expressway or a parkway project. This leaves two options: the London Road/Superior one-way pair option and the minor system management option of various intersection and parking improvements. At a future meeting, the consultant will prepare a visual image of the freeway alternative to better illustrate neighborhood impacts. Recommendations are

also likely to include the construction of two roundabouts, one at 40th Avenue East and one at 60th Avenue East as a way to mark the change from a freeway to a residential neighborhood.

10. Announcements

Steve O'Neil made an announcement about the 'Facing Meth' symposium coming up at the DECC later this month, and highly recommended the dynamic speaker.

11. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rondi Watson

MIC Division Secretary