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**DULUTH-SUPERIOR  
METROPOLITAN INTERSTATE COUNCIL**

***MEETING SUMMARY***

**Wednesday, May 16, 2007**

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

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***Voting Members Present:***

Broc Allen  
Ed Anderson  
Nick Baker, Wisconsin Co-Chair  
David (Mike) Bilden  
David Brenna  
Mike Coyle  
Earl Elde, Secretary  
Garry Krause  
Keith MacDonald  
Kay McKenzie  
Dean Miller  
Nick Milroy  
Cindy Moe  
Tari Rayala  
Russ Stover, Minnesota Co-Chair

***Voting Members Absent:***

Esther Dalbec  
Steve O'Neil\*  
Andy Peterson\*

\* = Excused

***Others Present:***

Holly Butcher  
Ron Chicka  
James Gittemeier  
Andy McDonald  
Rondi Watson

***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  
City of Hermantown  
Douglas County  
Douglas County  
City of Superior  
St. Louis County Suburban Townships  
Duluth Transit Authority  
City of Duluth

***Representing:***

City of Superior  
St. Louis County  
City of Duluth

***Representing:***

ARDC / MIC Staff  
ARDC / MIC Director  
ARDC / MIC Staff  
ARDC / MIC Staff  
ARDC / MIC Staff

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**1. Introductions/Agenda Review**

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

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meeting attendees introduced themselves.

## **2. Committee Business**

### **Meeting summary of April 18, 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/Mike Coyle moved to approve the meeting summary from the April 18, 2007 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.*

## **3. Long Range Transportation Plan – Draft Amendment**

Ron Chicka explained that to become compliant with the federal SAFETEA-LU transportation bill, all MPOs including the MIC are required to supplement specific components of their Long Range Transportation Plans (the MIC's was last completed in the fall of 2005). He reported that MIC staff had met over the past month with staff from the Minnesota and Wisconsin DOT central offices as well as from the Federal Highway Administration to update them on our overall progress and gain their insight toward achieving plan approval. Feedback from these agencies is that the MIC is on track with full compliance.

He reviewed the draft Amendment document, explaining that the main task involves documenting what each area jurisdiction or organization has in place for each of the five focal points:

- Safety Planning
- Security Planning
- Economic Development
- Environmental Consultation and Mitigation
- Operations and Maintenance

He then reviewed an outline of tasks for each issue area, which mainly involves developing a collaborative process to share relevant data, and to consult, when necessary, on a project level.

He noted that the Environmental Consultation and Mitigation section was the most involved of the amendments, adding that a consultation meeting was being scheduled for Tuesday, June 5th to begin a conversation with environmental stakeholders.

He closed with a request to approve release of the draft document for the 30-day public comment period, as mandated by federal requirements.

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*Broc Allen/Earl Elde moved to release the draft Amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan for the mandated 30-day public comment period. Kay McKenzie suggested additional contacts for the environmental consultation, from City of Superior's local storm water management, and from the Douglas county historical society (new conservationist). There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.*

#### **4. Draft 2008-2011 Duluth Metropolitan TIP**

James Gittemeier presented the draft FY 2008-2011 Duluth Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which sets forth all projects slated for federal transportation funding in the Duluth metropolitan area for fiscal years 2008-2011. He noted that 2009 would be a larger than average project year, due primarily to the extension of the I-35 reconditioning project between 26th Avenue East and Boundary Avenue. Also included are two Safe Routes to School awards.

He noted that the draft TIP would this year be posted for public comments on the MIC website, [www.dsmic.org](http://www.dsmic.org). He added that a hard copy of the draft document will be distributed to all MIC and TAC members who request one. Copies are also available for the public to view at the Duluth Public Library or by request.

He closed with a request to approve release of the draft TIP document for a 30-day public comment period, as mandated by federal requirements. He noted that public comments were being sought primarily through the website.

*Kay McKenzie/David Bilden moved to release the draft FY 2008-2011 Duluth Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program document for the mandated 30-day public comment period. Kay inquired about how and if TIP projects are evaluated for impacts on low-income populations, in particular the impacts of airborne particulates. James replied that we include a GIS analysis in each plan and the MPCA reviews all projects for air quality impacts. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.*

#### **5. Endion Land Use and Transportation Plan**

Holly Butcher presented information from the most recent advisory committee meetings. She reviewed the goal of the study, which is to identify solutions to improve safety traffic flow multimodal options and access on London Road between 10th and 26th Avenues East. She also noted that two new people have volunteered to participate on the advisory committee, to represent transit and bicycle interests.

She also reviewed the study area and discussed a bit of background about one-way streets, and the reasons to convert them back to two-way thoroughfares. She also

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gave some detail about one developer's plan for redeveloping the Plaza Shopping Center/Armory area into a mixed use area of residential and commercial properties, with 12th and 13th Avenues closed to through traffic. The consultant, URS, will be modeling this scenario to determine potential traffic impacts.

The advisory committee also selected other short- and long-term scenarios based on previous Charrette recommendations and business interests, such as St. Luke's' idea to create an expanded pedestrian campus and to convert some or all of the one-way streets to two-way corridors. They also expressed an interest in reviewing a high-density intersection that is technically outside study area, at 6th Avenue East and 4th St.

She also reviewed some of the potential concepts for redesigning London Road, noting that it is currently overbuilt and has outlived its usefulness now that I-35 is up and running. Design principles would create a corridor that is more conducive to "Complete Streets" concepts, i.e., friendlier to all modes (bike, ped, transit) in addition to vehicular traffic. Traffic calming would be an important end result, with a possible road diet approach, to reduce the width of the corridor, similar to Grand Avenue redesign. She added that a prior study of this corridor called for upgrading the visual streetscaping aesthetics and character of London Road. The next steps will be to administer a survey to London Road businesses and to conduct public outreach and education on the topic of converting one-way streets.

## **6. Harbor Planning/Dredged Materials Update**

Andy McDonald presented info about current HTAC activities. The Erie Pier Management Plan is nearing completion. It is important to understand that it is intended as a management plan—not an operational plan—to set an overall policy in place to facilitate its change from storage facility for dredged materials to a facility to separate and re-use these materials.

He noted that this plan has been driven primarily by the prohibitive cost of siting a new Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) when the existing Erie Pier facility runs out of storage capacity. By converting it to a beneficial reuse facility, it could realize ongoing use. He added that the final plan would be presented for approval at the June meetings of the HTAC and the MIC.

He added that it has become apparent in the development of the Erie Pier plan that the current Army Corps Dredged Material Management Plan, or DMMP, is no longer viable. The DMMP is the 20-year plan for disposing of dredged materials. We will be working with the Dredging Subcommittee on this topic to ultimately encourage the Army Corps to update its plan. As an example, the recent idea of realigning the runway at the Sky Harbor airport would need an updated DMMP to

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be implemented. Also the current low lake levels really bring the issue and practices of the DMMP into the fore.

During the discussion, Kay McKenzie asked about the mechanisms for funding of Army Corps projects. Andy responded that funding issues were very political.

Ed Anderson asked if the issue of controlling purple loosestrife could potentially be a deal-breaker for this facility. Andy responded that a top priority, after the Management Plan is approved, would be to develop a processing procedure that would be satisfactory to all regulatory entities.

## **7. Bike to Work Week**

James reported that Friday, May 18 is Bike to Work day, with planned events at ARDC for the entire week. Building off of last year's event, ARDC is coordinating with local biking advocates, Greater Downtown Council, DTA, YMCA, the City of Duluth, and MnDOT.

He noted that a couple of new events will take place this year. A celebration will be held at the Duluth Civic Center on Friday morning from 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. and will offer refreshments and free T-shirts; bike inspections; speakers and bike rack demonstrations with a DTA bus. The MIC also organized a group ride with the Mayor of Duluth, beginning at 7:00 am at the City Center West on 59th Street and Grand Avenue. Another group ride to downtown will begin at Portland Square, sponsored by the Ski Hut. He added that the DTA will offer free bus rides to bicyclists on Friday and the YMCA will make its facility available for showers and changing.

During the discussion, general agreement was expressed that the MIC needs to proactively look for ways to advocate for bike lanes and trail facilities, especially in the TIP projects that are approved for funding.

## **8. Project Updates**

### **Duluth Heights Traffic Circulation Plan**

Andy McDonald announced that a temporary traffic calming barrier and signage would be constructed later this month to restrict a right turn from Swan Lake Road onto Eklund Road, as recommended by the recent Duluth Heights plan as a way to discourage cut-through traffic. They were also considering a press release as a way to get the word out to the public. He added that MIC staff will also be conducting follow-up traffic counts and a survey of residents.

### **Regional Freight Initiative**

Ron Chicka announced that the Mn/DOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle

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Operations, MIC staff and ARDC Regional Planning staff have begun looking at a project centered on freight movements needs in the Arrowhead region. The Duluth Port Authority, Wisconsin DOT and the UWS Transportation Logistics Program are also invited. The project will be led via a private consultant with ARDC and MIC staff facilitating. Funding for the project will likely be from non-MIC state sources.

### **Duluth Airport BRAC Adjustment Planning Process**

Ron Chicka reported that the consulting firm LHB presented their findings from the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) adjustment planning process for the Duluth Airport. At a recent workshop for a group of local public and private entities, including the MIC, the focus was on the potential reuse of land in proximity to the airport. A primary area of greatest potential for redevelopment, termed the "Golden Triangle," is best suited to these efforts. The borders of the triangle are the runway on the north, Haines Road on the east and Highway 53 on the south and west. The consensus is that currently, land use within the triangle is not developed to its highest and best use. Aviation support industries were identified as best suited to locate and prosper within this identified land area. He added that many of the recommendations pertaining to access management, with respect to Highway 53, follow recent planning efforts by MnDOT and the MIC.

## **9. Announcements**

Nick Baker announced that he had been appointed as the Douglas County representative for the Twin Cities to Twin Ports Passenger Rail Study Coordinating Committee. He reported that he has attended a couple of meetings in the Twin Cities and so far, competing interests have dominated recent discussions-- Anoka County wants a commuter train route to Cambridge, and both St. Paul and Minneapolis want passenger rail stations. Additionally, many Minnesota counties have already committed a lot of funds; one potential issue is that there will only be a limited number of stops along the way. Consultants are also advising that for the passenger line to be profitable, it will need to attain higher speeds than are currently being planned, up from 80 mph to 100-140 mph. The higher speed option would, however, be significantly more expensive to implement and may not be a viable option.

## **10. Adjournment**

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rondi Watson, MIC Division Secretary