



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
MEETING SUMMARY  
Wed, June 20, 2007, 7:00 PM

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Hampton Inn, Canal Park, Duluth, MN	
<b>Meeting Chair</b>	Russ Stover	
<b>Note Taker</b>	Rondi Watson	
<b>Members Present</b>	Ed Anderson	City of Superior
	Nick Baker, WI Co-Chair	Douglas County
	David (Mike) Bilden	City of Superior Citizen Rep
	David Brenna	City of Proctor
	Mike Coyle	Douglas County
	Earl Elde, Secretary	St. Louis Co. Suburban Twps
	Garry Krause	City of Duluth
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County
	Nick Milroy	City of Superior
	Andy Peterson	City of Duluth
	Russ Stover, MN Co-Chair	City of Duluth
<b>Members Absent</b>	Broc Allen *	Douglas Co. Suburban Twps
	Keith MacDonald	City of Hermantown
	Dean Miller*	Douglas County
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis Co. Suburban Twps
	Steve O'Neil	St. Louis County
	Kevin Norbie*	City of Superior
	Tari Rayala*	Duluth Transit Authority
	* Excused	
<b>Others Present</b>	Holly Butcher	ARDC / MIC Staff
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Staff
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Assoc. Planner
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Staff
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Staff
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth Engineering

## 1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Minnesota Co-Chair Russ Stover called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and all meeting attendees introduced themselves. No changes were put forward to the agenda.

## 2. Committee Business – Meeting Summary of May 16, 2007

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

**Motion and Discussion** Garry Krause, with a second from Ed Anderson, moved to approve the meeting summary from the June 20, 2007 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 3. Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment

Ron Chicka presented an overview of the final Amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He explained that the purpose of the Amendment was to make the MIC's LRTP compliant with the new requirement in the federal SAFETEA-LU transportation legislation to improve accountability for the natural and human environments in transportation planning & decision making. The final Amendment addresses the following topics: Safety Planning; Security Planning; Economic Development; Environmental Consultation and Mitigation; and Operations and Maintenance.

He added that since the draft version was issued in May, most of the staff's work was directed toward developing the Environmental section. Many new contacts were made and MIC staff held an Environmental Consultation meeting with area stakeholders and agencies on June 5th at the Mn/DOT District office building. The meeting had a good turnout and staff learned of key data sets and plans that could inform and augment future MIC planning efforts. This information included sensitive lands, stormwater management, critical habitat, and cultural and historic context data. In addition, we gained a number of concrete ideas for environmental mitigation strategies and policies. He stressed that the most important point was that a dialogue or point of contact was made with a number of agencies.

The full LRTP amendment can be viewed online at [www.dsmic.org/lrp](http://www.dsmic.org/lrp). He closed by requesting approval of the Amendment.

**Motion and Discussion** Andy Peterson, with a second from Garry Krause, moved to approve the Amendment to the MIC's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan as presented.

*Ed Anderson commented that he was pleased to see these efforts. Added that the City of Superior's Comprehensive Planning process was underway, with requirements to document similar data sets -- hoped that the MIC might serve as a resource. Nick Baker commented that Superior had a business incubator center that could be included as a resource in the Economic Development section.*

There was no further discussion and the motion was passed unanimously.

#### **4. Erie Pier Management Plan**

Andy McDonald presented the final Erie Pier Management Plan that was approved at the June 6<sup>th</sup> HTAC meeting. He explained that its significance is that it lays the groundwork for transitioning Erie Pier from a confined disposal facility (CDF) to a processing and reuse facility (PRF). If successful, it would not only preserve Erie Pier for continuous use, but could also serve as a model for dredge material disposal throughout the Great Lakes.

He emphasized that both the purpose and the process of developing this plan, with the participation and input from multiple stakeholders and agencies, is consistent with new mandates and goals set forth by the National Dredging Policy. He noted that the process was truly collaborative, with all significant players at the table for a process that lasted nearly nine months. He then reviewed the contents of the plan on a chapter-by-chapter basis.

He closed by asking for approval of a Resolution of Support, which would help to implement the plan recommendations by encouraging the beneficial use of Erie Pier dredge materials. The final Resolution will be sent to local jurisdictions and agencies responsible for construction projects that could potentially utilize the Erie Pier material.

**Motion and Discussion** Nick Baker, with a second from Ed Anderson, moved to approve the Resolution of Support encouraging the beneficial re-use of dredged materials instead of disposing of them as waste.

*Ed Anderson commented that he hoped that this effort could eventually lead to the State of Wisconsin changing the regulatory framework that defines dredged materials as "solid waste" for disposal, rather than "excavated material," which could be treated as resource that has potential for re-use.*

*Kay McKenzie asked about the purpose of the Resolution, and Andy replied that the main purpose of distributing this plan and the MIC's Resolution was to encourage local stakeholders to utilize the certified material from the re-use operation. She also asked about the standards for the water to be returned to*

*the bay, and Andy noted that the clean water standards, as well as the certification process, had been reviewed in detail and approved by WisDNR and MPCA.*

There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## **5. Harbor Planning Update**

Andy McDonald reported on other topics presented at the June 6 HTAC meeting, which included presentations about the VHS fish virus, the Great Lakes Observing System and the Duluth-Superior Harbor Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP).

He then discussed the Corps' current but outdated (1998) DMMP in some detail. He explained that its intent is to provide a base cost for dredging, but the allowed methods for disposing of dredged materials (beach nourishment, deep hole fill, and placement in Erie Pier) are either not allowed by state laws, or are incompatible with the goals set forth in the Erie Pier Management Plan.

Another problem is that any other potential uses for the dredged materials, such as creating habitat or extending the alignment of the runway at Sky Harbor airport, are not addressed in the DMMP as it currently stands.

He added that the Corps is aware of these issues and has contacted the Port Authority and the City of Superior notifying them of the shortcomings of the current DMMP. They both plan to respond to the Corps by formally requesting a new (updated) DMMP. He added that the HTAC also requested that the MIC send a letter to the Corps making this request as well.

**Motion and Discussion** Ed Anderson, with a second from David Brenna, made a motion for MIC staff to develop and send a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers, on behalf of the MIC Policy Board, requesting that the DMMP for the Duluth-Superior Harbor be updated to reflect current practices for the handling of dredged materials.

There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## **6. Transportation System Management (TSM) Overview**

Robert Herling began his presentation by explaining that TSM seeks to find low cost solutions instead of large capital projects to address those problems (examples are pavement markings and signage at selected intersections with high crash rates).

He reviewed the TSM process for the MIC area:

**Step 1 - Identify "high-crash" locations** by using the most recent year of crash data to find those locations that have 3 or more crashes within 105 ft of each other that year.

**Step 2 – Determine locations of concern** by applying thresholds regarding number of crashes per average daily traffic, the severity of crashes, the crash trend over five years, etc. to derive "locations of concern".

**Step 3 – Rank the locations of concern** using a weighted combination of crash frequency, crash severity, 5-year crash trend, functional classification and level of service (LOS). Priority is given to those locations that are both the most congested and have the highest crash rates and severities.

**Step 4 – Study the crash patterns at each location** using five years of crash records to identify, crash trends, if any. On-site observations are made of the road design and patterns of traffic flow.

**Step 5 –Consult with jurisdictions about locations of concern;** document any improvements implemented and continue to monitor these locations.

He went on to review the top five ranked locations that had emerged from this process on both sides of the MIC area. In Minnesota, these intersections were:

- (1) London Road and 21st Avenue East;
- (2) Arrowhead Road and Kenwood Avenue;
- (3) Miller Trunk Hwy and Maple Grove Road;
- (4) East 4th Street and 6th Avenue East; and
- (5) Central Entrance and Mesaba Avenue.

In Wisconsin, the top five intersections, in order of significance, were:

- (1) Tower Avenue and 28th Street;
- (2) Hammond Ave and 5th Street;
- (3) Belknap Street and Baxter Avenue;
- (4) Belknap Street and Garfield Avenue; and
- (5) Tower Ave. and Belknap Street.

Ron emphasized how detailed this process of data analysis is and stated that a summary of the crash statistics for each of the locations will be presented to the affected jurisdictions by September 2007. He added that the upcoming State Transportation Plan would be emphasizing this type of analysis as well.

## **7. DTA Route Analysis – City of Superior**

Holly Butcher reported that the DTA has asked MIC staff to study and analyze current route structures in the City of Superior. In February, DTA staff collected

passenger boarding and alighting information for both routes in Superior. In April, a Superior rider and driver survey was administered. She reviewed the survey results and trends from the passenger boarding and alighting counts.

Ed Anderson commented that they have discussed at the City council the option of hiring a few bus drivers to basically develop their own bus service, with more intensive service within the City Business districts and periodic connections to Duluth. Holly mentioned that other options such as dial-a-ride might be included in the recommendations.

## **8. Duluth Heights Half Closure Implementation**

Andy McDonald discussed traffic calming recommendations from the MIC's recent Duluth Heights plan for three intersections and noted that one, a half closure at Swan Lake Road and Eklund Avenue, was installed in late May.

He reminded committee members that this is the implementation of the recommendations from the Duluth Heights study, and urged them to stay the course in the face of irate comments. The key would be to analyze the impact of the solutions and to gather feedback from residents. Next steps will be to monitor effectiveness of traffic calming devices by laying tube counters at nine selected locations sixty days after implementation. Traffic counts will be compared to the benchmark numbers from 2005. We will also administer a survey to neighborhood residents to gauge their reactions and feedback. He is documenting all comments he receives. It is hoped that this information will show overall satisfaction with the changes. He added that the best solution would be the construction of the Joshua Avenue extension, for which TIP money would be applied to preliminary engineering in the current TIP.

Garry Krause commented that he has witnessed several drivers going around the barriers (illegal motion). He has heard from some residents that it would be helpful for some signage to be implemented on Swan Lake Road.

## **9. Bike Route Planning**

James Gittemeier discussed several recent bike planning initiatives:

### **On-Street Bike Routes: Duluth & Superior**

Over the next month, the City of Duluth will be soliciting for and selecting a contractor to install the bike route wayfinding signage. It is anticipated that the signage (approx. 270 total signs) will be installed in August. MIC staff will also begin working on the Superior Bike Routes Plan, by identifying and meeting with the stakeholders involved with this project.

### **Bike to Work Day and Future Events**

Bike to Work Day events were held on May 18 at the Duluth Civic Center. The event

was a success with over 50 bicyclists stopping by to join in on the festivities. It was determined that the next time, if a public official is involved as Mayor Bergson was this year, that we make sure he or she wears a helmet!

### **Knicht Creative Communities Initiative (KCCI)**

A sub-group from KCCI is focusing on trails and pathways in the Duluth-Superior region. Part of this focus is on bikeways, specifically getting bike lanes in the region in the next year. In addition, the group is planning a group train-bike ride from Two Harbors to Duluth for later this summer.

### **Minnesota Bicycle Leadership Workshop**

MIC staff attended this workshop on June 7 and was sponsored by the Minnesota State Bicycles Advisory Committee. The workshop focused on the future of bicycling in Minnesota, including identifying priority issues for bicycle users and professionals and mechanisms for establishing a state advocacy group similar to the WI bike federation.

## **10. Northeast MN Regional Freight Study**

Ron Chicka discussed the initiative by MnDOT's Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations (OFCVO) to conduct a large-scale, region-wide freight study for northeast Minnesota. Last month, MIC staff and MnDOT District One staff met to discuss the project scope and significantly, the central office staff requested that the MIC serve as the project manager for the study, since the MIC has conducted smaller localized freight initiatives in the past, and has contacts jurisdiction-wide, including the Wisconsin side of the MIC, that we were best positioned to lead the study. The MIC would release the RFP, hire the consultant, conduct some work items, set up and facilitate meetings and, in general, guide the study throughout. Staff within ARDC's Regional Division would also be involved. He is also in contact with staff from WisDOT both locally and at their central office to elicit their input and their potential financial contribution to the plan.

Funding for the study would come mainly from MnDOT and possibly also from the MIC's planning budget. The estimated time frame was from nine to 18 months. Since taking on this study would impact the MIC's existing 2007-2008 Work Program, he would be seeking input about what projects could be delayed, specifically the three corridor plans, the Grand Ave study, the East 2nd Street study, and the UMD/Woodland Ave study.

Russ Stover asked: what is the mission and purpose for this plan? Ron replied that it's essentially to look at what's needed for freight movement in the northeast region. An important feature of this effort will be to engage the private sector.

Ed Anderson commented that this type of study is definitely needed for Superior as well, with Amsoil's business plans to expand and as port operations continue to

develop. He added that the planned East 2nd Street study would tie in well, instead of being delayed, it could be a component of the freight study. Nick Baker added that this will also really matter if Murphy Oil expands its operations significantly.

## **11. Project Updates**

### **Endion Land Use & Transportation Assessment**

Holly Butcher reported that MIC staff is currently devising a survey to assess the needs of London Road business patrons and property owners and to gather ideas for modifying the roadway in the future. They have also assessed the corridor on foot, examining land use and transportation patterns and issues. The consultant, URS Corporation, is running various traffic modeling scenarios to examine future roadway functionality with proposed development patterns, based on the steering committee's recommendations.

### **2008-2011 Duluth TIP**

James Gittemeier reported that this month, MIC staff will be updating the TIP with requested changes and will be conducting an Air Quality Review with FHWA, MnDOT Central Office and MPCA for the new projects. He noted that he had held an Open House on the Draft 2008-2001 Duluth Metro TIP just prior to the MIC meeting, with good press coverage. The TIP will be under review for final approval at the July MIC and TAC meetings.

### **Minnesota State Transportation Plan**

Ron Chicka reported that Mn/DOT is beginning the process of updating the long range Statewide Transportation Plan for the years 2010 to 2030. He has been invited to participate on the Plan Steering Committee to convene starting this summer and running through the end of 2008. The long range plan sets policy direction and performance goals for the statewide multimodal transportation system and provides the basic framework for investment decisions. It will address state and federal transportation planning issues and analyze emerging trends facing the industry as a whole. Mn/DOT has already begun some outreach to gain statewide perspectives on the issues key to different parts of the state regarding transportation needs. Some of the key points include preservation vs. expansion needs; freight movement deficiencies; funding for alternative modes and system management (small measure fixes) for the transportation network.

### **Twin Cities – Twin Ports Passenger Rail Study**

Ron Chicka reported that the Technical Advisory and Study Coordinating Committees for the initiative met on June 4th in Hinckley to review the scope of work as presented by the lead consultant and the Memo of Understanding between seated voting jurisdictions. As discussed previously, Nick Baker of the Douglas County Board is a member of the study committee. The City of Superior was asked,

informally, to sit on the study committee but declined. There was a push to have an elected representative from Duluth on the study committee; organizers will be looking into this issue.

## 12. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Stover adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
Distribute Resolution of Support for Beneficial Re-use of Erie Pier Dredge Materials (Follow-up to motion passed, agenda item #4)	MIC staff

Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
Send letter to Army Corps of Engineers requesting an update of the Dredged Materials Management Plan for the Duluth-Superior Harbor on behalf of MIC Policy Board. (Per motion passed, agenda item #5)	MIC staff