



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Wednesday, December 12, 2007, 7:00 PM**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	WITC Conference Room	
<b>Meeting Chair</b>	Nick Baker	
<b>Note Taker</b>	Rondi Watson	
<b>Members Present</b>	Broc Allen	Douglas Co. Suburban Twps
	Ed Anderson	City of Superior
	Nick Baker	Douglas County
	David Bilden	City of Superior Citizen Rep
	Mike Coyle	Douglas County
	Earl Elde	St. Louis Co. Suburban Twps
	Garry Krause	City of Duluth
	Keith MacDonald	City of Hermantown
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County
	Dean Miller	Douglas County
	Nick Milroy	City of Superior
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis Co. Suburban Twps
	Kevin Norbie	City of Superior
	Steve O'Neil	St. Louis County
	Tari Rayala	Duluth Transit Authority
<b>Members Absent</b>	David Brenna	City of Proctor
	Andy Peterson*	City of Duluth Citizen Rep
	Russ Stover*	City of Duluth
	* Excused	
<b>Others Present</b>	Ken Buehler	Duluth Depot
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Associate Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC / MIC Deputy Director
	Bob Manzoline	Regional Rail Authority
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Alexander Metcalf	Transportation Economics & Mgmt Systems (TEMS)
	John Ongaro	St. Louis County
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Division Secretary

### 1. Introductions and Agenda Review

MIC Co-Chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. He requested that business items on the agenda be moved to follow the guest speakers. Ron Chicka requested that another item for approval be added to the agenda, pertaining to a financial update to the 2030 Long Range Plan.

**Motion and Discussion** Steve O'Neil, with a second from Kevin Norbie, moved to approve the revised meeting agenda. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 2. Minneapolis to Duluth Passenger Rail Initiative

Bob Manzoline, from the Regional Rail Authority, reported that the Comprehensive Feasibility Study for the restoration of intercity passenger rail service between Minneapolis and the Twin Ports would be finalized within the month. He introduced Dr. Alexander Metcalf, president of the firm which is conducting the study, Transportation Economics and Management Systems (TEMS), to provide an update.

Dr. Metcalf reported that of the three evaluation scenarios they utilized for the study (79 mph, 110 mph, and 125 mph), the highest cost benefit ratio was achieved by running eight trains per day at 110 mph. Their ridership analysis showed that trains at 79 mph would not generate enough revenues and although the 125-mph systems would generate somewhat higher revenues than 110-mph systems, the operating costs and capital investment required for grade crossing elimination would be prohibitively expensive (\$610 million vs. \$362 million for the 110 mph scenario). Their analysis showed that eight trains per day at 110 mph would generate a \$1.2- \$4.6 million annual operating surplus (after ramp-up costs).

Passenger fares were estimated at 29¢ per mile (\$36 one-way/\$72 round-trip between Duluth and Minneapolis). The majority of the \$362 million cost would be subsidized by a federal grant included in the next transportation bill, due in 2009. He added that the greatest capital efficiencies would be gained with a start-up by the year 2012.

As for the route, their cost work found it would be both faster and cheaper to come through (and stop in) Superior –which would allow the city the opportunity of site redevelopment for a station. Another stop would be in Hinkley (many trips generated to and from the casino destination alone).

He also reviewed the estimated economic impacts for the Twin Ports: 100-250 jobs created (non rail related); \$5-11 million income added to the local economy; and since a lot of economic activity typically occurs around station sites, the opportunity for \$30-50 million in joint development potential would also exist. He closed by emphasizing that potential station communities such as ours need to start thinking about development plans; what kinds of services and complementary development would be preferred; how to organize it as a multimodal transportation facility, etc.

In response to a question about projected ridership, he stressed that they are building an “investment-grade” business case for this service, and risks are much broader than just ridership scenarios--costs are a key part of what needs to be done right in the final analysis.

He added that if gas prices continue to increase over the next 5-20 years, prospects for increased rail ridership would increase as well.

In response to questions about track ownership and possible utilization by freight rail, he noted that the track is owned by BNSF and major freight railroads have been contacted; the next stage will involve negotiations with the rail companies.

In response to a question about estimated trip time, he noted that three minutes per station are included in the total trip time.

Chair Baker called for an end to discussion and thanked Dr. Metcalf for his presentation and all other guests for attending tonight's meeting.

### 3. Committee Business – Meeting Summary of October 17, 2007

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

**Motion and Discussion** David Bilden, with a second from Mike Coyle, moved to approve the meeting summary from the October 17, 2007 meeting as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

### 4. Committee Business – Officer Elections

Chair Baker announced that the election for MIC Co-chairs would be postponed until January, but that a motion was needed to make a nomination for MIC Secretary and MIC Representative to the ARDC Board and Commission.

**Motion and Discussion** Keith McDonald, with a second from Broc Allen, moved to nominate Earl Elde for the MIC Secretary and MIC Representative to the ARDC Board and Commission. Earl stated that he would be willing and able to continue to serve in this capacity. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

### 5. LRTP 2020 Financial Plan Update

Ron Chicka reported that state and federal DOTs want to see the programmed projects in each MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) more closely matched to projected revenues. To meet this requirement, he presented a Financial Plan Update to the MIC's current LRTP for approval. Project costs from the current LRTP were shown with inflation factors applied for each jurisdiction for short-, mid- and long-range timeframes. The adjusted numbers show that a very large gap exists between programmed projects and projected revenues, totaling \$348 million. He added that the funding gaps will be addressed in the planned 2009 revision of the LRTP by bringing the project lists into constraint. All MIC jurisdictions will need to prioritize their projects to better match projected revenues—or identify other potential revenue sources.

**Motion and Discussion** Dean Miller, with a second from Keith MacDonald, moved to approve the Financial Plan Update to the MIC's Long Range Transportation Plan as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 6. TSM Assessment of MIC Roadways in Minnesota and Wisconsin (Final)

Robert Herling reported that after the draft 2007 Transportation System Management (TSM) Assessments were released in September, MIC staff had met twice with traffic engineers and planners from jurisdictions of both states to verify specific locations of concern and to get feedback about proposed solutions. The final TSM documents have been updated to reflect that input and include recommendations that are supported by the jurisdictions. He added that the jurisdictions also requested that the final documents receive formal approval by the TAC and the MIC Policy Board, to lend support to funding proposals they may submit to address identified safety and traffic flow issues.

He added that the next steps will be to develop and maintain a new TSM database to provide information and analysis of specific intersections on an ongoing basis. An update to the TSM Assessments is scheduled for 2009 and will incorporate an improved methodology based on feedback received. The final reports can be viewed on the MIC website at [www.dsmic.org/tsm](http://www.dsmic.org/tsm).

**Motion and Discussion** Kevin Norbie, with a second from Ed Anderson, moved to approve the TSM documents as presented. *In response to a question about specific feedback received during the jurisdictional meetings, Robert reported that they were advised to modify the methodology to analyze crash data to make it more consistent with the way MnDOT does it; also were encouraged to keep recommended solutions very general (e.g., state "adjust signal timing" without listing specific timing intervals).* There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 7. 2008-2011 Duluth Area TIP Amendments #5, 6 & 7

James Gittemeier presented three Amendments to the 2008-2011 Duluth Metro TIP to accommodate new 2008 projects:

**Amendment #5** adds funding for 2008 from the FTA Section 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program for new transit service to Airpark, Airport, United Healthcare and West Duluth. The project includes a 50/50 match with \$214,463 in federal funds for a total project cost of \$428,926.

**Amendment #6** adds the Duluth International Airport Perimeter Road project to the 2008 TIP. The project consists of paving and shouldering the previously constructed Perimeter Road. The paving will begin at the Air National Guard Bulk Storage Access Road and proceed parallel to taxiway A to the approach of Runway 9, continue westerly and parallel Runway 9/27 and end approximately at Lavaque Road. The paving will be approximately 10,000 feet long. The project will be funded by 80% HPP and 20% Minnesota Air National Guard funds for a total project cost of \$797,920.

**Amendment #7** adds 4 Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) projects into the 2008 TIP. The amendments are 100% federal dollars (no local dollars) and are described as follows:

**Lincoln Park School SRTS Infrastructure Project** – Installation of 2 LED crossing signs, poly preform crossings, and purchase of 4 grabber cones for use at pedestrian crossings for a cost of \$25,030.

**Lincoln Park School SRTS Non-Infrastructure Project** – Development of an improved bicycle and pedestrian training program for Lincoln Park students and the development of a crossing guard training for student and possibly adult crossing guards for a cost of \$5,000.

**Duluth Public Schools SRTS Non-infrastructure Project** – Hire a consultant to develop an ongoing bike and pedestrian education program, utilizing teachers to implement the program into curriculum, educate 2 students at each of the 16 schools at Legionville School Patrol Camp, purchase of MnDOT approved safety vest for student crossing guards, and educate staff on writing tickets for vehicles parked in bus drop zones for a cost of \$50,000.

**Congdon Park School SRTS Infrastructure Project** – Construct a new parent drop-off location and sidewalk and poly preform crossings, and purchase of grabber cones for a cost of \$137,600.

**Motion and Discussion** Ed Anderson, with a second from Kevin Norbie, moved to approve Amendments 5, 6 and 7 to the 2008-2011 Duluth Metro TIP as presented. *Kevin questioned the accuracy of the graphic depicting the proposed alignment for the airport project in the PowerPoint presentation. James responded that the written description was correct and may not have been represented correctly in his map. He stated that he would confirm the road description before submitting the Amendment to MnDOT.* There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

#### 8. 2008-2011 Superior Area TIP Amendments #1, 2 & 3

Sheldon Johnson presented three Amendments to add projects for inclusion in the 2008-2011 Superior Urbanized Area TIP:

**Amendment #1** adds an SRTS (Safe Routes to School) project that had been included in the approved TIP for 2007-2010. During development of the 2008-2011 TIP, it had been identified as on schedule for completion in 2007. However, the project became delayed and is now scheduled to begin in 2008. As a result of the project no longer being identified in the approved 2008-20011 project list, it is necessary to amend the 2008-2011 TIP to include the project.

**Amendment #2** adds a WisDOT project to make improvements to the USH 2 Rest Area. While the project uses no federal funds, it is necessary to include the project in the TIP since the project is located inside the MIC planning area boundaries.

**Amendment #3** adds a New Freedom award to North Country Independent Living develop a Mobility Manager and Voucher program, as announced by WisDOT on November 20, 2007. While not all of the funding will be targeted within the MPO area, it is necessary to amend the 2008-2011 TIP to include use of these funds within the MPO area.

**Motion and Discussion** Kay McKenzie, with a second from Dean Miller, moved to approve TIP Amendments 1, 2 and 3 to the 2008-2011 Superior Metro TIP as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 9. Scope of Work: East Second Street Study

Robert Herling reported that MIC staff had met with the City of Superior and WisDOT to discuss the Scope of Work for the East 2nd Street Corridor Study. The group identified the study area as the section of East 2nd Street (Hwy 2/53) from Belknap Street to 31st Avenue East, with an emphasis on the effect of accesses and turning movements along the corridor. Additional factors such as heavy truck movements, average vehicle speeds, and crash patterns will also be studied.

He added that the study will include a significant public participation component by utilizing the MIC website to disseminate information and presentations to the Superior City Council. The final product will focus on access management with short-, mid- and long-range recommendations. He closed by requesting approval of the Scope of Work.

**Motion and Discussion** Steve O'Neil, with a second from Broc Allen, moved to approve the Scope of Work as presented. *Kay McKenzie and others requested a work component to look at pedestrian and bike safety issues, considering the road's proximity to the Osaugie Trail.* There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 10. Proctor Trails Plan (Final)

James Gittemeier presented the final version of the Proctor Master Trail Plan. The plan displays alignments for 22 miles of an interconnected system of 17 trails with a variety of paved and unpaved trail surfaces. He noted that the starting point is Proctor, but the goal is connectivity to destinations inside and outside the city limits. The cities of Duluth and Hermantown have also expressed interest in linking to this trail.

The trail segment identified as the top priority for implementation is the connection from the Proctor Community Center to the Munger Trail. Meetings to discuss trail construction are planned to be held with various departments within the City of Duluth (Engineering, Parks & Rec, Planning), the City of Proctor, the City of Cloquet, the Minnesota DNR, Spirit Mountain, and other groups.

**Motion and Discussion** Keith McDonald, with a second from Earl Elde, moved to approve the final Proctor Trail Plan as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 11. HTAC/Harbor Planning Update

Andy McDonald presented an overview of the topics that were presented at the December 5th meeting of the Harbor Technical Advisory Committee.

**21st Avenue West Wetland Habitat/Park/Stormwater Management Project:** There has been an active concept to construct a wetland in this area of the harbor since 1999; the MPCA originally viewed it as a dredge materials disposal project, but it stalled because of contamination concerns and a scope that was thought to be overly broad. Bob Bruce, Duluth's Planning Director, presented the updated concept which includes a stormwater management project and a park that will connect to the planned Munger Trail extension.

**Erie Pier Process Re-use Facility Cost and Market Analysis Research:** In late 2007, UMD received a research grant from the Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute (GLMRI) to estimate the costs, revenues, and fees necessary to successfully convert the Erie Pier Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) to a Processing and Re-use Facility (or PRF--per the MIC's 2007 Erie Pier Management Plan). Jim Skurla, one of two researchers from the Department of Economics, presented information about the study to determine cost accounting and capital budgeting for the proposed PRF and evaluate market opportunities. He explained that the methodology will be based on cost minimization rather than profit maximization, because the main value of the proposed Erie Pier PRF is that it would create capacity and extend the life of the facility indefinitely.

**National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERR):** NERR is a federal-state partnership, funded through NOAA, which designates sites for research, education and infrastructure maintenance. The majority of the designated sites are along saltwater coasts, but the State of Wisconsin is seeking this designation and would be only the second freshwater estuary in the NERR network. Becky Sapper and Cathy Techtmann, from the UW-Extension program, presented information about the 8-year site selection process. The three sites under consideration are estuaries at Fish Creek and Bark River on Lake Superior's south shore, as well as the St. Louis River in the Superior harbor. They are currently in the public outreach phase and a designation is expected in the year 2010. Annual funding would total approximately \$750,000.

**Wisconsin Harbor Assistance Program Submittals:** Superior Planning and Port Director Jason Serck gave details about two project applications submitted for funding by this WisDOT-administered program, for improvements to the CLM Superior Lime Plant and the Cenex Harvest States facility. The latter project is the first project specifically related to the harbor corrosion issue to replace sheet piling and apply coatings. Jason stated that the State of Wisconsin had significantly increased its cash allocation to the HAP program and that there was a good chance that both Superior proposals would be funded through the competitive application process.

**Northeast Minnesota/Northwest Wisconsin Freight Study:** Andy McDonald reported that although this study has not yet been funded by MnDOT, based on the need for this information and the likely emphasis on freight in the next federal transportation bill, MIC staff is moving forward to get this study underway in 2008.

## 12. Project Updates

**Phase 2 Bike Routes Signage:** James Gittemeier reported that the implementation phase of the bike route project is underway. A contractor has been selected and the signs are being produced. (More signs added in October). Due to the colder temperatures fast approaching, installation of the signage is scheduled for Spring 2008, when the ground thaws. He is looking at a possible promotional opportunity to tie in the completion of the signage project to next spring's bike to work day.

**2009-2012 Duluth Area TIP Applications:** James Gittemeier reported that in November, MIC staff met with each Duluth-area jurisdiction eligible for federal transportation funding, the Duluth Transit Authority (DTA), MnDOT, St. Louis County, the City of Duluth, and the

City of Hermantown to go over each agency's project(s) in the current TIP and to review regional needs identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan. Project applications for 2012 federal funding were sent out on November 5 and are due by Friday, December 14.

**Endion Transportation and Land Use Plan:** Holly Butcher reported that the Endion Steering Committee met on Monday November 22nd to devise final plan recommendations and to consider further public outreach. URS is in the process of developing a technical memorandum of transportation modeling information which MIC staff will review and incorporate into this plan.

**DTA Route Analysis for the City of Superior:** Holly Butcher reported that in January, MIC, DTA, and City of Superior staff will meet with consultants from First Transit to review options for transit service in Superior.

**Duluth Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Applications:** Holly Butcher reported that on behalf of the Duluth Public Schools, MIC staff submitted an infrastructure application for Stowe Elementary School on November 16th. The Duluth SRTS Steering Committee, which includes school principals, along with city and MnDOT engineers worked diligently on the proposal and developed accurate cost information.

**Duluth's Blueprint to End Poverty:** Holly Butcher reported that MIC staff has been asked to join the Transportation Action Team, coordinated by Community Action Duluth, in conjunction with Duluth's Blueprint to End Poverty. This team will meet monthly and will begin to devise strategies to implement actions to resolving transportation issues for those in poverty who live in Duluth.

**Duluth Heights Traffic Calming Survey:** Andy McDonald reported that surveys were mailed to approximately 875 households in the Duluth Heights area to ask residents opinions about the half closure installed at the intersection of Eklund Avenue and Swan Lake Road in May 2007. We are currently compiling the results of the survey and will meet with City of Duluth staff to discuss the results and determine the next steps in this process.

### 13. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.