



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
MEETING SUMMARY
Wednesday, May 21, 2008, 7:00 PM

Meeting Location	WITC Conference Center, Superior, WI	
Meeting Chair	Nick Baker	
Note Taker	Rondi Watson	
Members Present	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Ed Anderson	City of Superior
	Nick Baker	Douglas County
	Steve Baker	Douglas County
	Warren Bender	City of Superior
	David Brenna	City of Proctor
	Mike Coyle	Douglas County
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Townships
	Jay Fosle	City of Duluth
	Garry Krause	City of Duluth
	Keith MacDonald	City of Hermantown
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County
	Kevin Norbie	City of Superior Citizen Rep
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis County Townships
	Dan Olson	City of Superior
	Steve O'Neil	St. Louis County
Members Absent	Andy Peterson	City of Duluth Citizen Rep
	Tari Rayala	Duluth Transit Authority Board
Others Present	Tom Bridge	Superior Common Council
	Holly Butcher	ARDC / MIC Senior Planner
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	Jeff Goetzman	City of Superior
	Sheldon Johnson	ARDC / MIC Deputy Director
	Jason Laumann	NWRPC / Senior Planner
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Shelley Nelson	Duluth News Tribune
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Secretary
	* Alternate	

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

MIC Co-Chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. Ron welcomed Warren Bender and Dan Olson, new members representing the Superior City Council, and Steve Baker, new representative from the Douglas County Board. He added that Kevin Norbie was continuing on as the citizen representative for

the City of Superior, replacing David Bilden, whose term had recently expired.

Chair Baker called for changes to the agenda. None were put forward.

2. Committee Business – Meeting Summary of April 16, 2008

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

Motion and Discussion Kevin Norbie/Earl Elde moved to approve the meeting summary from the April 16, 2008 meeting with no changes. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. City of Superior – Local Enhancements Project Application

Ron Chicka announced that the application that had been put forward by WisDOT, for funding under the FY 2009-2011 State Multi-Modal Improvement Program (SMIP), was back this month for approval by the Policy Board. He introduced Jeff Goetzman, Assistant Director of Public Works for the City of Superior, to present information about the project and respond to questions.

Jeff explained that the proposed project was for the construction of a Moccasin Mike Bypass Trail, a 2.1 mile long, 10-ft wide, non-motorized, gravel surface trail, connecting the Osaugie trail (part of the tri-county corridor trail system) out to Wisconsin Point. The estimated cost is approximately \$560,000; with an 80/20 cost share with the City. He noted that this project was put forward by the City primarily for safety reasons, because Wisconsin Point is a popular beach and lakeside destination, but Moccasin Mike Road poses a hazard to cyclists with its narrow geometry and the considerable amount of truck traffic that travels each day back and forth from the municipal landfill site. He added that it is included in the City's overall trail plan.

He also noted that the City had put forward an application for this project a few years back which was not funded, and that this proposal had been re-tooled to minimize wetlands impacts.

Questions: why does the proposed trail loop back, i.e., not follow a straight path? Jeff responded that the intent is to completely avoid wetland areas, and the preliminary ground survey and wetlands inventory revealed this alignment as a more feasible alternative. Tom Bridge added that the final design must come again before the City Council and the Douglas County Board, and they will have the opportunity for input again before the project can proceed.

Mike Coyle asked how motorized traffic could be kept off this trail. Jeff responded that removable bollards could be put in place.

Dan Olson expressed concern about possible safety issues, that the trail alignment would put riders too far away from the main road, plus gravel is a less stable surface, possible liability concerns. Jeff responded that the original plan was for an asphalt surface, but due to budgetary concerns was changed to gravel, which also would have less of an environmental impact with a permeable surface.

Kay McKenzie questioned if plans exist for a bike trail along Hill Avenue, Stinson, or 42nd

Avenue East, suggesting that these routes would be a higher priority for the City. Tom Bridge responded that there is no plan for trails in that area, partly because they are much longer, and significantly more expensive routes.

Kevin Norbie commented that Wisconsin Point is a popular and unique destination and that this trail has been talked about for quite awhile. He added that he would prefer to see a completely paved route to improve accessibility.

Nick Baker expressed concern that there is a lack of attention to a project that needs to be done, i.e., extending the bike lanes that end at the Millennium Trail, given that they have more potential for use than along Moccasin Mike Road. Tom Bridge stated that he didn't disagree that the Millennium Trail would be a good project, but asserted that there's just as much utilization along Moccasin Mike Road.

Ed Anderson agreed, describing Wisconsin Point as another jewel in the City's natural landscape, and that it would be great to be able to access it along an alternate route for non-motorized trail users. He suggested that concrete could be utilized instead of asphalt, or that the City could investigate other "green" surface materials could be utilized.

Broc Allen stated that he strongly supports this project as well, adding that gravel trail surfaces have worked well for bike trails in other parts of the state.

Motion and Discussion Ed Anderson, with a second from Warren Bender, moved to recommend that the City's application be forwarded to the state of Wisconsin with the MIC's recommendation that the project be ranked 1 of 1. The motion passed on a vote of 14 to 1 (McKenzie Nay, Krause Abstaining).

4. Douglas County Comprehensive Plan

Jason Laumann presented information about the planning process currently underway for the Douglas County Comprehensive Plan, which stresses coordination between local jurisdictions and with other plans, for example those developed by the MIC. Altogether it will be a 30-month process; the draft plan will be released for comment in September.

He also reviewed the responses to the Transportation Issues survey—some notable results, i.e., respondents were strongly not in favor of county-wide transit system or carpooling options; also general dissatisfaction with condition of the roadways in Douglas County was expressed.

Q: Why was the survey limited to the rural population? A: This plan is best viewed as a plan for the rural part of the county; therefore the City of Superior elected not to participate, also because they have their own Comprehensive Plan. Kay McKenzie pointed out that there is a need for integration between the two jurisdictions (City/County)—but the County does not have zoning authority within the City.

General Comment: County Board members want to have input at an earlier stage of the process, i.e., before the draft is released for comment.

5. Amendment #9 to the 2008-2011 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

James Gittemeier reported that St. Louis County had applied for and received a grant for federal transportation planning funds administered by the MN Historical Society. The grant will fund a study of adaptive reuse of the Duluth Depot in conjunction with new passenger rail service. Potential uses include office, retail, possibly even residential. The funding includes \$140,000 from Federal Highway, with a local match by St. Louis County of \$45,000 for total project cost of \$185,000, which needs to be amended into the current Duluth Area TIP for 2009 funding. He explained that this project, although developed outside the normal TIP selection process, needs to be amended into the current Duluth Area TIP for 2009 because it will utilize federal funds.

Motion and Discussion Broc Allen/Steve O'Neil moved to approve the Amendment to the 2008-2011 Duluth Area TIP as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. 2009-2012 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program - Draft

James Gittemeier presented the draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FY 2009-2012 projects in the Duluth urbanized area. He reported that the format for this TIP was being overhauled with the goal of making it more user-friendly and more understandable by the general public. After the draft is released for the mandatory 30-day comment period, he will begin the air quality conformity consultation with FHWA, MPCA and MnDOT Central Office. He noted that the funding level is significantly higher in FY 2009 and 2010, reflecting the additional projects funded by SAFETEA-LU.

More information was requested about the Munger Trail extension. James explained that the 2009 project list includes funding for preliminary engineering of the entire 6-mile trail from its current terminus at 75th Avenue west to Canal Park. The 2011 project list includes funding for the construction of the first two segments of the trail, about 2.6 miles total, from Pulaski Street to Recycle Way.

He requested approval by the MIC to release the draft TIP for a 30-day public comment period, with the final TIP to be completed in July.

Motion and Discussion Kay McKenzie/Mike Coyle moved to recommend to the MIC that the draft 2009-2012 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program be released for the mandated 30-day comment period. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

7. UMD-CSS Transportation Study

Andy McDonald reported that he had recently conducted two public meetings, structured as "issues identification" sessions where participants broke out to tables with large aerial photos of the study area to write or draw their concerns about transportation issues in the study area. Many comments were received relating to pedestrian, bike and transit issues as well as roadway concerns.

An online survey of all faculty, staff and students from each campus was also administered and got a good level of response. Comments in the open-ended question section mostly focused on parking problems on campus. Survey results will be analyzed to determine distances traveled and modes used, and to identify differences in the travel patterns of faculty/staff and students. GIS analysis will be used to compare student residence locations with routes taken.

An analysis of sidewalk snow removal in the surrounding neighborhood had also been conducted, giving a good idea of what sidewalks never get cleared and reinforcing the common complaint that the snow removal ordinance is not being enforced.

Finally, he reported that staff had also conducted a cut-through traffic analysis, observing traffic movements through the adjacent neighborhood at peak morning and afternoon travel times. The highest rate of cut-through traffic was observed on Lawn Street, with 87% of vehicles cutting through, with an especially high volume of traffic in the afternoon.

8. Proctor Comprehensive Plan Update

Holly Butcher reported that she and James had facilitated a Community Visioning session on May 13th. She explained that this session was intended to involve the community in the update of Proctor's Comprehensive Plan. They conducted a group process to identify the City's assets and opportunities and to develop a vision statement to guide the overall planning process. Themes that emerged from this discussion included: Proctor's prominent location on top of the hill, recreation, safety, schools & life long learning, and "green" approaches to new development. The update of the Plan is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

9. Bike to Work Day and Bike Planning Update

James Gittemeier reported that Bike to Work Day was Friday, May 16, and ARDC, along with the YMCA, the DTA and the Greater Downtown Council, had sponsored a morning commute event for bicyclists at the Minnesota Plaza from 7am to 9am. He got a fair amount of media attention and participation was good.

He also reported that Phase 2 Bike Route signs (about 330 total) have been installed in Duluth, Proctor and St. Louis County. Final inspection of the installed signage should be completed by the end of the month.

He also reported that a new initiative by the DTA is underway to improve its transit stops, which will include a type of parking meter that will also incorporate bicycle parking.

10. Roundtable Discussion

Parking around City-County Building

Nick Baker mentioned that the issue of parking problems around the City-County complex was raised at a recent County Board meeting. He wants to address the parking issue in that area by revisiting the recommendations in the 2003 Superior Parking Plan, which recommends the installation of short-term parking meters and better enforcement as a way to encourage turnover of parking spaces nearest the building. He noted that the Board, however, doesn't like the idea of

having customers pay for parking to come in and do business. Ed Anderson commented that some of the parking dedicated to some of the departments perhaps was not needed.

August and September MIC Meetings

Ron announced that in an unusual circumstance, schedule conflicts would prevent most of the MIC staff from being able to attend either the August 20th or the September 17th MIC meetings, adding that on both dates, they would be organizing, presenting at, or participating in various transportation planning conferences. He asked how many Board members would have schedule conflicts if the meetings were to be rescheduled a week later each month. Rondi mentioned that the rescheduled meeting would also be the annual joint MIC and TAC meeting, preceded by a picnic supper at 5:30 pm. He closed by saying that the date(s) of the rescheduled meetings would be announced as soon as possible.

11. Project Updates

Long Range Transportation Plan 2035

Ron Chicka reported that the MIC is beginning the process of updating the Duluth-Superior Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Scope of Work to be presented at the June TAC and MIC meetings. It will be updated as a web-based document, providing as much information as possible in a visual format and cutting down on the amount of text, with the goal of making it easier to navigate and utilize. Revisions will be presented on a chapter-by-chapter basis to the TAC and MIC for comment and input.

East Second Street Study

Ron also reported, on behalf of MIC Planner Robert Herling, that a number of initial tasks have been accomplished so far for this study, including the initial data gathering, access inventory, and crash analyses. An on-site assessment of the study area raised some considerations for extending the study further south along East 2nd Street, and MIC staff met with the City of Superior to revisit the objectives of the study and reassess the study boundaries. Also at this meeting, the make up of a steering committee was discussed, and a public involvement action plan was established.

WisDOT Safe Routes to School

Holly Butcher reported that she had been asked to participate on the WisDOT Safe Routes to School state-wide project selection committee. The MIC's early involvement in developing several SRTS studies prompted WisDOT's request that we be involved in helping to select quality projects submitted for the current grant cycle.

On May 9th, WisDOT hired a consultant to conduct a safe biking workshop as an implementation activity of their non-infrastructure grant.

Also, only half of the Congdon project as originally envisioned will be implemented due to changes from the Red Plan

Endion Land Use and Transportation Plan

Holly reported that the final Endion Transportation and Land Use Plan, after its approval at the April TAC and MIC meeting, was presented to the planning district in April. A public forum and panel discussion will be held on May 22nd at 7:00 p.m. at First Lutheran Church. The final document can be viewed at www.dsmic.org/endion.

Freight Planning Study

Ron announced that MnDOT had hired a new manager of the Freight Office, and discussions have begun again about getting the long-planned freight study for NE MN/NW WI underway. Now, however, there appear to be problems with funding and staffing from WisDOT – funds available in 2008 may not be available in 2009. He commented that not having Wisconsin participation would compromise the final results somewhat.

12. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:27 pm.