



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
MEETING SUMMARY
Wednesday, October 15, 2008, 7:00 PM

Meeting Location	Hermantown Public Safety Facility Training Center, Hermantown, MN
Meeting Chair	Andy Peterson
Note Taker	Rondi Watson

MIC Members Present		
	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
	Melanie Hendrickson	DTA Board
	Garry Krause	City of Duluth
	Keith MacDonald	City of Hermantown
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis County Townships
	Kevin Norbie	City of Superior Citizen Rep
	Dan Olson	City of Superior
	Steve O'Neil	St. Louis County
	Andy Peterson	City of Duluth Citizen Rep
MIC Members Absent	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Jay Fosle*	City of Duluth
Others Present		
	Holly Butcher	ARDC / MIC Senior Planner
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Associate Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC / MIC Deputy Director
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Secretary
	* Excused	

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

MIC Co-Chair Andy Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. No changes to the agenda were put forward.

2. Committee Business – Meeting Summaries of July 16 and September 3, 2008

Motion and Discussion Kevin Norbie/ Earl Elde moved to approve the meeting summaries from the July 16 and September 3, 2008 meetings. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Amendment #7 to 2008-2011 Superior Metro Transportation Improvement Program

Sheldon Johnson presented an amendment to add a project for inclusion in the current (2008-2011) Superior Urbanized Area TIP. Amendment #7 adds a right-of-way acquisition to the Belknap Street Extension project from USH 53/2 intersection westerly 0.7 miles, already approved in the 2008-2011 Superior Urbanized Area TIP, at a cost of \$250,000, all state-funded.

Motion and Discussion Kevin Norbie/Nick Baker moved to approve Amendment #7 to the 2008-2011 Superior TIP as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

4. Final 2009-2012 Superior Metro Transportation Improvement Program

Sheldon Johnson distributed copies of the final Superior Urbanized Area Transportation Improvement Program for 2009-2012 and reviewed the projects on a year-by-year basis. Eleven major projects covering multiple modes are being proposed for funding in the upcoming 4-year period. The only comment during the 30-day comment period was a procedural clarification from the local WisDOT office. He closed by requesting approval of the final document.

Motion and Discussion Nick Baker/Garry Krause moved to approve the final TIP as presented. *Kay McKenzie asked why the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects were not implemented in 2008, as originally programmed. She noted that the Superior SRTS plan had been completed a few years before the Duluth SRTS plan, yet Duluth has already funded and implemented several projects while Superior has not. Sheldon noted that the project requires matching funds from the City, and they requested that the project be carried over for funding in 2009. Kay stated that the SRTS improvements should have been a higher priority for the city. There was no further discussion. The motion passed by a vote of 15 to 1, Kay McKenzie opposing.*

5. Superior – Blatnik Traffic Study – Scope of Work

Robert Herling presented the scope of work for the upcoming Superior-Blatnik Bridge Traffic Study. He explained that the intent of the study is to examine capacity and design issues related to the I-535/US 53 interchange as it currently exists. The work will involve safety and efficiency assessments, and will model the potential effects of different traffic scenarios on a number of roads in north Superior. He added that traffic modeling would be a very large component of this study, and we are working with consultant.

He noted that last year's Traffic Safety Management (TSM) study revealed safety concerns related to the sudden decrease in speed from 55 mph on the bridge to 30 mph at the base when it becomes Hammond Avenue, compounded by cross traffic trying to shoot the gap at base of

the bridge. All modes and linkages will be examined.

He added that WisDOT had requested that we also model the impact of a closure of the Bong/Hwy 2 bridge in the summer of 2014 for work planned for the bridge. The ADT of 16,900 is anticipated to be routed to the Blatnik. The final study will include a technical report of modeling results. He closed by requesting approval of the Scope.

Motion and Discussion Kay McKenzie/Garry Krause moved to approve the Scope of Work as presented. *Kay wanted to ensure that bikes would be included in the analysis and about the bike lane across the Bong Bridge, hoped there would be consideration of an alternate route when the bridge is closed in 2014.* There was no further discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

6. 2009-2010 MIC Work Program Projects

Ron Chicka opened a discussion about projects to be programmed for 2009 and 2010 in the draft work program. He noted that each year can accommodate a few discretionary planning projects, and they have been incorporated (based on the poll of MIC and TAC members). He added that the budget has not yet been finalized, but added that all funds are still in place (from 2008-2009 work program), and priorities have yet to be determined for projects to be programmed. The numbers will be presented in final version to be presented at the December meetings.

He noted that some of the projects programmed for 2009 (determined last year with the approval of the 2008-2009 Work Program) have or will begin by the end of this year, including the UMD/CSS study, and the East 2nd Street Plan, Blatnik Bridge Study, and bike route planning in Superior.

Other projects to begin in 2009 and extend into 2010 include a Superior Urban Area Growth Impact Study, similar to the one conducted for Duluth to determine potential growth patterns into the townships and a study of Central Entrance, building off of the existing Miller Hill Study to examine land uses and improve safety along the corridor between MnDOT and Cub Foods. He also presented some proposed project options for 2010, including a new roundabout site study and a Kirkus Street plan examining land use, zoning, and pre-streetscaping for the City of Proctor before development gets going along that new street. He noted that "small improvements" were likely to be a common theme to aid traffic movements in the future, as opposed to recommendations for new construction.

Several other planning efforts would be included under the Plan Implementation section, an element of the work program that has been increasing in recent years in an effort to follow up on the implementation of recommendations from our prior planning efforts.

Transit planning is another standing element – may include an update to the 1998 "Transit Vision" long range plan for the entire MIC planning area, and the Long Range Planning element will take up a lot of our time this year, with the federal requirement to update the MIC's current LRTP through 2035. Rural transit, pedestrian and bike planning issues also possibly to be addressed in the LRTP update. Freight planning, too, is slated to take more

prominence with the MnDOT-driven Northern MN/Northwestern WI Regional Freight Plan. He emphasized again that the timing of all projects can be juggled a bit based on needs and jurisdictional priorities. He closed by requesting approval of the draft plan, adding that he would be taking comments and presenting the final version at the December meetings.

Motion and Discussion Dan Olson/Warren Bender moved to approve the draft 2009-2010 Work Plan and Budget as presented. *During the discussion, Kay McKenzie asked about aerial photo updates (answer: the cost is prohibitive for one entity to finance alone-must involve a partnership of MIC, city and county funding sources). Dan Olson remarked that a new hotel is planned for the Central Entrance corridor, to be factored in to the corridor analysis.* There was no further discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

7. UMD/CSS Transportation Assessment

Andy McDonald noted that last year's work on this project called out problems with snow removal as an impediment to pedestrian movements to and from campus; he reviewed the current Duluth ordinance, basically enforcement is inconsistent and complaint-driven. He also compared ordinances from ten other comparable size cities with colleges--other cities including Marquette, MI and Missoula, MT, generally spend more money on snow removal and have stricter enforcement

He also reported on recent bike ride that advisory committee members took with Steve Clark, a bike facility design consultant from the Twin Cities, within the UMD study area. The purpose was to identify opportunities for improved bike facilities, including best locations for bike lanes; bike markings to identify the shared use of lanes, and the possible reconfiguration of existing driving and parking lanes to accommodate bikes and bike lanes.

8. Proctor Comprehensive Plan

James gave an overview of the recent efforts in the city of Proctor's Comprehensive Planning process. He noted that factors driving the update are Proctor's aging population and an increasing interest in sustainability.

The recent community survey yielded five major themes --business development, in particular of a grocery store; improved bus service; development of bike routes and trails; road and sidewalk improvements; and retaining youth population. Another meeting, with Kirkus Street property owners, yielded similar themes. He added that he had visited 7th grade health classes as part of their class project devoted to the year-long assignment entitled "What can you do to make Proctor a greener community?"

All survey efforts emphasized the theme of sustainability, and there are many opportunities to implement this, such as "green" buildings and infrastructure, and this plan will set the stage for a new community direction.

Next steps include another meeting with the Comprehensive Plan group with a focus on sustainability; the work schedule will result in final plan by March 2009.

9. Downtown Modal Connections Study

Holly presented results from 185 recent intercept surveys conducted by consultants in late August, which showed that most visitors both drive and walk to get around the Canal Park and downtown areas, and that improved wayfinding for all modes is needed. Because increasing the roadway capacity is not an option, the solution is to develop more alternatives to car travel, such as a circulator bus between Canal Park and downtown, widening sidewalks on bridges over I-35 and adding a sidewalk on the west side of the 5th Avenue West bridge.

Next steps will be to hold a steering committee solution identification meeting. They have a very short time frame, with a draft plan due by mid-November and a final plan by January at the latest, to have recommendations in place that the City can put forward as legislative priorities for the next Congress.

10. Harbor Planning/HTAC Update

Andy McDonald presented an overview of the most recent HTAC meeting held at the MPCA on September 3rd. Topics included presentations on the recent NERR designation of the St. Louis Estuary site; GMRI Research Affiliate Projects funded for FY 2008; the visit to the Duluth port by the Great Lakes Maritime Academy ship; an overview of the upcoming Northern MN/Northwestern WI Freight study; a presentation about the Railmate bi-modal system, a new technology that facilitates rail to truck transport and may offer cost savings to the Army Corps as it looks to convert Erie Pier to a Processing and Re-use Facility.

He added that a contingent of top staff from MnDOT's central office, including Commissioner Tom Sorel, visited the Duluth Seaway Port Authority earlier this month to tour facilities, learn about bulk materials operations and get an in depth look at local port operations & issues.

11. Project Updates

East Second Street Study

Robert Herling reported that the steering committee for this study met in July 2008 for a briefing on study tasks already accomplished and the resulting findings. With input from this committee, a public participation strategy was developed which included engaging the local media and advertising the opportunity for people to get information and provide comments via the MIC website. An article appearing in the Superior Telegram on August 28 provided a good overview of the project goals and generated a number of responses to the MIC website. Presently, MIC staff is gathering speed counts along the E 2nd Street corridor which it will analyze and share the results in the next steering committee meeting tentatively scheduled for January 2009.

Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 Update

Robert Herling reported that MIC staff is presently gathering building permit information dating back to 2003, the year that work on the last Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update began. This information will be used to update the MIC's traffic demand model to generate traffic forecasts to be used in assessing the area's long range transportation objectives and needs. As this information becomes processed, the MIC will be bringing it to area

jurisdictions for verification and input before moving forward with updating the model.

SRTS Applications for Duluth and Proctor

Holly Butcher reported that several SRTS meetings have been scheduled for the month of October. The Duluth Public School District will discuss implementation of existing grants in addition to discussing school projects for the 2009 grant solicitation. In Proctor, MIC is assessing transportation patterns and issues around Bay View Elementary and Proctor Middle Schools. An assessment with county and city engineers will be conducted with Proctor School District staff on October 9th to result in five SRTS applications. Significantly, Duluth school district has changed its bike policy to allow biking to school, the SRTS applications will now include request for funding bike racks.

Northern Minnesota/NW Wisconsin Freight Study

Ron Chicka reported that last month the first meeting of the project steering committee met to discuss the entire work scope and key issues that should be under analysis for the plan. Members of the steering committee include both MNDOT and WISDOT staff, DNR staff from both states, university level partners, St Louis and Douglas County staff and Port Authority staff. In mid-October a consultant will be hired to assist with this project. They also began to look at data needs and mapping needs toward the task of dividing up tasks between agencies.

Transportation Research Board Presentations

Robert Herling, MIC Planner, and Andrea Grygo Diamond, the MIC's GIS Specialist, presented papers on crash analysis and visualization, respectively, at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 11th Annual Tools of the Trade Conference in Portland, Oregon. Both papers showcase the MIC's unique, innovative work in these areas. Andrea's presentation "Demystifying Visualization: How to use visualization in your community" was selected as one of the five "Best Papers" and will be presented at the national TRB meeting in January in Washington DC.

12. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Peterson adjourned the meeting at 8:36 pm.