



**Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Wednesday, January 21, 7:00 PM**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	WITC Conference Center, Superior, WI
<b>Meeting Chair</b>	Nick Baker
<b>Note Taker</b>	Rondi Watson

<b>MIC Members Present</b>	Ed Anderson	City of Superior
	Nick Baker	Douglas County
	Steve Baker	Douglas County
	Warren Bender	City of Superior
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Townships
	Troy Foucault	City of Proctor
	Melanie Hendrickson	DTA Board
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis County Townships
	Kevin Norbie	City of Superior Citizen Rep
	Steve O'Neil	St. Louis County
Andy Peterson	City of Duluth Citizen Rep	
<b>MIC Members Absent</b>	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Wayne Boucher*	City of Hermantown
	Mike Coyle	Douglas County
	Jay Fosle*	City of Duluth
	Garry Krause*	City of Duluth
	Dan Olson	City of Superior
<b>Others Present</b>	Holly Butcher	ARDC / MIC Senior Planner
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Pat Henderson	ARDC Executive Director
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Shawn McGovern (alternate)	City of Proctor
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Secretary
	* Excused	

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

MIC Co-Chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. Ron Chicka welcomed new members Troy Foucault and Shawn McGovern, newly appointed as the member and alternate for the City of Proctor. He added that they, along with new City of Hermantown representative, Mayor Wayne Boucher, would be participating in a MIC new member orientation session prior to next month's meeting.

Ron announced that this was Holly Butcher's last day with the MIC-she is leaving to take a new job at the City of Cloquet as Economic Development Director. MIC members thanked her for her eight years of good work as a MIC staff member.

Ron also announced that Rondi Watson had been promoted to Planning Assistant--after nine years at the MIC, the decision was made to formalize her role in support of the MIC's planning efforts and will be taking on some new projects in the coming year.

### **Committee Business – Meeting Summary of December 10, 2008**

**Motion and Discussion** Warren Bender/Earl Elde moved to approve the meeting summary from the December 10, 2008 meeting as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **2. Downtown Transportation Terminal Study**

Ron Chicka reported that the DTA's consultant from LSA Design was not able to attend the meeting to provide an update, so instead he would report on where the Downtown Transportation Terminal Study for the DTA stands. He explained that the DTA is taking another look at the possibility for a new downtown Duluth passenger terminal, in advance of possible federal earmark for funding this project. The station would not replace the current DTA operations facility on West Michigan Street, but would serve instead as a central transfer point for DTA buses and as a large centralized multi-modal transportation hub. The goal of the project is to create a stronger downtown presence and image for the DTA, with better downtown bus circulation, improved connectivity with Canal Park, and more effective multi-modal options (intercity coaches, trolley, taxi cab, rental car, car share, bike storage, and parking for local and visitor vehicles,). It is envisioned that the facility would coordinate with the proposed passenger rail service at the downtown Depot facility and could provide economic development opportunities by including small retail outlets.

The consultant is proposing seven options for potential locations, each site with its own pros and cons, for example, a facility near the Depot would be more convenient to passenger rail connections, while other locations would connect to the existing skywalk system; others might have potential viewshed issues or be more or less convenient terms of bus circulation. The options will be scored and prioritized by a number of stakeholders as part of the study process. At next month's meeting, more information will be presented about decisions made, with prices attached.

During the discussion, a question was asked about the possibility of utilizing the Depot instead of building a facility on adjacent lots. Ron answered that there is a parallel study being conducted for converting the Depot for use if passenger rail becomes reality. It's possible the two facilities could be combined; but in any case, connectivity between the rail and other modes of travel definitely needs to be established in the event of passenger rail.

### **3. Transit Vision Update**

Holly Butcher reported that MIC staff has been assisting the DTA with strategic planning for its

Transit Vision transit development plan. At the November DTA Board meeting, she and Robert Herling facilitated a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) analysis with board members to provide direction for next 5-10 years. Additionally, DTA staff administered passenger and driver surveys in the fall of 2008 and are analyzing the results.

Input from the Board stressed both regionalization of DTA service, as well as improved connectivity and a stronger downtown presence. They are interested in being proactive with projects that are sustainable and that encourage the public to think about transportation differently.

#### 4. Downtown Duluth Modal Connections Study

Holly presented the Downtown Duluth Modal Connections Study, which assesses the existing infrastructure and how it encourages or impedes the movement of pedestrians, bicyclists and public transit services between Downtown, Canal Park, the DECC and the Bayfront Park. The final plan identifies barriers and makes recommendations to improve connectivity.

She noted that there are four existing connections between downtown and the waterfront which are unevenly spaced and located at areas not easily accessible to both visitors and locals. Recommendations include physically connecting the two districts, including development of a connectivity platform (a deck over Interstate 35); establishing regular, frequent and easy-to-use transit circulator service to connect the medical district, canal park and downtown areas; encouraging non-auto travel between districts, including sidewalk design and bicycle parking facilities; improving wayfinding signage; and supporting rail readiness in the event that passenger rail service between the Twin Ports and the Twin Cities is established.

She added that successful implementation of these recommendations will require new public-private partnerships as well as collaboration between numerous entities, including the Duluth Transit Authority, the Lake & St. Louis County Regional Rail Authorities, the City of Duluth, MnDOT, the DECC, the Greater Downtown Council and property owners.

She noted that the plan is available online at <http://www.dsmic.org/modal>. She closed by requesting approval of the final plan.

**Motion and Discussion** Andy Peterson/Kevin Norbie moved to approve the Duluth Modal Connections Study as presented. *During the discussion, Ed Anderson recalled that some years ago, there was a presentation about a Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system called Taxi 2000; he suggested considering something like this, or perhaps a monorail system to circulate around the Canal Park attractions. Steve O'Neil asked about the likely timeline for completing a Munger Trail connection to the Canal Park area? Andy McDonald replied that at best, it will take 6-7 years, as funding sources such as the Transportation Enhancements program allow for construction about a mile at a time.*

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

#### 5. Proctor Comprehensive Plan-Draft

James Gittemeier reported that he was working on completing Proctor's update to its Comprehensive Plan, with a focus on implementation steps and strategies. He reviewed the main

sections, which include economic development, housing, infrastructure, intergovernmental cooperation, Kirkus Street, land use, natural & cultural resources, recreation and transportation.

He closed by noting that the draft plan will move through the City of Proctor approval process in February, with the final plan to be presented to the TAC and MIC in March.

## **6. Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 Update**

Robert Herling presented the latest update of the process of updating the MIC's long range transportation plan (LRTP), *Directions 2035*. He noted that coordinating this plan with state and federal policy guidance is a necessary but sometimes complicated endeavor. Policies impacting the MIC's long range plan include the 1998 federal TEA-21 legislation, which introduced the seven planning factors, and the 2005 SAFETEA-LU bill, which added emphasis on safety and security, congestion management, freight, data-driven planning and coordination. MnDOT and WisDOT plans present 38 and 37 state policies, respectively.

He also reviewed some of the considerations for the MIC area in developing its policies and priorities, including projections of modest population growth over the next 20 years, and the fact that our area has significantly more functionally classified roads compared to our population, noting that these are significant in relation to the need to maintain existing infrastructure.

He also noted that the SAFETEA-LU transportation bill is due to be re-authorized this fall but is more likely to be re-written, reflecting a sea change in the federal approach to funding transportation and planning. Recommendations from the recent National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission report likely anticipate some of the changes that will affect MPOs like the MIC, including asset maintenance programs conforming to national standards; performance-based plans, "maintenance of effort" requirements and cost/benefit analysis requirements.

He closed by explaining that he planned to utilize the input of committee members at the February TAC and MIC meetings to help determine the goals and objectives for the MIC area LRTP.

## **7. 2010-2013 Duluth Area TIP Project Solicitation**

James Gittemeier began by explaining that a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which identifies roadway projects chosen to receive federal funding for a four-year period, is one of the three tasks mandated for every MPO such as the MIC. (The other two tasks are to develop a 20-year Long Range Transportation Plan and an annual Work Program).

He then reviewed the process for developing the Duluth Metropolitan FY 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The MIC annually solicits projects from eligible jurisdictions (counties, cities with population over 5,000, and state agencies) and prioritizes them at the February TAC meeting, according to the process and criteria approved by the MIC in 2002. All voting TAC members, along with any MIC members who choose to participate, will be scoring this year's project applications for FY2013 funding using the specified evaluation criteria and 100-point scoring system. The projects are ranked from highest to lowest priority, according to the final scores, and are presented at the MIC meeting the following evening for discussion and final approval by the Policy Board. The final prioritized

project list is then submitted the Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (NE MN ATP) for funding consideration. The NE MN ATP is a committee of elected officials, engineers and planners which selects projects for an area that encompasses eight counties in northeast Minnesota as well as the MIC planning area. He noted that the public will be given an opportunity to comment on the proposed MIC-area projects at a public meeting that will be held in early February.

This year, five applications were received for FY 2013 federal TIP funding:

- DTA – purchase of 6 STRIDE buses
- Duluth – 10th Ave East Reconstruct from E. 2nd St. to E. 9th St.
- Duluth – Duluth Heights Connector (Joshua Ave) New Construction
- St. Louis County – Martin Road Rehabilitation from Arnold Rd to Jean Duluth Rd
- MN/DOT – I-35 Preservation work from Boundary Ave to Pine County.

The five applications are included in this month's meeting mailing, and James requested that all committee members review the applications and come prepared to score them at the TIP Project Prioritization Session, to be conducted at the February 17th TAC meeting at 1:30 pm at the Proctor Community Center.

James also presented the MIC-area Enhancements projects to be submitted to the ATP for 2013 funding. The Transportation Enhancements program provides funding for the implementation of a variety of projects ranging from bike and pedestrian facilities, to restoration of historic transportation facilities, to landscaping and scenic beautification, and are solicited in a separate process from the MIC's TIP process. These projects include

- Munger Trail Connection – Phase II, to extend the Munger Bike Trail from Grassy Point to Recycle Way
- Lakewalk Extension – Phase VI, to construct a trail segment from 20th Avenue East to 23rd Avenue East along Water Street.

James closed by reiterating his request that committee members come prepared with their scoring sheets for the MIC area prioritization session to be held at the February TAC meeting.

#### **8. Northern MN/Northwestern WI Regional Freight Study**

Andy McDonald reported that data collection efforts are continuing, with highway, freight, rail, port and waterway facilities, air cargo and pipeline inventories nearly complete. He also reported on the four in-person interviews that were conducted at major companies in the Duluth area in late December – with Cirrus Design, Midwest Energy Resources, Lake Superior Warehousing, and Hallett Dock. The purpose of the interviews was to gain a better understanding of the goods moving out of and into this area.

He closed by announcing that a Regional Freight Forum has been scheduled for the morning of Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. to noon at MnDOT District One in Duluth.

## 9. Project Updates

### **Connections 2030**

**Ron Chicka** announced that reps from the WisDOT central office would be making presentations next month in this area to gain public input into their Long Range Transportation Plan – Connections 2030. On February 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm at the UW-Superior Rothwell Student Center, WisDOT staff from the Madison office will be presenting the plan for public input. He encouraged TAC and MIC members to attend.

### **East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Access Management Plan**

Robert Herling announced that work on the East 2nd Street Access Management Plan is picking up again. Results from the various data gathering and analysis tasks are being compiled, maps are being created and drafting of a plan document has begun. The study committee for this project will convene again before the end of January to be briefed on the results of a recent speed study done along East 2nd Street, and to begin to develop recommendations regarding access management strategies for the corridor.

### **UMD-CSS Transportation Study**

Andy McDonald announced that they are in the solution identification phase of the study and are looking at recommendations to improve walking, biking, transit, traffic flow and safety in the campus areas. We will be scheduling the next study committee meeting soon to discuss solutions to problems that were identified, including snow removal and gaps in the sidewalk network, neighborhood cut through traffic, and traffic flow and crash problems at a couple of intersections.

### **TRB Annual Conference**

Ron Chicka announced that he and Andrea Grygo, the MIC's GIS Specialist, attended the annual Transportation Research Board conference in Washington D.C. last week where Andrea presented the visualization component from the 2008 Endion Transportation and Land Use Study. He noted that our work was chosen from a large pool of potential projects to be showcased at this conference. The conference itself is a premiere one for transportation professionals in a multitude of fields with sessions covering the gamut of planning topics. He also participated in a number of meetings as a member of the TRB Committee on Transportation Planning for Small and Medium Sized Communities.

## 10. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:53 pm.