



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, April 15, 2009, 7:00 PM

Meeting Location	Hermantown Training Center, 5111 Maple Grove Rd, Hermantown, MN	
Meeting Chair(s)	Andy Peterson, MN Co-chair	
Note Taker	Rondi Watson	
Members Present	Ed Anderson	Superior Common Council
	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Steve Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Warren Bender	Superior Common Council
	Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	Mike Coyle	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Jay Fosle	Duluth City Council
	Troy Foucault	City of Proctor
	Melanie Hendrickson	Duluth Transit Authority
	Garry Krause	Duluth City Council
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Dan Olson	Superior Common Council
	Steve O'Neil	St. Louis County Board
	Andy Peterson	City of Duluth – Citizen Rep
Members Absent	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Kevin Norbie*	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
Others Present	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC / MIC Deputy Director
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant
		* Excused

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Wisconsin Co-chair Andy Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. He called for changes to the agenda.

Ron Chicka requested that two informational items be added as the first two agenda items, pertaining to MN HPP Projects and City of Superior projects proposed for ARRA funding.

Motion and Discussion Dan Olson/Garry Krause moved to change the agenda as suggested. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

2. Meeting Summary of March 18, 2009

Chair Peterson asked for any changes or corrections to the previous month's meeting summary. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

Motion and Discussion Nick Baker/Garry Krause moved to approve the 3/18/09 meeting summary as presented. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. MIC-Area HPP Project Solicitation

Ron Chicka reported that an announcement had recently been sent out from Congressman Oberstar's office, soliciting High Priority Project proposals from Duluth-Area jurisdictions, due by April 27th. Several project proposals were planned to be submitted by various jurisdictions within the MIC area: Duluth Multi-Modal Connectivity Project, Munger Trail Extension, Skyline Parkway Reconstruction and Restoration and Joshua Avenue Extension (City of Duluth); Proctor Spur Trail Connection (City of Proctor); Duluth Intermodal Freight Facility (Duluth Seaway Port Authority); Multi-Modal Transit Terminal (DTA); Duluth Depot Passenger Rail Terminal, Haines Road Rebuild, and Reclaim and Overlay projects for segments of Jean Duluth Road, Rice Lake Road and Midway Road (St. Louis County).

He added that a hybrid bus acquisition proposal will likely be put forward by the DTA as well. MnDOT has no proposed projects as yet.

4. Superior ARRA Project Prioritization

Ron Chicka explained that the process is continuing for submitting local infrastructure projects for ARRA (stimulus) project solicitation, adding that Minnesota and Wisconsin have had entirely separate processes for handling this. As part of WisDOT's second round of project solicitation, the City of Superior has ten proposed mill and overlay projects for various road segments for a total of \$10 million of work, to be let in December. He added that if any of these are approved by WisDOT, they will not require special amendments as needed for the Duluth-area projects; the timing will allow them to be included in the next (2010-2013) Superior-Area TIP.

As part of the project submittal process, WisDOT requires that the City's proposed projects first be prioritized by the local MPO, i.e., by the MIC. Ron explained that he had met with City Engineer Jeff Goetzman to analyze the road segments, taking into consideration ADTs, pavement quality, access to transit; bike routes, etc., to produce a prioritized list of projects to be presented for Board approval.

The ten proposed mill and overlay projects, in prioritized order, are:

1. East 5th Street from 6th to 20th Ave East
2. North 5th Street from Hammond to Catlin
3. Hill Avenue from 28th to Maple
4. Banks Avenue from Winter to Belknap
5. Broadway Street from Ogden to Hammond

6. Catlin Avenue from USH 53 to N. 12th Street
7. East 5th Street from 24th to 31st Ave E
8. North 21st Street from Logan to Washington
9. 24th Avenue East from East 9th to 5th Street
10. Grand Avenue from USH 53 to Broadway.

He added that the Moccasin Mike Bypass Trail project will be submitted as #1 of 1 in a separate trail project list.

He closed by requesting approval of the prioritized list of projects for submittal to MnDOT for consideration for ARRA funding.

Motion and Discussion Nick Baker/Ed Anderson moved to approve prioritized list as presented, for submission to WisDOT for second round of ARRA funding. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. 2009-2012 Duluth Area TIP Amendment #4

James Gittemeier explained that St. Louis County has requested that the 2009-2012 Duluth Metro TIP be amended to include additional funding for the Haines Road Reconditioning Project. This project is currently programmed for 2009 and will include mill and overlay as well as drainage work from Airport Road to Morris Thomas Road (4 miles). The amendment is necessary as the total cost of the project has significantly increased from \$2.3 million to \$3.5 million due to uncertainty about bituminous prices. The cost increase will be covered by local funds. No additional federal funds were allocated for this project.

Motion and Discussion Steve O'Neil/Kay McKenzie moved to approve Amendment #4 to the FY 2009-2012 Duluth Metro Transportation Improvement Program to include additional funding for the Haines Road Resurfacing Project scheduled for FY 2009. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. DTA Downtown Intermodal Facility Project Update

Ron Chicka reported on the status of the proposed Downtown Multimodal Transit Terminal, noting the driving factors behind this proposal include improved intermodal connectivity, possible passenger rail service, and the need for a stronger downtown presence for the DTA. Seven initial sites have been narrowed to two, encompassing parcels along Michigan Street between 2nd Avenue West and 5th Avenue West, based on the ability of the surrounding road network to handle traffic into and out of a new passenger rail facility.

He added that the DTA had held an Open House last month to take comments on site options. The final site, recently approved by the DTA Board, is located on the lower side of West Fifth Street and Michigan Avenue, across from the Duluth Depot. He noted that the St. Louis County rail plan also dovetails nicely with this site in terms of their plans; this site would give them more room to accommodate the full length of the train. He added that one critical feature is a good skywalk connection to Superior Street.

He noted that this project is well aligned guidelines for multi-modal projects for ARRA (stimulus) funding, adding that they allow more time for implementing transit projects. The DTA will be carefully looking at the application criteria. It is known that projects would need to fall in the cost range of \$30 to \$250 million. Estimated cost for this facility would be between \$47 and \$55 million, and if funded by ARRA, would not require a local share.

He added that the feds are very interested in developing public-private partnerships, and with this project there is strong interest and buy-in from property and parking lot owners on that site. Next steps are to complete the facility planning report and apply for ARRA funds for pre-design and land legal issues.

7. Proctor Comprehensive Plan (Final)

James Gittemeier reviewed the process that had been followed to date for updating the Proctor Comprehensive Plan, which is undertaken by the City every 5 years. He noted that Proctor has a very active Comprehensive Plan advisory committee which focuses on actually implementing the goals put forward in each new plan update. One goal from the 2002 update was to increase the number of residential housing units; he displayed a map from the new plan which shows that this goal had clearly been implemented.

He also reviewed that the City's future land use map, which shows a larger-than-average amount of green space within the City, noting that they have plans for a new City park on the north side of town. In addition, the Proctor Trail Plan sets forth a plan to create a paved trail connection from the Munger Trail and Spirit Mountain through the length of the city up into Hermantown. He also pointed out a large area around the new Kirkus Street, which will provide a new grade-separated crossing across the railroad tracks and new opportunities for commercial development.

He closed by requesting approval of the final plan.

Motion and Discussion Garry Krause/Troy Foucault moved to approve the final Proctor Comprehensive Plan as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

8. Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 – Needs & Constraints

Robert Herling reviewed responses to the online survey of local transportation priorities. At the top of the public's list was (1) Aging and deteriorating roads & infrastructure, followed by (2) Safety of our streets & highways; (3) More transit options; (4) Create more housing closer to jobs & businesses; and (5) Invest more in harbor, airports and railroads. He noted that transit was ranked highly by the public, although it didn't rank particularly high in the recent surveys of TAC and MIC members. Their priorities can be summarized as: (1) We need improved infrastructure; (2) We need to reduce auto crashes and (3) We need a stronger regional freight economy.

He went on to explain that the major constraint in this year's version of the plan was flat revenues with the need to preserve existing infrastructure (tough climates, politically and

physically). He suggested that the challenges faced by the MIC area pointed to (a) an increasing need for prioritization; (b) an increasing need for information gathering and (c) an increasing need for coordinating efforts.

He also reported that MIC staff is currently meeting with jurisdictions individually to talk about transportation projects to be included in the project list for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). We are asking jurisdictions to identify long range projects (beyond those that may already be identified in their 10-year capital improvement plans). Once all the projects are identified, the estimated costs of those projects will be projected out according to their timeframes and will be compared to the revenue estimated to be available to the MIC area in those timeframes. Once this is done, the MIC will work with the jurisdictions to adjust the final project list within the constraints of expected revenues.

He noted that TAC members had commented that we could also think about dropping project cost increases down somewhat from current level of 5%.

9. 2009 Bike to Work Week

James Gittemeier presented information about this year's Bike to Work Week activities. Bike to Work Week this year takes place May 11 - 15, with Friday, May 15 designated as National Bike to Work Day by the League of American Bicyclists. The MIC is partnering with other agencies (DTA, Downtown Council and the YMCA) to promote biking to work for downtown workers.

This year's bike commuter event will be based, as it was last year, at the Minnesota Power plaza from 7 - 9 a.m. and will feature refreshments, bicycle safety checks, and more. The DTA will again be offering free but rides all day to bicycle commuters. A number of other activities are being planned by other groups, including a bike to school event at UMD and a week-long series of bike-related events at the Fitger's shopping complex.

10. Project Updates

MnDOT Transit and Rail Plan - Public Input Sessions

Ron Chicka reported that MnDOT will be soliciting public input into their 2009 Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan and the draft Greater Minnesota Transit Plan at one of seven upcoming open houses statewide. The open house in Duluth is scheduled for Wednesday, April 29th at the Depot Great Hall from 4-5 pm (transit plan) and 5-7 pm (rail plan).

Twin Ports Passenger Rail Terminal Location: Preliminary Analysis

Ron reported that he had attended the recent presentation by UWS students, which examines the examining the original feasibility study and finds some significant differences compared to the original estimates. He commented that it was a very good presentation and it would be worthwhile to give the MIC and other elected officials an opportunity to see it, as well. He is considering putting this presentation on the agenda for the May 20th MIC meeting, and inviting other elected officials to attend--but there are a limited number of students who would be available to present (classes end by mid-May). He is also looking at the evening of Tuesday,

May 5th, as a date that most of the students would be available to give the presentation. Warren Bender noted, however, that this would conflict with the Superior City Council meeting that night.

2013 Duluth TIP Projects/ATP Update

James Gittemeier reported that on April 2, the full ATP committee voted to approve three of the five projects submitted within the MPO area for FY 2013 federal transportation funding. Due to funding constraints, it was not possible to fund all 5 projects. The 3 projects which were approved for 2013 funding include (1) 10th Ave East Reconstruction; (2) Martin Road Rehabilitation; (3) DTA Bus Purchase – 6 STRIDE buses

This list now moves on to the MnDOT central office for their approval and inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (or STIP). In May, MIC staff will present the draft FY 2010-2013 Duluth Metro TIP for release for public review and comment.

UMD-CSS Transportation Assessment

Andy McDonald reported that the study committee met on April 6th to begin discussion of recommendations that will improve walking, biking, transit, traffic flow and safety in the campus areas. These recommendations may include completing the sidewalk network in the campus area; developing bike lanes; making adjustments to transit routes; reconfiguring traffic lanes; implementing access management techniques and devising cooperative agreements. We will be looking to schedule public meetings to present draft recommendations later this month or in early May.

Mississippi Valley Freight Coalition Workshop

Andy McDonald reported that MIC staff was invited to attend this workshop in Kansas City on April 14-16. The Mississippi Valley Freight Coalition is a regional organization that conducts planning in support of freight movement and infrastructure and represents ten states – Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin. Topics to be presented at the workshop include shippers and carriers issues, waterways issues, and reports on freight planning initiatives including a presentation on the Northern Minnesota / Northwest Wisconsin Freight Plan by Dave Christianson from MnDOT.

Superior Pedestrian Safety Task Force

Ron Chicka reported that later this month the City of Superior is facilitating a Pedestrian Safety Task Force – Walking Workshop to review policies and projects throughout the community. The Police Department received a grant to host this two-day workshop. This workshop will certainly aid in the various planning efforts conducted by the MIC toward this issue. MIC staff will be in attendance along with other invitees including City, County and State DOT staff plus school district officials.

11. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Peterson adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm.