



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Wednesday, June 17, 2009, 7:00 PM**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Hampton Inn-Starboard Room, Canal Park, Duluth MN	
<b>Meeting Chair(s)</b>	Andy Peterson, MN Co-chair	
<b>Note Taker</b>	Rondi Watson	
<b>Members Present</b>	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Steve Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Warren Bender	Superior Common Council
	Mike Coyle	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Jay Fosle	Duluth City Council
	Melanie Hendrickson	Duluth Transit Authority
	Garry Krause	Duluth City Council
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Kevin Norbie	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
	Dan Olson	Superior Common Council
	Steve O’Neil	St. Louis County Board
	Andy Peterson	City of Duluth – Citizen Rep
<b>Members Absent</b>	Ed Anderson	Superior Common Council
	Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	Troy Foucault	City of Proctor
<b>Others Present</b>	Sarah Chambers	Duluth Resident
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Pat Henderson	ARDC Executive Director
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC / MIC Deputy Director
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant
	* Excused	

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

Minnesota Co-chair Andy Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. Chair Peterson called for changes to the agenda, none were put forward.

## 2. Meeting Summary of May 20, 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** Earl Elde/Warren Bender moved to approve the 5/20/09 meeting summary as presented. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 3. Amendment #5 to 2009-2012 Duluth Metro Transportation Improvement Program

James Gittemeier reported that the Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) requested an amendment to the current Duluth Area TIP to include administrative corrections for FY 2009 and 2010 and new funding from various sources for three additional projects in FY 2010. Specifics include:

\$2,600,000 – Reflects an administrative correction for 2009 & 2010; the amount of regular FTA 5307 annual formula funds were incorrectly listed in the STIP because the Transit Office mistakenly excluded \$1.3 million in preventive maintenance funds for each of these years.

\$1,500,000 – For passenger amenity projects in 2010. Source: the DTA's formula ARRA funds.

\$ 400,000 – (\$500,000 total) for facility improvements (to replace the DTA's bus washer and make hub improvements) in 2010. Source: 5309 federal earmark funds & DTA's earmark from FY2008.

\$ 408,000 – (\$510,000 total) in 2010 for four hybrid buses (converting the purchase from regular buses to hybrid buses). Source: part of Mn/DOT's 5309 bus procurement allocation to the DTA.

He closed by requesting approval of the amendment.

**Motion and Discussion** Kevin Norbie/Steve O'Neil moved to approve Amendment #5 to 2009-2012 Duluth Metro Transportation Improvement Program. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 4. Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 – Project Lists & Model Results

Robert Herling explained the current status of the LRTP update, noting that both the jurisdictional project lists and the MIC-area model results have been slow in coming. He had appealed to TAC representatives the previous day to provide complete lists of short-, mid- and long-term projects for their respective jurisdictions, along with associated costs and projected revenues (factored for inflation). These are needed by June 30 at the latest, to prepare for the capacity analysis the FHWA will be looking for at July's Mid-Year Review meeting.

Robert noted that, bottom line, this year's plan needs to demonstrate the ability to fund proposed projects. There has been a key change in the guidance we're receiving about this year's Long Range Plan—we are being asked to include local and state aid project estimates in addition to federally-funded projects. The final plan will also include a list of unfunded needs.

He added that one difficulty in putting together the constrained project lists is the need to define “expansion” vs. “maintenance” vs. “preservation” projects; TAC members agreed that the same definitions as well as accounting methods needed to be applied across the jurisdictions.

He also gave a brief overview of the process that the St Cloud MPO utilizes—they gather a lot more info during their TIP funding process that makes it a lot easier to compile this information for purposes of the LRTP. He closed by noting that he hopes to have the project lists ready for next month’s meeting as well as for the mid-year review.

#### **5. Northern MN/Northwest WI Regional Freight Plan**

Andy McDonald reported that the Freight Plan is entering its final phases. MIC staff met with staff from the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, the Development Association of Douglas County and the City of Superior to discuss the issues and the formation of the final plan.

A draft of the Technical Memo was just passed along to MIC staff and is currently under review. He added that they have some questions about data accuracy pertaining to the metallic ore category (it can’t be as high as shown, may mistakenly include limestone). Major components of the final plan will include analyses of freight infrastructure, commodity flows and employment trends. Local freight infrastructure includes waterways, Class I and Class III railroads, roadways tiered by heavy commercial AADT volumes, bridges, and air cargo. Relative to the supply chain network, the data indicates that approximately 60% of local freight is outbound.

He noted that a shift is projected in this area from a manufacturing to a service-based economy – which also changes the dynamics of freight transportation (smaller packages, increased demand for express and shipment reliability).

Additional issues that are being investigated by the consulting team include port capacity and the development of an intermodal terminal and super corridor routes (to handle large oil sands and wind energy equipment), and the Harbor Maintenance Tax which favors bulk commodities—a barrier to expansion of short sea shipping activities.

He closed by reporting that the final document due by end of July (later than the planned June completion date). He added that MIC staff will be drawing out data that is pertinent to the Long Range Plan update.

#### **6. Duluth Safe Routes to School Projects Update**

James Gittemeier reported on the work that is currently underway for Safe Routes to School projects in Duluth. Last month, representatives from the City of Duluth, the Duluth School District and the MIC met to coordinate these projects. They are being moved around and divided into phases, to coincide with changes to the schools as the Duluth School District implements its Long Range Facility Plan; he noted that the Duluth district is being allowed a greater degree of flexibility in this regard.

Stowe Elementary School Infrastructure project—MnDOT’s will begin work this summer on

Hwy 23/Grand Avenue and will include Safe Routes to School improvements.

Lincoln Park Non-Infrastructure Project—is being developed for implementation this fall; any curriculum, bikes purchased, etc., will then moved to the remaining elementary school for that area.

District-wide Non-Infrastructure Project—is moving forward, personnel have been assigned and bike/ped education curriculum and training events are being planned this summer for implementation this fall.

Congdon Park School Infrastructure Project—may be delayed until the district’s “Red Plan” is firmed up for this school;

Lincoln Park Infrastructure Project—James reported some reluctance on the part of the city to implement this grant due to concerns about public reaction about spending these funds near a school that is closing; however, Holly Butcher’s conversation with MnDOT’s SRTS coordinator, Kristie Billiar, indicated that they would be okay with implementing this project because the Park itself, along with possible future conversion of the school to an assisted living facility, will continue to be a significant pedestrian generator across West 24th Street.

## 7. HTAC/Harbor Planning Update

Andy McDonald reported that the HTAC met on June 3<sup>rd</sup> at the WITC Conference Center. The agenda included presentations on several topics, including:

Superior Research Institute: Dr. Richard Stewart from UWS presented information about the proposed development of a state-of-the-art Superior Research Institute (SRI) facility on the Montreal Pier, located next to Barkers Island. The Great Ships Initiative (ballast water research facility) is already located there and Superior is planning a broader waterfront and landside development in this area. A joint proposal between UWS, the City of Superior and other regional stakeholders, the goals of this development are to expand research and public education opportunities and to create synergy by locating complementary agencies, academics and non-governmental agencies in proximity to one another. The proposed SRI would also provide public access to the SRI grounds and waterfront.

US Steel Superfund Site – the new project manager from the MPCA, Susan Johnson, gave a history of this site and described some of the results from the recent 5-year review, conducted in 2008 to determine if the prescribed response actions to date do indeed protect human health and safety. Sampling activities and data collection revealed 140 uncontaminated acres, but also a substantial number of tar seeps and oil seeps. This is coming to a head right now because the Port Authority has had inquiries about starting some type of development at this site. More sampling and data collection will be conducted; other next steps include developing and implementing selected response actions and working with prospective property buyers to evaluate parcels for contamination.

International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species: – Dale Bergeron from the Minnesota Sea Grant reported on the worldwide spread of the VHS fish virus, and its movement throughout Great Lakes specifically. One important message is that research indicates that no significant

sustained destruction of wild fish populations is occurring because of this virus—it appears to hit an area, then moves on and the fish populations do recover.

Duluth Slips 2 & 3 Land Use Planning – Larry Killien from MN DNR office in Grand Rapids presented information about the planning process for the possible development of waterfront land owned by DEDA and the LaFarge Cement Plant waterfront land. There is word of a possible sale of this land – the DNR wants to establish a partnership with DEDA to include an extensive public participation process with development of several design concepts.

Commercial Fishing in Duluth-Superior – Presentation by Ed Montgomery, Bob Libby and Mark Howard, who runs the last commercial fishing operation out of this port; concerns that commercial fishing is coming to an end in this area, resulting in the loss of an important part of this area’s heritage. Howard noted that to stay viable, his company needs space close to the harbor because of high fuel costs. There may be a resolution of support drafted for consideration at the September meeting.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative– - John Haugland from EPA Region 5 in Chicago presented information about this \$475 million fund to clean up the Great Lakes, building upon initiatives developed during the 2005 Great Lakes Collaboration. Participating federal agencies include the EPA, Coast Guard, Army Corps, Fish & Wildlife Service. The RFP process will begin this summer. Funds will be awarded in several subcategories:

**Toxic Substances** - \$147 Million for cleanup and pollution prevention;

**Invasive Species** - \$60 Million for monitoring, management plans & rapid response activities;

**Near Shore Work** - \$97 million for non-point source cleanup, watershed work & green infrastructure;

**Habitat Restoration** – \$106 Million for fish and aquatic habitat restoration; and

**Accountability** - \$65 Million for monitoring, science development & climate change research

He commented that based on recent planning activities, several entities within the Duluth-Superior Harbor should be well positioned to take advantage of this opportunity.

## 8. Project Updates

### **Blueprint to End Poverty Transportation Action Team**

Robert Herling reported that he had participated in the June 2nd meeting of Community Action Duluth’s Blueprint to End Poverty Transportation Action Team. A status report indicated that all initial tasks it had set out to achieve in 2007 have been accomplished (culminating with the successful launch of the "Jump Start" program). The group began working to define new objectives moving forward, which it anticipates to finalize in the coming months. The MIC has been an active participant in the Transportation Action Team, and our involvement helps to meet the objectives identified in the MIC’s long range transportation plan, as well as the MIC/ARDC Human Services Coordinated Transit Plan.

### **Bike-Ped Planning Update**

James Gittemeier reported that MIC staff is in the beginning stages of organizing a Duluth-Superior Bike-Ped Advisory Committee. Staff is researching the formal structure of these organizations, bylaws and overall objectives of what tasks the committee will be asked to perform. We will be reviewing and interviewing other existing Bike/Ped Advisory Committees as well as MN/DOT officials about what works and what doesn't.

In addition to the Bike/Ped Advisory Committee, the MIC is also putting together a Steering Committee to guide the process of bike route planning in Superior. Staff has begun to meet with groups and individuals working on improving the bicycling infrastructure in Superior and putting together a list of folks who are interesting in serving on this steering committee.

### **2010-2013 Draft Duluth Metro TIP**

The MIC is in the midst of updating the Draft Duluth Metro TIP. In addition, the MIC is conducting air quality review with MPCA, MN/DOT and FHWA. The MIC will also be holding a public meeting on the Draft TIP on Wednesday, June 17 from 5 to 6pm. Final 2010-2013 Duluth Metro TIP will be presented at the July MIC and TAC meetings.

### **City of Duluth ADA Funding Applications**

The City of Duluth is submitting applications for three sections of roadway for ARRA-funded ADA improvements for the pedestrian network. These are: 1) Hwy 194 – Central Entrance on the north side (two segments) between Anderson and Pecan; 2) London Road on the north side between 26<sup>th</sup> AE and 40<sup>th</sup> AE; and 3) I-35 and 5<sup>th</sup> AW – improvements at the overpass and near the Depot. The first and third in this list are recommendations derived primarily from MIC planning work in these areas.

### **Duluth Depot Steering Committee**

The steering committee for this project had their initial meeting last month to kick-off the master plan for the Depot as it relates to the potential reestablished passenger rail service from the Twin Cities. The committee includes County and City staff, DTA staff, the Greater Downtown Council, Congressman Oberstar's staff and St. Louis and Lake County Regional Rail staff. The study is being led by Miller Dunwiddie Architecture (Twin Cities) with LHB as the local resource part of the team. An open house is set for Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Depot to take comment from the public on the Master Plan.

### **Safe Communities Coalition**

Robert Herling reported that the Lake Superior Region Safe Communities Coalition met on Monday, June 1st to discuss the draft grant application for funding through the Office of Traffic Safety's TZD Safe Roads Program. The group worked to craft a mission statement and define a work program to identify initiatives addressing the issues of impaired driving, distracted driving, and teen and senior drivers in St. Louis and Carlton counties. They also plan to hire a part-time program coordinator to help facilitate future activities. The MIC has been an active partner in the coalition since its start in January 2009 and considers our involvement with the Safe Communities Coalition as one way to achieve the safety objectives identified in the MIC's long range transportation plan.

He noted that the grant application ran into difficulty at the last minute in the designation of a fiscal agent; intention is to solve that problem and forward the application for next year's round of funding; now their intention is to solve that problem and forward the application for next year's round of funding.

#### **9. Announcements and Adjournment**

Mike Coyle noted that this would be Steve Baker's last meeting – he had moved and could no longer represent his elected Douglas County district. The committee thanked Steve for his participation and time served on the MIC Policy Board.

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Peterson adjourned the meeting at 7:55 pm.