



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
 Annual Joint Meeting of the MIC and TAC  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Wednesday, August 19, 2009, 7:00 PM**

|                         |  |                                     |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Meeting Location</b> | Hermantown Public Safety Training Facility, Hermantown, MN |                                     |
| <b>Meeting Chair(s)</b> | Andy Peterson, Minnesota Co-chair                          |                                     |
| <b>Note Taker</b>       | Rondi Watson   |                                     |
| <b>Members Present</b>  | Broc Allen   | Douglas County Suburban Townships   |
|                         | Ed Anderson  | Superior Common Council             |
|                         | Nick Baker   | Douglas County Board of Supervisors |
|                         | Warren Bender  | Superior Common Council             |
|                         | Wayne Boucher  | City of Hermantown                  |
|                         | 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              |
|                         | Jim Paine  | Douglas County Board of Supervisors |
|                         | Andy Peterson  | City of Duluth – Citizen Rep        |
| <b>Members Absent</b>   | Mike Coyle*  | Douglas County Board of Supervisors |
|                         | Troy Foucault  | City of Proctor                     |
|                         | <i>* Excused</i>   |                                     |
| <b>Others Present</b>   | Ron Chicka   | ARDC / MIC Director                 |
|                         | Drew Digby   | Fit City Duluth                     |
|                         | Chuck Froseth  | TAC / City of Duluth Planning       |
|                         | James Gittemeier   | ARDC / MIC Planner                  |
|                         | Paul Halverson   | TAC / Douglas County                |
|                         | Jim Heilig   | TAC / DTA                           |
|                         | Robert Herling   | ARDC / MIC Planner                  |
|                         | Sheldon Johnson  | MIC / NWRPC                         |
|                         | Brian Ryks   | TAC / Duluth Airport Authority      |
|                         | Mimi Stender   | Fit City Duluth                     |
|                         | Cindy Voigt  | TAC / City of Duluth Engineering    |
|                         | Dena Young   | TAC / WisDOT                        |

### 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.

### 2. Meeting Summaries of July 15 and August 3, 2009

No changes were suggested to the meeting summaries from the regular 7/15/09 meeting and the special phone-in session on 8/3/09.

**Motion and Discussion** Kevin Norbie/Earl Elde made a motion to approve the two meeting summaries as presented. *There was no discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

### 3. Transportation Initiatives of Fit City Duluth's Active Living Committee

Executive Director Mimi Stender presented background information about Fit City Duluth, a public/private community initiative designed to change the social culture and physical environment of Duluth to encourage active, healthy lifestyles.

Their basic mission is aimed at preventing and reducing chronic health issues – one example is the current obesity epidemic (example cited: 33% of all children and adolescents in Minnesota are obese today, up from 10% in 1990).

They have three main focus areas: advocating for increased physical activity, healthy eating habits and a built environment that supports active lifestyles, including community transportation systems (public transit, sidewalks, trails and bike lanes). She stated she was happy to be addressing the MIC and TAC, since transportation policies and infrastructure are a strong influence on physical activity habits. She cited a study that showed a strong link between modes of transportation and obesity rates; every hour in a car per day is associated with a 6% increase chance in developing obesity, while each kilometer walked daily correlates with 4.8% reduction in the likelihood of obesity.

Their current initiatives include a website, e-newsletter and “Fit Friday” reports on television, all designed to promote general health and an awareness of the many opportunities for physical activity in our community. They also specifically target youth, as members of the Duluth Public Schools Wellness Advisory Team and participation in the Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP). She added that Douglas County has also begun a started a fitness initiative, currently working to get a website up and running.

Drew Digby, Chair of Fit City Duluth's Active Living Committee then presented information about some of their recent and current initiatives. The Active Living Committee has its roots in several local planning efforts, including the Duluth Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown Duluth Charrette, the LISC/NHS Neighborhoods That Work, the Knight Creative Communities Initiative and the Blandin Leadership Program. All of these initiatives call for improved connectivity; and are addressing the question of how to support more active living choices.

Some of the Active Living Committee's current projects include implementing a Complete Streets Policy for Duluth; a demonstration project focused on bike- and ped-friendly corridor

development along 6th Avenue East; actively having input into school design as the District's Long Range Facilities Plan is implemented; and producing a Healthy Community Transportation System Toolkit.

The intent of the Complete Streets policy is to change the way that roadway funding is spent, to design streets for all users, not just cars, from the beginning of each project.

They are looking at the redevelopment of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East as a pilot project addressing a key dividing line between neighborhoods. They are looking at ways to re-think and redesign the roads to support local businesses while providing a friendlier look and feel at a central crossroad point.

Committee members are also working with ISD709 and Johnson Controls to encourage active living principles as a part of all school projects. He noted that up until this year, the school district actually prohibited biking to school.

Finally, the Healthy Community Transportation System Toolkit is supported by Congressman Jim Oberstar, who believes that Duluth could be a great model for communities around the country. Fit City Duluth plans to develop an educational outreach program designed to demonstrate to communities of all sizes ways to increase choices among transportation modes and increase utilization of public transit services.

He closed by inviting people to visit their website at [www.fitcityduluth.com](http://www.fitcityduluth.com) and to watch for their work over the coming year.

Broc Allen commented that we at the MIC need to put forward plans that include recommendations for bike and pedestrian improvements.

Ron Chicka commented that the upcoming federal transportation legislation will address the criteria by which projects are chosen (such as off-street facilities and multi-modal accommodations). He added that Fit City Duluth had received preliminary approval for an HPP project to develop a pilot program as Drew had described, adding that currently there are not enough materials to show other communities what can be done, and what best practices are; the point here is to start at the beginning stage and document the process.

Ed Anderson commented that the issue of unimpeded pedestrian access came up last winter in Superior – related to lack of plowing policies and equipment.

#### **4. Amendment #3 to 2009 - 2012 Superior Metro Transportation Improvement Program**

Sheldon Johnson presented info about new project for the City of Superior (reconstruction of East 5<sup>th</sup> Street from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East to 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue East) that was recently approved by WisDOT for federal ARRA (stimulus) funding and needs to be amended into the 2009-2012 TIP. This project was made available for public comment from February 13 to March 14, 2009 (no public comments or questions relating to the project were submitted) and so is eligible to be amended in to the current TIP rather than waiting to include it as a new projects in the 2010-2013 version--in order to get going on the design component of the project.

**Motion and Discussion** Ed Anderson/Kevin Norbie made a motion to approve Amendment #3 to the 2009-2012 Superior Metropolitan TIP as presented. *There was no discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

#### 5. 2010-2013 Draft Superior Metro Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Sheldon presented the draft 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program for the Superior Urbanized Area.

He noted that two new ARRA-funded projects were proposed for inclusion for 2010: (1) Douglas County – pavement replacement on County Hwy C from STH 35 to Kronberg Road; and (2) City of Superior – a combined project resurfacing Hill Avenue from 28th Street N to Maple Avenue and Broadway Street from Ogden Avenue to Hammond Road.

He noted that to be included in the TIP, these need to be put out first for public comment. He closed by requesting the release of the draft plan for the required 30-day public comment period.

**Motion and Discussion** Kay McKenzie/Broc Allen moved to approve the release of the draft TIP and the start of the public comment period for the 2010-2013 Superior Metropolitan TIP. *There was no discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

#### 6. UMD-CSS Transportation Assessment

Andy MacDonald presented the final UMD-CSS Transportation Assessment, noting that the goal of this plan is to provide more choices for people in and around the two campus areas. He reviewed the plan's development, stakeholder input (1671 responses to an online survey – this info also used by UMD sustainability coordinator) and data collection (snow removal policies, commuter patterns, bikeability assessment, sidewalk conditions; transit routes, etc.).

He also gave an overview of the plan's recommendations, adding that MIC staff had met with City of Duluth staff on July 30 and August 4 to discuss specifics of the recommendations.

Kenwood Avenue recommendations include finding ways to reduce accidents including access management modifications; sidewalk needed on entire east side of roadway; roundabout possibility near Lyons Avenue; adding bike lanes and bump-outs for buses and a designated, marked bike lane.

College Street recommendations include a 3-lane configuration with bike lane; implement ways to reduce cut-through traffic; complete sidewalk network on both sides; possible roundabout at Junction Avenue.

DTA: recommendations include revising bus schedules to better coordinate with class schedules and to develop a new Lakeside route.

General recommendations include developing new off-road foot and bike paths to connect UMD to the Boulder Ridge housing development and CSS to Aspenwood; strengthening and enforcing the existing city snow removal ordinance (Duluth's has similar elements to most other jurisdictions-just needs teeth) and implementing "snow angels" programs; promoting

existing campus rideshare programs; and developing better bike facilities, including campus “bike centers” with storage facilities.

He noted that the plan is complete except for final maps – awaiting hire of new GIS Specialist to finalize them. He closed approval of the plan, pending the necessary maps.

**Motion and Discussion**

Nick Baker/Garry Krause moved approval of the final UMD-CSS Transportation Assessment as presented. *During the discussion, Jay Fosle asked why bike lanes and other special facilities were needed. He recalled that in his youth, he used to bike all over the city with no designated lanes, etc. These facilities (bike lanes, sidewalks) cost money. Andy replied that this has to do with providing choices and encouraging alternative modes by making people feel safer by making these types of infrastructure improvements. Nick Baker commented that distracted drivers and faster speeds are a big problem these days. Specific facilities are needed with designated travel routes. Ed Anderson noted that the MIC-sponsored Complete Streets seminar last March presented information about how you can change street configuration at very low cost, changes the character but not the functionality of streets. Design and planning phases are where this needs to happen. The motion was passed on a final vote of 15-1, Fosle opposed.*

**7. Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 – Project Lists & Model Results**

Robert Herling gave a status report on the MIC’s update of Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He reported that the errors encountered with updating of the traffic model (problems with inputs, data sources, employment numbers and general over-inflation of population projections) have now been resolved.

He reported that that due to time and technology constraints, the Plan will be released as an electronic document (pdf) that will be transferred to a website format by the end of 2010.

He also reviewed the project list; message that constraint needed to be applied had been received – with very few mid- and long-term projects listed by jurisdictions. Most of the planned projects had a preservation focus. Goal is for these projected projects to be displayed on an interactive map online.

He also presented the preliminary efforts to conduct a financial capacity analysis, explaining that the methodology was the sticking point and yet to be resolved—the issue being the many differences in accounting methods and project definitions among the various jurisdictions.

The purpose of the financial analysis is to demonstrate that the budget amount shown in the plan is adequate to cover the operations and maintenance of the entire system. The idea is to determine whether local jurisdictions can maintain and operate (including lighting, signals, etc.) the system they have before adding lanes and building new roadways; and estimating costs to do preservation and maintenance, over the course of 25 years. “Maintenance” means all the routine maintenance activities: pothole patching, snow clearance, etc.

James Gittemeier then reviewed the planned public participation effort conducting consultation with community and environmental groups; tribes, health interests; etc., prior to the release of the draft plan.

Robert closed by noting that the draft will be presented in October to the TAC and MIC, to release it for the mandatory 45-day public comment period.

#### **8. 2009 MN-CPG Contract MOU and 2010 MIC Work Program and Budget**

Ron stated that he had hoped to have either the ARDC Executive Director and/or Finance Director present to explain how and why it was decided that the agency would be reducing the amount of the local match by \$20,000. He added that there is a second meeting planned next week, with ARDC Admin and Board Chair, to discuss next year's budget and their forecasted revenues.

Ron noted that the 2010 work program and budget, which was developed at the end of last year, will need to be revised before the end of 2009. There will be a reduction in ARDC matching funds to the MIC (from \$97,000 down to approximately \$70,000). This reduction will impact the amount of federal funds that come to the MIC and the budget shortfall will partly be resolved by not filling the 4<sup>th</sup> planner position (due to Holly Butcher's departure earlier this year). Ways to augment the budget include seeking funds from the HTAC's partnering agreement and possibly requesting that the jurisdictions for which the MIC performs small area/transportation plans contribute funds towards the studies.

He added that a \$20,000 reduction in matching funds means a corresponding loss of \$80,000 in federal funds. It is possible that some of the \$20k can be made up by contributions from some of the MIC's partners.

He briefly reviewed planned projects for 2009 and 2010- which ones will carry over, and asked that the Board consider what its priorities are, as most areas will need to be cut back somewhat.

Nick Baker stated that they've had some blunt discussions with ARDC Executive Director Pat Henderson and Board Chair Dick Brenner. Although it receives funds from both ARDC and NWRPC, the MIC is an independent entity. He questioned why the MIC had to sign the MOU with ARDC, considering the MIC has never exceeded its budget. ARDC is talking about making a 12% cut in its local match to the MIC for 2010; he wants to know if this same cut is being sustained by other divisions and why this is necessary. What bothers him the most is what he believes is ARDC's "you do this or else" attitude. Believes ARDC is trying to "cut us loose" and that they don't properly understand the MIC's relationship and its value. "We're being targeted and we don't understand why."

Broc Allen asked the amount that the MIC has come in under budget each year; Ron replied that it's been about 10-15% each year. Broc asked how, then, would a 12% hit really affect us? Ron: replied that the issue was with the ability to leverage the federal funds.

Ed Anderson asked why the MIC needs to exist within ARDC, if it is an independent entity; Ron replied that again, the local match is the biggest hurdle. We would need to get those funds directly via agreements with the City of Duluth, the City of Superior, all MIC jurisdictions.

Ron stated that he would be asking representatives from ARDC to attend the September MIC meeting to clarify some of these questions.

#### **9. HTAC Partnering Agreement**

Andy McDonald gave a quick overview of the partnering agreement, which was first created in 1996 at the request of the Army Corps to address harbor-related issues of mutual interest, including dredged material management, environmental protection and habitat restoration. In 1999, a partnering meeting was held and the Partnering Agreement was revisited. Ten years later, although we are still working toward the same goals, the Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC) has had many accomplishments including progress on cleaning up contaminated sediments, managing dredged materials and producing four major planning documents that describe how area stakeholders will manage the harbor areas of Duluth-Superior.

He noted that these accomplishments, due to the extensive work by the HTAC and its subcommittees, provide a foundation for us to renew the original Partnering Agreement. A renewed Partnering Agreement should highlight our past accomplishments, emphasize our common goals and stress that we are committed to working together.

He closed by reporting that he would be proposing this to the full HTAC at its upcoming meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, and hoped to establish a working group to determine goals and signatories.

Ed Anderson commented that he wants to encourage the state of Wisconsin to change its definition of dredged materials.

#### **10. Adjournment**

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Peterson adjourned the meeting at 8:55 pm.