



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Wednesday, September 16 , 2009, 7:00 PM**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	WITC Conference Center, Superior, WI	
<b>Meeting Chair(s)</b>	Nick Baker, WI 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
	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
	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>	Troy Foucault	City of Proctor
	Dan Olson*	Superior Common Council
		* Excused
<b>Others Present</b>	Rick Arnebeck	SRF Consulting
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	Kyle Deming	City of Duluth Planning Dept.
	Tyler Freeman	ARDC / MIC Intern
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	WisDOT Central Office
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

Minnesota Co-chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. He called for changes to the agenda. Ron Chicka requested that a voting item be added to consider an amendment to the Duluth Area TIP.

**Motion** Garry Krause/Warren Bender moved to amend the agenda. There was no  
**Discussion** discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

## 2. Meeting Summary of August 19, 2009

No changes were suggested to the summary from the 8/19/09 annual joint meeting of the MIC and TAC. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

**Motion** Garry Krause/Warren Bender moved to approve the 8/19/09 meeting summary as  
**Discussion** presented. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

## 3. City of Duluth's Central Entrance Plan

Ron introduced Kyle Deming, Planner II at the City of Duluth's Planning Division, adding that this study has been underway for about a year, with input and representation from the MIC staff and committee members.

Kyle began by noting that he had presented this plan to the Duluth City Council just the night before and it had been unanimously adopted, pleased by that outcome.

This planning effort followed on the completion of the 2006 Duluth Comprehensive Plan, which recommended that a small area plan be developed to guide new development opportunities along the Central Entrance corridor; as the first area that travelers from the Duluth airport will encounter, they would like to put its best face forward, so to speak.

They hired a consultant to conduct the market analysis portion of the plan, thought it best to start out by gaining a strategic understanding of current trends and opportunities and supply and demand for different types of retail, commercial, hotel and residential development. They also posted a web page, hosted two public open houses and were guided by a diverse study committee.

The consultant forecasted that over next 15 years, Duluth was lacking several retail opportunities and would benefit from some "place-making" strategies to make the Central Entrance corridor more of a destination. There are some businesses that only want to relocate to areas with mixed-use development (recent examples include new suburban town centers). Along these lines, they see Central Entrance becoming more of a "main street" for local independent retail, smaller offices and services, for the Duluth heights neighborhood, instead of strictly auto-oriented commercial uses. One component would be development standards to give the business district a stronger identity

The plan recommendations focus on future land use, unified development code, and "place-making" enhancements. Buffers are suggested to better define the commercial and residential areas and transitional areas are also identified.

Noting that land use plans and transportation systems are interlinked, some of the transportation recommendations focus on a context-sensitive solution that encourages comfortable use by transit users and pedestrians as well as auto users. They are promoting site

designs that limit curb cuts, right in/right out intersections, sidewalks on both sides of the streets; as well as a suggested pedestrian trail along Miller Creek

They are also recommending that alleys be vacated as the area is redeveloped, the idea is to better utilize Palm Street west of Arlington Avenue to function as a backage road system (instead of the one-way pair option that had previously been suggested as a way to ease traffic concerns along Central Entrance.

They are also recommending that a business improvement district (BID) could be organized by local businesses to attend to maintenance issues over the long term.

He closed by inviting meeting participants to feel free to contact him directly with comments or questions and directed people to view the plan document at <http://www.duluthmn.gov/planning/sap/millerhill.cfm>

Ron noted that the land use and transportation recommendations will provide the foundation for the modeling component of the MIC's upcoming study of this corridor.

#### **4. 2010 MIC Work Program and Budget Program**

Ron introduced Pat Henderson, ARDC Executive Director, and Sr. Mary Matthew Morrisroe, ARDC Finance Director, and thanked them for attending to address the topic of ARDC's budget allocation to MIC. The intent was to inform Policy Board members about how ARDC's levy works and how it is allocated among ARDC divisions.

Sr. Mary began by reviewing the 1969 Minnesota statute that created RDCs, intended to promote multi-jurisdictional coordination in implementing programs to address "economic, social, physical and governmental concerns" in eight regions throughout the state. ARDC encompasses the northeast counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis and its funding comes from property tax levies from these seven counties. The levy for 2010 will be 3% higher than 2009. ARDC is an umbrella agency that allocates its funding among several divisions that together achieve its mandate of regional cooperation and mutually beneficial programs. ARDC's funds serve as the cash needed for the local match to leverage funds, not only for the MIC, but also for Regional Planning as well as the Area Agency on Aging.

She noted that the Executive Director is charged with developing budget, but it's up to Commission to determine how its levy will be spent. The process and timeline for budget development is that a preliminary budget for the following year is first presented to the ARDC Commission in July and is ready to release for public comment at the October meeting. In December meeting the Commission approves the final budget.

She commented that one issue that ARDC hopes to resolve with the MIC is the timing of its budget process; the MIC typically begins its process after ARDC has already submitted its proposed budget for a formal public comment period.

She reviewed the budget information handouts, showing the levy amounts raised in 2009 and projected for 2010 from each county; ARDC's preliminary 2010 budget; the match amounts

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allocated for all divisions since 2003; the match amounts unspent by the MIC each year; and a revenue and expense report for the MIC for the first half of 2009.

Nick Baker noted that in 2010, the MIC is slated for a \$25,000 budget cut which could be used to leverage a significant amount of federal funds, while some other divisions are receiving increases.

Sr. Mary explained that from an agency-wide perspective, they're in a situation where everyone wants and needs a local cash match; there's a lot of demand. On a historical basis, the MIC is actually being allocated an amount that is comparable to prior years. The \$97,000 that was allocated in 2009 should not be considered to be a "baseline" funding amount for the MIC, but as an anomaly – ARDC's match amount was increased specifically to support the Northeast Minnesota Regional Freight Study that was taking place in 2008 and 2009.

Similarly, ARDC's increase in funds to the Aging Division will provide the necessary local match for increased federal funding that will be available next year (via the ARRA) for nutrition programs in all seven counties. ARDC's local match amount to the Aging division may or may not remain at that level for 2011 – it depends what other initiatives are in the works for all divisions, including the MIC.

She reiterated that what ARDC is seeking is an increased level of dialogue, not just with the MIC but with all of its divisions, in a timeframe that accommodates ARDC's budget process, which basically begins in June or July for the following year.

Nick stressed that the MIC's process has always been that the MIC Board approves a work plan and budget, and then at that point it goes to ARDC for approval. If ARDC cannot accommodate the requested amount, they can always turn it down. He expressed concern that what ARDC is really angling for is more control over the MIC's work plan.

Pat stated that she appreciates the great work that MIC has done and continues to do and added that ARDC has absolutely no intention to have a hand in the MIC's work plan. They are simply requesting dialogue in advance of its development; it would seem to make sense to get on the same page about available dollar amounts earlier rather than later. What this discussion comes down to is, we need to make a business decision and develop a collaborative process in determining local match amounts.

She noted that ARDC isn't the only funding source that is being forced to make cuts to the MIC's budget; MnDOT state funds have essentially been capped – although they don't call it that, the amount of their contribution has remained the same for the last several years. Additionally, ARDC isn't the only funding source available to the MIC. The MIC Board may need to explore other sources of local match to augment its budget, for example, can a contribution be made from the jurisdictions for the work the MIC does for them? The MIC could use the same argument they are using with ARDC, that there are lots of federal funds that could be leveraged on behalf of that jurisdiction, if they can provide 20% (or some other amount) of the total project cost.

Garry Krause asked for more information about ARDC's funding increase for the Aging

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division. Sr. Mary explained that all eight RDCs across the state are being asked to contribute more to aging and other human services programs. Although there's less state funding, there are more federal funds available in 2010, including a significant bump for nutrition programs. That increase in federal funds requires an increase in local match. She added that 2010 is just the start of the baby boomers starting to move on to Social Security, it's the start of a significant trend in a need for aging services, which are needed by all seven counties in the ARDC region.

Garry commented that it's also important to continue support for the type of planning work done by the MIC. As an example, to receive the recent federal stimulus funding, which has a direct economic impact because its intent is to get people working, specific plans for road projects needed to be in place.

Ed Anderson commented that in his experience, there are all kinds of ways to contribute towards a local match, with in kind services, etc. Has ARDC looked into other mechanisms besides pledging hard cash? Sr. Mary replied that the MIC has always come to ARDC with a request for cash only—but they would be open to advice and counsel about other match options that would be available and of benefit to the MIC.

Ed noted that there seems to be a question of exactly who or what constitutes the MPO and who or what entity controls its work activities. He added that although he hadn't read the original joint powers agreement, he doesn't believe that that it is ARDC; the MIC is an independent entity. He stated that he is confident that we will find a solution in any case, although it might mean that MIC is no longer housed at ARDC.

Mike Coyle commented that he does understand the difficulties that ARDC must be experiencing due to problems the state is having with its own budget; however, if cuts are made to the amount of local match to the MIC, it means ARDC ultimately does have an influence on the MIC's work plan, in terms of the extent of projects it can take on. He added that this discussion needs to be continued, but since it's not the only agenda item tonight, we may need to invite them back.

Andy Peterson commented that at the end of the day, what we're going through is discovering what our relationship is and isn't, and what our options might be as an organization.

Ron commented that part of the issue has to do with timing. The timeframes for developing the following year's budgets are misaligned, and may need to be dealt with. He also noted that he plans to seek additional funding from port stakeholders to fund the increased Port and Harbor planning activities that Andy McDonald will describe in a presentation to follow.

He went on to review the projects proposed for inclusion in the MIC's work program for 2010, adding that he is seeking input from TAC and MIC members about projects they would like to see for inclusion.

In addition to the ongoing annual work on the Duluth and Superior TIPs and the MIC's Long Range Transportation Plan, he proposed the following short-range projects in 2010:

Kirkus Street Plan: a streetscaping/land use plan for the new HPP-funded roadway in Proctor;

this corridor plan also follows on completion of Proctor's Comprehensive Plan, similar to the City of Duluth's small area plan for Central Entrance. A small financial contribution from Proctor may be requested especially if our work gets into modeling.

Central Entrance Corridor Plan: this plan would build on the City of Duluth's small area planning effort, to include detailed GIS work. The TAC expressed an interest in seeing TSM and safety improvements that might be implemented at low-cost. Modeling will likely be an aspect of this plan which, once again, may trigger a request for dollar assistance from the City.

Blatnik Bridge Base Study: we will continue to monitor this plan as it is still being decided how the funding for the modeling component will occur. We would propose to look at all modal needs here and do some GIS work too.

The Bike and Pedestrian Planning element would be expanded, with a number of separate components to include forming a Bike and Ped Advisory Committee, conducting a BCI analysis to identify on-street bike routes in the City of Superior, and updating the 2003 MIC Area Bike Map.

Plan Implementation would be taken out as a separate line item, to be incorporated into administrative work.

Harbor Planning is an area they expect to be expanding in the coming years; as mentioned earlier, he planned to seek additional funding from port stakeholders endeavors such as implementation efforts behind the Erie Pier Management Plan and the push for staff to be involved in the revised Dredge Material Management Plan.

Freight Planning and Transit Planning elements to be continued. Within Freight Planning, staff will work toward implementation of the many measures identified in the recently completed plan for the area. Transit will also receive attention by staff with projects involving the proposed new terminal facility and normal review of service routes related to MIC plans.

Plans that would have to be moved from 2010 to 2011 include the Superior Urban Area Growth Impact Study and a Roundabout Site Feasibility Study for the MIC area. He added, though, that the MIC may still focus a smaller study specifically on the roundabout recommendations as put forward in the recent UMD study.

He stressed again that staff will continue to work on the Transportation Improvement Programs for Duluth and Superior and the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan will still need a considerable amount of staff time in 2010 to make it fully functional in a website format. He added that he believed it would be time well spent to make the LRTP more "friendly" and usable to all, and will also set us up properly for LRTPs of the future.

He closed by asking again for any input about specific projects they would like to see included, no responses. He closed by noting that he would be presenting a detailed Work Program and Budget next month.

## 5. Amendment #7 to the 2009-2012 Duluth Metro TIP

James Gittemeier presented Amendment #7 to the 2009-2012 Duluth Area TIP, an ARRA-

funded project to repair over 6,000 feet of the dock wall at the Clure Public Marine Terminal. The structural wall requires rehabilitation due to the harbor-wide problem of accelerated corrosion. This project will provide a permanent solution by reconditioning the upper ten feet of the structural wall (the area most affected by corrosion).

At Tuesday's TAC meeting, Jim Sharrow, Facilities Superintendent at the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, noted that they have been working for several years on studies to determine the cause of the accelerated corrosion; it's a poorly-understood problem that is showing up in ports all over the world. Results of the study are currently undergoing peer review and will be published soon, but in general, it has to do with the interaction of microbiological organisms and metals in the water. The protective metal coatings to be used in the reconditioning must be U.S.-made, although the ones with the longest track record happen to be European. They are hopeful about the potential for several U.S.-made coatings but have less experience with winter ice abrasion effects.

The project must be fast-tracked as one of the conditions of ARRA funding, and the City's Engineering department has made this project a priority, to guide the process. The Port Authority will be looking to advertise the project as soon as December and hope to award it shortly thereafter, so work can begin next spring, after the thaw. They expect the project will be complete by end of 2010.

**Motion** Kevin Norbie, with a second from Broc Allen, moved to approve Amendment #7 to  
**Discussion** 2009 – 2012 Duluth Metro TIP as presented. There was no further discussion and  
**& Vote** the motion was approved unanimously.

#### 6. Amendment #4 to the 2009-2012 Superior Metro TIP

Sheldon Johnson presented an amendment to the 2009-2012 Superior Urbanized Area Transportation Improvement Program to include two ARRA-funded projects as follows:

- Douglas County, CTH "C" from STH 35 to Kronberg Road – pavement replacement, construction anticipated to occur in 2010.
- City of Superior, Hill Avenue from 28<sup>th</sup> Street N to Maple Avenue, and Broadway Street from Ogden Avenue to Hammond Avenue – resurface existing roadways, construction anticipated to occur in 2010. He added that this project had been identified as two separate projects during the TIP public comment period; however, the projects have been combined under one TIP identifier.

Both projects are requested for amendment into the current TIP so engineering can begin in 2009 (in preparation for 2010).

**Motion** Ed Anderson/Broc Allen moved to approve Amendment #4 to the 2009-2012  
**Discussion** Superior Metro Transportation Improvement Program as presented. There was no  
**& Vote** discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 7. 2010-2013 Draft Superior Area TIP – Project Revisions

Sheldon Johnson presented the project list to be included in the upcoming TIP. He explained that he would not be able to attend the October meeting when the Draft would be presented for approval and release for public comment, so he is reviewing the proposed roadway, rail and transit projects to be included in the next TIP at this month's meeting. Placeholders are also included for upcoming projects, to be determined later.

He described the new projects as a relatively light schedule, but noted that there are quite a few already in the works in the current (2009-2012) TIP. Eleven projects are proposed to be added to the new TIP, and ten of those are rail projects. The only new transportation/street project adds pedestrian enhancements proposed for Tower Avenue. He added that although not a lot of road projects are being programmed, three new projects were recently awarded with federal stimulus funds.

He also reviewed the rail projects currently programmed, which include 3 placeholders for future, and as yet undetermined projects. Ed Anderson commented that they had recently met with federal rail association about the issue of reestablishing quiet zones.

He closed by reporting that the public comment period has been advertised and he had held a public listening session earlier in the day, a few folks showed up. No action required today, the final version will be presented for approval in October, should be pretty straightforward.

## 8. Harbor Planning (HTAC) Update

## 9. Munger Trail Extension Update

Nick announced that due to time constraints, these two agenda items would be held until next month's meetings.

## 10. Northern MN/Northwest WI Regional Freight Plan

Andy McDonald presented the final Freight Plan, a Mn/DOT-led study that focused on a ten-county area that sought to analyze current freight movements, identify deficiencies in the transportation system, develop recommendations and implementation strategies and develop partnerships with industry. Additional issues that were addressed include intermodal terminals, port capacity and development of super corridor routes. MIC staff has been participating since the study kicked off last summer, in reviewing materials and working with area stakeholders to make sure their issues are being addressed.

Recommendations are based on info gathered during stakeholder meetings:

- Expand port capacity by developing Garfield C and D dock area; dovetails with the TIGER grant put forward by Mn/DOT
- Promote port development, planning and research coordination between the two cities. The two cities need to work closely together
- Establish a regional freight advisory committee to advise MnDOT and WisDOT on freight issues and develop criteria to better incorporate freight movement into planning efforts.

- Designate a tiered truck network to designate roads to be used by roads in the network with daily truck traffic greater than 650; special safety and design concerns
- Identify specific commercial commodity corridors for priority investment and permitted operations
- Designate super haul corridors for permit operations
- Consider policies to improve regional truck size and weight uniformity—seek size and weight harmony on the routes with the most flexibility.
- Undertake a number of quick start projects (less than \$50,000) that would provide benefit to freight movements locally—there are a few discrete freight improvements that could be incorporated into the planned I-35 improvements.

Andy closed by thanking Rick Arnebeck from SRF Consulting for his work on this planning effort.

## 11. Project Updates

### **Long Range Transportation Plan 2035**

Robert Herling reported that staff is currently working on updating the content of the Duluth-Superior Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in preparation for the October 19th release date of the draft plan and the anticipated adoption of the final LRTP in December 2009.

The MIC has undertaken a 2-pronged method of public outreach to give more meaningful opportunities for members of the public to participate and comment. First, before the draft is released in October, the MIC will be consulting with various agencies, organizations and groups to discuss the goals and strategies of the plan as well as the project lists. Once the Draft LRTP is released for a 45-day public comment period, the general public will be invited to discuss and comment on the plan.

### **Bayfront Development**

Andy Peterson asked what, if anything, is known about what's going on with the Lafarge property down at the Bayfront, adding that Sandy Hoff of FI Salter has been invited to speak at HTAC because there's something big planned. Andy McDonald replied that he will be participating as a committee member on a new City of Duluth led Small Area Plan for Bayfront. This planning effort has replaced the earlier planning process organized by the DNR to look at Slips 2 and 3. The DNR is participating on the current planning committee, as is the developer for the Lafarge property. The timeline is to finish the plan by the end of the year.

## 12. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:51 pm.