



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Policy Board Meeting Summary
Wednesday, February 17, 2010, 7:00 PM

Meeting Location	WITC Conference Center, Superior, WI	
Meeting Chair(s)	Nick Baker, WI Co-chair	
Note Taker	Rondi Watson	
Members Present	Ed Anderson	Superior Common Council
	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Warren Bender	Superior Common Council
	Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	Tony Cuneo	Duluth City Council
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Troy Foucault	City of Proctor
	Kerry Gauthier	Duluth City Council
	Melanie Hendrickson	Duluth Transit Authority
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	David Montgomery	City of Duluth – Citizen Rep
	Dan Olson	Superior Common Council
	Steve O’Neil	St. Louis County Board
Jim Paine	Douglas County Board of Supervisors	
Members Absent	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Mike Coyle*	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Kevin Norbie*	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
		* Excused
Others Present	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Dennis Jensen	Duluth Transit Authority
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC / MIC Deputy Director
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Minnesota Co-chair Steve O’Neil called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. He commented that he appreciated the vote of confidence expressed by electing him as MN Co-chair, and also that he appreciates the work the MIC does to promote all modes of transportation for all people within the MIC area, who have a variety of transportation needs.

He asked if there were any proposed changes to the agenda. Ron Chicka stated that an additional (4th) TIP amendment to the 2010-2013 Duluth Area TIP needed to be added for approval as part of agenda item #6.

Motion Ed Anderson/Nick Baker moved to amend Agenda item #6 to include Amendment
Discussion #4 adding projects to the 2010-2013 Duluth TIP. There was no discussion and the
& Vote motion was approved unanimously.

2. Committee Business

January 20, 2010 Meeting Summary

No changes were suggested to the summary from the last meeting of the MIC Policy Board. Hearing none, Chair O'Neil asked for a motion to approve.

Motion Nick Baker/Warren Bender moved to approve the 1/20/10 meeting summary as
Discussion presented. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.
& Vote

3. DTA's Proposed Downtown Duluth Multimodal Facility

DTA general manager Dennis Jensen began by reporting that the federal TIGER grants that were announced today did not include DTA's multimodal facility; however, they plan to retrench and review their options for other funding sources.

He noted that the project is based on extensive planning process which is looking to interface public transportation with the possibility of commuter rail from the Twin Cities. The proposed facility would function as a true intermodal facility, with an emphasis on connectivity between all modes. It would also create a stronger DTA presence and image as well as provide new economic development opportunities within the downtown area.

The DTA has retained a consultant (LSA Associates) to produce the pre-design document. Elements of the facility include an interior bus passenger waiting station; a bicycle station; bike/pedestrian connections over I-35; a rental car center; stations for Greyhound and/or regional bus lines; taxi waiting area; 760 parking spaces; skywalk connections to downtown destinations as well as to the Depot facility, and space for retail development.

The second floor would be primarily parking with skywalk connections to downtown; also looking to create a skywalk connection from Superior Street along the Ordean building to create another skywalk connection to the west of the facility.

Although this facility is being proposed to accommodate the possibility of the NLX passenger rail service to Duluth, no funding was included in the grant application to accommodate the rail yard design – a corridor is being left available for this purpose, however.

Roof would include skylights and a green treatment. The construction type would be design-build, partly to accommodate the required 90-day timeframe.

Dennis added that he anticipated that they will end up with some type of a public-private partnership. The DTA would not manage the facility but would instead be a tenant; the plan is to hire a property manager who would oversee the planned retail.

He mentioned again that although they were disappointed that the TIGER grant application

was not successful, they will move forward with pursuing other funding options.

He closed by announcing that the DTA, in an effort to attract commuters during the upcoming two seasons of I-35 construction, will begin express bus service with a dedicated bus lane from west Duluth. They will also be offering free primetime fares to locations west of 40th Avenue West. He added this is the first time there will be a dedicated bus lane in Duluth, hopefully it will be successful enough continue after the I-35 project is completed.

4. 2014 Duluth Area TIP Project Prioritization

James Gittemeier presented the three project applications received by the MIC for 2014 federal funding.

Agency	Project Info	Federal \$	State/Local \$	Total \$
Mn/DOT	Hwy 2 Bong Bridge Repairs – painting, deck overlay & joint repair.	\$10,700,000	\$2,700,000	\$13,400,000
Mn/DOT	I-35 Repavement – From Carlton/St. Louis County line to Boundary Ave.	\$5,300,000	\$700,000	\$6,000,000
DTA	Regular Route Bus Replacement – purchase 10 buses, five of which will be hybrids.	\$4,656,000	\$1,164,000	\$5,616,000

He noted that normally this month, TAC members would score and rank these projects to forward on to the MIC for approval, to be then submitted to the NE MN ATP process for further funding consideration. However, since there are just two roadway project applications and a single transit project application, and since Mn/DOT's top priority, the Bong Bridge project, is being closely coordinated with WisDOT, it was agreed at last month's TAC and MIC meetings that the formal scoring process that usually takes place is not needed – instead the TAC is forwarding the recommendation that the MIC approve the project list, as it is currently prioritized.

James added that DTA will be going after additional federal funds to subsidize the hybrid bus purchase. He closed by noting that the complete applications are available to view on the MIC website, at www.dsmic.org/duluthip.

Motion and Discussion Nick Baker, with a second from Jim Paine, moved to prioritize the 2014 Duluth area TIP projects as presented:

Roadway Projects:

1st priority: Bong Bridge repairs (coordinated with WisDOT)

2nd priority: I-35 Repavement

Transit Projects:

Priority 1 of 1:10 regular route bus purchase (5 hybrids)

There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. Amendment #2 to the 2010-2013 Superior Urbanized Area TIP

Sheldon Johnson reported that it is necessary to consider an amendment to add the following project, funded by FTA 5317/New Freedom funds, to the approved 2010 projects list in the 2010-2013 Superior Urbanized Area TIP:

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
North Country Independent Living 113-10-21 <i>Amended to TIP in February 2010</i>	Funding for the availability of a Voucher Program	Voucher Program	168,959		168,959	337,918
		TOTAL	168,959		168,959	337,918

This project enables North Country Independent Living Center the ability to continue their transportation vouchers program to eligible clients throughout (eight county area including; Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer and Washburn counties in) northern Wisconsin. The project will begin in early 2010 and run through December 31, 2010.

Sheldon closed by noting that this project needs to be amended into the current TIP to accept the federal transit funds.

Motion and Discussion Nick Baker/Warren Bender moved to approve Amendment #2 to the Superior TIP as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. Amendments #2, 3 and 4 to the 2010-2013 Duluth Urbanized Area TIP

James Gittemeier presented information about three amendments proposed for addition to the approved 2010 projects list in the 2010-2013 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program.

Amendment #2

This amendment to the 2010 project list is being requested to include Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding to the City of Duluth for the Lester Park Elementary School project. The grant

was awarded in 2008, but since the district is just now moving forward with redeveloping the school site as part of the Red Plan, the funding for infrastructure work, mostly sidewalk improvements on adjacent streets, now needs to be amended into the current Duluth TIP. Federal total is \$155,870 with no local match required.

Amendment #3

This amendment to the 2010 project list is being requested to include Section 5309 Transit funding for pre-design work for the proposed DTA downtown terminal. Federal share is \$451,000 with a local match from the DTA in the amount of \$113,300, for a project total of \$564,300.

Amendment #4

This amendment to the 2010 project list is being requested to include three possible projects for funding through the Jobs for Main Street Act currently under consideration in Congress. James noted that this was a precedent-setting departure from our normal procedure of only amending projects that have definite funding commitments, and that essentially the MIC is being asked to approve projects for the TIP in anticipation of this bill. This is because one key feature of the legislation is an unusually short, 90-day timeframe for delivering projects. Both MnDOT and the FHWA are advising us that administratively it will be very challenging to meet this abbreviated turnaround time and therefore, all MPOs, including the MIC, are being encouraged to amend those local projects that are ready to go, on the basis that the funding is "reasonably expected" to be received. The three local projects include:

Aerial Lift Bridge – Painting and Rehabilitation – \$2,000,000 federal funds, \$0 local match

Midway Road from Jct. TH 2 to Jct. TH 194 – Mill and Overlay – \$3,150,000 federal, \$0 local

Glenwood Street from 43rd to 60th Avenues E – Reconstruction – \$3,225,000 federal, \$0 local

James noted that there were also two recommended transit projects in the mix that were not as time sensitive. They're for bus purchases and do not involve engineering specs, so there is less administrative work. These will be introduced for amendment at a later date, after more details are known about the jobs bill.

He added that he was not sure when the final jobs bill might be finalized. Although one version has been passed by the House, it now needs to move through the Senate, where it is likely to be modified. He closed by asking for a motion to approved the three Amendments to the 2010-2013 Duluth Area TIP.

Motion and Discussion Earl Elde/Wayne Boucher moved to approve Amendments 2, 3 and 4 to the 2010-2013 Duluth Area TIP to include the additional projects, as described, in the FY2010 project list.

Kay McKenzie asked how these particular projects were selected, and whether the MIC had any input to their prioritization. Ron explained that these particular projects were selected by the MnDOT state aid office in St. Paul, and were chosen because they are the ones that are ready to go in the abbreviated 90-day timeframe. He added that MnDOT has been

looking closely at all potential projects and in fact, not that many statewide are ready to be let in such a short period of time. The first two projects (the lift bridge and Midway Road) have already been listed in the state TIP as “illustrative projects” in case funding should become available, which is why the necessary environmental work has already been done. The Glenwood project is already programmed for 2011 in the current TIP, but if it’s funded by this legislation, the project length could be expanded by ten blocks, from its current span of 45th to 52nd Avenues East to a project that extends from 43rd to 60th Avenues East, which was the original proposed scope of the project.

Dan Olson asked how the aerial lift bridge was going to be completely painted without the additional federal funding – the ARRA-funded project currently underway is only painting the side structures. David Montgomery explained that the two side towers are the key areas right now, the rest of the bridge is less critical and funding would have been sought by the City at a later date to get that painted as well.

Ron Chicka also noted that the TAC had raised a question at its meeting the previous day, as to whether voting items like this one should be allowed to be amended on the day of the meeting, without notifying committee members in advance via the regular meeting mailing. He added that current MIC Bylaws currently do permit this, but the Board might want to consider updating its Bylaws to limit the voting items that can be amended into the agenda on short notice, in particular ones that result in Board Resolutions and/or TIP amendments, in order to give all members enough time to consider those items before voting on them.

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

7. 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Robert Herling reviewed the required components of the updated version of the LRTP. Staff is reviewing the 2010-2035 lists of transportation improvement projects in the following areas: social equity, environmental, air quality, financial capacity, and historical preservation. With this information, staff is currently undertaking an extensive consultation process with area and regional stakeholders to notify them of future projects and to gather input about potential issues related to them.

He stressed how the new “financial constraint” requirement is not only new territory for us, but is complicated by unclear and changing guidance from FHWA perspective. Their requirement is to analyze if “...revenues (federal, state, local, private) identified in the LRTP will cover the anticipated costs of projects in the LRTP, along with the operation and maintenance of the existing system.”

Robert showed that current estimates show the total cost of FTA-eligible projects at \$673 M – a projected shortfall of \$174 M. Similarly, the total projected cost of STP-eligible projects is estimated at \$877 M – with projected revenues falling short by \$581 M. He noted that the majority of that funding would cover maintenance and preservation, not expansion projects. Part of the problem is, it’s hard to forecast some of the revenue sources that may become

available, such as federal earmarks or ARRA funding in 2009.

Ron Chicka noted that to get around this, we may end up with a “constrained” plan as well as an “unconstrained” plan. Since the MPOs are the only ones being asked to make long range forecasts (the separate jurisdictions are not), we may have to pull some projects out of the long-range lists, and then update them with every successive LRTP update.

8. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Update

James Gittemeier presented information about the planned schedule of BPAC advisory committee meetings, starting with a kick-off meeting on Thursday, February 25th, 6pm at ARDC. The purpose of the meeting is to introduce the BPAC to the public, to explain why the committee has been created and the role of the committee in the region, and to hold a preliminary discussion of what projects are to be undertaken by this committee. First on that list will be the formation of a sub-committee to lead the effort to plan the Bike to Work Day event for 2010.

Ed Anderson commented that the planning work for the Tower Avenue reconstruction is underway, and the City is interested in having involvement from the BPAC on that project. James stated that he will be contacting Jason Serck about that project.

9. Project Updates

2010 Local Road Closures / Alternate Routes Mapping Project

Ron Chicka reported that at the January 25th meeting of the NE MN ATP Steering Committee, it was suggested that the MIC could perhaps partner with the City of Duluth to provide GIS assistance to develop and maintain a map of local road construction projects, to be made available online as information for residents and visitors about street closures and alternate routes during this summer’s busy construction season.

After further discussion between MnDOT and the City of Duluth, it was determined that MnDOT will be handling this project. Further details may be available at the TAC meeting from these respective jurisdictions.

Kay McKenzie commented that it would be helpful if there was information available by radio. David Montgomery commented that the types of signage they have down in the Cities, with information about how long it will take to travel from point to point, would be very helpful, that will be the main issue for drivers. Ron said he would find more information about what is being planned.

Federal Transportation Bill / Policy Update

Ron Chicka reported that at this time, the “Jobs Bill” or Jobs for Main Street Act, passed by the House, awaits action by the U.S. Senate. Then it will need joint congressional approval and finally Administrative (President) approval. As identified in this agenda with respect to the Mn/DOT TIP, the MIC is already taking action as directed by the DOT to amend projects into our existing TIP. This is being done in order to meet the very tight timelines for processing of funds through appropriate channels at the local, state and federal levels.

He also attended a Transportation Reauthorization Outreach Tour conducted by the US DOT in Minneapolis last month where the next federal bill was discussed from a federal perspective (i.e. the key components of the bill and how they pertain to transportation planning at a local level). The Administration's Secretary, Ray LaHood and Congressman Oberstar were key note speakers. Among the many items discussed were five major elements from Administration that for the most part mirror Oberstar's version of the bill. These include safety, livable communities, state of good repair (preservation of existing systems), economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability.

Blatnik Bridge Base Study

Robert Herling reported that MIC staff has revisited the initial scope of work for this study that was originally approved by the MIC Board in the last quarter of 2008. Work items were reassessed in terms of their current relevance and order of priority, especially as they relate to the modeling work URS is now undertaking jointly for the MIC and WisDOT. A new timeline was drafted for this study, and work will commence in April 2010. At a meeting to come – March or April – staff will present the modeling work that the consultant is conducting specifically tied to traffic movements resulting from the Bong being closed down and potential new modifications made to the Blatnik to mitigate congestion plus entirely revamped access points to the Blatnik in the long term.

Duluth's Green Jobs Initiative

Ron Chicka reported that MIC staff has been participating in this effort along with many other community leaders. Green jobs are defined as "jobs relating to, or involving actions for protecting the natural environment that have career growth potential and a living wage." In addition to a Steering Committee, there are 5 work groups organized – built environment, energy production, food system, resource protection, and transportation. Ron is participating on the Transportation work group and Andy McDonald is on the Resource Protection group.

At our most recent meetings, participants began developing action plans that will be designed implement goals. One of the primary goals of the Resource Protection group is to protect waters and lands of the Twin Ports area including the St Louis River Area of Concern. The action steps include developing contractor capacity for remediation/restoration projects, promoting low impact development, and capitalizing on recent funding opportunities.

The Transportation Work Group has focused on three topics: 1) Extending DTA's operating hours to provide greater opportunity for potential employees at existing or future job sites; 2) Focusing on infrastructure improvements at the old US Steel site (the Port Authority is currently proposing to develop one area) to make it "market-ready" for possible new employers; and 3) Making needed infrastructure improvements at the Duluth Bayfront area (former LaFarge Plant) as this transitions from industrial to mixed use.

City of Duluth Bayfront Small Area Management Plan

Ron Chicka reported that the City of Duluth recently hosted a public meeting on January 27 to present draft recommendations for public input. Recommendations were compiled after

reviewing past plans for area, input from the study committee and input from the public at the first public meeting. The recommendations include changing the zoning to Mixed-use Commercial Waterfront which will become Mixed Use Waterfront under the new Unified Development Code (UDC). The new UDC will include standards that address lot size, building setback, building height, buffers, water quality protection and shoreland areas. Issues raised by the public at this meeting included development location, water quality protection, parking, study area size, and other elements of the impending development. After this input is considered, the final recommendations will go to the Planning Commission in February and to the City Council in March.

2010-2013 Superior Urbanized Area TIP – Administrative Modifications

Sheldon Johnson reported that he following approved TIP projects require technical changes due to the projects having undergone further engineering analysis. The following projects do not require formal action to make the necessary changes to the 2010-2013 TIP. However, a brief description of the projects is summarized below.

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
Douglas County	CTH C – From STH 35 to Kronberg Road Const/pav replacement ARRA	PE	20,000			20,000
113-10-001		ROW				
		CONST	1,518,839		72,390	1,591,229
		TOTAL	1,538,839		72,390	1,611,229

The original dollar amount was for \$1,250,000 using 100% federal funds (ARRA). Additional funding includes \$20,000 for “state design oversight” and \$361,229 split 80/20 using STP Urban (federal) covering \$288,839 and \$72,390 covering the local match.

Additionally:

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
City of Superior	East 5 th Street – From 6 th Avenue E – 20 th Avenue E. Const/pav resurfacing ARRA	PE	7,500		5,500	13,000
113-10-002		ROW				
		CONST	501,067		9,954	511,021
		TOTAL	508,567		15,454	524,021
	8998-00-13/14					

The original dollar amount was for \$352,000 using 100% federal funds (ARRA). Additional funding includes \$13,000 for “state design oversight” and \$461,250 in ARRA funding and 49,771 split 80/20 using STP Urban (federal) covering \$39,817 and \$9,954 covering the local match.

Ed Anderson commented that he would much prefer to construct a new truck route in Superior – rather than improving Winter Street to handle more traffic.

10. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:23 pm.