



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
MEETING SUMMARY
Wednesday, December 8, 2010, 7:00 pm

Meeting Location	WITC Conference Center, Superior, WI	
Meeting Chair(s)	Nick Baker, WI Co-chair	
Note Taker	Beth Krebsbach	
Members Present	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Keith Allen	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Ed Anderson	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Warren Bender	Superior Common Council
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Melanie Hendrickson	Duluth Transit Authority
	Denise McDonald	Superior Common Council
	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	*Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	Tony Cuneo	Duluth City Council
	Troy Foucault	City of Proctor
	Kerry Gauthier	Duluth City Council
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
		* Excused
Others Present	Lynne Bly	MnDOT
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC/MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	MIC Deputy Director
	Beth Krebsbach	ARDC/MIC Administrative Assistant
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Wisconsin Co-chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. All meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Chair Baker asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Ron Chicka added an item to

Committee Business about the Superior SRTS efforts.

2. Committee Business

10/20/10 Meeting Summary

Chair Baker asked if there were any changes to the summary from the last meeting of the MIC Policy Board. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

Motion Steve O'Neil/Ed Anderson moved to approve the 10/20/10 meeting summary as
Discussion presented. Steve O'Neil mentioned a correction: he should be noted as the
& **Vote** Wisconsin, not Minnesota Co-chair in the summary. There was no further
discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

MIC Meetings Calendar for 2011 Distributed

Rondi Watson introduced the 2011 MIC meetings calendar, which was distributed to the group.

MIC Officers Election

Ron Chicka explained that the citizen representatives had acted as the nominating committee.

Dave Montgomery said the Minnesota members unanimously nominated Steve O'Neil to return as Minnesota Co-chair.

Ed Anderson said the Wisconsin members largely supported the nomination of Nick Baker to return as Wisconsin Co-Chair.

Ron Chicka also thanked Earl Elde for his willingness to continue as MIC secretary and ARDC board representative.

Motion Broc Allen/Keith Allen moved to approve the re-election of both chairs (Nick Baker
Discussion and Steve O'Neil) and Earl Elde as the secretary/ARDC board representative.
& **Vote** There was no further discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Safe Routes to School Update

Ron Chicka presented and distributed copies of a letter from Jason Serck, which detailed some of the crossing locations that would be improved for safety, along with a few other updates on SRTS progress in Superior.

Broc Allen asked if it was standard procedure to have earmarked money distributed, as this

funding was, over a 5-6 year period. Chicka explained that the federal HPP funds were allowed to be spread over several years because the City of Superior did not immediately have the necessary matching funds available.

3. Guest Speaker, Lynne Bly, *Vision for Transportation in Minnesota*

Lynne Bly, director of transportation planning for MnDOT, presented information about their new planning initiative to shape a long-range (50-year) vision for transportation in Minnesota.

She explained that the office of multimodal planning was created in February of 2010 at MnDOT. The office was created due to a movement for transportation planning to be more visionary and to have a more multimodal flavor. The office was given a charge to develop and articulate a vision for long range transportation planning in Minnesota. Bly explained that though the last statewide plan had been completed recently (in 2009), it had been heavily focused on highway planning, while a broad response had called for a more multimodal focus and a more fiscally conscious perspective. The office also has a charge to develop the next multimodal transportation plan.

Bly said the first step to developing this multimodal vision was to examine the background and foundation on which they would be building. These sources include dozens of plans for different modes of transportation, which, taken together, begin to develop a sense of vision.

Bly said MnDOT's vision for Minnesota's transportation systems now is "an integrated, connected and accessible transportation system exists throughout the state that provides safe, reliable options for mobility and competitive access to statewide, national, and international markets." She went on to detail the current aspects of Minnesota's transportation vision, across various modes of transportation. She said that while these aspects of long-term planning taken together were a beginning of a comprehensive vision, they would not be enough.

Bly also highlighted the interregional corridors and strategic terminals that would be utilized in the plan. These interregional corridors, representing only 2% of the state's roadways, carry more than 26% of all traffic, making them critical to the state's transportation. Major aviation facilities, bus services, rail services, ports and passenger rail system connections are all included in these strategic terminals and corridors.

Those foundations set the stage for the process, starting in January of next year and running through the summer, to form the new long-term, multimodal vision for Minnesota's transportation in the next 50 years.

The emerging issues and expectations that Bly highlighted are quality of life, economic competitiveness, and environmental health. She said the statewide transportation goals were updated in the Minnesota Legislature recently, for the first time since ISTEAs. She said these goals included economic goals, including the addition of tourism and recreation, as well as an

increased emphasis on multimodal and multipurpose orientations.

The process will look 50 years into the future, address all modes of transportation, and balance traditional priorities (safety, mobility, preservation) with emerging priorities (quality of life, economic competitiveness, environmental health).

Bly added that there will be various public involvement opportunities, and that the office aims to transition smoothly into the next statewide multimodal plan as well as modal system and investment plans.

Ed Anderson noted that the Marine Highway System was not mentioned in Bly's presentation, and commented that he thought it would be important to include, particularly highlighting Duluth and Superior as players in the Marine Highway System.

Bly responded that a detailed look at the components of the current vision revealed missing pieces in the past plans. The phrase, "the ports are active," should include more, for example, and the pedestrian transportation mode was entirely neglected. She urged the MIC Board Members to take home and examine the current MnDOT vision, in order to provide their input into the plan.

Chair Nick Baker commented that in the years that he's served on the MIC, he's been jealous of the cooperation that MnDOT gives the MIC, while WisDOT simply sends along its changes to the board with less cooperation.

Keith Allen asked what the acronym TIGER stands for; Bly answered. Keith Allen also asked a question about one of the lines on Bly's map of the interregional corridor system. Bly answered that the interregional corridor system was based on information from the past two (1990 and 2000) censuses. She explained that because of the way some cities scored on the ranking of trade centers, the corridor system includes some small pieces that seem less efficient than possible.

Dave Montgomery asked if Bly anticipated any change in the state's view on the intercity passenger rail systems due to the re-visioning. Bly responded that, though the changes in leadership might have an impact, she does not anticipate a change.

Dan Olson asked if Bly anticipated any challenges due to the change in the 8th Congressional District, given Rep. Oberstar's past support for transportation projects. Bly responded that currently MnDOT needs to help the new representative surpass the learning curve to understand the important transportation issues at hand.

Chair Baker ended discussion there, adding that further questions for Bly could be passed through the MIC office.

4. Amendments #4 and 5 to the 2010-2013 Superior Area Urbanized TIP

Sheldon Johnson explained is necessary to consider two amendments to add the following projects to the approved projects list in the 2010-2013 Superior Urbanized Area TIP. He said

they would be amended in the 2010-2013 TIP because the next document (2011-2014) had not yet received FHWA approval. The amendments are as follow:

Amendment #4

This project enables the Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency to deliver described program funding throughout the counties of Douglas, Bayfield and Ashland. The project(s) will occur in calendar year 2011 (January-December).

Amendment #5

This project enables the City of Superior to complete remaining work on a federal earmark from 2007 for work along N. 28th Street. The proposed improvements involve various pedestrian facilities on N.28th Street. The project(s) will occur in calendar year 2011.

Motion Warren Bender/ Dan Olson moved to approve the amendments to the 2010-2013
Discussion Superior TIP as presented.

& Vote

During the discussion, Ed Anderson raised concerns about the necessity of certain segments of the N. 28th Street sidewalks. Johnson responded that design details of the projects were not specifically called out in the funding, and that they would be determined when the project is engineered.

Nick Baker asked about many accesses on 28th St. without a required frontal road, to which board members responded that the requirements for a frontal road had not been met during design and construction of the street.

Ed Anderson asked about power poles located on that stretch, recommending that if sidewalks are added to that stretch, the power poles should be moved to behind the development.

Johnson responded that there is an engineering provision in the budget, which would be able to investigate that possibility.

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

5. Final 2011-2012 MIC Work Program and Budget

The final 2011-2012 UPWP was put forward for approval by Ron Chicka. He explained that from the discussion of the draft at the last meeting, there was little added input as to projects to be included or not for 2012. He briefly summarized the contents of the Work Program and Budget.

Motion Broc Allen/Keith Allen moved to approve the 2011-2012 MIC Work Program and
Discussion Budget as presented.

& Vote

During the discussion, Ed Anderson noted the disparity between the quantities of funding contributed by Wisconsin and Minnesota. Johnson answered that the funding from each state is allocated based on population distributions within each state, and for that reason, Superior receives a smaller cut of Wisconsin's total funding than Duluth receives of

Minnesota's total funding. Johnson that Wisconsin even has extra money contributed on top of the population-based allocation in an effort to correct the disparity.

Anderson noted that the allocation unjustly neglects the impact of the population of Duluth and the port of Superior to the Superior transportation systems.

Johnson agreed, adding that Superior is the lowest-funded MPO in the state, and that all MPO funding in Wisconsin was significantly cut in the last few years. Johnson said it is a continual fight for transportation dollars, and that given the new governor, it would be even more of a fight.

Ron Chicka added that it was fortunate that any dollar contributed to the MIC could be allocated to either state and that Wisconsin received higher funding than it would otherwise due to the existence of this MPO.

Dave Montgomery added an update, highlighting the Joshua Avenue project on p. 13. He said based on the election, that project's funding is in jeopardy, though it is an exciting project.

He also highlighted, on p. 6, the sidewalk inventory. He said there had been a conflict with the neighborhoods, many of whom were hostile to the addition of sidewalks. He said this on-the-ground reality presented a challenge to the addition of sidewalks and completion of the sidewalks.

Nick Baker commented that some projects in Superior had tried adding sidewalks to one side, while both sides of the street pay for it.

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

6. Kirkus Street Land Use Plan

James Gittemeier gave an update on the Kirkus Street Land Use plan, which was begun last summer and is now being wrapped up.

The study examines a one-mile corridor of Kirkus Street in Proctor, MN, set to be constructed in spring 2011. Gittemeier highlighted the fact that the street is a safety-based connector serving only Proctor, and not a regional connector.

In response to a question from Broc Allen, Gittemeier stated that the intersection of Ugstad Junction, Ugstad Avenue and Kirkus Street would not be a four-way stop, because of a house near the intersection.

He then highlighted the way the roadway crosses various zoning districts.

The study recommends:

1. Kirkus Street Roadway Design

-Design: 2-lane roadway, with shoulders and sidewalk on the north side. (The necessity of sidewalk on the south side will be determined by future development.)

- Pionk Drive connections
- Proctor Connector trail
- Local street future connections (also driven by future development)
- 2. Land uses (rezoning)
 - Mix of retail, office and residential zoning
 - Various types of residential zoning, due to current Proctor demographics from recent housing surveys. These housing types would specifically address Baby Boomer and young family demographics.
- 3. Flexible future development
 - Including a potential future sports complex, made possible by more flexible zoning.

7. East Second Street Corridor Study

Robert Herling presented a draft of the East 2nd Street Corridor Study in Superior that will be finalized and examined further by WisDOT in the next few weeks.

Study objectives outlined by Herling included:

- verify traffic conditions (including trucks)
- compare patterns (current with potential growth)
- identify deficiencies (capacity, accessibility, safety)
- recommend improvements (short-, mid-, long-range)

Herling explained that the study identified 10 different context zones, giving examples of the different contexts. He then reviewed an analysis of the different access points and density of the access points across the different zones. He highlighted that two of the zones had a high density of accesses, an area of concern for the study.

The study also examined the effect of various access densities on traffic flow, measured by travel times. It found that there did not appear to be a deficiency in that regard, though a better coordination of traffic signals in certain zones could allow for smoother flow.

Keith Allen pointed out one particular area of concern in the corridor, based on his own observations. Other members of the MIC (including Chair Baker and Broc Allen) also voiced their concerns with the high numbers of accesses and low speed limit.

Herling proceeded to examine numbers of crashes in each context zone.

Herling also examined the average speeds in various zones of the corridor, particularly in relation to high-access density zones. Chair Baker commented that a comparison between truck and other auto speeds would reveal that trucks speed more frequently than other autos along the corridor.

The study also highlighted the higher pedestrian injury severity in relation to higher speeds, noting that the corridor posed significant challenges to non-motorized travel across the corridor, as well as transit, trail and high density housing-related crossings.

Herling also noted that the study examined the design of the roadway, which is quite wide.

General recommendations of the study include:

- Create special criteria for E. 2nd Street land use ordinances, minimizing allowable accesses, ensuring efficient circulation within and between parcels, and filling in sidewalk gaps.
- Install additional speed limit signs and “Trucks Use Left Lane” signs (by WisDOT).
- Increase enforcement of speed limits and truck compliance (by City of Superior).
- Conduct more extensive analyses of key intersections (City of Superior and WisDOT).
- Upgrade crossings with high-visibility crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signs (WisDOT).
- Create pedestrian refuge islands with the next road reconstruction after 2020 (City of Superior and WisDOT).

Ed Anderson asked if Herling had seen the plan for the 18th Ave. intersection, which might address some of these recommendations and would be put into effect in the next few years.

Herling also highlighted a few specific recommendations regarding potential grade separation, particularly related to trail connections.

Ron Chicka commented that the speed limit issue was discussed at the December 7 TAC meeting, including the possibility of raising the speed limit, bearing in mind regard for pedestrian activity. He said the planners would discuss this possibility with the WisDOT.

Chair Nick Baker commented that connecting some parcels of land on the corridor to one another with side streets might be a way to limit the number of accesses.

Herling noted that business owners who had participated in the study were skittish about limiting the number of accesses.

Anderson also commented that local residents’ feedback appeared not to meet certain warrants, for example to add traffic lights at some intersections. He felt local feedback should carry more weight with the DOT, for example.

8. Bike and Pedestrian Planning Update

Bike-Ped Advisory Committee

James Gittemeier reported the Bike-Ped Advisory Committee got off the ground this fall. He noted that committee members sought opportunity to comment on roadway projects. At one meeting, MnDOT brought a project forward for comment, which Gittemeier said created effective and helpful discussion. He added the committee would continue to meet quarterly with special meetings as necessary.

Connect Duluth Bike Assessment

Gittemeier said the assessment was on its way to being utilized in a new plan for future bike network transportation lanes, sharrows and trails. He said this work was preliminary, not yet passing through public review.

Chair Steve O'Neil asked about certain gaps in the preliminary map, particularly in the western part of the city. Gittemeier said the gaps were due to the cross-city trail still to be built.

Safe Routes to School Process

Gittemeier said the evaluation stage of the SRTS plan is in process, now shifting because the school sites are changing. In the new study, many of the changed school sites will be re-evaluated.

He noted two of the new schools to be studied are Laura McArthur and Denfeld, which had both been changed recently.

He added that the committee would receive further updates as the process continues.

9. Project Updates

Northern Lights Express Passenger Rail

Ron Chicka called the board's attention to an article from the December 7, 2010 Duluth News Tribune, which focused on the progress of the Northern Lights Express initiative. The article stated current status of the rail project, especially focusing on the cost-benefit analysis from the NLX board versus the analysis done by the state's consultant. The article also noted that environmental assessment would continue through May.

Chair Baker commented that the Burlington Northern Line, who owns the NLX line, heavily supported the project. He also wished everyone happy holidays.

10. Adjournment

With no further committee business, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:56 pm.