



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
MEETING SUMMARY
Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 7:00 p.m.

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
	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Warren Bender	Superior Common Council
	Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	Dave Brenna	City of Proctor
	Tony Cuneo	Duluth City Council
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Dan Hartman	Duluth City Council
	Melanie Hendrickson	Duluth Transit Authority
	Denise McDonald	Superior Common Council
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Steve O'Neil	St. Louis County Board
	Jim Paine	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
Members Absent	*Keith Allen	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Ed Anderson	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
	*David Montgomery	City of Duluth – Citizen Rep
	*Dan Olson	Superior Common Council
		* Excused
Others Present	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	Drew Digby	Duluth Digs
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	MIC Deputy Director
	Beth Krebsbach	ARDC/MIC Administrative Assistant
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Jessica Montgomery	ARDC / MIC Intern

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Wisconsin Co-chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. All meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Chair Baker asked if there were any changes to the agenda. He noted that it would be advantageous to move the discussion on 2015 Duluth TIP projects to earlier in the meeting, in case

members might leave early.

Motion Warren Bender/Broc Allen moved to bring the Duluth Tip Projects, formerly
Discussion item #11 on the agenda, up to item #8. There was no further discussion and the
& Vote motion passed unanimously.

2. Committee Business

December 8, 2010 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 Warren Bender/Broc Allen moved to approve the 12/8/10 meeting summary as
Discussion presented. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.
& Vote Dan Hartman abstained.

3. Guest Speaker: Drew Digby, *Duluth Digs*

Digby began by explaining his and Heidi Jaros' involvement with Duluth Digs. He explained that the winter mobility issue is linked directly with their work in employment. He noted that 40 percent of Minnesota residents do not have a drivers' license, and pedestrian mobility, even in the winter months, is an important issue to non-driving residents.

He continued by explaining that earlier volunteer efforts involving snow removal and mobility had faded, due to budget cutbacks and increased liability concerns.

Digby went on to describe the plan of Duluth Digs to as a PR-based, volunteer coordination program. He added that the initiative is also working with cities and other jurisdictions to improve sidewalk snow removal.

He then highlighted a few policy positions to address this issue. The first is street design. Digby said the group is advocating for streets that are designed with sidewalks that are not intended for snow storage. For example, designing streets with boulevard space that allows easy snow storage off the sidewalk.

Another policy issue he highlighted involves intergovernmental and maintenance agency communication, to better coordinate the removal of snow on all roads.

Digby added that streets with a high number of foreclosed properties also pose a problem for sidewalk snow removal. He said that though the county is responsible for clearing those sidewalks, the removal has been less than effective.

Digby then recalled a meeting with snowplow drivers, who told him the coordination of plowing sidewalks vs. roads, could be improved. He said that in Duluth there is an effort to increase communication between the two groups of plow drivers (those who plow sidewalks and those who plow roads).

Digby continued, describing that much of the information about problem areas is stored informally by the related officials. He added that there was a desire to bring that information to more technologically advanced maps.

Nick Baker commented that in the city of Superior, some sidewalks bump up to the road, which are plowed consistently. He added that this body should advocate for more streets designed in that way.

Digby replied that those sidewalks cannot always be plowed efficiently enough for the transportation of people in wheelchairs. He added that narrow streets also generate less snow to plow away.

Kay McKenzie commented that in Superior, the county is not required to remove snow from tax-delinquent property.

Digby added that ordinances often require anyone from owners, residents or tenants to remove the snow, making it difficult to ticket the violators. He also said that volunteer groups that utilized people on probation were problematic, since revealing the location of the most vulnerable community members to them was a serious liability issue.

Some discussion commenced from various committee members about the snow removal ordinance in Superior being poorly enforced.

Digby added that the taskforce was planning to give out golden shovel awards to citizens who are particularly generous in their snow removal efforts.

Broc Allen asked if Duluth had any heated sidewalks.

Digby said there were a few, good options for downtown infrastructure.

Dan Hartman asked about progress on volunteer agency liability.

Digby said research is in progress, especially to address it in the Minnesota Legislature. *Hartman asked whether it should be on the city's list of priorities.*

Digby said it was headed to the state Legislature more directly.

4. Guest Speaker: Dena Young, WisDOT Roundabouts

Ron Chicka presented in the place of the DOT staffers.

He said the purpose of the presentation was to spread information and education about the benefits and challenges posed by constructing roundabouts. He said this would be a priority for the MIC and many of its jurisdictions.

He said that, generally, the Wisconsin DOT is much more aggressive in its policy for considering roundabouts than MnDOT. He said that WisDOT considers roundabouts first as a matter of policy, while MnDOT has no requirement to consider the option.

Chicka then pointed out the difference between a traffic circle (small, traffic calming) and a true roundabout. He said roundabouts do require significant space in terms of right-of-way, compared to signalized intersections.

He then presented on some of the benefits of roundabouts. He noted that a huge percent of

crashes reported happen at intersections, including those with fatalities.

Roundabouts reduce all crashes by 40 percent, crashes with injuries by 75 percent and crashes with fatalities by 90 percent. He said this is because the points of conflict are significantly reduced (from 32 in a signalized intersection to eight in a roundabout).

He said public opinion of roundabouts becomes significantly less negative after the construction of the roundabout takes place. He said negative feedback was cut in half following construction.

He then highlighted a roundabout being built on US2 and WIS13.

Chicka said there are 100 roundabouts operating in Wisconsin currently, with 52 more slated for construction this year.

He then highlighted roundabouts that had been constructed in Rice lake on CTH O and US 53.

Nick Baker commented that this roundabout is not as well signed as others he has encountered.

Chicka also highlighted the roundabout in St. Croix Falls on US 8 /208th Street.

He then noted WisDOT's public education efforts, including some video animations that describe how to use a roundabout in detail.

Warren Bender asked how GPS systems would respond to a roundabout. Cindy Moe commented that they do alert you that a roundabout is approaching.

Jim Paine asked whether the public education efforts had been used in implementations of all roundabouts, or in which situations they had been done. Chicka did not know. Nick Baker commented that those efforts were highly effective. Paine further commented that the graphics appeared intimidating, and that too much education might not even be a good thing. Chicka noted that perhaps it should be noted that traffic travels much more slowly in roundabouts. Paine added that it is also important to note that those intersections are signed.

5. Amendments #1, 2 and 3 to 2011-2014 Duluth Area TIP

James Gittemeier directed MIC members to their agendas, detailing the amendments to the TIP. The first, funding JARC routes for the DTA, would total \$191,500. The second amendment would increase funding for roof improvements (by \$840,000) to the Duluth Train Depot. The final project is resurfacing Midway Road in St. Louis County. He said the funding would add to the additional funding from MnDOT. The total for it is about \$3.3 million.

Motion Wayne Boucher/Earl Elde moved to approve the TIP amendments as presented.
Discussion There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.
& Vote

6. Amendments #1 and 2 to 2011-2014 Superior Area TIP

Sheldon Johnson presented the two amendments. The first would re-insert a four-year-old Safe Routes to School funding. He said the specific projects had been outlined in a letter presented at the previous MIC meeting. He said the second amendment would provide funding assistance to the Kimmes/Tobin wetlands mitigation site for berm replacement and repairs.

Motion Warren Bender/Kay McKenzie moved to approve TIP amendments as presented.
Discussion & Vote *During the discussion, Kay Mckenzie asked about the wetlands mitigation site. She said the berm had been built improperly, and asked whether the construction would be corrected. Johnson responded that the technology had been improved since the last time it was built to address the depth of the wetland. He said the entire berm would not be replaced in its entirety.*

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

7. East 2nd Street Corridor Study

Robert Herling said he presented on the study last month, and so would be brief at this time. He outlined the general recommendations:

1. That the city of Superior update its land-use ordinances to restrict unnecessary access points during redevelopment of this corridor.
2. Others included: more frequent signage and greater enforcement of speed limits on the roadway.

Nick Baker commented that he himself is a fast driver but noticed that trucks were particularly fast along that stretch.

Herling said the plan itself included more specific recommendations.

He also said the plan was presented to the Superior City Council the night before. He noted that it received a lot of positive feedback at that meeting, which Warren Bender corroborated.

Nick Baker asked what the city's overall reaction was. Bender said they shared the concerns about speeding on the roadway, and found the study helpful.

Motion Denise McDonald/Warren Bender moved to approve the study as presented.
Discussion & Vote *Broc Allen asked why the speed limit was posted five miles per hour slower than the design speed. MIC staff explained that this is often the case; overdesigning for safety.*
There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

8. Accessing Additional MIC Funds

Ron Chicka presented about the additional MIC funds that will be accessible to jurisdictions, adding projects to the MIC work program by a different process.

He explained that the MPO has surplus federal funding dollars at its disposal, which cannot otherwise be distributed to build the staff, for example, because the local match from the RDC/RPC is not there. He said the solution would be to bring on consultant studies.

He said that, in short, the funding had been building up over time, and that it would be at risk in the future for deficit reduction.

He said a letter of solicitation would be distributed to the jurisdictions to seek out a consultant-led land use or transportation studies that would be beneficial to the region. He said MIC would run an RFP process to find the consultant, though MIC staff could cover administrative

work to some degree.

He noted that the submitting agency must provide a 20 percent match to access these federal funds, and that the source of the match must be non-federal.

He said the TAC and MIC would have to approve the consultant selection, and that the usual federal and state agencies would have to approve the projects as well.

He said, based on the TAC's feedback, the applications would likely be accepted for around two months, and that he'd like to have a few projects in motion by the middle of the year.

Nick Baker asked whether MnDOT or WisDOT could use the funds, for example to address a redesign to the end of Blatnik Bridge. Chicka responded that he did not think they would immediately be interested, as some work is already in process. (Kay McKenzie asked more about these details, which Chicka proceeded to clarify.)

Dan Hartman asked where to take ideas. Chicka said communication should be ongoing between the MIC and jurisdictions and their staffs.

9. HTAC Harbor Planning Update

Andy McDonald briefly reviewed the agenda from the former HTAC meeting, but focused heavily on the Erie Pier material use issue.

He said there had been a meeting on 12/14/10 to discuss the obstacles to the use of the Erie Pier material. He said that the perception of contamination would prevent MnDOT from using the Erie Pier material. He said that MnDOT's legal counsel was warning against using any potentially contaminated material due to possible future liability. McDonald also said MnDOT had determined that the MPCA's certification would not be sufficient to declare the material uncontaminated.

McDonald added that this would be worked on at the Dredging Subcommittee meeting next Tuesday, as MnDOT staff would be contributing to the search for strategies to address this problem. One strategy would be a memorandum of agreement; another would be to get a beneficial use determination for the material. The final strategy would be legislative action.

He also added that the material may be used in a St. Louis County Haines Road project in the future.

Broc Allen commented that MnDOT could have saved upward of \$300,000-\$400,000 by using the material in the last year on the I-35 project.

Kay McKenzie asked if the material had been used in the mines; McDonald replied that some of the fine material had been used in that way.

Nick Baker suggested using it to sand roads in the wintertime. Earl Elde suggested it could be used in the septic system.

McDonald also said a project at UMD was also focusing on the potential uses of this material.

Broc Allen asked whether a MIC resolution might aid in swaying MnDOT. McDonald replied that it would be considered as an option.

10. Express Bus Route Survey Results

Robert Herling reported the results of a 2010 passenger survey based on modified DTA service that had been designed to mitigate congestion from the I-35 project.

There was an on-board survey distributed Sept. 27 through Oct. 6, weekday mornings. There was a 33 percent return rate of those survey riders who boarded West of 46th Ave. E.

The DTA reported 2,250 (round) trips for the period.

Survey objectives:

- Did enhanced service increase usage?
- Who was using service, why?
- Did the service attract new users?
- What attracted new users?
- What were users' perceptions of the service?

Some Significant Survey Results—

- Seventy-three percent of respondents said they had used DTA for three or more years , while 14 percent reported that they had just started using the service during the summer.
- Eighty-four percent of respondents said they used DTA “frequently” or more than four times per week.
- Forty-four percent of respondents said they were riding for free.
- Seventy percent of new riders reported having access to a car
- Forty-five percent of respondents could have made the trip by car
- Seventy percent of respondents said they were using the service to go to work; 20 percent were going to school
- Twenty-two percent of respondents said they were riding to avoid traffic, 38 percent said they were motivated by the free pass, and 72 percent said they always take transit.
- The most common responses from new riders on their reasons for using transit were: to avoid traffic, because of the free pass, and because of convenience.
- Twenty-six percent of respondents had at least one complaint about the ride. The most common complaint was that the ride was not quick enough.

Herling reported that MnDOT, U of MN, DTA and MIC would be collaborating for improved research on this ridership in the next year, during and after construction season, and including follow-up surveys.

11. Duluth TIP Projects 2015

(This item was moved up to #8 on the agenda.)

James Gittemeier explained the two projects submitted for the 2015 Duluth TIP. The first, submitted by the city of Duluth, requested funding to reconstruct part of West First Street, and the second, submitted by St. Louis County, requested funding to resurface part of Martin Road.

Gittemeier presented more details, including traffic counts, technical classifications and public comments, about each of the roads in question.

He also reviewed the scoring process and criteria.

Tony Cuneo asked, regarding the multimodal scoring criterion, whether the design proposed was detailed enough to show whether sidewalks, for instance, would be included. Gittemeier replied that the design was often not that detailed at this stage. Gittemeier also said that criterion related more to whether a certain project was a multimodal route. Sheldon Johnson also later commented that the applications did in fact indicate whether sidewalks would be involved in the design.

Kay McKenzie asked a question pertaining to multimodal (bicycle) design on Kenwood Ave. Gittemeier said the project had been prioritized by the city, not the MIC, though the MIC had commented at public meetings about the project.

Dan Hartman asked a question about Martin Road, clarifying whether shoulders would count for bike accommodations. Gittemeier replied that they would, and that this degree of design was completed, though many details were not yet determined.

Broc Allen asked for the definition of "wide" shoulders that act as bike lanes. Gittemeier responded that for the Martin Road Street project the shoulders were eight feet wide. Allen also asked why West First Street would not be considered for a bike route, as it is lower traffic than Superior Street/Michigan Street. Gittemeier responded that West First Street is one-way and also very hilly.

12. Project Updates

Ron Chicka updated the group on the necessity of an upcoming special meeting to approve an amendment to the TIP for a time-sensitive DTA funding project.

Chicka also gave a brief update on the progress of the transportation bill in Washington.

Nick Baker thanked MIC staff for their work on presentations. He said the meetings had been shortened significantly since his beginning on the MIC.

13. Adjournment

With no further committee business, Chair Baker asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion Wayne Boucher/Jim Paine moved to adjourn the meeting, The motion was
Discussion approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.
& Vote