



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Wednesday, May 18, 2011, 7:00 p.m.**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	WITC Conference Center – Superior, WI	
<b>Meeting Chair(s)</b>	Nick Baker, Wisconsin Co-Chair	
<b>Note Taker</b>	Laurel Davis	
<b>Members Present</b>	Ed Anderson	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Warren Bender	Superior Common Council
	Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	Dave Brenna	City of Proctor
	Robert Browne	Superior City Council
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	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
	Steve O’Neil	St. Louis County Board
	Jim Paine	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
<b>Members Absent</b>	Brock Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Keith Allen	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Tony Cuneo	Duluth City Council
	Dan Hartman	Duluth City Council
	Dan Olson	Superior Common Council
		* Excused
<b>Others Present</b>	Jim Helig	DTA Guest Speaker
	Ellen Pillsbury	ARDC Guest Speaker
	Jim Skoog	St. Louis County SHIP Guest Speaker
	Ron Chicka	ARDC/MIC Director
	Laurel Davis	ARDC/MIC Administrative Assistant
	James Gittemeier	ARDC/MIC Senior Planner
	Rondi Watson	ARDC/MIC Planning Assistant

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

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

Chair Baker asked if there were any changes to the agenda. None were put forward.

## 2. Committee Business

### April 20, 2011 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** Dave Brenna/Warren Bender moved to approve the 4/20/11 meeting summary as  
**Discussion** presented. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

## 3. Guest Speaker: Jim Heilig, DTA

Jim Heilig presented a status report on the DTA's effort to bring a multimodal transit terminal to Downtown Duluth and reported on service challenges arising from Walmart expansion plans in Hermantown.

He began with a description of the old bus route and explained how the route would change as the expansion plans continue. The DTA will no longer be allowed in the Walmart parking lot, and will have to do pick-ups and drop-offs at the road, on one side. This will require riders going to Walmart to ride up to the airport, turn around and come back to be dropped off at the appropriate side. He estimates this adds about five minutes to the trip.

*Dave Montgomery asked if there were any appeals in the works for better access. Heilig said there were a couple, including the possibility of a turn around area at Walmart.*

Jim Heilig then went on to give an update on the proposed multimodal transit terminal. He showed plans of the terminal and stated that the second half of the funding has not been offered yet. They are waiting on the federal side for phase two, and are currently looking to state money for the project.

*Steve O'Neil asked how the skywalk will be connected to the rest of the system. Heilig stated that it would connect to the Northwest Passage. James Gittemeier asked what level the skywalk connects to the terminal. It enters on Level 2.*

*Nick Baker asked if the current land owners will be involved in the project. Heilig said they are trying to work out a partnership in which the land owner will retain ownership of the land, which would save money and keep the land on the property tax rolls as it will be privately owned.*

## 4. Guest Speaker: Jim Skoog, St. Louis County SHIP

### Sixth Avenue East Health Impact Assessment

This health impact assessment examines the potential health effects of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East as it currently exists as a four-lane roadway, as well as the effects from the proposed re-design into a 3-lane roadway with boulevards. The outcome of this assessment is to provide recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and minimize adverse health impacts on all the users of the roadway facility as well as on the surrounding neighborhood.

Jim Skoog introduced the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) currently in progress for Sixth Ave

East, and started by giving a definition and overview of what an HIA entails. An HIA seeks to examine a project's impact on health in a community using a framework that starts with screening to determine what projects would benefit from an HIA, then identifies what specific health aspects to consider, assesses who may be affected and how, develops a set of recommendations to promote health and mitigate negative effects, and evaluates what impact the HIA had on the project.

Skoog said that a public meeting was held on March 3, 2011 at Gloria Dey Church, with twenty-five community members to get their input on what health concerns or interests they had. After a great deal of discussion they distilled the comments down to three major areas of consideration – Accessibility and Safety, Livability, and Physical Activity.

Ellen Pillsbury of ARDC then explained how they used these areas to guide them in a process of research and data collection, including field studies, a walkability audit, crash data mapping, plotting street lighting, and more community input.

They then presented some drawings of proposed ideas for improvements to the plans for Sixth Ave East which included bike lanes, moving the sidewalks away from the street, creating a greenway, adding a traffic signal to the 7<sup>th</sup> street crossing, and putting in more transit stops.

*While looking at the plans, Dave Brenna expressed concern that compressing the traffic down to fewer lanes might cause more accidents, while Nick Baker wondered where all the traffic would go, noting that Central Entrance pours into Sixth Avenue.*

Ron Chicka explained that we have funding to do modeling of the proposed changes to get an idea of how traffic patterns will flow, and pointed out that 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue is a good example of another busy street that was compressed to single lanes and turning lanes and that it's working well. *Steve O'Neil also mentioned Grand Avenue as another example of this type of road that is working well.*

James Gittemeier clarified that the HIA is focused on health aspects of proposed changes and doesn't seek to regulate traffic. Jim Skoog added that this is merely an informed way to guide thinking and is only a part of the overall process.

*Dave Montgomery said that Sixth Avenue is currently a barrier between neighborhoods and it would be nice to include changes that would bridge that gap, noting that currently many people will not try to cross that street. Skoog agreed and said that some of the community feedback they received was that people who would otherwise shop at Whole Foods Co-op do not because it's too difficult to get across.*

## **5. Draft of the 2012-2015 Duluth Area TIP**

James Gittemeier presented a draft of the 2012-2015 Duluth Area TIP outlining projects for the coming years.

### **2012 TIP Projects**

I-35 Project

Haines Road

Trail Projects – Lakewalk and Cross City Trail

### **2013 TIP Projects**

Roadway Preservation at Martin Road and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue East

Cross City Trail

**2014 TIP Projects**

Major Highway work including I-35 from Boundary Avenue to Carlton County  
Bong Bridge repairs  
Cross City Trail

**2015 TIP Projects**

Roadway Preservation at Martin Road and W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Cross City Trail

Gittemeier went through financial information regarding the TIP, stating that there were plenty of discretionary funds to cover the match. He also said there would be a Draft TIP Informational Meeting held June 16<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm at ARDC seeking public involvement. He further stated that they expected to be seeking approval for the final TIP in late July or August.

*Nick Baker mentioned he's seen some surveying going on and asked when the Haines Road project would be starting. James thought possibly later rather than sooner, but did not have concrete information.*

*Kay McKenzie asked about the process of estimating asphalt over time, and James explained they use a formula based on past years and projected projects.*

*Dave Montgomery asked what the possibility was of finding serious dollars to do a complete reconstruction of Skyline Parkway. Ron Chicka said that a project of that size would have to be segmented out over time and they would have to look at earmarks and federal bills, but he said other sources might be considered such as HUD dollars or Scenic Byways. Ron also said there was a planning effort for a new logo and new signs for Skyline Parkway. Montgomery suggested that this be a long term project designed to make Skyline a true parkway.*

**Motion** Ed Anderson/Earl Elde moved to release the Draft TIP for public comment. There  
**Discussion** was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

**6. Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Update/Resolution**

James Gittemeier reported on the May BPAC meeting, citing bylaws, social media and the Sidewalk Study as topics covered. He introduced Duluth's Master Plan for trails and bikeways and pointed out that it considers transportation in addition to recreation. He also said they were looking to name the system, similar to the Chain of Lakes system in the Twin Cities.

*James briefly mentioned their effort to do bike and ped counts, and Kay McKenzie asked if that could be done with the same kind of road counters they use for cars. James replied that a system like that would need to be specially tailored to catch bike and pedestrian traffic.*

James also mentioned the Bike to Work day effort and announced that the new bike maps would be available for Bike to Work day.

James then introduced a resolution from BPAC in support of the proposed London Road re-striping project. He showed samples of what could be accomplished with a re-striping and pointed out that it could always be returned to its original striping.

Ron Chicka pointed out that this was coming from the BPAC not the TAC and therefore was

primarily focused on the impact to bike and pedestrian traffic and not traffic planning as a whole.

*Dave Montgomery said that planning for London Road was influenced by zone planning, such as the desire to bring businesses closer to the road for more of a town square feel, and that re-striping could be a cost effective way to do some of that, which fit well with the longer range zone planning. He also suggested that Mn/DOT might be able to offer some creative ideas for this.*

*Steve O'Neil stated that fifteen years ago when the road was bad and they tried to do something similar, they were able to collect hundreds of resident signatures in support of the changes and feels they could do it again.*

*Ed Anderson mentioned that a plan was created some time ago for London Road that included many attractive streetscaping enhancements and could possibly be brought into play since the planning had already been done. He also asked to have "form" defined in the context of the discussion. Montgomery explained that it refers to the style and size of the buildings and the plans for the surrounding areas in terms of trying to create a certain look and feel of a neighborhood.*

*Nick Baker pointed out that the plan is to use what currently exists for the time being, because you can't convince people to tear up new pavement and this is more cost effective. He also said the re-striping was a good idea because it would give people a chance to get used to the changes before they become permanent.*

**Motion** Steve O'Neil/Warren Bender moved to approve the London Road Re-striping  
**Discussion** Resolution. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

## 7. Safe Routes to School Update

James Gittemeier gave an update on the Safe Routes to School planning. He said the MIC staff is finalizing the recommendations and cost estimates for the first 2 school sites (Denfeld and Laura MacArthur). In addition, MIC staff just recently found out about another round of Safe Route to School funding available. MIC staff will lead an effort with the SRTS Steering Committee to put together funding applications for this funding.

He said that MNDOT has grant applications for the Safe Routes program and the steering committee would be meeting to decide what to apply for, but that Denfeld would not be eligible for these funds because they are for K-8 schools.

## 8. CPG Funds Distribution Update

Ron Chicka presented on the projects that have come forward from jurisdictions for extra funding from the MIC.

- 1) **City of Duluth – 6<sup>th</sup> AE Traffic Study (2<sup>nd</sup> St to Mesaba):** A comprehensive traffic analysis is proposed that would serve as the design element for the work completed to date by the City that resulted in a schematic of the corridor that used CDBG funding. The concept is to turn the corridor into one that is easier for non-auto modes to use. \$50,000 was requested.
- 2) **St Louis County – Intersection Control Evaluation Planning Study – Duluth Area:** This "first of its kind" study would analyze a series of intersections that are either under the authority of the City of Duluth or the County to ascertain the appropriate traffic operational control with a focus on modern roundabout feasibility. The application of roundabouts may provide an

improvements in both traffic operations and traffic safety. \$80,000 was requested.

- 3) **Duluth Airport Authority – Air Service and Air Cargo Leakage and Expansion Analysis:** The primary goal of this study is to maintain and potentially expand air service opportunities at the Duluth International Airport. With origin and destination data pulled from the airport, future growth markets can be identified and financial analysis performed to ascertain profitability of new markets. \$50,000 was requested.
- 4) **Duluth Seaway Port Authority – Duluth Cruise Ship Dock Facility Study:** This study proposes the construction of a cruise ship terminal adjacent to the Convention Center area or the Great Lakes Aquarium and its resulting traffic impacts landside at these locations. The study is a more focused look at an area of development and its impacts that was first analyzed within the MIC's *Port Land Use Plan*, completed in 2006 as well as our *Downtown Modal Connections Study*, conducted in 2009. \$60,000 was requested

Chicka stated that these are listed in the order he believes these will proceed in the coming year and that he wants to push forward while the funds are still there. He said that he would be getting a quote from URS Corp to do a modeling study on the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East project, and that the St. Louis County study would probably go first, with the other projects most likely going into 2012 late in the summer or fall.

He said he will try to encumber these projects in a work plan amendment so they are set, and recommends staggering the projects rather than trying to do them all at once.

*Kay McKenzie asked if Wisconsin had applied for any projects yet and Chicka said that he'd spoken to a few people, but nothing has been sent in yet.*

Chicka also mentioned that Northern Lights just received five million dollars to continue their work, and that he got to meet with Tim Olsen of Rep. Cravaack's office and was able to tell him about what the MIC does. He said that Olsen agreed to come to the HTAC meeting in June. *Kay McKenzie also pointed out that Mary Moshier Willette was a staff person for Rep. Cravaack in Superior, working out of the Blaine building.*

## 9. Project Updates

### **Travel Demand Model – Traffic Analysis Zone Update, Robert Herling**

MIC staff is presently working on delineating Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) boundaries that will be compatible with future deliveries of the US Census Bureau's 3-year American Community Survey (ACS) data and 5-year Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP) data. The MIC is responsible for defining these zones for all of St. Louis County, MN and Douglas County, WI.

### **Bike to Work Day – Friday May 20, 2011, James Gittemeier**

The MIC is leading the sixth annual Bike to Work Day morning commuter events for the Twin Ports. The event will include 2 bike stations, one in Duluth at Lake Avenue and Superior Street and the other in Superior at Tower Avenue and Belknap Street. Both events will have refreshments, safety inspections, and bicycle commuter information. In addition, the DTA will be at the Duluth event for a bikes-on-bus rack demonstration. Both events will take place from 6:30am to 8:30am and are free and open to the public. No registration is needed.

**10. Adjournment**

With no further committee business, Chair Baker asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:41.

**Motion  
Discussion  
& Vote**

Wayne Boucher/Kay McKenzie moved to adjourn the meeting. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.