



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, June 15, 2011, 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Location	Hampton Inn – Duluth, MN	
Meeting Chair(s)	Nick Baker, Wisconsin Co-Chair	
Note Taker	Laurel Davis	
Members Present	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
Members Absent	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
Others Present	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 7:00. All meeting attendees

introduced themselves.

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

2. Committee Business

May 18, 2011 Meeting Summary

Chair Baker asked if there were any changes to the summary from the 5/18/11 meeting of the MIC Policy Board. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

Motion Warren Bender/Earl Elde moved to approve the 5/18/11 meeting summary as
Discussion presented. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.
& Vote

3. MIC Work Program Amendment

We will propose an amendment to the Work Program and Budget to the total of \$190,000 in federal funds with match coming exclusively from the submitting entities: St Louis County (Intersection Control Evaluation), Duluth Airport Authority (Air Service and Air Cargo Analysis), and the Duluth Seaway Port Authority (Cruise Ship Facility Study). In addition, I have been able to work with our modeling consultant that will conduct the work for Duluth's 6th AE study concerning new (potential) access measures and will be able to wrap this project into the current budget. I will still take advantage of the City's proposal to aid in cost-sharing (20%) for this project. A resolution amending the UPWP is up for approval. I will alter the actual document upon approval of this amendment from federal and state agencies. Request for Proposals (RFPs) could not be sent out until the federal and state representatives fully approve the amendment.

Rondi Watson presented an overview of the proposed amendment to the MIC Work Program and outlined the various projects as described above, making note of the special allocation of CPG funds and pointing out the 20% matching grant from the City.

Warren Bender asked for clarification as to who we were requesting the funds from, and Nick Baker explained that the funds would be coming from the State of Minnesota.

Ed Anderson put forth a request that any consideration for harbor projects include the City of Superior.

Motion Dave Brenna/Melanie Hedrickson moved to approve the MIC Work Program
Discussion Amendment. There was minimal discussion and the motion passed by unanimous
& Vote vote.

4. Amendment #11 to the 2011-2014 Superior Area TIP *

This amendment for approval is to make geometric changes and install signals at the juncture of the I-535/STH 53 eastbound off-ramp (from the Blatnik bridge) and N 4th Street. Engineering is set for this year with construction in 2012. Overall project cost is \$280,000.

Sheldon Johnson presented the revised amendment proposal, outlining the planned changes for

the intersection designated at the foot of the Blatnik bridge.

Keith Allen asked which year of the TIP this would be part of and Johnson replied that it would be on the 2012 schedule.

Motion Nick Baker/Keith Allen moved to approve the Superior Area TIP Amendment.
Discussion There was minimal discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.
& Vote

5. Harbor Planning Update

The Harbor Technical Advisory Committee met on Wednesday June 1 at the Inn on Lake Superior in Duluth. We heard presentations on Detroit District Activities in the Duluth-Superior Harbor by the Army Corps, Floating Treatment Wetlands, Follow Up from Letter to MPCA and MnDOT Commissioners, and Section 10 Regulations Enforcement. I will provide a brief summary of these topics at our upcoming meetings.

Andy McDonald gave a presentation on the topics discussed at the June 1st HTAC meeting, starting with a description of the presentation by Lt. Col. Mike Derosier on dredging in the Duluth-Superior area and the status of the Erie Pier facility. Erie Pier is expected to be full by 2015, and measures being considered include raising the dikes, and using Erie Pier as a processing facility.

Next he gave information on the floating wetlands presentation from Bluewing Environmental. These are manufactured island bases that get planted with live material and anchored out in polluted water to help clean it.

Nick Baker said he thought that was a very interesting part of the HTAC meeting and that this might be a good solution for Lake Nebagamon.

McDonald then reported on the results of the letter to MPCA and MnDOT regarding the use of dredged material from Erie Pier in the I-35 construction project. He said they believe they got a positive response in that they were told the Erie Pier material doesn't constitute solid waste and that the permit they already have serves the same purpose as the requested BUD. MnDOT currently wants to review the information in the current permit.

Following that, McDonald outlined the concerns being raised about the enforcement of Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. The main areas of conflict are a discrepancy between beliefs of what areas are actually covered under this act, and the confusion created by having two people in two states covering the same area independently. Two main solutions are currently being implemented. The first is an outline of the shoreline as it was in 1899 being created by the Army Corps GIS division in an attempt to accurately define the enforcement area. The second is a position being created by the Corps that will have one person overseeing both sides of the harbor.

Dave Montgomery commented that this would affect the Bayfront area, while Nick Baker stated that no one has been enforcing it for years and this process was started by someone higher up.

Finally, McDonald briefly mentioned the May 23rd Propeller Club luncheon, and the May 24th christening of the Oberstar.

6. TSM Update

The MIC completed the 2011 TSM Assessment in February and identified a series of Duluth and Superior intersections as potential locations of concern. The MIC staff is preparing to meet with area jurisdictions during the summer of 2011 to discuss potential TSM mitigation strategies for a number of these intersections, which would be included as project recommendations in a final TSM plan.

Robert Herling presented the results of the TSM Assessment and outlined the next steps to be taken. He said the first step is to meet with area jurisdictions to discuss potential solutions. He explained that they evaluated a group of intersections, looking specifically at safety and operations. They used a short scale so as not to actually rank intersections, but sort out ones that are facing the most issues. The result was that eight intersections have been identified as needing the most attention. He said that some of those intersections fall into upcoming projects and have been flagged so these issues can be addressed at that time.

He stated that their projected schedule was to contact jurisdictions and analyze crash histories by June 30, meet with jurisdictions to discuss possible improvements by July 30, and have a plan drafted by September.

Dan Hartman asked if they would be getting copies of the presentation, and Herling said that would be possible, but also that he'd be sending out a more comprehensive report later in the week.

7. Safe Routes to School Update

The MIC will assist the City of Duluth, the Duluth School District, Fit City Duluth and the Proctor School District with putting together grant applications for 2011 Safe Routes to School funding for:

1. Bay View Elementary
2. Grant Elementary
3. Laura MacArthur Elementary

The grants applications have a quick timeframe, as they are due on June 15, 2011. The projects will be picked in July and awardees will be notified in August.

James Gittemeier presented the Safe Routes to School update, explaining that they had submitted grant applications for the three schools listed above. He said that although Bay View Elementary is in Proctor, the City of Duluth will be the project sponsor. He also added that Lowell School was being added for consideration at the request of St. Louis County.

Requests for Bay View include completing the sidewalks, installing bike racks, improving a common trail currently in use so students can avoid Vineland Street, improving crosswalks, and installing yellow blinking LED lights to flash during school time. Total request is \$100,000.

Gittemeier said Grant school is being closed and added onto. He stated that since over 70% of students walk to school, sidewalk improvement is the major request for Grant, focusing on the upper side of the street by the fields to tie them in. They will also be requesting new crossing

signs, improved crosswalks, and LED blinking systems. Request is \$150,000.

Dan Hartman pointed out that the intersection at Kenwood and 11th was a dangerous one to walk and asked if any changes were proposed there. Gittemeier replied that weren't any because the biggest issue was how to get students across 9th safely since the majority of them live below the school.

Next Gittemeier outlined the proposals for Laura MacArthur Elementary school. These include completing the sidewalk network, improvements to the key intersection of Elinor and Central Entrance, and an LED blinking system for the intersection at W. 6th Street. He also mentioned that they would like to start some kind of assessment to find a better solution for that intersection. The request would be \$63,000.

8. Central Entrance Study

MIC staff recently met with City of Duluth, St. Louis County and MnDOT regarding data collection efforts this summer related to different traffic studies in the Central Entrance area. The purpose of this meeting was to identify opportunities to work cooperatively to maximize resources as we collect information in support of the traffic studies and modeling efforts. We will be working with our modeling consultant URS to develop a small area model of the Central Entrance corridor. MIC staff will be out in the field collecting turning movement counts at various intersections in support of this effort. Our counts will be shared with MnDOT to support some of their traffic signal coordination efforts. The City and County will also be collecting data that will be useful to a numbers of studies.

Andy McDonald presented an update on the modeling being done for the Central Entrance Study. Data being collected for the modeling includes turning movement counts, signal timing, and timing run information. He stated that there would be a twelve hour count being done at the intersection of Arlington and Central Entrance on June 15.

McDonald also explained that the MIC staff had met with MnDot to discuss ways to maximize resources for the data collection effort. It was decided that the intersections would be split between organizations, with MnDOT doing Trinity, St. Louis County doing Arlington, and the MIC doing Pecan, Blackman, Basswood, Anderson and Mall Drive. This data will be used by URS to create traffic models for the Central Entrance Corridor.

9. Human Services Transit Plan Update

A regional workshop focused on improving coordinating and improving transportation services in the Arrowhead region (including the Duluth metro) was held on June 7th. Those who attended the workshop participated in activities designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in transportation services throughout the region, as well as potential Human Services Transit related improvements. The MIC will provide a summary report of these potential improvement projects, which will potentially become part of a Coordinated Human Services Transit plan and be eligible to receive federal transit funding.

Robert Herling gave an update on the status of the Human Services Transit Plan, explaining the three phases of the project. He said the first phase was the survey which has been completed with a 20% return rate on 200 invitations sent out. The results of this survey were

processed and brought to the steering committee in May. This was the second phase in which fourteen members of the committee examined the survey results, reviewed the 2007 plan and brainstormed who should be invited to the June 7th workshop. Herling said that the June 7th workshop was phase three of the project and turned out to be very successful. The forty workshop participants included transit organizations, human rights organizations and seniors programs. They identified what they felt were the top five strengths and weaknesses of the transit system as follows:

Strengths: Existing collaboration, accessibility, safe/efficient/economical, volunteers, reliability.

Weaknesses: Resource availability, limited rural services, awareness, lack of specialized services, cost of operations.

Herling also said they came up with strategies for solutions that include: resource directories, coordination between providers with regards to services and scheduling, and hubs for transportation.

Finally, Herling said the next step was another steering committee meeting on June 29th to review the workshop results and identify preferred strategies. Following that, a draft plan should be done by August 2011 and ready for review, with the final goal to adopt a plan in September 2011.

10. Sidewalk Study

MIC staff has gotten a good start in creating the sidewalk inventory and condition analysis with hard work from our recent intern Jessica Montgomery. We will be training in our new intern Brian Heaton to pick up where Jessica left off. I will provide an update on the progress of the inventory as well as some of the groups we have met with.

Andy McDonald presented an update on the sidewalk study. He said that the initial phase of the project, digitizing sidewalks from aerial photos, is complete and that the fieldwork portion of the project is still ongoing. This consists of doing a physical inventory and condition analysis aided by GPS.

He also said that he did a presentation to the Duluth Commission on Disabilities, outlining the inventory and condition analysis, and that as part of Phase 2 we will be wanting to know where disabled citizens are traveling by sidewalk because the conditions affect accessibility.

Dave Montgomery asked when they thought the project would be complete, MacDonald replied that he thought the field work would be finished this summer and a report made by fall. He then asked if Montgomery needed it sooner, and Montgomery said that perhaps they should have a meeting with the city council to show them what they have so far. MacDonald agreed this would be a good idea since the information in the study could be useful in making policy.

Dan Hartman asked if they would be ranking sidewalks eventually. MacDonald replied that they'd like to brainstorm with various groups generating large numbers of pedestrians such as churches, schools and UMD, as well as special needs groups like the disabled and seniors. MacDonald added that each sidewalk would be getting a condition rating.

Dave Montgomery pointed out that there needs to be agreement on what should be done if we can come up

with the money, and that this information will help with those discussions. He felt it was pivotal for the city council to hear and that this study will show them the importance of maintaining the sidewalk system.

Ed Anderson commented that other studies have been done and it's not as if they don't have much of this information already. Montgomery replied that it wasn't the condition information he thought was important so much as knowing who was using the sidewalks and how.

MacDonald said the thought we could use our social media as a way to involve and educate the public.

11. Project Updates

MIC Social Media and Public Involvement Update, Rondi Watson

We have launched some new social media initiatives in our effort to reach out to the public to educate them about the MIC's work and to gain their input into our planning initiatives. Our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/dsmic) garnered 57 'likes' (hopefully you are among them!) and over 3,000 page views during its first month. Our OpenMIC blog got off to a good start, as well, with 135 people visiting 2 to 3 of our posts. We put forward information about the federal gas tax and transportation infrastructure, the DTA's bike racks, Bike to Work Day and port-related topics. We encourage you to subscribe to receive the blog as posts are published at www.duluthsuperioropenmic.org. Look for the "Want this Blog via Email?" section and sign up.

Rondi Watson presented an update on the social media effort. She said she wondered if we would ever generate the kind of discussion we envisioned, but that we are getting readers to the blog, and that we will continue to attract more if we post the kind of content that makes the blog more searchable.

CTS Meeting, Robert Herling

MIC staff attended the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) 2011 Transportation Research Conference on May 24th, in St. Paul, MN. This conference offered a series of panels reporting on a variety of current research being done in a variety of transportation-related areas.

Robert Herling gave a brief update on the Transportation Research Conference he attended, stating that there was a lot of good research being done. Topics he felt were of note included a freight study showing the lack of waysides for trucks, teen driving issues, and quality of life in the transportation system.

Duluth Area 2011-2014 TIP Administrative Change, James Gittemeier

A correction to the FTA amount of the DTA's Operating and Preventative Maintenance funding has been made for FY 2011. The federal funding was incorrectly listed as \$738,000, but should have been entered as \$1,300,000. Because there is no change in the project scope nor total project cost, MIC staff have administratively made the change.

Dan Hartman asked if it would be possible for presentation materials to be sent to committee members ahead of time. We said we would look into that.

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Broc Allen asked if the DTA was looking into creating an app for bus schedules. Melanie Hendrickson said she would find out about that.

12. Adjournment

With no further committee business, Chair Baker asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:11.

Motion

Discussion

& Vote

Warren Bender/Ed Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.