



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Wednesday, August 17, 2011, 7:00 p.m.**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Proctor Community Center, Proctor MN	
<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
	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
<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
	Melanie Hendrickson*	Duluth Transit Authority
		* Excused
<b>Others Present</b>	Ron Chicka	ARDC/MIC Director
	Laurel Davis	ARDC/MIC Administrative Assistant
	James Gittemeier	ARDC/MIC Senior Planner
	Brian Heaton	ARDC/MIC Intern
	Robert Herling	ARDC/MIC Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC
	Andy McDonald	ARDC/MIC Principal Planner
	Kody Thurnau	ARDC/MIC GIS Specialist
	Rondi Watson	ARDC/MIC Planning Assistant

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

Wisconsin Co-Chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 6:58. All meeting attendees introduced themselves.

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

## 2. Committee Business

### June 15, 2011 Meeting Summary

Chair Baker asked if there were any changes to the summary from the 6/15/11 meeting of the MIC Policy Board. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

**Motion** Dave Brenna/Dan Olson moved to approve the 6/15/11 meeting summary as  
**Discussion** presented. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

## 3. Final 2012-2015 Duluth Area TIP

The Duluth Area TIP has a few minor changes (largely with Mn/DOT projects) since the draft was released in May. MIC staff will review these changes, final project costs, and total funding.

Robert Herling presented the Final 2012-2015 Duluth Area TIP, outlining the changes to the TIP as follows. The Seven Bridges Road project will now be locally funded, the National Guard Base project has been moved back, Hwy 23 Bridge Maintenance was added, \$37 million in state money was added for the Better Roads for MN project, and the Hwy2 and I-35 Projects were combined.

Ed Anderson asked if there was a chance the Guard Base would be funded by the military, and James Gittemeier explained that the funding is written as law and won't get routed anywhere else.

**Motion** Ed Anderson/Dave Montgomery moved to approve the Final 2012-2015 Duluth  
**Discussion** Area TIP. There was minimal discussion and the motion passed by unanimous  
**& Vote** vote.

## 4. Draft 2011-2014 Superior Area TIP \*

The draft Superior TIP will be forwarded for your review and comment. The TIP includes 4 years of federally funded transportation projects, as well as some of the significant state funded projects. The Draft TIP will be released for a 30-day public comment period on or about August 22. The final TIP will be presented for approval at the October MIC meetings. For comments or questions, please contact Sheldon Johnson at [sjohnson@nwrpc.com](mailto:sjohnson@nwrpc.com) or (715) 635-2197, ext. 228.

Sheldon Johnson presented the Draft 2011-2014 Superior Area TIP and stated that 12-13 new projects had been added to the TIP, including a locally funded stoplight in Superior, nine DOT projects, a culvert replacement near Oliver, pavement work on Hwy 2, joint work and pavement repair on Hwy 13, Hwy 105 maintenance, and two place holder rail projects for 2015. He also

added that no new lay miles were being added.

**Motion** Nick Baker/Warren Bender moved to approve the Superior Area TIP Amendment.  
**Discussion** There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

## 5. Lincoln Park Pedestrian Study

MIC staff is working with Neighborhood Housing Services of Duluth (NHS) on this pedestrian route project. The goal of the project is to encourage a safe pedestrian corridor connecting the new Lincoln Park Middle School (opens in fall of 2012) to the Clyde Iron campus. A peripheral outcome is a route connecting Skyline Parkway to the Cross City Trail, which is a recommendation of the Draft Duluth Trails and Bikeways Plan. The Clyde Iron Complex has the potential to be a trailhead and neighborhood hub with the sports facilities, Boys & Girls Club, and the Cross City Trail located there. There have been 3 meetings with a team of stakeholders, including a walkability audit. The report will be concluded at the end of August with a preferred corridor and recommendations to make it safer for pedestrians.

James Gittemeier and Brian Heaton presented updates on the Lincoln Park Pedestrian Study, which is a collaboration with the YMCA through Fit City and with the Healthy Duluth Area Coalition. A \$5000 grant for planning was awarded in Mid-June, the project started in July and will be wrapping up in September. The team outlined three routes between the Lincoln Park School and the Clyde Iron Complex and did a walkability audit of each one. The most direct route includes 30<sup>th</sup> Ave which runs through the parking lot of a propane business, creating some difficulty for walkers. Gittemeier said that the city would look into negotiating a right of way since the building encroaches on public property. The route continues on Michigan Street to Devonshire and up through the woods.

*Dave Montgomery wanted to know how steep the top portion of the route through the woods was, and what the total elevation change is. Heaton said the steepest part was 17-18%, and the elevation change was a few hundred feet.*

*Kay McKenzie asked if there was a way to alter this route along the diagonal. Gittemeier explained that there was private property in the way, and they chose the most direct route available.*

*Ed Anderson expressed concern that during the winter months, the route, especially at the top, would become very icy and wondered if there were plans to reassess the route in the winter. Gittemeier said the Safe Routes study would take some of that into account, but this grant only lasted for a short time frame.*

*Nick Baker wanted to know if the upper most part of the route was on school property. Gittemeier said the school is concerned about that too. This is tax forfeit land.*

*Dan Olson pointed out that the top portion was all rock, and there was another road up at the top corner of the study area, but acknowledged it was a long way to go. Gittemeier explained that they believe students*

*will not take a less direct route, that if they can see where they're heading, they'll go straight for it. Andy McDonald compared the situation to Duluth Central, where students created their own route. Olson then asked how long the total route was, and Heaton said it was about two miles.*

## 6. Central Entrance Study

Data collection efforts continue for input into the modeling effort for this corridor study. We were unable to complete intersection turning movement counts prior to Arrowhead Road closing. Traffic levels were higher on Central Entrance during the Arrowhead Road closure leading us to wait until it reopens to collect the final counts. Once counts are complete we will forward the count information to URS, our modeling consultant, to be entered into the model.

Andy McDonald presented the updates on the Central Entrance Study, stating that modeling really couldn't begin until they get the Arrowhead Road turning counts, and so they will have to decide whether to wait until the construction is done or move forward.

He said they would be looking at tools for managing access as a way to control and direct traffic. These include consolidating accesses, shared access, making use of frontage and backage roads, and use of medians to control traffic flow. He pointed out that there is already mention of using Palm Street as a backage road in the Small Area Plan, and that Myrtle street is already functioning as one. One strategy is to encourage more access to smaller routes as land in the area sells and can be renegotiated. He said that the key is to start looking at some of the state guidance and what the policies are, examine best practices and identify opportunities, and to be proactive as development takes place rather than reactive

*Nick Baker asked if 6th was the street they were talking about making into a two-lane street, and if so suggested that would take some of the pressure off the traffic. Baker also wanted to know what will happen when they sell the Central School Property. McDonald said the Central property will have to connect to Blackman and they already have a well designed outlet for that. Baker then asked what would happen if it becomes a housing development or something similar. McDonald replied that when the modeling is done, they will plug in some higher density use there to see how traffic will move.*

*Ed Anderson pointed out that at one time, there was a plan to create frontage and backage roads in that area, and McDonald said the city plans state those are off the table now because they were deemed bad for the neighborhood. Anderson said the obvious problem is going to be future congestion, and McDonald replied that Trinity Road will take some of the pressure off.*

*Kay McKenzie asked if the land use plan changes depending on who's on the city council, to which David Montgomery replied that in theory, no the broader plan doesn't change, and they keep trying to focus back when smaller issues come up. McKenzie then suggested that these planning documents were becoming more and more important, to which both Montgomery and Andy McDonald agreed.*

*Ed Anderson asked if there was any mechanism in the plan to accommodate significant changes in land use, such as the school becoming an apartment building. Montgomery and McDonald explained that*

*there is a way to amend the plan if needed, and that it's reviewed from time to time, to take these things into account.*

## **7. Arrowhead Road/Kenwood Road Intersection**

With the development of a new Walgreens at the intersection of Arrowhead Rd & Kenwood Ave, this location has been receiving a lot of attention. In June, the City of Duluth engaged MIC staff in discussions about a potential modeling and analysis of the intersection. Staff will be presenting some background information and hopes to engage the TAC and board members in a discussion about possible MIC involvement in further studying this intersection.

Ron Chicka started by explaining that he talked with Dave Montgomery about what he'd like to see happen who said that he'd like to gather as much information as possible about the intersection.

Robert Herling then presented the information gathered so far, saying that there was a lot of crash data from recent years (though he mentioned not all the glitches were out of the CMAT system used to generate that data), but limited turning counts dated from 2004. Data showed that the highest concentration of traffic was at the PM peak, and that a high percentage of crashes line up with the Super One access.

*Kay McKenzie asked if there was a time of day when the most crashes occurred, and Robert Herling explained that the information could be parsed out, but that hasn't been done yet.*

Ron Chicka summed up what had been discussed at the TAC meeting, explaining that they would like the MIC to collect data in the short term and do it soon. He said they'd have to wait until school starts and the construction is done, but pressure is on the engineering staff to do this now rather than waiting, and that is a project that could possibly get into the work program for next year, but that wouldn't be soon enough.

*Dave Montgomery stated that this intersection has been on the radar a long time, and that Walgreens coming in has stirred up concern. He explained that some rezoning has already been done, and they are working with Walgreens to design access that will relieve congestion so that development can be part of the solution rather than the problem. They would also like to look at doing some restriping, and talk to US Bank and Wells Fargo about consolidating their access points. He also added that there can't be any final answer until the four corners of the intersection are developed.*

*Nick Baker asked if they had talked to the land owner about blocking off the access closest to the shopping center which would relieve some of the traffic right at the intersection, because there were a lot of connecting roads behind that could serve the same purpose. Montgomery agreed and said that even the parking lot needs to be better designed.*

*Ron Chicka asked if the pressure was on because the credit union wanted to get going, and Montgomery replied that he hasn't seen a proposal from them yet, that it's Walgreens and the request for rezoning that is driving the effort at the moment.*

*Chicka admitted that doing a study this year probably wouldn't be prudent for the MIC, and he didn't think they could get it into their modeling with all the other things already planned, but this could be done in*

2012.

*Ed Anderson asked if it would be possible to do portions of it, such as doing the turning counts now and the rest of the study in the spring. Montgomery agreed with this idea saying that the counts would drive the reorganization of the lanes which would have the biggest impact.*

## 8. BPAC Update

The BPAC met on August 1st for its regularly scheduled quarterly meeting. At this meeting, the first half of an interactive Action Planning Process was undertaken with the committee members and the technical advisors. The Action Planning process was set in order to fully engage the BPAC on what they see and want their role to be and say in the future direction of the committee, with a focus on 2012 and 2013, which are the next years in the MIC's Work Program. MIC staff facilitated this planning process. The second half of this Action Planning Process is scheduled to take place in September.

James Gittemeier explained the action planning process and said that the BPAC had gotten through the first four steps. This consisted of reviewing the current state of the BPAC and determining what they wanted the future of the BPAC to be. It was decided that the BPAC should be seen as a leading bike/ped resource, and provide strong, proactive leadership.

The BPAC then outlined their strengths and weaknesses saying that while they had an experienced and dedicated membership, the limited influence of the BPAC and the infrequency of their meetings were current limitations. Benefits and dangers of a successful BPAC were outlined, showing that the BPAC could grow into a highly influential resource that could provide direction for local initiatives, but that this success could potentially overwork BPAC staff and alienate local decision makers.

*Dave Montgomery asked if there was an issue of too many groups dealing with bike issues and that they were trying to consolidate. Gittemeier said that the goal was for the BPAC to be the source to go to, and that there really isn't any bike advocacy going on right now.*

*Robert Herling pointed out that the BPAC has a bigger scope than just bike issues. Steve O'Neil asked if there were statistics showing if there are more bikes or peds, to which Gittemeier replied that there is a study planned but it hasn't gotten off the ground yet. Andy McDonald added that the numbers of bikes on the DTA busses has grown each year, and Kay McKenzie noted that she's seeing bikes on roads she doesn't remember seeing them on before. Dave Montgomery said a good example was Jean Duluth Road with the new paved shoulders where bike use has exploded.*

## 9. Sidewalk Study

Development of the sidewalk inventory and condition analysis continues. MIC staff will provide an update on our progress and describe plans to complete this phase of the study.

Brian Heaton discussed his work on the sidewalk study, explaining that they started inventorying sidewalks this spring and have now completed 96 miles of 400. He showed slides depicting common obstructions such as overgrowth, raised lips, and broken pavement, and discussed the

inventory of curb ramps at intersections.

Andy McDonald then outlined the plans to complete the inventory, stating that they had hired a temp with GIS/GPS experience to work exclusively on this project, and that a new MIC intern would be starting in September who would be able to put in some work as well. He did say that they were trying to limit the number of people who were actively taking inventories to keep the data consistent, but that those who did were trained and vetted for consistency. He also mentioned that yearly updates were planned for the future.

*Nick Baker asked if the new person would be going with Brian Heaton to be trained, and McDonald said he would, and that they would do some quality control to make sure the same standards were being followed.*

## 10. Social Media Update

One year ago, our consultants from PureDriven presented information about the MIC's new effort to incorporate social networking tools into its public participation strategies. Rondi Watson will present an update on this initiative to make the MIC's plans and programs more accessible to a wider audience.

Rondi Watson presented her update on the transition to an active web-based outreach effort. She explained that since the introduction of the MIC's website in 2006 there's been a dramatic rise not only in social media activity as a whole, but also in the kinds of technology available to access it. She pointed out that studies show people spend three times as much time on blogs and social media than they do on email these days, and that there's a significant number of social media users in every age group. Watson went on to say that social media was a good fit for public outreach because it's content driven and the information the MIC has is interesting and relevant to people's lives, and that people are becoming more and more likely to engage in online discussions than ever before.

Watson then introduced the MIC blog, Open MIC, and the MIC Facebook page, discussing the variety of content available and the MIC's efforts in creating videos, guest posts and eventually public response to posts. She said the next goal is to increase readership and participation.

*Nick Baker asked if she could tell who was reading the blog. Watson said that she couldn't tell who, but did get numbers on how many, and that she could do more tracking with Facebook. She also pointed out that readers could subscribe to the blog and get it in their email, and encouraged all MIC members to subscribe.*

*Kay McKenzie mentioned that the Safe Routes to School and the Arrowhead/Kenwood intersection would make good topics for the blog, and Watson said that they were definitely on her list of subjects.*

*Ron Chicka pointed out that no other MPO in the state is doing social media to this level, and that Watson would be presenting her approach at the MPO conference in La Crosse.*

## 11. Project Updates

### **Safe Routes to School Update, James Gittemeier**

MIC and Fit City Duluth have partnered together to conduct a safe routes to school site assessment process. The focus in the past month has been on the two Duluth Public High Schools, Duluth East and Denfeld, both of which are scheduled to re-open this fall. This safe

routes to school assessment is focused on infrastructure improvements, with the idea of assisting the district as they finishing the school projects. The assessment has looked at bike and pedestrian connections to the school, including the location of bike racks, transit stops and real time message board locations. Staff continues to meet with school officials, DTA and the City of Duluth and others as the process moves forward.

**Harbor Planning Update**, *Andy McDonald*

The HTAC as a model was presented at the Coastal Zone 11 Conference in Chicago on July 18. We are sharing the HTAC model with Great Lakes and national audiences to provide an example of a collaborative harbor planning committee that others communities can use as a template to start their own harbor committees. We have recently been in communication with representatives from Toledo, Ohio as they are preparing proposals to start a harbor committee.

**MIC Bike Map Awards**, *Kody Thurnau*

The **Duluth-Superior Bike Map** was awarded first prize in the category [Best Cartographic Design Single Map Product – Large Format Press Copy](#) at the [2011 Esri International User Conference](#) in San Diego, CA. Judged by 38 Esri staff members for general and specific cartographic quality, entries in this category had to be a single map product larger than 11 in. x 17 in. but not exceeding 48 in., printed professionally on a printing press. Judging criteria included 'efficiency in communication of intended message' and 'maximization of the user's cognitive experience.'

The map was also one of three overall winners of the [Cartography Special Interest Group \(Carto SIG\)](#) Map Awards, out of 1,200 conference Map Gallery entries.

**Human Services Transit Plan Update**, *Robert Herling*

The steering committee for this effort will have reconvened for its 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting by the time of the TAC and MIC meetings. The purpose of the meeting: to revisit the results of the June 7<sup>th</sup> workshop and recommend action strategies and projects for inclusion in an updated HS Transit plan.

**Higher Education Small Area Plan**, *Andy McDonald*

MIC staff has been invited to participate on the Higher Education Small Area Plan Committee. This committee represents residents, businesses, property managers, colleges, students and government agencies. From 2001 until 2010, the student population increased by 30%. This has created challenges in neighborhoods surrounding UMD and CSS. The purpose of this planning effort is to identify how to balance student needs with those of the neighborhoods.

**Multimodal Facility Letter of Support**, *Ron Chicka*

The MIC was requested to write a letter of support for the Duluth Transit Authority's 5309 Bus and Buss Facility; State of Good Repair grant for the Twin Ports Multi Modal Transportation Facility. Ron Chicka provided a letter which was forwarded to the DTA for review and then will be forwarded on to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

After the project updates, Ron Chicka mentioned his meeting with Mary Willett, saying they had a good discussion with her, and that they had invited her to the HTAC meetings. He said he was hopeful because they'd been successful with Rep. Cravaack in getting Tim Olson to attend.

Chicka also reminded the committee that the next meeting's location had changed and would not be held at WITC and to read their meeting materials carefully.

## 12. Adjournment

With no further committee business, Chair Baker asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:46.

<b>Motion Discussion &amp; Vote</b>	Ed Anderson/Dan Olson moved to adjourn the meeting. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.
---	--