



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

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Hermantown Training Center, Hermantown, MN	
<b>Meeting Chair(s)</b>	Steve O'Neil, Minnesota Co-Chair	
<b>Note Taker</b>	Laurel Davis	
<b>Members Present</b>	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
	Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	David Brenna	City of Proctor
	Bob Browne	Superior Common Council
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Dan Hartman	Duluth City Council
	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
	Dan Olson	Superior Common Council
	Steve O'Neil	St. Louis County Board
<b>Members Absent</b>	Tony Cuneo	Duluth City Council
	Jim Paine*	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	* Excused	
<b>Others Present</b>	Lynne Bly	Mn/DOT
	Katie Caskey	Mn/DOT
	Ron Chicka	ARDC/MIC Director
	Laurie Davis	ARDC/MIC Administrative Assistant
	Pat Henderson	ARDC
	Robert Herling	ARDC/MIC Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	MIC/NWRPC
	Andy McDonald	ARDC/MIC Principal Planner
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

Minnesota Chair Steve O'Neil called the meeting to order at 7:05. All meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Chair O'Neil asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Ron Chicka asked that Item #4 Draft

2012-2015 Work Program be removed from the agenda and reintroduced at the December meeting.

## 2. Committee Business

### September 21, 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.

Ron Chicka stated that at this time of year nominations for officers are taken care of and asked for some volunteers to make phone calls and gather nominations for the December meeting. Warren Bender volunteered for Wisconsin, and Dave Montgomery volunteered for Minnesota.

**Motion** Nick Baker/Dave Montgomery moved to approve the 09-21-11 meeting summary  
**Discussion** as presented. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

## 3. Guest Speaker – Lynne Bly

### *Minnesota GO Vision*

The Minnesota Department of Transportation launched the Minnesota GO visioning process to better align the transportation system with what Minnesotans expect for their quality of life, economy and natural environment.

The effort is based on an understanding that transportation is a means to other ends, not an end in itself. It also recognizes that infrastructure is only one of many elements necessary to achieving a high quality of life, a competitive economy and a healthy environment.

This 50-year vision for transportation will require consistency and collaboration across jurisdictions and sectors to be fully achieved. Although Mn/DOT initiated the effort to develop the vision, this is a vision for all forms of transportation, and ownership of the vision is a shared responsibility.

Lynne Bly presented Mn/DOT's GO Vision project as an attempt to find a more multimodal approach to developing a set of principals all parties can agree on to guide decision making and creating a long range vision of a successful transportation system. This vision would ultimately lead to a Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan.

They started by working with the Center for Transportation Studies, asking experts what they saw on the horizon for transformative change. Several videos were made and are available for viewing on their website. Bly stated that the response to these videos has been encouraging, with nearly four thousand viewers. She also stated that many other avenues of input have been used, including social media, advisory groups, public workshops, and targeted outreach.

The results of this input are a list of challenges and opportunities to be explored, which include things like an aging population, urbanization, changing work environments, automation and budget challenges. A vision statement was created which details the role of a successful transportation system, including components for quality of life, environmental health, and economic competitiveness.

Guiding principles were then developed for making decisions and finding solutions that can

address as many of the challenges as possible. These include ensuring accessibility, integrating safety, building to a maintainable scale, ensuring regional connections, and leveraging public investments to achieve multiple purposes. She then discussed what this could mean for transportation in terms of integrated networks of transportation, reliable and affordable transportation, safety, and the ability to change over time.

Bly said the vision comment period was coming to a close and they believe the revisions will be modest and will most likely adopt them. She also said there will be many more opportunities for public involvement in the near future and the goal was to have a transportation plan developed by March 2012.

*Dave Montgomery commented that the vision seemed to be more reactive and adaptive, and wondered how much thought was given to making it a driving force for change. Bly said this was a good observation and said the plan was created to be resilient to address very different future considerations, since they don't know what to expect. She also said that it was designed to drive change in its call for multimodalism, and there are things to look at over the next five to ten years that will especially shape their ability to achieve this vision.*

Ron Chicka noted that the harbor has great potential in terms of moving goods and providing relief to other forms of transportation more cost effectively, but the challenge would be to shift the priority at the state level.

*Dave Montgomery then commented on the goal of zero deaths in transportation and asked where cost/benefit comes into play and how this gets modified to a situation with limited resources. Bly responded that the piece of the vision that addresses this is a push to be strategic about where money is spent and where you work to fix the system to get the most benefit. She also noted that the goal was partly a recognition that there is no ethical way to set a limit on how many deaths would be okay.*

*Broc Allen suggested that automated freeways would make sense when technology becomes available that can automate cars and move them at the same speed. Bly replied that there is some discussion of that on the website, and that experts are divided on whether or not that could ever become a viable possibility.*

#### 4. Final 2012-2013 Superior Area TIP

Sheldon Johnson presented the FINAL Superior Urbanized Area 2012-2015 TIP for approval. After having the document available for public comment at the Superior Public Library and the MIC webpage since August 26 and a public information session on September 20 at the Government Center located in Superior, no formal comments have been provided. The only change to the plan document since its public release on August 17 is the inclusion of project number 113-12-013 Belknap Avenue rehabilitation from Banks Avenue to Hill Avenue. This project is scheduled for preliminary engineering in 2012. Construction related to this project is not included in the 2012-2015 TIP as the construction phase is currently programmed for calendar year 2018.

**Motion** Nick Baker/Warren Bender moved to approve the amendment as presented.

**Discussion & Vote** There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 5. Central Entrance Study

We have currently finished our collection of turning movement data and are working with URS, our modeling consultant, on development of a small area model. This model will show us how future proposed land use changes will impact traffic flow in the corridor. We have received some input on our access management section and we will review that at our upcoming meetings. We will also be bringing forward draft sections relating to pedestrian, bike and transit issues. We conducted a post card mailing to area residents directing them to a survey about Central Entrance and we will review preliminary results.

Andy McDonald presented results of the Central Entrance study, stating that eighty-five responses were received and that the survey would be left open a while longer. He also mentioned a previous survey, conducted by phone ten years ago, which covered a larger corridor, but which can provide a basis for some comparison of public views then and now.

More than half the respondents make at least six to ten trips using Central Entrance each week, and the overwhelming majority of all respondents rated Central Entrance "Bad" or "Very Bad" in terms of things such as safety, traffic congestion, speeding traffic, making turns and accessing local businesses. Eighty-one percent said they have avoided using Central Entrance for these reasons, and of those, eighty-nine percent gave traffic congestion as their primary reason.

*Kay McKenzie asked if traffic counts had been done to determine if traffic really has increased. McDonald stated that Mn/DOT does them every other year, and has shown a growth in traffic.*

*Steve O'Neil mentioned that he's talked to someone who owns a van service who avoids Central Entrance whenever possible, taking a longer route that actually ends up being faster.*

*Dan Hartman asked if the data showed that the public perception of Central Entrance was worse than the survey in 2001, and McDonald said that it did, but the differences between the two surveys should be noted.*

McDonald then presented some bike and pedestrian considerations that should be taken into account when redesigning Central Entrance and showed slides of several proposed bike paths, sidewalks, transit centers, and crossings. He explained that several of these recommendations have been in pieces in various other plans.

*Dan Hartman asked if there would be any signage directing people from Central Entrance letting them know there is a bike path one block over. McDonald replied that City Planning would like to have archway entrances and more signage identifying it, and mentioned that it is also listed on the bike map.*

*Broc Allen asked if there was a bike path there already and McDonald said there was, but that it wasn't well known.*

## 6. Superior TSM

In September, MIC staff met with the traffic engineers from the City of Superior and Wisconsin DOT to discuss potential safety and operational issues at those locations identified in the MIC's 2011 Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Assessment of Superior area intersections. From these discussions, a number of low-cost treatments were identified for recommendation. These recommendations are being added to the TSM assessment document that was drafted earlier in the year. Together, this information and is being brought before the MIC Policy Board as the *2011 TSM Assessment of Superior Intersections* for approval.

Robert Herling presented the Superior TSM, beginning with an explanation of how the intersections considered were chosen by entering crash data and various other information for the past several years and selecting those that fell within the lowest safety scores.

He then moved onto the recommended TSM actions for the first intersection: Hammond Ave & N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Recommended actions are a speed display for southbound traffic, explore closing or modifying access closest to the intersection, create a pedestrian island, explore modifying the transit route.

*Kay McKenzie noted that this intersection is not well lit, and Broc Allen commented that people turning left slow down sooner causing people to move to the right lane, and the lanes merging into one creates problems. Nick Baker agreed, saying that people race each other to get to the single lane first.*

Ron Chicka responded that one recommendation is to remove that left turn altogether, and that the state is looking into short term improvements. He also stated that the better option was to make it an on/off ramp only, and that although this won't happen in the near future, it will be looked at in the Long Range Plan. Herling noted that they will be watching what happens during the half-closures of the bridge to see how that affects traffic.

*Bob Browne said that many people go down 5<sup>th</sup> street to get to Highway 2 and that neighborhood isn't designed to handle that kind of traffic. He suggested limited access, such as turns allowed only at certain times of day. Nick Baker requested that a new recommendation be added to place a median preventing the left hand turns. Ed Anderson said there was no reason not to have a traffic light at that intersection, which could eliminate some of these issues.*

*Dan Olson responded to this, stating that if you eliminate the left turn, people are likely to go one block down and turn at turn at 6<sup>th</sup>, which would not only create a worse pile up, but would be routing traffic into a neighborhood known to have a lot of children and seniors.*

*Keith Allen asked if the businesses in the area were notified about these recommendations, and Herling told him they were not because the TSM is just a preliminary menu of options being recommended, but not advocated for. Allen responded that he felt businesses should be involved from the start so the*

*process doesn't get too far along before they have any input. Kay McKenzie agreed, stating that if she owned a business along these areas and was not informed, she'd be very unhappy, and that they should be included much earlier.*

At this point, due to time constraints, Herling asked if the board would like to bring discussion of this intersection back in the next meeting for further consideration. Nick Baker made a motion to table the discussion until the December meeting, which was seconded by Warren Bender.

Herling then moved onto presentations of the remaining intersections.

**Tower & 21<sup>st</sup> Street:** Investigate issues with location of loop detectors, conduct a signal study, investigate clearance intervals and pedestrian crossing times.

**CTH E & CTH Z:** Conduct a speed survey, and consider converting it to a four-way stop.

*Keith Allen mentioned that he believed this intersection used to be a four-way stop at one time.*

**Hammond Ave & Winter Street:** Paint centerline and edgelines, conduct a study of signal times and railway operation and consider moving or adding signals to Winter Street.

*Ed Anderson suggested developing the truck route to go down 3<sup>rd</sup> Street as a much better option than Winter street, stating he felt if you added up the damage and other considerations, it would be worth the cost. Ron Chicka said he was going to continue to push this.*

Herling pointed out that the TSM would be available to comment on until December, and urged members to take a look and contact him with their thoughts or concerns. The draft TSM can be found on the MIC website ([www.dsmic.org](http://www.dsmic.org)) by clicking the "Transportation Systems Management (TSM)" link in the right hand column.

Ron Chicka concluded by mentioning the Bong Bridge project, stating he would try to get a speaker from WisDOT to come to the December meeting for a presentation. He briefly outlined the project which may call for eliminating part of Belknap, putting in a signal and taking out the ramp.

*Dave Montgomery asked if they have considered putting in a roundabout, and Chicka said they have because the piece of land is big enough to support one.*

## 7. Sidewalk Study Discussion

Our temp worker, Marc Mayer has nearly completed the sidewalk inventory. This is the first phase of the study. The second phase of the study includes identifying priority segments of sidewalk. A tool we are considering utilizing is a pedestrian priority model used in San Diego (see attached pdf file). The model has three basic components – pedestrian generators, attractors and detractors. We would replicate this model but make adjustments to reflect the

unique characteristics of our area.

Andy McDonald presented an update to the sidewalk study, introducing the second phase of the project and the pedestrian priority model used in San Diego that they will be using as a template. He explained that they'd be going through this as a draft and then bring it before the committee to see if it makes sense.

He then went on to define the three basic components of the model:

- **Pedestrian Generators:** Includes things like people who walk to work, population density of groups such as seniors and youth, household income, and mixed use areas.
- **Pedestrian Attractors:** Includes schools, universities, transit station, libraries, post offices, parks and retail shopping.
- **Pedestrian Detractors:** Includes safety, traffic, slope, street lighting, and railroads or freeways.

McDonald explained that all of these things are given a score based on a defined scale and weighted to account for varying conditions, with the end goal to be prioritizing the sidewalk system for future planning.

*Steve O'Neil commented that trees and bushes growing over the sidewalks is a detractor, and Ed Anderson asked about how snow and winter conditions would be accounted for in this model. McDonald replied that the San Diego model is just a template, and that rather than using their specific definitions of detractors, they'd be defining their own that are suited to the area and conditions in Duluth.*

*Dan Hartman asked if the goal was to have a list of higher priority areas, and whether or not recommendations for solutions would be included. McDonald said that, yes, there will be indications of which areas are problems, and that rather than specific recommendations, they would be including some general guidelines for making decisions.*

Ron Chicka added that the intent was to make this a living document for the council.

## 8. Project Updates

### **Lincoln Park Pedestrian Study, James Gittlemeier**

A public meeting on the draft Lincoln Park Study was held. A few minor changes were requested, but the major recommendations were accepted. Therefore, MIC staff will complete work on the Lincoln Park Pedestrian Corridor Plan.

### **Bike Share Forum, James Gittlemeier**

MIC hosted a discussion forum on the concept of bike sharing. Bike Sharing is a city wide rental bicycling system that is being implemented in cities across the country, including Minneapolis and St. Paul. The forum took place on October 14, and was led by a group who helped put together the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of Twin Cities' system.

**Walk to School Day – Superior Northern Lights Elementary, James Gittemeier**

The MIC, Healthier Douglas County and Northern Lights Elementary participated in National Walk to School Day on October 5<sup>th</sup>. The event had the assistance of the City of Superior Police Department, Superior School District, PTA, and other parents as well. The students at Northern Lights were encouraged to meet at 3 different locations (parks closest to their houses (Wade Bowl, Hammond Park & Heritage Park) and form into walking parades as they walked to school together that morning.

*Warren Bender commented that he took part in the Walk to School Day, and that it went very well.*

**Duluth Charrette –Community Meeting on Connectivity, James Gittemeier**

The MIC participated in the Duluth Charrette Update, organized by Duluth LISC and the City of Duluth. The Duluth Charrette originally took place in 2005. The update was organized to recognize the successes and refocus on areas still in need of improvement. MIC staff participated in a Housing Meeting and a Connectivity Meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, to discuss the latest news on these topics.

**Minnesota State APA Conference, Rondi Watson**

There is a great deal of interest in the MIC's new effort to incorporate social networking tools into our public participation strategies, as evidenced by several recent invitations to speak on this topic. Most recently I presented information about planning for and implementing the [OpenMIC blog](#) and the MIC's [Facebook page](#) at the statewide conference of the Minnesota chapter of the American Planning Association, held in St. Cloud on September 28 – 30.

Ron Chicka took a moment to mention two letters of support that he sent out recently, one supporting the TIGER III grant funding for the Port of Duluth Multimodal Project, and the other supporting the CFIRE grant proposal for establishing a multimodal freight focused regional University Transportation Research Center (UTC) that will include the University of Wisconsin-Superior's Transportation and Logistics Research Center.

*Dan Hartman put forward a request to be sent presentation slides before the meetings so that members can review the material and be prepared to ask questions at the meetings.*

**9. Adjournment**

With no further committee business, Chair O'Neil asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52.

**Motion**

**Discussion**

**& Vote**

Dan Hartman/Nick Baker moved to adjourn the meeting. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.