

TAC Agenda Topics and Project Updates

February 19, 2008 Meeting



Transportation Advisory Committee

* = Approval Item

1. INTRODUCTIONS / AGENDA REVIEW

2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- Meeting Summary of January 16, 2008 *

3. 2008-2011 DULUTH METRO TIP AMENDMENT #8 *

There is one amendment to the 2008-2011 Duluth Metro TIP. **Amendment #8** advances the Duluth Heights Connector Preliminary Engineering Study into Fiscal Year 2008, in order for the City of Duluth to begin the preliminary engineering work. The City of Duluth will upfront the cost of this engineering study and will not be requesting federal reimbursement until its original programmed year of 2011.

Duluth Metro TIP Amendment #8 – 2008 Roadway Projects					
Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description	Estimated Costs & Funding			
		Federal	State	Local	Total
Duluth 118-080-36	Duluth Heights Connector Planning: Preliminary Engineering for a new roadway between Maple Grove Rd. and Arrowhead Rd.	\$400,000	\$0	\$100,000	\$500,000

Contact James Gittemeier at jgittemeier@ardc.org or (218) 529-7556 for more information.

4. 2008-2011 SUPERIOR URBANIZED AREA TIP AMENDMENT #4 *

It is necessary to consider an amendment to add a project for inclusion in the 2008-2011 Superior Urbanized Area TIP, as follows:

Amendment 4: This project will look at future needs along the USH 53 corridor to upgrade the existing freeway/expressway from Solon Springs to Superior. Right-of-way needed for future interchanges, over/under passes and local road alteration will be preserved to ensure that solutions to future and current mobility and safety concerns will be valid projects in the future.

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continued

Superior Metro TIP Amendment #4 – 2008 Roadway Projects						
Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description	Type of Cost	Estimated Costs & Funding Sources in Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT 113-08-011	Solon Springs to Superior: Corridor Preservation and Planning 1195-00-06 Backbone	PE ROW CONST	312	78		390
		TOTAL	312	78		390

Contact Sheldon Johnson at 715-635-2197 or sjohnson@nwrpc.com for more information.

5. 2009-2012 DULUTH URBANIZED AREA TIP PROJECT PRIORITIZATION *

There were 2 project applications submitted for the 2012 federal funding:

2012 Duluth Metro TIP – Project Applications					
Agency	Project Description	Federal \$	State \$	Local \$	Total \$
DTA	Bus Purchase: 10 regular route buses, 5 will be hybrid buses.	\$3,694,544	\$0	\$923,636	\$4,618,180
MnDOT	Blatnik Bridge Preservation: work includes painting bridge steel and deck sealing. Project is split 50/50 with WISDOT.	\$2,790,000	\$310,000	\$0	\$3,100,000
	TOTALS	\$6,484,544	\$310,000	\$923,636	\$7,718,180

A public involvement meeting was held at the Miller Hill Mall to review these projects. At the February MIC and TAC meetings the projects and any public comments received will be reviewed. Please note, since there are only 2 projects, a roadway one and a transit one, there will NOT be project scoring this year. Hence, each project will be the top prioritized project for each category (roadway and transit) for submission to the ATP. Contact James Gittemeier at jgittemeier@ardc.org or (218) 529-7556 for more information.

6. NORTHWEST SUPERIOR TRAFFIC CIRCULATION STUDY

The MIC is finalizing its work on the Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Study.

Recommendations based on results from the small-area traffic model were presented at the January 2008 MIC and TAC meetings. The study will also contain a series of short, mid and long-term recommendations that are not contingent on the results from the model. These recommendations will address issues other than capacity, or level of service (LOS), but instead focus on traffic safety, access management, and infrastructure deficiencies.

Due to questions from WisDOT regarding the results of the traffic model used for the study, a final draft of the study has been delayed until March 2008. A draft available for review will be available by March 1st at www.dsmic.org/nsw. Contact Robert Herling at rherling@ardc.org or (218) 529-7573 for more information.

7. ENDION LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT

On February 5th MIC staff received the Technical Memorandum reporting the modeling results from the consultants. Due to the short turnaround time, completion of the study, originally planned for February, has been delayed. Key findings from this report will instead be reviewed at the February TAC and MIC meetings and incorporated into a draft report. Contact Holly Butcher at holly.butcher@ardc.org or (218) 529-7548 for more information.

8. PROCTOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY RESULTS

A citizen/property owner survey was conducted in fall 2007. The results have been tabulated and reviewed. MIC staff will go over the 2007 survey results and compare them with the prior 1996 and 2001 Comprehensive Plan survey results. Contact James Gittemeier at (218) 529-7556 or jgittemeier@ardc.org for more information.

9. PROJECT UPDATES

HTAC Advocacy Coalition Oberstar Dinner, *Andy McDonald*

On January 25, 2008 the Great Lakes Port Advocacy Coalition organized a dinner at Northland Country Club with Congressman Jim Oberstar. Invited guests included Duluth-Superior port business owners and the mayors of Duluth and Superior. Program speakers included Ted Smith, Chair of the Great Lakes Ports Advocacy Coalition, Adolph Ojard, Executive Director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority and Congressman Oberstar.

Oberstar spoke about the history and accomplishments of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. In 2007, under his leadership, the committee signed 46 bills into law including the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA). This bill will fund much needed maritime transportation infrastructure projects including a backlog of Great Lakes ports dredging projects and 100% federal funding of a new Soo Lock. Other topics that he touched on include the need for a national policy on ballast water and how short sea shipping could reduce congestion on our highways.

Blueprint to End Poverty, *Holly Butcher, Robert Herling*

MIC continues to be part of the "Transportation Action Team" for the Blueprint to End Poverty project to help plan for transportation needs of low-income and working poor in the Duluth-Superior area. MIC staff has been analyzing the "geography of the problem" by synthesizing

jobs, daycare, housing, and transit availability data. The Transportation Action Team will meet again on February 13th and MIC staff can provide an update at the February meetings.

DTA Route Analysis-City of Superior, *Holly Butcher, Robert Herling*

In January The DTA brought in a specialized transit consultant from First Transit who analyzed the current routes in the City of Superior and came up with six different alternative service models. First Transit, MIC and DTA staff met with the mayor's office on January 16th to discuss these alternatives. Another meeting is expected during February to identify the future service model preferred by the City of Superior and to devise a strategic pilot project.

Minnesota Functional Classification Update, *James Gittemeier*

MIC staff received a functional classification map back from MnDOT Central Office in January for our review and comment. Staff has noted a number of errors on the map based on the information submitted a year ago. In order to verify the classifications on the MIC border, staff is waiting for the ARDC Regional Division to receive their functional classification map back from Central Office before completing the review and sending corrections to Central Office.

Mn/DOT Statewide Transportation Plan, *Ron Chicka*

Andy McDonald and I attended the first meeting of the Intrastate Connections subcommittee of the larger Mn/DOT State Plan Advisory Committee. The larger advisory committee is examining the needs of the major arteries across Minnesota to determine how they will be incorporated and funded within the next overall state policy plan. The Intrastate Connections subcommittee will focus on transit, air and rail service policies within the plan and forward these recommendations to the larger committee for review and approval. The work of this group will be important to the Twin Ports area as freight commerce will be impacted by these policies and will set the foundation for our own area wide freight plan to begin later this year.

National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) Conference, *Ron Chicka*

This month, John Chell, ARDC Executive Director and I traveled to Washington D.C. to attend the 2008 National Conference of Regional Councils. ARDC is a member of NARC. The conference featured many transportation themes with economic, community development and environmental breakouts as well. The upcoming federal transportation bill was a focal point. Funding will be the biggest factor as it is becoming apparent that the traditional means of financing will not be enough to meet the needs across the country. Private sources will have to be tapped along with more user-based mechanisms (e.g. tolls, congestion pricing). A series of legislative positions was developed by the NARC Board that will be forwarded to House and Senate members as they begin to craft the next transportation reauthorization bill. A number of small and larger MPOs were in attendance voicing issues key to their continuing success in the field. Most called for a balanced approach to resolve urban transportation needs by putting more emphasis on non-auto travel. I also spent time with Congressmen Obey and Oberstar informing them of current and upcoming projects conducted by the MIC staff for the Twin Ports area.