



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
 TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Tuesday, September 2, 2008, 1:30 PM**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Proctor Community Center, 100 Pionk Drive, Proctor, MN	
<b>Meeting Chair</b>	Denny Johnson	
<b>Note Taker</b>	Rondi Watson	
<b>Members Present</b>	Chuck Froseth	City of Duluth
	Denny Johnson	Mn/DOT District 1
	Cari Pedersen	City of Duluth
	David Salo	City of Hermantown
	Jim Rohweder	City of Proctor
	Dena Ryan	WisDOT NW Region
	Cindy Voigt*	City of Duluth
<b>Members Absent</b>	Jim Benning	City of Duluth
	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County
	Jeff Goetzman	City of Superior
	Paul Halverson	Douglas County
	Bryn Jacobson	Bike/Pedestrian Rep
	Dennis Jensen	Duluth Transit Authority
	Walter Leu	Mn/DOT District 1
	Heather Rand	Mn DEED
	Jason Serck	City of Superior
	Jim Sharrow	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
<b>Others Present</b>	Holly Butcher	ARDC / MIC Senior Planner
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	ARDC / MIC Associate Planner
	Denise McDougall	Lake Superior Warehousing
	Tim Mitchell	FHWA-St. Paul
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Secretary
	* Alternate	

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

TAC Chair Denny Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. No changes to the agenda were put forward.

**2. Committee Business – Meeting Summary of July 15, 2008**

**Motion and Discussion** David Salo/ Jim Rohweder moved to approve the meeting summary from the July 15, 2008 meeting. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

### Committee Business – Changes to the Agenda

Denny announced that one item (Amendment #10 to the 2008-2011 Duluth TIP) needed to be added to the agenda and another item (presentation about the Long Range Plan Update) was being removed. No other changes to the agenda were requested.

#### 3. Amendment #6 to 2008-2011 Superior Metro Transportation Improvement Program

Sheldon Johnson presented an amendment to the 2008-2011 Superior Urbanized Area TIP to add a project, programmed by the WisDOT Central Office, involving the inspection and replacement of necessary suspender cables along the Wisconsin portion of the Blatnik Bridge. Project to begin in CY 2008.

**Motion and Discussion** Dena Ryan/Chuck Froseth moved to approve Amendment #6 to the Superior TIP. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

#### 4. Amendment #10 to the 2008-2011 Duluth Metro Transportation Improvement Program

James Gittemeier presented an amendment which he described as mainly administrative, moving the project to pave the perimeter road at the Duluth Air National Guard base from FY2008 to FY2009 in the 2008-2011 Duluth Metro TIP.

**Motion and Discussion** Dave Salo/Jim Rohweder moved to approve Amendment #10 to the 2008-2011 Duluth Metro Transportation Improvement Program as presented.

*During the discussion, Cindy Voigt questioned why the amendment was necessary, since the newer version of the TIP (for 2009-2012, recently approved by the MIC and TAC), already lists the project for 2009. Furthermore, she noted that she had just let the project, i.e., in federal fiscal year 2008, so why program the funds for 2009?*

*After discussing the question with Gus Peterson at MnDOT, James clarified that although the project is listed for 2009 funding in the more recent (2009-2012) TIP, that version has not yet been officially approved by the FHWA, so it is technically not the current TIP. He added that since the state fiscal year 2009 had already begun, the project needs to be listed as a 2009 project in the current (2008-2011) TIP, hence the amendment.*

There was no further discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

#### 5. 2009-2012 Draft Superior Metro Transportation Improvement Program

Sheldon Johnson distributed copies of the draft Superior Urbanized Area Transportation Improvement Program for 2009-2012 and reviewed the projects on a year-by-year basis. Eleven major projects covering multiple modes are being proposed for funding in the upcoming 4-year period. He closed by requesting approval to release the draft plan for the required 30-day public comment period.

**Motion and Discussion** Dena Ryan/Cari Pedersen moved to release the draft document for the mandatory 30-day comment period. There was no discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

## 6. 2009-2010 MIC Work Program Projects

Ron Chicka opened a discussion about projects to be programmed for 2009 and 2010. He noted that he would be following up by emailing all TAC and MIC members not present at this month's meetings. He began by noting that mandatory projects include work on the Long Range Transportation Program, the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) for both Duluth and Superior, and transit and bike route planning.

In addition, each year can accommodate a few discretionary planning projects. Some of the projects already programmed for 2009 (determined last year with the approval of the 2008-2009 Work Program) have or will begin by the end of this year, including the regional freight plan, superior bike route planning, and a study of the Blatnik Bridge. He noted that the latter was prompted by WisDOT's request to project traffic volume in advance of planned work in 2014 which may shut the bridge down for the summer and route all traffic across the Bong Bridge instead. Other projects to begin in 2009 include a Superior Urban Area Growth Impact Study, similar to the one conducted for Duluth to determine potential growth patterns into the townships, as well as a Central Entrance study, building off of the existing Miller Hill Study to examine land uses and improve safety and access management along the corridor between MnDOT and Cub Foods.

He then presented some proposed project options for 2010, including a Metropolitan Pedestrian Plan (a policy plan to build off the Long Range Plan); a metropolitan rail plan (another policy plan); and a Kirkus Street plan examining land use, zoning, and streetscaping for the City of Proctor before development gets going along that new street. Two transit plans were also proposed, including an update to the 1998 Transit Vision plan for the entire MIC planning area, and a regional transit study on the Wisconsin side (a consultant conducted this type of study a few years ago on the Duluth side). He then opened it up for discussion, asking for other ideas.

Cari Pedersen suggested a rail plan that looks at linking rail, trail, transit connections if and when passenger rail comes to Duluth. She noted that there's an interest, currently, in linking all parts of the City, including Lakeside and west side. Ron stated that he would prefer to wait to be approached by the City as plans develop instead of taking it on in advance of rail plans being finalized.

Cindy Voigt suggested a comprehensive, GIS-based pavement management system, a central database of pavement conditions for all jurisdictions.

Holly Butcher noted local bike advocacy groups that are calling for bike lanes on strategic routes. Ron replied that it's included as a standing item, under bike route implementation.

Sheldon Johnson inquired about the possibility of an about aerial photo update. Ron replied that the MIC budget can't swing it alone; it must be a multi-jurisdictional project, with financial contribution from city and county. Sheldon mentioned that in Wisconsin, grant

funding paid for a flyover of a particular area.

Ron also mentioned that he had set aside \$25,000 in the current budget to construct a demonstration project on roundabouts, to show how they can function, how to design them and how not to design them. Cindy Voigt suggested that she would prefer to spend the money to identify a few key areas to target as good candidates for roundabouts, i.e., a Roundabout Feasibility Location Study.

Chuck Froseth suggested a comprehensive Duluth Trail Plan, identifying existing trails and area-wide connectivity, similar to the recent Proctor Trail Plan

Ron asked TAC members to rank these projects 1st, 2nd and 3rd in terms of their priorities. After tallying the results, he reported that the top three-ranked projects, for this group at least; were (1) a roundabout feasibility study, (2) the Kirkus Street plan, and (3) a pavement quality index (on the MN side). Next priorities include pedestrian plan and a regional trail study.

He closed by stating that the final poll results would be incorporated into the draft Work Plan and Budget, to be presented for approval at the October meetings, after all TAC and MIC members have been polled as well.

#### **7. Downtown Duluth Modal Connection Study**

Holly Butcher reviewed the goals of this study, describing it as a "transformative vision" to identify deficiencies and opportunities for connectivity between the downtown and Canal Park business districts.

She also presented results of the July traffic and pedestrian counts. She noted that it was quite revealing to note that traffic volumes on each of the four lanes on the Lake Avenue overpass peaked at different days and times on Fridays and Saturdays, reflecting the different uses from in-town and out-of-town traffic. Similarly, pedestrian traffic peaked on Saturday mid-afternoon in Canal Park, and on Wednesday during the noon hour in downtown, again reflecting the differing patterns of the two groups (Canal Park tourists and downtown workers).

She added that a consultant, Zenith Research, had been hired to conduct in-person surveys of tourists and downtown workers to better understand their perceptions, awareness and travel patterns between the two areas.

#### **8. Superior Bike Route Planning**

James gave an overview of the process for developing a system of signed bike routes in and around the City Of Superior. He's in the process of organizing a steering committee to convene in September. Other steps will be to identify potential routes and perform a Bicycle Compatibility Index (BCI) analysis to hone in on the final routes. Described it as a very data-intensive process, many components needed per block of each route; after model is run and reviewed by steering committee, public involvement phase will begin to determine that the final routes make sense. Chuck Froseth commented that including some type of school or student representative would make sense from the perspective of Safe Routes to School; James replied that he intended to recruit a student who would be able to participate in the group.

## 9. Roundtable Discussion

No announcements were made or topics put forward for discussion.

## 10. Project Updates

### Northern MN/Northeastern WI Freight Study

Ron reported that the MNDOT Central Office, MNDOT District staff and MIC staff continue to meet on aspects of the scope, including development of an exact project budget in preparation for the RFP that should occur in September. They have recently been in touch with Dr. Richard Stewart at UW-Superior to discuss their role in the project, who will be able to use his connections for data acquisition as well as in-kind assistance. An RFP for a study consultant should be out within the next month or so.

### East Second Street Study

Ron noted that MIC staff had met with the Superior Daily Telegram and the result was a good article in the paper that will hopefully lead to more public input. A steering committee meeting for was held on August 4<sup>th</sup> to look at the various pieces of information gathered so far for this study and to help direct future tasks. It was determined that the collection of speed data was the next important task to be carried out, as well as to establish a method for people to provide input to the study via the MIC website.

### Proctor Comprehensive Plan Update

James reported that the Proctor Comprehensive Plan Update will roll into full gear this fall, devising sections of the plan by topic for feedback from the Proctor Comprehensive Plan Group. MIC staff will also be facilitating a public meeting that will yield a general land use plan for the land that will be opened to development after the Kirkus Street project is completed. Holly added that the Proctor Safe Routes to School Steering committee will meet on August 19<sup>th</sup> to review school site traffic observations and survey data collected this spring.

### Minnesota State Planning Conference

Holly Butcher announced that the annual state planning conference for the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association (MnAPA) will be held at the DECC/Holiday Inn from Monday September 22 – Wednesday September 24. The theme, Transitions in Planning, represents the changing climate of planning topics: the housing market, transportation, environmental awareness, and design requirements.

## 11. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 3:05 pm.