



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Transportation Advisory Committee
MEETING SUMMARY
Tuesday, January 20, 2009, 1:30 PM

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|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Meeting Location | WITC Conference Center, Superior, WI | |
| Meeting Chair(s) | Denny Johnson, Dena Young | |
| Note Taker | Rondi Watson, MIC Staff | |
| Members Present | Chuck Froseth | City of Duluth |
| | Paul Halverson | Douglas County |
| | Bryn Jacobson | Bike/Pedestrian Rep |
| | Alison Johnson* | Duluth Airport Authority |
| | Denny Johnson | Mn/DOT District 1 |
| | Cari Pedersen | City of Duluth |
| | Jim Rohweder | City of Proctor |
| | David Salo | City of Hermantown |
| | Dena Young | WisDOT NW Region |
| Members Absent | Jim Foldesi | St. Louis County |
| | Jeff Goetzman | City of Superior |
| | 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 |
| | Cindy Voigt* | City of Duluth |
| Others Present | Holly Butcher | ARDC / MIC Senior Planner |
| | Ron Chicka | ARDC / MIC Director |
| | James Gittemeier | ARDC / MIC Planner |
| | Robert Herling | ARDC / MIC Planner |
| | Andy McDonald | ARDC / MIC Principal Planner |
| | Jerrid Mulligan | ARDC / MIC Intern |
| | Rondi Watson | ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant |
| | | * Alternate |

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

TAC Chair Denny Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Committee Business – Discussion: MnDOT Projects for Upcoming Stimulus Legislation

Ron Chicka reported that with the upcoming federal stimulus package, he would like to have a discussion at the February TAC meeting about projects proposed to receive FHWA and FTA funds within the MIC planning area. Because final project selections will need to be amended

into the Duluth and Superior TIPS and the state STIPs, the proposed projects should be consistent with the MIC's Long Range Transportation Plan. He added that MnDOT is working to develop project selection principles and expedited approval processes.

Denny spoke about MnDOT's approach to project prioritization and selection. It will not follow the regular ATP process; instead, MnDOT's State Aid Division will develop and manage the local program of Economic Recovery funds, with the goal of letting initial projects within 31 days after the federal bill is enacted. Each MnDOT district will send in their own prioritized projects, and the State Aid Division will be coordinating with local units of government (i.e., cities and counties).

He added that specific criteria would be applied to all potential projects in order to meet the goal of creating jobs and improving the nation's infrastructure, including project readiness; consistency with existing performance-based plans; statewide coverage; balance of types of projects; and identifying projects for which environmental considerations have already been resolved and have minimal right-of-way issues. Furthermore, projects already funded in FY 2009 will not be included in the Economic Recovery Program, but projects may be advanced from later years for inclusion.

He added that everything was still very preliminary, for example, at this point they have no idea of the exact funding amounts, and details would evolve as the legislation shapes up.

Paul Halvorson commented that he was not clear how Wisconsin will be prioritizing its projects or distributing its funds, at least at this point. It appeared that WisDOT districts are developing their own projects but Madison is not acting as a central coordinating function.

Committee Business – 2009 TAC Officer Elections

Ron thanked Denny for his service as TAC Chair last year, and, pursuant to the discussion at the December TAC meeting, requested a motion to nominate Dena Ryan as 2009 TAC Chair and Jim Foldesi as the Vice-Chair.

Motion and Discussion Paul Halvorson/Chuck Froseth moved to approve the slate of candidates as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously. Dena took over as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

2. Committee Business – Meeting Summary of December 10, 2008

Chair Young called for amendments or corrections to the previous TAC meeting summary. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve.

Motion and Discussion Jim Rohweder/Paul Halvorson moved to approve the meeting summary from the December 10, 2008 meeting. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Downtown Transportation Terminal Study

Ron Chicka reported that the DTA's consultant from LSA Design was not able to attend the meeting to provide an update, so instead he would report on where the Downtown Transportation

Terminal Study for the DTA stands. He explained that the DTA is taking another look at the possibility for a new downtown Duluth passenger terminal, in advance of possible federal earmark for funding this project. The station would not replace the current DTA operations facility on West Michigan Street, but would serve instead as a central transfer point for DTA buses and as a large centralized multi-modal transportation hub. The goal of the project is to create a stronger downtown presence and image for the DTA, with better downtown bus circulation, improved connectivity with Canal Park, and more effective multi-modal options (intercity coaches, trolley, taxi cab, rental car, car share, bike storage, and parking for local and visitor vehicles,). It is envisioned that the facility would coordinate with the proposed passenger rail service at the downtown Depot facility and could provide economic development opportunities by including small retail outlets.

The consultant is proposing seven options for potential locations, each site with its own pros and cons, for example, a facility near the Depot would be more convenient to passenger rail connections, while other locations would connect to the existing skywalk system; others might have potential viewshed issues or be more or less convenient terms of bus circulation. The options will be scored and prioritized by a number of stakeholders as part of the study process. At next month's meeting he will present more information about decisions made, with prices attached.

4. Transit Vision Update

Holly Butcher described the process they conducted with the DTA Board (SWOT analysis) Holly Butcher reported that MIC staff has been assisting the DTA with strategic planning for its Transit Vision transit development plan. At the November DTA Board meeting, she and Robert Herling facilitated a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) analysis with board members to provide direction for next 5-10 years. Additionally, DTA staff administered passenger and driver surveys in the fall of 2008 and are analyzing the results.

Input from the Board stressed both regionalization of DTA service, as well as improved connectivity and a stronger downtown presence. They are interested in being proactive with projects that are sustainable and that encourage the public to think about transportation differently.

5. Downtown Duluth Modal Connections Study

Holly presented the Downtown Duluth Modal Connections Study, which assesses the existing infrastructure and how it encourages or impedes the movement of pedestrians, bicyclists and public transit services between Downtown, Canal Park, the DECC and the Bayfront Festival Park. The final plan identifies barriers and makes recommendations to improve connectivity.

She reported that there are four existing connections between downtown and the waterfront which are unevenly spaced and located at areas not easily accessible to both visitors and locals. Recommendations include physically connecting the two districts, including development of a connectivity platform (a deck over Interstate 35); establishing regular, frequent and easy-to-use transit circulator service to connect the medical district, canal park and downtown areas; encouraging non-auto travel between districts, including sidewalk design and bicycle parking facilities; improving wayfinding signage; and supporting rail readiness in the event that passenger

rail service between the Twin Ports and the Twin Cities is established.

She added that successful implementation of these recommendations will require new public-private partnerships as well as collaboration between numerous entities, including the Duluth Transit Authority, the Lake & St. Louis County Regional Rail Authorities, the City of Duluth, MnDOT, the DECC, the Greater Downtown Council and property owners.

She noted that the plan is available online at <http://www.dsmic.org/modal>. She closed by requesting approval of the final plan.

Motion and Discussion Jim Rohweder/Bryn Jacobsen moved to approve the plan as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

6. Proctor Comprehensive Plan-Draft

James explained that he was working on completing Proctor's update to its Comprehensive Plan, with a focus on implementation steps and strategies. He reviewed the main sections, which include economic development, housing, infrastructure, intergovernmental cooperation, Kirkus Street, land use, natural & cultural resources, recreation and transportation.

He closed by noting that the draft plan will move through the City of Proctor approval process in February, with the final plan to be presented to the TAC and MIC in March.

7. Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 Update

Robert Herling presented the latest update of the process of updating the MIC's long range transportation plan (LRTP), *Directions 2035*. He noted that coordinating this plan with state and federal policy guidance is a necessary but sometimes complicated endeavor. Policies impacting the MIC's long range plan include the 1998 federal TEA-21 legislation, which introduced the seven planning factors, and the 2005 SAFETEA-LU bill, which added emphasis on safety and security, congestion management, freight, data-driven planning and coordination. MnDOT and WisDOT plans present 38 and 37 state policies, respectively.

He also reviewed some of the considerations for the MIC area in developing its policies and priorities, including projections of modest population growth over the next 20 years, and the fact that our area has significantly more functionally classified roads compared to our population, noting that these are significant in relation to the need to maintain existing infrastructure.

He also noted that the SAFETEA-LU transportation bill is due to be re-authorized this fall but is more likely to be re-written, reflecting a sea change in the federal approach to funding transportation and planning. Recommendations from the recent National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission report likely anticipate some of the changes that will affect MPOs like the MIC, including asset maintenance programs conforming to national standards; performance-based plans, "maintenance of effort" requirements and cost/benefit analysis requirements.

He closed by explaining that he planned to utilize the input of committee members at the February TAC and MIC meetings to help determine the goals and objectives for the MIC area LRTP.

8. 2010-2013 Duluth Area TIP Project Solicitation

James Gittemeier reviewed the application packets for FY 2013 federal TIP funding. They included scoring sheet and copies of the applications

- DTA – purchase of 6 STRIDE buses
- Duluth – 10th Ave East Reconstruct from E. 2nd St. to E. 9th St.
- Duluth – Duluth Heights Connector (Joshua Ave) New Construction
- St. Louis County – Martin Road Rehabilitation from Arnold Rd to Jean Duluth Rd
- MN/DOT – I-35 Preservation work from Boundary Ave to Pine County.

He James requested that all committee members review the applications and come prepared to score them at the TIP Project Prioritization Session, to be conducted at the February 17th TAC meeting at 1:30 pm at the Proctor Community Center.

Denny commented that the size and scale of the Joshua Avenue connector project is considerably larger than any of the others being submitted this year. Cari Pedersen responded that they are looking for partners (e.g., the state or the county) to assist with sponsoring the local match for this project.

James also presented the MIC-area Enhancements projects to be submitted to the ATP for 2013 funding, which include

- Munger Trail Connection – Phase II, to extend the Munger Bike Trail from Grassy Point to Recycle Way
- Lakewalk Extension – Phase VI, to construct a trail segment from 20th Avenue East to 23rd Avenue East along Water Street.

Dave Salo commented that the cost for the Lakewalk Extension seemed inordinately high, considering the short length of the project. Cari explained that this was because there were some distinct physical obstacles for the site, including two water courses to be spanned as well as retaining wall and slope issues.

James closed by reiterating the request that committee members come prepared with their scoring sheets for the MIC area prioritization session to be held at the February TAC meeting.

9. Northern MN/Northwestern WI Regional Freight Study

Andy McDonald reported that data collection efforts are continuing, with highway, freight, rail, port and waterway facilities, air cargo and pipeline inventories nearly complete. He also reported on the four in-person interviews that were conducted at major companies in the Duluth area in late December – with Cirrus Design, Midwest Energy Resources, Lake Superior Warehousing, and Hallett Dock. The purpose of the interviews was to gain a better understanding of the goods moving out of and into this area.

He closed by announcing that a Regional Freight Forum has been scheduled for the morning of Wednesday, February 25th from 8 a.m. to noon at MnDOT District One in Duluth.

10. Roundtable Discussion

No announcements were made.

11. Project Updates

Connections 2030

Ron Chicka announced that reps from the WisDOT central office would be making presentations next month in this area to gain public input into their Long Range Transportation Plan – Connections 2030. On February 11th at 5:00 pm at the UW-Superior Rothwell Student Center, WisDOT staff from the Madison office will be presenting the plan for public input. He encouraged TAC and MIC members to attend.

East 2nd Street Access Management Plan

Robert Herling announced that work on the East 2nd Street Access Management Plan is picking up again. Results from the various data gathering and analysis tasks are being compiled, maps are being created and drafting of a plan document has begun. The study committee for this project will convene again before the end of January to be briefed on the results of a recent speed study done along East 2nd Street, and to begin to develop recommendations regarding access management strategies for the corridor.

UMD-CSS Transportation Study

Andy McDonald announced that they are in the solution identification phase of the study and are looking at recommendations to improve walking, biking, transit, traffic flow and safety in the campus areas. We will be scheduling the next study committee meeting soon to discuss solutions to problems that were identified, including snow removal and gaps in the sidewalk network, neighborhood cut through traffic, and traffic flow and crash problems at a couple of intersections.

TRB Annual Conference

Ron Chicka announced that he and Andrea Grygo, the MIC's GIS Specialist, attended the annual Transportation Research Board conference in Washington D.C. last week where Andrea presented the visualization component from the 2008 Endion Transportation and Land Use Study. He noted that our work was chosen from a large pool of potential projects to be showcased at this conference. The conference itself is a premiere one for transportation professionals in a multitude of fields with sessions covering the gamut of planning topics. He also participated in a number of meetings as a member of the TRB Committee on Transportation Planning for Small and Medium Sized Communities.

12. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 3:23 pm.