



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Tuesday, April 14, 2009, 1:30 PM**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	WITC Conference Center, 600 N. 21 <sup>st</sup> Street, Superior, WI	
<b>Meeting Chair(s)</b>	Dena Ryan	
<b>Note Taker</b>	Rondi Watson	
<b>Members Present</b>	Brian Boder	St. Louis County Engineering
	Jeff Goetzman	City of Superior
	Jim Heilig	Duluth Transit Authority
	Denny Johnson	Mn/DOT District 1
	Cari Pedersen	City of Duluth Engineering
	David Salo	City of Hermantown
	Dena Young	WisDOT NW Region
<b>Members Absent</b>	Chuck Froseth	City of Duluth Planning Dept
	Paul Halverson	Douglas County
	Bryn Jacobson	Bike/Pedestrian Rep
	Walter Leu	Mn/DOT District 1
	Cindy Petkac	City of Duluth Planning Dept
	Heather Rand	Mn DEED
	Jim Rohweder	City of Proctor
	Brian Ryks	Duluth Airport Authority
	Jason Serck	City of Superior
	Jim Sharrow	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth Engineering
<b>Others Present</b>	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Andrea Grygo	ARDC / GIS Specialist
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Heidi Jaros	Community Action Duluth
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

Vice-Chair Dena Ryan called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. She then asked about any changes to the agenda. Ron Chicka requested that two informational items be added as the first two agenda items, pertaining to MN HPP Projects and City of Superior projects proposed for ARRA funding.

**Motion and Discussion** Jeff Goetzman/Dave Salo moved to approve these additions to the meeting agenda. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 2. Meeting Summaries of February 26, 2009 and March 17, 2009

Chair Ryan asked for any changes or corrections to the two previous meeting summaries. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve.

**Motion and Discussion** Denny Johnson/Cari Pederson moved to approve the meeting summaries from the February 26, 2009 and March 17, 2009 TAC meetings. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 3. MIC-Area HPP Project Solicitation

Ron Chicka reported that an announcement had recently been sent out from Congressman Oberstar's office, soliciting High Priority Project proposals from Duluth-Area jurisdictions, due by April 27th. Several project proposals were planned to be submitted by various jurisdictions within the MIC area: Duluth Multi-Modal Connectivity Project, Munger Trail Extension, Skyline Parkway Reconstruction and Restoration and Joshua Avenue Extension (City of Duluth); Proctor Spur Trail Connection (City of Proctor); Duluth Intermodal Freight Facility (Duluth Seaway Port Authority); Multi-Modal Transit Terminal (DTA); Duluth Depot Passenger Rail Terminal, Haines Road Rebuild, and Reclaim and Overlay projects for segments of Jean Duluth Road, Rice Lake Road and Midway Road (St. Louis County).

Cari Pedersen commented that they hope the County will join the City in requesting support for the Joshua Ave project. Jim Heilig mentioned that a hybrid bus acquisition proposal will likely be put forward by the DTA as well. MnDOT has no proposed projects as yet.

## 4. Superior ARRA Project Prioritization

Ron Chicka explained that the process is continuing for submitting local infrastructure projects for ARRA (stimulus) project solicitation, adding that Minnesota and Wisconsin have had entirely separate processes for handling this. As part of WisDOT's second round of project solicitation, the City of Superior is submitting ten proposed mill and overlay projects to various road segments for a total of \$10 million of work, to be let in December. He added that if any of these are approved by WisDOT, they will not require special amendments as needed for the Duluth-area projects; the timing will allow them to be included in the next (2010-2013) Superior-Area TIP.

As part of the project submittal process, WisDOT requires that the City's proposed projects first be prioritized by the local MPO, i.e., by the MIC. The ten proposed mill and overlay projects include:

East 5<sup>th</sup> Street from 6<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Ave East; North 5<sup>th</sup> Street from Hammond to Catlin; Hill Avenue from 28<sup>th</sup> to Maple; Banks Avenue from Winter to Belknap; Broadway Street from Ogden to Hammond; Catlin Avenue from USH 53 to N. 12<sup>th</sup> Street; East 5<sup>th</sup> Street from 24<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> Ave E; North 21<sup>st</sup> Street from Logan to Washington; 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue East from East 9<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and

Grand Avenue from USH 53 to Broadway.

Ron explained that normally the TAC and MIC would take an action to prioritize what's missing is information about ADTs, pavement quality, access to transit; bike routes, etc., to better analyze the road segments and prioritize them. Ron noted that the process for the MIC stamp of approval is yet to be determined, although a prioritized list with the MIC's recommendation does need to be submitted to WisDOT by April 17. He added that the Moccasin Mike Bypass Trail project will be submitted as #1 of 1 in a separate trail project list.

Denny Johnson commented that since the roadway projects are all mill and overlays, the ranking should be up to the local jurisdiction to make a recommendation. Jeff Goetzman responded that the City does have some ideas. Ron added that he would be meeting soon with Jeff to review this information and to develop a prioritized list to present to the Policy Board at tomorrow night's meeting.

#### 5. 2009-2012 Duluth Area TIP Amendment #4

James Gittemeier explained that St. Louis County has requested that the 2009-2012 Duluth Metro TIP be amended to include additional funding for the Haines Road Reconditioning Project. This project is currently programmed for 2009 and will include mill and overlay as well as drainage work from Airport Road to Morris Thomas Road (4 miles). The amendment is necessary as the total cost of the project has significantly increased from \$2.3 million to \$3.5 million due to uncertainty about bituminous prices. The cost increase will be covered by local funds. No additional federal funds were allocated for this project.

**Motion and Discussion** Jim Heilig/Brian Boder moved to approve Amendment #4 to the FY 2009-2012 Duluth Metro Transportation Improvement Program to include additional funding for the Haines Road Resurfacing Project scheduled for FY 2009. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

#### 6. DTA Downtown Multimodal Transit Terminal

Jim Heilig reported on the status of the proposed Downtown Multimodal Transit Terminal, noting the driving factors behind this proposal include improved intermodal connectivity, possible passenger rail service, and the need for a stronger downtown presence for the DTA. Seven initial sites have been narrowed to two, encompassing parcels along Michigan Street between 2nd Avenue West and 5th Avenue West, based on the ability of the surrounding road network to handle traffic into and out of a new passenger rail facility.

He added that the DTA had held an Open House last month to take comments on site options. The final site, recently approved by the DTA Board, is located on the lower side of West Fifth Street and Michigan Avenue, across from the Duluth Depot. He noted that the St. Louis County rail plan also dovetails nicely with this site in terms of their plans; this site would give them more room to accommodate the full length of the train. He added that one critical feature is a good skywalk connection to Superior Street.

He noted that this project should be well aligned with guidelines for multi-modal projects for

ARRA (stimulus) funding, adding that they allow more time for implementing transit projects. Final guidelines for these projects will be available in early May and the DTA will be carefully looking at the application criteria. It is known that projects would need to fall in the cost range of \$30 to \$250 million. Estimated cost for this facility would be between \$47 and \$55 million, and if funded by ARRA, would not require a local share.

He added that the feds are very interested in developing public-private partnerships, and with this project there is strong interest and buy-in from property and parking lot owners on that site. Next steps are to complete the facility planning report and apply for ARRA funds for pre-design and land legal issues.

#### 7. Final Proctor Comprehensive Plan

James Gittemeier reviewed the process that had been followed to date for updating the Proctor Comprehensive Plan, which is undertaken by the City every 5 years. He noted that Proctor has a very active Comprehensive Plan advisory committee which focuses on actually implementing the goals put forward in each new plan update. One goal from the 2002 update was to increase the number of residential housing units; he displayed a map from the new plan which shows that this goal had clearly been implemented.

He also reviewed that the City's future land use map, which shows a larger-than-average amount of green space within the City, noting that they have plans for a new City park on the north side of town. In addition, the Proctor Trail Plan sets forth a plan to create a paved trail connection from the Munger Trail and Spirit Mountain through the length of the city up into Hermantown. He also pointed out a large area around the new Kirkus Street, which will provide a new grade-separated crossing across the railroad tracks and new opportunities for commercial development.

He closed by requesting approval of the final plan.

**Motion and Discussion** Cari Pedersen/Denny Johnson moved to approve the final Proctor Comprehensive Plan as presented. *During the discussion, Denny asked if the trail project would be an eligible HPP project from the City of Proctor or perhaps jointly submitted by the cities of Proctor and Duluth. Cindy Voigt stated that the City of Duluth would support Proctor's project submission, but that the application itself would need to be handled by the City of Proctor.* There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

#### 8. Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 – Needs & Constraints

Robert Herling reviewed responses to the online survey of local transportation priorities. At the top of the public's list was (1) Aging and deteriorating roads & infrastructure, followed by (2) Safety of our streets & highways; (3) More transit options; (4) Create more housing closer to jobs & businesses; and (5) More investment in harbor, airports and railroads.

He noted that transit was ranked highly by the public, although it didn't rank particularly high in the recent surveys of TAC and MIC members. Committee members' priorities can be

summarized as: (1) Improve infrastructure; (2) Reduce auto crashes and (3) Strengthen the regional freight economy.

He went on to explain that the major constraint in this year's version of the plan was flat revenues with the need to preserve existing infrastructure (tough climates, politically and physically). He suggested that the challenges faced by the MIC area pointed to (a) an increasing need for prioritization; (b) an increasing need for information gathering and (c) an increasing need for coordinating efforts. As an example of information gathering and coordination, he noted that we could build on our TSM (Transportation Systems Management) process, and to prioritize results of high-crash intersections in the process of developing jurisdictional project lists.

He noted that MIC staff is currently meeting with jurisdictions individually to talk about transportation projects to be included in the project list for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). We are asking jurisdictions to identify long range projects (beyond those that may already be identified in their 10-year capital improvement plans). Once all the projects are identified, the estimated costs of those projects will be projected out according to their timeframes and will be compared to the revenue estimated to be available to the MIC area in those timeframes. Once this is done, the MIC will work with the jurisdictions to adjust the final project list within the constraints of expected revenues.

Denny Johnson commented that we could also think about dropping project cost increases down somewhat from current level of 5%. Rob noted that similarly, when meeting with St. Louis County about their projects and anticipated revenue, there was not as much of a gap as expected.

#### **9. 2009 Bike to Work Week**

James Gittemeier presented information about this year's Bike to Work Week activities. Bike to Work Week this year takes place May 11 - 15, with Friday, May 15 designated as National Bike to Work Day by the League of American Bicyclists. The MIC is partnering with other agencies (DTA, Downtown Council and the YMCA) to promote biking to work for downtown workers.

This year's bike commuter event will be based, as it was last year, at the Minnesota Power plaza from 7 - 9 a.m. and will feature refreshments, bicycle safety checks, and more. The DTA will again be offering free but rides all day to bicycle commuters. A number of other activities are being planned by other groups, including a bike to school event at UMD and a week-long series of bike-related events at the Fitger's shopping complex.

#### **10. Roundtable Discussion - Local Projects**

No announcements.

#### **11. Project Updates**

##### **MnDOT Transit and Rail Plan - Public Input Sessions**

Ron Chicka reported that MnDOT will be soliciting public input into their 2009 Minnesota

Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan and the draft Greater Minnesota Transit Plan at one of seven upcoming open houses statewide. The open house in Duluth is scheduled for Wednesday, April 29th at the Depot Great Hall from 4-5 pm (transit plan) and 5-7 pm (rail plan).

#### **Twin Ports Passenger Rail Terminal Location: Preliminary Analysis**

Ron reported that he had attended the recent presentation by UWS students, which examines the examining the original feasibility study and finds some significant differences compared to the original estimates. He commented that it was a very good presentation and it would be worthwhile to give the MIC and other elected officials an opportunity to see it, as well. He is considering putting this presentation on the agenda for the May 20<sup>th</sup> MIC meeting, and inviting other elected officials to attend--but there are a limited number of students who would be available to present (classes end by mid-May). He is also looking at the evening of Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, as a date that most of the students would be available to give the presentation.

#### **2013 Duluth TIP Projects/ATP Update**

James Gittemeier reported that on April 2, the full ATP committee voted to approve three of the five projects submitted within the MPO area for FY 2013 federal transportation funding. Due to funding constraints, it was not possible to fund all 5 projects. Here are the 3 projects which were approved for 2013 funding:

1. 10<sup>th</sup> Ave East Reconstruction
2. Martin Road Rehabilitation
3. DTA Bus Purchase – 6 STRIDE buses

This list now moves on to the Minnesota Department of Transportation central office for their approval and inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (or STIP). In April, MIC staff will be compiling the draft FY 2010-2013 Duluth Metro TIP. In May, the TIP will be released for public review and comment.

#### **UMD-CSS Transportation Assessment**

Andy McDonald reported that the study committee met on April 6<sup>th</sup> to begin discussion of recommendations that will improve walking, biking, transit, traffic flow and safety in the campus areas. These recommendations may include completing the sidewalk network in the campus area; developing bike lanes; making adjustments to transit routes; reconfiguring traffic lanes; implementing access management techniques and devising cooperative agreements. We will be looking to schedule public meetings to present draft recommendations later this month or in early May.

#### **Mississippi Valley Freight Coalition Workshop**

Andy McDonald reported that MIC staff was invited to attend this workshop in Kansas City on April 14-16. The Mississippi Valley Freight Coalition is a regional organization that conducts planning in support of freight movement and infrastructure and represents ten states – Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin. Topics to be presented at the workshop include shippers and carriers issues, waterways issues, federal authorization update and reports from the states on freight planning

initiatives including a presentation on the Northern Minnesota / Northwest Wisconsin Freight Plan by Dave Christianson from MnDOT.

**Superior Pedestrian Safety Task Force**

Ron Chicka reported that later this month the City of Superior is facilitating a Pedestrian Safety Task Force – Walking Workshop to review policies and projects throughout the community. The Police Department received a grant to host this two-day workshop. This workshop will certainly aid in the various planning efforts conducted by the MIC toward this issue. MIC staff will be in attendance along with other invitees including City, County and State DOT staff plus school district officials.

**12. Adjournment**

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Ryan adjourned the meeting at 2:47 pm.