



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Transportation Advisory Committee
MEETING SUMMARY
Tuesday, June 16, 2009, 1:30 PM

Meeting Location	WITC Conference Center, Superior, WI	
Meeting Chair(s)	Dena Young	
Note Taker	Rondi Watson	
Members Present	Jim Foldesi	City of Superior
	Chuck Froseth	City of Duluth Planning Dept
	Paul Halverson	Douglas County
	Jim Heilig	Duluth Transit Authority
	Alison Johnson	Duluth Airport Authority
	Denny Johnson	Mn/DOT District 1
	Walter Leu	Mn/DOT District 1
	Cari Pedersen	City of Duluth Engineering
	Heather Rand	Mn DEED
	Jim Rohweder	City of Proctor
	David Salo	City of Hermantown
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth Engineering
	Dena Young	WisDOT NW Region
Members Absent	Brian Boder	St. Louis County Engineering
	Bryn Jacobson	Bike/Pedestrian Rep
	Cindy Petkac	City of Duluth Planning Dept
	Jason Serck	City of Superior
	Jim Sharrow	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
Others Present	Ann Doucette, <i>alternate</i>	Douglas County
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Vice-Chair Dena Young called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. She called for changes to the agenda; none were put forward.

2. Meeting Summary of May 19, 2009

Chair Young asked for any changes or corrections to the previous month's meeting summary. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve.

Motion and Denny Johnson/Cari Pederson moved to approve the meeting summary from the

Discussion May 19, 2009 TAC meeting. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Amendment #4 to 2009-2012 Duluth Metro Transportation Improvement Program

James Gittemeier reported that the Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) requested an amendment to the current Duluth Area TIP to include administrative corrections for FY 2009 and 2010 and new funding from various sources for three additional projects in FY 2010. Specifics include:

- \$2,600,000 – Reflects an administrative correction for 2009 & 2010; the amount of regular FTA 5307 annual formula funds were incorrectly listed in the STIP because the Transit Office mistakenly excluded \$1.3 million in preventive maintenance funds for each of these years.
- \$1,500,000 – For passenger amenity projects in 2010. Source: the DTA's formula ARRA funds.
- \$ 400,000 – (\$500,000 total) for facility improvements (to replace the DTA's bus washer and make hub improvements) in 2010. Source: 5309 federal earmark funds & DTA's earmark from FY2008.
- \$ 408,000 – (\$510,000 total) in 2010 for four hybrid buses (converting the purchase from regular buses to hybrid buses). Source: part of Mn/DOT's 5309 bus procurement allocation to the DTA.

He closed by requesting approval of the amendment.

Motion and Discussion Chuck Froseth/Jim Heilig moved to approve Amendment #4 to 2009-2012 Duluth Metro Transportation Improvement Program as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 – Project Lists & Financial Capacity Analysis

Robert Herling explained the current status of the LRTP update, noting that both the jurisdictional project lists and the MIC-area model results have been slow in coming. He appealed to TAC representatives the previous day to provide complete lists of short-, mid- and long-term projects for their respective jurisdictions, along with associated costs and projected revenues (factored for inflation). These are needed by June 30 at the latest, to prepare for the capacity analysis the FHWA will be looking for at July's Mid-Year Review meeting.

Robert noted that, bottom line, this year's plan needs to demonstrate the ability to fund proposed projects. There has been a key change in the guidance we're receiving about this year's Long Range Plan—we are being asked to include local and state aid project estimates in addition to federally-funded projects. The final plan will also include a list of unfunded needs.

Jim Foldesi and Denny Johnson discussed the difficulties they've been having in meeting this request, noting that one issue is that they both have budgets for areas that are significantly wider than just the MIC area. Andy McDonald suggested that one approach would be to determine the jurisdiction's amount of mileage in MIC area, and use as a dollar amount the

percentage of funds that it is assumed will be spent in this area.

Denny added that, in addition, it is very difficult to determine line item amounts in both the cost and revenue sections for any projects beyond the next 4 or 5 years. He stressed that there needed to be consistency between all jurisdictions in defining the types of projects (“maintenance” vs. “preservation” vs. “expansion” projects) as well as the processes to be followed in determining estimated costs and funding sources.

Robert replied that one way to determine estimated costs and revenues would be to look at past TIPs--those numbers will help to determine average yearly maintenance spending. He spelled out the cost/revenue assumptions to be applied: 1% inflation per year for revenue estimates; 5% per year for MN construction costs; 2.5% per year inflation for WI construction costs.

He also gave a brief overview of the process that the St Cloud MPO utilizes—they gather a lot more info during their TIP funding process that makes it a lot easier to compile this information for purposes of the LRTP. He closed by noting that he hopes to have the project lists ready for next month’s meeting as well as for the mid-year review.

He closed by giving a brief overview of the preliminary model results received back from the consultant, noting that they will need some closer attention and tweaking before they’re really useable – at this point, they show a very large number of failing intersections (LOS ranking “D” or “F”) throughout both Superior and Duluth, and the population estimates just don’t support those numbers.

5. Northern MN/Northwest WI Regional Freight Plan

Andy McDonald reported that the Freight Plan is entering its final phases. MIC staff met with staff from the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, the Development Association of Douglas County and the City of Superior to discuss the issues and the formation of the final plan.

A draft of the Technical Memo was just passed along to MIC staff and is currently under review. He added that they have some questions about data accuracy pertaining to the metallic ore category (it can’t be as high as shown, may mistakenly include limestone). Major components of the final plan will include analyses of freight infrastructure, commodity flows and employment trends. Local freight infrastructure includes waterways, Class I and Class III railroads, roadways tiered by heavy commercial AADT volumes, bridges, and air cargo. Relative to the supply chain network, the data indicates that approximately 60% of local freight is outbound.

He noted that a shift is projected in this area from a manufacturing to a service-based economy – which also changes the dynamics of freight transportation (smaller packages, increased demand for express and shipment reliability).

Additional issues that are being investigated by the consulting team include port capacity and the development of an intermodal terminal and super corridor routes (to handle large oil sands and wind energy equipment), and the Harbor Maintenance Tax which favors bulk

commodities—a barrier to expansion of short sea shipping activities.

He closed by reporting that the final document due by end of July (later than the planned June completion date). He added that MIC staff will be drawing out data that is pertinent to the Long Range Plan update.

6. Duluth Safe Routes to School Projects Update

James Gittemeier reported on the work that is currently underway for Safe Routes to School projects in Duluth. Last month, representatives from the City of Duluth, the Duluth School District and the MIC met to coordinate these projects. They are being moved around and divided into phases, to coincide with changes to the schools as the Duluth School District implements its Long Range Facility Plan; he noted that the Duluth district is being allowed a greater degree of flexibility in this regard.

Lincoln Park Non-Infrastructure Project—is being developed for implementation this fall; any curriculum, bikes purchased, etc., will then moved to the remaining elementary school for that area.

District-wide Non-Infrastructure Project—is moving forward, personnel have been assigned and bike/ped education curriculum and training events are being planned this summer for implementation this fall.

Congdon Park School Infrastructure Project—may be delayed until the district’s “Red Plan” is firmed up for this school;

Lincoln Park Infrastructure Project—James reported some reluctance on the part of the city to implement this grant due to concerns about public reaction about spending these funds near a school that is closing; however, Holly Butcher’s conversation with MnDOT’s SRTS coordinator, Kristie Billiar, indicated that they would be okay with implementing this project because the Park itself, along with possible future conversion of the school to an assisted living facility, will continue to be a significant pedestrian generator across West 24th Street.

Stowe Elementary School Infrastructure project—MnDOT’s will begin work this summer on Hwy 23/Grand Avenue and will include Safe Routes to School improvements. He noted that one question was being raised by those involved in the Stowe school SRTS plan, about why the crosswalks were not located at the areas of the intersections as recommended in the plan. Cindy Voigt responded that it was a fast-track project for stimulus funds, the work had been 90% planned by the time SRTS considerations entered in (not so much a problem with inter-jurisdictional coordination as a project-specific issue). Cari Pedersen commented that there still might be time to make that change in crosswalk location—however, the final placement might have been due to the free-right turn lane and wanting to avoid interactions between turning vehicles and pedestrians in a crosswalk.

7. HTAC/Harbor Planning Update

Andy McDonald reported that the HTAC met on June 3rd at the WITC Conference Center. The agenda included presentations on several topics, including:

Superior Research Institute: Dr. Richard Stewart from UWS presented information about the proposed development of a state-of-the-art Superior Research Institute (SRI) facility on the Montreal Pier, located next to Barkers Island. The Great Ships Initiative (ballast water research facility) is already located there and Superior is planning a broader waterfront and landside development in this area. A joint proposal between UWS, the City of Superior and other regional stakeholders, the goals of this development are to expand research and public education opportunities and to create synergy by locating complementary agencies, academics and non-governmental agencies in proximity to one another. The proposed SRI would also provide public access to the SRI grounds and waterfront.

US Steel Superfund Site – the new project manager from the MPCA, Susan Johnson, gave a history of this site and described some of the results from the recent 5-year review, conducted in 2008 to determine if the prescribed response actions to date do indeed protect human health and safety. Sampling activities and data collection revealed 140 uncontaminated acres, but also a substantial number of tar seeps and oil seeps. This is coming to a head right now because the Port Authority has had inquiries about starting some type of development at this site. More sampling and data collection will be conducted; other next steps include developing and implementing selected response actions and working with prospective property buyers to evaluate parcels for contamination.

International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species: – Dale Bergeron from the Minnesota Sea Grant reported on the worldwide spread of the VHS fish virus, and its movement throughout Great Lakes specifically. One important message is that research indicates that no significant sustained destruction of wild fish populations is occurring because of this virus—it appears to hit an area, then moves on and the fish populations do recover.

Duluth Slips 2 & 3 Land Use Planning – Larry Killien from MN DNR office in Grand Rapids presented information about the planning process for the possible development of waterfront land owned by DEDA and the LaFarge Cement Plant waterfront land. There is word of a possible sale of this land – the DNR wants to establish a partnership with DEDA to include an extensive public participation process with development of several design concepts.

Commercial Fishing in Duluth-Superior – Presentation by Ed Montgomery, Bob Libby and Mark Howard, who runs the last commercial fishing operation out of this port; concerns that commercial fishing is coming to an end in this area, resulting in the loss of an important part of this area's heritage. Howard noted that to stay viable, his company needs space close to the harbor because of high fuel costs. There may be a resolution of support drafted for consideration at the September meeting.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative– - John Haugland from EPA Region 5 in Chicago presented information about this \$475 million fund to clean up the Great Lakes, building upon initiatives developed during the 2005 Great Lakes Collaboration. Participating federal agencies include the EPA, Coast Guard, Army Corps, Fish & Wildlife Service. The RFP process will begin this summer. Funds will be awarded in several subcategories:

Toxic Substances - \$147 Million for cleanup and pollution prevention;

Invasive Species - \$60 Million for monitoring, management plans & rapid response activities;

Near Shore Work - \$97 million for non-point source cleanup, watershed work & green infrastructure;

Habitat Restoration – \$106 Million for fish and aquatic habitat restoration; and

Accountability - \$65 Million for monitoring, science development & climate change research

He commented that based on recent planning activities, several entities within the Duluth-Superior Harbor should be well positioned to take advantage of this opportunity.

8. Roundtable Discussion – Local Projects

No announcements.

9. Project Updates

2010-2013 Draft Duluth Metro TIP

James Gittemeier reported that the MIC is in the midst of updating the Draft Duluth Metro TIP. In addition, the MIC is conducting air quality review with MPCA, MN/DOT and FHWA. The MIC will also be holding a public meeting on the Draft TIP on Wednesday, June 17 from 5 to 6pm. Final 2010-2013 Duluth Metro TIP will be presented at the July MIC and TAC meetings.

City of Duluth ADA Funding Applications

The City of Duluth is submitting applications for three sections of roadway for ARRA-funded ADA improvements for the pedestrian network on MnDOT roadways. These are: 1) Hwy 194 – Central Entrance on the north side (two segments) between Anderson and Pecan; 2) London Road on the north side between 26th AE and 40th AE; and 3) I-35 and 5th AW – improvements at the overpass and near the Depot. The first and third in this list are recommendations derived primarily from MIC planning work in these areas.

Duluth Depot Steering Committee

The steering committee for this project had their initial meeting last month to kick-off the master plan for the Depot as it relates to the potential reestablished passenger rail service from the Twin Cities. The committee includes County and City staff, DTA staff, the Greater Downtown Council, Congressman Oberstar's staff and St. Louis and Lake County Regional Rail staff. The study is being led by Miller Dunwiddie Architecture (Twin Cities) with LHB as the local resource part of the team. An open house is set for Tuesday the 9th at 7:00 pm at the Depot to take comment from the public on the Master Plan.

Bike-Ped Planning Update

James Gittemeier reported that MIC staff is in the beginning stages of organizing a Duluth-Superior Bike-Ped Advisory Committee. Staff is researching the formal structure of these organizations, bylaws and overall objectives of what tasks the committee will be asked to perform. We will be reviewing and interviewing other existing Bike/Ped Advisory Committees as well as MN/DOT officials about what works and what doesn't.

In addition to the Bike/Ped Advisory Committee, the MIC is also putting together a Steering Committee to guide the process of bike route planning in Superior. Staff has begun to meet with groups and individuals working on improving the bicycling infrastructure in Superior and putting together a list of folks who are interesting in serving on this steering committee.

Safe Communities Coalition

Robert Herling reported that the Lake Superior Region Safe Communities Coalition met on Monday, June 1st to discuss the draft grant application for funding through the Office of Traffic Safety's TZD Safe Roads Program. The group worked to craft a mission statement and define a work program to identify initiatives addressing the issues of impaired driving, distracted driving, and teen and senior drivers in St. Louis and Carlton counties. They also plan to hire a part-time program coordinator to help facilitate future activities. The MIC has been an active partner in the coalition since its start in January 2009 and considers our involvement with the Safe Communities Coalition as one way to achieve the safety objectives identified in the MIC's long range transportation plan.

He noted that the grant application ran into difficulty at the last minute in the designation of a fiscal agent; intention is to solve that problem and forward the application for next year's round of funding; now their intention is to solve that problem and forward the application for next year's round of funding.

Blueprint to End Poverty Transportation Action Team

Robert Herling reported that he had participated in the June 2nd meeting of Community Action Duluth's Blueprint to End Poverty Transportation Action Team. A status report indicated that all initial tasks it had set out to achieve in 2007 have been accomplished (culminating with the successful launch of the "Jump Start" program). The group began working to define new objectives moving forward, which it anticipates to finalize in the coming months. The MIC has been an active participant in the Transportation Action Team, and views our involvement as an important endeavor in helping to meet the objectives identified in the MIC's long range transportation plan, as well as the MIC/ARDC Human Services Coordinated Transit Plan.

10. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 2:54 pm.