



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Tuesday, December 8, 2009, 1:30 PM**

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

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

TAC Chair Dena Young called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. .

Chair Young asked for any changes or corrections to the agenda. Ron Chicka requested that a voting item be added to consider an amendment to the Superior Area TIP.

**Motion and Discussion** Jason Serck, with a second from Jim Foldesi, moved to add an approval item as #4 on the agenda. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 2. Meeting Summary of October 20, 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 Discussion** Jason Serck, with a second from Chuck Froseth, moved to approve the 10/21/09 meeting summary as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

### B. 2010 TAC Officer

Jason Serck volunteered to serve as vice-chair in 2010. Dena noted that a vote would be taken next month at the first meeting in January.

### C. 2010 TAC Meetings Calendar

Rondi Watson distributed a calendar showing the dates and locations of next year's MIC meetings and requested that members place these dates on their 2010 schedules. The meeting schedule is also available to view online, at [www.dsmic.org/tac](http://www.dsmic.org/tac).

## 3. Amendment #1 to the 2010-2013 Duluth Urbanized Area TIP

James Gittemeier presented an amendment to the 2010-2013 Duluth Urbanized Area TIP that is being requested to include Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) project for the Duluth Transit Authority (DTA). The purpose of this project is to provide additional operating funds for transit service to the non-traditional employment centers outside of the central business district, via Route #18 to MN Power and United Health along Rice Lake Road and Route #20 to Cirrus and Airpark. Funding total is \$392,000 (\$187,000 federal, \$205,000 local).

Dennis Jensen commented that these are examples of additional service routes the DTA is currently exploring; the #18 route will serve students along Rice Lake Road as well as Cirrus employees, and the park and ride lot in Hermantown provides the bulk of the ridership for Route #20.

**Motion Discussion & Vote** Chuck Froseth/Jim Foldesi moved to approve Amendment #1 to 2010 – 2013 Duluth Area TIP as presented. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 4. Amendment #1 to the 2010-2013 Superior Urbanized Area TIP

Dena Young presented an amendment to the 2010-2013 Superior Urbanized Area TIP that is being requested to include funding for two additional projects not included in the original project list for 2010. The first is a painting project for the Bong Bridge in the City of Superior,

at a cost of \$200,000 (federal) and the second project is for upgrading permanent signing on the Wisconsin side of the Blatnik Bridge, a work activity associated with TIP number 113-08-014 relating to investigation and replacement of cables begun in 2009 and carried over to 2010. Total cost of this project is \$170,000 (\$153,000 federal and \$17,000 state).

She noted that the painting project is being moved up to 2010 to accommodate and coordinate with construction and north lane closure of the upcoming I-35 reconstruction project.

**Motion** Jason Serck/Chuck Froseth moved to approve Amendment #1 to 2010 – 2013  
**Discussion** Superior Area TIP as presented. There was no further discussion and the motion  
& **Vote** was approved unanimously.

## 5. Readoption of the 2030 MIC Area Long Range Transportation Plan

Robert Herling reported that MIC staff has been unable to meet the October 19th target date for release of the draft LRTP 2035 due to a variety of circumstances. In order to stay in compliance with federal regulations, which require that a current, approved Long Range Plan is in place to be able to amend project items in the TIP, staff is proposing that the MIC readopt its existing (2030) LRTP. Doing so will ensure that an “active” plan remains in place in the interim as staff continues working to complete the updated LRTP.

After consulting with FHWA, MnDOT and WisDOT, it was determined that the main consideration before moving forward with readopting the 2030 plan is whether its assumptions and goals still apply to the MIC planning area. Their concern has to do with possible increased demand on our transportation system—but Robert noted that our most recent demographic and traffic modeling analysis shows just the opposite, that population (and associated traffic demand) is not significantly expanding and therefore will not render the existing LRTP obsolete.

He added that the process for readopting the current plan requires a public notice period before the actual action to readopt at the January 20, 2010 MIC meeting. He closed by requesting approval of the public comment period for the Readoption of the 2030 MIC Long Range Transportation Plan.

**Motion and Discussion** Denny Johnson/Jason Serck moved to approve the required public notice for the Readoption of the 2030 MIC Long Range Transportation Plan.

*Cindy Petkac asked more information about what caused the delay in the 2035 update. Robert responded that the MIC had unanticipated staff reductions (there is now one less planner, and it took several months to replace our GIS person); also there were problems with needing to refine our traffic model as put forward by the consultant. Also, the new emphasis on fiscally-constrained project lists required more work with jurisdictions to figure out a new method of projecting expenditures and revenues. He added that although we have many pieces in place, the entire draft document must be ready to present for public review and board approval.*

There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 6. Kirkus Street Land Use Plan – Scope of Work

James Gittemeier presented the Scope of Work for the upcoming Kirkus Street Land Use Plan. The new, one-mile long, federally-funded roadway is set to be constructed in 2010 in a relatively undeveloped section of Proctor. The study's objective is to identify land use and transportation corridor standards for Kirkus Street prior to the completion of the new road.

He added that this plan will also provide a guide for the city regarding the future land uses for the undeveloped lands, as well as a template to identify where key local and regional transportation connections should be made.

MIC staff has met with City of Proctor officials to further define the study and clarify the MIC's role in this study. They will be working from the Comp Plan's future land use map, and will be involving residents, school district, and other stakeholders to determine and update future land uses. WLSSD has also requested that they be involved to consider the possible extension its service boundaries; there are also natural resources to be assessed and considered. Next steps will be to convene a Task Force and to hold an initial "visioning" meeting with adjoining property owners. They also plan to hire a consultant to conduct a market analysis and to look at design principles and guidelines. The City will update its subdivision codes per the recommendations of this plan

He closed by requesting approval of the Scope of Work.

**Motion** Heather Rand/Dennis Jensen moved to approve the Scope of Work for the Kirkus Street Land Use Plan as presented.

**Discussion & Vote**

*Cindy Petkac asked why, with this plan, the MIC is getting involved in land use planning. James responded that it's a federally funded new roadway; we've also done land use planning for our airport and port areas; and we have historically been involved when transportation infrastructure is driving the changes for the area. She also asked if the local jurisdiction would be contributing any funds to this effort or if it was totally federally funded and what that amount was. James replied that the total MIC budget for this project is \$45,000 and that the City of Proctor would pay for the market study portion of the study.*

*Jim Foldesi commented that it seems more appropriate for MIC to be involved in corridor studies. Ron Chicka responded that land use and corridor planning is inter-related.*

There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 7. Harbor Planning (HTAC) Update

Andy McDonald presented a recap of topics presented at the most recent Harbor Technical Advisory Committee meeting. The HTAC met on Wednesday December 2 at 9 am at the Superior Public Library.

### Bayfront District Small Area Plan

Heidi Timm-Bijold (City of Duluth), Larry Killien (MnDNR), and Sandy Hoff (F.I. Salter Real Estate) presented information about the planning process currently underway for developing the area adjacent to the Bayfront Festival Park, which includes property owned by the Duluth Economic Development Authority (DEDA) as well as the LaFarge cement property that is currently for sale.

The purpose of the Bayfront District Small Area Plan is to determine the appropriate mix of land uses and to recommend zoning changes that would allow a transition to a mixed use for the site. This area, currently zoned waterfront industrial, was one of approximately ten areas called out in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan for further study. It has also been the focus of numerous planning efforts to date; she noted that the current planning process will utilize the information and recommendations assembled in previous plans as the basis for this plan. The first public meeting was held on Wednesday, December 2nd at 6:30 pm in the Great Hall of the Depot. Final recommendations are expected to be put to the Planning and Zoning Committee and the Duluth City Council in February.

#### **Factors Contributing to Corrosion of Steel Pilings in the Duluth-Superior Harbor**

Brenda Little, Senior Scientist, Marine Molecular Processes, Naval Research Laboratory, Stennis Space Center, presented some highly-anticipated information from the recently-published study entitled "Factors Contributing to Corrosion of Steel Pilings in Duluth-Superior Harbor" (by R. Ray, J. Lee and B. Little). The peer-reviewed paper, published in CORROSION, The Journal of Science and Engineering, demonstrates a specific sequence of biological, chemical and physical events responsible for the accelerated corrosion of steel structures in the Duluth-Superior harbor.

She outlined the process by which specific iron-oxidizing bacteria attach to carbon steel, creating a nodule (or "tubercle") of biomass and corrosion byproducts. Conditions beneath those nodules cause the copper in the harbor water to precipitate and adhere to the iron. When ice scours the pilings each winter, the tubercles break, exposing the copper-covered iron to oxygen which, in turn, causes the steel in those pitted areas to corrode at a faster rate.

#### **Seasnake – Innovative Ship Design**

James Hartung, Executive Vice President of Seasnake LLC, presented information about the Seasnake, a new waterborne cargo module technology under development. The Seasnake vessel configuration is more characteristic of a train than a traditional ship. It includes a traction (pulling) unit, cargo module(s), and a caboose (pushing) unit, with articulated connectors allowing each module to move independently. It has been tested for stability, strength of linking mechanisms, and course-keeping ability.

One significant feature of its design is that it eliminates ballast, thereby curbing the introduction of invasive species, addressing a big issue for the Great Lakes. Additionally its propulsion/hull design improves air emissions and fuel economy.

They are enthusiastic about its potential to enhance Great Lakes container feeder services and short sea shipping as well as its environmental advantages. They will be presenting

information about this new technology throughout the Twin Ports area.

### **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative**

Pat Carey, Watershed Unit Supervisor, MPCA-Duluth, presented information about the \$475 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), recently passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama as part of the FY2010 budget, to protect and clean up the Great Lakes by addressing the most significant problems including invasive aquatic species, non-point source pollution and critical habitat protection. It is intended to build on (but not take the place of) existing federal activities and partnerships with states, cities, tribes and nongovernmental entities.

The GLRI has five focus areas: Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern (\$147M), Invasive Species (\$60M); Nearshore Health and Nonpoint Pollution (\$98M); Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration (\$105M); and Accountability-Monitoring-Evaluation-Communication and Partnerships (\$65M). Many of these focus areas are relevant to the Duluth-Superior area, for example, the potential to re-use dredge materials in habitat restoration projects.

The Initiative is organized as a multi-agency effort led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which will administer a competitive grant application process via an RFP for \$120 million in funds. Proposals for this RFP are due January 29, 2010. Information about this RFP is available online at <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/fund/2010rfp01/index.html>.

### **SS Meteor Rehabilitation**

Jason Serck, Planning Director for the City of Superior, Susan Anderson, Director of Superior Public Museums, and project volunteers Roger Pellett and Jim Sharrow presented information about the current initiative to preserve, restore and upgrade the display of the Meteor, the last surviving non-submerged “whaleback” design ship, built by the American Steel Barge Company in Superior in 1896 and now owned by the City of Superior.

The plan aims at preventing further deterioration of the vessel by excavating and relocating it to an elevated dry berth about 50 feet north of its present location on Barkers Island. The idea is to remove the modifications that converted it to a tanker in 1943 and restore the vessel to her original 1925 appearance and historic significance as the “Frank Rockefeller.” The plan also includes an adjacent interpretive center to present the history of this type of vessel as well as the local shipyard industry.

## **8. Roundtable Discussion of Local Projects**

Denny Johnson reported that Mn/DOT had submitted five applications to the \$1.5 billion Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) federal grant program last fall. He added that this ARRA-funded program was competitive nationwide, but feedback has been received, requesting more information about the application for the Duluth Intermodal Project. This is hopefully a good sign for this project that would include construction of a new dock, pavement rehabilitation for 12 miles of I-35 in the Duluth area including replacement of

three bridges and truck route improvements on local streets to the port.

Cindy Petcak announced that the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of Duluth's zoning code update is on track to be released for public presentation and comment in early February, adding that other stakeholder meetings are planned, including one with the airport. James asked about potential zoning impacts of the proposed downtown transit center. Cindy responded that because it will be first and likely the only multimodal facility, it would probably best be dealt with by a variance.

Jason Serck announced that several bids had been received for a dock wall repair project at Gavilon Grain – Connors Point terminal in Superior. A \$2 million state harbor assistance grant will cover 80 percent of the costs of the project, which will allow Gavilon to make substantial repairs to a deteriorating dock wall. It is anticipated that the repairs can be completed this winter.

Denny Johnson announced that upcoming highway closures will have significant traffic impacts both on the interstate and local roads. They've been working with DTA about express bus service and also with the Depot about possible rail commuter service from west to downtown during the construction. Dennis Jensen noted that the DTA has submitted a plan for express bus service during the 2-year construction process and they are looking into possible MnDOT funding sources. MnDOT is looking at this as a demonstration type of project with a flexible contract, hopefully will see increased bus service from April to October. Other proposed changes would include park and ride lots and dedicated traffic lanes from Grand Avenue to Carlton Way.

Brian Ryks announced that with the help of \$11 million in state and federal funds they are now completing the first phase of airport reconstruction, with new roads leading into the airport. He added that the new nonstop service to Orlando has been a big success, and direct flights to Chicago O'Hare will begin on the 17th.

Ron Chicka announced that a public open house would be held for the proposed Northern Lights Express (NLX) passenger rail line, on Wednesday, December 9, from 4:30-6:30 pm at the Superior Middle School at 3626 Hammond Avenue.

## 9. Project Updates

### **2011-2014 Duluth Area TIP Project Solicitation**

James Gittemeier reported that applications for 2014 federal transportation funding for projects on the Duluth side of the MIC area due Friday, December 18, 2009 by 5pm. MIC staff will distribute the projects applications and supporting material at the January meetings, with a scoring and ranking session in February.

### **City of Duluth Complete Streets Task Force**

James Gittemeier reported that two MIC staff members had been invited to join the Mayor's Task Force on Complete Streets. The Task Force's mission is to develop a comprehensive streets policy that addresses design and usability of streets for bicyclists, walkers, bus riders, motorists, and wheelchair users. It will look at internal City policies and processes to

implement Complete Streets within Duluth. The Task Force is on a tight timeline and is charged with wrapping up its work in 3-4 months.

Significantly, in preparation for an anticipated Complete Streets policy, the City will be hosting a Complete Streets workshop on Wed, January 20<sup>th</sup>, with a more technical emphasis. This training session will be led by James LaPlante, traffic engineer for the City of Chicago for 30 years and has addressed many real-world traffic issues. He is also involved in the development of the ITE/green book standards. MIC and TAC members will be contacted when registration materials are available, and are invited and encouraged to attend.

Cindy Petcak commented that they view upcoming local projects (such as the Joshua Avenue construction) as a great opportunity to design new roads for all users. Ron Chicka commented that this is a project the MIC might get involved with. Andy McDonald added that that the neighborhood wants and expects involvement related to its cut-through traffic issue.

#### **Duluth, Proctor and Superior SRTS Projects Update**

James Gittemeier and Ron Chicka reported that Duluth SRTS projects are moving forward. A meeting with the City of Duluth, the Duluth School District and the MIC on November 10 took place to discuss the latest plans for Congdon and Lester Park Elementary schools and prioritize the SRTS improvements for both schools. The Lincoln Park SRTS infrastructure project will no longer take place, since the school is set to close; however, the non-infrastructure grant will still be used at Lincoln Park Elementary School.

The Proctor SRTS project grant is for non-infrastructure activities, including bicycling and pedestrian education. Over the past month, MIC staff assisted the Proctor School District with moving forward with implementing this project. The District is in the process of putting together the necessary project memo to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian education into their curriculum.

Ron added that Superior SRTS project design for South Tower Avenue is still being worked on by the City's consultant. A solution to the facility improvement along Tower is undecided at this point. A note from the City stated that they are looking into conducting a traffic count at Tower and 58<sup>th</sup> next spring to determine if warrants are met; in the past they have not been. When the MIC staff receives word that designs can be commented on, we will attempt to get them before the Board.

Ron noted that there are MIC members very interested to know how the Superior SRTS money, which was granted 5 years ago, will be spent, and whether one project will involve crossing improvement on Tower Avenue at 60<sup>th</sup> Street. This area has not met warrants for a new traffic signal, but the City will examine it again during the school season/golf season. He added that this is definitely a hot political issue for that council district, but WisDOT is very definite on the point that it needs to meet warrants.

#### **NADO Award for Northern MN/Northwestern WI Freight Plan**

Andy McDonald reported that ARDC and the MIC have been awarded a 2009 *Excellence in Regional Transportation Award* from the National Association of Development Organizations

(NADO) for the Northern Minnesota/ Northwest Wisconsin Freight Plan. NADO is a Washington, DC-based association that promotes programs and policies to strengthen local governments, communities and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery and comprehensive strategies. The awards showcase organizations for noteworthy projects and practices in planning, program delivery and special initiatives. Award winners received national recognition at the 2009 National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conference, October 28 – 30 in Savannah, Georgia.

Ron added that they are looking to roll it out, present it to targeted groups to build support for implementation, will likely lead to work items for MIC staff in 2010.

#### **10. Adjournment**

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 2:48 pm.