



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Wednesday, July 21, 2010, 7:00 PM**  
**Annual Joint Meeting of the MIC and TAC**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Richard I Bong Veterans Historical Center, Superior, WI	
<b>Meeting Chair(s)</b>	Nick Baker, WI Co-chair	
<b>Note Taker</b>	Rondi Watson	
<b>MIC Members Present</b>	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Ed Anderson	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Warren Bender	Superior Common Council
	Tony Cuneo	Duluth City Council
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Melanie Hendrickson	Duluth Transit Authority
	Denise McDonald	Superior Common Council
	Kay McKenzie	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Cindy Moe	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Steve O’Neil	St. Louis County Board
<b>MIC Members Absent</b>	Keith Allen	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Wayne Boucher*	City of Hermantown
	Troy Foucault	City of Proctor
	Kerry Gauthier*	Duluth City Council
	David Montgomery	City of Duluth – Citizen Rep
	Dan Olson*	Superior Common Council
	Jim Paine	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	* Excused	
<b>TAC Members Present</b>	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County Engineer
	Chuck Froseth	City of Duluth – Planning Dept
	Jeff Goetzman	City of Superior – Engineering Dept
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth – Engineering Dept
<b>Others Present</b>	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	John Crawford	URS Corp
	Patrick Garmoe	PureDriven
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Tim Hohn	ARDC / MIC Intern
	Dan Meyers	URS Corp
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Erik Seiberlich	URS Corp
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant

## 1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Wisconsin Co-chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. All meeting attendees introduced themselves. Ron Chicka introduced new MIC member Denise McDonald, appointed to replace Ed Anderson as a representative of the Superior City Council.

Ron mentioned that the MIC's midyear review had taken place, the annual review of plans, budgets and work programs. He thanked staff from DOTs, FHWA and MPCA who had attended that meeting and were here tonight as well.

Chair Baker asked if there were any changes to the agenda. None were put forward.

## 2. Committee Business

### May 19, 2010 Meeting Summary

Chair Baker noted that June 16 MIC meeting had been cancelled and asked if there were any changes to the summary from the previous meeting of the MIC Policy Board on May 19. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

**Motion** Warren Bender/Earl Elde moved to approve the 5/19/10 meeting summary as  
**Discussion** presented. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

## 3. Guest Speaker: Utilizing Social Media in the MIC's Public Involvement Process

Patrick Garmoe of PureDriven, a social media and marketing consulting firm based in Two Harbors, presented information regarding the MIC's new effort to incorporate social networking tools into its public participation strategies, with the goal of making the MIC's plans and programs more accessible to a wider audience. MIC staff, as well as Ryan Gaug, MPO liaison from MnDOT, and Steve O'Neil, MN Co-chair, participated in two strategic planning sessions in May and June.

He described the MIC's goal of better engaging the public in its planning process as a prime example of what social media can do—the MIC is not selling anything and it has good information to share—which makes it a good fit for not just the MIC but for other government entities.

He described social media as a set of tools (including website and blogs) operating in an online space to give and get information. By blending web-based technologies with social interaction, social media creates connections, the "arms," as it were, of the internet to bring traffic to your site or blog. It also finds people where they are (i.e., it goes to them).

He noted that the use of social media is one tool in an overall communications plan for the MIC. It is just as important to continue to focus on traditional media, not just by sending press releases but building relationships with reporters. He added that traditional news outlets (TV, radio, newspaper) are more successful in reaching some under-served populations than social media is.

One key recommendation for the MIC is to create a new blog site in addition to the MIC's existing website. It will be administered by the MIC as a way to present relevant information about ongoing planning efforts and current transportation topics. It is envisioned that when it is up and running, it will feature interactive conversations and include features such as guest posts, surveys

and videos.

It's also very important to create "listening posts" so people don't have to physically attend meetings to have input. Many comments that the MIC cares about are already being made; we just need to create a couple of accessible portals or channels. Therefore, another recommendation is that the MIC create Facebook pages for different topics such as bike/ped and harbor issues. The idea is to create conversations, post concerns, and start dialogues.

Broc Allen agreed with the idea that we need to develop an integrated strategy, because no single approach will do it. He gave the example of how easy it is to miss a post on Facebook if you didn't happen to log in on a particular day. Also asked how we will be measuring success in utilizing social media—is our goal to have a certain number of 'friends'? Patrick responded that a key goal is to gain substantive comments from people in this area who are interested in or affected by the MIC's planning efforts – not necessarily reflected by the number of friends. They will also be coaching MIC staff in the use of analytics to track success of various efforts and make adjustments if one approach isn't working.

#### 4. Guest Speakers: – Bong and Blatnik Bridge Traffic Modeling Results

Erik Seiberlich, a member of the consultant team from URS, presented results of the modeling work looking at potential traffic mitigation efforts for the Blatnik Bridge. The goal of this project is to have a series of options available for the WisDOT to consider in their evaluation of how to properly handle traffic should the Bong require complete closure for a construction season. The idea is to identify alternatives to having to detour traffic all the way to the Oliver bridge. Their final report will detail their analysis of major intersections along Hammond Avenue, as well as others of importance, near the Blatnik that will have an impact on traffic movement.

He explained that after collecting data and by using both macro- and micro-simulation models, seventeen intersections throughout the city were studied for current volume and flow. The resulting travel demand model output shows projected traffic volumes in the year 2014 – resulting from traffic redirected from highways 53 and 2.

With the Bong bridge removed, Belknap will see a lot less vehicles while East Second Street, Hammond and Tower Avenues will see significant increases (approx. 4000 daily trips). It's also estimated that 2500 bong bridge trips will simply be eliminated.

The model points out three main intersections of concern: at N. 3rd Street and Hwy53; at Hwy53 and E street; and at 5th Street and Hammond. Nick Baker suggested that Catlin Avenue would also be problematic. Erik responded that its turn lane feature will generally keep moving things along.

**Mitigation measures at N. 3rd Street and Hwy53** could include restriping lanes; adding an all-way stop or signal; building a roundabout (likely a cost-prohibitive option) ; or leave as is (it would still be functioning at an acceptable Level of Service (LOS)). He noted that WisDOT plans to modify the geometry at this intersection in the near future, based on their ongoing safety studies. For this reason, their recommendation is to monitor the intersection in 2014 to determine if any of

the other measures are needed.

Ed Anderson asked if another option, of preventing drivers from turning right to go to East Second Street, and turning left to go back to Tower Avenue. Erik responded that creating an overflow onto city streets creates its own set of problems.

**Mitigation measures at Hwy53 and E street**, with its potential for increased heavy truck traffic, based on expected development in the area, would include modifying the intersection with signalization. Would also be helpful to have an acceleration lane if there is enough room. Their recommendation is to reconfigure it as a right-in-right-out intersection, which will also require enhancement of local roads, which overall will increase safety significantly by eliminating certain turning movements.

**Mitigation measures recommended at 5th Street and Hammond Avenue** include changing the intersection from a 4-way to a three-quarter configuration, and adding a westbound right turn lane if possible. There is a likely right-of-way issue with that recommendation however.

For the long term, a study of the terminus of the Blatnik bridge is planned for the future, which could involve reconfiguration of ramps and/or construction of a roundabout.

He added that during their weekly conference calls, the topic of at-grade rail crossings and what will happen with significant train delays (which can run as long as 13 minutes) was discussed at length. Ed Anderson commented that emergency vehicles have had to deal with that issue—important to use intelligent transportation systems, real time signage to reroute traffic to east second street at key points in time, triggered by rail lines. Nick Baker asked whether it would be possible to work with rail lines to direct its hundred unit trains at night or off peak times of day.

In response to a question about how (or if) bikes and peds will be able to cross over the Bong bridge during construction, Ron responded that it was his understanding that they are not planning to close off the bike/ped sidewalk facility. They are also contemplating solutions to a possible problem with oversize vehicles.

## 5. Final 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

Robert Herling reported that the official 30-day public review (June 1 to June 30) of the MIC's updated long range transportation plan (LRTP) "Directions 2035" yielded comments from both individual members of the public and a number of public agencies, and the MIC has worked to respond accordingly, making recommended adjustments to the plan were deemed appropriate.

He noted that MIC's general response to several comments (e.g., wanting to see more data about freight movements), is that this level of detail is not possible at this time due to staffing constraints. In other cases (e.g., wanting more specific bike and pedestrian accommodations at specific locations), that level of detail is not within the scope of work of this project, which deals with a general direction or overview. He added that comments from both DOTs, that livability issues need to be explicitly discussed, does merit more attention especially in light of recent local initiatives such as Fit City Duluth and Green Jobs. It would be appropriate to beef up this theme in the next update (four years from now).

All comments received have been included in the plan's appendices. No comments were received which resulted in significant changes to the draft that would require an additional public review, and the plan is therefore being brought to the MIC Policy Board for approval at this meeting.

He added that a big enhancement to the plan is an interactive project map developed by our GIS Specialist Kody Thurnau. We plan to highlight this feature at future TAC and MIC meetings.

He closed by requesting approval to adopt the final plan.

**Motion** Ed Anderson/Broc Allen moved to adopt the final version of the Directions 2035,  
**Discussion** the Long Range Transportation Plan, as presented. *Ron commended Robert's work on*  
**& Vote** *this update, noting that it has been significantly improved in terms of its organization,*  
*content and visualization elements.* There was no discussion and the motion passed  
by unanimous vote.

#### 6. Final 2011-2014 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program

James Gittemeier reported that the MIC received minor comments during the public comment period on the Duluth Area TIP. The comments largely came from the local jurisdictions regarding small project changes and insubstantial language changes in the text. The final Duluth Area TIP will be presented for approval at the July meetings.

He closed by requesting approval to adopt the final TIP.

**Motion** Steve O'Neil/Kay McKenzie moved to adopt the final 2011-2014 Duluth Area TIP,  
**Discussion** as presented. There was no discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.  
**& Vote**

#### 7. City of Superior Project Submittal – STP Urban Funds

Sheldon Johnson explained that under the new Wisconsin DOT guidelines for project solicitation for STP (Surface Transportation Program)-Urban funds, projects need to be submitted by the MPO when a municipality is incorporated within a MPO. Therefore, the City of Superior now needs to funnel their STP-Urban project requests through the MIC Policy Board—a change in procedure that provides us a bit more input into project selection. The idea is that the City's goals for project development align with those identified in the MIC's Long Range Transportation Plan. Should there be multiple projects; the MIC will also have to prioritize them. If selected at the state level, this project will be included in the upcoming (2011-2014) Superior Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Jeff Goetzman, engineer for the City of Superior, presented information about the project being forwarded for consideration. The project would reconstruct North 28th Street from Hill to Bardon Ave. Based on rough costs, it is estimated at \$1.875 million. Due to the way the STP-Urban funding cycle is set up, they are proposing to submit and complete the project in two phases, about a quarter mile at a time:

**2013** Construct North 28th Street from Hill Avenue to approximately 1320 feet east; estimated cost \$940,000

**2015** Construct North 28th Street from 1320 feet east of Hill Avenue to Bardon Avenue, estimated cost \$940,000

These would be full reconstruction with grading, new pavement section, etc. The funding would be 80% federal, 20% City of Superior.

**Motion** Ed Anderson/Warren Bender moved to approve the 2013 segment of the project  
**Discussion** and forward it for consideration in the state's STP-Urban program. There was no  
**& Vote** discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

## 8. Project Updates

### **Superior Safe Routes to School Projects**

Ron Chicka reported that he and Jason Serck have been assisting the Superior school district with their application for WisDOT Safe Routes to School funding, due July 9th. The district is targeting infrastructure improvements, specifically sidewalks and crosswalks, near all elementary schools, cognizant of the fact that the City has recently improved some sidewalks near the schools. They are trying to determine which locations, not yet upgraded, would best meet the conditions specified in the grant application.

### **Kirkus Street Land Use Plan**

James Gittemeier reported that the Kirkus Street task force attended a meeting of the Proctor Economic Development Authority (PEDA) to hear a presentation regarding the retail market for the Proctor Area. The information presented will be analyzed by the task force in an effort to devise a future land use strategy for the mostly undeveloped southern portion of Proctor.

### **Bike/Pedestrian Planning Update**

James Gittemeier reported on two current initiatives:

#### **Bike to Work Day**

The MIC coordinated 2 Bike to Work Day events, one at Lake Ave and Superior Street in Duluth and the other at Tower Ave and Belknap Street in Superior. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate, and the morning events were called off early. However, the message encouraging people to try bicycling as a legitimate mode of transportation did get out, as there was good media coverage before the events.

#### **Cross City Trail – Munger to Lakewalk Connection**

The alignment options for the trail are being narrowed down. The City of Duluth has met with the railroads, including CP and BNSF, to determine final alignment. The Cross City Trail Committee held a meeting on June 22<sup>nd</sup> to go over these alignments and options with each alignment. The committee is charged with assisting the City of Duluth in determining final alignment. As the final alignment of the trail emerges, the general public, stakeholders, and interested citizens are encouraged to provide comments. All MIC and TAC members are strongly encouraged to participate at this point as well.

### **TIGER II Grant Applications**

Ron Chicka reported that a second phase of the TIGER Discretionary Grants "TIGER II" was

recently announced by the US DOT. It is a \$600 million competitive grant process for surface transportation projects targeted for capital investments in highway or bridge projects, public transportation projects, passenger and freight rail projects, port and infrastructure investments and intermodal facilities. The Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) is forwarding an application for their plans for a new multimodal terminal in the downtown, adjacent to the Duluth Depot. The Port Authority is resubmitting (from the first TIGER grant process in 2009) a proposal for improvements to Garfield C and D docks toward development of a trans-shipment facility.

**Transportation Research Board (TRB) Presentation,**

Ron Chicka reported that he and Andy McDonald attended the July conference of the TRB in Minneapolis where we have been asked to present the work of our Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC) to a national audience. Their session is titled "The Future of Great Lakes Transportation" will be moderated by Prof. Richard Stewart from UW-Superior's Transportation and Logistics Research Center – a longtime colleague of the MIC.

**9. Adjournment**

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:43 pm.