



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Transportation Advisory Committee
MEETING SUMMARY
Tuesday, January 18, 2011, 1:30 PM

Meeting Location	WisDOT Lake Superior Room, Superior WI	
Meeting Chair	Jason Serck, Cari Pedersen	
Note Taker(s)	Beth Krebsbach	
Members Present	Chuck Froseth	City of Duluth Community Development Dept
	Paul Halverson	Douglas County
	Bryn Jacobson	Bike/Pedestrian Rep
	Dennis Jensen	Duluth Transit Authority
	Alison Johnson	Duluth Airport Authority (Alternate)
	Denny Johnson	Mn/DOT District 1
	Cari Pedersen	City of Duluth Engineering
	Cindy Petkac	City of Duluth Planning Dept
	Heather Rand	Mn DEED
	Jim Rohweder	City of Proctor
	Jason Serck	City of Superior
	Jim Sharrow	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth Engineering
	Dena Young	WisDOT NW Region
Members Absent	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County Engineering
	Jeff Goetzman	City of Superior
	Walter Leu	Mn/DOT District 1
	Brian Ryks	Duluth Airport Authority
	David Salo	City of Hermantown
Others Present	Marc Bowker	WisDOT
	Ron Chicka	ARDC/MIC Director
	Drew Digby	Duluth Digs
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Heidi Jaros	Duluth Digs
	Holly Kostrzewski	MnDOT Toward Zero Deaths
	Beth Krebsbach	ARDC/MIC Administrative Assistant
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Dave Ostrowski	WisDOT
	Kody Thurnau	ARDC / MIC GIS Specialist
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Planning Assistant

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

TAC Vice-Chair Jason Serck called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. All meeting attendees introduced themselves. He asked if there were any proposed changes to the agenda.

Ron Chicka and Jason Serck introduced an amendment to the agenda: to elect a new TAC chair and vice chair.

Jason Serck also proposed moving agenda item #7 up to follow Committee Business (item #3) because he had to leave the meeting early and wanted to comment on it.

Motion Heather Rand/Jim Rohweder moved to add officer elections to the agenda.
Discussion There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.
and Vote

Motion Cindy Petcak/Alison Johnson moved to move agenda item #7 to be discussed
Discussion immediately after Committee Business. There was no discussion and the
and Vote motion passed unanimously.

2. Officer Elections

Jason Serck was nominated as the chair for next year, and Cari Pedersen was nominated as the vice chair for the next year.

Motion Chuck Froseth/Dena Young moved to elect both Serck and Pedersen. There
Discussion was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.
and Vote

3. Committee Business

Meeting Summary of October 19, 2010 and of December 7, 2010

Chair Serck asked for any changes or corrections to the earlier months' meeting summaries. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

Heather Rand/Denny Johnson moved to approve both summaries, the motion passed unanimously.

Motion Heather Rand/Denny Johnson moved to approve the 10/19/10 and 12/7/10 meeting
Discussion summaries as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved
and Vote unanimously.

4. Guest Speaker—Drew Digby, *Duluth Digs*

Drew Digby and Heidi Jaros began by explaining the reasons for this initiative, including advocating for a more active reputation for the city of Duluth, and to meet the transportation needs of all Duluth citizens.

Digby noted that only 60 percent of Minnesota residents had drivers' licenses, pointing out

that the remaining 40 percent would rely on bike and pedestrian modes of transportation year-round, not only in the summer months.

He distributed a handout with specific recommendations of the taskforce. He then proceeded to highlight specific recommendations that they were making.

The first recommendation pertained to road design. Digby said that sidewalks should not be designed as primary snow storage locations. He said that sidewalks also should not be designed immediately next to the road in hopes that snowplows would be able to clear them, as it is normally not effective, especially to make sidewalks accessible for wheelchairs

The second recommendation of the task force was related to interagency cooperation. Digby said that after discussing this issue with snowplow drivers, they noted that it was often not clear who was responsible for what road, specifically. Another issue is coordinating between drivers who plow sidewalks and street maintenance. Digby said their message to the city has been to continue the dialogue and conversation between plow drivers and the city.

Jason Serck asked if there was documentation of problems/complaints about plowing in the Duluth area. Digby replied that the group hoped to increase tracking of these complaints, ideally hoping to create a map to track the complaints and their locations.

Digby also said that the liability issue was a challenge for individuals and nonprofits seeking to volunteer clearing snow for those who are unable to do it.

Petcak asked if Superior had similar problems keeping roads clear. Serck replied that they did, but respond simply by ticketing violators after 48 hours.

Dennis Jensen commented that the problems with snow removal were extensive and asked Digby if they had attempted to use technology to approach these problems. He said the DTA often ends up calling the jurisdictions to alert them that certain places are not clear enough for busses to pass through.

5. Guest Speakers—Dena Young and Marc Bowker, WisDOT Roundabouts

Ron Chicka introduced the presentation, saying he wanted to give people an opportunity to see what progress had been made by WisDOT in exploring the details of roundabouts.

Dena Young explained first the definition of a roundabout. A roundabout is distinct from a “mini” traffic circle,” which is used primarily for traffic calming. A roundabout is intended as an independent design concept for intersections with a high volume of turns.

She explained the reasons for using roundabouts, listing a series of statistics about violent and frequent crashes taking place in intersections. She said roundabouts reduce crashes by 40 percent compared to signaled intersections. They reduce crashes with injuries by 75 percent and crashes with fatalities by 90 percent. She explained it was because of the fewer number of conflict points (8, down from 32 conflict points), and the lower posted speed limit in the circles (15 to 25 mph).

Marc Bowker explained that public opinion is often negative when considering constructing roundabouts. He said public opinion often shifted in favor of roundabouts, for example from 34 to 69 percent favorable opinions from before to after the roundabouts are constructed. He added that a flyer explaining how to drive in a roundabout is currently being included with vehicle registration, as a public education effort. Other public education efforts include more detailed flyers for each individual roundabout.

Bowker added that the state has concluded in policy that roundabouts must be evaluated in each situation where a signal would be considered for an intersection. The state has 100 roundabouts constructed and operating, with 52 planned for construction in 2011. The known local number is approximately 45 in operation, mostly single-lane in smaller communities.

Bowker gave one example of roundabouts implemented in Rice Lake on the exit ramps for 53. Another example was the St. Croix Falls roundabout on US 8 and 208th Street.

Bowker then continued to explain the public information efforts that WisDOT has made, including wisconsinroundabouts.gov. He also showed a brief animation, demonstrating how a roundabout functions with different types of crossings.

He explained that Wisconsin was largely pushing roundabouts due to lower maintenance costs and better safety.

Dena Young also added that roundabouts had been included in the drivers' manual.

Cindy Voigt asked if roundabouts could be lighted as thoroughly as signalized intersections. Bowker added that they were often lighted better and more efficiently than signalized intersections.

Dennis Jensen asked about pedestrian crossings. Bowker responded that the effort aimed to keep pedestrians out of the actual "circle".

Denny Johnson asked if having sufficient right of way had been a problem for building the roundabouts. Bowker responded that it was at times.

Cindy Petcak asked about construction costs. Bowker responded that construction costs were higher than signalized intersections, though there was a savings on maintenance.

Dave Ostrowski, also from WisDOT, commented that snow removal in the roundabout was more efficient than in signalized intersections, and that the red truck apron allowed trucks to move easily as well.

Jim Sharrow asked about oversized and overweight loads. Ostrowski and Bowker replied that they would often be facilitated by shutting down the entire intersection, on a case-by-case basis.

Ron Chicka asked about software to evaluate the need of roundabouts. Bowker responded that the software is useful for comparing the traffic volumes, but obviously still won't design the roundabout, calculate right-of-way, etc. Bowker also mentioned other software that could examine further beyond an intersection to an entire corridor.

6. Amendments #1, 2 and 3 to 2011-2014 Duluth Area TIP

James Gittemeier directed the TAC members' attention to the descriptions of the TIP amendments, which were listed in the agenda. The first amendment would cover DTA JARC

funding (corrected, an additional \$500). This funding covers routes to Air Park and United Health. The second amendment involved funds for repairing the roof of the Duluth Train Depot.

The third amendment involved resurfacing Midway Road. *Denny Johnson noted that the funds were not yet available for the third amendment, but were expected.*

Gittemeier and Ron Chicka also mentioned the necessity of a special meeting to approve another amendment to the Duluth TIP to provide funding for a DTA multimodal terminal. Jensen explained that the funding, a State of Good Repair award, to cover half the cost of the terminal, had been made available. He explained that the local match would be 20 percent.

Gittemeier explained that the amendment needed MIC and federal approval in order to have part of the work under contract by the beginning of February. Special meeting tentatively set for 8:30 a.m. next Tuesday.

Motion Dennis Jensen/Denny Johnson moved to approve the TIP amendments as
Discussion presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.
and Vote

7. Amendments # 1 and 2 to 2011-2014 Superior Area TIP

Ron Chicka presented the information about the two amendments. The first amendment would be used for Safe Routes to School, and the other would be used to fund Wetland Mitigation Bank Repairs.

Motion Chuck Froseth/Dennis Jensen moved to approve the TIP amendments as
Discussion presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved
and Vote unanimously.

8. East 2nd Street Corridor Study

Robert Herling presented on the East 2nd Street Corridor study, which was up for approval in its final version.

He reviewed the general recommendations, which included:

1. Create special criteria for East 2nd Street in land use ordinances
 - minimize allowable accesses
 - Ensure efficient circulation within and between parcels
 - fill in sidewalk gaps
2. Install more speed limit signs and "Trucks Use Left Lane" signs
3. Increase speed-limit enforcement
4. Conduct more extensive analyses of key intersections
5. Upgrade crossings with high visibility crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signs

6. Create pedestrian refuge islands at key crossings

Herling also reported that he would be reporting the study's recommendations at the Superior City Council's meeting that evening.

Jason Serck commented that the study looked ready for approval.

Motion

**Discussion
and Vote**

Jim Rohweder/Dena Young moved to approve the final study as presented.
There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

9. Accessing Additional MIC Funds

Ron Chicka gave a presentation on the unique opportunity coming up to access Consolidated Planning Grant Funding available through the MIC. He noted that the excess of federal transit funds should be distributed. He said that approximately \$200,000 would be available to MIC jurisdictions for one or more consultant-led land use or transportation studies, and that an RFP process would be necessary to choose the consultant. He reiterated that an 80/20 match would be necessary for the jurisdictions to receive the funding. Chicka reviewed potential components of the submittal, including purpose, need and relevance of the study, among others.

He noted that a letter would be distributed to the jurisdictions to describe the formal requirements for projects, though the timeframe for submittals has not been solidified.

Cindy Voigt asked/suggested if the application process might include a rating or scoring process. Chicka replied that it was a possibility. Voigt also commented that they would likely need a few months before submitting an application to the funds. Chicka said a goal for him would be to have some projects in motion by mid-year.

Cindy Petcak asked whether MIC staff would be managing the consultant time. Chicka responded that the level of MIC staff contribution would vary by case.

Voigt asked whether construction dollars would be eligible. Chicka responded that they would not.

Dennis Johnson asked whether the DTA's funding already in place for signal prioritization would be eligible; Chicka suggested it likely would be.

10. HTAC Harbor Planning Update

Andy McDonald presented on the December HTAC meeting, reviewing the agenda briefly:

McDonald then focused especially on the Use of Erie Pier Material in Local Road Construction Projects. He reviewed what the committee had found, particularly highlighting that MnDOT had expressed concerns about material being contaminated. He noted that MnDOT's legal council had advised against taking on any liability based on the perception or reality that the material is contaminated. McDonald noted the disconnect between MPCA's and MnDOT's requirements for the material to be certified and guaranteed as not contaminated.

McDonald then reviewed further options to allow the material to be used. One strategy would be a memorandum of agreement; another would be to get a beneficial use determination for the material. The final strategy would be legislative action.

Jim Sharrow commented that the committee meeting about Erie Pier had been disappointing. He explained

that they had been working to open the door for this material's use, hoping that a certification from MPCA would be acceptable. He said it was an "eye-opener" to find that MnDOT would take a different view.

McDonald said, in MnDOT's defense, that they were reacting to past problems with changing requirements and emerging liabilities, resulting in lawsuits.

Rondi Watson noted that the case needs to be made that using Erie Pier material would be a beneficial use public funds.

Dennis Jensen asked whether this situation was parallel to the use of taconite tailings to make pavement. McDonald replied that it has some similarities, though that situation is much further developed than the use of Erie Pier material.

McDonald also said this situation may cause some changes to the Erie Pier Land Use Management plan.

11. Express Bus Route Survey Results

Robert Herling reported the results of a 2010 passenger survey based on modified DTA service that had been designed to mitigate congestion from the I-35 project.

There was an on-board survey distributed Sept. 27 through Oct. 6, weekday mornings. There was a 33 percent return rate of those survey riders who boarded West of 46th Ave. E.

The DTA reported 2,250 (round) trips for the period.

Survey objectives:

- Did enhanced service increase usage?
- Who was using service, why?
- Did the service attract new users?
- What attracted new users?
- What were users' perceptions of the service?

Some Significant Survey Results—

- Seventy-three percent of respondents said they had used DTA for three or more years, while 14 percent reported that they had just started using the service during the summer.
- Eighty-four percent of respondents said they used DTA "frequently" or more than four times per week.
- Forty-four percent of respondents said they were riding for free.
- Seventy percent of new riders reported having access to a car
- Forty-five percent of respondents could have made the trip by car
- Seventy percent of respondents said they were using the service to go to work; 20 percent were going to school

-Twenty-two percent of respondents said they were riding to avoid traffic, 38 percent said they were motivated by the free pass, and 72 percent said they always take transit.

-The most common responses from new riders on their reasons for using transit were: to avoid traffic, because of the free pass, and because of convenience.

-Twenty-six percent of respondents had at least one complaint about the ride. The most common complaint was that the ride was not quick enough.

Herling reported that MnDOT, U of MN, DTA and MIC would be collaborating for improved research on this ridership in the next year, during and after construction season, and including follow-up surveys.

12. Duluth TIP Projects, 2015

James Gittemeier encouraged the TAC members to review the projects and scoring criteria distributed in their TIP packets, and to report back to the next meeting ready to score them.

He then explained the two projects submitted for the 2015 Duluth TIP. The first, submitted by the city of Duluth, requested funding to reconstruct part of West First Street, and the second, submitted by St. Louis County, requested funding to resurface part of Martin Road.

Gittemeier presented more details, including traffic counts, technical classifications and public comments, about each of the roads in question.

He also reviewed the scoring process and criteria.

He then reviewed the scoring criteria and TIP timeline.

Gittemeier also reviewed the MIC-area enhancement projects.

1. Cross City Trail Connection – Phase IV
2. Lakewalk Extension – Phase VI

He said that both would receive the enhancement funding.

Bryn Jacobson asked why the St. Louis County project requested more funding than the Duluth project. Gittemeier responded that it has to do with the equity guidelines from MnDOT.

13. Roundtable Discussion – Local Projects

Holly Kostrzewski distributed her contact information and materials about the MnDOT Toward Zero Deaths initiative. She said they are seeking participation, especially from engineers, to work on the initiative.

14. Project Updates

Kirkus Street Land Use Plan, James Gittemeier

Gittemeier reported that the plan is being finished up and will be brought through the Proctor approval process and then brought before the MIC sometime soon, but not February.

Northern Lights Express Passenger Rail, Ron Chicka

Ron Chicka reported the latest progress on the Northern Lights Express, including the routes that were recently selected for study. He said the six miles between Duluth and Superior were the most expensive miles on the route.

Central Entrance Corridor Study, *Andy McDonald*

McDonald reported that the next stage of the study involved seeking public input by a variety of methods, including a public meeting and social media outreach.

15. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Vice-Chair Pedersen asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Motion

Discussion

and Vote

Cindy Petkac/Jim Froseth moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by unanimous vote.