



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Transportation Advisory Committee
MEETING SUMMARY
Tuesday, August 16, 2011 at 1:30 p.m.

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| Meeting Location | Proctor Community Center, Proctor MN | |
| Meeting Chair | Cari Pedersen | |
| Note Taker(s) | Laurel Davis | |
| Members Present | Chuck Froseth | City of Duluth Community Development Dept. |
| | Jim Foldesi | St. Louis County Engineering |
| | Jim Heilig | DTA (Alternate) |
| | 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 Public Works |
| | Jeff Goetzman* | City of Superior |
| | Paul Halverson | Douglas County |
| | Bryn Jacobson | Bike/Pedestrian Rep |
| | Dennis Jensen | Duluth Transit Authority |
| | Alison Johnson* | Duluth Airport Authority (Alternate) |
| | Cindy Petkac* | City of Duluth Planning Dept |
| | Brian Ryks* | Duluth Airport Authority |
| | Jason Serck | City of Superior |
| | Jim Sharrow | Duluth Seaway Port Authority |
| | | *Excused |
| Others Present | Ron Chicka | MIC Director |
| | Laurel Davis | MIC Administrative Assistant |
| | Drew Digby | Mn DEED |
| | James Gittemeier | MIC Senior Planner |
| | Brian Heaton | MIC Intern |
| | Robert Herling | MIC Planner |
| | Sheldon Johnson | MIC Deputy Director |
| | Andy McDonald | MIC Principal Planner |
| | Nancy Sannes | MN/DOT |
| | Kody Thurnau | MIC GIS Specialist |

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Chair Cari Pedersen called the meeting to order at 1:34. All meeting attendees introduced themselves. She asked if there were any proposed changes to the agenda. None were requested.

2. Committee Business

Meeting Summary of 6/14/11

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

Motion

Discussion and Vote

Jim Rohweder/Jim Helig moved to approve the 6/14/11 meeting summary as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Final 2012-2015 Duluth Area TIP

The Duluth Area TIP has a few minor changes (largely with Mn/DOT projects) since the draft was released in May. MIC staff will review these changes, final project costs, and total funding.

Robert Herling presented the Final 2012-2015 Duluth Area TIP, outlining the changes to the TIP as follows. The Seven Bridges Road project will now be locally funded, the National Guard Base project has been moved back, Hwy 23 Bridge Maintenance was added, \$37 million in state money was added for the Better Roads for MN project, and the Hwy2 and I-35 Projects were combined.

Walter Leu mentioned that the Anderson Road project has been moved to 2012.

Cindy Voigt asked about the funding changes for Seven Bridges Road and Gittemeier said that money went to the Lakewalk instead.

Motion

Discussion & Vote

Cindy Voigt/Jim Rohweder moved to approve the Final 2012-2015 Duluth Area TIP. There was minimal discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Draft 2011-2014 Superior Area TIP *

The draft Superior TIP will be forwarded for your review and comment. The TIP includes 4 years of federally funded transportation projects, as well as some of the significant state funded projects. The Draft TIP will be released for a 30-day public comment period on or about August 22. The final TIP will be presented for approval at the October MIC meetings. For comments or questions, please contact Sheldon Johnson at sjohnson@nwrpc.com or (715) 635-2197, ext. 228.

Sheldon Johnson presented the Draft 2011-2014 Superior Area TIP and stated that 12-13 new projects had been added to the TIP, including a locally funded stoplight in Superior, nine DOT projects, a culvert replacement near Oliver, pavement work on Hwy 2, joint work and pavement repair on Hwy 13, Hwy 105 maintenance, and two place holder rail projects for 2015. He also added that no new lay miles were being added.

Ron Chicka asked for an update the 28th Street project between Weeks and Hill avenue, and Dena Young said there was no news on that yet.

Motion Dena Young/Jim Rohweder moved to approve the Superior Area TIP Amendment.
Discussion
& Vote There was minimal discussion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

5. Lincoln Park Pedestrian Study

MIC staff is working with Neighborhood Housing Services of Duluth (NHS) on this pedestrian route project. The goal of the project is to encourage a safe pedestrian corridor connecting the new Lincoln Park Middle School (opens in fall of 2012) to the Clyde Iron campus. A peripheral outcome is a route connecting Skyline Parkway to the Cross City Trail, which is a recommendation of the Draft Duluth Trails and Bikeways Plan. The Clyde Iron Complex has the potential to be a trailhead and neighborhood hub with the sports facilities, Boys & Girls Club, and the Cross City Trail located there. There have been 3 meetings with a team of stakeholders, including a walkability audit. The report will be concluded at the end of August with a preferred corridor and recommendations to make it safer for pedestrians.

James Gittemeier and Brian Heaton presented updates on the Lincoln Park Pedestrian Study, which is a collaboration with the YMCA through Fit City and with the Healthy Duluth Area Coalition. A \$5000 grant for planning was awarded in Mid-June, the project started in July and will be wrapping up in September. The team outlined three routes between the Lincoln Park School and the Clyde Iron Complex and did a walkability audit of each one. The most direct route includes 30th Ave which runs through the parking lot of a propane business, creating some difficulty for walkers. Gittemeier said that the city would look into negotiating a right of way since the building encroaches on public property. The route continues on Michigan Street to Devonshire and up through the woods.

Jim Foldesi asked what the grade was for this walk, and Gittemeier responded that most of it was a gradual increase with the steepest section being an eight. He also pointed out that there were several other issues the next Lincoln Park study would look at and this one only addressed the walking corridor.

David Salo asked if this was the first major presentation of the Lincoln Park Study and Gittemeier replied that it was.

Walter Leu asked what the importance of this corridor was, and Gittemeier said that it was a naturally forming one between two centers of activity and would include several other centers along the way. Leu felt that the importance of this study needed to be strengthened because he wasn't seeing it. Ron Chicka pointed out that the MIC is not the lead on this study, the NHS and other agencies are the driving factor and he believes that the goal is to create support for funding when it comes time to seek it.

Cindy Voigt said she didn't think the plan was to link the center to the school; that the focus was to be on getting around the neighborhood and she hadn't seen anyone presenting a link between them. Gittemeier said that it was a goal to make it possible for students to make that walk, and provide a way to get people up to the school for events. Cari Pedersen added the grant language actually was written to examine the corridor between the two locations.

Walter Leu said that there were a lot of pieces missing before any support could be given, and David Salo pointed out that the neighborhood would change quite a bit and that couldn't be predicted.

Gittemeier concluded by saying that he would be bringing further updates in September.

6. Central Entrance Study

Data collection efforts continue for input into the modeling effort for this corridor study. We were unable to complete intersection turning movement counts prior to Arrowhead Road closing. Traffic levels were higher on Central Entrance during the Arrowhead Road closure leading us to wait until it reopens to collect the final counts. Once counts are complete we will forward the count information to URS, our modeling consultant, to be entered into the model.

Andy McDonald presented the updates on the Central Entrance Study, stating that modeling really couldn't begin until they get the Arrowhead Road turning counts, and so they will have to decide whether to wait until the construction is done or move forward.

He said they would be looking at tools for managing access as a way to control and direct traffic. These include consolidating accesses, shared access, making use of frontage and backage roads, and use of medians to control traffic flow. He pointed out that there is already mention of using Palm Street as a backage road in the Small Area Plan, and that Myrtle street is already functioning as one. One strategy is to encourage more access to smaller routes as land in the area sells and can be renegotiated. He said that the key is to start looking at some of the state guidance and what the policies are, examine best practices and identify opportunities, and to be proactive as development takes place rather than reactive

Ron Chicka added that the main thing was to be as close as possible a complement to the Small Area Plan so that as development takes place, these guidelines could be followed in much the same way.

7. Arrowhead Road/Kenwood Road Intersection

With the development of a new Walgreens at the intersection of Arrowhead Rd & Kenwood Ave, this location has been receiving a lot of attention. In June, the City of Duluth engaged MIC staff in discussions about a potential modeling and analysis of the intersection. Staff will be presenting some background information and hopes to engage the TAC and board members in a discussion about possible MIC involvement in further studying this intersection.

Ron Chicka started by explaining that he talked with Dave Montgomery about what he'd like to see happen who said that he'd like to gather as much information as possible about the intersection.

Robert Herling then presented the information gathered so far, saying that there was a lot of crash data from recent years (though he mentioned not all the glitches were out of the CMAT system used to generate that data), but limited turning counts dated from 2004. Data showed that the highest concentration of traffic was at the PM peak, and that a high percentage of crashes line up with the Super One access.

Andy McDonald recommended looking at the UMD-CSS Transportation Assessment and using

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raised medians to regulate turning movements. He also outlined some proposed land use changes.

Cindy Voigt said that over the summer the city was approached about possibly outlining a plan for the credit union corner and that the city would like to find a way to use MIC turning counts, get some ped/bike counts and then have a consultant give a recommendation because this is so big politically that an outside view would go more smoothly. She also stated that this answer couldn't wait until a year from now and they would like to see the issue resolved sooner rather than later.

Ron Chicka asked if they were looking at just that corner or wanted a bigger scope, and Voigt said to just focus on the intersection, looking at Walgreens and the other driveways, and suggested they work with Super One and the banks to consolidate access. Chicka asked if this is what Dave Montgomery would ask for, and she said he hasn't heard any of this yet. Cari Pedersen added that they were looking to do a brainstorming session.

Drew Digby added that another concern about the area is where more retail space could be added. He said the area looks ripe for it, but no one will support any plans until the issues with that corridor are improved, and that he'd like to see it zoned for a wider variety of uses.

Cari Pedersen said that they keep hearing concerns of safety and wanted to know if the rate of pedestrian accidents warranted that. Robert Herling told her they were minimal. Pedersen said that people are appealing to the city to do something, and Herling explained that one of the concerns is that pressure to do something will focus on the intersection itself and force an engineering fix, when what's needed is a bigger management plan. Pedersen added that some new codes were added for access in the current plan, but that you can't take away what people already have.

Jim Foldesi pointed out that part of the confusion over this issue is that they have tried to do some advance planning for putting in a right turn lane, and with Walgreens coming in they were able to get an easement

Drew Digby said that traffic from the church was continually brought up because high traffic at certain times was causing problems. Pedersen pointed out that they had agreed to an easement to provide for back access to the church, which was supposed to take place when the church was built, but they never could work out the details.

Ron Chicka stated that the MIC board would say they'd like to have some input on the scope of the project, and that the MIC would want to have some input into what it looked at. He asked if his understanding was correct that the city was facing pressure and needs to get this going now rather than waiting until spring. Cari Pedersen said that would be a question for the MIC board. Jim Foldesi said the city could strike out on it's own and do some research, and added that the county could as well. Chicka said that when school was back in session, they could get some turning counts in, but that might be about all they could do at this time.

Jim Foldesi asked if that meant the MIC couldn't meet Voigt's time frame, and if the project was four to five months from now, could the MIC take it on? Chicka replied that the MIC board could say to change plans to get this done now, but that would be difficult. He mentioned that if the MIC were to do it, they would have URS do the modeling, which he said could have ramifications, such as potentially pushing the Central

Entrance plan off the table.

Robert Herling pointed out that within the current work program, the MIC has the ability to go out and get some data for them, which Chicka agreed with. Voigt said that it might be good to get some people out between now and snowfall to get an accurate reflection of the existing conditions, and Chicka said that was doable, but that waiting until early 2012 might be better.

8. BPAC Update

The BPAC met on August 1st for its regularly scheduled quarterly meeting. At this meeting, the first half of an interactive Action Planning Process was undertaken with the committee members and the technical advisors. The Action Planning process was set in order to fully engage the BPAC on what they see and want their role to be and say in the future direction of the committee, with a focus on 2012 and 2013, which are the next years in the MIC's Work Program. MIC staff facilitated this planning process. The second half of this Action Planning Process is scheduled to take place in September.

James Gittemeier explained the action planning process and said that the BPAC had gotten through the first four steps. This consisted of reviewing the current state of the BPAC and determining what they wanted the future of the BPAC to be. It was decided that the BPAC should be seen as a leading bike/ped resource, and provide strong, proactive leadership.

The BPAC then outlined their strengths and weaknesses saying that while they had an experienced and dedicated membership, the limited influence of the BPAC and the infrequency of their meetings were current limitations. Benefits and dangers of a successful BPAC were outlined, showing that the BPAC could grow into a highly influential resource that could provide direction for local initiatives, but that this success could potentially overwork BPAC staff and alienate local decision makers.

Chuck Froseth questioned the danger of alienating decision makers, and Gittemeier explained that the BPAC would have to choose sides on certain issues and as it grows in influence, its views will carry more weight and could upset people who disagree, making it harder for the BPAC to do its job.

9. Sidewalk Study

Development of the sidewalk inventory and condition analysis continues. MIC staff will provide an update on our progress and describe plans to complete this phase of the study.

Brian Heaton discussed his work on the sidewalk study, explaining that they started inventorying sidewalks this spring and have now completed 96 miles of 400. He showed slides depicting common obstructions such as overgrowth, raised lips, and broken pavement, and discussed the inventory of curb ramps at intersections.

Andy McDonald then outlined the plans to complete the inventory, stating that they had hired a temp with GIS/GPS experience to work exclusively on this project, and that a new MIC intern would be starting in September who would be able to put in some work as well. He did say that

they were trying to limit the number of people who were actively taking inventories to keep the data consistent, but that those who did were trained and vetted for consistency. He also mentioned that yearly updates were planned for the future.

Walter Leu asked if the MIC would be using this study as part of its ADA infrastructure and McDonald stated that they would, and that they would be looking for input from the disabled community.

10. Project Updates

Safe Routes to School Update, James Gittemeier

MIC and Fit City Duluth have partnered together to conduct a safe routes to school site assessment process. The focus in the past month has been on the two Duluth Public High Schools, Duluth East and Denfeld, both of which are scheduled to re-open this fall. This safe routes to school assessment is focused on infrastructure improvements, with the idea of assisting the district as they finishing the school projects. The assessment has looked at bike and pedestrian connections to the school, including the location of bike racks, transit stops and real time message board locations. Staff continues to meet with school officials, DTA and the City of Duluth and others as the process moves forward.

James Gittemeier stated that the MIC had not heard anything yet due to the state shut down, and Walter Leu said that he had the latest information. He said that the only school selected for infrastructure work was Esko School, but he had not heard about any of the non-infrastructure choices.

Harbor Planning Update, Andy McDonald

The HTAC as a model was presented at the Coastal Zone 11 Conference in Chicago on July 18. We are sharing the HTAC model with Great Lakes and national audiences to provide an example of a collaborative harbor planning committee that others communities can use as a template to start their own harbor committees. We have recently been in communication with representatives from Toledo, Ohio as they are preparing proposals to start a harbor committee.

MIC Bike Map Awards, Kody Thurnau

The **Duluth-Superior Bike Map** was awarded first prize in the category [Best Cartographic Design Single Map Product – Large Format Press Copy](#) at the [2011 Esri International User Conference](#) in San Diego, CA. Judged by 38 Esri staff members for general and specific cartographic quality, entries in this category had to be a single map product larger than 11 in. x 17 in. but not exceeding 48 in., printed professionally on a printing press. Judging criteria included 'efficiency in communication of intended message' and 'maximization of the user's cognitive experience.'

The map was also one of three overall winners of the [Cartography Special Interest Group \(Carto SIG\) Map Awards](#), out of 1,200 conference Map Gallery entries.

Human Services Transit Plan Update, Robert Herling

The steering committee for this effort will have reconvened for its 2nd meeting by the time of the TAC and MIC meetings. The purpose of the meeting: to revisit the results of the June 7th workshop and recommend action strategies and projects for inclusion in an updated HS Transit plan.

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Robert Herling stated that the steering committee met on August 11th and was currently working to put together a draft of the updated plan. Ron Chicka pointed out this was last done in 2006.

Higher Education Small Area Plan, *Andy McDonald*

MIC staff has been invited to participate on the Higher Education Small Area Plan Committee. This committee represents residents, businesses, property managers, colleges, students and government agencies. From 2001 until 2010, the student population increased by 30%. This has created challenges in neighborhoods surrounding UMD and CSS. The purpose of this planning effort is to identify how to balance student needs with those of the neighborhoods.

Andy McDonald stated that he'd been participating on the committee because they wanted the MIC's expertise. He said that he gave the chancellor of UMD a copy of the plan and asked him to read it, and that he seemed more engaged so hopefully relations there can be improved.

Multimodal Facility Letter of Support, *Ron Chicka*

The MIC was requested to write a letter of support for the Duluth Transit Authority's 5309 Bus and Buss Facility; State of Good Repair grant for the Twin Ports Multi Modal Transportation Facility. Ron Chicka provided a letter which was forwarded to the DTA for review and then will be forwarded on to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Ron Chicka asked Jim Helig to give this update, and Helig stated that the letter had been forwarded to the USDOT and they would find out about the next award in the spring.

11. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Pedersen asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:12.

Motion

**Discussion
and Vote**

Jim Foldesi/Walter Leu moved to adjourn the meeting. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.