



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Tuesday, September 20, 2011, 1:30 p.m.**

|                         |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Meeting Location</b> | WisDOT Lake Superior Room, Superior, Wisconsin |   |
| <b>Meeting Chair</b>    | Jason Serck/Cari Pedersen                      |   |
| <b>Note Taker(s)</b>    | Laurel Davis                                   |   |
| <b>Members Present</b>  | Bryan Anderson                                 | Mn/DOT District 1                         |
|                         | Jim Foldesi                                    | St. Louis County Engineering              |
|                         | Paul Halverson                                 | Douglas County                            |
|                         | Bryn Jacobson                                  | Bike/Pedestrian Rep                       |
|                         | Dennis Jensen                                  | Duluth Transit Authority                  |
|                         | Walter Leu                                     | Mn/DOT District 1                         |
|                         | Cari Pedersen                                  | City of Duluth Engineering                |
|                         | Cindy Petkac                                   | City of Duluth Planning Dept              |
|                         | David Salo                                     | City of Hermantown                        |
|                         | Jason Serck                                    | City of Superior                          |
|                         | Cindy Voigt                                    | City of Duluth Engineering                |
|                         | Dena Young                                     | WisDOT NW Region                          |
| <b>Members Absent</b>   | Chuck Froseth                                  | City of Duluth Community Development Dept |
|                         | Jeff Goetzman                                  | City of Superior                          |
|                         | Heather Rand                                   | Mn DEED                                   |
|                         | Jim Rohweder*                                  | City of Proctor                           |
|                         | Brian Ryks                                     | Duluth Airport Authority                  |
|                         | Jim Sharrow                                    | Duluth Seaway Port Authority              |
|                         |  | *Excused                                  |
| <b>Others Present</b>   | Scott Byykonen                                 | ARDC/MIC Intern                           |
|                         | Katie Caskey                                   | Mn/DOT                                    |
|                         | Ron Chicka                                     | ARDC/MIC Director                         |
|                         | Laurel Davis                                   | ARDC/MIC Administrative Assistant         |
|                         | James Gittemeier                               | ARDC/MIC Senior Planner                   |
|                         | Robert Herling                                 | ARDC/MIC Planner                          |
|                         | Andy McDonald                                  | ARDC/MIC Principal Planner                |
|                         | Bobbi Retzlaff                                 | Mn/DOT                                    |
|                         | Kody Thurnau                                   | ARDC/MIC GIS Specialist                   |
|                         | Rondi Watson                                   | ARDC/MIC Planning Assistant               |

### 1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Chair Jason Serck called the meeting to order at 1:33. All meeting attendees introduced themselves. He asked if there were any proposed changes to the agenda. None were requested.

## 2. Committee Business

### Meeting Summary of 08-16-11

Chair Serck asked for any changes or corrections to the previous month's meeting summary.

Jim Foldesi noted that on page 5 it should have stated that it was part of a future plan to build a right turn lane, rather than building it now.

Cindy Voigt pointed out that possible development on the credit union corner was not something they would take to the city council.

Serck asked for a motion to approve the summary with those changes.

**Motion** Walter Leu/Jim Foldesi moved to approve the 08-16-11 meeting summary with  
**Discussion** revisions. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.  
**and Vote**

## 3. 2012-2013 Draft Work Program and Budget

Ron Chicka presented the work program explaining that the budget portion of it would be a couple weeks away yet. The budgets will be discussed to a greater extent at the October meetings. In addition, to our ongoing project elements concerning the harbor, bikes and pedestrians, freight planning, transit planning and roadway planning (implementation activities) we will incorporate the following to our Work Program:

Air Service and Air Cargo Expansion Analysis (consultant led)  
Duluth Cruise Ship Dock Facility Study (consultant led)  
Intersection Control Evaluation Plan (consultant led)

The above take advantage of the reserved federal dollars at the MICs disposal and will be matched entirely by the submitting jurisdiction. Other studies include:

Duluth – 6th AE Corridor Study  
Duluth – Lincoln Park Multimodal Transportation Plan

Lastly, the following list represents those tasks that MAY be potential projects (short range) for inclusion in the Work Program:

Duluth – Downtown Streetscape Plan  
Duluth – Kenwood/Arrowhead Intersection Analysis  
Superior/Douglas County – Parkland Industrial Park Transportation Assessment  
Douglas County – County C west of Hwy 35 Transportation Assessment

Please come prepared to the meeting to discuss these projects plus others that may be pertinent to your jurisdiction or organization.

*Ron Chicka told Cindy Voigt that we would be able to do some data collection for the Arrowhead/Kenwood project, but didn't know what would happen after that. He suggested that maybe the MIC was only a part of*

*it with another agency leading. Voigt said they were going to sit down and talk about resources and see what they could get before the snow falls.*

*Paul Halverson commented that the south side of Hwy Z has a major rail line and he would tie that into the multimodal siding area. He also said that Cty C is a route designated to keep the trucks from coming into town, and he suggested that we could jump in now to have planning in place when money becomes available. Chicka asked him which project he felt needed higher priority, and Halverson said the Cty C project did, in his opinion.*

Chicka stated that as far as the Superior traffic study on Winter and Broadway corridors, Winter Street has always popped up with high crash statistics and there has been speculation as to why Broadway has the traffic lights.

*Dena Young asked if Winter was a truck route and wondered why they didn't put the traffic light there. Jason Serck said that it was, and he believed the light was placed where it is due to the rail lines there.*

*Cindy Voigt asked if the sidewalk study would be finished this year or carry over until next. Chicka replied that he doesn't expect them to finish this year and that it will carry over, which Voigt said she was glad to hear because she felt it was important.*

*Cindy Petkac asked when comments on the work program should be in, and Chicka said about two weeks.*

#### **4. 2011-2014 Duluth Area TIP Amendment #8**

The proposed TIP amendment contains two separate adjustments to the 2011-2014 TIP. The first change is a funding adjustment: the Duluth Air Guard has agreed to transfer \$1,276,775 of HPP funding originally procured for improved access roads to St. Louis County's Haines Road improvement project (see table below). Haines Road is a primary route to the Duluth Air Guard Base, and the Duluth Air Guard concurs that expenditure of these funds for reconstruction of Haines is a high priority use of these funds.

The other change is an administrative adjustment: MnDOT and the City of Duluth have requested that the Joshua Avenue construction project (currently unfunded) be identified in the STIP as an "illustrative" project to be eligible for programming while the City of Duluth seeks additional funding.

*Walter Leu added some information about the transfer of funds from the Air Guard, explaining that the Air Guard got funding for improvement to primary and secondary roads to the base which could not be used for any improvements on the base itself. Rather than risk losing the money, they agreed to transfer it to the Haines Road project because that road serves the Air Base and fits into the requirements for using that money.*

Herling also gave a brief description of the Stewart Creek Bridge project that was included as Amendment #7 to the Duluth Area TIP which was approved by the TAC in a special meeting held 9-13-11.

*Ron Chicka asked Walter Leu if we can reasonably expect this project to move forward, and Leu replied that it's uncertain whether it will be 2011 or 2012, but either way it's moving forward and we will*

*retain the \$800,000.*

**Motion** Cari Pedersen/Dennis Jensen moved to approve the amendment as presented.  
**Discussion** There was minimal discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.  
**and Vote**

## 5. Federal Transportation Bill Reauthorization

The federal transportation bill is set to expire at the end of this month. It is quite likely that some form of Continuing Resolution (CR) will be put into place by that time to extend the various programs. The length of that extension might be as short as a few weeks, or as long as a few months – probably nothing too greater. The reauthorization is already overdue by more than a year. At a recent conference of the MPOs and DOTs in Wisconsin and Minnesota, we had a series of speakers (including myself) address the topic of the federal bill and its complexities of funding not only programs such as MPOs, but also funding for projects overall across the nation. The gas tax figured in our discussion, but it is likely not the long-term solution (or at best only a part of the solution). Other forms of financing a bill have been discussed including some form of vehicle mileage tax though it is quite uncertain (and debated) as to how that tax would be administered.

We also had in attendance; Tom Petri (U.S. House - 6th District Wisconsin) and long-time Transportation and Infrastructure Committee member provide his thoughts concerning the outlook for the next federal bill. The House, Senate and the Administration have different forms of legislation that, to date, have been discussed some though nothing formally introduced yet. The future prospects of many programs (not just MPOs) could be altered significantly by the next bill. For the meeting, I will outline the various perspectives being considered by the Congress and also discuss the points I provided at the conference on behalf of the MPOs.

Ron Chicka presented the above information on the federal transportation bill, and added that the bill had been given a clean extension for another six months, but that it was unknown what would happen after that.

*Cindy Voigt asked how a mileage based tax would work in terms of data collection, and Chicka said that it would most likely be via diagnostics in the cars, but that this was one of the main problems with the idea. He also said that another consideration was the vast amount of public education that would have to take place.*

*Jason Serck asked if there had been any analysis comparing gas tax to mileage based tax to see which format brought in more revenue. Chicka said he didn't think so, and that phasing in a mileage based tax was likely to be a transitional thing combining both forms of tax for quite some time.*

*James Gittemeier mentioned that there was a pilot program taking place in Oregon.*

## 6. BPAC Update

James Gittemeier presented the BPAC update, stating that the planned meeting for September 19 had been postponed until October due to not enough members being able to attend. He

explained that this process was a very important one and therefore they felt they needed the majority of the BPAC to participate.

The main question of this action planning process is "What does a successful BPAC look like?" Participants in the second half will focus on key actions and establishing timeframes for what the BPAC wants to accomplish in 2012 and 2013.

Gittemeier also mentioned the draft for the Duluth Trail and Bikeway Plan which will include all forms of trails in the area including on-street bike routes and horse trails. He said they were looking for specific recommendations for what kind of road markings and facilities should be used. The advisory group is being run through the Parks and Rec Department, but they wanted to be sure the TAC was aware of it to offer recommendations for roadway improvement.

*Cindy Petkac added that the plan was in the public comments stage and anyone with ideas should get them in now because it was going before the city council at the end of October.*

## 7. Central Entrance Study

MIC staff has almost completed turning movement counts to use as inputs in the small area model. We recently spoke with URS staff (our modeling consultant) about development of the small area model. We will also bring a draft access management policy plan forward for TAC review at our upcoming meetings. We would like to get input as we develop this part of the study.

Andy McDonald presented the update on the Central Entrance Study, stating that turning movement counts were nearly complete and the remaining ones were scheduled for the following week.

He explained that the access management goals were separated into four segments with tailored policy for each:

**Mesaba to Blackman:** Extend Clearwood Dr. to Central High School Dr. to serve as a backage road.

**Blackman to Basswood:** Continue to use Palm St. as a backage road, align Clearwood Dr. with Palm St., and encourage consolidated and shared access points. They would also consider medians and dedicated turning lanes.

**Basswood to Anderson:** Myrtle St. and Palm St. should serve as the backage roads, Robin Ave. would be closed off at Palm, and Palm St. would be extended to Anderson Rd., the alleyway would be mostly closed off, and any new accesses off Central Entrance would be discouraged in this section.

**Anderson to Trinity:** Develop a backage road to Mall Dr. and encourage all new development to access that road.

*Cindy Petkac commented that the vision coming out of the Small Area Plan was to make Central Entrance the Main Street of Duluth Heights, so it should be walkable and the goal was not to move traffic through there as quickly as possible.*

*Jim Foldesi asked if there was a streetscape component to this planning, to which McDonald replied that there wasn't at this time, but it could become part of a long range plan. Petkac added that she felt it was a priority and would want to see it sooner than later.*

(NOTE: At this point in the meeting Jason Serck needed to leave, and Cari Pedersen took over as chair.)

### **8. Lincoln Park Pedestrian Study**

The Draft Plan, which focuses on connecting the Clyde Iron Complex and the new Lincoln Park Middle School, is being presented to the public for comment and discussion on Thursday, September 22nd from 5pm to 6:30pm at the Harrison Community Center. The specific recommendations for the plan will be presented at this meeting.

James Gittemeier presented the draft plan of the Lincoln Park Pedestrian Study. He outlined the recommended walking route between the Clyde Iron Complex and the new Lincoln Park Middle School, which follows 30<sup>th</sup> Ave up, across Vernon St, up Grand Forks St. to cross 3<sup>rd</sup> Street over to Restormel St., up Winnipeg St, across Devonshire, and up a path through the woods. Gittemeier said they were also including the school designated route for reference, but that it's not the best route.

Further recommendations are that the city continue to pursue an easement at the propane company to provide a safe crossing there, better crosswalks at Michigan, Superior and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, installing trails at the upper section where the road doesn't go through, and providing wayfinding signage at the upper portion where the route is less intuitive. He also added that some of these recommendations would be eligible for Safe Routes to School.

*Cindy Voigt asked why the route didn't use the existing crossing at Devonshire and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Gittemeier replied that it didn't make sense from a pedestrian point of view. Voigt then pointed out that an even better option would be to recommend crossing at the intersection two blocks below that where Vernon crosses 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, since there are several roads intersecting at that location with no signals or signs to control traffic. This would provide a crossing for the students and take care of an unsafe intersection at the same time. Gittemeier agreed that this was a good idea and said he would include the option with their other recommendations.*

He finished by saying they hope to have a complete plan in October.

### **9. Human Services Coordinated Transit Plan**

A final draft of the Coordinated Human Services Transit Plan for the Arrowhead Region is ready for public review. The plan identifies strategies and projects aimed at improving the quality and coordination of transit services for elderly, disabled, and low income populations. The plan also makes those projects identified eligible to receive future FTA 5310, "New

Freedom”, and JARC funds. The MIC assisted in the development of this plan, which includes strategies and projects specific to the Duluth-Superior metropolitan area.

Public comments will be taken on the draft plan until November 17<sup>th</sup>, when the draft plan will be brought before the ARDC Policy Board for approval.

Robert Herling presented the Human Services Coordinated Transit Plan. He outlined the project prioritization effort that came out of the stakeholder workshop and the August steering committee meeting. First priority were the easy to do projects, minor improvements being ride contracting among organizations, major improvements being the creation of a Mobility Manager in the Twin Ports and convening a Regional Coordination Body. The more difficult projects included developing a regional call center, creating a rural transportation co-op, scheduling medical appointment days, multi-community coordination, and volunteer driver recruitment and training.

Herling finished by saying the draft plan would be ready for review October 1<sup>st</sup>, and could be examined at [www.arrowheadplanning.org/transitcoordination](http://www.arrowheadplanning.org/transitcoordination)

## 10. HTAC Update

HTAC met on Wednesday September 7 at the WITC Conference Center in Superior. Our agenda included presentations on the Vintage Vessel National Center of Excellence, Current St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC) Activities, Using Erie Pier Material in Wisconsin Project, and Moccasin Mike Landfill Dredged Material Demonstration Project. MIC staff also toured Erie Pier on Thursday September 8 with staff from the Army Corps, Port Authority, MnDOT and MPCA as well as members of the HTAC Dredging Subcommittee. This tour was organized to show MnDOT environmental staff how material is processed at Erie Pier. We are still trying to resolve the issue of using Erie Pier material in state construction projects.

Andy McDonald gave the update on the HTAC. He briefly outlined the above presentations and then added that WisDOT would like to tour Erie Pier in mid October and TAC members were invited to join. He gave Oct 12-13 as a tentative date, but said that nothing had been set.

*Jim Foldesi asked what the end result of the meeting was on the Minnesota side regarding Erie Pier. McDonald said that MPCA had stated that the material meets their criteria, but that they were still waiting for final word from Mn/DOT. He added that they were asking for an answer before the next HTAC meeting in December, and they'd like to have the issue resolved in time for the bidding on upcoming construction. Foldesi then asked if they are looking at using the same process as Wisconsin, and McDonald said he wasn't sure and that Mn/DOT may feel this would give blanket approval to dredging projects statewide.*

## 11. Project Updates

### **Draft 2012-2015 Superior Area TIP, Sheldon Johnson**

The Draft 2012-2015 Superior Area TIP has been officially out for public comment since August 26. Public comments will be accepted through September 28, 2011. A public information display will be available at the Government Center on Tuesday, September 20 from 11:30am – 12:30pm highlighting the new projects

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recommended for inclusion in the TIP. Approval of the TIP will be at the October meetings.

### **Sidewalk Study, Andy McDonald**

We have hired Mark Mayer as a temp worker to complete the gathering of sidewalk condition data. As of early September, he had made excellent progress and we are over half way done with the data collection phase. MIC staff continues research into criteria used by other communities to prioritize sidewalks. This information will be used in the second phase of the study.

### **Social Media Update, Rondi Watson**

There is a great deal of interest in our social media initiatives, as evidenced by several recent invitations to speak on this topic. I presented information about the ways the MIC is augmenting public involvement strategies with our [OpenMIC blog](#) and [Facebook page](#) at the annual MPO/DOT/RPC Conference in La Crosse in late August and at the Social Media Breakfast group in early September. A third presentation is planned for the Minnesota APA conference in St. Cloud at the end of this month.

### **Small MPO Modeling Peer Exchange, Ron Chicka**

I recently helped in coordinating and participating in a peer exchange for small MPOs across the country in an effort to evaluate the status of transportation modeling within planning agencies. This was sponsored by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) out of Washington D.C. Participants were specifically chosen across the nation from small urban areas in order to ascertain the state of network modeling across a range of agency designation. Nearly all MPOs run a travel demand model to determine levels of congestion for future planning needs along any given road in an urban area. Who exactly runs the model and how often it is used and its role in determining project selection varies from agency to agency. The Peer Exchange was set up to determine a series of best practices for MPOs to follow in getting the most from their models toward decisions in local area planning. A series of recommendations and model resources will be provided as a final product by FHWA in the exchange proceedings.

### **Minnesota Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council, Kody Thurnau**

The Minnesota Geospatial Information Office, known as MnGeo, was established in May 2009 as the first state agency with legislatively defined responsibility for coordinating GIS within Minnesota. It was created based upon a recommendation made by the [Drive to Excellence](#) Sub-Cabinet to pursue an enterprise strategy to implementing GIS within the state. Drive to Excellence is a high-level state-government reform program that recommends government reforms that improve government services. Kody will be representing non-metro regional government on MnGeo's Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council, which advises MnGeo about issues, policies, priorities, and investments needed to improve services statewide through coordinated, affordable, reliable, and effective use of geospatial technology.

## 12. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Cari Pedersen asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:25.

### **Motion Discussion and Vote**

Jim Foldesi/Cindy Voigt to adjourn the meeting. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.