



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Tuesday, December 13, 2011, 1:30 p.m.**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Superior Public Library, Superior, Wisconsin	
<b>Meeting Chair</b>	Cari Pedersen	
<b>Note Taker(s)</b>	Laurel Davis	
<b>Members Present</b>	Matt Decur	City of Duluth Engineering
	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County Engineering
	Chuck Froseth	City of Duluth Community Development Dept
	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
	Heather Rand	Mn DEED
	Jim Rohweder	City of Proctor
	Brian Ryks	Duluth Airport Authority
	David Salo	City of Hermantown
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth Engineering
	Dena Young	WisDOT NW Region
<b>Members Absent</b>	Bryan Anderson	Mn/DOT District 1
	Jeff Goetzman	City of Superior
	Paul Halverson	Douglas County
	Jason Serck	City of Superior
	Jim Sharrow	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
		*Excused
<b>Others Present</b>	Jeff Abramson	Ayers Associates
	Scott Byykkonen	ARDC/MIC Intern
	Ron Chicka	ARDC/MIC Director
	Laurel Davis	ARDC/MIC Administrative Assistant
	Matt Dickenson	WisDOT
	James Gittemeier	ARDC/MIC Senior Planner
	Robert Herling	ARDC/MIC Planner
	Morrie Luke	WisDOT
	Andy McDonald	ARDC/MIC Principal Planner
	Kody Thurnau	ARDC/MIC GIS Specialist
	Rondi Watson	ARDC/MIC Planning Assistant

## 1. Introductions and Agenda Review

Chair Cari Pedersen called the meeting to order at 1:32. All meeting attendees introduced themselves. She asked if there were any proposed changes to the agenda. None were requested.

## 2. Committee Business

Ron Chicka presented the 2012 meeting calendar and made sure everyone had been given a copy. He also mentioned that they were being sent out electronically.

Chicka also announced that at this time of year volunteers were requested for Vice-Chair. Jason Serck will be stepping down and Cari Pedersen will take over as Chair. Volunteers agree to serve one year as Vice-Chair and the second year as Chair. The motion and vote will be taken at the January meeting. Dena Young volunteered.

### Meeting Summary of 10-16-11

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** Jim Foldesi/Chuck Froseth moved to approve the 10-16-11 meeting summary as  
**Discussion** presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.  
**and Vote**

## 3. US 2/I-35 Bong Bridge Rehabilitation

Morrie Luke introduced the presentation on the rehabilitation of the Bong Bridge, stating that they generally expect to get about thirty years out of the decks of these bridges before they have to rehabilitate them, especially in our harsh environment, and that this is simply the next step in the lifecycle of the bridge.

Jeff Abramson of Ayers Associates then took over to run through the presentation as it was given at the public involvement meetings. He said that a lot of data gathering and traffic counts were done and they were now in the process of developing plans for the rehabilitation.

The US Highway 2 / Bong Bridge and approaches project begins at the intersection of USH 2 and Belknap in Superior and continues to Duluth terminating prior to the intersection of USH 2 and Michigan Street. Preliminary design is now underway with inter-agency coordination going into 2012 along with a public involvement component slated to conclude by the summer of next year. Construction is scheduled for 2014 and 2015 as the project would require phasing over the two year period to allow for limited traffic usage over the bridge during this time. The project includes mill and overlay of the deck, replacement of structural joints, painting of the truss, lighting upgrades and

sidewalk maintenance. Improvements to the intersection of Belknap Street with the bridge approaches will also be incorporated into the project with a potential new roadway connection that would extend to the north into the nearby industrial park. The specific traffic control device at this location is currently under review by the DOT and the City of Superior. Additionally, intersection modifications and signal installation at the south approach of the Blatnik Bridge will also be conducted as preparation for added diverted traffic is taken into account with this project.

Although the bulk of the project involves rehabilitation, there is one area where significant redesigning will occur. The intersection of USH 2 and Belknap is being studied to determine whether a signalized intersection or a roundabout would be the best solution there. Abramson said they compared factors such as cost and safety and they are recommending a roundabout at this time. Matt Dickenson of WisDOT pointed out that traffic coming off the bridge can be going very fast and if they encounter a green light, they tend to just continue on through at a high speed, but they are forced to slow down for the roundabout each time. He said safety was what really jumped out with this option.

*Ron Chicka asked if S. Garfield would be a right in/right out, and Abramson said it would be. Then Chicka asked if the intension was to design N. Garfield to handle trucks, and would it be able to handle even more trucks if they got routed that way. Dickenson, replied that they could provide more access if there was a need, particularly if more than one business was using it, but that the city still needs to do some things to make that area more industry friendly.*

Abramson also spoke about the process for determining whether the project could be done in one or two years. He said that when they looked a cost, incident management, traffic flow, and other factors, the two year option became the apparent solution. They questioned whether even a large contractor could do the full job effectively in one year, and determined that keeping half the bridge open over a two-year span provided not only less disruption in traffic over all, but a safer alternative for vehicles involved in the construction and the offloading of materials.

*Bryn Jacobson asked if the Bong bridge sidewalk would be closed, and Abramson replied that there would need to be some work done on the sidewalk as well, and it's proposed to be closed during the 2015 season. He also said that they were taking suggestions from the public for pedestrian management, and they would have to work out how to serve those users.*

#### **4. 2012-2013 Work Program Final**

The Work Program and Budget will be presented for approval at the December

meeting. Upon approval, I would seek to get ARDC and NWRPC to agree to enter into contracts for 2012 to carry out the tasks described in the document. Since I mailed out the Work Plan a couple of weeks ago, I have received a couple of comments from TAC and MIC members and have incorporated those into the current version provided with the meeting materials. Please provide further comments to me at the meeting itself so that all additions are satisfied.

Ron Chicka presented the 2012-2013 Work Program, primarily outlining the short range planning projects as follows:

- Duluth Safe Routes to School Site Assessment
- Lincoln Park Multimodal Transportation Assessment
- Superior Transportation Systems Management Study – North End
- Intersection Control Evaluation Planning Study for the Duluth Regional Area
- Duluth Cruise Ship Dock Facility Study
- Air Service and Air Cargo Leakage/Expansion Analysis

He stated that they hoped to be kicking off the consultant led projects (the last three) early in 2012 and would most likely be doing them in a somewhat staggered fashion. He also said that the funding is there and these have all been approved by the state. Concerning 2013 short range projects, he noted that the state will also be doing an assessment of the Douglas County Road C truck route. He gave a very brief overview of the ongoing planning areas and long range planning. Of special note is an update to the Project Selection Criteria to reflect long range goals.

*Cindy Voigt had a couple of comments. On page 21 of the Work Program she noted that the work done in 2011 was listed as a preliminary design which is incorrect. Chicka said he would clarify that statement to say that some draft schematics had been conducted. Under the Kenwood/Arrowhead description, no mention was made of the MIC helping with traffic counts and other data collection, or of any consultant led modeling. Chicka said he would add those details.*

**Motion** David Salo/Jim Rohweder moved to approve the Work Program with those  
**Discussion** changes. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved  
**and Vote** unanimously.

#### 5. 2011-2014 Duluth Area TIP Amendments #9 & #10

Robert Herling presented two amendments for the Duluth Area TIP. MnDOT is adding to projects to the existing 2011-2014 TIP. The first (amendment #9) is a \$262,500 project to upgrade a number of accesses on STH 23 in Gary New Duluth up to ADA standards, which will include replacing various sidewalk segments in order to match

grades.

*Walter Leu explained that the ADA standards were in flux at the time of the original project and they made a lot of good improvements, but didn't get some areas up to ADA specs and will now go back and bring everything into compliance.*

The second project (amendment #10) involves the installation of various ITS signs on I-35 and STH 23 to provide motorists with travel time information through the upcoming interstate construction in 2012. The accessibility improvements will be funded 80% with federal TEA funds, while the ITS signage will be funded with 50% federal STP funds.

*Leu stated that they had put in some requests for funding to upgrade technology for drive times and were able to get some money for this project.*

**Motion Discussion and Vote** Walter Leu/Jim Foldesi moved to approve the TIP as presented. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 6. DTA/Downtown Multimodal Terminal Project

Dennis Jensen spoke about the current state of the Multimodal Project. He said since the DTA was unable to secure additional grant funding necessary to complete the planned multimodal terminal project, they are now exploring opportunities to use an alternative site that was identified in their 2009 DTA Downtown Multi-Modal Transportation Terminal Analysis. They are looking at the potential for a public-private arrangement that will help fund the construction of a terminal/parking ramp facility at the SE corner of Michigan Street & 3rd Avenue W. The project would include an indoor bus staging area, bike facilities, retail space, and upgrades to the NW Passage skywalk. The design will also take into consideration future connections with potential NLX passenger rail service. Estimated project cost, \$26 million.

Jensen said the proposed project would possibly double the parking spaces in that facility, and that they have gotten favorable comments from both the bank and the property owner.

*Bryn Jacobson asked if there would still be a potential rail connection at this facility. Jensen replied that they spoke to the rail people and they may possibly be willing to move the train a little closer to the facility, but that the question was still out on when that project might go through, and the DTA felt they needed to move forward with the money they have in hand due to some timing guidelines*

*from Federal on the use of it.*

*Cindy Petkac added that the project proposed some improvements to the skywalk system including adding some missing connections on the lower side of Michigan Street which eventually could get it connected to The Depot.*

*Jim Foldesi asked if the change in site was essentially a cost issue. Jensen explained that the previous site required more foundation and construction work than this one. Foldesi also asked how much money they had in hand right now, and Jensen said about \$20 million with the state bonding money and some private funds.*

*Cari Pedersen asked if this information was for public discussion and Jensen assured her she could talk about it.*

#### 7. TSM Assessment of Duluth Area Intersections (draft)

Robert Herling presented the TSM for Duluth. He said MIC staff met with traffic engineers from the City of Duluth and St. Louis County to discuss the results of the 2011 TSM Assessment of Duluth Area Intersections. From these discussions, a number of low-cost treatments were identified for recommendation, which have been added to the assessment document that was drafted earlier in the year. Together, the assessment and recommendations are being brought before the MIC Policy Board as the *2011 TSM Assessment of Duluth Intersections* for approval.

These intersections include:

**Arrowhead Rd & Kenwood Ave:** Recommendations are converting westbound Arrowhead to a single through lane with dedicated turning lanes, pursue access management improvements along with centerline median treatments, and optimize signal timing.

**E 4<sup>th</sup> St & 6<sup>th</sup> Ave E:** Install additional speed messaging sign for southbound 6th Ave E closer to the intersection, pursue access management improvements.

**Railroad St & Lake Ave S:** Although there isn't much that can be done here, one recommendation is to create parking incentives downtown and market/incentivize DTA shuttle service.

**London Road & 21<sup>st</sup> Ave E:** Investigate opportunities to lengthen red-clearance times, and optimize pedestrian crossing times.

*Cindy Voigt pointed out that Herling had commented he would be putting the TSM on the MIC website, and said it was her understanding that they had decided not to post it, and that she*

*still had some concerns about the language. Herling said there would have to be further discussion about that, because it was the MIC's feeling that it should be there, but there were concessions he could make in terms of language to make it more clear that this is an assessment and not a formal plan, more a menu of potential options. He also said that in future he would ask for more feedback earlier on to prevent these concerns.*

*Cindy Petkac asked if the menu would be prioritized, and Herling said no, it would be presented the same way it's been presented to the board, as a simple bullet-point list.*

#### **8. Duluth Sidewalk Study**

Andy McDonald introduced the Duluth Sidewalk Study Update, stating that MIC staff will be presenting the inputs and initial results of the test runs of the Pedestrian Priority Modeling. This modeling process is designed to identify areas most important to sidewalk users. The model has three components – pedestrian generators, pedestrian attractors, and pedestrian detractors. We will discuss what data was used as inputs into the model, how that data was weighted and what the preliminary results look like.

Kody Thurnau then took over to define the three components of the model, saying that pedestrian generators included such things as population density, income and employment density. Pedestrian attractors were things like schools, shopping centers, transit centers and parks. Pedestrian detractors included safety, railroads, freeways and speed of traffic.

All these things were given scores based on weighted multipliers and then plotted on a map. When the maps for each of the three components were overlaid, a composite model of the sidewalk system and its usability was created.

*Cindy Petkac asked Thurnau to clarify what the red blocks and red lines on the map were, he explained that the red blocks are areas of high priority and the lines were sidewalks in need of improvement.*

Thurnau then announced that he'd just finished up the online piece, which is an interactive map that users can scroll through, and incorporates the sidewalk inventory and the priority modeling. McDonald asked members to try it out and see if things made sense, encouraging them to give feedback.

#### **9. Central Entrance Corridor Study**

MIC staff will be presenting some of the draft recommendations from the study. We will review the results of the pedestrian, bike and transit discussions from the October meetings. We will also show some of the access management recommendations which are very preliminary at this point.

Andy McDonald presented some new recommendations to the Central Entrance Corridor Study. For the Anderson Road to Basswood Avenue segment, they are proposing a solid median the entire length with a right in/right out at Robin Avenue. The median would be 6', driving lanes would be 10' and 12', curb and gutter 2', grass boulevard 5', sidewalk 5'. The same style median with these dimensions is proposed from Basswood Avenue to Arlington Avenue. From Arlington Avenue to Blackman Avenue the median would be 12' with the same driving lanes, boulevard and sidewalks, with right in/right out and left turn only accesses along the length. One exception would be Myrtle Street where there would be no median due to its use as a backage road.

Ron Chicka stated that he felt this would dovetail well with the city's Small Area Plan, but invited input for better solutions.

*Cindy Voigt asked if this had been shown to the businesses along that section yet, as she felt they would be very unhappy with these recommendations and expects a lot of comment from them. McDonald said they hadn't yet, but planned to in the future when the study is more refined. Voigt also expressed concern about getting a five foot boulevard without taking right of way. McDonald replied that the boulevard was important not only for snow storage but as part of the plan to make the area more of a community place.*

*Cindy Petkac asked if six or seven feet wouldn't be better for snow storage. Voigt said ten to fifteen feet would be better, but there's no space and they'd need right of way. McDonald stated that they were working within the eighty-six feet of right of way, and the proposed boulevards fit within that boundary.*

McDonald requested that members mention any businesses they specifically think would be unhappy so he could possibly address their concerns by showing how people could get to various businesses when they hold the public meetings.

Ron Chicka commented that at the public meeting held at Marshall School, although some people were saying it was tough, several people were in favor of it, and the response may not be as bad as expected.

*Cindy Petkac commented that many people use Palm Street as a backage road to access those businesses. Jim Foldesi agreed, saying that he thinks traffic is already naturally doing a lot of right in/right out now, and suggested doing traffic counts to show this as a way to convince businesses. He also commented that the lights at Arlington may have to be timed to address that*

*additional traffic flow.*

*Petkac then asked if they had decided on any treatment for the medians, to which McDonald replied that they had not yet, but a six foot median would likely be concrete, while with a larger one you might have more choices.*

## 10. Roundtable Discussion – Local Projects

- 24<sup>th</sup> W. & Piedmont Photos

Ron Chicka mentioned that he had received a letter, and so had the city, complaining about traffic levels and the cueing of cars at the intersection of 24th Avenue West and Piedmont Avenue. He is wondering if there's anything that can be done.

*Dennis Jensen commented that the traffic problem seemed to be the worst in the evening when all the cars are turning left and trying to go up the hill.*

Chicka agreed and said that maybe at some point some data collection should take place.

- Hermantown Walmart Mall Drive Entrance/Exit

Ron Chicka explained that an issue has arisen with people coming out of the front entrance of Walmart and rather than turning right, as they are supposed to do, they do a short U-turn around the median there so they can go left out to Mall Drive, sometimes driving right over the median. He showed photos taken by MIC staff of several cars doing this within the space of only a few minutes. He then opened the topic for discussion by stating that he thought there was some discrepancy as to what is a legal move there.

David Salo stated that they have put up a No U-Turn sign, so it's now clearly illegal. He went on to explain that the approach Hermantown is currently taking is that this is Walmart's problem and they need to fix it. Walmart doesn't have a certificate of occupancy yet, and the inspector has suggested to the manager that this isn't a problem Walmart wants associated with their store, especially if it causes more significant accidents. They are hoping this idea will work its way up the chain of command. He also said they are holding \$1 million of Walmart's money and won't give it back until the issue is resolved.

*Ron Chicka asked if the exit in question could simply be removed, but Salo said it would reduce the parking lot to one egress. Jim Foldesi then asked if something in the internal design pushed*

people to use that exit. Salo explained that from the inside it looks as if you can get directly to Hwy 53 going that way. Cindy Voigt suggested putting a sign on the building directing people through the back exit to get to 53. Cindy Petkac asked if they could simply move the exit, but Salo said he believed that would be too much money and Walmart would refuse. Dennis Jensen suggested a signal at that exit, but Salo said it was too close to the 53 signal.

Salo concluded by saying that the city liked Walmart being there. The relationship needs to work both ways, which is why they are taking it carefully.

Cindy Voigt then announced she would be submitting grant proposals for two projects, one along the North Shore Scenic Drive, and the other along Skyline starting at 19<sup>th</sup> Ave E to Kenwood. Jim Foldesi asked what the North Shore project was, and Voigt explained that they would like to do some resurfacing, guard rails, and various other refurbishing, plus they are making a push for bike lanes.

## 11. Project Updates

### **I-35/DTA Traffic Mitigation Study, Robert Herling**

The MIC assisted the DTA with processing survey responses from their effort to survey ridership of the West Mainline during the 2011 construction work on I-35. MIC staff developed a database for the survey responses, which have been transferred to researchers with the University of MN who are carrying out a larger study regarding the effectiveness of various transit strategies as congestion mitigation during large reconstruction projects.

Herling said they passed along the data to a researcher in the cities, but mentioned that the survey showed 13% of riders were new users who owned cars, so it appeared that the express service did attract users.

*Dennis Jensen commented that they didn't hear too many complaints and felt they met the goal of getting people where they were going quickly.*

### **2011-2014 Superior Area TIP Modification, Sheldon Johnson**

An administrative amendment to the 2011-2014 Superior Urbanized Area TIP. The amendment is to project 113-08-03 that increases the amount of funds available for the project from \$890,000 to \$1,376,000. No action is required by the MIC.

### **Harbor Planning, Andy McDonald**

The HTAC will be meeting on Wednesday December 7th at 9am at the Inn on Lake

Superior in Duluth. Our scheduled agenda includes reports of the following projects and activities:

- Army Corps Detroit District Activities in the Duluth-Superior Harbor
- Remediation to Restoration at 21st and 40th Ave. West Project Areas
- Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR)
- Erie Pier Dredge Materials: Follow Up from Letter to MPCA and MnDOT Commissioners

**Bike/Ped Planning**, *James Gittemeier*

BPAC completed the action planning process in November. The process was set up to understand the role of the committee and the next tasks to be undertaken in the next year. From this series of action planning meetings, the BPAC has decided to focus on expanding the membership, develop more communication opportunities and processes for the committee to be more active, offer committee training on bike and ped initiatives, Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School specifically, and develop outreach and education strategies for the community.

## 12. Adjournment

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

**Motion**

**Discussion  
and Vote**

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