
DULUTH-SUPERIOR
METROPOLITAN INTERSTATE COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Tuesday, July 19, 2005 at 1:30 PM

WITC Conference Center
600 N 21st Street, Superior, WI

Members Present:	Representing:	Others Present:	Representing:
Jim Benning	City of Duluth	Brian Boder	St. Louis County
Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County	Holly Butcher	MIC Staff
Martin Forbes *	Wisconsin DOT	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
Chuck Froseth, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	City of Duluth	James Gittemeier	MIC Staff
Paul Halverson	Douglas County	Andy McDonald	MIC Staff
Dennis Jensen, <i>Chair</i>	DTA	Rondi Watson	MIC Staff
Denny Johnson	Minnesota DOT		
Dick Larson	City of Duluth		
Walter Leu	Minnesota DOT		
Mike Metso	City of Duluth		
Jason Serck	City of Superior		
Ray Skelton	Duluth Seaway Port Authority		
Brian Ryks	Airport		

* = *alternate*

Members Absent:	Representing:
John Foschi	City of Proctor
Bryn Jacobson	Bikes and Peds
David Salo	City of Hermantown

1. Introductions/Agenda Review

MIC-TAC Chair Dennis Jensen called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

2. Committee Business

Meeting summary for June 14, 2005

Chair Jensen called for amendments or corrections to the previous month's meeting

summary. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

Chuck Froseth/Denny Johnson moved to approve the meeting summary from the June 14, 2005 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Final 2006-2008 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program

James Gittemeier presented the final 2006-2008 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program and reviewed the text changes that had been made to the document since the draft version was presented in June. He noted that no comments had been received during the 30-day public comment period or at the public meeting held on June 15 at the Hampton Inn in Canal Park. He added that the MPCA officially approved the content of the draft document for air quality conformity purposes on July 1. He closed by requesting approval of the final document.

Jim Foldesi/Mike Metso moved to approve the final 2006-2008 Minnesota TIP. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. Safe Routes to School in Duluth—Scope of Work

Holly Butcher reviewed the tasks and timelines set forth in the Scope of Work for Duluth Safe Routes to School project. She noted that the specific schools had not yet been identified, but that Ken Willms, the Duluth Public Schools Transportation Director, had suggested five ‘walkable’ urban elementary schools and one middle school as good fits for this study. After the Scope of Work is approved, she will be contacting them to gauge their level of interest. She added that she was scheduled to make a presentation about Safe Routes to School concepts to the Duluth School Board at their August Board meeting. She closed by requesting approval of the Scope.

Chuck Froseth/Jim Benning moved to approve the Scope of Work as presented for the SR2S-Duluth study. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. Duluth Heights Traffic Study—Scope of Work

Andy McDonald reviewed the Scope of Work for the Duluth Heights Traffic Circulation Study, noting that it had been modified from the draft version to incorporate the feedback and information generated at last month’s TAC and MIC meetings. He closed by requesting approval of the Scope of Work.

Chuck Froseth/Brian Ryks moved to approve the Scope of Work as presented for the Duluth Heights Traffic Circulation study. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. Rice Lake Road Corridor Study—Scope Development

Holly Butcher presented a preliminary scope of work for the upcoming Rice Lake Road Corridor Study and requested committee input. Discussion centered on the issues that are already being addressed around Lowell Elementary School. Jim Foldesi reported that the improvements as set forth in “Option 5” in the draft Scope of Work would be implemented by the County this summer. He noted that the County had quite a bit of data to supply on this corridor, adding that the information they would be most interested in seeing from this study would be future capacity needs. Dennis Jensen noted that cut-through traffic in the area of the Chris Jensen nursing home merited some attention, and Denny Johnson suggested that an additional intersection should be included in the study area for traffic counts. Chuck Froseth noted that the aerial photos from 2002 did not show the residential growth that has since occurred in that area and that information would need to be updated for accurate traffic projections to be made. Holly thanked committee members for their input and stated that the final Scope of Work would be presented for approval in August.

7. Duluth Port Land Use Plan—Draft

Andy McDonald presented the draft version of the Duluth Port Land Use Plan and requested TAC members read it and return comments to him. He began by showing the study area relative to the entire Duluth shoreline and noted that it was a comparatively small area with a concentration of maritime and industrial land uses. He singled out the Future Land Use map as the key piece of the plan based on modeling efforts that incorporated a number of features. He noted that he would be meeting the next day with the study advisory committee for their comments before the final plan is produced. Chuck Froseth commented that he could help to set up a presentation to the Duluth Planning Commission about the plan and its recommendations. Andy stated that he would welcome the opportunity as it is hoped that this plan will be incorporated into Duluth’s Comprehensive Plan, which is currently being developed.

8. Hermantown Section 13 Traffic Circulation Study

James Gittemeier reported that he had gathered development and trip generation data and updated the trip distribution tables based on a fully built out Section 13 scenario. This month, URS is working on making the adjustments to the small area model (Synchro) and had determined that a total of 1,750 additional trips could be generated during the evening peak traffic hour, assuming all committed and potential land uses for the area. He stated that the draft plan would be presented at the August meeting.

9. Long Range Transportation Plan 2030—Public Comments

Holly Butcher presented information about the agency and public input that had been received since the release of the draft last month. She reported that during June, two public meetings were held on the draft Plan. At the June 21st meeting at First United Methodist in Duluth, one citizen attended and expressed concerns about congestion on London Road and adverse impacts experienced by the neighborhood. At the June 23rd meeting at the Superior Public Library, there were no attendees.

She noted that substantial state and federal agency comments had been received, however, during the June 15th Mid-year Review session. She reviewed the comments from FHWA, MnDOT Central Office, MnDOT District 1, and MPCA and reported that due to the volume of suggested changes and the tight timeframe between the close of the public comments on July 30th and the next meeting date of August 17, that MIC staff had decided to produce and present the final Plan for approval at the September meetings.

Some discussion followed on the press coverage that had been received, in particular an editorial in the Duluth News Tribune criticizing the Transit section of the draft plan for not including commuter rail service in the City of Duluth or rail service between Duluth and the Twin Cities metropolitan area. She pointed out that the recent Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MRRI) study had identified a potential Duluth to Minneapolis connection, not as a direct rail connection, but as a bus feeder route. She added that she would be adding a discussion of these topics based on the findings and recommendations of the MRRI study as well as local demographic trends.

Dennis Jensen discussed the recent DTA trial run of the North Shore Scenic Railway, which was originally conceived not as a full-fledged commuter option but rather as a public relations effort during the statewide BBOP commuter week promotion. He commented that the participation of 600 or so riders, of whom only a small percentage were actual commuters, demonstrated that the North Shore Scenic Railway was in fact not a viable commuter option. He added that the expansion of rail service between Duluth and the Twin Cities was an attractive but very expensive concept, which would need further study to support the idea and identify potential funding sources. Ron Chicka noted that he would be requesting additional information about the proposed St. Louis County-sponsored study looking into the viability of light rail service between Minneapolis and Duluth, specifically to determine what this proposed study could point out that the other recent ones did not.

10. 2006-2007 MIC Work Program and Budget

Ron Chicka outlined the process and timeline for developing the upcoming 2-year MIC Work Program and Budget. He began by identifying the ongoing and mandatory

elements and then reviewed a list of the optional or discretionary plans and studies. He noted that the following week a survey would be mailed out to all MIC and TAC members to prioritize the optional projects. The top-ranked five to seven projects would likely be included as elements in the 2006-07 work program and budget. He asked committee members to review the list of discretionary projects in case they wanted to add other topics for consideration in the survey, and further asked that they watch for the survey in the mail and to complete and return it as soon as possible. He added that the survey results would be presented for discussion at the August joint meeting of the MIC and TAC, and that a draft document would be presented for approval in September, which would incorporate the top-ranked discretionary projects.

11. Roundtable Discussion

Duluth Planning Charrette – Chuck Froseth spoke favorably of the recently-concluded charrette planning process, which focused intensively on the downtown Duluth and East Hillside neighborhoods. Members of the charrette's team, a group of experts from around the country and architecture students and staff from the University of Miami, conducted 16 public meetings over 5 days and made many recommendations. Ron noted that several of the recommendations are familiar to the MIC from the recent East Hillside, Lake Avenue and Hospital District plans, such as converting some of the neighborhood one-way streets back to two-way streets, striping bike lanes and creating a pedestrian-friendly connection from downtown to Canal Park.

Woodland Avenue – Jim Foldesi reported that work on Woodland Avenue between Arrowhead Road and Anoka was starting up, with traffic to be restricted to one lane in each direction for a while.

12. Project Updates

Proctor Master Trail Plan – James Gittemeier reported that MIC staff recently held an organizational meeting at the Proctor Community Center. A steering committee was set up and its monthly meeting dates were scheduled for 4pm at the Proctor Community Center on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. The newly formed steering committee began the trail planning process by reviewing destination and departure points in and around Proctor. The August meeting will involve a further delineation of destination and departure points, as well as looking at existing trail networks.

Duluth Priority Pedestrian Pathways – Holly Butcher reported that the Duluth Priority Pedestrian Pathway committee met again on June 16th to review the GIS model developed by MIC staff that used a series of criteria to identify priority sidewalks and “pathways” connected along DTA routes. The group identified

weighting factors for pedestrian criteria and MIC staff adjusted the GIS model accordingly. MIC staff will hold one more meeting on the subject to display the final GIS model results and to discuss future steps necessary to achieve implementation of the concept through public input and city staff.

13. Other Issues

Ron Chicka reminded committee members to RSVP if they had not done so already for the August 4th MIC golf tournament. He added that next month's meeting would be the annual joint meeting of the MIC and TAC on Wednesday, August 17 and encouraged TAC members to attend as a way to interact directly with the MIC Policy Board members. He added that the guest speaker would be Michael Huber from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota, speaking on recent research which shows a link between community and transportation design and the health and health costs of those communities.

14. Adjournment

With no other agenda items or announcements, Chair Jensen adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rondi Watson
MIC Division Secretary