
Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, October 18, 2006 at 1:30 PM
Hermantown Public Safety Facility
5111 Maple Grove Road, Hermantown, MN

<u>Members Present/Representing</u>	<u>Members Absent/Representing</u>	<u>Others Present/Representing</u>
Jim Benning, <i>Vice-chair</i> City of Duluth	Chuck Froseth, <i>Chair</i> City of Duluth	MIC Staff: Ron Chicka
Brian Boder* St. Louis County	Paul Halverson Douglas County	Andrea Diamond
John Foschi City of Proctor	Bryn Jacobson Bike/Pedestrian Rep	James Gittemeier
Dennis Jensen Duluth Transit Authority	Denny Johnson Mn/DOT District 1	Sheldon Johnson
Dick Larson City of Duluth	Jason Serck City of Superior	Andy McDonald
Walter Leu Mn/DOT District 1		Rondi Watson
Cari Pedersen City of Duluth		Cindy Voigt
Dena Ryan WisDOT District 6		City of Duluth Engineering
David Salo City of Hermantown		
Jim Sharrow Duluth Seaway Port Authority		
Susan Thompson* Duluth Airport Authority		

* = alternate

1. Introductions/Agenda Review

MIC-TAC Vice-Chair Jim Benning called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Meeting participants introduced themselves. Ron Chicka thanked committee members for agreeing to reschedule this month's meeting from Tuesday to Wednesday in order to accommodate the memorial service for longtime TAC and HTAC member Ray Skelton, who passed away the previous week.

2. Committee Business

Meeting summary for September 19, 2006

Chair Benning called for amendments or corrections to the previous month's meeting summary. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

Cari Pedersen/John Foschi moved to approve the meeting summary from the September 19, 2006 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Proposed Revision to TAC Bylaws Adding New Representative

Ron Chicka requested approval of a revision to the TAC Bylaws to include a third State of Minnesota representative. The position would be filled by Heather Rand, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Program Specialist in the Duluth office. He noted that the addition of a DEED representative would enable the MIC to comply with the new SAFETEA-LU requirement that MPOs consult with local economic development entities. In addition, Heather brings a direct connection to the City of Duluth Planning Commission and the recently completed Comprehensive Plan, as well as an overall understanding and enthusiasm for the planning process. He added that the total voting membership of the TAC would increase from 17 to 18, but that the quorum would remain unchanged at six.

John Foschi/Susan Thompson moved to amend the TAC Bylaws to include another voting member representing the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, as described. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Election of 2007 TAC Officers

Ron Chicka announced that a 2007 Chair and Vice-Chair would need to be elected at the January TAC meeting. He noted that the nomination process had in recent years become fairly informal--the current Vice-Chair generally goes on to serve as Chair for the next year, and another committee member simply volunteers to take on the role of Vice-Chair. He added that Jim Benning was willing to serve as Chair in 2007, and asked members to consider putting their names forward for Vice-Chair.

3. Final 2007-2010 Superior Metropolitan Area Transportation Improvement Program

Sheldon Johnson presented the final Superior Urbanized Area Transportation Improvement Program for approval. He reported that no public comments had been offered during the 30-day review period that began in early September. He noted that the document had been modified, since it was presented in draft form, to remove most references to TEA21 and ISTEA and to comply with some new SAFETEA-LU language. Additionally, one new project was added to take the place of the OCR Rail Project in 2007 and is referenced as project 113-05-02.

Walter Leu/Cari Pedersen moved to approve the final 2007-2010 Superior Metropolitan Area TIP as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. Draft Public Involvement Plan

James Gittemeier reviewed the Draft Public Involvement Plan, which is an update to the 2002 plan to reflect new SAFETEA-LU requirements which specify that all MPOs improve their public input processes by involving more agencies & organizations; integrating public comments into plans and programs, and reach out to the public in ways that are more accessible, including a greater emphasis on website and online communication.

He noted that MIC staff would be the primary users of this plan, therefore he was seeking to

develop 'structured yet flexible' guidelines that would clearly define public involvement requirements while being able to adapt them to the MIC's many different types of plans and stakeholder groups. As an example, he compared the extensive neighborhood involvement that was required for the recent Duluth Heights Traffic Circulation Study, as opposed to the narrower stakeholder group of business owners and WisDOT staff impacted by the upcoming Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Plan, or the broad community involvement that would likely be necessary to reach the multiple stakeholders in the upcoming UMD Area Transportation Study.

James noted that there was a public involvement process required in the development of this public involvement plan, and instead of scheduling public meetings that might be poorly attended, he was considering convening a more structured focus group of interested citizens to elicit comments about the draft plan. Dick Larson suggested that possible participants could include the leaders of the Duluth planning districts. John Foschi suggested that the final plan include a concise overview or schematic illustrating the basic public involvement process in addition to the detailed text. James asked that committee members review the plan and forward comments to him by Friday, December 8. He closed by requesting approval of the draft document for a 45-day public comment as federally required.

Dick Larsen/Cari Pedersen moved to release the draft Public Involvement Plan for a 45-day public comment period. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. Draft 2007-2008 MIC Work Program and Budget

Ron Chicka handed out and reviewed the 2007 – 2008 Work Program and Budget. Work items include the mandatory elements of the TIP and the Long Range Plan as well as modal projects including harbor planning and bike and pedestrian planning. Planned short-term (discretionary) projects will include the UMD/Woodland Avenue transportation study, which is being carried forward from 2006 to 2007; and also the Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Plan, for which the Scope of Work will be introduced today and will continue into 2007. New projects to be initiated in 2007 will include a London Road study (from 10th to 26th Avenue E) with a focus on potential redevelopment in the western segment and a Grand Avenue Access Management Plan, both in Duluth, and an East Second Street Access Management Plan in Superior. Projects slated for 2008 include a study of ramp options at foot of Blatnik Bridge in Superior, an update to Proctor's Comprehensive Plan, a study of downtown Duluth's modal connections and an urban growth study for the Superior area.

He stressed that the planned projects needed to be kept to a flexible schedule because, as is often the case, various state and federal initiatives and well as project requests from local jurisdictions can delay project start dates. He closed by requesting approval of the draft version of the Work Program and asked committee members to review it closely and get back to him with comments prior to the December TAC and MIC meetings, when the final version will be presented for approval.

Dick Larson/John Foschi moved to moved to approve the draft 2007-2008 MIC Work Program and Budget. The question was raised about the possibility of studying potential rail connections between the harbor and the airport. Ron stated that this topic, along with a possible region-wide freight movement study, were included as project options in the Plan

Implementation, Long Range Plan and Administrative sections. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. Scope of Work – Highway 2/Susquehanna Access Management Plan

Andy McDonald presented the Scope of Work for a new study, noting that its title had been changed to the *Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Study*. He explained that this study was developed in anticipation of increased and proposed development in northwest Superior near Susquehanna Avenue and Winter Street, as the City of Superior has targeted this area for additional industrial development. The intensification of the land use means that roads in this area will see increased traffic including more trucks.

He added that he and Associate Planner Robert Herling had met with WisDOT personnel as well as Jason Serck, Planning Director for the City of Superior, in developing the specific tasks contained in the Scope. He noted that a challenging aspect of the study would be to work with the railroads, which historically have not been interested in cooperating in study efforts such as this one. It was suggested that Anna Davey, Rail Coordinator for the WisDOT district that includes Superior, might be a good resource. He added that the project has an estimated completion date of summer 2007.

Dena Ryan/Cari Pedersen moved to approve the Scope of Work for the Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Study. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

7. Human Services Transportation Plan

Robert Herling (in Holly Butcher's absence) reported that the Steering Committee for the Human Services Transportation Plan met in September to discuss the results of a survey given to regional transportation providers. The Committee used the survey results to develop action strategies for the plan. Once the plan is completed, any organization in the region that applies for future JARC, New Freedom or 5310 funding will need to relate their proposals to one or more of these action statements.

He added that the ARDC Regional Planning staff had completed a draft document of the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan on October 16th. It contains both a regional section and a section specific to the MIC planning area. The draft is currently available for public review and comment on ARDC's website: www.ardc.org. A final version of the plan will be completed for the November 1st deadline.

Sheldon Johnson also reported on the status of the plan for the Superior/Douglas County planning area. In August Douglas County, including the Superior Metropolitan Area, held its meeting to review and develop action statements for the Human Service-Public Transportation Plan. A summary of the meeting information is available online at nwrpc.com under 'Community Development' then 'Transportation Planning.' A final plan document was submitted to the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation by the end of September.

8. On-Street Bike Route Planning Update

James Gittemeier reported that MIC staff has finalized the Phase 2 on-street bike routes for Duluth and St. Louis County. He highlighted certain segments where designating routes has been problematic because bikes must be briefly routed along very busy roadways (such as Woodland Avenue) in order to maintain connectivity between different areas of the city. He

added that he is working with St. Louis County to fine-tune the wayfinding portion of the project; the project plans will be finalized in November and a Project Memorandum submitted to MnDOT in December for implementation (i.e., production and installation of bike route signage) in Spring 2007.

He added that the next phase, Phase 3, will focus on a designated and signed on-street bike route system in Superior, which will then complete the on-street bike route system for the metropolitan area.

9. Roundtable Discussion

NE MN ATP Steering Committee – Dave Salo reported on recent discussions at the ATP about separating rail and transit projects from roadway projects. Although the MIC decided after last year’s ranking process to submit separate project lists, it is not certain that the other jurisdictions will do the same. He added that a new Safety category has been created, with an earmark of 2% of available funds.

10. Adjournment

With no other discussion or agenda items, Chair Benning adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rondi Watson
MIC Division Secretary