
Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Tuesday, March 20, 2007 at 1:30 PM

WITC Conference Center

Superior, WI

Members Present/Representing	Members Absent/Representing	Others Present/Representing
Jim Benning, <i>Chair</i> - City of Duluth	Jim Foldesi / Brian Boder* - St. Louis County	Holly Butcher
Chuck Froseth, - City of Duluth	John Foschi - City of Proctor	Andrea Diamond
Dennis Jensen - Duluth Transit Authority	Paul Halverson - Douglas County	James Gittemeier
Denny Johnson, <i>Vice-Chair</i> - Mn/DOT District 1	Bryn Jacobson - Bike/Pedestrian Rep	Robert Herling
Cari Pedersen - City of Duluth	Walter Leu - Mn/DOT District 1	Sheldon Johnson
Heather Rand - Mn DEED	Jim Sharrow - Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Andy McDonald
Dena Ryan - WisDOT NW Region		Todd Pierson
Susan Thompson* Duluth Airport Authority		Rondi Watson
David Salo - City of Hermantown		- MIC Staff
Jason Serck - City of Superior		
Cindy Voigt* - City of Duluth		

* = *alternate*

1. Introductions/Agenda Review

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

2. Committee Business

Meeting Agenda Change

MIC-TAC Chair Benning reported that staff requested the addition of another item to the meeting agenda and asked for a motion to approve.

Heather Rand/Jason Serck moved to amend the meeting agenda to include a

voting item, Amendment # 2 to the 2007-2010 WI TIP. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting summary of February 20, 2007

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

Jason Serck/Dena Ryan moved to approve the meeting summary from the February 20, 2007 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Amendment #2 to the 2007-2010 Superior Metropolitan TIP

Sheldon Johnson presented information about the three projects requested by the WisDOT central office for inclusion in the current Superior area Transportation Improvement Program. He added that all three were related to truck turning movements and repairing damage to curbs and other roadway features as were recommended by the local Northwest Region DOT office.

Jason Serck/Dena Ryan moved to approve Amendment # 2 to the 2007-2010 WI TIP as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was passed unanimously.

4. On-street Bike Routes-Phase 2

James Gittemeier reported that on February 6, he had met with project partners (the City of Duluth, St. Louis County, and the City of Proctor) to determine the final routes, fine-tune the wayfinding signage, and discuss the steps toward implementation. He added that the final project memo, project plans, and the inter-jurisdictional agreement are near completion.

He also reviewed the existing and planned bike routes. He added that once the project memo and plans are approved by MnDOT, a consultant will be hired to help the local jurisdictions implement the project in the spring and summer months.

5. Endion Transportation & Land Use Study

Holly Butcher presented an update to the planning process for this study. She reviewed the study goal, to *identify solutions to improve safety, traffic flow, multi-modal options & access on London Road between 10th to 26th Ave E and adjacent connections into the Endion neighborhood in an effort to support flexible land use reinvestment within the City of Duluth.* She reported that the Study Advisory Committee had met for the first time on February 28th to bring stakeholders together to discuss the future vision for this study area, data collection items needed, public and business involvement strategies, and future steps.

In addition, intersection locations for turning movement counts were selected by the committee, which will be conducted from March 20th through April 3rd. The goal of this data collection effort is to accurately model the cumulative impact of planned development on the study area.

She added that the steering committee will meet again on Friday, March 30th, when the consultant from URS will attend to give an overview of the small area transportation modeling software that would be used to devise a series of travel scenarios for London Road and around the St. Luke's Medical Campus and Plaza/Armory area.

6. Harbor Planning Update

Andy McDonald presented an update on a variety of recent port planning activities. At the March 7th HTAC meeting, Matt TenEyck, Ph.D. student at UMD and Associate Researcher at UWS, gave a presentation about the Great Ships Initiative. He described the Initiative as a coordinated effort among regulatory agencies, industry and the scientific community to evaluate promising ballast water treatment technology and provide input into policy development. The ultimate goal of this industry-led research project is to develop the technology necessary to prevent the introduction of aquatic nuisance species into the Great Lakes by ocean-going ships on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system. A \$3.5 million specialized facility, overseen by UWS, was recently constructed on the Superior waterfront to provide research and development assistance for promising ballast water treatment technologies. He explained that this type of controlled research environment was needed because tests on board ships are difficult to control and replicate.

He added that a complete report on the Great Ships Initiative, along with details about proposed ballast water treatment solutions, can be found online at <http://www.nemw.org/scopingreport.pdf>.

Andy also noted that progress continues on the Erie Pier Management Plan, although the deadline for the final plan was pushed back to early June to allow more time to address the issue of managing Purple Loosestrife and other invasive perennial plant species.

He also reported on the meeting that MIC Director Ron Chicka attended in early March. The Lake Michigan Forum, which provides input to the US EPA on the Lakewide Management Plan, invited the MIC to present information about the HTAC model of inter-agency cooperation. He added that the Coast Guard and the Sea Grant programs are interested in seeing more groups like this one operating throughout the Great Lakes.

He closed by reporting that on February 22nd the MIC, on behalf of the HTAC's Great Lakes Ports Advocacy Coalition, sponsored a luncheon at the DECC with Congressman Jim Oberstar as the featured speaker. With approximately 50

representatives of local maritime industry and government agencies in attendance, Representative Oberstar's message was that Great Lakes infrastructure projects such as dredging and developing a second lock at Sault St Marie to handle 1,000-foot ships are of significant national importance and that he was working to get them funded by the federal government through increases in the Army Corps of Engineers budget.

7. Transportation System Management (TSM) / Safety Planning

Robert Herling reported on the MIC's effort to analyze crash sites on local roadways and identify low-cost alternatives to improve their safety and efficiency. In December 2006, the MIC completed a crash analysis of area roadways. Two lists of "high-crash" locations were produced (one for Minnesota roadways and another for Wisconsin roadways) using 5 years of accident data. The locations were ranked in order of their crash rate, average crash severity, 5-year crash trend, and roadway congestion.

Since completing the crash analysis, the MIC staff has been further examining conditions at each of the "high-crash" locations in order to determine what, if any, TSM strategies may be applied. To date, MIC staff has met twice to analyze the conditions at 22 of these locations. He noted that after all the locations have been examined, staff will be meeting with jurisdictional representatives to discuss these identified sites in greater detail. Their input will be incorporated in a final TSM document, which is tentatively scheduled for completion in the summer of 2007. The final findings will be presented at that time to the TAC and MIC.

8. Introduction to Roundabouts

James Gittemeier presented the Mn/DOT video "How about a Roundabout? The Minnesota Experience." After the video, he reiterated the concepts that modern roundabouts differ from other circular intersections such as rotaries and neighborhood traffic circles. A roundabout was defined as a circular intersection with yield control of all entering traffic, channelized approaches, specific geometric curvature and travel speeds typically less than 30 mph.

He noted that roundabouts generally cost more and take up more space than conventional intersections, but that they have a big advantage in improved traffic flow and safety. Safety is significantly improved because the movement is counterclockwise and vehicles must yield to traffic inside the circle. Left turns are eliminated, thereby eliminating head-on collisions. He also gave examples showing that engineers and public officials can expect strong public opposition to be expressed prior to the construction of a community's first roundabout. Strikingly, nationwide studies show that after drivers adjust to the structure, public opposition switches over to an equal or greater level of public support for that type of intersection, followed by calls for more roundabouts to be constructed. Locally, this has particular relevance to the current Mn/DOT London Road study, in which two roundabouts are likely to be

recommended to manage the traffic flow along that roadway.

9. Roundtable Discussion

Cindy Voigt mentioned that changes to the project scope of the Munger Trail Extension Project needed to be made to allow for HPP funds to be used for preliminary engineering activities in 2008. James replied that an amendment to the 2007-2010 Duluth Area TIP would be introduced at the April TAC and MIC meetings to formalize this change.

10. Project Updates

Functional Classification: Andrea Diamond reported that MIC staff had submitted a map of the updated road network for the MIC area to Mn/DOT Central Office as a supplement to the Functional Classification update approved in January. This GIS file is the result of an in-depth road network review and will now contain local roads, private roads, and rustic local roads that had not previously been included. Addition of the local roads will affect the total mileage in the MIC area and alter the percentage of each classification. James noted that our region continues to have a high percentage of collector roads. Andrea noted that any changes from this point forward are likely to be small updates.

Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Study: Robert Herling reported that MIC staff met with staff from WisDOT, the City of Superior and URS on January 31st to provide an update on the NW Superior Traffic Circulation Study. They reviewed the study objectives, presented preliminary findings, and identified information still needed. Additionally, a survey will be sent out to area businesses to supplement the data being gathered and to help identify any infrastructure/network needs, as perceived by the local businesses and trucking firms.

DTA-Superior Route Analysis: Holly Butcher reported that MIC staff is in the process of designing rider, driver and non-rider surveys to gain input on DTA service issues for Superior routes 16 and 17. She plans to administer in the surveys in April.

TDA Legislative Briefing: Sheldon Johnson reported that he and Ron Chicka had attended the Transportation Development Association (TDA) Annual Fly-In to Washington D.C. this month for a legislative briefing with Wisconsin congressional leaders. The delegation met with both House and Senate representatives and their staff with the goal of educating congressional members about transportation issues important to Wisconsin. The focus of the discussion was on key components of the federal transportation bill related to MPOs, annual appropriation levels and the highway and airway trust funds.

Dennis Jensen noted that he was there, as well to lobby for continued federal operating assistance and federally earmarked 5309 projects.

MnDOT London Road Project: James Gittemeier reported that this study is currently in the evaluation stage. At the steering committee meeting in February, a discussion regarding the movement of hazardous cargo along the route was a focal point. It was noted that, aside from fuel, very little amounts of hazardous material is moved within this corridor. This material may also include blasting agents for mining operations or biomedical waste; however, no current commodity flow data is available. A study is not anticipated, either, as there are some security concerns that information may be breached by conducting a public study and the data used for potentially illegitimate purposes. This issue will be examined further in the upcoming district-wide freight study that ARDC and the MnDOT Central Office will be conducting.

With regard to the possible roadway alternatives, the steering committee chose to table the large-scale and very costly options of an expressway or a parkway project. This leaves two options: the London Road/Superior one-way pair option and the minor system management option of various intersection and parking improvements. At a future meeting, the consultant will prepare a visual image of the freeway alternative to better illustrate neighborhood impacts. Recommendations are also likely to include the construction of two roundabouts, one at 40th Avenue East and one at 60th Avenue East as a way to mark the change from a freeway to a residential neighborhood.

11. Adjournment

With no other business or discussion items, Chair Benning adjourned the meeting at 2:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rondi Watson
MIC Division Secretary