
Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Tuesday, April 17 at 1:30 PM

Hermantown Public Safety Training Facility
5111 Maple Grove Road, Hermantown, MN

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 Andrea Diamond
John Foschi City of Proctor	Paul Halverson Douglas County	James Gittemeier Robert Herling
Chuck Froseth, City of Duluth	Bryn Jacobson Bike/Pedestrian Rep	Andy McDonald Todd Pierson
Denny Johnson, <i>Vice-Chair</i> Mn/DOT District 1	Dennis Jensen / Jim Heilig* Duluth Transit Authority	Rondi Watson MIC Staff
Walter Leu Mn/DOT District 1	Heather Rand Mn DEED	
Cari Pedersen City of Duluth	Dena Ryan/Jeff Emerson* WisDOT NW Region	
Brian Ryks Duluth Airport Authority	Jason Serck City of Superior	
David Salo City of Hermantown	Jim Sharrow Duluth Seaway Port Authority	
Cindy Voigt* City of Duluth		

* = alternate

1. Introductions/Agenda Review

MIC-TAC Chair Jim Benning called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. Committee Business

Meeting summary for March 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.

Denny Johnson/Chuck Froseth moved to approve the meeting summary from the March 20, 2007 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Safe Routes to School Grant Awards

Holly Butcher began by announcing that in early April, we were notified that two of the five Safe Routes to School grant applications were successful. Duluth was awarded two grants for 2007, the first to implement safety improvements at Congdon Park Elementary School for the full funding amount of \$137,600. The second was to implement a district-wide non-infrastructure education grant for Duluth Public Schools to provide and integrate age-appropriate bicycle and pedestrian curriculum across the school district in the amount of \$50,000.

Denny Johnson asked if these projects would need to be amended into the current Duluth TIP. Holly replied that they would instead be included in the draft 2008-2011 Duluth area TIP to be presented for approval in May.

4. Administrative TIP Change

James Gittemeier reported that the City of Hermantown was advancing the funding for the Arrowhead Road resurfacing project in the TIP from FY 2008 to FY 2007. However, because the city agrees to finance the total construction cost for the work until federal reimbursement is received in FY 2008, we are not required to make a formal TIP amendment, but rather an administrative change to the document.

5. Amendment 3 to the 2007-2010 Duluth Metropolitan TIP

James Gittemeier reported that we had received a request by MnDOT to amend the 2007-2010 Duluth TIP to change the project scope of the Munger Trail Extension Project to allow for funds to be used for preliminary engineering activities in 2008.

Chuck Froseth/Cari Pedersen moved to approve Amendment 3 to the 2007-2010 Duluth Metropolitan TIP as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. Amendment 4 to the 2007-2010 Duluth Metropolitan TIP

James Gittemeier presented another amendment request from the Duluth Transit Authority (DTA). Section 5309 (Bus & Bus Facilities Program) grant funding was awarded for the Downtown Duluth Transit Facility Improvement Project and needs to be incorporated into the 2007 Duluth TIP.

Denny Johnson/Brian Ryks moved to approve Amendment 4 to the 2007-2010 Duluth Metropolitan TIP as presented. Denny Johnson asked for information about the specifics about the proposed improvements. Holly Butcher replied that the project would create more bus stops across downtown in an effort to relieve congestion at the central transit centers. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

7. DTA Route Analysis—City of Superior

Robert Herling reported that the DTA asked the MIC to study and analyze current route structures in the City of Superior. MIC staff has begun this process by developing two surveys to be administered the week of April 16th: one for Superior route riders and the other for Superior route drivers.

He reviewed the Rider Survey, which aims to gather data about how well Superior riders' destinations are being met with current route structures and to compile their service suggestions.

Holly Butcher reviewed the Driver Survey, which aims to examine what causes drivers' delays on current routes and asks for their feedback on how to improve efficiencies.

8. Amendments to the MIC's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

James Gittemeier explained that explained that SAFETEA-LU federal transportation bill set forth several new initiatives. To become compliant, the MIC is required to augment specific components of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), last updated in the fall of 2005. He added that MIC staff will be meeting at the end of this week with representatives from MnDOT and FHWA to review our initial plans for meeting the requirements.

He noted that two of the requirements have recently been met with the completion of stand-alone plans, the Human Services Transit Plan and the updated Public Involvement Plan. He added that there are five other amendment components, broad initiatives and directives to better coordinate and consult with a broad range of agencies and jurisdictions. The specific focus areas include:

Safety

Robert Herling reviewed the objective of this component, which is to ensure that safety is considered at all stages of the planning process for all modes, to be coordinated with state and local agencies.

Security

Andy McDonald reviewed the goals of Security component, which are to define the role of transportation planning in promoting security; to identify critical facilities and to insure consistency with other existing safety plans from City, County and State jurisdictions and agencies.

Economic Development

Andy McDonald reviewed the main goal of the Economic Development component, which is to consult with local agencies and groups to identify common goals and to integrate them into the transportation planning process.

Environmental

Holly Butcher reviewed the goal of the Environmental components, which are to beef up the inter-agency consultation process to ensure that environmental and Historic preservation issues are integrated with the MIC's plans and studies, to compare plans, maps, and goals to develop a baseline GIS inventory to underlay with future transportation projects;

Operations & Maintenance

Holly reviewed the goals for this component, which are to document financial plans and Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) for maintaining infrastructure networks; to discuss congestion areas; and to determine what is being spent annually in this area towards preservation, operations and maintenance.

James closed by reporting that the Draft version of the Amendments will be presented at the May meetings for a 30-day comment period and the final Amendments will be presented for approval in June.

9. Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Study

Robert Herling reviewed the responses that had been received from a survey mailed out to area business on March 24th. The goal of the survey was primarily to better determine the patterns of commercial truck traffic between the Bong and Blatnik bridges, in anticipation of commercial growth in the northwest corner of the city.

He reported that there had been 33 percent return rate of the surveys, with a good percentage of trucking firms represented. Notable was that there were twice as many trucks traveling over the Bong Bridge than crossing over the Blatnik (53 vs. 26 percent). Access to the Bong Bridge was in particular identified as problematic for respondents.

He added that MIC staff is awaiting the results from the traffic modeling that is being done by the URS consulting firm. The results of the modeling will provide forecasted traffic patterns as they relate to the future growth of industrial and manufacturing operations in northwest Superior.

10. Bike to Work Week

James Gittemeier reported that MIC staff, along with the DTA, YMCA, Greater Downtown Council, and local bicycle advocates, are collaborating to promote Bike to Work Day, scheduled this year for Friday, May 18th. Preliminary plans for the day include a morning event at the Duluth Civic Center in front of Duluth City Hall. Bicyclists will be encouraged to stop by for free t-shirts and refreshments. Ideas being discussed for the morning event include guest speakers to advocate for bicycling, a bicycle inspection station and tips on minor bicycle tune-ups, and possibly a DTA bike rack demonstration.

The next steps have to do with getting the word out; he requested that if anyone else

would care to participate in planning the event, please contact him.

Chuck Froseth mentioned that the City's Wellness Committee sees a strong connection between this event and their efforts to promote healthy lifestyles.

11. Roundtable Discussion:

Cindy Voigt announced that she is looking at putting in an application for TCSP (Transportation, Community, and System Preservation) funding, a federal (SAFETEA-LU) funding program to address congestion and/or safety issues. Cindy believes that the two Rice Lake and Arrowhead Road intersections might be eligible under this program. However, she would like to meet with St. Louis County to discuss applying for funds, since these projects are already funded through last year's TIP process (FY 2010 federal funding). MIC staff met with Cindy a couple of weeks ago to discuss this project as well as others that could utilize this funding source.

Cindy also asked if MnDOT could provide a letter of support to accompany the application, but Walter Leu and Denny Johnson declined because neither Arrowhead nor Rice Lake Road are state facilities.

Andy McDonald announced that a temporary half-closure will be installed on Eklund Avenue near the intersection of Swan Lake Road in the next couple of weeks. An implementation of a recommendation in the MIC's Duluth Heights plan, the half closure will prevent southbound traffic on Swan Lake from turning right onto Eklund. Northbound traffic will still be able to turn left onto Eklund. He added that some residents would likely not be happy about it, but to remind them that the trial period is 6 months and traffic counts to measure effectiveness will be conducted 30-60 days after installation.

12. Project Updates

Endion Land Use and Transportation Assessment

Holly Butcher reported that the second meeting of the Endion Land Use and Transportation Steering Committee took place on Friday March 30th. URS Corporation attended the meeting to review elements of their traffic simulation modeling software (Synchro and SimTraffic) which will be used to cumulatively analyze traffic flow and various modeling scenarios that the steering committee chooses to examine.

2008-2011 Duluth Metropolitan Area TIP

James Gittemeier reported that the Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) will be asked to approve the Draft Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) at their regularly scheduled meeting, held on April 5, 2007, at the Hermantown Public Safety Building. Included in the 2008-2011 NE MN ATIP are the new projects for FY 2011 for the Duluth urbanized

area. This month, we will be collecting project updates and financial data from due jurisdictions to include in the Draft Duluth Metro FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Regional Freight Initiative

Andy McDonald reported that he and Ron Chicka had met with staff from the Mn/DOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations to begin talks concerning a study centered on freight movements needs in the Arrowhead region. Also invited were representatives from the Duluth Port Authority, Wisconsin DOT, the UWS Transportation and Logistics Program, and ARDC. He noted that the central office staff of Mn/DOT had recently completed a similar undertaking recently in the Mankato district as a model for such a study, but that the scope of the study for this area would be significantly different due to the dynamics introduced by activities of the Duluth-Superior port. The project will likely be led via a private consultant with ARDC and MIC staff facilitating. Next steps include identifying other stakeholders and roles of each of the study partners. Brian Ryks noted that he had information about air freight carriers that could be relevant; Denny Johnson stated that he would be contacting him as one of the stakeholders as the project progresses.

Western Plains MPO Conference

Holly Butcher reported that she and Robert Herling will be attending the 2007 Western Plains MPO Conference in Rapid City, South Dakota from April 23rd through April 26th. She will be giving a presentation on the Duluth and Superior Safe Routes to School Plans.

Duluth Airport BRAC Adjustment Planning Process

Andy McDonald reported that the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) adjustment planning process for the Duluth Airport is nearing a key stage in finalization. A local consultant, LHB Engineers and Architects, will be presenting their findings soon at a workshop for a group of local public and private entities, including the MIC. The workshop will involve a discussion of the new mission of the Air Guard Base and a plan for reuse of Air Guard and Airport properties.

13. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Benning adjourned the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rondi Watson

MIC Division Secretary