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Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Tuesday, May 15 at 1:30 PM

WITC Conference Center

Superior, WI

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

\* = alternate

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**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 April 17, 2007**

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

*Dave Salo/Chuck Froseth moved to approve the meeting summary from the April 17, 2007 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.*

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### 3. Long Range Transportation Plan – Draft Amendment

Ron Chicka explained that to become compliant with the federal SAFETEA-LU transportation bill, all MPOs including the MIC are required to supplement specific components of their Long Range Transportation Plans (the MIC's was last completed in the fall of 2005). He reported that MIC staff had met over the past month with staff from the Minnesota and Wisconsin DOT central offices as well as from the Federal Highway Administration to update them on our overall progress and gain their insight toward achieving plan approval. Feedback from these agencies is that the MIC is on track with full compliance.

He reviewed the draft Amendment document, explaining that the main task involves documenting what each area jurisdiction or organization has in place for each of the five focal points:

- Safety Planning
- Security Planning
- Economic Development
- Environmental Consultation and Mitigation
- Operations and Maintenance

He then reviewed an outline of tasks for each issue area, which mainly involves developing a collaborative process to share relevant data, and to consult, when necessary, on a project level.

He noted that the Environmental Consultation and Mitigation section was the most involved of the amendments, adding that a consultation meeting was being scheduled for Tuesday, June 5th to begin a conversation with environmental stakeholders.

He closed with a request to approve release of the draft document for the 30-day public comment period, as mandated by federal requirements.

*Denny Johnson/Chuck Froseth moved to release the draft Amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan for the mandated 30-day public comment period. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.*

### 4. Draft 2008-2011 Duluth Metropolitan TIP

James Gittemeier presented the draft FY 2008-2011 Duluth Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which sets forth all projects slated for federal transportation funding in the Duluth metropolitan area for fiscal years 2008-2011. He noted that 2009 would be a larger than average project year, due primarily to the extension of the I-35 reconditioning project between 26th Avenue East and Boundary Avenue. Also included are two Safe Routes to School awards.

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He noted that the draft TIP would this year be posted for public comments on the MIC website, [www.dsmic.org](http://www.dsmic.org). He added that a hard copy of the draft document will be distributed to all MIC and TAC members who request one. Copies are also available for the public to view at the Duluth Public Library or by request.

He closed with a request to approve release of the draft TIP document for a 30-day public comment period, as mandated by federal requirements. He noted that public comments were being sought primarily through the website.

*Jim Heilig/Jim Benning moved to release the draft FY 2008-2011 Duluth Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program document for the mandated 30-day public comment period. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.*

## **5. Endion Land Use and Transportation Plan**

Holly Butcher presented information from the most recent advisory committee meetings. She reviewed the goal of the study, which is to identify solutions to improve safety traffic flow multimodal options and access on London Road between 10<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenues East. She also noted that two new people have volunteered to participate on the advisory committee, to represent transit and bicycle interests.

She also reviewed the study area and discussed a bit of background about one-way streets, and the reasons to convert them back to two-way thoroughfares. She also gave some detail about one developer's plan for redeveloping the Plaza Shopping Center/Armory area into a mixed use area of residential and commercial properties, with 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenues closed to through traffic. The consultant, URS, will be modeling this scenario to determine potential traffic impacts.

The advisory committee also selected other short- and long-term scenarios based on previous Charrette recommendations and business interests, such as St. Lukes' idea to create an expanded pedestrian campus and to convert some or all of the one-way streets to two-way corridors. They also expressed an interest in reviewing a high-density intersection that is technically outside study area, at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East and 4<sup>th</sup> St.

She also reviewed some of the potential concepts for redesigning London Road, noting that it is currently overbuilt and has outlived its usefulness now that I-35 is up and running. Design principles would create a corridor that is more conducive to "Complete Streets" concepts, i.e., friendlier to all modes (bike, ped, transit) in addition to vehicular traffic. Traffic calming would be an important end result, with a possible road diet approach, to reduce the width of the corridor, similar to Grand Avenue redesign. She added that a prior study of this corridor called for upgrading the visual streetscaping aesthetics and character of London Road. The next steps will be to administer a survey to London Road businesses and to conduct public outreach and education on the topic of converting one-way streets.

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Chuck Froseth commented that the City's most recent planning efforts (Comprehensive Plan, Charette process) and input from neighborhood residents and businesses support the idea of converting streets in the area from one-way to two-way. Heather Rand asked about the timeframe for modeling results. Holly answered that the draft report would be completed by summer's end.

## **6. Harbor Planning/Dredged Materials Update**

Andy McDonald presented info about current HTAC activities. The Erie Pier Management Plan is nearing completion. It is important to understand that it is intended as a management plan—not an operational plan—to set an overall policy in place to facilitate its change from storage facility for dredged materials to a facility to separate and re-use these materials.

He noted that this plan has been driven primarily by the prohibitive cost of siting a new Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) when the existing Erie Pier facility runs out of storage capacity. By converting it to a beneficial reuse facility, it could realize ongoing use. He added that the final plan would be presented for approval at the June meetings of the HTAC and the MIC.

He added that it has become apparent in the development of the Erie Pier plan that the current Army Corps Dredged Material Management Plan, or DMMP, is no longer viable. The DMMP is the 20-year plan for disposing of dredged materials. We will be working with the Dredging Subcommittee on this topic to ultimately encourage the Army Corps to update its plan. As an example, the recent idea of realigning the runway at the Sky Harbor airport would need an updated DMMP to be implemented. Also the current low lake levels really bring the issue and practices of the DMMP into the fore.

## **7. Bike to Work Week**

James reported that Friday, May 18 is Bike to Work day, with planned events at ARDC for the entire week. Building off of last year's event, ARDC is coordinating with local biking advocates, Greater Downtown Council, DTA, YMCA, the City of Duluth, and MnDOT.

He noted that a couple of new events will take place this year. A celebration will be held at the Duluth Civic Center on Friday morning from 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. and will offer refreshments and free T-shirts; bike inspections; speakers and bike rack demonstrations with a DTA bus. The MIC also organized a group ride with the Mayor of Duluth, beginning at 7:00 am at the City Center West on 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Grand Avenue. Another group ride to downtown will begin at Portland Square, sponsored by the Ski Hut. He added that the DTA will offer free bus rides to bicyclists on Friday and the YMCA will make its facility available for showers and changing.

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## 8. Roundtable Discussion

There was a short discussion about the state transportation bill, which includes a 5-cent per gallon gas tax increase – and whether it would pass this session with a veto-proof majority.

## 9. Project Updates

### **Duluth Heights Traffic Circulation Plan**

Cari Peterson announced that a temporary traffic calming barrier and signage would be constructed later this month to restrict a right turn from Swan Lake Road onto Eklund Road, as recommended by the recent Duluth Heights plan as a way to discourage cut-through traffic. They were also considering a press release as a way to get the word out to the public. Andy McDonald noted that MIC staff will also be conducting follow-up traffic counts and a survey of residents.

### **Regional Freight Initiative**

Ron Chicka announced that the Mn/DOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations, MIC staff and ARDC Regional Planning staff have begun looking at a project centered on freight movements needs in the Arrowhead region. The Duluth Port Authority, Wisconsin DOT and the UWS Transportation Logistics Program are also invited. The project will be led via a private consultant with ARDC and MIC staff facilitating. Funding for the project will likely be from non-MIC state sources.

### **Duluth Airport BRAC Adjustment Planning Process (Ron Chicka)**

Ron Chicka reported that the consulting firm LHB presented their findings from the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) adjustment planning process for the Duluth Airport. At a recent workshop for a group of local public and private entities, including the MIC, the focus was on the potential reuse of land in proximity to the airport. A primary area of greatest potential for redevelopment, termed the “Golden Triangle,” is best suited to these efforts. The borders of the triangle are the runway on the north, Haines Road on the east and Highway 53 on the south and west. The consensus is that currently, land use within the triangle is not developed to its highest and best use. Aviation support industries were identified as best suited to locate and prosper within this identified land area. He added that many of the recommendations pertaining to access management, with respect to Highway 53, follow recent planning efforts by MnDOT and the MIC.

Dave Salo commented that recommendations should take into account the statutes related to closure of a trailer park, which he described as a significant effort.

## 10. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Benning adjourned the meeting at 2:28 p.m.

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Respectfully Submitted,

*Rondi Watson*

MIC Division Secretary