



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 MEETING SUMMARY
Tuesday, June 19, 2007, 1:30 PM

Meeting Location	Hampton Inn, Canal Park, Duluth, MN	
Meeting Chair	Jim Benning	
Note Taker	Rondi Watson	
Members Present	Jim Benning	City of Duluth
	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County
	John Foschi	City of Proctor
	Chuck Froseth	City of Duluth
	Denny Johnson	Mn/DOT District 1
	Walter Leu	Mn/DOT District 1
	Cari Pedersen	City of Duluth
	Dena Ryan	WisDOT NW Region
	Susan Thompson*	Duluth Airport Authority
	David Salo	City of Hermantown
	Jim Sharrow	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
	Cindy Voigt*	City of Duluth
	*alternate	
Members Absent	Bryn Jacobson	Bike/Pedestrian Rep
	Dennis Jensen	Duluth Transit Authority
	Paul Halverson	Douglas County
	Jason Serck	City of Superior
	Heather Rand	Mn DEED
Others Present	Holly Butcher	ARDC / MIC Staff
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Staff
	Robert Herling	ARDC / MIC Assoc. Planner
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Staff
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Staff

1. **Introductions and Agenda Review**

TAC Chair Jim Benning called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. and all meeting attendees introduced themselves. No changes were put forward to the agenda.

2. **Committee Business – Meeting Summary of May 15, 2007**

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

Motion and Denny Johnson/Dave Salo moved to approve the meeting summary

Discussion from the May 15, 2007 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. **Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment**

Ron Chicka presented an overview of the final Amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He explained that the purpose of the Amendment was to make the MIC's LRTP compliant with the new requirement in the federal SAFETEA-LU transportation legislation to improve accountability for the natural and human environments in transportation planning & decision making. The final Amendment addresses the following topics: Safety Planning; Security Planning; Economic Development; Environmental Consultation and Mitigation; and Operations and Maintenance.

He added that since the draft version was issued in May, most of the staff's work was directed toward developing the Environmental section. Many new contacts were made and MIC staff held an Environmental Consultation meeting with area stakeholders and agencies on June 5th at the Mn/DOT District office building. The meeting had a good turnout and staff learned of key data sets and plans (sensitive lands, stormwater management, critical habitat, and cultural and historic context data) that could inform and augment future MIC planning efforts. He stressed that the most important point was that a dialogue or point of contact was made with a number of agencies.

The full LRTP amendment can be viewed online at www.dsmic.org/lrp. He closed by requesting approval of the Amendment, adding that it would be forwarded to each state's DOT and FHWA offices.

Motion and John Foschi/Walter Leu moved to approve the Final Amendment to the

Discussion MIC's Long Range Transportation Plan as presented. There was no further discussion and the motion was passed unanimously.

4. Erie Pier Management Plan

Andy McDonald presented the final Erie Pier Management Plan that was approved at the June 6th HTAC meeting. He explained that its significance is that it lays the groundwork for transitioning Erie Pier from a confined disposal facility (CDF) to a processing and reuse facility (PRF). If successful, it would not only preserve Erie Pier for continuous use, but could also serve as a model for dredge material disposal throughout the Great Lakes.

He emphasized that both the purpose and the process of developing this plan, with the participation and input from multiple stakeholders and agencies, is consistent with new mandates and goals set forth by the National Dredging Policy. He noted that the process was truly collaborative, with all significant players at the table for a process that lasted nearly nine months. He then reviewed the contents of the plan on a chapter-by-chapter basis.

He closed by asking for approval of a Resolution of Support, which would help to implement the plan recommendations by encouraging the beneficial use of Erie Pier dredge materials. The final Resolution will be sent to local jurisdictions and agencies responsible for construction projects that could potentially utilize the Erie Pier material.

Motion and Discussion

Chuck Froseth/Jim Sharrow moved to recommend approval to the MIC of the final version of the Erie Pier Management Plan as presented and the Resolution of Support. *Jim commented that this had been a very positive and productive planning process, and that every regulatory agency (that will have any say) participated. The key now is to find users (customers) for the unclassified fill that will newly be produced by this facility. He noted that the material was relatively clean, with small amounts of heavy metals, slightly above the limits for residential construction but way below the upper limits for commercial and other large-scale construction projects. This information will be made available to contractors via the marketing plan. Participation in this way by the community at large will be key to the success of transforming Erie Pier to a processing and reuse facility.* There was no further discussion and the motion was passed unanimously.

5. Harbor Planning Update

Andy McDonald reported on other topics presented at the June 6 HTAC meeting, which included presentations about the VHS fish virus, the Great Lakes Observing System and the Duluth-Superior Harbor Dredge Material Management Plan (DMMP). He then discussed the Corps' current but outdated (1998) DMMP in some

detail. He explained that its intent is to provide a base cost for dredging, but the allowed methods for disposing of dredged materials (beach nourishment, deep hole fill, and placement in Erie Pier) are either not allowed by state laws, or are incompatible with the goals set forth in the Erie Pier Management Plan.

Another problem is that any other potential uses for the dredged materials, such as creating habitat or extending the alignment of the runway at Sky Harbor airport, are not addressed in the DMMP as it currently stands.

He added that the Corps is aware of these issues and has contacted the Port Authority and the City of Superior notifying them of the shortcomings of the current DMMP. They both plan to respond to the Corps by formally requesting a new (updated) DMMP. He added that the HTAC also requested that the MIC send a letter to the Corps making this request as well.

6. Transportation System Management (TSM) Overview

Robert Herling began his presentation by explaining that TSM seeks to find low cost solutions instead of large capital projects to address those problems (examples are pavement markings and signage at selected intersections with high crash rates).

He reviewed the TSM process for the MIC area:

Step 1 - Identify "high-crash" locations by using the most recent year of crash data to find those locations that have 3 or more crashes within 105 ft of each other that year.

Step 2 – Determine locations of concern by applying thresholds regarding number of crashes per average daily traffic, the severity of crashes, the crash trend over five years, etc. to derive "locations of concern".

Step 3 – Rank the locations of concern using a weighted combination of crash frequency, crash severity, 5-year crash trend, functional classification and level of service (LOS). Priority is given to those locations that are both the most congested and have the highest crash rates and severities.

Step 4 – Study the crash patterns at each location using five years of crash records to identify, crash trends, if any. On-site observations are made of the road design and patterns of traffic flow.

Step 5 –Consult with jurisdictions about locations of concern; document any improvements implemented and continue to monitor these locations.

He went on to review the top five ranked locations that had emerged from this process on both sides of the MIC area. In Minnesota, these intersections were:
(1) London Road and 21st Avenue East;

- (2) Arrowhead Road and Kenwood Avenue;
- (3) Miller Trunk Hwy and Maple Grove Road;
- (4) East 4th Street and 6th Avenue East; and
- (5) Central Entrance and Mesaba Avenue.

In Wisconsin, the top five intersections, in order of significance, were

- (1) Tower Avenue and 28th Street;
- (2) Hammond Ave and 5th Street;
- (3) Belknap Street and Baxter Avenue;
- (4) Belknap Street and Garfield Avenue; and
- (5) Tower Ave. and Belknap Street.

Ron commented that he wanted that TAC in particular to be comfortable with the methodology and the results of this analysis. Next steps will be to contact jurisdictions, discuss possible mitigation and costs and possible funding sources.

Denny Johnson stated that he had compared these results to those from the state, and would like Rob Ege from MnDOT to be involved in the analysis, they have somewhat different results, would like to understand why. Added that safety is certainly an emphasis at the federal level. Would like to see traffic engineers to respond to suggestions of signal timing, protected left turns, etc. Jim Foldesi asked why LOS is such a highly-weighted factor. Robert replied that MIC staff is viewing its analysis in terms of a system-wide analysis. Dave Salo noted that the ATP/TIP process is now incorporating safety considerations; questions about incorporating the data into its funding decisions.

7. DTA Route Analysis – City of Superior

Holly Butcher reported that the DTA has asked MIC staff to study and analyze current route structures in the City of Superior. In February, DTA staff collected passenger boarding and alighting information for both routes in Superior. In April, a Superior rider and driver survey was administered. She reviewed the survey results and trends from the passenger boarding and alighting counts.

8. Duluth Heights Half Closure Implementation

Andy McDonald discussed traffic calming recommendations from the MIC's recent Duluth Heights plan for three intersections and noted that one, a half closure at Swan Lake Road and Eklund Avenue, was installed in late May.

He reminded committee members that this is the implementation of the recommendations from the Duluth Heights study, and urged them to stay the course in the face of irate comments. The key would be to analyze the impact of the solutions and to gather feedback from residents. Next steps will be to monitor effectiveness of traffic calming devices by laying tube counters at nine selected

locations sixty days after implementation. Traffic counts will be compared to the benchmark numbers from 2005. We will also administer a survey to neighborhood residents to gauge their reactions and feedback. He is documenting all comments he receives. It is hoped that this information will show overall satisfaction with the changes. He added that the best solution would be the construction of the Joshua Avenue extension, for which TIP money would be applied to preliminary engineering in the current TIP.

Jim Benning reported that during the first week, the Engineering department received lots of calls, which have tapered off by now.

9. Bike Route Planning

James Gittemeier discussed recent bike planning initiatives:

On-Street Bike Routes: Duluth & Superior

Over the next month, the City of Duluth will be soliciting for and selecting a contractor to install the bike route wayfinding signage. It is anticipated that the signage (approx. 270 total signs) will be installed in August. MIC staff will also begin working on the Superior Bike Routes Plan, by identifying and meeting with the stakeholders involved with this project.

Bike to Work Day and Future Events

Bike to Work Day events were held on May 18 at the Duluth Civic Center. The event was a success with over 50 bicyclists stopping by to join in on the festivities. It was determined that the next time, if a public official is involved as Mayor Bergson was this year, that we make sure he or she wears a helmet!

Knight Creative Communities Initiative (KCCI)

A sub-group from KCCI is focusing on trails and pathways in the Duluth-Superior region. Part of this focus is on bikeways, specifically getting bike lanes in the region in the next year. In addition, the group is planning a group train-bike ride from Two Harbors to Duluth for later this summer.

Minnesota Bicycle Leadership Workshop

MIC staff attended this workshop on June 7 and was sponsored by the Minnesota State Bicycles Advisory Committee. The workshop focused on the future of bicycling in Minnesota, including identifying priority issues for bicycle users and professionals and mechanisms for establishing a state advocacy group similar to the WI bike federation.

10. Northeast MN Regional Freight Study

Ron Chicka discussed the initiative by MnDOT's Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations (OFCVO) to conduct a large-scale, region-wide freight study for northeast Minnesota. Last month, MIC staff and MnDOT District One staff met to

discuss the project scope and the central office staff requested that the MIC serve as the project manager for the study, since the MIC has conducted smaller localized freight initiatives in the past, and has contacts jurisdiction-wide, including the Wisconsin side of the MIC, that we were best positioned to lead the study. The MIC would release the RFP, hire the consultant, conduct some work items, set up and facilitate meetings and, in general, guide the study throughout. Staff within ARDC's Regional Division would also be involved. He is also in contact with staff from WisDOT both locally and at their central office to elicit their input and their potential financial contribution to the plan. Input from the TAC and MIC

Funding for the study would come mainly from MnDOT and possibly also from the MIC's planning budget. The estimated time frame was from nine to 18 months. Since taking on this study would impact the MIC's existing 2007-2008 Work Program, he would be seeking input at future meetings about what projects could be delayed, specifically the three corridor plans, the Grand Ave study, the East 2nd Street study, and the UMD/Woodland Ave study.

11. Roundtable Discussion

Jim Foldesi announced that work on Midway Road and Airport Road to start within a week or two: Cirrus Drive to be let next month.

Dave Salo announced that 2008 Arrowhead road project to begin on Friday.

12. Project Updates

Endion Land Use & Transportation Assessment

Holly Butcher reported that MIC staff is currently devising a survey to assess the needs of London Road business patrons and property owners and to gather ideas for modifying the roadway in the future. They have also assessed the corridor on foot, examining land use and transportation patterns and issues. The consultant, URS Corporation, is running various traffic modeling scenarios to examine future roadway functionality with proposed development patterns, based on the steering committee's recommendations.

2008-2011 Duluth TIP

James Gittemeier reported that this month, MIC staff will be updating the TIP with requested changes and will be conducting an Air Quality Review with FHWA, MnDOT Central Office and MPCA for the new projects. He noted that he had held an Open House on the Draft 2008-2001 Duluth Metro TIP just prior to the MIC meeting, with good press coverage. The TIP will be under review for final approval at the July MIC and TAC meetings.

Minnesota State Transportation Plan

Ron Chicka reported that Mn/DOT is beginning the process of updating the long range Statewide Transportation Plan for the years 2010 to 2030. He has been invited to participate on the Plan Steering Committee to convene starting this summer and running through the end of 2008. The long range plan sets policy direction and performance goals for the statewide multimodal transportation system and provides the basic framework for investment decisions. Mn/DOT has already begun some outreach to gain statewide perspectives on the issues key to different parts of the state regarding transportation needs. Some of the key points include preservation vs. expansion needs; freight movement deficiencies; funding for alternative modes and system management (small measure fixes) for the transportation network.

Twin Cities – Twin Ports Passenger Rail Study

Ron Chicka reported that the Technical Advisory and Study Coordinating Committees for the initiative met on June 4th in Hinckley to review the scope of work as presented by the lead consultant and the Memo of Understanding between seated voting jurisdictions. As discussed previously, Nick Baker of the Douglas County Board is a member of the study committee. The City of Superior was asked, informally, to sit on the study committee but declined. There was a push to have an elected representative from Duluth on the study committee; organizers will be looking into this issue.

13. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Benning adjourned the meeting at 3:37 p.m.