



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
 TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
Tuesday, September 18, 2007, 1:30 PM

Meeting Location	WITC Conference Center	
Meeting Chair	Jim Benning	
Note Taker	Rondi Watson	
Members Present	Jim Benning	City of Duluth
	Brian Boder	St. Louis County
	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County
	Chuck Froseth	City of Duluth
	Bryn Jacobson	Bike/Pedestrian Rep
	Dennis Jensen	Duluth Transit Authority
	Cari Pedersen	City of Duluth
	Dena Ryan	WisDOT NW Region
	Jason Serck	City of Superior
	Brian Ryks	Duluth Airport Authority
	Cindy Voigt*	City of Duluth
Members Absent		
	John Foschi	City of Proctor
	Paul Halverson	Douglas County
	Denny Johnson	Mn/DOT District 1
	Walter Leu	Mn/DOT District 1
	Heather Rand	Mn DEED
	David Salo	City of Hermantown
	Jim Sharrow	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
	* Alternate	
Others Present	Holly Butcher	ARDC / MIC Senior Planner
	Ron Chicka	ARDC / MIC Director
	Andrea Diamond	ARDC / MIC GIS Specialist
	James Gittemeier	ARDC / MIC Planner
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC / MIC Deputy Director
	Andy McDonald	ARDC / MIC Principal Planner
	Rondi Watson	ARDC / MIC Division Secretary

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

TAC Chair Jim Benning called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and all meeting attendees introduced themselves. No changes were put forward to the agenda.

2. Committee Business – Meeting Summary of July 17, 2007

Chair Benning called for amendments or corrections to the July 17, 2007 meeting summary. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve. He noted that the summary from the 8/15/07 joint meeting of the MIC and TAC was presented for information only.

Motion and Discussion Jason Serck, with a second from Chuck Froseth, moved to approve the meeting summary from the July 17, 2007 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Draft 2008-2009 MIC Work Program and Budget

Ron Chicka presented the draft version of the MIC Work Program and Budget. He noted that no dollar amounts have been assigned in the draft, but will be included in the final version. Revenues are close to being finalized, with the Wisconsin contribution staying the same as last year's and Minnesota's possibly increasing a bit.

He reviewed the short-range planning projects planned for 2008, beginning with the Woodland/UMD studies. The scope of work has begun to be developed, and the study area would likely be expanded to include St. Scholastica as well. He reviewed the Plan Implementation section, which provides for follow-up activities to prior planning efforts, including a development analysis of the former US Steel site in Morgan Park to examine access for all modes into the site and conduct a build-out analysis to determine needed traffic infrastructure.

Three studies slated to begin later this year and continue into 2008, including the Grand Avenue Access Management Plan (from the Zoo to I-35), and the East 2nd Access Management Plan in Superior. He added that these two projects would have more limited scopes of work compared to some other corridor plans that the MIC has conducted, limited primarily to problem identification and access management (not as in depth). Preliminary work on the Proctor Comprehensive Plan Update will also be getting underway this month.

In addition to the short-range planning efforts, there are a number of ongoing efforts in the areas of the Transportation Improvement Program, HTAC/Harbor Planning, and bike and pedestrian planning. He added that by this time next year, the Long

Range Plan is due for its next update per federal mandates, to update it through 2035.

A new component to this work plan is Freight Planning, with specifics to follow as MnDOT provides more detail, should know by late spring. Brian Ryks added that he gets requests to coordinate efforts between waterborne, rail and air freight planning — and that the topic is timely, given development plans for the northwest segment. Ron stated that air freight will be specifically included in the Regional Freight Study when the scope is developed.

Ron noted that there still may be room for a few discretionary elements to be added in 2009 — preliminary thoughts are that the MIC area rail plan, pedestrian plan and Miller Hill land use plans all need to be updated. He added that he would be polling TAC and MIC members in the next few weeks to determine possible additional projects for the end of 2009.

4. Proctor Trail Plan

James Gittemeier announced that based on feedback received from the Proctor Planning Commission and the Proctor City Council, a few new components (property lines, rights of way, trail segments along streets that have sidewalks, and trail segments that follow formal or informal existing trails and pathways) need to be called out on the map before the Trail Plan can be presented to the MIC for approval. He anticipates that it will be finalized and presented for approval in October.

5. Munger Trail Plan

Andy McDonald presented information about the MIC's recommended alignment to connect the Munger Trail from where it currently ends at 75th Avenue West to the Lakewalk in Canal Park. He added that there was a preference for creating an off street route as much as possible, and that the alignment, as presented, represents a consensus among all possible alternatives. He noted that many of the rights-of-way are already owned by the city, but in a few instances alternate alignments are also included because of potentially difficult arrangements with the railroads to acquire the rights-of-way.

He reviewed potential costs to construct the entire connector as well as a preliminary strategy to develop the trail. Currently, the High Priority Program (HPP) funding earmarked in the current federal transportation bill will fund less than half the length of the connector. Future funding might possibly be included in the next federal transportation bill. The City of Duluth will be doing the first segment by 2009.

6. Endion Land Use and Transportation Plan

Andrea Grygo Diamond presented the visualization segments that she developed for use at the public meetings for the Endion Land Use and Transportation Plan. She noted that the use of visualization techniques—putting words into images—is not only mandated by SAFETEA-LU but is just generally becoming more common in the media today. Visualization techniques range from simple maps to more elaborate 3-D models of a study area, all aimed at giving the public a better idea, or picture, of proposed changes that could occur along any given corridor. By presenting views of several options, support can be gauged for any set of proposed improvements. Such support from the general public and businesses can then aid in the implementation phase of a project.

She gave examples based on images of London Road to demonstrating different roadway configurations with features such as center turn lanes, bike lanes, center medians, and noting the dimensions of each. Since pedestrian amenities were identified as a need by London Road business owners, she showed examples illustrating crosswalks with pedestrians.

She also demonstrated how aerial photography can be overlaid with elevation views, adding another dimension to the way the landscape and the buildings are represented. She also gave a preview of how she is developing flyover views of potential London Road scenarios to simulate the experience of moving through the corridor with new features included.

Holly Butcher then reviewed the two recent public meetings that were held to gain feedback and input into the plan. The first, held on September 12th at First Lutheran Church, gave an overview of the entire plan, with a focus on gaining public input for the idea of converting one-way to two-way streets throughout the study area. She noted that there were no objections expressed to this idea, and instead, participants commented that many plans had been put forward in the past several years, and that they were ready to see implantation of some of the recommendations they've heard.

The second meeting, held on Monday, September 17, was focused specifically on developing a vision or preferences for the look and configuration of the business district on London Road between 10th and 26th Avenues East. Noting that its width far exceeds the needs for its present traffic volume, there are opportunities for a "road diet" and amenities such as streetscaping and bike lanes.

She is still analyzing the consensus responses, and will be presenting this information to the study steering committee at a meeting to determine final plan recommendations. The study is on track for completion in January.

7. HTAC Port Planning Update

Andy McDonald presented an overview of the topics presented at the September 5th meeting of the Harbor Technical Advisory Committee. The first was an update of the corrosion issue in the Duluth-Superior harbor, with a presentation by Chad Scott, the engineer who first discovered the problem in 1998 and who had recently conducted a comprehensive underwater inspection of multiple structures in the harbor. Pitting of metal structures was shown to be most severe at depths between approximately 4 feet and 6 feet, with little or no damage showing up at deeper or shallower areas. The central part of the harbor (around Midwest Energy and Hallett Dock) seemed to have the most severe corrosion, with less appearing near the Duluth entry area and up by the Oliver Bridge. Additionally, Randall Hicks, a researcher from UMD Biology department is analyzing the samples taken from the corroded structures. He presented a preliminary overview of his analysis of the biofilm discovered in the pitted areas of the corroded structures. This is a complex topic that has so far revealed one active bacterium that is iron-oxidizing and another that is iron-reducing. Multiple factors such as temperatures and the amount of light in different areas are being examined.

Also presented was a progress report of the cleanup work being conducted at the St. Louis River Interlake Duluth Tar (SLRIDT) Superfund site. Eric Hedblom from the contractor performing the work, SERVICE Engineering, showed slides of various steps taken this summer, including clearing the site of plant materials and accumulated garbage and GPS-guided dredging on a section-by-section basis so each segment can be assessed as it is completed.

In the final presentation about 2007 dredging operations, it was noted at the meeting that the mechanical dredging contract had been awarded to a local company (Marine Tech) this year, because for the first time they were not limited by the small business requirement and could for the first time bid on the job. Hopefully the materials can be staged for re-use according to recommendations in the recent Erie Pier Management Plan.

8. Project Updates

Arrive Minnesota Transportation Fair

Holly Butcher reported that three events were being held across the state during September to promote the *Arrive Minnesota* website as a single point of reference for alternative transportation options. One event will be held in Duluth on Wednesday, September 19th from 11am – 1pm at the Lake Superior Plaza at Minnesota Power (Superior Street and Lake Avenue). Denis Jensen added that DTA will have one of its new green buses on display.

DTA Route Analysis—City of Superior

Holly Butcher reported that on Tuesday, September 4, DTA and MIC staff met with Superior Mayor Dave Ross and Financial Advisor Jean Vito. The group had a candid and positive conversation about transit service in Superior. Attendees agreed to meet monthly to begin crafting solutions to “overhaul” the way transit service is delivered in Superior. In addition, DTA staff conducted more ridership counts during August for MIC staff to examine against the February 2007 counts. Preliminary data shows that ridership counts are twice as high on some days during the summer months. MIC staff will be synthesizing this count data for comparison.

Duluth Aerial Photography Project

Ron Chicka announced that MIC staff was working to obtain partners who might benefit from updated aerial photography for the Duluth area in the spring of 2008. The last aerial photographs were taken in the summer of 2001. He anticipated having an initial meeting in September to discuss participants for cost sharing and a vendor to take the photos.

MIC Conference Presentation and Recognition

Andrea Grygo Diamond, the MIC’s GIS Specialist, was invited to present the various visualization techniques utilized for the Endion Land Use and Transportation plan at the Wisconsin and Minnesota MPO conferences in August and at the Minnesota GIS/LIS conference in October.

Additionally, the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association recently announced that Holly Butcher’s presentation, Duluth-Superior Safe Routes to School Plans, was chosen to receive a Merit Award at their annual conference.

9. Roundtable Discussion / Announcements

DTA

Dennis Jensen reported that the management company for DTA, First Transit, was in the process of a merger to acquire Laidlaw, which includes Greyhound ...

MnDOT London Road Public Meeting

Cari Peterson announced that a public meeting to present the plan options was scheduled for this evening, September 18, beginning with an open house at 6:30 pm and presentations at 7 pm, at Ordean School.

10. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Benning adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.