

Agenda Topics and Project Updates

October 16, 2007 Meeting



Transportation Advisory Committee

* = Approval Item

1. INTRODUCTIONS / AGENDA REVIEW

2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- Meeting Summary of September 18, 2007 *
- 2008 TAC Officers

At the October TAC meeting, I will be asking for a volunteer to serve as the Vice-Chair for the upcoming year. Following TAC protocol, current Vice-Chair Denny Johnson (MnDOT) will serve as the 2008 TAC Chair. Nominations for both officers will be formalized by a vote at the start of the January 2008 meeting.

Please consider putting your name forward to serve as 2008 Vice-Chair (and as Chair in 2009). If you have you comments or questions, please contact Ron Chicka at 529-7506 or at rchicka@ardc.org.

3. 2008-2011 DULUTH METRO TIP AMENDMENTS #1 – 4 *

The cost of the Miller Hill project, which is scheduled for 2008, has increased by \$6.6 million (from \$13 to \$22 million). The three jurisdictions (Duluth, St. Louis County & MnDOT) participating in this project met in September and agreed upon a managed advance construction solution in order to accommodate this substantial cost increase in the current TIP. In addition, a number of projects have either been moved back a year in the TIP or have moved out of the TIP all together. While this will be resolved in the next TIP process, MIC staff will review all of the changes. Due to the multi-jurisdictional nature of the project, three separate amendments are necessary.

TIP Amendment # 4 reflects an increase in Section 5307 funding for transit operations and transit capital from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). If you have any comments or questions, please contact James Gittemeier at jgittemeier@ardc.org or (218) 529-7556.

4. 2008-2011 SUPERIOR AREA TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM *

At the upcoming October MIC meetings, the final Superior Urbanized Area Transportation Improvement Program will be considered for approval. No public comments were offered during the 30-day review period that began in early September. If you have any questions please Sheldon Johnson at 715-635-2197 or by email at sjohnson@nwrpc.com.

5. 2008-2009 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET *

The updated 2008 – 2009 Work Program and Budget is enclosed (as a separate pdf document) for your review and approval at the October meeting. The 2008 program is fully updated and should be the main focus of approval (see highlights, below). Per MnDOT's request, I am asked to put together a 2-year Work Program and Budget. 2009 will almost certainly change as priorities shift, but preliminary projects and budget numbers for that year are included.

Highlights of the revised 2008 Work Program:

- 1) Inclusion of a freight planning program element in anticipation of a broad study of northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin to begin next year and go into 2009.
- 2) Inclusion of funding to purchase new aerial photos of the Minnesota MIC area (current ones are from 2002).
- 3) Inclusion of funding to pursue a demonstration of how a roundabout operates by having a full-scale model built within some parking lot (consultant expenditure). Such a model was recently conducted for Dakota County in Minnesota.
- 4) With no current support to conduct a study along Grand Avenue (MNDOT), to the west of I-35, this project is being recommended to be dropped. Also, I have moved the Superior Urban Growth Study to 2009.
- 5) From my polling of members, an accounting of selected corridor speeds to enhance our planning analysis was ranked highly. I have included this item within tasks for long range planning, similar to our recent accounting of crash statistics for the MIC area. We will conduct this work periodically over the next two years.

Per MnDOT's request, I am asked to put together a 2-year Work Program and Budget. At the meetings, I will review all the above elements plus projects slated for 2009. If you have you comments or questions, please contact Ron Chicka at 529-7506 or at rchicka@ardc.org.

6. ENDION TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE PLAN

As mentioned at the September meetings, two public meetings were held on this project during September. The first meeting on September 12th focused on the Endion one-way system and the proposed St. Luke's and Plaza-Armory developments. The second meeting on September 17th examined land use and transportation opportunities and alternative scenarios along London Road from 10th to 26th Avenues East. At the October meetings I'd like to share the public input received at these meetings. The likely final steering committee for this project will be held on Monday October 22nd and study members will be asked to devise plan recommendations and

implementation strategies. If you have you comments or questions, please contact Holly Butcher at holly.butcher@ardc.org or (218) 529-7548.

7. DTA –ROUTE ANALYSIS FOR THE CITY OF SUPERIOR

The initial purpose of the Superior Route Study was to identify inefficiencies in the operations of the #16 and #17 bus routes and recommend ways to improve them. In August, the DTA provided the MIC with updated ridership counts for the #16 and #17 bus routes in Superior. The MIC has compared these numbers to the ridership counts from February to ensure the numbers would be representative enough for use in the study.

As of September, the focus of the study has changed. The MIC and the DTA met with the City of Superior on September 4th, during which the mayor expressed an interest in finding ways to increase the levels of transit service within Superior by restructuring the way that transit service is currently provided. The mayor and DTA staff proposed the concept of developing a transit hub and investigating funding sources to launch a pilot project, with the overarching goal of increasing Superior ridership through improved transit service. Currently the MIC, DTA and the Mayor's office are researching alternative funding sources, and will be meeting again in October to further discuss the direction of this effort.

If you have you comments or questions, please contact Holly Butcher at holly.butcher@ardc.org or (218) 529-7548 or Robert Herling at rherling@ardc.org or (218) 529-7572.

8. PROJECT UPDATES

Transportation System Management (TSM) *Robert Herling*

The reports showing the results of the MIC's 2007 TSM assessment have been completed. A report was produced for both the Minnesota and Wisconsin sides of the MIC area. These reports show the potential problem locations that were identified through the analysis. The MIC staff has distributed these reports to the local jurisdictions and will be meeting with them this fall to discuss each location and potential solutions. The reports can be viewed on the MIC website at: www.dsmic.org/tsm.

Duluth Safe Routes to School Applications, *Holly Butcher*

On September 20th MIC staff met with the Duluth Safe Routes to School Steering Committee to discuss the grant applications which are due November 16th. MIC staff will be developing these applications on behalf of the Duluth Public School District and will submit them by the deadline.

Northwest Superior Traffic Circulation Plan, *Andy McDonald*

We have scheduled a meeting with the study committee and our consultants from URS to review the traffic modeling results. URS recently completed trip generation rates for future anticipated development and traffic forecasts. We will also be discussing the results of the business survey and public participation techniques. We will be posting the new modeling information on our website (www.dsmic.org/nws) in the near future.

Regional Freight Planning, *Andy McDonald*

On September 19 & 20, I participated in freight planning training designed by the Federal Highway Administration and conducted by the National Highway Institute. This training was valuable as we anticipate beginning a regional freight study in 2008. The training highlighted the importance of freight networks as they relate to regional and local economies. We need to communicate the significance of a freight study to all decision makers in our area.

Bike Routes Phase 2 Implementation, *James Gittemeier*

The implementation phase of the bike route project is beginning. Signage is scheduled to be installed over the next month by H&R Construction Company. A total of 508 signs are to be installed at 92 locations. MIC staff will be assisting with this process including the inspection of the signage once it is installed.

2009-2012 MN TIP Jurisdictional Meetings, *James Gittemeier*

In October, MIC staff will be meeting with each Duluth-area jurisdiction eligible for federal transportation funding, the Duluth Transit Authority (DTA), MnDOT, St. Louis County, the City of Duluth, and the City of Hermantown to go over each agency's project(s) in the current TIP and to review regional needs identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

AMPO Conference, Ron Chicka

I recently attended the National MPO conference in Little Rock that brought together Metropolitan Planning Organizations from around the country to exchange best practices and become informed on the latest federal transportation initiatives. Among the many sessions provided to attendees was one covering upcoming components of the next federal transportation bill. A key component will be the movement of freight throughout the country and dedicated revenues to enhance its mobility. Greater usage of waterborne movements was a focal point. The MIC's upcoming work on freight movement in this region will be timely and potentially set us up to be in the forefront for funded projects included in the new legislation. I have been assisting a technical committee of AMPO in delineating needs and priorities to potentially be addressed in the next federal bill. At an future meeting, I will present these in detail.