



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
 TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
Tuesday, October 16, 2007, 1:30 PM

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

1. Introductions and Agenda Review

TAC Vice-Chair Denny Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and meeting attendees introduced themselves. No changes were put forward to the agenda.

2. Committee Business – Meeting Summary of September 18, 2007

Chair Johnson called for amendments or corrections to the September 18, 2007 meeting summary. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

Motion and Discussion Jim Foldesi, with a second from Chuck Froseth, moved to approve the meeting summary from the September 18, 2007 meeting with no corrections or changes. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Committee Business – 2008 TAC Officers

Ron Chicka asked 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.

Motion and Discussion Dennis Jensen, with a second from Dave Salo, nominated Dena Ryan to serve as vice-chair for 2008. Dena consented to serve in this role. Vote unanimous.

4. 2008-2011 Duluth Metro TIP Amendments #1 – 4 *

James Gittemeier reported that the cost of the multi-jurisdictional Miller Hill reconstruction project had increased significantly, by \$6.6 million (up from \$13 million when it was originally programmed to \$22 million). Project managers agreed that it includes no “extras” that could be cut, so adjustments need to be made in the way it is funded.

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. Three TIP amendments are being put forward to handle the separate jurisdictions.

He closed by presenting a fourth TIP Amendment, reflecting an increase in Section 5307 funding for transit operations and transit capital from the Federal Transit Administration.

Motion and Discussion Dave Salo, with a second from Jim Foldesi, moved to approve the TIP Amendments 1-3. *Jim noted a discrepancy in the text of Amendment 2, which James said had been corrected for the final version.* There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Jason Serck, with a second from Dena Ryan, moved to approve the TIP Amendment 4 as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. Final 2008-2011 Superior Area Transportation Improvement Program

Sheldon Johnson presented the final Superior Urbanized Area Transportation Improvement Program for approval. The draft was presented in August, and no public comments were offered during the 30-day review period that began in early September. He noted that the document had been modified since it was presented in draft form to comply with some new SAFETEA-LU language. He also outlined some text changes in the project tables on pages 22 and 23. Additionally, at WisDOT’s suggestion, two components were removed in the final version: the Transit section, which is not relevant to this TIP, and the copy of the MIC’s

Resolution in the Appendix, which duplicates the Self-Certification section. He added that much consultation had taken place with the Superior office, to match up project costs between WisDOT and those listed in the document and meet the goal of fiscal constraint.

Motion and Discussion Jason Serck, with a second from Dennis Jensen, moved to approve the 2008-2011 Superior area TIP as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. 2008-2009 Work Program and Budget

Ron Chicka presented the 2008 – 2009 Work Program and Budget for approval. He reported that he had met with MnDOT and WisDOT to review all aspects of the draft version and their comments had been incorporated into the final document. He noted that three planning efforts will start up by the end of this year—the Proctor Comprehensive Plan update, the UMD-CSS transportation assessment (to be combined with the Woodland Avenue corridor study), and the East 2nd access management plan in Superior. He also noted the inclusion of a large-scale freight study of NE Minnesota and NW Wisconsin to likely begin in 2008 and continue into 2009.

He remarked that the Grand Avenue project had been dropped out of the Work Program altogether, because it did not rank high in the state’s estimation and was therefore hard to justify as a priority. He added that safety concerns at specific intersections along the corridor could still be analyzed from the perspective of the MIC’s ongoing TSM work.

He also reviewed the projects slated for 2009, noting that they will almost certainly change as priorities shift and special projects come forward. The survey of TAC and MIC members highlighted an interest in access management issues along Central Entrance, so that project was added for 2009. Funding was also included to purchase new aerial photos of the Minnesota MIC area (the current ones date back to 2002) and to pursue a roundabout demonstration project (as a consultant expenditure) by constructing a full-scale model of a roundabout for public education purposes, similar to one that was recently developed for Dakota County.

Finally, he noted that the Long Range Transportation Plan will need to be updated through 2035 by late 2009. He will be consulting with the DOT central offices about issues with utilizing demographic data from the 2000 census, and about augmenting the bike/ped and financial analysis sections.

He closed by requesting approval of the final 2008 – 2009 Work Program and Budget.

Motion and Discussion Cari Pedersen, with a second from John Foschi, moved to approve the 2008-2009 MIC Work Program and Budget as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

7. Endion Transportation and Land Use Plan

Holly Butcher reported that two public meetings had been held in September. The first meeting, on September 12, focused on the Endion one-way system and the proposed St. Luke’s and Plaza-Armory developments. The second meeting, on September 17, examined

land use and transportation opportunities and alternative scenarios along London Road from 10th to 26th Avenues East.

The feedback they received from businesses along the corridor is that pedestrian crossing is regarded as one of the biggest issues, along with the need to improve aesthetics and bike/pedestrian/transit amenities. Concerns were expressed about closing off streets per the armory plans as well as concerns about the City being able to maintain anything that is built. Strong interest was also expressed in stormwater management, as the lake is directly adjacent to this corridor. New technologies could be part of the final recommendations.

Although a majority expressed an interest in seeing landscaped center medians, a vocal minority of business owners opposed the idea. Holly noted that in other areas of the country, it works just fine—center medians are not incompatible with the ability to access businesses. The idea is that improved landscaping amenities would make the corridor a more attractive destination district which in turn could spur economic investments in the area. During the discussion it was suggested that she could also make the case for center medians because the data shows they are justified from a safety perspective.

The final steering committee meeting for this project will likely be held on October 22nd and study members will be asked to devise plan recommendations and implementation strategies. The consultants from URS will also review the modeling results.

8. DTA Route Analysis for the City of Superior

Robert Herling reported that the DTA provided the MIC with additional ridership counts for the #16 and #17 bus routes in Superior for the month of August. Comparison with counts gathered in February showed a decrease in ridership during weekdays, with increases noted on weekends.

Holly Butcher reported that the DTA had organized a meeting in early September with DTA staff, MIC staff and Superior Mayor David Ross, in response to a press feature contending that ridership is low in the City of Superior because the routes don't hit the right destinations at the right times of day. At this meeting, the Mayor proposed working with the DTA and the MIC to devise a pilot project to increase transit services in Superior, rather than simply seeking efficiencies and thereby decreasing the current level of service. This has caused the direction of the study to change. The new focus of the study is to determine what enhanced bus service should look like for Superior, which could include the development of a transit hub. The MIC will continue to meet monthly with the DTA and the City of Superior. Dennis Jensen will be contacting First Transit as consultants on the project to identify an appropriate service model for a pilot project.

During the discussion, Jason Serck commented that they are looking to redesign Tower Avenue, and transit needs to be a part of the mix, a transfer/hub facility could leverage a lot of federal dollars. Another potential funding source could be the WETAP program, with its goal of improving transportation to jobs for low income populations.

9. Roundtable Discussion / Announcements

Jason Serck announced that Jeff Goetzman, who formerly worked for St. Louis County and most recently at the SEH office in Virginia, had been hired as City Engineer for Superior. He would be joining the TAC, possibly at the December meeting.

Dennis Jensen reported that the DTA had been awarded the full JARC funding amount they applied for, to expand the Route 18 to serve the growing campus housing market along Rice Lake Road, and to add a new Route 20 to accommodate the early morning and late night shift hours at Cirrus Design, Airpark and United Healthcare workplace destinations.

10. Project Updates

Transportation Systems Management (TSM)

Robert Herling reported that he has been discussing the final TSM documents to determine a process that is uniform between the MIC and the separate jurisdictions. One piece of feedback he received is that formal TAC and MIC approval of the documents would give more teeth to support funding requests for safety improvements that might arise from the recommendations. The reports will be presented for approval at the December TAC and MIC meetings and will be available to view on the MIC website at: www.dsmic.org/tsm.

Duluth Safe Routes to School Applications

Holly Butcher reported that 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 reported that URS recently completed trip generation rates for future anticipated development and traffic forecasts. A meeting has been scheduled with the study committee and our consultants from URS to review the traffic modeling results and to discuss the results of the business survey and public participation techniques. The project is anticipated to wrap up by December or January.

Regional Freight Planning

Andy McDonald reported that on September 19 & 20, he participated in freight planning training designed by the Federal Highway Administration and conducted by the National Highway Institute. The training highlighted the importance of freight networks as they relate to regional and local economies. This training was valuable as the MIC plans to undertake a regional freight study in 2008. He added that we need to communicate the significance of a freight study to all decision makers in our area.

Bike Routes Phase 2 Implementation

James Gittemeier reported that the implementation phase of the Bike Route Phase 2 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 reported that in October, MIC staff will be meeting with each Duluth-area jurisdiction eligible for federal transportation funding (the Duluth Transit Authority, 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 reported that he had 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. He noted that Freight was a prominent theme—it is anticipated that the subject will be a significant component of the next federal transportation bill. He added that he has been assisting a technical committee of AMPO in delineating needs and priorities to potentially be addressed in the next federal bill.

11. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.