



TAC Agenda Topics and Project Updates

December 12, 2023 Meeting

Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council Meeting Summary

* = Approval Item

Note Taker(s)	Tari Aanonsen, MIC Administrative & Finance Assistant	
Members Present		
	Chris Beldon	Duluth Transit Authority
	David Bolf	Alternate for City of Hermantown
	Chris Carlson	City of Superior – Public Works
	Kate Ferguson	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
	Jim Foldesi	St Louis County
	Derek Fredrickson	MnDOT District 1
	James Gittemeier	City of Duluth
	Jason Jackman	Douglas County
	Todd Janigo	City of Superior – Public Works
	Cari Pedersen	City of Duluth
	Dena Ryan	WisDOT
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth Engineering
	Maren Webb	MnDOT Dist 1
	Tom Werner	Duluth Airport Authority
	Skip Williams	Active Transportation
Members Absent		* Excused Absence
	Chris Lee*	City of Duluth
	John Mulder	City of Hermantown
	Jess Rich	City of Proctor
	Karl Schuettler*	Northspan Group
	Vacant	Mobility Challenged Community
Others Present		
	Bryan Anderson	MnDOT
	Brian Boder	St. Louis County Public Works
	Ron Chicka	MIC Director
	Andrea Crouse	Zeitgeist
	Miles Hanson	City of Duluth, AmeriCorps
	Duane Hill	MnDOT
	Sara Husen	WisDOT
	Colin Korst	FTA Dist. 5
	Prescott Morrill	MIC Planner
	Jason Nordberg	FHWA-WI
	Anna Pierce	MnDOT
	Bobbie Retzlaff	FHWA-MN
	Ricky Sarran	MIC-GIS Specialist
	Erika Shepard	MnDOT
	Noel Shughart	MnDOT
	Trish Trego	City of Hermantown



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Table with 2 columns: Name and Title. Rows: Rondi Watson (MIC Senior Planner/Communications Specialist), Mike Wenzholz (MIC Senior Planner)

1. Introductions / Agenda Review

Ron Chicka, MIC Director, called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm. A "roll call" attendance was taken. When completed, Ron asked if there were any questions or changes to the agenda. There were none.

2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Meeting Summary of 10.17.23*

Ron then asked if there were any questions or changes to the October meeting summary. Maren Webb noted that Bryan Anderson was listed in both the Members Present and Members Absent listings on the meeting summary. Change was noted and made to the October 17, 2023 meeting summary.

Table with 2 columns: Motion Discussion and Vote, Description. Content: Ron Chicka requested the approval of the 10.17.23 meeting summary with the noted change. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Chicka reported on the following:

- Safety Action Plan Update 2023 and 2024- AECOM and the area jurisdictional partners continue to meet and are currently uploading detailed data on: speed limits, curve locations and radius, intersection traffic control, lighting, land use and socioeconomic data. Project will continue into 2024.
MIC Staffing Update- The MIC welcomes back Mike Wenzholz as Principal Planner, leading the HTAC and co-leading our Long Range Plan.
I-35 Plan Update- The Plan is complete and a link will be available on our website to view the final product from Bolton & Menk. The MIC is pleased with the work that was done by our consultant.
Letters of Support- MIC staff has had multiple requests from area jurisdictions toward projects proposed for the metro area. These include: Blatnik Bridge (Bike/Ped Component), five project applications by St Louis County for HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) funding, Pike Lake Bike-Ped Improvement Study, City of Duluth for the Junction Ave/W. St Marie Street-Local Road Improvement Program, and lastly, St Louis County-Rice Lake Road Corridor.

3. MTP LONG RANGE PLAN 2050 – INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT EVALUATION

Jim Meyer, of AECOM, Consultant for the MIC, outlined the process of project evaluation for our Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2050. The process seeks to connect performance to LRTP goals and objects, while being data driven. This helps to inform the project selection, supports FHWA's Performance Management process, as well as National Performance Goals. Jim presented scoring examples from two communities, one being Maricopa County in Pheonix, Arizona and the other from Kingsport, TN. He outlined a four-step approach for project evaluation and explained that the scoring process is tailored to meet the needs of our MPO. All projects included in the final plan will be mapped for a visual reference.

Questions regarding the MIC's Long Range Plan 2050 can be directed to: Rondi Watson, rwatson@ardc.org or Mike Wenzholz, mwenzholz@ardc.org



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4. RICE LAKE ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Vic Lund, Traffic Engineer for St. Louis County Public Works, presented on the Rice Lake Road Corridor Improvement Project. The project timeline can track back to a MIC Intersection Control Evaluation that occurred in 2013 and has progressed to a joint effort between St. Louis County and the City of Rice Lake. The project seeks to improve the support of commercial and residential activity along the Rice Lake Rd Corridor, as well as create a downtown center for the City of Rice Lake. It will incorporate intersection improvements, a separated trail along Rice Lake Road and Martin Road, a city street connecting West Calvary Road and Martin Road, and a new road to access tax forfeit properties managed by the County to support future development. Another significance will be the ability to manage the access points along the corridor as the area is developed.

The County is in the process of applying for a 2024 RAISE grant for 25M in Federal funding, to assist with the needed 40.1M in funding. Several communities, including many of the Iron Range, have offered Letters of Support to be included in the application from the County. Vic is asking for the support of the Duluth Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council and will be presenting at the MIC Policy Board meeting tomorrow evening.

For questions relating to the Rice Lake Road Corridor Improvement Project, please contact Vic Lund: LundV@StLouisCountyMN.gov

5. 2024-2027 DULUTH AREA TIP AMENDMENT #1*

Prescott presented the following amendment to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP:

The City of Duluth is requesting the addition of a project along the Lakewalk, using funding awarded from the federal RAISE grant program (TIP Project ID# 118-090-029). This project will include multi-use trail construction and shoreline stabilization from Lake Ave to 28th Ave E.

- Total Project Cost = \$10,248,758
 - Federal Funding = \$8,196,234
 - City Funding = \$2,052,524

There were no Public Comments.

6. 2024-2027 DULUTH AREA TIP AMENDMENT #2*

Prescott presented the following amendment to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP:

MnDOT is requesting a new project for inclusion in the current Duluth Area TIP for highway sign replacement on MN 23 from Howard Rd to Becks Rd in Duluth (TIP Project ID# 8821-377). This project is 100% funded by state funds. However, because a portion of these improvements fall within the MIC/MPO area, it will be included in the current Duluth Area TIP.

- Total Project Cost (State Funding) = \$900,000

There were no Public Comments.



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7. 2024-2027 DULUTH AREA TIP AMENDMENT #3*

Prescott Morrill presented on the following amendment to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP:

Amendment #3 constitutes a suite of changes, including Bridge Formula Funding Program (BFP) for two projects in the TIP. These additional funds will be used to complete bridge deck overlays instead of a cheaper flood seal treatment.

For each project, there are additional federal funds from the BFP program, with additional local match funds, which will be added as new line-items to the Duluth Area TIP.

These two projects are:

Duluth TIP ID# 6982-336: multiple bridges between Lake Ave and 21st Ave E

- Original project cost = \$1,900,000
Additional BFP Project cost = \$1,138,500 Federal; \$126,500 State Fund match; \$1,265,000
Project Total

Duluth TIP ID# 6982-348: multiple I-35 bridges over Mesaba Ave

- Original project cost = \$8,200,000
Additional BFP project cost = \$931,500 Federal; \$103,500 State Fund match; \$1,035,000
Project Total

There were no Public Comments.

Table with 2 columns: Motion Discussion and Vote, and content: Jim Foldessi / Dena Ryan moved to recommend the 2024-2027 Duluth Area Tip Amendments #1-3 to the Policy Board for approval. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.

8. MINNESOTA CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGY

Prescott Morrill gave an update on the Carbon Reduction Strategy (CRS) document that MnDOT published in November, which includes a toolkit for jurisdictions to reference when applying to the MPO for CRP funding. The toolkit offers guidance on how to select and apply funds to projects. The MIC will be soliciting projects for FY 2025 and FY 2026 in February 2024. Project selection will be done by the MIC, in coordination with the NEMNATP, and selected projects for FY 2025 and FY 2026 will be amended into the current Duluth Area TIP.

9. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

- Cindy Voight spoke on a notable article written by Jim Foldessi that was published in the Duluth News Tribune last week; it is worth a read.
Duane Hill spoke of TIP Amendments to come regarding a third party contract for piers load tests on Blatnik Bridge. Federal Bridge funds will need to go into the STIP and TIP.
Chris Beldon stated that the DTA is reporting increased ridership for two consecutive months following their Better Bus Blueprint rollout and is approaching pre-pandemic numbers.
Ricky Sarran reported that STGP applications have been awarded to both the City of Hermantown and the City of Duluth, each for \$971,750.



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10. PROJECT UPDATES

- **Administrative Modification #1 to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP**

This modification, approved by MIC staff, removes two projects from the Duluth Area TIP.

Duluth TIP ID# 6910-109: This project was intended to remove a historic bridge over Mission Creek. This project is being removed due to cultural discoveries and will be delivered in a future fiscal year. The federal funds allocated to this project will be used to fund other district priorities, to be determined.

Duluth TIP ID# 6982-342: This project was to make some nominal improvements for ADA compliance from Lake Ave to 26th Ave E. However, district priorities have changed due to budgetary constraints, and these funds will be allocated for similar purposes in the same fiscal year (FY 2024) for other MnDOT projects.

- **Administrative Modification #2 to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP**

This modification is for a project on the Two Harbors Expressway, for intersection conflict reductions. Due to more refined project estimates, the projected project cost has been reduced by \$800,000. The revised total project cost is \$1,077,778.

- **HTAC Update**

Issues reviewed and presented at the December HTAC included: reporting out of the work of both the Navigation and Dredging subcommittees by their respective Chairs; presentation and input period regarding the Minnesota statewide Freight Plan Update by central office staff of the DOT; an input session from HTAC members and other relevant entities focused on the MICs Metropolitan Transportation Plan in order to gain input on current key issues of movement in the Twin Ports area; lastly, a discussion led by Bryan Rydberg of AOR Waterfront Security, a local leader in the logistics industry and experienced at security with shippers/businesses in Duluth and Superior.

- **Letters of Support for St. Louis County Safety Projects**

We prepared letters of support on behalf of the MIC for five project applications submitted by the county for HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) funding. HSIP is a core Federal-aid program with the purpose of achieving a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads and requires a data-driven, strategic approach to improving safety, with a focus on performance.

All five projects are located within the MIC area, and the proposed improvements would implement some longstanding recommendations from several MIC plans, including the 2000 Midway Road Access Management Plan, the 2018 Duluth-Superior Area Truck Route Study and the 2020 update of our long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan.



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- **2023 D-S Adjusted UAB**

The 2023 Duluth-Superior Adjusted Urban Area Boundary has been submitted to both states. MnDOT has officially accepted the Boundary and sent it on to FHWA for Minnesota Approval.

11. ADJOURN: With no further agenda items, discussions or announcements, Director Ron Chicka adjourned the meeting at 3:19 pm.