



## Meeting Summary

\* = Approval Item

|                        |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| <b>1Note Taker(s)</b>  | Tari Aanonsen, MIC Administrative/Finance Assistant |   |
| <b>Members Present</b> |   |   |
|                        | <b>Members Present</b>                              |   |
|                        | Broc Allen  | Douglas County Suburban Townships       |
|                        | Ed Anderson   | City of Superior – Citizen Rep          |
| <b>WI Co-Chair</b>     | Nick Baker  | Douglas County Board of Supervisors     |
| <b>MN Co-Chair</b>     | Wayne Boucher                                       | City of Hermantown                      |
|                        | Annie Harala  | St. Louis County                        |
|                        | Mark Johnson  | City of Superior                        |
|                        | Yauhen Karatai                                      | City of Duluth – Citizen Representative |
|                        | Rosemary Lear                                       | Douglas County Board of Supervisors     |
|                        | Nick Ledin  | Superior City Council                   |
|                        | Mike Mayou  | Duluth City Council                     |
|                        | Sam Pomush  | Douglas County Board of Supervisors     |
|                        | Bob Quade   | City of Rice Lake                       |
|                        | Randy Skowlund                                      | Douglas County Board of Supervisors     |
|                        | Terese Tomanek                                      | Duluth City Council                     |
|                        | Jenny Van Sickle                                    | Superior City Council                   |
|                        | Chad Ward   | City of Proctor                         |
|                        |   |   |
| <b>Members Absent</b>  |   | * Excused Absence                       |
|                        | Tom Szukis  | DTA                                     |
|                        | Scott Welsh*  | Solway Township                         |
| <b>Others Present</b>  |   |   |
|                        | James Gittemeier                                    | City of Duluth (Presenter)              |
|                        | Sheldon Johnson                                     | NWRPC & MIC Deputy Director             |
|                        | Ann Lynch   | MnDOT                                   |
|                        | Greg Mathis   | MnDOT (Presenter)                       |
|                        | Alex Popp   | City of Duluth (Presenter)              |
|                        | Dena Ryan   | WisDOT (Presenter)                      |
|                        | Richard Sarran                                      | MIC Senior GIS Specialist               |
|                        | Lisa Stern  | WisDOT                                  |
|                        | Rondi Watson  | MIC Senior Planner/Communications Coor. |
|                        | Mike Wenholz  | MIC Principal Planner                   |



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### 1. Introductions / Agenda Review

MIC Co-Chair, Nick Baker, called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. A “roll Call” attendance was taken. When completed, Chair Baker moved on to item# 2 on the agenda.

### 2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- Meeting Summary of 3.20.24\*

Chair Baker then asked if there were any questions or changes to the March meeting summary.

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b> | Sam Pomush / Wayne Boucher moved to approve the 3.20.24 meeting summary. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously. |
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### DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Director Chicka was not able to attend, however had reported on several items of interest that were highlighted in the Director’s Report in the agenda packet.

**SS4A Planning Grant -- \$62,500 local match required from MIC-area jurisdictions** - As described at last month’s TAC and MIC meetings, we were awarded a federal Safe Streets for All (SS4A) planning grant in the amount of \$250,000 (plus a \$62,500 local match) – the largest FY23 award in Minnesota– to complete a Safety Action Plan to guide the implementation of a Safe System, multimodal approach to roadway safety. All cities, counties, and townships in the MIC area will be involved in (and will benefit from) this project.

**The next step to getting it up and running as soon as possible is to determine the amount of each jurisdiction’s contribution toward the required \$62,500 local match.** We will be presenting options for allocating this amount (e.g., based on population size or number of roadway miles) at the next SS4A advisory committee on May 16. At that time, we hope to reach a consensus about how the matching grant amount will be divided up, including specific dollar amounts to be forwarded along for inclusion in each jurisdiction’s 2025 budget request.

**I-35 and Federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant** – With the City of Duluth receiving \$1.8M (total \$2.25M with match) a strategy meeting is being set between area partners to discuss next steps. The MICs recently finished plan set this in motion. We’ll review some aspects of the document and consider additional planning work underway by the County, with respect to the Depot at 5<sup>th</sup> AW and NLX concepts, plus discuss where the DOT is at with their plans for the reconstruction/redesign for the 5<sup>th</sup> AW overpass (short term project for the DOT). All will need to be blended with this recent award for the City to develop long term plans for the Interstate in the downtown.



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### Letter(s) of Support

- a) National Sea Grant Program – Continuing the federal funding via the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Bill for work of both the MN and WI Sea Grants. Both are key participants in the function of the MICs Harbor TAC promoting and supporting the economic and environmental importance of the St. Louis River estuary.

### OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Chair Baker then allowed for an opportunity for Public Comment. Hearing none, he continued to item #3 on the agenda.

### 3. NORTHERN LIGHTS EXPRESS (NLX) UPDATE

Greg Mathis presented the status of the proposed NLX project for the Duluth-Superior area. Currently, four round trips daily are conceived with a 2.5 hour travel time with 6 stops for commuter boarding and exiting.

Several capital improvements will be necessary, including track and signal upgrades, grade crossing improvements, along with new and expanded stations. State funding has been appropriated in the amount of \$194.7 million, which provides the matching funds needed to apply for federal funding of up to 80% of the final design and construction, as well as the purchase of locomotives and cars.

In December of 2023, the project was accepted into the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program (Corridor ID) which allows for funding of project development work. This will help to create a prioritized list of projects for capital funding under other grant programs. The Corridor ID Program involves three steps: Scoping, Service Development Planning (SDP) and Preliminary Engineering. Other Federal funding will need to be secured for the implementation phase of the project.

Lisa Stern of WisDOT also presented the Wisconsin perspective and support of MnDOT's NLX project, through collaboration where service occurs through both states. WisDOT currently has four rail corridors in the FRA Corridor ID Program, two of which offer a potential extension to the Twin Cities. They have also identified their support of the MnDOT sponsored Northern Lights Express (service between Minneapolis and Duluth/Superior) and new passenger rail service proposed between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities, sponsored by Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties.

A time for discussion and questions followed the presentation.

### 4. WEST SUPERIOR STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

James Gittemeier, from the City of Duluth, explained that the West Superior Street corridor is what remains of the old Hwy 61 before the interstate was constructed. It has seen some modifications over the years, but it largely retains much of the old highway configuration. The City of Duluth applied for the Rebuilding America Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant to reconstruct 1.6 miles of the



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corridor. More importantly, this grant reconstruction project will serve to mitigate the long-standing negative impacts of regional infrastructure to the West Duluth neighborhoods. The newly constructed corridor will be human centered, with trees, green infrastructure and will serve as an active transportation corridor for the area. James then welcomed Alex Popp, with the City of Duluth, who is the engineer on this project.

Alex continued with presenting the details of the West Superior Reconstruction Project. Funding was awarded to the city of Duluth in 2022, in the amount of \$24,990,160, from the Rebuilding America Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant from FHWA and is administered by MnDOT. An additional amount of \$7,684,530 has been awarded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Match Program grant from MnDOT. Due to the funding constraints of the award, this project is moving along quickly. The city is currently in the design phase through the end of 2024. Bidding will occur in January 2025 and construction will run from 2025-2028.

Public involvement to date has included four open house events. These events provided important feedback from folks who live, work and play in the neighborhood, which helped to drive the design of the corridor. A fifth open house is planned for the fall to present the final plans and construction impacts to the area, as well as mitigation strategies.

The 1.6-mile corridor of West Superior Street has been broken down into four character districts based upon the surrounding land use. The project will aim to create a cohesive design throughout the corridor, while providing key elements to each character district, based upon its individual needs. Some of the improvements include accessible bus stops, bike and pedestrian crossings, increased lighting, greenspace and a shared multi-use path. Connection to the Cross City Trail is also included in the project.

Renderings and a virtual fly-through were provided to show the potential look for the improvements that are being proposed. Time was provided for member discussion and questions.

### 5. LONG RANGE MTP 2050 UPDATE

Mike Wenholz gave an update on the current work in preparing the Long Range MTP 2050. As a review, the Long Range MTP is federally required of MPO's and must be updated every five years. This plan looks out 25 years and should largely direct the MIC's annual work program.

The MTP sets the overall vision for the MIC area's multimodal transportation network by setting five goals and twenty-six objectives for the plan. It lists the proposed transportation projects in the MIC area for the next twenty-five years, including a prioritized list of projects that best help to implement the vision of the plan. Primarily, this plan should guide the carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive performance-based, multimodal transportation planning process.



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To date, the following has been completed:

- Goals and objectives reviewed and revised
- Focus group consultations held: pedestrian, sustainability and equity
- Jurisdictional consultations held for both Minnesota and Wisconsin
- Upcoming focus groups to be held with representatives of Older Adults and People with Disabilities
- Demographic and Socioeconomic document
- One chapter written, other chapters in progress
- Performance-Based Planning (PBP) Process established (includes a significant partnership between MIC staff, the consultant and MIC area jurisdictional staff)

Remaining tasks include:

- Complete the draft MTP (now-June)
- Request approval for a Public Review Period (June)
- Submit the draft MTP to FHWA, MnDOT, and WisDOT for review (July)
- Public Review Period & Public Open Houses (August)
- Final revisions (September)
- Request approval of final MTP (October)

### 6. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

- Mike Wenzholz spoke on his attendance at a recent DSTA multimodal conference. DSTA is trying to implement a multimodal focus and inclusion in their organization.

### 7. PROJECT UPDATES

#### 2024 Duluth Area Bikeway Plan Update

The Bike Subcommittee has reviewed the first round of content updated to the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Bikeways Plan, last published in 2019. Work is ongoing to update the current plan, and the next round of draft updates are to be discussed and considered at the May BPAC meeting (5/2/2024).

- **ADJOURN:** With no further agenda items, discussions or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 7:57 pm.