



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
HARBOR TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
 March 6, 2024

Hybrid Meeting held at Barker's Island Inn and Via Microsoft Teams

HTAC Voting Members

Present	Name	Organization	Sector Representing
Y	Ed Anderson (<i>Chair</i>)	MIC Policy Board	Regional Organization
Y	Adam Bechle (<i>alternate</i>)	MN Sea Grant	Agency
	Dan Belden	Western Lake Superior Sanitary District	Regional Organization
	Cliff Bentley (<i>alternate</i>)	MN Department of Natural Resources	Agency
Y	Cameron Bertsch	Douglas County	Local Government
	Brian Boder (<i>alternate</i>)	St. Louis County	Local Government
Y	Dan Breneman (<i>alternate</i>)	MN Pollution Control Agency	Agency
Y	Steve Brossart	US Army Corps of Engineers	Agency
	Natalie Chin	WI Sea Grant	Agency
	AJ Clavette (<i>alternate</i>)	US Customs and Border Patrol	Agency
	CDR Jarrod DeWitz	US Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Duluth	Agency
	John Downing	MN Sea Grant	Agency
	Matti Erpestad	Day Tripper of Duluth	Recreation
Y	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County	Local Government
	James Gittemeier	City of Duluth	Local Government
Y	Gary Glass	Izaak Walton League	Citizen Group
	Cheri Hagen	WI Department of Natural Resources	Agency
	Dan Hartman	DECC	Harbor Tourism
	Barb Huberty	MN Pollution Control Agency	Agency
	Duane Johnson (<i>alternate</i>)	St Louis County Emergency Management	Local Government
Y	Joel Johnson	Lakehead Boat Basin	Recreation
	Sheldon Johnson (<i>alternate</i>)	Northwest Regional Planning Commission	Regional Organization
	Brandon Kohlts (<i>alternate</i>)	WLSSD	Regional Organization
	Shawn Krizaj	City of Duluth Fire Department	Local Government
Y	Rich Laskey (<i>alternate</i>)	GLF / Key Lakes	Harbor Industry
Y	Jason Laumann	Northwest Regional Planning Commission	Regional Organization
	Sam Lobby	St. Louis River Alliance	Citizen Group
	Robb McGhie	Perkins Specialized Transportation Contracting	Harbor Logistics
Y	LTJG Joe McGinnis (<i>alternate</i>)	US Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Duluth	Agency
	Capt. Ed Montgomery	Sea Service LLC	Harbor Industry
Y	Nick Patterson	JF Brennan	Harbor Industry
Y	Mike Peterson	GLF / Key Lakes	Harbor Industry
Y	Patrick Phenow	MN Department of Transportation	Agency
Y	Kelsey Prihoda (<i>alternate</i>)	MN Sea Grant	Agency
Y	Jason Reeves	Compass Minerals	Harbor Industry
	Capt. Dan Rentschler (<i>alternate</i>)	Western Great Lakes Pilots Association	Harbor Industry
Y	Mandi Rosebrock	Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Government
Y	Dena Ryan	WI Department of Transportation	Agency
	Jason Serck	City of Superior	Local Government
Y	Ted Smith (<i>alternate</i>)	Marine Tech	Harbor Industry
Y	Bri Speldrich	MN Department of Natural Resources	Agency
Y	Matt Steiger (<i>alternate</i>)	WI Department of Natural Resources	Agency
	Jeff Udd	Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Regional Organization
	Ashley Vande Voort (<i>alternate</i>)	Douglas County	Local Government
Y	Lou Weichseldorfer	CN	Harbor Logistics
	Vacant		Harbor Industry
	Vacant		Harbor Logistics



Others Present

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Tari Aanonsen	MIC	Seth Johnson	AMI
Brian Bellmore	Barr Engineering	Heather Krauel	
MST3 Michael Chupp	USCG	Halle Kusterman	WisDOT
Matt Conlan	Compass Minerals	Ericka Massa	
Orion DiFranco	Senator Tina Smith	Willis Mattison	Izaak Walton League
Therese Dorigan		Jim Miller	Congressman Tom Tiffany
Kate Ferguson	Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Guy Partch	Barr Engineering
Mike Goettel	WI DNR	Daniel Rust	UW-Superior
Michael Halsted	WisDOT	Ricky Sarran	MIC
Jacob Hensel	USACE	Jeff Stollenwerk	
Duane Hill	MnDOT	Maren Webb	MnDOT
Darren Jacobson	CN	Mike Wenzholz	MIC

In addition to the above, there were at least 5 unidentified people online. We do not have the names of those participants.

Introductions / Agenda Review / Committee Business

In **HTAC Chair Ed Anderson’s** absence at the start of the meeting Mike Wenzholz called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 AM. Mike welcomed everyone to the hybrid HTAC quarterly meeting and shared a few basic meeting logistics.

Mike W asked if there were any concerns with the December 6, 2023, Meeting Summary, and hearing none asked for a motion to approve.

- Joel Johnson moved to approve the 12/6/2023 HTAC Meeting Summary. Gary Glass seconded the motion.
- There was no further discussion.
- **The motion to approve carried unanimously.**

During the meeting Mike W noted that Jeff Stollenwerk had recently retired from the Duluth Seaway Port Authority. Mike described the partnership with Jeff and his excellent work with several HTAC-related topics, including being the primary writer of the updated Erie Pier Management Plan. Mike thanked him for his positive contributions to and support of HTAC and wished him well in retirement.

Summary of Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Workshop, Kelsey Prihoda, UM Extension

- See the presentation



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- Kelsey P provided a summary of the recent Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Workshop held January 31, 2024.
 - The goal of the workshop was to identify beneficial use priorities for dredged material from the Duluth-Superior Port over the next 10 years so that the Port can continue dredging operations and address planning needs in advance. In short to help promote the beneficial use of dredged materials.
 - The workshop provided an opportunity to use the US EPA's Dredged Material Decision Tool (DMDT) with 9 real proposed local projects. The DMDT helps to identify project information gaps and can be used to help prioritize options for beneficially using dredged materials in future years.
 - The workshop included discussion of ecosystem services valuation methods that could be considered for beneficial use projects.
 - A total of 60 people participated – 26 in-person and 34 virtually. A diversity of backgrounds and professions were represented by the participants.
 - The workshop provided a learning opportunity and first step in using the DMDT locally. Additional data for most proposed sites/projects is necessary to successfully use the tool.
- Dan B said one of the benefits of the workshop and using the DMDT is early coordination among stakeholders.

Summary of the 2023 Shipping Season, Jayson Hron, Duluth Seaway Port Authority

- See the presentation
- Jayson H provided summary of the 2023 shipping season in the Duluth-Superior Port.
- The port had a very good shipping year. Some of the highlights include:
 - Most vessel arrivals since 2018.
 - Season-over-season tonnage increases across eight cargo categories.
 - Iron ore tonnage up 14.3% from 2022 – highest single season since 1995.
 - Iron ore exports up 22% from 2022.
 - Cement up 29% from 2022 and 31.1% above the 5-season average.
 - Record wheat shipments.
 - The longest international shipping season ever – 277 days.
 - New trans-Atlantic monthly liner service started – the first since the late 1970's.
 - 11 visits from cruise ships.
 - 8 ships wintering in the port – most since 2016-17.
- Iron ore has been the port's primary cargo since 1890, and typically represents more than half of the port's annual cargo.
- Grain was up 22.5% from 2022, but 29% below the 5-season average. Grain variable as it is significantly impacted by strength of the dollar, fuel costs, and weather.
- Coal continues steep decline – 22% below 2022 and 28% below the 5-season average. It has dropped from approximately 20 million tons in 2005 to approximately 5 million tons in 2022.
- Shipping remains a more energy efficient freight option (compared to truck and rail). DSPA continues to support and promote water-based transportation.



HTAC Dredging Subcommittee Update & Meeting Summary, Dan Breneman, MPCA

- See the presentation
- Dan B provided a summary of the recent Dredging Subcommittee meeting. Some highlights mentioned included:
 - Debriefed the Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Workshop (discussed by Kelsey P earlier).
 - USACE announced the maintenance contract will be to provide beach nourishment on Wisconsin Point near the closed landfill to support resiliency. There will also be an opportunity to use dredged material for landfill cover for cover during the current City of Superior landfill closure.
 - Wisconsin DNR is planning and designing an Allouez Bay marsh bird habitat restoration.
 - Discussion of the status of implementing the updated Erie Pier Management Plan. There has been progress made towards three of the plan's recommendations: making material data available, finding markets for dredged materials, and improving regulatory controls, including DSPA gaining full ownership of the Erie Pier property. Dredged material from maintenance dredging went to Erie Pier in both 2022 and 2023, and some material has been sold and more is available for sale.
- Dan B shared two upcoming Great Lakes Dredging Team events to consider:
 - April 3: Informational webinar on implications of climate change and coastal processes on Great Lakes navigation system maintenance
 - September 26-28: Annual meeting in Erie, PA

St Louis River Area of Concern (AOC) Updates, Matt Steiger, WI DNR

- See the presentation (maps)
- Matt S shared updates on all ongoing and new St Louis River Area of Concern projects scheduled for 2024 in both Minnesota and Wisconsin.
- In total Matt S provided information about 8 projects in Minnesota and 9 projects in Wisconsin. Thus there is a lot of AOC work to be accomplished in 2024.

Role & Responsibilities of the USCG Marine Safety Unit Duluth, Joe McGinnis, US Coast Guard

- See the presentation
- Joe M provided an overview of what the USCG Marine Safety Unit (MSU) Duluth is and what its responsibilities are.
- MSU Duluth consists of 24 active duty and 4 civilian employees.
- MSU Duluth comprises 4 sectors: On Scene Coordination, Maritime Security, Marine Inspection, and Captain of the Port.
- MSU Duluth carries out the following missions:
 - Domestic Vessel Inspections
 - Port State Control
 - Waterways Management
 - Facility Inspections



- Marine Environmental Protection
- Pollution Response and Control
- Investigations following a variety of situations
- MSU Duluth has a large area of responsibility, from just east of the Keweenaw Peninsula to the Red River (ND/MN boundary) and the border with Canada south to a line south of Duluth, MN and Ashland, WI.
- In closing Joe M announced that this was his last HTAC meeting, as he will be restationed and moving to Lafayette, Louisiana. Mike W thanked him for his excellent partnership and support of HTAC, including chairing the HTAC's Navigation Subcommittee.

Annual MIC Harbor Work Plan Update, Mike Wenzholz, MIC

- Mike W reminded the group that the HTAC is very important to the MIC. This is demonstrated by the fact the MIC's harbor-related work has its own work plan, which Mike summarized. He shared several highlights, including
 - The budget for the 2024 Harbor Planning Work Program is \$55,600.
 - The 2024 budget includes 775 staff hours.
 - The MIC's Harbor Planning work includes three components: coordination, information exchange, and group facilitation (in essence the quarterly HTAC meetings); HTAC subcommittee facilitation and coordination; and program development and other activities (a diverse list of activities).

Roundtable

- Dena R shared that Wisconsin Governor Evers announced last month \$10 million for 8 projects under the Harbor Assistance Grants program. \$3 million is to the City of Superior for a dock wall intermodal project. \$803,000 is for work at the General Mills property. \$3 million is for work at the C Reiss property. Mike H provided some clarifications.
- Ricky S announced the availability of a summer MIC intern.
- Ricky S shared about the local Lake Superior Captain's Academy he participated in recently, He said it was excellent and the instructor was amazing. He highly recommends it for anyone needing to take a captain's course.
- Patrick P shared that the latest round of State of Minnesota Port Development Assistance Awards were announced last month. \$18 million has been allocated, which is again an increase from the previous year. The Duluth Port will be receiving \$7.5 million for materials abatement and related work associated with rehabbing one of the dilapidated grain elevators.
- Duane Hill provided a very short update on the Blatnik Bridge project. He announced the project has received \$1.05 billion from the federal government and they considering applying for an additional grant. Additionally, the Federal Highway Administration just signed the finding of no significant impact for the preferred alternative. This is a big milestone and allows the project to move forward. Pier location and pile load testing is planned to occur this year.
- Daniel R announced the Twin Ports Intermodal Conference focused on infrastructure readiness. The conference is from 4:30 – 6 PM on April 17 at the UW-Superior Yellowjacket Union Great Room, with networking and hors d'oeuvres to follow. The conference is a collaboration of the Duluth Superior Transportation Association (DSTA) and the UWS Transportation and Logistics Research Center.
- Mike W shared there is a National Harbor Safety Committee conference in Chicago on Navy Pier March 20-21. Tari A sent information on this conference to people on the HTAC email distribution list.



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- Joe M shared the Soo Locks will be opening March 22, two or three days early.
- Gary G mentioned the City of Duluth lift bridge is to undergo rehab this year. He suggested that the rehab should include consideration of maintaining and expanding the aids to navigation for not only ships but also boaters and paddlers.

With no other items brought forward, Mike Wenholz adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:36 AM.