



## Meeting Summary

\* = Approval Item

<b>1Note Taker(s)</b>	Tari Aanonsen, MIC Administrative/Finance Assistant	
<b>Members Present</b>		
	<b>Members Present</b>	
	Ed Anderson	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
<b>WI Co-Chair</b>	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Jake Benson	City of Proctor
<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
	John Lohse	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Sam Pomush	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Bob Quade	City of Rice Lake
	Terese Tomanek	Duluth City Council
	Scott Welsh	Solway Township
<b>Members Absent</b>		* Excused Absence
	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Nick Ledin	Superior City Council
	Mike Mayou*	Duluth City Council
	Randy Skowlund*	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Tom Szukis*	DTA
	Jenny Van Sickle	Superior City Council
	Chad Ward*	City of Proctor
<b>Others Present</b>		
	Ron Chicka	MIC Director
	Sheldon Johnson	MIC Deputy Director, NWRPC
	Prescott Morrill	MIC Planner
	Richard Sarran	MIC Senior GIS Specialist
	Rondi Watson	MIC Senior Planner/Communications Specialist
	Mike Wenholz	MIC Principal Planner



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### 1. Introductions / Agenda Review

MIC Co-Chair, Wayne Boucher, called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. A “roll Call” attendance was taken. When completed, Chair Boucher moved on to item# 2 on the agenda.

### 2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- Meeting Summary of 6.26.24\*

Chair Boucher then asked if there were any questions or changes to the June meeting summary. Scott Welsh asked for a correction to note that he was present at the June meeting. He was incorrectly marked as absent.

<b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b>	Nick Baker / Sam Pomush moved to approve the 6.26.24 meeting summary with the noted change. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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- DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Director Chicka reported on several items of interest that were highlighted in the Director’s Report in the agenda packet as well as some items as listed below:

**Blatnik Update and Bridge Traffic Mitigation Modeling** – Hope all can attend our September meetings; we’ll be having a presentation from the DOT as to status of the Blatnik, plus a more extensive discussion as to traffic mitigations efforts being planned for when there is only the Bong Bridge to move between the cities. Meetings are being conducted to put forward potential flow options/restrictions. Key will, obviously, be Belknap on the Superior side. The MIC will also document the traffic issue within the context of the Long Range Plan being modeled by our consultant, AECOM.

**Bong Bridge Public Meeting** – Sent last week, and just prior to the MIC Board meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Wis DOT will be holding an information meeting from 5 to 7 pm at the Superior Library to detail maintenance work to be performed on the bridge next construction season – 2025. Some of the work here is being done knowing that the Bong will see an inordinate volume of traffic once the Blatnik closes in a few years. The major impact will be that traffic will be funneled down to one lane in either direction. At some stage, the ramps on the Mn side will be closed for repairs as well.

**MIC Mid-Year State/Federal Review** – On August 8<sup>th</sup>, we conducted our annual State and Federal review of all operations of the MIC. We go over various administrative items including financial and other reporting requirements via both states. One document we will be looking to update next year is our Memo of Understanding (MOU) that lays out the working arrangements between the MIC, the DOT and the DTA (our two main funding partners). We also reviewed the contents of the Work Program, status of each TIP and where the MTP is at in its approval stages. All items checked out and we are in good standing with the oversight agencies.

**Duluth – Central Entrance Review** – At the end of the month, I’ve arranged to meet with the MIC Board Councilors on the Duluth side, along with the Duluth Mayor’s representative on the MIC



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Board to discuss the upcoming public review meetings on possible design of the reconstructed Central Entrance corridor – now slated for either 2028 or 2029. All should recall the extensive work that the MIC conducted that led to the current design initiative underway with MnDOT. Most important for upcoming decisions on design will be some level of adherence to the City's Small Area Plan established for the corridor and how well some chosen design fits the objectives of said City plan. Before the year is out, I'll re-present the MICs Plan on the roadway to refresh everybody as to what we stated. I should point out that, at some point in the future, the MIC Board will very likely be asked to approve added federal funds for the project targeted for actual construction.

**Northern Lights Express** – After talking with County Commissioner (and MIC Board member) Annie Harla, I've been invited to attend meetings of the NLX/Depot committee. City, County and St. Louis Co. Regional Rail staff convene to discuss upcoming steps in the NLX project, including possible transportation issues and changes that may occur surrounding the Depot. Will report back to the MIC as needed.

**RAISE Grant – Rice Lake Road Corridor Project** - St. Louis County Public Works was awarded a \$25 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant for the Rice Lake Road Corridor Project. At the TAC and MIC meetings last December, Vic Lund presented information about the project and we subsequently provided a letter of support for the County's grant application. The project will improve safety and traffic flow along this critical freight and passenger transportation route and will also provide regional economic development and community benefits.

**Title VI and Language Access Plans** – Following up on the request made at our May meeting – if you haven't done so already, please respond to the short survey we sent to determine the demographic composition of our Board and Committee members. This is so we can assess, in accordance with our Title VI and Language Access plans, who's involved in our discussions about transportation issues and planning projects as advisory committee members.

### Letter(s) of Support:

- **St Louis County** – Federal Rail Administration grant program to explore the feasibility of grade separation at two locations along Midway Road (CSAH 13) immediately south of USH 2 (Adolph) and diagonal crossing at St Louis River Road. Each is exposed to approximately 30 trains per day. Delays to freight traffic along this key corridor for goods movement is becoming a concern.
- **Meeting Materials Demonstration**  
Going forward, meeting materials will no longer be attached to the meeting notices but will be linked in the email notification. Meeting materials can be viewed, downloaded or printed at one's convenience. A brief example was given to familiarize board members with how this will look.



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### OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

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

### 3. DRAFT 2025-2028 SUPERIOR AREA TIP – RELEASE FOR 30 DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON SEPTEMBER 1, 2024\*

Sheldon Johnson requested for approval, the release of the 2025-2028 Superior Area TIP for public comment for a 30-day period, beginning on September 1, 2024. At this time, the list of public projects for Fiscal Years 2025-2028 is complete, according to input from our constituent jurisdictions. After this public comment period, any pertinent comments received will be incorporated into the final version of the TIP, with the action to adopt to be included in the agenda for the October 2024 MIC Board meeting.

A public information session will be held virtually on September 18, 2024, from 12:00-12:30 pm [Superior TIP 2025-2028 Public Information Session – DSMIC](#)

Questions regarding the Superior Area TIP should be directed to Sheldon Johnson at 715-635-2197 or by email at [sjohnson@nwrpc.com](mailto:sjohnson@nwrpc.com).

<b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b>	Nick Baker / Ed Anderson moved to approve the Draft 2025-2028 Superior Area Tip for 30-Day Public Comment Period on September 1, 2024. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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### 4. 2024-2027 SUPERIOR AREA TIP AMENDMENT #16\*

Sheldon Johnson presented the following amendment to the 2024-2027 Superior Area TIP:

#### TIP AMENDMENT #16

A TIP amendment has been requested by WisDOT for preliminary engineering scheduled to begin in 2024 for work associated with a 90-bridge deck sealing project covering the NW Region of WisDOT with a total cost of \$35,000. The funding below is for PE work associated with the two bridges in the MIC area.

#### 2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT  113-24-027  Amended to TIP in August 2024	USH 53	PE	.60	.15		.75
	Multiple Bridge Structures	ROW				
	B-16-0012&16-0024 (0.0 miles)	CONST				
	Bridge Preventative Maintenance NHPP	TOTAL	.60	.15		.75
	1190-03-07					



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Time was allowed for Public Comment. No Public Comments were received.

Questions regarding this project should be directed to Sheldon Johnson at 715-635-2197 or by email at [sjohnson@nwrpc.com](mailto:sjohnson@nwrpc.com).

<b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b>	Nick Baker / Sam Pomush moved to approve the 2024-2027 Superior Area TIP Amendment #16 for adoption. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.
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### 5. FINAL 2025-2028 DULUTH AREA TIP\*

Prescott Morrill presented the Final 2025-2028 Duluth Area TIP for adoption to the MIC Policy Board, which includes, among others, the following projects:

- RAISE Grant 2025 Reconstruction of W Superior St from Carlton St to W Michigan St (Point of Rocks/M&H Gas Station)
- RAISE Grant Rice Lake Rd Corridor: reconstruction of a portion of Rice Lake Rd, Martin Rd and West Calvary Rd, improve key intersections, construction of a new city street, and construction of a new multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) W Superior Street Reconstruction in 2025, Campus Connector Trail, Segment 4 in 2026 and placeholders for project solicitation in 2027 and 2028.
- National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) construction of one charging stations located at the Circle K Store at 9314 W Skyline, Proctor, MN 55810

Time was allowed for Public Comment. No Public Comments were received.

Questions relating to the Duluth Area TIP should be directed to Prescott Morrill at 218-529-7556 or by email at [pmorrill@ardc.org](mailto:pmorrill@ardc.org).

<b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b>	Terese Tomanek / Annie Harala moved to approve the Final 2025-2028 Duluth Area TIP for adoption. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.
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### 6. DRAFT 2025-2026 MIC WORK PROGRAM DISCUSSION

Ron Chicka presented an overview of the Draft 2025-2026 MIC Work Program, which includes the addition of a new short-term project involving the Safe Streets For All grant funding. Other areas of focus in the Work Program include tasks in partnering with the DTA, including participation on an advisory committee for a Bus Rapid Transit facility study, as well as an assessment of bus stops and shelters in relation to pedestrian connectivity and accessibility. In addition, a TOD, or Transit Oriented Development, will assess the impact of various land uses on transit utilization.

Additionally, further Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) work in 2025 will continue with the integration of the new, performance-based approach to the TIP and other MIC planning processes, that were a direct outcome of the MTP work in 2023 and 2024.



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Ongoing work that will continue to occur in 2025 include Bicycle and Pedestrian planning, Roadway, Harbor and Freight planning, as well as ongoing administrative tasks. A draft of the 2025-2026 Work Plan & Budget will be presented in September for review and comment, with a final to be presented at the October Board meeting. Once approved, it will be forwarded to MnDOT, WisDOT, FHWA and FTA for final approval.

Questions regarding the 2025-2026 UPWP should be directed to Ron Chicka at 218-529-7506 or by email at [rchicka@ardc.org](mailto:rchicka@ardc.org).

### 7. LONG RANGE MTP 2050 PROJECT UPDATE

Mike Wenholtz presented an update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) process that has been ongoing in 2023-2024. Official review was held in early August that included representative jurisdictional partners and oversight personnel. Input was given for revisions that were needed, but not significant enough to warrant a new Public Comment Period.

Open houses were held in August in both Duluth and Superior locations. While minimally attended, good discussions were held and feedback consistent with the goals and objectives of the plan were received by community members. The Public Comment Period Continues through September 06, 2024. Final revisions to occur in September, addressing any comments received, and a request for approval of the final MTP will be on the October agenda.

Questions regarding the Long Range MTP 2050 should be directed to Mike Wenholtz at 218-529-7573 or by email at [mwenholtz@ardc.org](mailto:mwenholtz@ardc.org).

### 8. ROUND TABLE

- Annie Harala offered her apology for her questions during the discussion earlier in the meeting and thanked the group for their grace.
- Yauhen Karatai asked regarding the Rice Lake Road Corridor Project if it was possible to extend the reconstruction to the intersection at Arrowhead Road. Prescott Morrill stated that the scope of work and funding does not include that intersection.
- Annie Harala, as a ARDC Board member, gave an update on ARDC's interim Executive Director, Kristi Kane, who is working to support the ARDC staff during this transition time. Annie mentioned that some of that support is coming in the form of internal staff surveys to gain an understanding of the current needs of each division and staff members. External surveys may also occur, so Policy Board members may see something in the coming months and are encouraged to participate.

### 9. PROJECT UPDATES

- **City of Duluth West Superior Street Traffic Re-routing**

The City of Duluth, towards their efforts to reconstruct West Superior Street, is considering routing options for a 3-phased detour plan for all modes of traffic. These detours are currently planned for construction during the following three years:



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-2026/Phase 1: Point of Rocks to 18<sup>th</sup> Ave W

-2027/Phase 2: 18<sup>th</sup> Ave W to 24<sup>th</sup> Ave W

-2028/Phase 3: 24<sup>th</sup> Ave W to Carlton St

- **2027 & 2028 MN Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Funds**

MnDOT is still reviewing their CRP solicitation schedule, and the main points are as follows:

1. MnDOT is working to align CRP grants', PROTECT grants', and Transportation Alternatives (TA) grants' timelines.
2. In this next round, likely this Fall, CRP and PROTECT grants will be soliciting for FY27, 28, and 29.
3. The CRP funding will follow similar processes for eligibility as the previous two years (FY25, and 26).
4. PROTECT grants are intended to have a more streamlined solicitation process, through the ATP. This will be guided by the Resilience Improvement Plan.
5. Additional information on these programs and schedules will be available in early September, 2024, with time for questions and feedback in October, 2024.

- **ADJOURN:** With no further agenda items, discussions or announcements, Chair Boucher adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm.