



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
HARBOR TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
 September 4, 2024

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

HTAC Voting Members

Present	Name	Organization	Sector Representing
Y	Jeff Abboud	WI Department of Transportation	Agency
Y	Ed Anderson (<i>Chair</i>)	MIC Policy Board	Regional Organization
	Adam Bechle (<i>alternate</i>)	WI Sea Grant	Agency
Y	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	CDR John Botti	US Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Duluth	Agency
Y	Dan Breneman (<i>alternate</i>)	MN Pollution Control Agency	Agency
	Steve Brossart	US Army Corps of Engineers	Agency
Y	Natalie Chin	WI Sea Grant	Agency
	AJ Clavette (<i>alternate</i>)	US Customs and Border Patrol	Agency
	John Downing	MN Sea Grant	Agency
	Matti Erpestad	Day Tripper of Duluth	Recreation
Y	LTJG Zach Fedak (<i>alternate</i>)	US Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Duluth	Agency
Y	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County	Local Government
	James Gittemeier	City of Duluth	Local Government
Y	Gary Glass	Izaak Walton League	Citizen Group
Y	Cheri Hagen	WI Department of Natural Resources	Agency
	Dan Hartman	DECC	Harbor Tourism
Y	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
Y	Shawn Krizaj	City of Duluth Fire Department	Local Government
	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
	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
	Jason Reeves	Compass Minerals	Harbor Industry
	Capt. Dan Rentschler (<i>alternate</i>)	Western Great Lakes Pilots Association	Harbor Industry
Y	Amanda Rosebrock	Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Government
Y	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
	Matt Steiger (<i>alternate</i>)	WI Department of Natural Resources	Agency
Y	Jeff Udd	Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Regional Organization
	Ashley Vande Voort (<i>alternate</i>)	Douglas County	Local Government
	Lou Wechseldorfer	CN	Harbor Logistics
	Vacant		Harbor Industry
	Vacant		Harbor Logistics



Others Present

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Katherine Alexsen		Rachel Miller	USACE – Soo Locks
Andrew Andrusko	MnDOT	Alan Mozol	USACE
Brian Bellmore	Barr Engineering	Eric Oberhart	CPCS
Ron Chicka	MIC	Stacy Oltmanns	Northland Constructors
Christopher Edyvean	Western GL Pilots Association	Brian O	AGLPA
Kate Ferguson	Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Guy Partch	Barr Engineering
Ben Gates	US Coast Guard MSU Duluth	Daniel Rust	UW-Superior
Michael Halsted	WisDOT	Miah Schmidt	AMI
Nick Hickey	Fraser Shipyards	Melissa Sjolund	MnDNR
John Hoenig	Barkers Island Marina	Mae Sommerfeld	WisDOT
Jayson Hron	Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Robert Sullivan	MARAD
Pat Lammersen	US Coast Guard	Maren Webb	MnDOT
Joe Lane	UM - Duluth	Mike Wenholz	MIC
Willis Mattison	Izaak Walton League	Corey Weston	USACE
Julie McDonnell	MnDNR	Chris Wojtowicz	SBDC

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

HTAC Chair Ed Anderson called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 AM. Mike welcomed everyone to the hybrid HTAC quarterly meeting, and he and Ron Chicka shared a few basic meeting logistics.

Mike W shared that the June 5, 2024, Meeting Summary is not yet completed and thus is not up for approval at this meeting. He anticipates it will be ready for the December 4 meeting.

Mike W also noted a mistake on the agenda. The third item should be “Dredging Subcommittee Meeting Summary”, not “Navigation Subcommittee Meeting Summary”.

Introduction of US Coast Guard Commander Botti, John Botti, US Coast Guard MSU-Duluth

- Commander Botti introduced himself and provided a brief overview of his past roles and experiences.
- He also outlined a few of the primary duties of the Marine Safety Unit – Duluth.
- As part of his position, he is also Captain of the Port for Western Lake Superior.
- Zach Fedak will be the primary USCG MSU-Duluth “face” at many HTAC meetings, including the Navigation Subcommittee.



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HTAC Dredging Subcommittee Meeting Summary, Dan Breneman, MPCA

- See the presentation
- Dan B provided a summary of the August 21 Dredging Subcommittee meeting. Some highlights mentioned included:
 - An update of the 2024 USACE Duluth-Superior federal O&M contract was discussed. Beach placement on Wisconsin Point adjacent to the closed City of Superior landfill was planned. Due to the contractor RFP going out later than desired and only one bid that was significantly higher than estimated USACE was not able to proceed with an awarded contract.
 - The current plan is to combine 2024 and 2025 O&M funds for 2025 dredging of approximately 120-160,000 cubic yards. This will include everything planned for 2024, as well as some shoaling priorities.
 - The Duluth Seaway Port Authority will be dredging approximately 36,000 cubic yards as part of the Berth 10 dock wall rehabilitation that will be stockpiled at Erie Pier and be for sale in 2025.
 - USACE has an RFP to assist with beneficial use of Erie Pier fine materials.
 - Dredged material use through 2028 likely will include the beach placement along Wisconsin Point, capping of the current City of Superior landfill that will be closing, and placement within Allouez Bay to create hemi marsh habitat.
 - Updating and populating a prioritized list of viable placement alternatives with project partnership identified. The USEPA's Dredged Material Decision Support Tool should be utilized to do this.
 - Find ways to limit contracting challenges, advance the federal standard discussion to off-set total project costs, and support early coordination for prioritized projects and ensure multiple contractor responses.
- Dan B reminded everyone of the USACE's 70/30 beneficial use of dredged material initiative and gave a brief explanation of what that entails.
- Dan B again announced the upcoming Great Lakes Dredging Team Annual meeting in Erie, PA on September 24-25.

Minnesota Freight Plan Update, Andrew Andrusko, MnDOT

- See the presentation
- Andrew A provided an overview and status update of the update to the Minnesota State Freight Plan.
- The plan must be regularly updated and is directly tied to \$21.6 million of funding annually.
- Regarding COVID-19 impacts, freight was impacted less and rebounded quicker than passenger travel.
- More US crude oil is being shipped via pipeline and less by trucks. Truck shipping of crude oil has dropped to well less than half what it was in 2016.
- The truck driver and workforce shortages remain an issue.
- MnDOT used a variety of means to engage the public and promote the draft plan, and they received a good amount of feedback.
- Andrew discussed key parts of the plan (what's in it).
- Total annual freight tonnage into, out of, and within Minnesota increased by 15% between 2012 and 2019, and is expected to grow another 40% by 2050. Truck and pipeline are the largest modes by tonnage, and truck and multiple modes are the largest by value. The top commodities by tonnage currently and anticipated to be in 2050 are natural gas and other fossil products and cereal grains. The



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top commodities by value currently are electronics and mixed freight, and these along with precision instruments and pharmaceuticals are anticipated to be the top commodities in 2050.

- Improved safety and sustainable truck strategies are two of the significant updates in the plan.
- Andrew shared the Freight Action Agenda – 24 recommended actions to work on over the next 20 years that were developed in collaboration with the Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee.
- The estimated financial range of freight needs statewide is \$1.1 – 1.9 billion.
- The public comment period was open at the time of the meeting.
- Competitive rail access is an issue brought up by people in NE Minnesota.
- Willis M asked where to prioritize, and who to consider when prioritizing. Andrew A said these issues are addressed more in the Ports and Harbors Plan, or as site-specific plans.

UW-Superior Transportation & Logistics Program – Training the Next Generation, Daniel Rust, UW-Superior

- Daniel R provided an overview of the Transportation & Logistics Management (TLM) and Supply Chain Management (SCM) programs available at UW-Superior.
- The TLM program is a distinctive program created in 1999 that prepares graduates to work in a variety of roles including transportation manager for any mode of transportation; warehouse, terminal, or DC manager; logistics coordinator; supply chain manager; or demand planner.
- The SCM program is the only such program in the Twin Ports, and focusses on supply chain management, quantitative analysis, and information systems.
- The programs include many tours of local industries, and such tours are integral parts of the coursework. Daniel showed pictures of many different tours.
- All TLM majors require an internship.
- UW-Superior is one of only 12 universities nationally that are a member of the Intermodal Association of North America.
- UW-Superior often wins or places well in Case Competitions with these other schools.
- Daniel shared a slide that identified a large and diverse number of companies, government agencies, and organizations as examples of where graduates have been employed, including many in the Twin Ports area.

St Louis River Area of Concern (AOC) Updates, Barb Huberty, MPCA, and Cheri Hage, WDNR

- See the presentation
- Barb H shared updates on all ongoing and new St Louis River Area of Concern projects in both Minnesota and Wisconsin.
- Brief updates were provided for the Munger Landing, AGP/Northland Slip, Thomson Reservoir, US Steel/Spirit Lake, Mud Lake, Perch Lake, and Manoomin restoration projects in Minnesota.
- Brief updates were provided for the Piping Plover Habitat, Little Balsam Creek Fish Passage, Pickle Pond, C Reiss Coal Slip, C Street Slip, Superior Slips, and Manoomin restoration projects in Wisconsin.
- Post construction sampling and bathymetry is ongoing in numerous areas.
- Regarding BUI 1 Fish Consumption Advisories: Hg and PCBs papers are out for publication and funding was obtained to study SLRAOC-wide fish tissue concentrations.
- As always, outreach continues in a number of ways, including new story maps.



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- As of the end of March 2024 SLR AOC management actions were 72.5% complete. It was hoped that would increase to 81.3% complete by the end of September 2024 with the completion of 7 more management actions.

New Lock at the Soo Progress Update, Rachel Miller, USACE

- See the presentation
- Rachel M provided a detailed status update on the Soo Locks project.
- The Soo Locks are vital for moving freight to and from upper and lower lakes of the Great Lakes system. The Soo is a choke point in the system, especially given there is currently only one lock that can accommodate the thousand-foot ships. Thus, the construction of a new lock is important for redundancy in the system.
- Some primary reasons the Soo Locks are important:
 - Nearly all domestically produced high strength steel is made with iron ore that transits the Poe Lock. 95% of US taconite goes through the Soo Locks.
 - 69 million tons of commodity transited through the Soo Locks in 2023.
 - It has been estimated that within 2-6 weeks of an unscheduled Poe Lock outage 75% of our nation's high strength steel production would cease.
 - It is estimated a 6-month unscheduled outage would result in 11 million jobs lost and \$1.1 trillion negative economic impact.
- The Soo Locks are very old and updates are needed.
- The current configuration includes 4 locks, only one (the Poe Lock) of which can accommodate the largest ships on the Great Lakes (i.e. the thousand-footers). Two of the older, smaller locks are being demolished, and in part of that same area a new larger lock will be constructed. The new lock will be the exact same dimensions (1200 feet long x 110 feet wide x 32 feet deep) as the existing Poe Lock. This will allow efficiencies such as sharing unique parts between the new and Poe Locks, as needed.
- The authorized project cost is \$3.219 billion. \$1.967 billion has been allocated to date. Funding is coming from multiple sources, including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. If full funding is achieved, the project is estimated to be completed summer 2030.
- Rachel showed many slides and a time-lapse video detailing the work that has been done to date, mostly building coffer dams to allow for the demolition and reconstruction work, demolition of what were the Sabin and Davis Locks, upstream channel deepening, and reconstruction of the upstream approach walls. The demolition work has required an extensive amount of concrete removal and has been very labor intensive. The project is utilizing as much demo concrete and other material onsite as possible.
- A significant part of the project is the inclusion of a large concrete batch plant to provide onsite, reliable concrete for this very concrete-intensive project.

Roundtable

- Pat L announced there is a CISA cybersecurity update – a new rule. He will provide a link for the MIC to distribute.
- Jason S provided an update on several port-related projects in the City of Superior.
 - The C Reis project is ending in September.
 - The General Mills slip received a \$1 million Harbor Assistance Grant for rip rap work.
 - A planning grant was submitted to consider options for developing the Jeff Foster property.
- Jason S is the Wisconsin Commercial Ports Association President and announced the Association's annual meeting is October 24-25 in Prairie du Chein.



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- Gary G shared concerns regarding maintaining and expanding the Lift Bridge aids to navigation for not only ships but also recreational boaters and paddlers. He said some shippers want these changes, as well. Chris E asked for clarification of what Gary was asking for. Mike W said this is a discussion for the next Navigation Subcommittee.
- Mike W offered an open invitation for anyone to suggest or offer a presentation or presentation topic for future HTAC meetings.
- Chris E announced that the International Ship Master's Association (ISMA) Grand Lodge Convention will be held in Duluth January 28-February 1, 2026. He is selling raffle tickets to help with the meeting costs. The grand prize of the raffle is an ore ship trip for 4 aboard the Edwin H. Gott during the 2025 shipping season. The raffle drawing will be held in February or March 2025. You can contact Chris (capt.edyvean@wglpa.com) for additional details or to purchase raffle tickets.

With no other items brought forward, Mike Wenholz adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:45 AM.