



**Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Meeting Summary**

** = Approval Item*

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| Note Taker(s) | Tari Aanonsen, MIC Administrative & Finance Assistant | |
| Members Present | | |
| In at 1:34 pm | David Bolf | City of Hermantown |
| In at 1:32 pm | Chris Carlson | City of Superior – Public Works |
| | Jim Foldesi | St Louis County |
| | Derek Fredrickson | MnDOT District 1 |
| | James Gittemeier | City of Duluth |
| | Jason Jackman | Douglas County |
| In at 1:35 pm | Todd Janigo | City of Superior – Public Works |
| | Jeremy Kroke | Duluth Transit Authority (Alternate) |
| | Mae Sommerfeld | WisDOT NW Region |
| | Cindy Voigt | City of Duluth Engineering |
| | Maren Webb | MnDOT District 1 |
| | Tom Werner | Duluth Airport Authority |
| | Skip Williams | Active Transportation |
| Members Absent | | * Excused Absence |
| | Chris Belden * | Duluth Transit Authority |
| | Kate Ferguson* | Duluth Seaway Port Authority |
| | Chris Lee* | City of Duluth |
| | Cari Pedersen | City of Duluth |
| | Jess Rich | City of Proctor |
| | Vacant | Economic Development |
| | Vacant | Mobility Challenged Community |
| Others Present | | |
| | Ron Chicka | MIC Director |
| | Duane Hill | MnDOT District 1 |
| | Justin Johnson | WisDOT Central Office - MPO Coordinator |
| | Sheldon Johnson | NWRPC |
| | Yauhen Karatai | MIC Policy Board |
| | Chris Michels | WisDOT |
| | Eli Norlander | MIC Transportation Planner |
| | Dean Ryan | WSB |
| | 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

Mike Wenholz, MIC Principal Planner, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm. A "roll call" attendance was taken. When completed, Wenholz then asked if there were any questions or other changes to the agenda. There were none.

2. Committee Business

- Meeting Summary of 8.19.25*

Wenholz then asked if there were any questions or changes to the August meeting summary.

Table with 2 columns: Motion Discussion and Vote, and a text description of a motion to approve the 8.19.25 meeting summary.

Director's Report

Ron Chicka gave a brief update on the following items:

Lowel Elementary and Rice Lake Rd - Planning efforts continue for the movement of traffic to and from Lowel Elementary on Rice Lake Road. Changes will be coming to assist with the flow of traffic in and out of the school.

Rice Lake Rd Corridor Project – St. Louis County, in partnership with the City of Rice Lake will be holding a public meeting on Thursday, October 23, 2025, to discuss the final design phase of the Rice Lake Rd Corridor Project. A meeting announcement was included in the meeting materials

Additional Director's Report items were not discussed but can be found in the meeting materials packet.

3. 2025-2028 Superior Area TIP Amendment #14-18*

Sheldon Johnson gave a detailed overview of the Superior Area TIP Amendments, as listed below:

TIP AMENDMENT #14

A TIP amendment to an existing project listed in the 2025-2028 TIP has been requested by WisDOT to increase the funding amount from \$11,116,000 to \$19,420,000 and move the project construction date from 2027 to 2028.

Please see table on the next page.



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2028 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

| Jurisdiction and Project Number | Project Description | | Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|--|-------|-------|--------|
| | | | Federal | State | Local | Total |
| WisDOT 113-24-001 Amended to TIP in September 2025 1180-00-60 | USH-2 Superior-Wentworth 53 rd Ave E to CTH C Pavement Resurfacing miles 6.52 STPG-U Multi-Year Project Total Improvement Cost (nearest \$) \$19,841,093 | PE ROW CONST | 15,536 | 3,884 | | 19,420 |
| | | TOTAL | 15,536 | 3,884 | | 19,420 |

TIP AMENDMENT #15

A TIP amendment has been requested by WisDOT for preliminary engineering work associated with a new maintenance garage at Safety Rest Area 23 south of Superior. Total project cost is estimated at \$100,000. Work related to the project amendment is scheduled for 2025.

2025 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

| Jurisdiction and Project Number | Project Description | | Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|
| | | | Federal | State | Local | Total |
| WisDOT 113-25-032 Amended to TIP in September 2025 1180-00-17 | USH-2 Off Roadway Superior-Wentworth Safety Rest Area 23 New Maintenance Garage miles 0.0 Total Improvement Cost (nearest \$) \$750,000 | PE ROW CONST | | 100 | | 100 |
| | | TOTAL | | 100 | | 100 |



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TIP AMENDMENT #16

A TIP amendment has been requested by WisDOT for construction work associated with a new maintenance garage at Safety Rest Area 23 south of Superior. Total project cost is estimated at \$650,000. Work related to the project amendment is scheduled for 2028.

2028 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

| Jurisdiction and Project Number | Project Description | | Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|
| | | | Federal | State | Local | Total |
| WisDOT 113-25-033 Amended to TIP in September 2025 1180-00-87 | USH-2 Off Roadway Superior-Wentworth Safety Rest Area 23 New Maintenance Garage miles 0.0 Total Improvement Cost (nearest \$) \$750,000 | PE ROW CONST | | 650 | | 650 |
| | | TOTAL | | 650 | | 650 |

TIP AMENDMENT #17

A TIP amendment has been requested by WisDOT for construction work associated with sanitary sewer work associated with Blatnik Bridge work. Total project cost is estimated at \$4,347,000. Work related to the project amendment is scheduled for 2026.

2026 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

| Jurisdiction and Project Number | Project Description | | Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands | | | |
|--|--|--------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|
| | | | Federal | State | Local | Total |
| WisDOT 113-25-034 Amended to TIP in September 2025 1199-00-78 ID to bill City of Superior for their portion of sanitary sewer | IH535 Superior - Duluth St Louis River Br B16- 0005-0001 to 0005 Reimbursement to MN miles 0.0 State Bond Funds Total Improvement Cost (nearest \$) \$410,096,125 | PE ROW CONST | | 3,912 | 435 | 4,347 |
| | | TOTAL | | 3,912 | 435 | 4,347 |



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TIP AMENDMENT #18

A TIP amendment has been requested by WisDOT for construction work associated with lighting associated with Blatnik Bridge work. Total project cost is estimated at \$522,000. Work related to the project amendment is scheduled for 2026.

2026 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

| Jurisdiction and Project Number | Project Description | | Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|
| | | | Federal | State | Local | Total |
| WisDOT 113-25-035 Amended to TIP in September 2025 1199-00-79 ID to bill City of Superior for lighting | IH535 Superior - Duluth St Louis River Br B16-0005- 0001 to 0005 Reimbursement to MN miles 0.0 | PE ROW CONST | | | 522 | 522 |
| | Total Improvement Cost (nearest \$) \$410,096,125 | TOTAL | | | 522 | 522 |

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| Motion Discussion and Vote | <p>James Gittemeier / Cindy Voigt moved to recommend the 2025-2028 Superior Area TIP Amendments #14-18 to the Policy Board for approval.</p> <p>Committee Discussion:</p> <p>Cindy Voigt commented that the slides shown for Amendment #17 and Amendment #18 contained different dollar amounts than what was reflected in the meeting materials.</p> <p>Sheldon Johnson stated that he agreed the amounts were different and he suggested that the voting on this item be postponed until later in the meeting, to allow him time to confirm which figures were correct.</p> <p>Later in the meeting, Sheldon was able to confirm that the slide deck had the incorrect dollar amounts and that the meeting materials that were distributed were correct. He stated that he would make the correction to the slide deck in time for the Policy Board presentation.</p> <p>There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.</p> |
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4. Final 2026-2029 Duluth Area TIP*

Eli Norlander gave an overview of the 2026-2029 Duluth Area TIP. Items that changed included accessibility improvements, as well as language and definition changes, for added clarity, as well as alignment with Executive Orders.

Upcoming projects for 2026 include: London Road (MN 61) and the Blatnik Bridge projects, as well as



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the STBGP funded projects of 40th Avenue W, Canosia Road, and the 4th and 5th Segments of the Campus Connector, which is also being funded in part by Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds, as well as Transportation Alternative (TA) funds. Other projects occurring in 2026 include projects being funded by the Build (formerly known as Raise) grant which are the Lift Bridge Rehabilitation, West Superior Street Reconstruction, and the Rice Lake Road Reconstruction projects.

The 30-Day Public Comment Period was held from July 14th through August 13th, 2025. All comments that were received were sent a response from the MIC and have been recorded in the Appendix of the final TIP document. Comments were also shared with the relevant jurisdiction. All document-specific changes were considered, and most were incorporated.

An additional column was added to the Performance Measure (PM 1) Safety table to aid in showing a trend for fatal and serious injury crash rates. Additions were also made to the Status Report to include timeline changes and impacts on Performance Measures.

If approved, the Final 2026-2029 Duluth Area TIP will be routed to the MnDOT MPO Coordinator for review and approval, then submitted to FHWA and FTA. Once it is fully approved, it will be incorporated into the STIP and the next TIP cycle begins again.

Skip Williams noted a change is needed regarding Rice Lake. Eli noted that an edit will be made. Cindy Voigt noted that the Campus Connector map that is pictured in the presentation is not accurately displaying the location. It does not go through the middle of the UMD campus, but travels along College Street. She also stated appreciation for the TIP process but is disappointed to see that the project year of a particular project did not get adjusted to 2026 after she had requested the change. Richard Sarran stated that an amendment can be made once the TIP is fully approved. James Gittemeier asked if we anticipate a normal approval turnaround time for the TIP. Ron Chicka stated that he had not heard of any delays in the process and so does not anticipate any.

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| Motion Discussion and Vote | Jim Foldesi / Skip Williams moved to recommend the 2026-2029 Duluth Area TIP to the Policy Board for approval. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously. |
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5. Draft 2026-2027 MIC Work Program

Director Chicka gave a review of the Draft 2026-2027 MIC Work Program. Not a lot changed from the August presentation, save for a few of the budget amounts that had been finalized in the interim. The Final 2026-2027 Work Program & Budget will be presented at the October meeting for adoption by the Policy Board and then forwarded to MnDOT, WisDOT, FHWA and FTA for final approvals.

6. Definitions Related to TIP Projects

Mike Wenzholz began by explaining that the MIC had identified three words or phrases requiring local and clarifying definition, that are key pieces of the 23 CFR 450.326, federal regulation for MPOs. These are: "regionally significant", "consistent with", and "reflect the investment priorities established in".

The MIC built its new definition of "Regionally Significant" around the minimum definition from the federal regulation, as well as tailored it to work for the MIC area. It was reviewed by TAC and then finalized based upon the TAC suggestions at the August meeting.



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The phrase “consistent with” as it applies to 23 CFR 450.326(i) means that the project or project phase, once completed, is anticipated to make progress towards meeting one or more of the MTP’s goals and objectives. It is also expected that the anticipated progress will be measurable and/or positively noticed by users and will help bring the MTP’s vision to reality. It does not mean that the project, or project phase must make progress towards meeting *all* the MTP’s goals and objectives.

The phrase “reflect the investment priorities established in” as it applies to 23 CFR 450.326(a) means the following:

- that the project or project phase is listed in the MTP’s priority projects list, full project list, and/or is determined to be regionally significant, and is fiscally constrained; and
- The project or project phase, once completed, is anticipated to make progress towards meeting one or more of the MTP’s goals and objectives; and
- The project or project phase, once completed, is anticipated to make progress towards implementing Action Steps identified in the MTP; and
- In achieving the above the project or project phase, once completed, will help bring the MTP’s vision to reality.

After the presentation, the TAC discussed how jurisdictions can assist in helping to achieve the goals and objectives of the MTP.

7. Round Table Discussion

- James Gittemeier stated that the city has received guidance that the I-35 study may have final approval in the next 2-3 months. This project would be funded by the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) program grant, once approved.
- Duane Hill mentioned that a ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for October 6th for the Twin Ports Interchange, as construction is estimated to be completed by mid-November.
- Skip Williams stated that he had participated in a bike walk audit of Arrowhead Road. There was also a walk audit of 2nd Street that occurred recently as well. He feels these are good ways to build awareness.
- Cindy Voigt mentioned that 6th Avenue East is still under construction and to be aware of the detours.
- James Gittemeier mentioned that Duluth has been awarded a Safe Routes to School grant to update its SRTS plan, which was last updated in 2006. This process will include the oversight of Andi Heil, the Safe Routes to School Coordinator for Duluth Public Schools and this plan will be expanded to include the secondary schools.

8. Project Updates

- **Administrative Modification #1-16 to the 2025-2028 Superior Area TIP**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has requested 16 administrative modifications to the 2025-2028 Superior TIP. The modifications add narrative to selected projects to show the full project costs associated with the improvement project(s).



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Adding the full associated project costs reflects current practices for calculating year of expenditure in WisDOT's Environmental Documents. There are no changes to project description/activity, length, or funding or year of implementation.

Please refer to the tables on the next page for further details.

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- **Safe Routes to School**

MIC and ARDC staff joined the Duluth Public Schools Safe Routes to School Coordinator at two open house events on August 27th and 28th. Community members also joined to help with tabling to help reach as many schools as possible on the primary open house night, Wednesday, August 27th. At schools with staff or community volunteers present, tables were set up with “dotmocracy” posters and students, parents, and school staff were asked to provide their top 3 reasons why students do not walk or bike to school and their top 3 ways to encourage and allow more students to walk or bike to school. Additionally, information was provided about the Safe Routes to School planning initiative and parents were encouraged to watch for upcoming emails about future data collection volunteer opportunities.

- **MIC Public Engagement Plan**

The MIC is updating its Public Involvement Plan (PIP), which was last revised in 2021. This comprehensive update fulfills federal requirements under 23 CFR 450.316 to periodically review and improve public participation procedures. The updated plan will create a more inclusive and measurable framework for community involvement in our transportation planning processes and ensure consistency with state DOT processes.

Key steps in its development include conducting a thorough review of 23 CFR 450.316 regulations with MIC staff, surveying other MPO plans for best practices and other content, and working with MIC staff and partner agencies to update the processes we will follow to develop, amend, and administratively modify the MTP, UPWP, and Duluth and Superior TIPs.

After releasing the draft plan for a 45-day public comment period in October, holding at least one public meeting and conducting formal consultations with state and federal agencies, staff will incorporate feedback received and prepare the final document for approval by the MIC Policy Board in December.

9. **Adjourn:** With no further agenda items, discussions or announcements, Mike Wenzholz adjourned the meeting at 2:30 pm.