



**Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Policy Board**

September 17, 2025 Meeting

Meeting Summary

* = Approval Item

1Note Taker(s)	Tari Aanonsen, MIC Administrative/Finance Assistant	
Members Present		
	Members Present	
	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
WI Co-Chair	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Jake Benson	City of Proctor (alternate)
MN Co-Chair	Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	Annie Harala	St. Louis County
	Mark Johnson	Superior City Council
In at 6:05 pm	Yauhen Karatai	City of Duluth – Citizen Representative
	Janet Kennedy	Duluth City Council
	Rosemary Lear	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Nick Ledin	Superior City Council
	John Lohse	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Adam McGill	Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) Board
	Bob Quade	City of Rice Lake
	Randy Skowlund	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
In at 6:05 pm	Tara Swenson	Duluth City Council
In at 7:18 pm	Jenny Van Sickle	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
	Scott Welsh	Solway Township
Members Absent		* Excused Absence
	Tylor Elm	Superior City Council
	Chad Ward*	City of Proctor
Others Present		
	Bryan Anderson	MnDOT District 1
	Jim Benning	City of Duluth Public Works
	Mrs. Benning	Community Member
	Libby Bent	Vibrant Streets
	Mike Casey	Community Member
	Ron Chicka	MIC Director
	Jim Foldesi	St. Louis County Public Works
	Dick Haney	BPAC
	Duane Hill	MnDOT District 1
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC Deputy MIC Director
	Kristi Kane	ARDC Executive Director
	Sarah Kessler	Community Member



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	Eli Norlander	MIC Transportation Planner
	John Ramos	Duluth Monitor
	Richard Saran	MIC Senior GIS Specialist
	Forest V	Community Member
	Mike Wenholz	MIC Principal Planner
	Rondi Watson	MIC Senior Planner/Communications Specialist

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1. Introductions / Agenda Review

MIC Co-Chair, Nick Baker, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. He then read [this statement](#), which was also displayed as a presentation, regarding MPO board liability. Then a "Roll Call" attendance was taken. When completed, Chair Baker then moved on to item #2 on the agenda.

2. Committee Business

- **Meeting Summary of 8.20.25***

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

Motion Discussion and Vote	Rosemary Lear / John Lohse moved to approve the 8.20.25 meeting summary. Board Discussion: None Motion Passed Unanimously.
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- **Director's Report**

Director Chicka joined the meeting virtually and asked Deputy Director, Sheldon Johnson, and MIC Principal Planner, Mike Wenholz, to give the Director's Report.

Sheldon gave a brief update on the potential use of the Wisconsin designated Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds for the MIC MPO Planning Area. They are looking at the possibility of reserving and stacking the funds over a few years so that the amount could be more substantial and more easily applied to a project in the future. They are awaiting an answer to this question.

Mike shared that at the recent HTAC meeting on September 3, 2025, recommendations were brought forward by the Duluth Ship Canal Concerns Work Group; a workgroup of the Navigation and Safety subcommittee, formed to address three long standing concerns. HTAC voting members voted on the recommendations via email after the meeting took place. Mike stated that more could be shared as the recommendations are carried out. He asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Other Director's items not discussed, but were listed as distributed in the [agenda packet](#).

- **Open Public Comment Period:**

Chair Baker then allowed for an opportunity for Public Comment.

Co-Chair, Wayne Boucher, called for a Point of Order, in which he asked for the owners of the electronic devices that were unaccompanied setting on the meeting table to please keep them on their person. Mike Casy removed his device, and John Ramos reached for his device and moved it closer to Chair Baker, stating his recorder could be set anywhere he chose in the room. Wayne asked a second time if John would remove his device from the table and to keep it on his person. John did not remove his device again stating that he could place the recorder where he chooses. Wayne then picked up the device and said that he had given John two opportunities to remove the device from the Board table, then proceeded to put the device in the trash bin. From this point on, Mr. Ramos appeared to use his cell phone video to record the meeting, and no objection was made by the Policy Board.



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At the request of Board members, the meeting was paused while John Ramos phoned the police from his cell phone. The police arrived and Mr. Ramos and Co-Chair Boucher met with them out in the hall. Upon his return to the room, Mr. Ramos retrieved his recording device.

The meeting was resumed.

Chair Baker then moved on to item #3 on the Agenda.

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

Sheldon Johnson gave an 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.

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	PE ROW CONST	15,536	3,884		19,420
	Total Improvement Cost (nearest \$) \$19,841,093	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.

Please see table on the next page.



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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

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.

Please see table on the next page.



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2026 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

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

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	IH535	PE				
113-25-035	Superior - Duluth	ROW				
Amended to TIP in	St Louis River Br B16-0005-	CONST			522	522
September 2025	0001 to 0005					
1199-00-79	Reimbursement to MN					
ID to bill City of Superior	miles 0.0					
for lighting	Total Improvement Cost	TOTAL			522	522
	(nearest \$)					
	\$410,096,125					

Public Comments:

No public comments were received.



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Motion Discussion and Vote	Moved by Rosemary Lear, seconded by John Lohse, to approve Amendments #14-18 for adoption into the 2025-2028 Superior Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Board discussion: Q: Why are the two Blatnik Bridge related projects not included in the main Blatnik project? A: There are many pieces of the Blatnik Bridge project in the way of preparatory work that is listed as separate projects in the TIP. Voting Aye: Allen, Baker, Benson (in for Ward), Boucher, Harala, Johnson, Karatai, Kennedy, Lear, Ledin, Lohse, McGill, Quade, Skowlund, Swensen, Welsh Voting Nay: None Abstain: None Absent: Elm, VanSickle, Ward Motion Carried: Aye: 16, Nay: 0.
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4. London Road & 26th Avenue East

Duane Hill began his presentation by playing a video regarding the design of the intersection of London Road and 26th Avenue East. The video was produced and distributed on September 16, 2025, by a local advocacy group, Vibrant Streets.

Duane then went on to give a brief overview of the MnDOT London Road Project, which calls for a 2" mill and overlay, with many bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Two roundabouts are planned, one at 26th Avenue East, and the other at 40th Avenue East, which, together, will work to move traffic through the intersection at slower speeds. Roundabouts are proven to reduce the occurrences of fatal and serious crashes. A Cost-Benefit analysis was carried out, resulting in this design choice.

Also included in this plan are several pedestrian and bicycle improvements, including the replacement of sidewalks to meet ADA standards, raised pedestrian refuge islands at intersections, the addition of rapid flashing beacons for pedestrian crossings at 32nd Ave East and 60th Avenue East, and a paved bike lane from Lemon Drop Hill to Lester River.

The final design is 95% complete and bid letting is scheduled for November 2025. This project has been included in the Minnesota Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in 2023, 2024 and 2025, and public involvement was sought early in the process. There were concerns brought forward by the public about the safety of bike and pedestrian traffic in this corridor, particularly at 26th Avenue East, where I-35 ends. MnDOT experts did not feel comfortable providing a bike and pedestrian crossing over the freeway here, as they felt this was not a safe option. Duane went on to identify several options for cyclists to travel, primarily along the Lakewalk, along with the use spur paths to travel up to London Road to avoid key traffic points. He also stated that the new bike lane will include signage directing bike traffic away from the roundabout. Cyclists may also choose to cross over to the upper side of London Road before 26th, allowing them to cross the avenue away from the I-35 continuous lane.



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5. Final 2026-2029 Duluth Area TIP*

Mike Wenholtz 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.

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* of 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.

Mike finished by stating that the federal regulations (23 USC 134(h)(1-3)) include language that state that failure to consider any of the 10 planning factors is not reviewable by any court.

Eli Norlander then presented the Final 2026-2029 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for approval by the Policy Board. He started by giving a summary of the language changes in Chapter 1 including the update to the definition of “Regionally Significant”, along with changes in Chapter 5 primarily due to an action by Executive Order.

Eli went on to highlight some of the upcoming projects in the TIP, including the London Road and Blatnik Bridget projects, along with St Louis County’s 40th Avenue West Reconstruction Project. Additional projects included in this TIP are those being funded by the Build grant (formerly known as the Raise grant). These projects include the Duluth Lift Bridge, the West Superior Street project and the Rice Lake Road project.

During the Public Comment Period, the MIC received 21 nearly identical comments that mentioned two projects from FY 2026, FY2027 and FY2028, along with other comments. All comments were responded to by MIC staff and were shared with the appropriate jurisdiction. Additionally, all comments received can be found in the appendix of the 2026-2029 Duluth Area TIP. Document-specific changes were all considered, and most were incorporated into the final document.

Once approved by the Policy Board, the next steps will be the review and approval process by state



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and federal oversight and once approved, it will be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Public Comments:

Jim Benning, the public works director for the City of Duluth, stated that he was in attendance to represent the city's support for the TIP as drafted and presented this evening. In 2023 the city gave municipal consent for MnDOT's London Road project, giving the green light for the design.

Mike Casey, community member, stated that as a resident of Smithville and avid cyclist, has attended many of the public meetings and spoken to Duane Hill many times on the topic of London Road. He had received feedback regarding the concerns he has raised over the design, that there isn't the budget or time to make changes. Mike went on to reference another freeway (entrance) project that allows motor vehicles to travel faster as they access the freeway and ultimately led to the death of Mr. Hoover. He feels he has gotten similar responses from MnDOT on his current concerns, as he had received on that project (Mesaba Avenue/I-35 entrance). Mike went on to state that Forest Lake has two roundabouts currently that offer more safety than the London Road design; these could be options. He feels that the current London Road design improves the flow for motor vehicles but not for pedestrians and cyclists. Mike also stated that Vibrant Streets Duluth (VSD) had requested the data assumptions that went into the traffic modeling for the roundabout tests and were not provided with those. He asks that MnDOT District One move forward toward safer designs and that the Policy Board members vote their conscious tonight.

Hadrian DeMaioribus, community member, stated he lives on Woodland Avenue and is the creator of the video that was shown from Vibrant Streets. He noted that the Lakewalk is more of a recreational path and is not ideal for commuters, such as those that are on E-bikes. The Lakewalk does not allow for the 30 mph speeds that E-bikes commonly travel and so most choose to travel on London Road. He feels that MnDOT is not considering this trending mode of transportation now and into the future.

Yauhen Karatai, Policy Board member, stated that multiple suggestions were brought forward from BPAC discussions regarding the London Road topic, how were they considered?

Answer from Duane: Sidewalk markings will be used to direct users onto the Lakewalk.

Member Karatai also asked if there were considerations for raised crosswalks?

Answer from Duane: They have been considered.

Annie Harala, Policy Board member, commented that there was good discussion at the previous Board meeting, including talk about the BPAC resolution that was brought forward by the BPAC for review by the Board. She feels it is important that the resolution be included in the TIP, what is the process for adding that?

Answer from Rondi Watson, MIC Senior Planner-Communications Specialist: MIC Staff will include the BPAC resolution as an addendum to the 2026-2029 Duluth Area TIP.



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Motion Discussion and Vote	Moved by Randy Skowlund, seconded by John Lohse, to approve the 2026-2029 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Board discussion: Q: Member Karatai stated that at the last Board meeting, he had expressed interest in being able to vote on the London Road at 26th Avenue East project separately from the TIP. He asks what would be required to do that? A: An amendment to the original motion would be required to alter the motion.
Motion Amended	Moved by Yauhen Karatai, seconded by Annie Harala, to split the London Road Project out from the TIP as a separate voting item. Board Discussion: Q: What needs to happen next? A: A roll call vote on the amended motion is required. Voting Aye: Allen, Benson (in for Ward), Harala, Johnson, Karatai, Kennedy, Ledin, McGill Voting Nay: Baker, Boucher, Lear, Lohse, Quade, Skowlund, Swenson, Welsh Abstain: None Absent: Elm, Van Sickle, Ward Motion Defeated: Aye: 8, Nay: 8.
Main Motion	Repeated from above: Moved by Randy Skowlund, seconded by John Lohse, to approve the 2026-2029 Duluth Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Board Discussion: Q: Member Karatai asked that the BPAC be included as an advisory committee to the Policy Board in the TIP document. A: Eli Norlander stated that the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) states that the TAC is the advisory committee involved in developing the TIP, not the BPAC, currently. Rondi Watson stated that the PIP is being updated currently, and this is an item that may be addressed in the update. Q: Member Allen likes what the MIC is doing by adding the comments to the TIP document. Can the upcoming projects be made available as hot links for the public, so they can be educated on the current projects? A: Richard Sarraan and Eli Norlander stated that links can be included for the project pages that each jurisdiction may have made available to the public on their websites, however, not all projects have a webpage. This would be too massive a task for the MIC to create a webpage for each project. Voting Aye: Allen, Baker, Benson (in for Ward), Boucher, Harala, Johnson, Kennedy, Lear, Lohse, McGill, Quade, Skowlund, Swenson, Welsh Voting Nay: Karatai, Ledin Abstain: None Absent: Elm, Van Sickle, Ward Motion Carried: Aye: 14, Nay: 2.



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6. Draft 2026-2027 MIC Work Program

Ron Chicka gave a brief overview of the MIC Work Program, including the work planned within the ongoing modal planning elements, and the long-range planning. The 2026 budget has been updated to include the local match (an update since last month). In addition to planning activities funded by the normal revenue sources for the MIC, we have received a federal grant, Safe Street for All, in which planning is currently underway by the MIC's consultant, Zan Associates, to complete the Safety Action Plan. This project will continue into 2026 and will wrap up by the end of the year.

7. Round Table

- Member Karatai stated that after a lively discussion about the London Road project at the last MIC Policy Board meeting, he has become aware of an attempt that was made to remove him from the Board. He stated that he is always open to discussion and would ask that anyone please be upfront and honest by including him in any similar conversations in the future.
- Tara Swenson mentioned that the City of Duluth has recently passed the creation of a transportation commission at the city council meeting. This may be a helpful addition to the conversations that are occurring in the community surrounding transportation issues within the city. The commission will kick off in January of 2026.

8. Project Updates

Project updates are not always formally presented at the meeting but are listed here per the MIC's Public Involvement Plan (PIP), and to inform the board members of current MIC activity.

- **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).

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.*

Questions regarding these projects should be directed to Sheldon Johnson at 715-635-2197 or by email at sjohnson@nwrpc.com.

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



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- **MIC Public Engagement Plan**

The MIC is updating its Public Involvement Plan (PIP), 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, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 7:33 pm.