



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
HARBOR TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
 September 3, 2025

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

HTAC Voting Members

| Present | Name | Organization | Sector Representing |
|---------|---|--|-------------------------|
| | 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 |
| | Dan Breneman (<i>alternate</i>) | MN Pollution Control Agency | Agency |
| Y | Daniel Carlson | 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 |
| Y | James Gittemeier | City of Duluth | Local Government |
| Y | Gary Glass | Izaak Walton League | Citizen Group |
| Y | Cheri Hagen | WI Department of Natural Resources | Agency |
| Y | Dan Hartman | DECC | Harbor Tourism |
| | Joe Havasi | Compass Minerals | Harbor Industry |
| | 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 |
| | Kris Laman (<i>alternate</i>) | US Army Corps of Engineers | Agency |
| Y | Rich Laskey (<i>alternate</i>) | GLF / Key Lakes | Harbor Industry |
| | Jason Laumann | Northwest Regional Planning Commission | Regional Organization |
| | 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 |
| | 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 |
| | Jason Serck (Vice-Chair) | City of Superior | Local Government |
| Y | Mae Sommerfeld | WI Department of Transportation | Agency |
| Y | Bri Speldrich | MN Department of Natural Resources | Agency |
| | Matt Steiger (<i>alternate</i>) | WI Department of Natural Resources | Agency |
| Y | Jeff Udd (Chair) | Duluth Seaway Port Authority | Regional Organization |
| | Ashley Vande Voort (<i>alternate</i>) | Douglas County | Local Government |
| Y | Chad Ward | MIC Policy Board | Regional Organization |
| Y | Lou Weichseldorfer | CN | Harbor Logistics |
| | Vacant | St. Louis River Alliance | Citizen Group |
| | Vacant | | Harbor Industry |
| | Vacant | | Harbor-related Business |
| | Vacant | | Harbor-related Business |



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Others Present

| Name | Organization | Name | Organization |
|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Tari Aanonsen | MIC | Joseph Lane | UM-Duluth |
| Kevin Beardsley | Duluth Seaway Port Authority | Pat Lammersen | US Coast Guard |
| Brian Bellmore | Barr Engineering | Jared Lehrer | |
| Travis Black | MARAD | Brianna Linderholm | Key Lakes |
| Alex Buckman | Fraser Shipyards | Jim Miller | Congressman Tiffany |
| Ron Chicka | MIC | Eric Oberhart | GSGP |
| Duane Dale | Graymont | Stacy Oltmanns | Northland Constructors |
| Kate Ferguson | Duluth Seaway Port Authority | Daniel Rust | UW-Superior |
| Ben Gates | US Coast Guard | Dena Ryan | WSB |
| Mary Glad | DECC | Jim Sharrow | |
| Tim Haak | WGLPA | Richard Stewart | D-S Maritime Club |
| Lucy Hick | NOAA | Maren Webb | MnDOT |
| Mike Hill | SBDC | Mike Wenzholz | MIC |
| Jayson Hron | Duluth Seaway Port Authority | Chris Woitowicz | SBDC |
| Seth Johnson | AMI Engineers | | |

In addition to the above, there was one additional unidentified person online. We do not have the name of that participant.

Introductions / Agenda Review / Committee Business

HTAC Chair Jeff Udd welcomed everyone to the hybrid HTAC quarterly meeting and called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 AM.

Tari Aanonsen took a roll call of HTAC voting members. Mike Wenzholz acknowledged Chad Ward as the new MIC Policy Board representative voting member.

Jeff asked if there were any concerns with the June 4, 2025, Meeting Summary, and hearing none asked for a motion to approve.

- Joel Johnson moved to approve the 6/4/2025 HTAC Meeting Summary. Gary Glass seconded the motion.
- There was no further discussion.
- **The motion to approve carried unanimously.**

Duluth Ship Canal Concerns Work Group - Recommendations, Mike Wenzholz, MIC

- See the presentation



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- Mike W reminded the HTAC of the Duluth Ship Canal Concerns Work Group (DSCC WG) and summarized its work.
- Mike shared the purpose, participants, timeline, and actions taken by the DSCC WG. The Work Group completed its tasks within three meetings during 2025.
- Mike presented the Work Group's 10 recommendations to be voted on by the HTAC voting members. Mike and Jeff Udd asked the voting members to indicate whether they preferred voting live during the HTAC meeting, or voting via email that Mike would initiate. Some voting members preferred the email option, so that is how the voting will occur.
- Mike provided a short explanation of each recommendation and answered questions of meeting participants.

HTAC Dredging Subcommittee Update & Meeting Summary, Jeff Udd, DSPA

- Jeff Udd provided a brief summary of the 8/21/2025 Dredging Subcommittee meeting, including the following:
 - Representatives from the City of Duluth and their consultants participated to share details of the Park Point Recreation Area Restoration Plan. Jeff noted the reason for their connection with the Dredging Subcommittee is the potential opportunity for the project to beneficially use dredged material. Many details and ideas were shared. This is an ongoing discussion. Mike W mentioned he will ask these representatives to present at a future HTAC meeting.
 - An update on the status of 2025 maintenance dredging in the Duluth-Superior harbor. Jeff mentioned how important this topic is to the Subcommittee – it is a regular topic at nearly every meeting. Dan C will provide additional details.
 - Continued discussion on the status of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Preliminary Assessment for an updated dredging management plan for the Duluth-Superior harbor.
 - The Great Lakes Dredging Team annual meeting will be held in Portage, Indiana October 15-16. Its an opportunity for those interested in Great Lakes dredging issues to learn, network, and ask questions.

Removal of Dredged Material from Erie Pier for Beneficial Use, Daniel Carlson, US Army Corps of Engineers

- See the presentation
- Daniel C provided a summary of recent success in removing previously dredged material from Erie Pier for beneficial use.
- Continuously finding partners to beneficially use materials from Erie Pier is important. Daniel repeated what has been said many times over the years – we cannot realistically build a new Erie Pier. Thus, we have to find partners that can use the material without it going to Erie Pier or that can remove and use materials already brought to Erie Pier. A sufficient amount of dredged material needs to be used to prevent Erie Pier from reaching capacity.
- USACE sent out requests to local entities asking if anyone could use the material at Erie Pier. A list of potential options was created from this inquiry.
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding was used to hire a contractor to remove 55,000 cubic yards of previously dredged material from Erie Pier and place it at three sites identified during the inquiry of potential options for beneficial use.



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- 10,000 cubic yards was beneficially used at the City of Superior landfill, 20,000 cubic yards was beneficially used at a state gravel pit in St Louis County, and 25,000 cubic yards was beneficially used at the St Louis County Forsman Pit. The material was used for reclamation cover.
- The removal of 55,000 cubic yards of material resulted in an elevation drop in a basin at Erie Pier from 626 feet to under 610 feet.
- The funding was used to help pay for transit of the material from Erie Pier to each site.
- Some additional funding remains so USACE is looking to work on new contracts.

- Daniel also provided a brief update on the 2025 maintenance dredging of the Federal Shipping Channel. The contract went to Roen who will dredge 51,900 cubic yards, all of which will be brought to Erie Pier. The work is to be completed in October.

NOAA's Duluth Hydrographic Survey, Lucy Hick, NOAA

- See the presentation
- Lucy H shared about NOAA's Office of Coast Survey and provided a summary of the recent hydrographic survey in Duluth and Two Harbors.
- The Office of Coast Survey is one of the first US government science agencies, established in 1807 as the US Coast Survey. The Office conducts foundational work that broadly supports maritime port use, including navigational support. The Office's products include data collection, product development, and product distribution. The Office's services include navigation response, regional support, technology research, and model development.
- The current hydrographic survey work in 2025 includes completing the survey in the lake outside Duluth-Superior and in and adjacent to Two Harbors.
- The current hydrographic survey work is part of Great Lakes Restoration funding and will be used to:
 - Develop habitat maps to support management decisions
 - Update navigational charts
 - Support Lakebed 2030 – Great Lake-wide high-density mapping
- Lucy invited anyone to submit questions and comments, report an error, or share data.

Future Vision for the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Kevin Beardsley, Duluth Seaway Port Authority

- See the presentation
- Kevin B, the new Executive Director of Duluth Seaway Port Authority (DSPA) provide a brief background of himself and DSPA. Kevin joined DSPA in 2014 as Chief Financial Officer. DSPA was established in 1955 in anticipation of the completion and opening of the St Lawrence Seaway a few years later. DSPA's established mission and vision remains the same under Kevin's leadership.
- Kevin announced the Port of Duluth was awarded its 18th Pacesetter Award for 2024.
- Kevin shared several numbers highlighting how the Port of Duluth-Superior remains a powerful local economic driver, driven in part by the Clure Public Marine Terminal (a multimodal logistics hub).
- Recent capital investment by DSPA includes significant warehouse expansion, facility railroad upgrades, and reconstruction of Berths 10 and 11. This is in addition to ongoing maintenance of terminal facilities.
- A significant upcoming project is a \$25 million demolition and restoration of the Duluth Lake Port property at the heart of the harbor (central Rice's Point) to transform the property back into an economic asset.



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- Kevin shared issues and trends to build on, including:
 - Diversification and addition of new cargoes, while growing existing cargoes
 - New opportunities in emerging fuels & resources, and greener operations
 - Renewed federal commitment to American maritime industry and operations
- Kevin shared existing challenges to address, including:
 - Significantly declining grain exports
 - Continued coal declines
 - An unstable/dynamic global trade environment
 - Threats to resilience and security of port infrastructure and properties
 - Policy challenges at the local, state, federal, and international levels

2025 Tall Ships Event Recap, Zach Fedak, US Coast Guard

- Zach F provided a summary of this year's Tall Ships Event. The event included 10 ships and over 12,000 ticketed visitors. Highlights included:
 - Parade of Sail on day 1
 - Significant education and outreach throughout the event
 - Positive partnerships with locals
 - Tours of ships and sailing opportunities
- Zach identified the following positives of the event:
 - Very good organizational coordination. He believes this was one of the best he has experienced. It included numerous pre-event meetings and coordination with a very wide range of partners.
 - No major incidents or injuries occurred
 - Excellent community engagement – especially the Power Squadron
 - No negative news
- Even with the significant positives noted above, the USCG Marine Safety Unit reviews events such as this to identify things that can be improved in the future. They identified the following as opportunities for improvement:
 - Provide clearer boundaries across the event location for all participants
 - Improve flexibility to adjust for inclement weather
 - Start planning even a little earlier
 - Possibly use buoys to delineate on-water zones
 - Consider ways to improve outreach

The Latest on Great Lakes Cruising, Dan Hartman & Mary Glad, Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC)

- See the presentation
- Dan H and Mary G provided an overview of Great Lakes cruising to Duluth.
- Since 2022 there have been 21 day stop visits and 13 turn around visits. Turn-round visits are when a cruise ends in Duluth. It includes people exiting the ship, going through customs, [often] staying at a local hotel, and [typically] flying out of Duluth International Airport. Turn-round visits are a boost to the local economy, especially for the Duluth International Airport.
- 3 day stop visits and 4 turn-around visits are already booked for 2026. Cruises are being booked out to 2029.



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- The overall economic benefit to Duluth from Great Lakes cruising is estimated at \$600,000 per year.
- Dan and Mary explained the DECC dock wall improvement and construction was very integral to increasing and supporting Great Lakes cruising in Duluth. Overall, the project went very well.
 - The public, cruise ship companies, and cruise ship passengers love the new space, which is much safer and user friendly.
 - The new space is also a much improved first impression of Duluth for many visitors.
 - Dredging was vital in bringing this new space into operation.
- Dan also shared some lessons learned and ideas to consider for the future. Two primary thoughts were:
 - Consider what humans will enjoy and use in planning and designing future spaces.
 - Design influences future use and economic opportunities.
- The dock wall and related dredging project was completed just prior to the first cruise ship arrival in 2025. It was a significant effort as the first ship arrival was also the largest that currently comes to Duluth – the Viking Octantis.

Roundtable

- Ben G (US Coast Guard) shared a handout announcing an upcoming maritime safety course (AWR 144: Port and Vessel Security for Public Safety and Maritime Personnel). The course will be held at the Douglas County Government Center in Superior, WI on October 7, 2025. Advanced registration is required.
- Ben G also announced there is a pollution-based training exercise next week (September 10-11).

With no other items brought forward, Jeff Udd adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:55 AM.