

# 6. Participation

This section of CONNECTIONS 2040 outlines the MIC’s process for ensuring participation from area stakeholders and the general public. It describes the various actions that were undertaken to distribute information and gather input during its development.

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## **CONCLUSION**

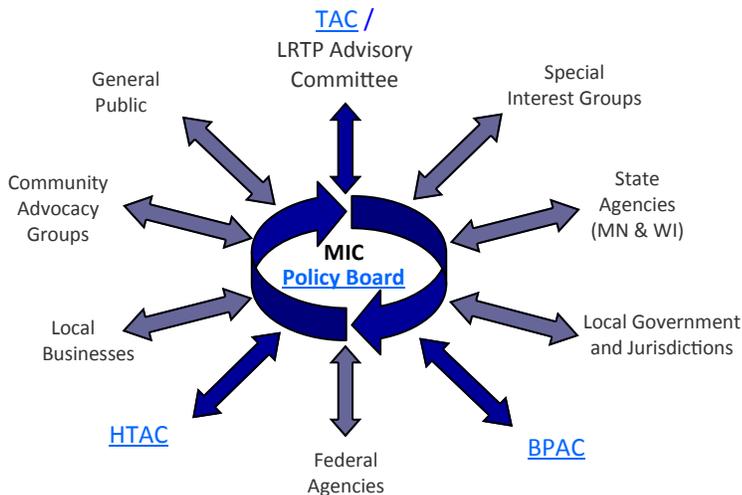
# ENGAGING OTHERS IN DULUTH-SUPERIOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Involving others in the process of planning for their communities is important, as professional planners and engineers are not always aware of certain issues encountered by some members of the community, nor can they account for every potential effect that might result from a specific policy or action. That is why the Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) is not only federally obligated to be transparent and inclusive in its transportation planning activities, but is committed to engaging community members in the process of planning for their community and to facilitating the active exchange of information on a continual basis.

## Ensuring involvement in the planning process

Starting with its official advisory committees (BPAC, HTAC, TAC), the MIC's staff and Policy Board works with a diverse group of officials and public representatives with different interests in local transportation issues. But the MIC also reaches out to engage people with various perspectives and expertise from a broad range of groups, organizations, government agencies and the community at large (Figure 6.1 and Appendix B-2 and B-3).

Figure 6.1: MIC Stakeholder Involvement



The MIC's website ([www.dsmic.org](http://www.dsmic.org)) is a primary outreach tool to connect with those in the community who may have an interest in local transportation planning issues but who have not yet been



Audience at a MIC public outreach meeting

### The MIC's outreach responsibility:

*"The MPO is responsible for actively involving all affected parties in an open, cooperative, and collaborative process that provides meaningful opportunities to influence transportation decisions."*

Source: *The Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues - USDOT (2009)*

*"It is the goal of the MIC's public involvement efforts to increase awareness of and encourage participation in the MIC's planning activities, as well as to broaden the range of voices and views expressed"*

Source: *Citizen Participation in Transportation Planning: MIC Public Involvement Plan (2013)*

identified by the MIC. The MIC uses its website to provide searchable access to all its planning documents, studies and other resources, as well as to information about current and ongoing MIC activities and related information. The website also provides contact information and opportunities for users to request information and provide comments.

### The MIC's Planning Process

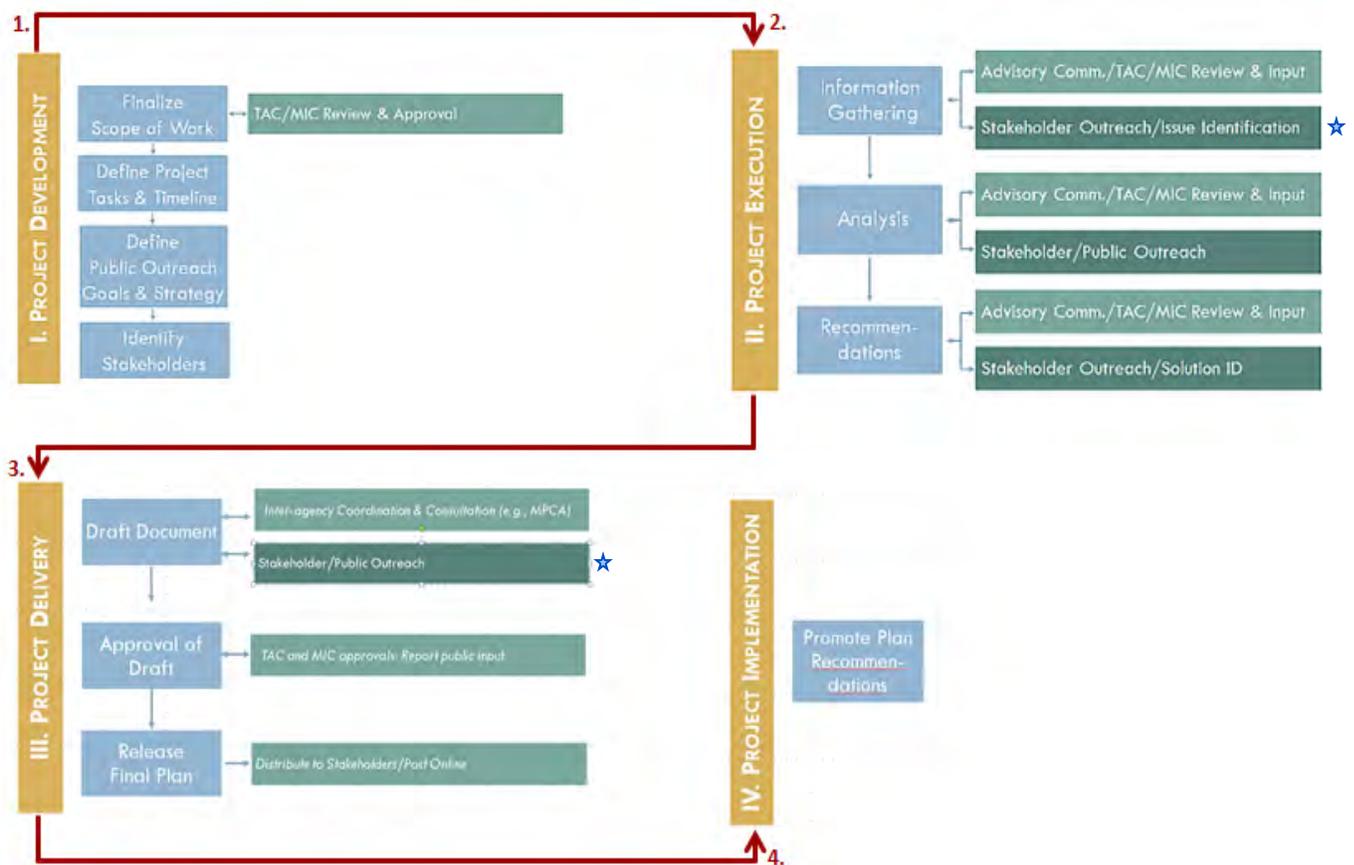
All of the MIC's planning activities embody the [3-C planning process](#) (comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative) and follow the general steps outlined in its [Public Involvement Plan \(PIP\)](#). By disseminating information and soliciting comments regarding ideas, issues, scope, and alternatives throughout the planning process, the MIC aims to ensure that all stakeholders, including the general public, are given ample opportunity to have a real influence throughout the planning and decision-making processes and thus help to shape the local policies, programs and projects of their own communities.

Although the scope and specific activities will vary from one planning effort to the next, the MIC begins every new initiative by establishing a stakeholder involvement strategy that is tailored to

### The MIC's general involvement efforts:

- a. Works with a diverse policy board & advisory committees.
- b. Follows a public involvement plan (PIP).
- c. Maintains a website for disseminating information and receiving comments.
- d. Regularly reviews and updates specific objectives and strategies for public participation.

Figure 6.2: The MIC's General Planning Process



that effort and then proceeds with a process similar to the one outlined in figure 6.2 and in Appendix B-18.

### Traditionally Underserved Populations

Nationwide, low-income individuals and groups of racial and ethnic minority have historically been underserved in urban planning processes, and subsequent legislation and policy, such as the Executive Order on [Environmental Justice](#), have been developed to ensure that these groups receive more consideration and have more input in planning decisions that affect their communities.

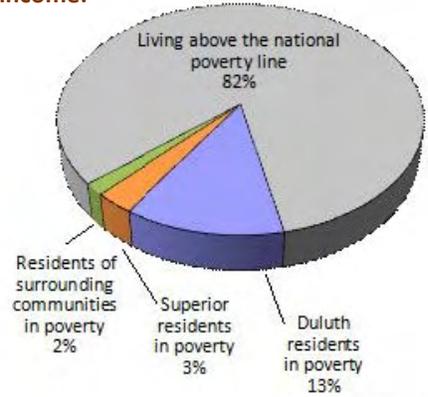
It is estimated that over 24,000 individuals (18%) of the population are living in poverty, and that approximately 8% of the MIC area’s population is of a racial or ethnic minority. In addition, 5% of the population is estimated to speak a language other than English as their primary language, and potentially could have limited proficiency in reading or understanding public information. Together, these groups represent the MIC area’s *traditionally underserved* population (Figure 6.3).

The MIC works regularly with a number of local agencies and organizations such as Community Action Duluth on transportation issues as they relate to low-income and minority groups in the MIC area. The MIC works to consider the impacts that planning decisions may have on individuals of these groups, which includes public transit and non-motorized modes of transportation. To ensure the consideration and participation of these groups, the MIC will continue to take the following actions:

- a. Utilize geographic information systems (GIS) applications to collect and analyze current demographic data in relation to local transportation issues or proposed improvements.
- b. Work closely with local organizations that advocate for low-income, racial minority and non-English speaking members of the community to remain aware of specific transportation issues being encountered by these populations and ensure early and continuing engagement with members of these communities.
- c. Ensure EJ considerations are included in the [TIP](#) criteria so that potential impacts of planned projects are identified and addressed early in the TIP development process.
- d. Perform community impact assessments on all transportation improvement projects that are programmed to receive federal funding.
- e. Explore ways the MIC website can be improved to at least notify the MIC if and when someone with limited English proficiency is requesting assistance with accessing information.

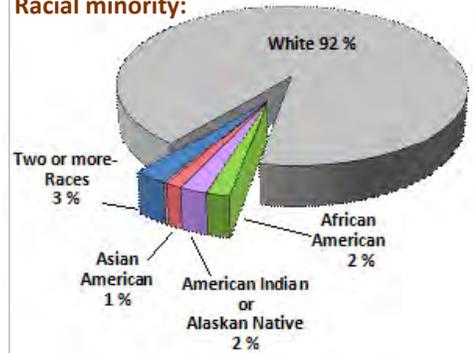
Figure 6.3: “Traditionally Underserved” Populations in Duluth-Superior

#### Low-income:



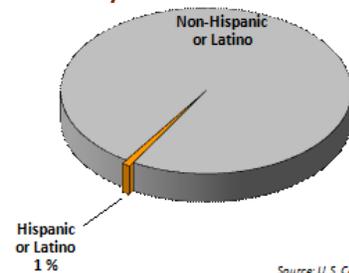
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

#### Racial minority:



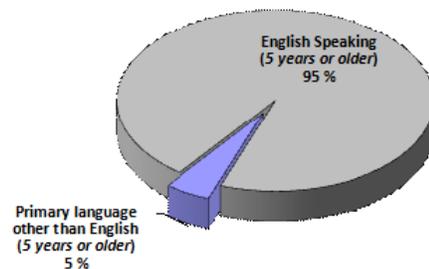
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

#### Latino ethnicity:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

#### Non-English speaking:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

## Engaging the Freight Sector

MIC staff has made an effort, in accordance with the previous LRTP, [Directions 2035](#), to become more involved with a number of different freight related groups, including private sector businesses as well as academic staff and government agencies involved in freight planning and infrastructure. This has allowed MIC staff to take advantage of freight training opportunities and to be involved in discussions about how to improve the freight network.

### ***Mid-America Freight Coalition***

The Mid-America Freight Coalition is a regional organization that cooperates in the planning, operation, preservation, and improvement of transportation infrastructure in the Midwest. The ten states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin) share key interstate corridors, inland waterways, and the Great Lakes; they signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2006, demonstrating their willingness to meet freight demand with regional cooperative efforts.

### ***Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee***

The MFAC is facilitated by MnDOT staff and is a partnership between government and business that meets quarterly to exchange ideas and recommend policy and actions. The goal of this committee is to develop and promote safe, productive and sustainable freight transportation in Minnesota.

### ***Duluth-Superior Transportation Association***

MIC staff has joined the DSTA to better network with area transportation professionals. Members represent all modes of transportation including air, motor carriers, rail and water as well as commercial shippers, purchasers, manufacturers, government agencies, educators and students with an interest in transportation. The DSTA meets monthly and is a new forum for sharing information about the MIC and its projects.

### ***Propeller Club***

The Propeller Club of Duluth-Superior was chartered in 1933 and continues to be an active network of maritime industry stakeholders in the Twin Ports. Membership in the nonprofit, all-volunteer organization totals nearly 90, including port tenants, terminal operators, public officials, maritime engineers, pilots, and others - all focused on promoting harbor improvements and advocating for maritime interests along the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway. Monthly lunch meetings feature presentations on various topics related to shipping in the Duluth-Superior port. This is a good networking opportunity and a chance to learn about happenings in the local shipping industry.



*Multimodal freight is an important transportation sector in Duluth and Superior. The MIC has forged connections with several related stakeholder groups in recent years.*

## The MIC's Public Participation Goal

Because the participation of stakeholders is integral to the planning process, the MIC includes "Public Involvement" as one of nine major goals for the Long Range Transportation Plan (Chapter 1).

During the development of *Connections 2040*, members of the public were invited to prioritize these goals (described in more detail on page 6-12). Survey respondents ranked the overall transportation goal of Public Involvement as 4th-most important out of 9—up from its previous rank of 6 for the previous LRTP.

MIC's public involvement objectives were revised as part of the process of updating LRTP, and are shown below:

### Goal 4: Public Participation

*Provide ongoing and effective opportunities for public participation so the needs and interests of all users of the transportation system are taken into consideration*

#### **Objective (1): Ensure the public has a variety of opportunities for information and involvement**

##### **Strategies to accomplish objective (1):**

- a. Implement methods and techniques put forward in the 2013 MIC PIP
- b. Ensure the proper timing of announcements to allow meaningful input to be incorporated into decision making process
- c. Coordinate planning and outreach efforts with local jurisdictions and transportation partners

#### **Objective (2): Ensure efforts to inform and engage disenfranchised groups impacted by transportation decisions**

##### **Strategies to accomplish objective (2):**

- a. Ensure compliance with Environmental Justice and Title VI requirements
- b. Broaden contact base and invite participation from churches, community clubs, group homes, and special needs facilities
- c. Establish convenient contact centers at high-traffic and/or centrally-located areas and events, such as mall kiosk, fair/festival booth, etc.
- d. Seek ways to regularly encourage participation in transportation planning

### Specific Federal Outreach Requirements:

- a. Provide reasonable public access to information.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- b. Incorporate the use of electronic methods and visualization techniques.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- c. Provide early & continuous opportunities for involvement.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- d. Offer timely information to citizens, affected agencies, private entities and other interested parties.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- e. Give adequate notice of public involvement activities and ample time for public review and comment at key decision points.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- f. Hold public meetings at convenient times and accessible locations.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- g. Ensure the inclusion of non-motorized users, the disabled, the elderly, minority, low-income and other traditionally "underserved populations".<sup>1,2,5,6,7,8</sup>
- h. Include the consideration of the potential impacts of decisions on social and natural resources and reach out to relevant agencies and stakeholders.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>
- i. Develop and regularly review a public participation plan.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

#### Sources of regulations:

1. *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU); Sections 1107 and 6001.*
2. *23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR); Parts 450.210 and 450.316.*
3. *23 United States Codes (USC) 128 and 135*
4. *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*
5. *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act*
6. *28 CFR 36 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*
7. *Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice*
8. *Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency*

**Objective (3): Improve strategies and methods to get the word out, receive feedback and increase public interest**

**Strategies to accomplish objective (3):**

- a. Increase use of real-time consumer technologies (e.g. smartphone apps, social media, etc.)
- b. Implement methods and techniques put forward in the 2013 MIC PIP
- c. On an annual basis review the PIP and other efforts to determine what worked and what did not work and who was missed

## OUTREACH & INVOLVEMENT DURING DEVELOPMENT OF CONNECTIONS 2040

The MIC is obligated to meet a number of federal requirements regarding stakeholder outreach, discussed in detail in the MIC’s Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The public participation strategy and stakeholder identification tool (Appendix B-10) were used as the MIC’s “road map” for getting good stakeholder participation in the development of *Connections 2040*, as illustrated in the process illustrated in Figure 6.4 at right.

### Using MIC website as a principal outreach tool

A web page specific to the LRTP update ([www.dsmic.org/lrtp](http://www.dsmic.org/lrtp)) was created as one of the MIC’s initial steps in ensuring stakeholder involvement in updating the Duluth-Superior LRTP (Figure 6.5). This webpage was used throughout the process to post updated information about the project’s development. It included an interactive map of the LRTP project list and a link to a brief survey regarding peoples’ opinions about local transportation priorities (Survey Results, Appendix B-29), along with information about the LRTP and contact information for people to email comments (Comments Received, Appendix B-), submit questions, and/or leave their email address to be added to the MIC’s *Connections 2040* mailing list.

**Assessment of website’s effectiveness:**

While the website greatly increased the MIC’s outreach abilities, and 91 people completed the survey, only three comments were received via the website, and only two visitors asked to be added to the LRTP mailing list.

Figure 6.4: LRTP Development and Stakeholder Engagement Process

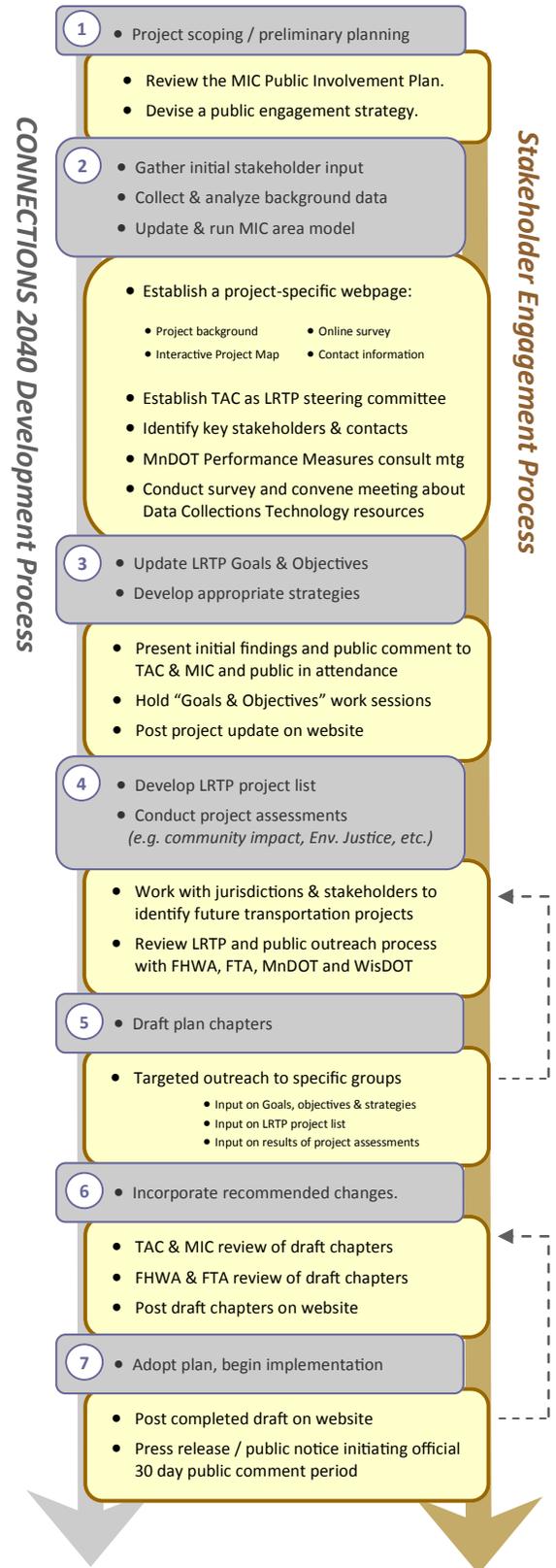


Figure 6.5: LRTP Webpage - Interactive Map & Public Survey



**Things that could be improved:**

- Add a counter to record the number of visits the website receives.
- Explore ways of better advertising the web page.
- Explore other methods, in addition to providing email links to MIC planning staff, that would allow and encourage public comments that are viewable by others and to which MIC staff could respond publicly.

**CONNECTIONS 2040 Steering Committee**

As stated in the MIC’s Public Involvement Plan, “communication with the elected officials and community representatives on the MIC Policy Board and its advisory committees is a cornerstone of our

public involvement.” The MIC used its principal advisory board, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and its Policy Board as a combined steering committee (makeup of Steering Committee, Appendix B-2) for updating the Duluth-Superior LRTP. This is because the both bodies are comprised of Duluth-Superior public officials and professionals who represent the area’s various jurisdictions and interests.

These groups have acted as the LRTP steering committee in the past two updates and are familiar with the various requirements of the document. The varied perspectives of these two bodies were relied upon right away to help to further identify an initial list of key stakeholders to contact directly as the updating process began.

The regularly scheduled meetings of the TAC and MIC Policy Board also allowed members from other stakeholder groups and the general public at large two opportunities every month (one midday and one in the evening) to have direct access and provide immediate input about the LRTP update process.

### **Data verification**

Data collection occurred early on in the update process to determine population and socioeconomic trends occurring throughout the MIC area, and this information was presented as it was developed at the monthly LRTP subcommittee sessions during the monthly TAC meetings.

### **Assessment of steering committee effectiveness:**

The TAC & MIC policy boards represent a diverse group of backgrounds and perspectives; staff deemed the regular meeting times, and the groups’ prior familiarity with the LRTP process was very beneficial.

### **Things that could be improved:**

- a. Have a stronger representation of “traditionally underserved” populations (i.e. low income and minority groups).

## **Directing outreach to stakeholder groups**

Information was also presented and comments solicited at quarterly meetings of the MIC’s Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC) and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees, which together represent a wide representation of city, county, state, federal, industry and citizen groups and agencies (makeup of advisory committees, at right, and in Appendix B-3).

## **Groups the MIC contacted about the LRTP update process:**

### **LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS**

Airport, port and transit authorities  
Area colleges and universities  
Chambers of commerce  
Community advocacy groups  
Commuter groups  
Counties, cities and townships representatives  
Duluth-Superior Transportation Association  
Economic development organizations  
Engineering and architecture firms  
Environmental groups  
Industry groups  
Local business groups  
Local planning departments  
Local media  
Neighborhood groups  
Police departments  
Propeller Club  
Public health agencies  
School districts  
Social services  
Trails & recreation organizations  
Utility and sanitary service providers

### **REGIONAL & STATE STAKEHOLDERS**

Intercity transit services  
Duluth Transit Authority (DTA)  
Regional economic development organizations  
Regional planning organizations  
MnDOT and WisDOT  
Tribal communities  
State DNRs and MN Pollution Control Agency.  
Regional rail operators  
Mid-America Freight Coalition  
Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee

### **NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS**

Army Corps. Of Engineers  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Federal Highway Administration  
Federal Transit Administration  
National industry groups  
US Coast Guard  
US Fish & Wildlife Service

## Stakeholder identification

As part of the 2013 update of the Public Involvement Plan, a comprehensive stakeholder mailing list was compiled that included interested parties (agencies, interest groups and individuals who have been engaged in current and recent planning activities or “opted in” to our planning mailing lists) as well as traditionally underserved groups and individuals as defined in Section 450.316 of the Federal Register and as identified in the MIC’s Title VI plan. (see Fig. 6.6 at right and Appendix B-10) for steps and matrix from the MIC’s 2013 [Public Involvement Plan](#) that were used).

In addition to those whom the MIC directly contacted, anyone who visited the CONNECTIONS 2040 website were invited to submit their email address or other contact information if they were interested in receiving future notices and updates about the L RTP. In this way, the MIC hoped to be continually expanding the mailing list from those who were not originally identified in the initial mailing list.

## Communication with those on L RTP stakeholder list

Stakeholders on the mailing list were sent an initial notice informing them of the MIC’s L RTP update process and encouraging them to do the following:

- Visit the CONNECTIONS 2040 webpage for additional information and opportunities to comment.
- Participate in the upcoming “Goals & Objectives” work session.
- Attend each month’s meetings of the TAC and MIC to get regular project updates and provide direct input into the process.
- Forward the email or notice on to others who they think should be notified.

## Effectiveness of Stakeholder Identification:

Outreach was comprehensive regarding public agencies, private business, special interests, and community advocacy groups, but the stakeholder mailing list contains significantly more contacts on the MN side than the WI side.

## Things that could be improved:

- Better assess the balance of MN and WI contacts earlier in the process.
- Actively solicit additional WI contacts if representation among the different stakeholder categories appears disproportionate between the two states.

Figure 6.6: Stakeholder Identification Matrix

### Stakeholder Identification Tool for L RTP

As part of the 2013 update of the Public Involvement Plan, a comprehensive stakeholder contacts list was developed that included interested parties (agencies, interest groups and individuals who have been engaged in current and recent planning activities or “opted in” to our planning mailing lists) as well as traditionally underserved groups and individuals as defined in Section 450.316 of the Federal Register and as identified in the MIC’s Title VI plan.

Required Stakeholders (see 450.316 (c)(1) & (c)(2) (MTR) vi Part and exclusion / optional)	List specific contacts
<b>1. Citizens/General Public</b> <i>People who live and work in the Duluth-Superior area, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those individuals and groups directly impacted by the results and recommendations of the plan or study, i.e., located inside or in close proximity to the study area/or those individuals and groups who opt in to receive more information.</li> <li>Community clubs and neighborhood groups.</li> <li>Club groups and service organizations such as the Rotary, Lions Club and Kiwanis Club.</li> <li>People and groups involved recent MIC plans and studies (within the past two years).</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-01 / List 767
<b>2. Government and Public Agencies (Coordinated Planning)</b> <i>Government agencies and agencies responsible for other planning activities within the Duluth-Superior area that are affected by transportation, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local elected officials from the cities, counties, and townships within the MIC Planning Area or Study Area—Engineering and Planning, Fire and Police, etc.</li> <li>Local professional staff from the cities, counties, and townships within the MIC Planning Area or Study Area—Engineering and Planning, Fire and Police, etc.</li> <li>City and County planning commissions.</li> <li>Area organizations responsible for planning activities with transportation interests (e.g., small area and/or policy studies).</li> <li>Fair and informal groups representing area transportation-related interests such as traffic safety, walking, Parks and Recreation, etc.</li> <li>State and Federal of/fices—regulators representing the study area in both MN and WI.</li> <li>State and Federal agencies, including the planning and modal divisions of MNDOT and DOT, FHWA and FTA.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-02 / List 768
<b>3. Public Transportation Interests</b> <i>Representatives of both agencies and users of transit, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duluth Transit Authority staff.</li> <li>Organizations and individuals who represent the needs of transit-dependent persons.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-03 / List 769
<b>4. Private Transportation Interests</b> <i>Demand response operators and other private transportation interests, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private transit operators and taxi services.</li> <li>Other.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-04 / List 770
<b>5. Multimodal Freight Interests</b> <i>Representatives of both freight-generating businesses (shippers) and providers of multimodal freight transportation services, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trucking firms.</li> <li>Railroads and rail operators.</li> <li>Duluth Seaway Port Authority and harbor-related businesses.</li> <li>Duluth Airport Authority and airport-related businesses.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-05 / List 771
<b>6. Non-Motorized/Active Transportation Interests</b> <i>Representatives of non-motorized/active modes of transportation, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Users of pedestrian facilities, affiliated interest groups.</li> <li>Users of bicycling facilities, affiliated interest groups.</li> <li>MN Department of Public Health.</li> <li>Health promotion and active lifestyle advocacy groups.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-06 / List 772
<b>7. Human Services Interests</b> <i>Representatives of traditionally underserved populations, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disabled.</li> <li>Low-income.</li> <li>Minority.</li> <li>Low-English proficiency (LEP) clients.</li> <li>Human Services transportation providers.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-07 / List 773
<b>8. Resource Preservation and Protection Interests</b> <i>Representatives of groups involved with land use management, conservation, and protection of historical, archeological and environmental/natural resources, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MNDNR and WDCNR.</li> <li>Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.</li> <li>Other environmental/natural groups and agencies.</li> <li>Historical/archeological preservation groups and agencies.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-08 / List 774
<b>9. Business and Economic Development Interests</b> <i>Representatives local businesses and economic development groups, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chambers of Commerce, Downtown Councils.</li> <li>Business Improvement Districts &amp; Development Associations.</li> <li>Business representatives, e.g., private developers, small business owners who have some familiarity with the MIC or its recent plans and studies.</li> <li>Other.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-09 / List 775
<b>10. Education Interests</b> <i>Representatives of all elementary, middle school, high school and higher educational institutions, including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HD 709 (Duluth) School District and the School District of Superior.</li> <li>Elementary school board members representing K-12 education for both Duluth and Superior.</li> <li>PTA and other interested K-12 parents, educators and neighborhood residents.</li> <li>College of V. Scholastica—administrators, interested staff, students and neighborhood residents, student associations, courses with urban planning and/or transportation focus.</li> <li>University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD)—administrators, interested staff, students and neighborhood residents, student associations, courses with urban planning and/or transportation focus.</li> <li>University of Wisconsin-Superior (UWS)—administrators, interested staff, students and neighborhood residents, student associations, courses with urban planning and/or transportation focus.</li> <li>Lake Superior College (LSC)—administrators, interested staff, students and neighborhood residents; student associations.</li> <li>Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College-Superior (WITC)—administrators, interested staff, students and neighborhood residents; student associations.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-10 / List 776
<b>11. Tribal and Federal Lands</b> <i>When the MNM includes Indian Tribal and Federal public lands, the MIC will involve in the development of the L RTP and the TTP.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indian Tribal government(s).</li> <li>Federal land management agencies.</li> <li>Recipients of funds under 23 U.S.C. 562 (Federal Lands Highway Program).</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-11 / List 777
<b>12. Other / Miscellaneous</b> <i>Any other project stakeholders with transportation-related interests not listed above?</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify.</li> </ol>	MIC-LRTP-12 / List 778
<b>13. Local Media Contacts</b> <i>Local and regional media contacts to whom we send public meeting notifications and project-specific press releases.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newspaper and television reporters with government and city beats and who have posted on MIC-related and transportation-related stories over the past year.</li> <li>Duluth News-Tribune managing editor.</li> <li>Superior Telegram reporter or managing editor.</li> <li>Area radio stations—News Director.</li> <li>Area broadcast TV news stations—News Director.</li> <li>Specialized publications (Duluth Women, North Shore Voice, etc.).</li> <li>Neighborhood newspapers or newsletters.</li> </ol>	MIC Media Contacts / List 192

## Seeking Input from Traditionally Underserved Populations

Community advocacy groups which the MIC works with regularly regarding local transportation issues were identified as the “primary contacts” to traditionally underserved populations during its initial outreach efforts. Various members of these organizations were included on the LRTP stakeholder mailing list and notified directly about the LRTP update and opportunities for involvement.

Staff from the MIC also introduced the *Connections 2040* process at a number of meetings with local community advocacy groups and informed those attending of opportunities to become involved in the process. These occurrences are documented in the MIC’s LRTP outreach log found in Appendix B-34 of this plan.

During the development of *Connections 2040* the MIC also considered outreach to non-English speaking individuals, but data regarding the number and specific language requirements of such individuals in the Duluth-Superior area is scant, and the MIC was unable to determine a cost-effective approach of targeting communication to non-English speaking peoples.

As development of the plan progressed and future transportation projects were identified, staff also conducted an environmental justice (EJ) assessment of those projects (see Chapter 5) and undertook a targeted outreach effort to notify representatives of these groups of the potential impacts (or opportunities) that specific projects may have on members of traditionally underserved populations.

### **Effectiveness of outreach to traditionally underserved communities:**

No comments were received by individuals identifying themselves as low-income or of a racial minority. Efforts by the MIC staff to speak at scheduled events of traditionally underserved individuals were either not responded to, or faced scheduling conflicts.

### **Things that could be improved:**

- a. Work to identify, early on, opportunities throughout the year to present directly to audiences of traditionally underserved peoples.
- b. Work with counties and local community groups to better identify non-English speaking needs within the Duluth-Superior metro area.



*MIC staff present demographic trends and proposed transportation projects in consultation with staff members from Community Action Duluth, local advocates for low-income, minority and disabled people and transit users*

## Prioritizing LRTP Goals and Objectives

MIC staff conducted several work sessions at TAC and MIC meetings to update Plan goals, objectives, and strategies (Chapter 1). Participants at the sessions were asked to rank the priority of various objectives, and to assist in identifying strategies the MIC could employ to address them.

External stakeholders were notified and invited to participate via distribution of meeting materials and LRTP website. The LRTP mailing list and MIC blog ([www.duluthsuperioropenmic.org](http://www.duluthsuperioropenmic.org)) were employed to advertise the survey.

### Online Survey

The survey questions and results from the survey are summarized in Figure 6.7, at right, and detailed responses are included in Appendix B-22 and B-29)

#### Effectiveness of engaging others in updating the goals, objectives and strategies:

No one representing the community of Proctor, MN (who were not members of either the TAC or MIC boards) participated in the online survey; no one representing tribal interests completed the survey, attended the Consultation Workshop, or responded to our emails. Eight of the 92 survey respondents discontinued the survey when it came to the question about prioritizing the nine goals. A comment on the survey suggested that the language of the survey was too technical for the average (non-planner) population.

#### Things that could be improved:

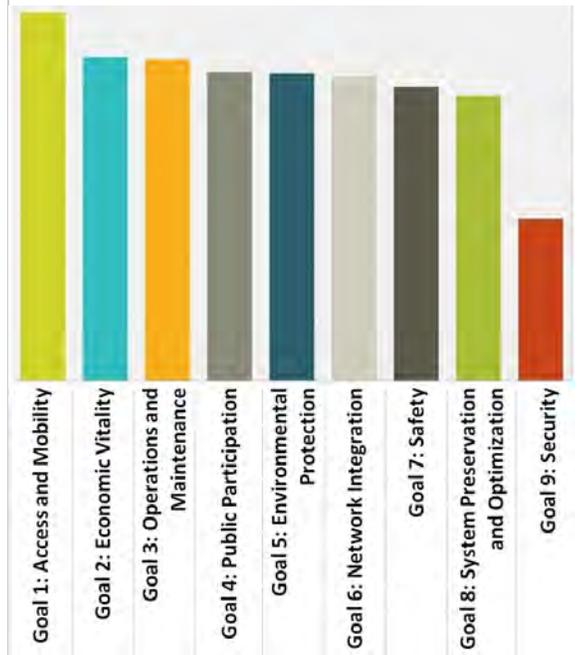
- a. Simplify the language of the survey to make it more accessible to the average (non-planner) population.
- b. Hand out “Goals & Objectives” worksheets after LRTP presentations at other outreach meetings with a link to the survey; allow people to respond at their leisure.

## Seeking Input on the LRTP’s List of Proposed Projects

Once area trends were determined and the goals, objectives and strategies were updated, the MIC met with members of the various jurisdictions to identify future transportation improvement projects to be identified in the *Connections 2040*.

The list of projects that resulted was presented at the July 2014 MIC and TAC meetings, which were open for public comment. Notices were sent out to stakeholders that the list could be reviewed via an

Figure 6.7: Prioritization of Goals from Public Survey



interactive map on the *Connections 2040* webpage.

The project list was also presented at the July DTA Operations meeting, to the TAC and MIC at the August 2014 meetings, as well as to participants of the consultation meeting on DATE. Comments on projects were also sought from targeted groups identified in the discussion below.

#### **Effectiveness of stakeholder notification of projects:**

No comments were received after the initial release of the project list.

#### **Things that could be improved:**

- a. Make use of local newspaper's and blog site's online forums to post notices about opportunity to review the draft project list.

### **Targeted Outreach**

After the list of transportation projects was compiled, staff at the MIC performed a series assessments to determine which projects, if any, posed potentially negative impacts to the area's environmental, cultural, or financial resources in the area, or whether they posed disproportionately negative impacts for low-income or minority populations. This process is discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

#### **Consultations**

Once projects with potential impacts were identified, MIC staff notified relevant agencies (see list at right) by first identifying appropriate contacts within those agencies, then sending them an email describing the specific projects and maps showing the location and extent of those projects.

The results from these consultations are summarized at right, and the more detailed comments (as well as the work session materials) are included in Appendix B.

#### **Effectiveness of engaging other agencies in project assessments:**

Since the vast majority of projects in *Connections 2040* are not expansion related projects, MIC staff did not expect many concerns to be raised.

#### **Things that could be improved:**

- a. Identify and notify appropriate contacts earlier on; host an informational meeting explaining the LRTP process, its relevance to their organizations, and specific actions the MIC would like them to take.
- b. Request a response by a specified date, but follow up with an inquiry if no comment is returned.

### **Project assessments performed**

As required by FHWA, projects submitted for inclusion in the Duluth-Superior LRTP underwent assessment to determine their potential impact on/ regarding following items:

- a. Historic Preservation Sites
- b. Environmental Justice analysis
- c. Environmentally Sensitive areas
- d. Financial capability of jurisdictions

### **Groups contacted — Consultation about potential impacts of projects on environmental/historic/cultural resources**

- a. Area Agency on Aging
- b. Community Action Duluth
- c. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- d. Minnesota DNR & Wisconsin DNR
- e. Duluth & Superior Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- f. Western Lakes Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD)
- g. Minnesota & Wisconsin Historical Societies
- h. Duluth Heritage Preservation Commission
- i. Duluth Preservation Alliance
- j. Minnesota Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Bois Fort Band of Chippewa, and Grand Portage Band of Chippewa
- k. Wisconsin St. Croix Band of Chippewa, La Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwa, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

## Soliciting Comment Throughout the Process

As draft chapters of the plan were completed, they were reviewed at the monthly meeting of the LRTP advisory committee. Changes that were recommended were incorporated, and then the week that the plan was released for public review, emails were sent out to mailing list recipients and advisory committee members, inviting them to also review the materials in advance.

Stakeholder input was sought throughout the development of *Connections 2040*. In general, much of the input came through various members of the LRTP steering committee, in response to the arrangement or presentation of drafted plan materials. A significant number of comments were received that determined the priorities of the Goals & Objectives as shown in Chapter 1. Verbatim comments, and the MIC's responses to them, can be viewed in Appendix B.

As comments were received they were reported to the LRTP steering committee members and to the MIC Policy Board.

The MIC also solicited comments through the following methods:

- a. Link to planning staff email to submit comments.
- b. Inviting stakeholder's on the LRTP mailing list to email or call the MIC with comments.
- c. Encouraging comments or questions during outreach meetings; highlighting contact information for others to record and respond to later.

All comments received through these methods (as well as the MIC answers or actions in response to them) can also be found in Appendix B.

## Draft Document

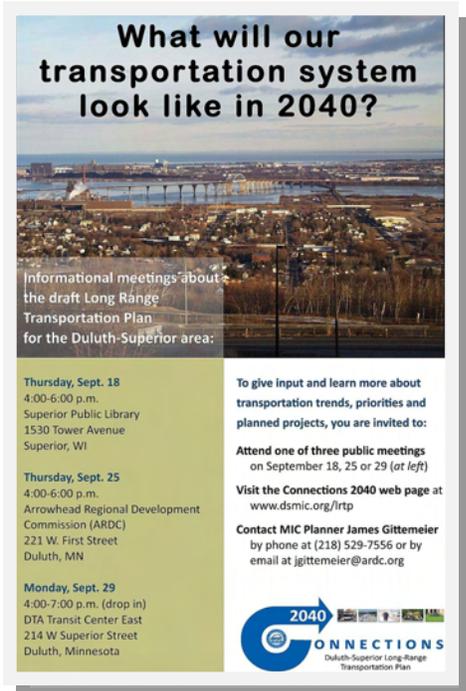
Comments received about the draft document will be summarized and distributed to all TAC and MIC members after the close of the official review period (September 30<sup>th</sup>) and prior to the Policy Board's scheduled action to vote on adoption of the plan (October 22nd).

### Legal Notices

Legal notices were published in the Duluth and Superior papers on August 31st, to notify readers of a month-long official comment period extending from September 1 through 30. Press releases were sent to local media outlets to further inform the public of the official review period and of the specific dates and times of two upcoming public meetings in which the public would have an opportunity to provide input and ask questions in person. Staff contact information was included in the press releases, and the



*MIC staff talk to and take comments from those who stopped by the LRTP Public Informational Display on DATE at the Holiday Center in downtown Duluth*



*Poster advertising public meetings and information about the draft LRTP*

public was invited to direct their comments and questions to the MIC staff at any time during the official review period.

### Paid Advertisements

The MIC placed one print advertisement in the Superior Telegram (September 16) and two in the Duluth News-Tribune (September 17 and 24), as well as a notice on the Duluth News-Tribune website (September 17-24) inviting people to attend the upcoming public meetings during the public comment period.

### Press Releases

The MIC distributed three press releases inviting comment on the public comment period for the draft document and publicizing the public meetings.

### Email to Stakeholders, Administrative oversight, and MIC and advisory committees

The MIC emailed stakeholders, administrative oversight representatives, and MIC and advisory committees inviting comment three times during the public comment period about the draft document and to publicize the public meetings.

### Public Meetings

Four public meetings were held during the 30-day comment period and any comments were incorporated into the final document and reported to the TAC and MIC according to the process spelled out in the Public Involvement Plan.

## Conclusion

The MIC is committed to carrying out its duties to ensure an open and transparent planning process, and to engage the participation of a variety of stakeholder groups and the public at large. It carried this commitment forward in the development of its updated LRTP, which began with a stakeholder involvement strategy. This strategy led the MIC to carry out a number of efforts, including the development of a project website with interactive features; all of which were aimed at improving the amount of input and involvement received.

The MIC has attempted to assess the effectiveness of its LRTP involvement efforts, and ways that these efforts might be improved upon. The MIC will use this information in subsequent updates of the Duluth-Superior LRTP and continue to find ways of effectively delivering information and encouraging participation.

### Public Meetings about the draft LRTP:

#### Thursday, Sept 11

5:00-7:00pm  
Community Action Duluth  
2424 W Fifth Street, Duluth, MN

#### Thursday, Sept 18

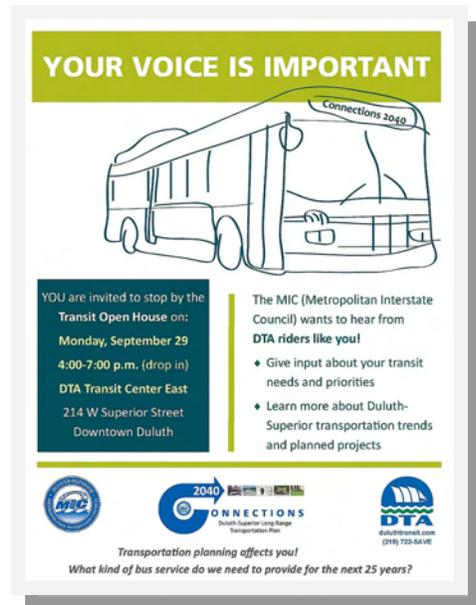
4:00-6:00pm  
Superior Public Library  
1530 Tower Avenue, Superior, WI

#### Thursday, Sept 25

4:00-6:00pm  
Arrowhead Regional Development  
Commission (ARDC)  
221 W First Street, Duluth, MN

#### Monday, Sept. 29

4:00-7:00 p.m. (drop in)  
DTA Transit Center East  
214 W Superior Street. Duluth, MN



Poster advertising the public meeting at the DTA transit center