

**BPAC – February 4, 2021  
Meeting Summary**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Virtual (online) Meeting via Microsoft Teams	
<b>Meeting Chair(s)</b>	Carol Andrews	
<b>Note Taker</b>	James Gittemeier	
<b>Members Present</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	Carol Andrews	St. Louis County
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Chris Carlson	City of Superior
	Chris Belden	DTA
	Skip Williams	We Walk in Duluth
	Andrea Crouse	Zeitgeist/SHIP
	Dick Haney	Friends of Western Duluth Parks & Trails
	Judy Gibbs	Citizen Representative
<b>Members Absent</b>		* Excused
	Cari Pedersen*	City of Duluth
	Dena Ryan*	WISDOT
	Prescott Morrill	Citizen Representative
	Andrew Slade	Duluth Bikes
	Jason DiPiazza*	Citizen Member
	Eleanor Bacso*	City of Duluth
<b>Others Present</b>		
	Natalie Chin	WI Sea Grant
	Maren Webb	MnDOT District 1
	Ron Chicka	MIC
	James Gittemeier	MIC
	Mike Wenholz	MIC
	Ricky Sarran	MIC
	Mike Casey	Friends of Western Duluth Parks & Trails
	Rondi Watson	MIC
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth
	Bruce Fehinger	Citizen
	Alison Clarke	Citizen

## 1. Introductions

Meeting participants introduced themselves.

## 2. Committee Business

**Meeting Agenda** - No changes requested.

### November 5, 2020 Meeting Summary

- Minor correction put forward by Cari Pedersen to change the language from “EAW” to “Project Memo” under the Project Updates – Cross City Trail item.
- Revised summary was moved for approval by Skip Williams, seconded by Dick Haney approved by consensus.

### Quarterly Meeting Structure

- There is a long-time desire to meet more frequently, due to the large amount of bicycle and pedestrian topics and issues that members would like to discuss more in-depth and being able to respond in a more timely fashion.
- Possible options:
  - Longer quarterly meeting - similar format to the HTAC – longer meeting with guest speakers/topics and breaks.
  - Special Project Discussion/Education/Topic – 1:00-2:15pm
  - Formal meeting – 2:30-4pm
- Committee discussion on this option
  - Advisory committee issue of frequency to hold meetings and timing on issues
  - Do better at thinking far enough ahead to use the quarterly meetings in timely way, improve working with jurisdictions on with what’s coming up.
  - Be concerned over holding an unofficial meeting before the formal meeting. Open meeting law concerns brings up an issue that should have more discussion on a public body meeting with a quorum or more, be open to the public and advertised as usual.
  - Consider forming working groups to take on specific topics that have less than a quorum membership, have discussions, develop recommendations and bring forward to the full board. Option to work on specific topics outside of regular meetings.
  - No decision at this time. Look into this more.

## 3. Morris Thomas Road Project Recommendation

- St. Louis County is reconstructing a one-mile section of Morris Thomas Road within the City of Duluth. The BPAC held a special meeting on January 5, 2021 to discuss this project (summary was sent out on January 22, 2021). Based on the special meeting, findings of fact, and best practice design guidance, MIC staff composed a draft recommendation report and submitted that to the BPAC for their review and comment.
- Committee Discussion

- Recommendation focused on improving the pedestrian environment over bicycle and transit improvements, as there is a greater need for pedestrian improvements due to the Safe Routes to School plan. The existing and expected demand for cyclists and transit riders is low, based on the land use in this area and the lack of change in density at this time.
- Lack of infrastructure contributes to the low level of use. Hesitant to rely on existing low levels of bike use. There could be more level of use when considering the network connectivity and vertical route connection, coming out of the downtown and harbor and how to better integrate bus and bike into the street network.
- Consider level of use with the planned Proctor/Hermantown Munger Spur.
- The existing wide shoulders do provide somewhat of a comfortable bike space.
- The car centric focus of Lake Superior College, gives opportunities for pedestrian, cycling and transit connections within the Piedmont Neighborhood to Lake Superior College. Consider this potential demand.
- Question about the recommendation fitting within the existing right-of-way, and while it does, the specifics are left to be determined by the project engineer.
- While BPAC is not recommending a specific design, one possible design concept example that would largely meet the bike and ped needs and thinking in the recommendation report for this Morris Thomas Road corridor, is a design similar to the recently reconstructed Glenwood Street in Duluth. High quality pedestrian space with sidewalks on both sides and there would be buffers between the sidewalks. However, it is important to reiterate that the BPAC is not recommending a specific design.
- Question over, can the parking be limited, reduced to only a couple of areas where it is more utilized? Could be limited to only one side, low level of demand, but did not consider recommending removing all on-street parking.
- Deciding on the appropriate bikeway facility, two key factors must be taken into consideration, beyond level of existing and anticipated use by cyclists, traffic volume and vehicle speeds. This roadway has a daily traffic volume (3,000 AADT) that puts it on the edge of a recommended separated facility based on the guidance. However, the relatively high traffic speeds anticipated to be 35-40mph range, makes this corridor not conducive to sharing the lane. With a low level of parking use, relatively low level of traffic and low level of cyclists, the recommendation was for all of these uses to share the same space separated from the traffic lanes, but not share the pedestrian space.
- This project review process is a meant to be an iterative process, where St. Louis County will follow up with MIC and the BPAC based on the recommendation.
- Motion by Andrea Crouse to approve MIC staff and BPAC Chair finalizing recommendation report to St. Louis County following the main points in the draft submitted/share with the BPAC, and the comments discussed at the BPAC meeting. Seconded by Dick Haney. Motion passed unanimously.

#### 4. Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Pedestrian Plan

- MIC staff provided an overview of the Ped Plan. The draft document is in a rough format and will be released following the BPAC meeting.
- Once the plan is reviewed, comments provided and responded to, a special meeting of the BPAC is being asked to be called to discuss the Pedestrian Plan.
- The BPAC should weigh in on and vote to move the Plan onto the MIC Policy Board. The Pedestrian Plan Advisory Committee will meet one final time.

#### 5. Cross City Trail Phase 3 Update

- The City of Duluth provided a status report on this project. The City of Duluth has built a lot of miles of shared use paths in the past 15 years. Now, the City is working to build Phase 3 and extend the trail from the end of Phase 2 completed in the Fall 2020 at Irving Park to the Upper CCT/Keene Creek Park segment completed in 2015. The Cross City Trail has been troublesome, with issues of right-of-way requirement to construct a new trail in a built environment, making the completion of this trail slow and costly. The City of Duluth has been hop-scotching to build the CCT when right-of-way is set, which is hard on everyone. The City of Duluth is committed to finishing the connectivity between the built sections of the trail, having a contiguous path, and filling the gap between the two completed segments. The Mini Master Trail Plan calls out the general concept for this segment, but the alignment with specific streets still needs to be determined. A public meeting was held last week, scheduled to be constructed in 2023, not ahead of schedule, the City of Duluth needs to finish the alignment, finish the environmental documentation and design memo.
- Committee Discussion
  - Desire to complete the Segment 3 section below Grand Avenue.
  - Upper CCT route does not meet the vision of 40 years for the development of the CCT, a less direct route and less safe route (requiring 2 crossings of Grand Avenue).
  - The Upper route does have a transportation purpose, but more of a spur trail of the Cross City Trail, but with the vision of the Cross City Trail, this segment adds a lot of distance and there are concerns over the grade to get to would not meet ADA universal design/accessibility standards.
  - Invite the BPAC to have a walkabout to look at several routes that do not include the BN. Desire to consider other routes below Grand Avenue, and encourage the City of Duluth to pursue the development of the trail below Grand Avenue and not waiting until the BN route alignment can be agreed upon.
  - Segment 3 meets the recommendations of the CCT Mini-Master Trail Plan, however, not necessarily the original vision of the CCT as a direct route, but the Master Trail Plan changed this vision to include the Upper CCT route, which had not been included in any of the prior planning for the CCT. Note, a segment of the Upper CCT route was built before the Master Trail Plan was completed.
  - In 2018, the MIC Policy Board voted to remove this segment of trail and agreed to put it back in the TIP, with assurances that the Lower CCT route would be pursued.
  - What is the role of the BPAC in this process? Shouldn't the BPAC provide advice on this issue to the City of Duluth?

- A letter was read by a member of the public, and will be attached to the meeting summary.
- Regarding the Lower Route along the BN corridor, everyone prefers this route, but the City of Duluth will not be able to purchase the BN corridor in the near future.
- The input the City of Duluth needs from BPAC is how best to accommodate this Segment 3 route from Irving Park to Keene Creek. The BPAC should consider that this segment was selected for funding through the ATP process and that decision has not been made. The MIC is interested in learning the City of Duluth's take on the future plans/timeline/schedule for the Lower CCT route.
- The next step would be to meet with the City of Duluth to convey the BPAC comments on the Cross City Trail and learn more about the long term plans for completing the Lower CCT route.

## **6. Project Updates:**

- Blatnik Bridge Project – MnDOT has created a high level two-page Purpose and Need Statement document noting the reasons for the project, including crash rates, no bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on the bridge, and the need for redundancy.
  - Committee Discussion
    - Purpose and need statement is missing a top tier purpose and need, that is a multimodal crossing between Duluth and Superior, with the crossing being the main issue and is the primary need and not necessarily the current situation.
    - Comments are encouraged and welcome to MnDOT on this project.
- Winter Bike Week – a week of events are planned, with a Ped Plan session upcoming and a Winter bike commuting class.
- Other Projects
  - Hammond Avenue Reconstruction in 2023/2024 from Belknap to 28<sup>th</sup> Street is just in the beginning scoping. Stay tuned.

Meeting adjourned 4:20 pm