



MIC Policy Board Meeting Summary

September 15, 2021

Virtual MS Teams Meeting

Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

Note Taker	Barb Peterson	
	Members Present	
	Ed Anderson	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
WI Co-Chair	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Warren Bender	Superior Common Council
MN Co-Chair	Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	Pete Clark	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Zack Filipovich	Duluth City Council
	Adam Fulton	City of Duluth
	Ashley Grimm	St. Louis County
	Janet Kennedy	Duluth City Council
	Rosemary Lear	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Tom Szukis	DTA
	Jenny VanSickle	Superior City Council
	Chad Ward	City of Proctor
	Members Absent	* Excused Absence
	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Earl Elde	St. Louis County Suburban Townships
	Nick Ledin*	Superior City Council
	Sam Pomush	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Bob Quade	City of Rice Lake
Others Present		
	Ron Chicka	MIC Director
	Rondi Watson	Planning Communications Coordinator
	James Gittemeier	MIC Principal Planner
	Duane Hill	MnDOT District 1
	Mike Wenzholz	MIC Senior Planner
	Ricky Sarran	MIC GIS Specialist
	Cyrus Knutson	MnDOT Community Connections Director
	Shannon Laing	Ecolibrium 3/Duluth Waterfront Collective
	Bobbi Retzlaf	FHWA Minnesota
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC – MIC Deputy Director
	Jordan van der Hagen	Duluth Waterfront Collective



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1. INTRODUCTIONS / AGENDA REVIEW

Co-Chair Wayne Boucher called the meeting to order. A roll call of attendees was done with attendees confirming their presence and the entity they represent.

2. GUEST SPEAKER: HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED - JORDAN VAN DER HAGEN, DULUTH WATERFRONT COLLECTIVE

Jordan van der Hagen began by stating that the Duluth Waterfront Collective is a group of Duluth designers working towards a new vision and way of looking at reconnecting downtown Duluth and Canal Park. He began by describing/showing where Duluth started before I-35, after I-35 and what the corridor could be "fixing the freeway". Several groups and individuals have stated that I-35 was over built. Duluth's Downtown Waterfront area has a poverty rate which is the highest in the state. Jordan also shared that "people who live or work within .2 miles of a freeway experience higher rates of asthma, lung impairment, cardiovascular disease, cancer and premature death" to name a few.

He shared the vision that the collaborative have come up with which includes a traffic circle, street trees, walk ways and more. This vision hopes to spur economic growth, create green space, improve safety and mobility and also create a unified downtown.

Proposed traffic patterns out of Canal Park/Downtown were then reviewed. Potential Transit options were presented bringing back the Streetcar and the creation of a Bus Rapid Transit network. Jordan shared how this vision would address a spur of economic growth, how it would create green space, improve safety and mobility and create a unified downtown.

Jordan discussed the role of the MIC in this process. A need for a planning study looking into this concept is what is needed next, and answering a number of questions including what are the costs of rebuilding the Interstate verses what are the costs of building the Highway 61 Revisited project. The MIC, tied with the goals of the LRTP, could take on the needed studies that will need to take place to fully vet and consider this project.

Warren Bender asked a question about a need for a motion to receive and file this information, Ron Chicka responded, no, not at this point.

After the presentation by Jordan, co-chair Boucher asked for any questions. Here were the comments and questions were given:

Zack Filipovich commented that he co-sponsored the Duluth City Council resolution in support of this project and asking the City of Duluth and public partners, including the MIC, to begin studying this proposal.



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Nick Baker commented that it was quite unique, allows for acres of land to be available and only one mile in length. He asked if it could spread, possibly to the East and maybe to the West.

Ed Anderson commented that there should be some practical considerations that need to be addressed, questions related to Winter climate situation, snow removal and snow storage issues with the proposed design and where will the trucks (freight) go.

Adam Fulton commented on the ties between the city’s transportation systems and the Imagine Duluth 2035 comprehensive plan and expressed appreciation for the vision and the process being undertaken.

Ashley Grimm commented support for the project and the possibilities and encourages the MIC board to take the next steps.

Ron Chicka mentioned that the next steps will be devised in the coming months, but the planning funding needed for this will have to come from a number of sources, existing and new federal grants, not only the MIC resources.

Duane Hill commented that MnDOT is looking at gathering information for the entire I-35 corridor in the MPO and put together a long range investment plan for the corridor for all the infrastructure, undertake public engagement to better understand all the issues along the corridor. In the more short range, MnDOT will be looking at 5th Avenue West bridge over I-35 looking at an at-grade intersection concept, rehab of the bridge concept, and looking at replacing the bridge and making it more accessible.

Nick Baker stated that there should be some kind of statement of support considered by the MIC board at an upcoming meeting. Ashley Grimm spoke in support of this. Ed Anderson commented the need to chart a direction on a next agenda to discuss this.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- Meeting Summary of 8.25.21 (for Approval)

Motion Discussion and Vote	Nick Baker/Warren Bender moved to approve the 8.25.21 meeting summary. There was no discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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- Public Involvement Plan Update

Rondi Watson shared that it is time again for a full review and update of this plan which identifies steps and strategies for public engagement at each phase of the planning process. This update process also requires public involvement and Rondi is asking a motion to approve the start of the mandatory 45-day comment period, effective October 1. More details will be presented at the October meetings.



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Motion Discussion and Vote	Ed Anderson moved, Warren Bender seconded to approve the start of the 45 day public comment period. There was no discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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4. ROUND TABLE

- **Opportunity for Public Comment**

none

Adjourn: With no further agenda items, discussions or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting.