



## TAC Agenda Topics and Project Updates

October 17, 2023 Meeting

### Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council Meeting Summary

\* = Approval Item

Note Taker(s)	Tari Aanonsen, MIC Administrative & Finance Assistant	
Members Present		
	Bryan Anderson	Alternate for MnDOT Dist. 1
	David Bolf	Alternate for City of Hermantown
	Chris Carlson	City of Superior – Public Works
	Kate Ferguson	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
	James Gittemeier	City of Duluth
	Matt Hemmila	Alternate for St. Louis County
	Jason Jackman	Douglas County
	Todd Janigo	City of Superior – Public Works
	Dena Ryan	WisDOT
	Karl Schuettler	Northspan Group
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth Engineering
	Maren Webb	MnDOT Dist 1
	Tom Werner	Duluth Airport Authority
	Skip Williams	Active Transportation
Members Absent		* Excused Absence
	Jim Foldesi	St Louis County
	Chris Lee	City of Duluth
	John Mulder	City of Hermantown
	Cari Pedersen*	City of Duluth
	Jess Rich	City of Proctor
	Vacant	MnDOT Dist 1
	Vacant	Mobility Challenged Community
Others Present		
	Lisa Austin	MnDOT
	Ron Chicka	MIC Director
	Derek Fredrickson	MnDOT
	Miles Hanson	City of Duluth
	Sara Husen	WisDOT
	Sheldon Johnson	MIC Deputy Director/NWRPC
	Scott McBride	Bolton & Menk
	Prescott Morrill	MIC Planner
	Jason Nordberg	FHWA
	John Ramos	Duluth Monitor
	Ricky Sarran	MIC-GIS Specialist
	Erika Shepard	MnDOT
	Robert Sullivan	MARAD
	Rondi Watson	MIC Planning Asst/Communication Coordinator



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**Meeting Summary**

**1. Introductions / Agenda Review**

Ron Chicka, MIC Director, called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm. A “roll call” attendance was taken. When completed, Ron asked if there were any questions or changes to the agenda. There were none.

**2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

• **Meeting Summary of 8.15.23**

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

<b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b>	Skip Williams / James Gittemeier moved to approve the 8.15.23 meeting summary. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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**DIRECTOR’S REPORT:**

Director Chicka reported on the following:

- **MIC Staffing Update-** The MIC is still down one planner. This position is responsible for overseeing the HTAC group.
- **Wisconsin MPO Conference-** The conference was last week and included presentations on the Blatnik Bridge and the Tower Avenue Road rightsizing projects.

**3. DULUTH AREA I-35 CORRIDOR PLAN-STUDY FINDINGS AND DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Angie Bursaw presented the study findings from the I-35 Corridor Plan. The goal of the plan was to develop a range of ideas and needs for the 14-mile stretch of the corridor included in the study. Phase one included a large amount of public engagement. One key theme that came out of this was a desire for a Bike/Ped priority.

Several areas of focus resulted from the study, some of which included:

- Signal enhancements to 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. West and Lake Avenue
- A proposed round about for the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue West and I-35 overpass
- A proposed median u turn interchange in order to remove the left hand exists for safety on the West Duluth portion of the corridor
- A proposed underpass at 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue West to improve Bike/Ped traffic
- The addition of an extended truck climbing hill at Thompson Hill
- The addition of improved on/off ramp access along Thompson Hill and removing the Cody Street Exit
- The addition of ITS, Intelligent Transportation Systems, to several places along the corridor

A grant was awarded to Bolten & Menk from MnDOT to complete an ITS, Variable Speed Limit study. Bolton & Menk has also assisted the City of Duluth in applying for the Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant. If awarded, these funds will be used to assess the Downtown and West Duluth neighborhoods more closely. Awards will be announced in the Spring of 2024.



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**Meeting Summary**

The Implementation Plan guides jurisdictional partnerships and clarifies prioritization of projects. Four timelines have been formed, ranging from Short Term to Long Term and include many projects stemming from the discovery of needs through the study. The short-term projects align with the current funding opportunities and/or the STIP and the medium-term projects align with the CHIP. Funding for the long-term projects is less certain and may be safety or opportunity driven. The final report will be available on the MIC website in late October or early November 2023.

**4. FINAL MIC URBAN AREA BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT**

Richard Sarran began by explaining the guidelines for determining the Adjusted Urban Area Boundary and outlined the proposed changes to the MIC Urban Area Boundary (UAB). The presentation included a map that compared the last Adjusted UAB completed in 2013 to the current 2023 Adjusted UAB, to indicate the proposed changes more clearly. Staff asked for a recommendation from the TAC to move the MIC Urban Area Boundary Adjustment forward to the MIC Policy Board for approval.

<b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b>	David Bolf / Cindy Voight moved to recommend the MIC Urban Area Boundary Adjustment to the Policy Board for approval. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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**5. WISDOT 2024 SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURE TARGETS**

Sheldon Johnson began by explaining that annually, all MPO's must consider adopting the Federal PM Safety Measures for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) or adopt their own with the approval of the FHWA and FTA. WisDOT released the CY 2024 Safety Targets on August 31, 2023. Those targets were included in the meeting packet and in the presentation materials for review by the TAC. Staff recommended moving the WisDOT Proposed PM 1 Safety Targets, as presented, forward to the MIC Policy Board for Adoption.

<b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b>	Jason Jackman / Dena Ryan moved to recommend the WisDOT 2024 Safety Performance Measure Targets to the Policy Board for adoption. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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**6. FINAL 2024-2027 SUPERIOR AREA TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)**

Sheldon Johnson presented the 2024-2027 Superior Area TIP for recommendation by the TAC to the Policy Board. He explained that New Project Solicitation began June 2023, and the Draft TIP was approved to public release by the MIC Policy Board on August 16, 2023. Sheldon went on to state that citizen comment has been noted and WisDOT has provided minor technical changes. Hearing no questions or discussion, Sheldon recommended the approval of the 2024-2027 Superior Area TIP.

<b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b>	Todd Janigo / Skip Williams moved to recommend the 2024-2027 Superior Area TIP to the Policy Board for adoption. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**Meeting Summary**

**7. FINAL 2024-2025 MIC WORK PROGRAM**

Ron Chicka summarized the planning projects included in the 2024-25 MIC Work Plan. Some new items include a Traffic Signal System Assessment to be added to the Roadway Planning element, and other components of the Safety Action Plan being moved to the Long-Range Planning element. Also new will be the MIC's involvement with Bus Rapid Transit planning by the DTA, which will be included in the Transit portion of the Ongoing Initiatives. MIC Staff recommended the 2024-2025 MIC Work Program for approval.

<b>Motion Discussion and Vote</b>	Skip Williams / Cindy Voight moved to recommend the 2024-2025 MIC Work Program to the Policy Board for adoption. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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**8. MTP LONG RANGE PLAN 2050 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Rondi Watson spoke on the importance of the involvement of our multiple jurisdictions and community members regarding the update of the MTP Long Range Plan 2050. Interactive sessions are planned for the near future to attain feedback from stakeholders on the goals and objectives that will guide our planning projects for the next 20 years. Round two of the consultations will be discussing the projects for inclusion in the MTP, as well as the inter-jurisdictional aspects of these projects and gathering financial data to demonstrate fiscal constraints. The online survey for stakeholder engagement is still open. New for this MTP update, each chapter will be approved individually, as they are completed. For questions regarding the update of the MTP Long Range Plan 2050, please contact Rondi Watson, MIC Planning Assistant and Communication Coordinator, [rwatson@ardc.org](mailto:rwatson@ardc.org)

**9. BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING UPDATE**

Prescott Morrill reported on the recent bike and pedestrian counts that have been collected at various project locations. A new approach by the BPAC is to take counts prior to and after specific road construction projects have been completed. The hope is to have measurable data that directly relates to improvements made to roadways that affect the accessibility and safety of our bike and pedestrian community. Prescott outlined three areas of interest that include Woodland Ave from Snively Road to Anoka Street, Raleigh Street from S 59th Ave W to Grand Ave, and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave E from E 2<sup>nd</sup> St to E 9<sup>th</sup> Street. All three projects are scheduled for Summer 2024 and counts will be taken again after their completion.

Additionally, the BPAC was recently given an update by the Snow Removal Task Force that included a written document that aims for reliable snow removal to benefit our bike and pedestrian community in the upcoming winter months. Subcommittee meetings have brought forth a request for a gaps analysis with an emphasis on projects that are tied to DTA routes. This will help to inform TA and AT grant applications, as well as feed into the MTP and the Bikeway Plan Update in 2024. For any questions regarding the work of the BPAC, please contact Prescott Morrill, Planner, [pmorrill@ardc.org](mailto:pmorrill@ardc.org)



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council  
**Meeting Summary**

**10. ROUND TABLE**

- Prescott Morrill reported that the Carbon Reduction Strategy will be published by the State sometime in November. While not prescriptive, it will give MPO's a toolkit to guide the selection of projects and help document the process. There is funding available through 2027.
- Discussion took place regarding the Blatnik Bridge alternative plans, addressing concerns over multimodal access and height of the proposed replacement bridge.

**11. PROJECT UPDATE**

- *Rice Lake Road Corridor Improvement Project*

Rondi Watson reported that St. Louis County is looking at changes to Rice Lake Road and Martin Road. A presentation will be coming to the TAC in the near future.

- *Letter of Support for Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant*

A letter of support was written by the MIC in support of this grant application by the City of Duluth. A copy was included in the distributed meeting materials.

**12. ADJOURN:** With no further agenda items, discussions or announcements, Director Ron Chicka adjourned the meeting at 3:41 pm.