



Meeting Summary

* = Approval Item

Note Taker(s)	Tari Aanonsen, MIC Administrative/Finance Assistant	
Members Present		
	Members Present	
	Ed Anderson (after roll call)	City of Superior – Citizen Rep
WI Co-Chair	Nick Baker	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Jake Benson	City of Proctor
MN Co-Chair	Wayne Boucher	City of Hermantown
	Mark Johnson	City of Superior
	Rosemary Lear	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Mike Mayou	Duluth City Council
	Sam Pomush	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Bob Quade (after roll call)	City of Rice Lake
	Tom Szukis	DTA
	Jenny Van Sickle	Superior City Council
	Scott Welsh	Solway Township
Members Absent		* Excused Absence
	Broc Allen	Douglas County Suburban Townships
	Hannah Alstead	Duluth City Council
	Annie Harala	St. Louis County
	Nick Ledin	Superior City Council
	Randy Skowlund*	Douglas County Board of Supervisors
	Chad Ward	City of Proctor
	Vacant	City of Duluth – Citizen Representative
Others Present		
	Bryan Anderson	MnDOT
	Ron Chicka	MIC Director
	Andrea Crouse	Zeitgeist
	Richard Haney	UMD
	Vic Lund	St Louis County
	Prescott Morrill	MIC Planner
	Anna Pierce	MnDOT
	Bobbie Retzlaff	FHWA-MN
	Ricky Sarran	MIC GIS Specialist
	Rondi Watson	MIC Communications Co-ord./Planning Asst.
	Maren Webb	MnDOT



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1. Introductions / Agenda Review

MIC Co-Chair, Nick Baker, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. A “roll call” attendance was taken. When completed, Chair Baker asked if there were any questions or changes to the agenda. Hearing no changes, Chair Baker continued to Item# 2.

2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

• Meeting Summary of 10.18.23*

Chair Baker then asked if there were any questions or changes to the October meeting summary.

Motion Discussion and Vote	Sam Pomush / Wayne Boucher moved to approve the 10.18.23 meeting summary. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Ron Chicka reported the following:

- **Safety Action Plan Update 2023 and 2024-** Due to understaffing in 2023, some funds will be allowed to carry over into 2024. We will be amending our 2024 UPWP which will allow us to use up these funds. We will be looking at crash analysis data, along with consultant work, for our Safety Action Plan.
- **MIC Staffing Update-** The MIC welcomes back Mike Wenholz as Principal Planner, leading the HTAC and co-leading our Long Range MTP 2050.
- **I-35 Plan Update-** The Plan is complete, and a link will be available on our website to view the final product from Bolton & Menk. The MIC is pleased with the work that was done by our consultant.
- **Letters of Support-** MIC staff has had multiple requests from area jurisdictions toward projects proposed for the metro area. These include: Blatnik Bridge (Bike/Ped Component), five project applications by St Louis County for HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) funding, Pike Lake Bike-Ped Improvement Study, City of Duluth for the Junction Ave/W. St Marie Street-Local Road Improvement Program, and lastly, St Louis County-Rice Lake Road Corridor.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Chair Baker then allowed for an opportunity for Public Comment. Hearing none, he continued to item #3 on the agenda.

3. RICE LAKE ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Vic Lund, Traffic Engineer for St. Louis County Public Works, presented on the Rice Lake Road Corridor Improvement Project. The project timeline can track back to a MIC Intersection Control Evaluation that occurred in 2013 that has progressed to a joint effort between St. Louis County and the City of Rice Lake. The project seeks to improve the support of commercial and



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residential activity along the Rice Lake Rd Corridor, as well as create a downtown center for the City of Rice Lake. It will incorporate intersection improvements, a separated trail along Rice Lake Road and Martin Road, a city street connecting West Calvary Road and Martin Road, and a new road to access tax forfeit properties managed by the County to support future development. Another significance will be the ability to manage the access points along the corridor as the area is developed.

The County is in the process of applying for a 2024 RAISE grant for 25M in Federal funding, to assist with the needed 40.1M in funding. Several communities, including many on the Iron Range, have provided Letters of Support to be included in the application from the County. Vic is asking for the support of the Duluth Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council.

For questions relating to the Rice Lake Road Corridor Improvement Project, please contact Vic Lund: LundV@StLouisCountyMN.gov

Motion Discussion and Vote	Bob Quade / Sam Pomush moved to recommend a letter of support from the Duluth Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council for the Rice Lake Road Corridor Improvement Project. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.
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4. 2024-2027 DULUTH AREA TIP AMENDMENT #1*

Prescott presented the following amendment to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP:

The City of Duluth is requesting the addition of a project along the Lakewalk, using funding awarded from the federal RAISE grant program (TIP Project ID# 118-090-029). This project will include multi-use trail construction and shoreline stabilization from Lake Ave to 28th Ave E.

- Total Project Cost = \$10,248,758
 - Federal Funding = \$8,196,234
 - City Funding = \$2,052,524

There were no Public Comments.

5. 2024-2027 DULUTH AREA TIP AMENDMENT #2*

Prescott presented the following amendment to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP:

MnDOT is requesting a new project for inclusion in the current Duluth Area TIP for highway sign replacement on MN 23 from Howard Rd to Becks Rd in Duluth (TIP Project ID# 8821-377). This project is 100% funded by state funds. However, because a portion of these improvements fall within the MIC/MPO area, it will be included in the current Duluth Area TIP.

- Total Project Cost (State Funding) = \$900,000



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Public Comments recorded:

Mike Mayou asked if this included additional signs or just new replacement signs. Prescott replied that these are replacement signs.

6. 2024-2027 DULUTH AREA TIP AMENDMENT #3*

Prescott Morrill presented on the following amendment to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP:

Amendment #3 constitutes a suite of changes, including Bridge Formula Funding Program (BFP) for two projects in the TIP. These additional funds will be used to complete bridge deck overlays instead of a cheaper flood seal treatment.

For each project, there are additional federal funds from the BFP program, with additional local match funds, which will be added as new line-items to the Duluth Area TIP.

These two projects are:

Duluth TIP ID# 6982-336: multiple bridges between Lake Ave and 21st Ave E

- Original project cost = \$1,900,000
 - Additional BFP Project cost = \$1,138,500 Federal; \$126,500 State Fund match; \$1,265,000
- Project Total

Duluth TIP ID# 6982-348: multiple I-35 bridges over Mesaba Ave

- Original project cost = \$8,200,000
 - Additional BFP project cost = \$931,500 Federal; \$103,500 State Fund match; \$1,035,000
- Project Total

There were no Public Comments.

Motion Discussion and Vote	Jake Bensen / Mike Mayou moved to approve the 2024-2027 Duluth Area Tip Amendments #1-3. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.
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7. MINNESOTA CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGY

Prescott Morrill gave an update on the Carbon Reduction Strategy (CRS) document that MnDOT published in November, which includes a toolkit for jurisdictions to reference when applying to the MPO for CRP funding. The MIC will be soliciting projects for FY 2025 and FY 2026 in February 2024. Project selection will be done by the MIC, in coordination with the NEMNATP, and selected projects for FY 2025 and FY 2026 will be amended into the current Duluth Area TIP.

Mike Mayou asked if these were the funds used for the Ped improvements to the Woodland Avenue project in 2023. Prescott responded that they were the funds that supported those improvements.

Director Chicka added that the 2023 Wisconsin CRP funds were used to update LED street lighting in the Superior area.



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8. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

- Nick Baker asked if MnDOT was having issues with completing the Can of Worms portion of the I-35 project. Duane Hill responded that MnDOT was working diligently, but not making much headway.
- Ron Chicka reported that the Northern **LIGHTS** Express is slowly coming along. He also noted to look for a presentation soon on the 6th Avenue East Restriping Project. Also, the DTA is reporting increased ridership for the last two consecutive months following their Better Bus Blueprint rollout.
- Ed Anderson reported on a discussion that occurred at the December HTAC meeting. A question was raised at that meeting on whether the plan for the replacement bridge to the Blatnik would have the capacity to handle semi tractor trailers loaded to 100,000 lbs. Duane Hill was able to respond that the new bridge will have that capacity. Tractor trailers will be required to have a special permit to allow that capacity.

9. PROJECT UPDATES

- **Administrative Modification #1 to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP**
This modification, approved by MIC staff, removes two projects from the Duluth Area TIP.
Duluth TIP ID# 6910-109: This project was intended to remove a historic bridge over Mission Creek. This project is being removed due to cultural discoveries and will be delivered in a future fiscal year. The federal funds allocated to this project will be used to fund other district priorities, to be determined.
Duluth TIP ID# 6982-342: This project was to make some nominal improvements for ADA compliance from Lake Ave to 26th Ave E. However, district priorities have changed due to budgetary constraints, and these funds will be allocated for similar purposes in the same fiscal year (FY 2024) for other MnDOT projects.
- **Administrative Modification #2 to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP**
This modification is for a project on the Two Harbors Expressway, for intersection conflict reductions. Due to more refined project estimates, the projected project cost has been reduced by \$800,000. The revised total project cost is \$1,077,778.
- **HTAC Update**
Issues reviewed and presented at the December HTAC included: reporting out of the work of both the Navigation and Dredging subcommittees by their respective Chairs; presentation and input period regarding the Minnesota statewide Freight Plan Update by central office staff of the DOT; an input session from HTAC members and other relevant entities focused on the MICs Metropolitan Transportation Plan in order to gain input on current key issues of movement in the Twin Ports area; lastly, a discussion led by Bryan Rydberg of AOR Waterfront Security, a local leader in the logistics industry and experienced at security with shippers/businesses in Duluth and Superior.



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- **Letters of Support for St. Louis County Safety Projects**

We prepared letters of support on behalf of the MIC for five project applications submitted by the county for HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) funding. HSIP is a core Federal-aid program with the purpose of achieving a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads and requires a data-driven, strategic approach to improving safety, with a focus on performance.

All five projects are located within the MIC area, and the proposed improvements would implement some longstanding recommendations from several MIC plans, including the 2000 Midway Road Access Management Plan, the 2018 Duluth-Superior Area Truck Route Study and the 2020 update of our long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

- **2023 D-S Adjusted UAB**

The 2023 Duluth-Superior Adjusted Urban Area Boundary has been submitted to both states. MnDOT has officially accepted the Boundary and sent it on to FHWA for Minnesota Approval.

- **ADJOURN:** With no further agenda items, discussions or announcements, Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 7:02 pm.