



TAC Agenda Topics and Project Updates

January 16, 2024 Meeting

Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council Meeting Summary

* = Approval Item

Note Taker(s)	Tari Aanonsen, MIC Administrative & Finance Assistant	
Members Present		
	Jeff Abboud	WisDOT
	Chris Beldon	Duluth Transit Authority
	David Bolf	City of Hermantown
	Chris Carlson	City of Superior – Public Works
	Kate Ferguson	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
	James Gittemeier	City of Duluth
	Jason Jackman	Douglas County
	Todd Janigo	City of Superior – Public Works
	Cari Pedersen	City of Duluth
	Karl Schuettler	Northspan Group
	Cindy Voigt	City of Duluth Engineering
	Maren Webb	MnDOT Dist 1
	Skip Williams	Active Transportation
Members Absent		* Excused Absence
	Jim Foldesi*	St Louis County
	Derek Fredrickson*	MnDOT District 1
	Chris Lee	City of Duluth
	Jess Rich	City of Proctor
	Dena Ryan*	WisDOT
	Tom Werner*	Duluth Airport Authority
	Vacant	Mobility Challenged Community
Others Present		
	Ron Chicka	MIC Director
	Trish Crego	City of Hermantown
	Andrea Crouse	Zietgeist
	Amy Demmer	Zeitgeist
	Miles Hanson	City of Duluth, Americorps
	Duane Hill	MnDOT/FHWA
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC
	Prescott Morrill	MIC Planner
	Josh Pearson	FHWA
	Ricky Sarran	MIC-GIS Specialist
	Erika Shepard	MnDOT
	Siri Simons	MnDOT-Presenter
	Sister Mary Matthew	ARDC
	Mike Sullivan	Marad
	Rondi Watson	MIC Senior Planner/Communications Specialist
	Mike Wenzholz	MIC Senior Planner



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council Meeting Summary

1. Introductions / Agenda Review

Ron Chicka, MIC Director, called the meeting to order at 1:30 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 12.12.23***

No Action was taken. This item will appear on February’s agenda.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Director Chicka reported on several items of interest that were highlighted in the Director’s Report in the agenda packet and as listed below:

- Safety Action Plan Update 2024 – AECOM and the area jurisdictional partners will continue to work throughout the year due to the Work Program amendment (using one-time 2023 carryover funding) proposed for formal action this month. The tasks outlined in consultation with our consultant will take the plan to its conclusion and provide a roadmap for addressing the highest priority locations/corridors regarding multimodal safety needs in the MIC area.
- I-35 Plan Update – The final plan is on our website. Also, presentations of the work to the Fond du Lac Tribe in Cloquet plus the Duluth – Superior Maritime Club to gain input and feedback. A further technical study concerning the possibility of applying variable speed limits along the corridor will be underway soon; addressed as a follow-up task in the plan.
- Superior – Tower Avenue Plan – Meetings continue with City and Wisconsin DOT staff as we review the traffic operations study recently completed by AECOM. Once again, this study involves the feasibility of lane reduction along Tower between Belknap and 28th Street. The plan was a first step toward this potential change; purely technical and without public or private sector input. When ready for a broader level presentation to the TAC and MIC, we will try to line up a presentation.
- Letters of Support – MIC staff has had multiple requests from area jurisdictions toward projects proposed for the metro area. These include:
 - 1) St Louis County – Rice Lake Road Corridor – Following on the County’s presentation last month, we’ve submitted a letter of support toward their request for federal funds to carry out their preliminary planning efforts. The MIC Board took an official action approving the letter.
 - 2) NWRPC – Our Wisconsin host agency has asked for a letter toward a climate resilience project for continued flood plain management work – in particular a road/stream crossing evaluation in the Nemadji River watershed – via National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). A key aspect of the MICs Long Range Plan and within our planning area.
 - 3) City of Duluth – Signature toward a grant for lighting of the improved bike-pedestrian crossing of I-35 near the Mesaba Avenue interchange.



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Meeting Summary

3. MINNESOTA CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGY AND TOOLKIT

Siri Simons of MnDOT Office of Sustainability, presented on the Minnesota Statewide Carbon Reduction Strategy, which identifies priorities for reducing carbon pollution from transportation. Minnesota receives \$20.5 M annually from the Carbon Reduction Program and makes funds available to MPO's for use in projects that achieve the goals of the program.

A tool kit has been developed by the State to aid MPO's in assessing and scoring project applications to best select projects for this funding. The tool kit helps to assess the estimated cost effectiveness of the carbon emissions reduction of a project. Specific criteria are also included to select projects that aid in advancing equity, safety, access, and health. Templates are included for each MPO to facilitate an application process from jurisdictions, along with a scoring rubric.

The State is looking for feedback on the draft toolkit and the final draft is scheduled to be completed by early February.

Q: What is the allocation of funds to the MIC?

A: \$370,000 for 2025 and 2026. \$225,000 for 2027 and 2028.

Q: Does the MIC have a solicitation schedule?

A: We're looking for applications in Feb/Mar of 2024 for funding years 2025 and 2026. Applications for funding years 2027 and 2028 will be collected by November 2024.

Cindy Voigt suggested that the formal application process be waived for FY2025, due to a deadline by the State engineer occurring in September of 2024. This does not allow enough time to put together a new project, but if a project that was already in place for 2025 could be agreed upon, this would be a more realistic timeline for such a task. Prescott Morrill commented that this was done similarly in 2024 with the CRP funds being applied to the Rice Lake Road project. Siri commented that the State is strongly recommending that a solicitation and the toolkit be used, but it is understood that this is a quick turnaround. At a minimum, MPO's should document how project selection was made and the toolkit could help with that.

Q: Does Wisconsin have a similar program?

A: Yes, but their funding is significantly less. Our MPO area received around \$70k in 2024 for the Wisconsin side, which was used for a LED lighting project in the Superior area.

4. 6TH AVENUE EAST RESTRIPIING PROJECT

As a segway into the presentation, the MIC showed a three-minute video created by Zeitgeist that draws attention to the needs of the 6th Avenue East Corridor, from a community perspective.

Alex Pop from the City of Duluth Office of Planning & Economic Development, presented on the 6th Ave. E. Restriping Project. This project is for an overlay from E 2nd Street to Mesabe Avenue. It includes 80 improvements, including ADA improvements, modification of intersections and the making of a 4-way to a 3-way roadway.

Historically, 20% of deaths due to car accidents in Duluth occurred on 6th Avenue East. This project will include many safety benefits, including the calming of traffic, reduced weaving, a reduction of left-hand turn conflicts, and a reduction in crashes, estimated by 19 to 47% less. In reviewing the crash history along this corridor, 20% would likely have been prevented had the improvements been in place. This project is slated for summer 2024.



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

For questions relating to the 6th Avenue East Restriping Project, please contact James Gittemeier:
jgittemeier@duluthmn.gov

5. 2024-2027 SUPERIOR AREA TIP AMENDMENTS #1-8*

Sheldon presented the following amendments to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP:

TIP AMENDMENT #1

This project enables IndiGO (North Country Independent Living Center) the ability to continue their transportation voucher and volunteer driver program to eligible clients throughout (eight county area including; Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer, and Washburn) northern Wisconsin. The project provides individuals with disabilities and residents aged 55 and over who are experiencing a transportation barrier a means of traveling to work, school, shopping, and other events. The vouchers are used to reimburse friends, neighbors and other volunteers who use their own vehicle for transporting disabled individuals. Federal funds for this project are made available through the Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Program administered by WisDOT. The project will span January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024.

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Section 5310)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
IndiGO - North Country Independent Living Center 113-24-012 Amended to TIP in January 2024	Funding of a Voucher Program for individuals with disabilities and others experiencing transportation barriers in 8 NW Counties.	Voucher Program	130,815		130,815	261,630
		TOTAL	130,815		130,815	261,630

TIP AMENDMENT #2

This project enables IndiGO (North Country Independent Living Center) the ability to operate a mobility management program funding staff members who coordinate rides for the region's population seniors and individuals with disabilities, and also work to expand their service, provide outreach and information of transportation options to residents, and work to coordinate rides with other providers. Federal funds for this project are made available through the Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Program administered by WisDOT. The project will span January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024.



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Meeting Summary

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Section 5310)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
IndiGO - North Country Independent Living Center 113-24-013 Amended to TIP in January 2024	Funding a mobility manager within NCIL	Mobility Manager	22,725		5,681	28,406
		TOTAL	22,725		5,681	28,406

TIP AMENDMENT #3

This project enables the Center for Independent Living to provide a transportation voucher and volunteer driver program to eligible clients throughout a 42-county area (including Douglas County). The project provides individuals with disabilities and residents aged 55 and over who are experiencing a transportation barrier a means of traveling to work, school, shopping, and other events. The vouchers are used to reimburse friends, neighbors and other volunteers who use their own vehicle for transporting disabled individuals. Federal funds for this project are made available through the Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Program administered by WisDOT. The project will span January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Section 5310)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
Center for Independent Living 113-24-014 Amended to TIP in January 2024	Funding of a Voucher Program for individuals with disabilities and others experiencing transportation barriers in 42 Central and NW Wisconsin Counties.	Voucher Program	410,280		410,280	820,560
		TOTAL	410,280		410,280	820,560

TIP AMENDMENT #4

This project enables the Center for Independent Living to operate a mobility management program funding staff members who coordinate rides for a 42-county area (including Douglas County) for a population of seniors and individuals with disabilities, and also work to expand their service, provide outreach and information of transportation options to residents, and work to coordinate rides with other providers. Federal funds for this project are made available



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Meeting Summary

through the Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Program administered by WisDOT. The project will span January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024.

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Section 5310)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
Center for Independent Living 113-24-015 Amended to TIP in January 2024	Funding a mobility manager within the Center for Independent Living	Mobility Manager	126,658		31,665	158,323
		TOTAL	126,658		31,665	158,323

TIP AMENDMENT #5

This project enables Senior Connections to replace a current vehicle with a new Minivan, Side-Entry equipped. Federal funds for this project are made available through the Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Program administered by WisDOT.

2022 Transportation Improvements Projects (Section 5310)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
Senior Connections, Inc. 113-24-016 Amended to TIP in January 2024	1 - Minivan Replacement Vehicle Purchase Side-Entry Equipped	Vehicle Purchase	55,271		23,688	78,959
		TOTAL	55,271		23,688	78,959

TIP AMENDMENT #6

A TIP amendment has been requested for preliminary engineering for work associated with painting the Bong Bridge (B161-0038-0001 to 0013) in partnership with MnDOT. Preliminary engineering work is scheduled for 2024.



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Meeting Summary

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT 113-24-017	USH 2 - Bong Bridge Prelim Engineering - Zone Painting B16-0038-0001 to 0013 0.0 miles	PE ROW CONST		85	85	170
Amended to TIP in January 2024	\$85,000 WisDOT and \$85,000 MnDOT 8680-00-04	TOTAL		85	85	170

TIP AMENDMENT #7

A TIP amendment has been requested for preliminary engineering for an MMA (methyl methacrylate) overlay of the Susquehanna Bridge along USH 2 in the City of Superior. Preliminary engineering work is scheduled for 2024.

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT 113-24-018	USH 2 Susquehanna Ave Bridge B16-0049 Preliminary Eng 0.00 miles NHPP	PE ROW CONST	1.920	.600		2.400
Amended to TIP in January 2024	1570-00-12	TOTAL	1.920	.600		2.400

TIP AMENDMENT #8

A TIP amendment has been requested for preliminary engineering for a thin polymer overlay of the Pokegama River Bridge (B-16-0143) along STH 105. Preliminary engineering work is scheduled for 2024.



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Meeting Summary

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT	STH 105	PE	5.624	1.406		7.030
113-24-019	Pokegama River Bridge B-16-0143	ROW				
	Thin Overlay	CONST				
Amended to TIP in January 2024	Preliminary Eng					
	0.0 miles NHPP	TOTAL	5.624	1.406		7.030
	8510-00-07					

Questions regarding this project should be directed to Sheldon Johnson at 715-635-2197 or by email at sjohnson@nwrpc.com.

There were no Public Comments.

Motion Discussion and Vote	Skip Willimas/Chris Belden moved to recommend the 2024-2027 Superior Area Tip Amendments #1-8 to the Policy Board for approval. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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6. 2024-2027 DULUTH AREA TIP AMENDMENT #4-5*

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

Amendment #4 – MnDOT is requesting the addition of a new project on MN 23 from W 5th St to 121st Ave W using STBGP funds (TIP Project ID # 6910-116). This project includes the removal and replacement of bituminous pavement.

- Total project cost = \$2,000,000
 - Federal funding = \$1,628,400
 - State funding = \$371,600

Amendment #5 – MnDOT is requesting the addition of a new project related to the Blatnik Bridge in 2024, using Bridge Formula Funding (TIP Project ID # 6981-26PLT). This project is for engineering consultation; bridge pile load testing and bridge footing location investigation.

- Total project cost = \$10,000,000
 - Federal Funding = \$4,500,000
 - State Funding = \$500,00
 - “Other” Funding (WisDOT) = \$5,000,000

There were no Public Comments.



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council Meeting Summary

Motion Discussion and Vote	Cindy Voigt/Skip Williams moved to recommend the 2024-2027 Duluth Area Tip Amendments #4-5 to the Policy Board for approval. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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7. 2024 UPWP AMENDMENT #1*

Ron Chicka presented on the following amendment to the 2024 UPWP Amendment #1

With year-end info coming in, we have roughly \$100k left over funds from 2023, due to a shortage in staffing. The amendment would carryover these funds, (roughly \$80,000 in Federal funds and \$20,000 in local ARDC match) to the MIC 2024 budget. These funds would be used to carryout the Safety Plan, using \$75,000 of the carryover and \$25,000 would be applied towards the Long Range Plan (LRP) in consultant work.

Q: A question was asked by James Gittemier if the Safe Streets For All Grant was going to be received and used in this fiscal year?

A: Ron replied that those funds were not expected until 2025 at the earliest. The work that those funds would be used for is still being determined, based upon the terms of the grant and the needs of the MIC planning area. This could incorporate the resulting data from the multi-modal crash analysis being performed in 2024.

There were no other Public Comments.

Motion Discussion and Vote	Chris Belden/James Gittemier moved to recommend the 2024 UPWP Amendment #1 to the Policy Board for approval. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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8. MTP LONG RANGE PLAN 2050 – MIDWAY STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

Rondi Watson reported on the midway point of our Stakeholder Involvement Process.

December was eventful with stakeholder involvement events taking place with specific focus groups. Three common themes arose from these meetings: pedestrian issues and needs, sustainability, and equity (underserved people and neighborhoods).

Some perceptions of our current transportation system include light to moderate traffic congestion, average transit service, although few survey respondents were bus riders, pedestrian facilities are considered poor to average, and bicycle infrastructure is considered unsafe or not convenient. Some transportation issues and opportunities recorded were snow clearance and its effects on walking, spot traffic congestion, excess road capacity, limited funding, a need to accommodate oversized trucks as port activities grow, (including a truck bypass), a reliable base system for walking, and the need for a continuous and safe east-west greenway or bike lane.

Overall, the most critical issues that need to be addressed are maintaining our infrastructure, improving the conditions for walking, biking and transit and transportation safety.

Rondi noted that input is still sought by certain individuals and organizations that support the following groups: aging population, disabled people, low-income people, minority or historically disadvantaged people, people who take the bus, businesses and the City of Superior. Next steps are to finalize the stakeholder contact information and reach out to the remaining groups as listed for their input.



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
Meeting Summary

9. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

- Skip Williams commented on the importance of reaching out to the DTA and school districts, aiming to get feedback and to show that we are making a commitment to safety. Skip also commended the MIC on the I-35 Corridor Study final report completed by Bolten and Menk, citing the importance of the study.
- James Gittemeier reported that the City of Duluth Commission on Disabilities Sidewalk Taskforce had published its campaign literature to raise community awareness on the importance of clearing public sidewalks. It can be found in area retail shops, among other locations.

10. PROJECT UPDATES

- **Administrative Modification #3 to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP**

This modification, approved by MIC staff, is a group of edits to the current TIP document (Duluth Area 2024-2027 TIP) to include updated safety performance measures to include the most recent data from MnDOT.

- **Administrative Modification #4 to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP**

This modification, approved by MIC staff, is related to an existing MnDOT project in the current 2024-2027 TIP to secure Early Procurement (EP) in 2024 of lighting equipment for the planned improvements along Hwy 61 (Project ID # 6926-57). EP will use \$50,000 of the project's existing budget and remain fiscally constrained.

- **Administrative Modification #5 to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP**

This modification, approved by MIC staff, is related to an existing MnDOT project in the current '24-'27 TIP to secure Early Procurement (EP) in 2024 of expansion joints for planned bridge improvements along the I-35 corridor from Lake Ave to 21st Ave E. EP will use \$90,000 of the project's existing budget and remain fiscally constrained.

- **Long Range MTP 2050 – Jurisdictional Meetings Update**

Jurisdictional consultations are an important part of the development of a long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), such as the MIC's *Sustainable Choices 2050*. MIC staff recently facilitated two jurisdictional consultations, one in Minnesota and one in Wisconsin. Thirteen people participated in the Minnesota consultation representing MnDOT, St. Louis County, the City of Duluth, the City of Proctor, DTA, Duluth Airport Authority, St. Louis County Emergency Management, Duluth Seaway Port Authority, and the MIC. Seven people participated in the Wisconsin consultation representing WisDOT, the City of Superior, and the MIC. In a departure from past MTP development efforts these jurisdictional consultations were held as group meetings for the purpose of encouraging cooperative interactions to better understand and discuss the MIC area's multimodal transportation network. This purpose was achieved during both consultations.



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council Meeting Summary

Following introductions and a brief high-level overview presentation to provide context for the consultation the agenda items were for each jurisdiction to estimate the current condition and performance of its multimodal transportation network, identify projects within the past 5 years that highlight improvements in condition and performance, identify the most pressing needs to improve condition and performance, identify proposed federally-funded and/or regionally significant projects to be included in the MTP, and an estimate of costs versus expected revenue for their proposed list of projects. Jurisdictions were able to ask questions of each other or share information that was helpful for others and/or the entire MIC area multimodal transportation network.

- **Letters of Support for the Rice Lake Road Corridor Improvement Project**

We prepared a letter of support on behalf of the MIC for St. Louis County's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant for the Rice Lake Road Corridor Project. The program supports state and local jurisdictions to complete critical freight and passenger transportation infrastructure projects. Vic Lund presented information about the project at the December TAC and MIC meetings; you can read more about the project at <https://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/rice-lake-rd-corridor>.

11. ADJOURN: With no further agenda items, discussions or announcements, Director Ron Chicka adjourned the meeting at 3:18 pm.