



TAC Agenda Topics and Project Updates

May 14, 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 Belden	Duluth Transit Authority
	David Bolf	City of Hermantown
	Chris Carlson	City of Superior – Public Works
	Kate Ferguson	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
	Derek Fredrickson	MnDOT District 1
	Jim Foldesi	St Louis County
	James Gittemeier	City of Duluth
	Jason Jackman	Douglas County
	Todd Janigo	City of Superior – Public Works
	Jess Rich	City of Proctor
	Karl Schuettler	Northspan Group
	Maren Webb	MnDOT Dist 1
	Skip Williams	Active Transportation
Members Absent		* Excused Absence
	Chris Lee	City of Duluth
	Cari Pedersen	City of Duluth
	Dena Ryan*	WisDOT
	Cindy Voigt*	City of Duluth Engineering
	Tom Werner*	Duluth Airport Authority
	Vacant	Mobility Challenged Community
Others Present		
	Ron Chicka	MIC Director
	Trish Crego	City of Hermantown
	Miles Hanson	City of Duluth, Americorps
	Duane Hill	MnDOT District One
	Sheldon Johnson	NWRPC –MIC Deputy Director
	Prescott Morrill	MIC Transportation Planner
	Josh Pearson	FHWA-MN
	Richard Sarran	MIC Senior GIS Specialist
	Erika Shepard	MnDOT Central Office
	Kacie Stanek	MnDOT Grants and Contracts Coordinator Office of Sustainability and Public Health
	Rondi Watson	MIC Senior Planner/Communications Specialist
	Mike Wenzholz	MIC Principal Planner



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1. Introductions / Agenda Review

Ron Chicka, MIC Director, called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm. A "roll call" attendance was taken. When completed, Ron asked if there were any questions or other changes to the agenda. There were none.

2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- Meeting Summaries of 4.16.24*

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

Table with 2 columns: Motion Discussion and Vote, and description of the motion to approve the 4.16.24 meeting summary.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

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

I-35 and Federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant - The first (of likely many) was held last month between the City of Duluth, the County, the DOT and the MIC as planning efforts initiate/blend looking at the future for I-35 between West Duluth and the downtown. In the near term (next 2 to 3 years) it will concern the parameters studied in the City's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods federal award and what could be accomplished along the 5th AW overpass of I-35 since the roadway needs to be addressed in the next 5 to 10 years by the DOT. This locale is also important to the County in its improvements to the Depot and how the Northern Lights Express will be properly accommodated at this site. A robust community engagement effort will be a key aspect of the City's efforts and much of the foundation for possible outcomes as identified in the recent I-35 Plan completed for the MIC and the DOT.

This area of 5th AW by the Depot calls for a much-improved multimodal amenity that connects the Bayfront area (still to be further built) with the Depot and other nearby sites on this particular end of the downtown. Staff from the City anticipates the effort to kick-off in the first or second quarter of 2025. Furthermore, though much of the discussion for now focused on the 5th AW area, the City's award is also to be focused on improved (future) multimodal connections in the Spirit Valley area of the Interstate.

Twin Ports Interchange (TPI) Update - We recently sent out an updated timeline for all MIC committees as detailed by the DOT. By the end of this season, there is commitment to complete Hwy 53 down to 21st AW exit; with the remainder of the work (bridges/ramps) connecting to I-35 and I-535 by the end of next season. For I-535 at the foot of the Blatnik, the goal is to open it to four lanes (TPI to foot of bridge) with ramps to/from southbound Garfield opening this Fall; northbound ramps at Garfield next Fall.



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2024 Update of the MIC's Title VI & Language Access Plans - In accordance with federal Title VI requirements and guidance from MnDOT's Office of Civil Rights, the MIC prepares a Title VI Plan to document how we ensure that no person or group of persons shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in the MIC's planning activities. The Language Access Plan documents how the MIC will provide meaningful access t for persons with limited English proficiency. It's required that these plans be updated every three years and approved by the governing entity responsible for policy decisions.

As part of this update, we need to document the related demographic composition of our Board and Committee members. **Tari will be sending out a brief survey to you later this week, and we request that you complete it so we can complete the assessment as required.**

Changes from the 2021 to the 2024 version are expected to be minimal and will be presented for Board approval in June.

Letter(s) of Support

- a) City of Duluth – In support of Duluth's own City-wide traffic safety measures, a Safe Road Zones grant application is being solicited. This will aid traffic enforcement efforts and signage in problem zones; specifically the Twin Ponds area of Skyline and corridors to the west of here towards Haines. Long term safety improvements will be studied as well.
- b) Duluth Seaway Port Authority – Federal Maritime Port Infrastructure Development Grant – In support of the Port's \$33.8M request (state match of \$8.45M) toward continued rehabilitation efforts for several sites near/along the Rice's Point area and Clure Public Marine Terminal.
- c) City of Superior – Federal Maritime Port Development Planning Grant – In support of the City's application for a grant to improve multimodal marine, rail and truck transportation and logistics at the Elkhorn Marine Terminal (53-acre site near Jeff Foster Trucking).

3. NATIONAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE (NEVI) PROGRAM

Kaci Stanek of MnDOT, presented on the federal NEVI program funds received by MnDOT, in the amount of \$68M, to build electric vehicle fast charging stations along Alternative Fuel Corridors I-94 and I-35. The funding has been broken out into 18 projects, one of which is inside the MIC planning area.

Part of the requirement of the NEVI charging stations is that a third party will own, operate and maintain the stations for at least five years. MnDOT has accepted applications from third parties who are interested in owning and operating these stations. It is expected that by the end May 2024, grants will be awarded. Applicants will be reimbursed up to 90% of costs to construct the charging stations.

The remaining timeline includes TIP and STIP amendments, and FHWA authorization between June and September 2024, Preliminary Engineering from September to November 2024 and MnDOT approval of Preliminary Engineering to occur between November and December 2024.

For more information on the NEVI program, please go to: <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/nevi/>



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4. 2024-2027 DULUTH AREA TIP AMENDMENTS #6-7*

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

TIP AMENDMENT #6

MnDOT is requesting the addition of a new project along the I-35 corridor as part of their efforts to expand access to electric vehicle charging stations (TIP Project ID# 8821-385). This project is intended to fund the installation of charging stations at I-35 exits 256B, 255A, 253B, 252, and 249.

- Total project cost = \$843,000
o Federal funding = \$590,100
o State funding = \$168,600
o Other local funding = \$84,300

TIP AMENDMENT #7

The Duluth Transit Authority is requesting an administrative change to their accounting of mobility management funds to include expenditures for grant applications to be bundled into two-year line items. As such, the line-item total project cost for TIP Project ID #TRF-9069-25 is increasing per the amounts listed below.

- Total project cost in year 2024 = \$152,582 (up from \$92,958 in FY2024)
o Federal Funding in year 2024 = \$122,066 (up from \$77,465 in FY2024)
o Other/local funding in year 2024 = \$30,516 (up from \$15,493 in FY2024)

Questions regarding these projects should be directed to Prescott Morrill at 218-529-7556 or by email at pmorrill@ardc.org.

Table with 2 columns: Motion Discussion and Vote, and content: Skip Williams / Jim Foldessi moved to recommend the 2024-2027 Duluthr Area Tip Amendments #6 and #7 to the Policy Board for approval. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.

5. 2024-2027 SUPERIOR AREA TIP AMENDMENTS #11-15*

Sheldon presented the following amendment to the 2024-2027 Superior Area TIP:

TIP AMENDMENT #11

A TIP amendment has been requested by WisDOT for preliminary engineering/reimbursement to Minnesota towards the IH 535 Blatnik Bridge replacement project (St. Louis River BR B16-0005-0001 to 0005). WisDOT funds transfer to MnDOT scheduled for 2024.



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2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT 113-24-022 Amended to TIP in May 2024	IH 535 - Blatnik Bridge Replacement Preliminary Engineering/reimbursement to MnDOT B16-0005-0001 to 0005 0.0 miles 100% WisDOT State Funding 1199-00-10	PE ROW CONST		5,680.92 0		5,680.920
		TOTAL		5,680.92 0		5,680.920

TIP AMENDMENT #12

A TIP amendment has been requested by WisDOT for preliminary engineering/reimbursement to Minnesota towards the IH 535 Blatnik Bridge replacement project (St. Louis River BR B16-0005-0001 to 0005). WisDOT funds transfer to MnDOT scheduled for 2024.

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT 113-24-023 Amended to TIP in May 2024	IH 535 - Blatnik Bridge Replacement Preliminary Engineering/reimbursement to MnDOT B16-0005-0001 to 0005 0.0 miles 10% WisDOT State and 90% Federal (Earmark) 1199-00-11	PE ROW CONST	7,500	833.4		8,333.4
		TOTAL	7,500	833.4		8,333.4



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TIP AMENDMENT #13

A TIP amendment has been requested by WisDOT for preliminary engineering towards the IH 535 Blatnik Bridge replacement project (St. Louis River BR B16-0005-0001 to 0005). Work scheduled for 2026.

2026 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT 113-24-024	IH 535 - Blatnik Bridge Replacement Preliminary Engineering	PE ROW CONST		2,491	2,209	4,700
Amended to TIP in May 2024	B16-0005-0001 to 0005 0.0 miles 53% WisDOT Bond and 47% MnDOT 1199-00-12	TOTAL		2,491	2,209	4,700

TIP AMENDMENT #14

A TIP amendment has been requested for preliminary engineering for a future reconstruction of CTH C scheduled for 2024.

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources			
			Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT 113-24-025	CTH C MN State Line – STH 35 S Barnes Road to Irondale Road	PE ROW CONST			15	15
Amended to TIP in May 2024	0.0 miles County Funding 8758-00-05	TOTAL			15	15



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TIP AMENDMENT #15

A TIP amendment has been requested for preliminary engineering for a future reconstruction of CTH C scheduled for 2024.

2024 Transportation Improvements Projects (Roadway)

Jurisdiction and Project Number	Project Description		Estimated Costs & Funding Sources Thousands			
			Federal	State	Local	Total
WisDOT	CTH C	PE			15	15
113-24-026	MN State Line – STH 35	ROW CONST				
Amended to TIP in May 2024	Irondale Rd to STH 35 0.0 miles County Funding 8758-00-06	TOTAL			15	15

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

Motion Discussion and Vote	Jason Jackman / Todd Janigo moved to recommend the 2024-2027 Superior Area Tip Amendments #11-15 to the Policy Board for approval. There was no further discussion; the motion was approved unanimously.
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6. LONG RANGE MTP 2050 UPDATE

Mike Wenholz reviewed draft chapters of the Long Range MTP 2050 and asked for input from the TAC. The chapters reviewed were Vision, Goals, Objectives Strategies (Draft Chapter 2), Progress Since Sustainable Choices 2045 (Draft Chapter XX), and the 2050 Demographic Trends & Regional Travel Analysis Report (Summary of Findings from AECOM). Positive feedback was received; these chapters will move along to the final document.

The Priority Project List was also presented and discussed. One question was raised regarding whether projects should be lumped together that are tied together and will be “let” as one project, or if they should remain individually listed. It was determined that the preference was to not tie the projects together in the priority list.

7. ROUND TABLE

- Chris Beldon asked why Wisconsin has timber signposts versus Minnesota having metal posts. Discussion determined that Minnesota Iron Ore likely plays a role, and the cost of materials are likely not much different.
- Mike Wenholz brought up the difficulty he has experienced in using the skywalk system in the downtown Duluth area, in finding doorways locked along the corridor, prior to the scheduled closing time of 7:00 pm. He is hoping to find a resolution to this issue and will report back.



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8. PROJECT UPDATES

- **Administrative Modification #9-10 to the 2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP**

 - **2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP- Administrative Modification #9**

 - **Additional Federal Scenic Byway Funds Applied to Project 118-060-013**

 - The City of Duluth requested a cost increase for an existing 2024 Project (TIP Project ID #118-060-013) to add interpretive signage on Skyline Parkway at Bardon Peak Outlook with the use of \$757,000 in additional federal Scenic Byway funds. The total project cost increase is less than 50% of the original project cost. Based on the criteria adopted in the 2021 MIC Public Involvement Plan, this change does not require a formal TIP Amendment and has been made by MIC staff as an Administrative Modification.

 - **2024-2027 Duluth Area TIP – Administrative Modification #10**

 - **Project Description Change to Project 118-080-065**

 - The City of Duluth requested a change to the project description for an existing 2025 project on Garfield Ave/Port Terminal Road (TIP Project ID 118-080-065), in response to the National Highway Administration's request to change the language to include "concrete pavement repairs." The project year, scope and cost are not affected. Based on the criteria adopted in the 2021 MIC Public Involvement Plan, this project change does not require a formal TIP Amendment and has been made by MIC staff as an Administrative Modification.

- **2024 Duluth Area Bikeway Plan Update**

 - The Bike Subcommittee has reviewed the first round of content updates to the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Bikeways Plan, last published in 2019. Work is ongoing to update the current plan, and the next round of draft updates are to be discussed and considered at the May BPAC meeting (5/2/2024).

- **2024 MIC Area Safety Action Plan**

 - MIC staff is continuing to work with AECOM to draft the MIC Safety Action Plan. At present, the project team is reviewing Safety Emphasis Areas that pertain to various streetscape contexts, and what types of implements may be used in the future to mitigate safety risks. Additionally, MIC staff, with the assistance of our AECOM consultants, are working towards an inventory of all applicable road sections and intersections where these safety measures may be implemented.

9. ADJOURN: With no further agenda items, discussions or announcements, Director Ron Chicka adjourned the meeting at 2:57 pm.