



Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership Meeting

February 12, 2020 @ 10:00 am
Proctor St. Luke's Sports & Event Center
704 Kirkus St, Proctor, MN 55810

Meeting Summary

1. Meeting called to order at 10:02am by Chair Holliday, who requested that attendees introduce themselves.

Members in Attendance: Bryan Anderson, Ken Anderson, Chris Belden, Brian Bluhm, Wayne Boucher, Robert Deschampe, Beth Drost, Jim Foldesi, Krysten Foster, Karin Grandia, Duane Hill, Jason Holliday, Andy Huble, Gary Johnson, Holly Kostrzewski, Jack Larson, Mark LeBrun, Bob Manzoline, John McDonald, JinYeene Neumann, Gary Peterson, Bill Pratt, Dave Reimer, Jeff Rypka, Tony Swader, Cindy Voigt, Matt Wegwerth, John Welle
Guests in Attendance: David Bolf, Dom DeGuiseppe, Robert Ege, Russell Habermann, Scott Johnson, Michael Kalnbach, Jeff Madill, John Minor, Tina Neary, Michelle Pierson, Voni Vegar, Maren Webb, Mike Wenzholz

2. Approval of Meeting Summary - October 9, 2019

A motion to approve the October 9, 2019 ATP meeting summary was made by Robert Deschampe/Bill Pratt. Carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Karin Grandia/Jack Larson. Carried unanimously.

4. Comments from Citizens Present - None

5. Washington Avenue Project - JinYeene Neumann, Carlton County

JinYeene Neumann, Carlton County, presented on a recent project along Washington Avenue in Cloquet and Scanlon. She covered the history of the roadway and the process to evaluate needs for this road in the area of the newly constructed middle school in Cloquet. The project cost \$3.2 M, and Northland was the contractor. The project length was 1.5 miles and involved a road diet and a radar-controlled speed limit sign, improvements to a crosswalk near the school, installation of a 10-ft. wide concrete multi-use path. Presentation included a video with drone

footage of the project corridor. Neumann shared impact of the project on snow removal practices in November and December 2019.

6. Transportation Alternatives (TA) Task Force FY 2024 Project Recommendations (Attachment #1)

Russell Habermann presented about the FY 2024 Transportation Alternatives applications and Task Force process. He noted that after discussion of nine projects, with a total request of nearly \$4.5 million, with \$900,000 to distribute, the TA Task Force recommended awarding \$300,000 to each of the top three scoring projects. Each of these three projects had requested the maximum of \$600,000. The three projects include:

- Carlton County - CSAH 55 (22nd Street) Multi-Use Path (\$300,000)
- Minnesota DNR - Gitchi-Gami State Trail - Two Harbors to Flood Bay Wayside (\$300,000)
- Pine County - James L. Oberstar Trail Segment (\$300,000)

Deliverability potential and timelines were discussed. John McDonald said he could not think of other recent projects that were not able to proceed due to lack of acquiring additional funding. Bob Manzoline noted that there has been a precedent for a three-way split of the \$900,000. Discussion also included potential review of floor/ceiling application levels for future solicitations. Next steps may involve communication with the Task Force to consider revisions to the application floor/ceiling prior to the FY25 solicitation.

A motion to approve awarding \$300,000 to each of the high scoring projects listed above was made by Bob Manzoline/Duane Hill. Motion carried unanimously.

7. MnDOT Program Updates

Bryan Anderson presented the FY 2024 Local Funding Targets, which is a \$10M split between the TA Program (\$900,000), HSIP (\$1,700,000), MPO (\$2,960,000), and Cities/Counties (\$4,440,000).

Anderson went over the 2024 Federal Aid Candidate projects, which include a project in Carlton County on CSAH 55, a project in Cook County on CSAH 12, and a project on St. Louis County CSAH 115. Two additional projects in the MPO include a project in Hermantown for MSAS 101 and 104 and a Duluth project on MSAS 147. Anderson asked a representative for each candidate project to provide a brief outline of what their project would entail. Anderson also noted a needed correction on the agenda for the St. Louis County project on CSAH 115 - the request amount is \$1,480,000 (~~\$1,340,000~~).

Noting the corrected dollar amount for the St. Louis County project, a motion to add these projects (Carlton County - CSAH 55 Project [\$1,480,000]; Cook County - CSAH 12 Project [\$1,480,000]; St. Louis County - CSAH 115 Project [~~\$1,340,000~~] [\$1,480,000]; City of Duluth - MSAS 147 Project [\$1,480,000]; City of Hermantown - MSAS 101 & 104 Project [\$1,480,000]) to the draft ATIP was made by Duane Hill/John McDonald. Motion carried unanimously. The ATP will consider approval of the ATIP at its next meeting on April 8.

8. Trunk Highway 2 Corridor Project

Andy Hubley, ARDC Planning, presented the Cohasset to Grand Rapids Highway 2 Corridor Study. Hubley presented the recent history of how Highway 2 has operated in the last several years and how recent changes have been made to address safety concerns. What was once a corridor with two east bound and two west bound lanes was initially converted into two west bound lanes, one east bound lane, and a center turn lane. This reduced crashes, but complaints were still made. Next, two east bound lanes were striped with one west bound lane and a center left turn lane. This made an even greater impact on reducing crashes. This study was requested by the community, especially those with businesses along the corridor, as they were feeling that time it took to turn onto Highway 2 was too lengthy. ARDC kicked off this project last summer with outreach to businesses and residents, a survey, and several meetings. A consultant was hired to conduct a traffic study in August to evaluate turning movements, traffic counts, gap analysis, and safety review. Local stakeholders have been engaged and assisted with defining the concerns to include traffic congestion west bound, inability to safely enter traffic for significant amounts of time, concern about excessive speed, turning movement confusion, pedestrian safety concerns, and the desire for a bicycle facility between Cohasset and Grand Rapids. Initial findings suggest that the roadway is operating as is hoped, seeing wait times peak between 30-60 seconds. Next steps may be to address bicycle connectivity, pedestrian safety and some potential Highway 2 improvements.

9. Planning NEMNATP's Future

Russell Habermann led the ATP and guests through an exercise designed to collect feedback on how the ATP functions and what changes should be made in the future. Meeting attendees were invited to answer a series of questions on a handout, imagining what the ATP would be like in two years. Following a five-minute written response time, Habermann invited participants to stand up, find someone they didn't work with, and interview one another about their responses. This interaction was repeated two more times, with attendees directed to partner with new folks each time. Following this exercise, Habermann asked the group to share thoughts about the ATP's role in guiding transportation development in northeast Minnesota. Some responses included:

- hopeful for more funds to distribute
- continued effective cooperation
- diverse ATP member base (all modes, elected officials, engineers, MnDOT, public health, etc)
- continued quarterly meetings
- increased transparency for project selection
- competitive process for project selection
- working toward a goal of education/engagement to see if the MnDOT priorities are correct
- ensure the ATP participation is valuable for all members and attendees
- improved evaluation tools for projects (ie drone footage)
- discrepancies between ATP regions and MnDOT districts resolved/aligned
- MnDOT continuing to do a good job with engaging communities about upcoming project
- see more education on funding, and on best practices for projects
- presentations to include more corridor studies that might help guide design, and follow-up reports to showcase unexpected results, opportunities, issues

- increase understanding of program needs ATP wide
- inclusive of all modes

10. ATP Strategic Planning Committee (Attachment #6)

A proposal to form an ATP Strategic Planning Committee, which would be tasked with identifying the desired direction of ATP activities, has been developed with several goals including:

- Further explore the vision identified by members of the ATP
- Develop action steps to move toward implementation of this vision, and
- Provide recommendations to the ATP for future actions of the ATP

Proposed committee membership would be made up of six members to include a MnDOT D-1 Representative (Bryan Anderson), an ATP staff member Representative (ARDC Planning's Russell Habermann), an Elected Official Representative, a County Engineer Representative, an At-large Representative, and the ATP Chair (Jason Holliday). Term of committee will be effective the end of this meeting through December 31, 2020.

Habermann inquired if there were any volunteers. Gary Peterson volunteered to serve as the Elected Official Representative, Jim Foldesi volunteered to serve as the County Engineer Representative, and Jack Larson volunteered to serve as the At-large Representative.

A motion to approve the ATP Strategic Planning Committee was made by Gary Peterson/Krysten Foster. Motion carried unanimously.

11. ARDC Regional Transportation Planning Workplan FY 2021

Russell Habermann noted that ARDC and MnDOT would be meeting in the coming weeks to develop a planning workplan for ARDC in FY 2021. A final list will be prepared and presented to the ATP at the April 8, 2020 meeting for approval. Habermann noted that several people had suggested some topics that could be considered for the work plan, including pavement ratings, ATV trail/road use on a regional level, and non-traditional intersections. Habermann asked if anyone had other ideas to add to this list for consideration. Additional items presented at the meeting included a re-iteration of ATV use/trail/road systems and how they interact with MnDOT road facilities. Another mentioned electric vehicle corridors accommodating charging stations. Timber transport was brought forward. Evaluation of salt use and how it impacts road/bridge systems and water was brought forward. This item led to discussion about evaluation of best winter maintenance practices and opportunities to learn from multiple agencies. Habermann noted these items and will work to refine a proposed list for the 2021 work plan.

12. Twin Ports Interchange Project Update

Duane Hill, MnDOT D-1, presented updates on the Twin Ports Interchange Project. The project is needed to enhance safety by eliminating blind merges and left exits, replace aging infrastructure, and improve freight mobility. The estimates for this project are so high above budget that MnDOT has had to revise the scope of the project. There is a budget of \$350M, and total project costs for all work in the scope has come in between \$430M-\$500M. The project was broken into three components. MnDOT will be proceeding with Component 1 and

deferring Component 2 (Hwy 53 reconstruction, including a bridge) and Component 3 (I-535/Garfield Avenue Reconstruction) to better align with budgets. The reduced scope total project cost is now between \$340M-\$390M. Hill went over some of the pre-engineering and testing work that has been completed to date and shared how some of the testing has led to the increased cost estimates due to poor soils, pollution mitigation, water mitigation, and utilities that will need to be moved and more. The first stage of the project that will begin in summer 2020 will be the replacement of culverts on the Coffee and Miller Creek. Following this work in 2020 through Spring 2021 will see the replacement of the 27th Ave W. bridge, lowering the profile of I-35 for improved sight distance, bridge removals and construction, lower Michigan Street storm sewer relocation and bypass, West 1st Street and Piedmont Avenue, the temporary widening of Garfield Interchange off ramp, and the removal of the Garfield bridge. During a question and answer portion of Hill's presentation, Gary Johnson asked what will happen with the deferred bridges. Hill noted that should extra funding be found as late as FY2022 the two deferred components could be re-added into the project scope. If not, the projects would need to be added to the 10-year program.

13. Duluth-Superior Long Range Transportation Plan

Mike Wenholz, Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (DSMIC), presented findings from the agency's long range plan, called Sustainable Choices 2045. He provided background about the DSMIC, its geographic area, and projects it works on. He then provided background on the agency's efforts to engage the public at events, with surveys and online tools. He noted that the bottom line of the project is that there are many needs and wants but limited resources, which necessitates making wise, sustainable choices. Evaluating sustainability involved looking at financial, social, and environment sustainability. Some of the goals that will guide five-year plans will be looking to achieve integrated balance, beyond just safety and efficient movement of vehicles. There will be a greater emphasis on sustainability, with the goal of a fully sustainable transportation system.

14. Open Discussion/Member Concerns

John McDonald reminded county engineers that local project plans are due April 1, 2020. He also called attention to the spreadsheet and map document hands that were distributed highlighting District 1 Local Federal Projects.

Duane Hill informed the membership that John McDonald would be retiring on March 3, 2020. The membership extended thanks to John for his time with MnDOT D-1 and wished him well in his retirement.

15. **A motion to adjourn was made by Chris Belden/Jim Foldesi. Motion carried unanimously.**

Bold print denotes action.

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Next NEMNATP Meeting: April 8, 2020 at 10am in the
Carlton County Transportation Building (1630 County Rd 61, Carlton, MN 55718)