



Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership Meeting

April 13, 2022 @ 10:00 am – Hybrid Meeting Format:
Carlton County Transportation Building or via Zoom

SUMMARY

Members in attendance: Kevin Adee, Bryan Anderson, Chris Belden, Ron Chicka, Jason DiPiazza, Jim Foldesi, Larry Folstad, Krysten Foster, Rick Goutermont, Karin Grandia, Steve Hallan, Robert Hass, Duane Hill, Jason Holliday, Andy Hubley, Jack Larson, Mark LeBrun, Bob Manzoline, Susan Michels, Brian Napstad, Gary Nelson (For Davin Tinquist), JinYeene Neumann, Gary Peterson, David Reimer, Penny Simonsen, Jim Strezishar, Bob Svaleson, Cindy Voigt, John Welle

Guests in attendance: Brian Bluhm, Sarah Ciochetto, Alison Clarke, Sandra Davey, Jason Fisher, Russell Habermann, Dick Haney, Scott Johnson, Michael Kalnbach, Kris Liljebblad, Bill Majewski, Paige Melius, John Minor, Prescott Morrill, Tina Neary, Serge Phillips, Michelle Pierson, Nissa Tupper, Voni Vegar

1. Call to Order

Chair Karin Grandia called the meeting to order at 10:06am. Chair Grandia welcomed attendees, reiterated directions regarding voting items. Paige Melius reviewed protocols for asking questions/making motions for those joining in person and on Zoom. Attendance was taken via chat box for Zoom attendees and a clipboard was sent around the room for those attending in person. There was about a 50/50% split on Zoom/In-Person attendance.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary – February 9, 2022

A motion to approve the February 9, 2022 meeting summary was made by Jim Foldesi/John Welle. Carries.

3. Comments from Citizens Present

Dick Haney, from Duluth, MN, offered comments in support of the City of Duluth application to the Transportation Alternatives FY2026 program for its Segment 5 of the Campus Connector. Haney also noted the importance this connection will make to the Lakewalk, to the Cross-City Trail, to the Munger, eventually to the communities of Proctor and Hermantown, and to the Gitchi-Gami State Trail noting the connectivity of our system will provide health, wellness, and transportation alternatives impacts.

Alison Clarke, a member of Friends of Duluth Parks and Trails and Friends of the Lakewalk, shared comments of her support for extending the multimodal paved trail to provide connectivity across Duluth. She shared her support of the Campus Connector, and urged attention to connect the last section of the Cross City trail in western Duluth.

4. Presentation: Draft Vehicle Miles Travelled and Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan Engagement (Nissa Tupper)

Leading up to the public comment period of the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP), Nissa Tupper is joining all the ATPs to make folks aware of a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) Target in the draft, and the impacts it makes, and giving people opportunities to ask questions. Public comments will open in June.

Tupper reviewed outcomes and measurement tools for improving safety, promoting equity, supporting healthy, livable communities and increasing options and how a reduction in VMT can help accomplish these goals. Currently, a draft target and partnership item in the SMTP has been identified to reduce VMT by 20% per capita, by 2050. This goal has the benefits of helping decrease risk for vehicle crashes, increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists, reduce time spent in traffic, reduce money spent on transportation, reduce system disparities of vehicle ownership to access basic needs, and reduce long-term financial costs of the expansion of the transportation system.

Tupper reviewed what the draft VMT Target can do, and what it does not do. She shared comparative data at the local and national level and noted that close to 10% of total VMT in Minnesota is for trips under five miles, and 20% is for trips under 10 miles. Also shared was some online research about general support for this 20% VMT reduction target by 2050 showing nearly 6 in 10 people surveyed find the reduction reasonable.

Slides were also displayed showcasing MnDOT's role, some priority strategies based on VMT trends, some examples of how reductions could happen in urban, suburban and rural areas, and noted that the draft language in the SMTP is a good starting point for more engagement, partnership and planning around VMT in the future. Several questions were asked by participants including curiosity about the scalability for the metrics for small towns. Additional questions were asked regarding how the pandemic and more remote working has influenced VMT, if induced demand will be evaluated as part of future highway expansion, how MnDOT will track progress toward the targets, and a note about school siting and how this influences VMT. Tupper was unable due to time constraints to answer many of these questions, but left her email address (nissa.tupper@state.mn.us) for those seeking additional answers.

5. Transportation Alternatives FY2026 Projects and Recommendations (Andy Hubley) (Attachment #1)

Andy Hubley gave a brief overview of the Transportation Alternatives (TA) process, task force meeting, projects submitted and gave meeting attendees a bit of background regarding the two projects recommended by the Transportation Alternatives Task Force for funding for FY2026. The two projects selected were:

Campus Connector Segment 5, City of Duluth, \$384,091
Multimodal Trail Center, City of Silver Bay, \$515,909

These projects are included in the draft FY 2026 ATIP which will seek approval later on this agenda. No questions were asked by meeting participants.

6. Local Federal Aid FY2026 Recommended Projects (Bryan Anderson)

Bryan Anderson reviewed the FY 2026 Local Funding Targets with its four tenets combining to \$10M. This program contains \$900,000 in TA program funds, \$2.96M in the MPO region, \$1.7 in HSIP

projects, and \$4.44M for projects in cities and counties outside of the MPO region. He asked engineers from several upcoming projects to review their FY2026 Federal Aid Candidate Projects including:

- a project in Aitkin County on CSAH 2 which will aid in mill and overlay for 10 miles between TH65 and the Pine County line.

- two projects in St. Louis County, one on CSAH 21, a mill, full depth reclaim, and paving from TH169 to TH135, an 8.5 mile segment. The second project on the Canosia Road CSAH 98, a reclaim and overlay from the St. Louis River Road to TH 53.

- a Lake County project on CSAH 2, a 7.6 mill and overlay, stretching between the Huhta Road to Wales Road.

- City of Duluth project along London Road with intersection improvements at 26th and 40th Avenues East, and other pedestrian improvements along the London Road Corridor between 26th and 60th Avenues East.

Anderson also noted the total ATP projects outside of the MPO area are coming in at \$4.44M in Federal dollars, with a total cost of \$8.67M and projects inside the MPO area at \$2.96M in Federal dollars and a total cost of \$5.5M.

7. FY2026 MnDOT Program (Bryan Anderson)

Anderson shared slides showcasing funding targets for FY 2026 and describing that the \$59.4M is substantially lower than past years. Some 2027 projects will be advanced constructed into the FY 2026 program, while some projects will have to move out of FY2026 into FY2027. The four projects in the NEMNATP region will include a project in Duluth on 194, a project on Hwy 23 near the Hwy 210 junction to construct a ceremonial structure and gathering space for the historic Fond du Lac Cemetery, a project on Hwy 73 to replace a bridge, and a project on US Hwy 2 in Proctor.

8. Local Program Updates (Krysten Foster) (Attachment #2)

Krysten Foster directed attendees to Attachment #2, FY2022 Local Program. Foster highlighted good work around the region, calling special attention to two projects not on the spreadsheet. Koochiching County received state appropriations for a project for an overpass over rail tracks to reduce congestion in the south side of International Falls area. She also highlighted Lake County's work to find funding from the state park road funding source, to build the new road to the campground expansion. Federal program projects listed included a St. Louis Co./City of Duluth cooperative project that will have a big impact in the Duluth area with a roundabout at Glenwood and Jean Duluth Road, and some improvements to Arrowhead Road, Snively, continuing to the intersection with Woodland.

9. MnDOT Program Updates (Bryan Anderson)

Anderson shared updates about the Special Transportation Economic Development (TED) Grant Solicitation. \$2M will be available for projects in Greater MN. Solicitation will occur in May/June 2022. Program provides competitive grants for construction projects on state highways that provide measurable economic benefits.

He also notified attendees about an expected solicitation for the Corridors of Commerce program in August 2022. Projects submitted in this program must develop additional system capacity or demonstrate improvement for freight movement. The NEMANATP will score projects and recommend the top five projects to compete statewide. Anderson noted he expects that a scoring tool will be developed and presented to this group at the July meeting for feedback ahead of when projects will need to be scored.

Anderson also presented information about Non-SRS Consultant requests. These include continuing the MnDOT/ARDC partnership for ATP support; ARDC's facilitation of the Aitkin Area Transportation Plan; an intersection assessment in Hibbing at TH169 and 37th St which has high crash data; a TH73 Corridor Plan that will assist MnDOT 1 in assessing the corridor from Cromwell to 8 miles south which features some curves and assessing wider shoulder accommodations; and a TH48 Hinckley Corridor Study to evaluate signal systems at the end of their life and a corridor that has congestion issues in the summer.

10. FY 2023- 2026 Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP)
(Bryan Anderson) (Attachment #3 & Maps)

Bryan Anderson called attention to the handouts and map packets as part of Attachment #3. Hearing no questions, he asked for a motion.

A motion to approve the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) was made by JinYeene Neumann/Mark LeBrun. Motion carries.

11. FY 2023 ARDC Regional Transportation Planning Workplan
(Andy Hubley) (Attachment #4)

Andy Hubley reviewed projects that will be included in ARDC's FY2023 Regional Transportation Planning Workplan including work on Community Transportation Plans in Cloquet and Aitkin, support for regional Scenic Byway development, assistance with paved trail development, and other activities that may come up during the fiscal 2023 year.

A motion to approve the ARDC Regional Transportation Planning Workplan was made by Jim Foldesi/Jason DiPiazza. Carries.

12. Presentation: Federal Funding Opportunities and Discussion
(Sergius Phillips)

Serge Phillips, MnDOT Federal Relations Manager, presented comparisons of Fast Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIA) 5-year funding levels. He noted that this will bring \$240M/year of additional federal funds to Minnesota, at a 70% state, 30% local level. Will require 20% match and will require the state legislature to assume budget authority. Phillips shared information about various grant programs and expected timelines, and noted that Community Project Funding (formerly know as earmarks) are back at the federal level. He believes additional funding opportunities can have a positive impact around the State of MN, and that jurisdictions should work with his office or with Krysten Foster in State Aid if they have projects that may be appropriate for various aspects of the program. Serge shared this website to refer to notices of funding announcements:

<https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/upcoming-notice-funding-opportunity->

[announcements-2022](#)

Phillips added his contact information as sergius.phillips@state.mn.us or 651-775-9755, and his slides will be emailed to the NEMNATP mailing list following the meeting.

13. Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council Updates (Ron Chicka)

Ron Chicka, Director of the DSMIC, reviewed recent staff changes in the division, and introduced Prescott Morill who will be working with bicycle and pedestrian planning, and serve as the Duluth Area TIP Coordinator. He also updated the NEMNATP on 2022 MIC planning initiatives to include I-35 Corridor Planning in the Duluth area, Blatnik Bridge Reconstruction committee participation, transportation System Management Plan updating, and multimodal planning initiatives.

14. Member Concerns/Future Agenda Topics

Andy Hubley thanked participants for their patience as we navigated our first hybrid meeting of the NEMNATP, and thanked Chair Grandia, JinYeene Neumann for their support and flexibility with meeting pacing and problem solving. With 47 participants, it was a well-attended meeting.

Duane Hill reiterated that when the legislature gives spending authority, the IIJA and other programs will impact our region and may impact the Twin Ports Interchange project's package 3 and 4, and potentially the Blatnik Bridge project. He reiterated this being the season of grants, and advised stakeholders to continue to look for opportunities to fund projects in their jurisdictions.

15. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by JinYeene Neumann/John Welle at 11:55am. Carries.

The next meeting of the NEMNATP will be held on Wednesday, July 13, 2022. Format for the meeting will be decided in late June, 2022.

Bold print denotes items that required action.