



Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership Meeting

October 13, 2021 @ 10:00 am
Zoom Video/Audio Conference

SUMMARY

Members in attendance: Jamie Adams (for Jason Hollinday), Kevin Adee, Bryan Anderson, Ted Brokaw, Ben DeNucci, Jason DiPiazza, Kate Ferguson, Jim Foldesi, Krysten Foster, Rick Goutermont, Karin Grandia, Stephen Hallan, Robert Hass, Matt Hemmila (for Jim Foldesi), Duane Hill, Andy Hubley, Jack Larson, Mark LeBrun, Bob Manzoline, Susan Michels, John Mulder, Brian Napstad, JinYeene Neumann, David Reimer, Penny Simonsen, Gary Peterson, Bob Svaleson, Jim Strezishar, Cindy Voigt, Matt Wegworth, John Welle

Guests in attendance: James Gittemeier, Russell Habermann, Scott Johnson, Michael Kalnbach, Pippi Mayfield, John Minor, Gary Nelson, Alex Peritz, Michelle Pierson, Patrick Weidemann, Ashley Zidon

1. Call to Order

Chair Duane Hill called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Chair Hill welcomed attendees and noted the meeting would be recorded so that presentations could be shared with legislators and other stakeholders following the meeting.

Michelle Pierson, Planning Assistant at ARDC Planning, requested that attendees type their name and agency they represent, if any, in the chat box to serve as meeting attendance. Gary Nelson, representing Itasca County, called into the meeting via phone; the remaining attendees logged in via video conference.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary – April 14, 2021

A motion to approve the April 14, 2021, meeting summary was made by Jack Larson/Karin Grandia. No discussion was had. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Comments from Citizens Present

No comments were brought forward.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

It was noted that one action can accept all items, and members may pull any individual item out of this consent agenda to discuss/act on the item separately.

- Appointment of Transportation Alternatives Task Force Members (Tony Carter, Annie Harala, Mark Jeffers, and Mary Somnis)
- Appointment of CY 2022 Strategic Planning Committee
- Approval of CY 2022 Meeting Schedule (February 9, April 13, July 13, and October 12 – Meetings at 10 am)

A motion to accept the items in the Consent Agenda as laid out in provided attachments was made by Gary Peterson/Cindy Voigt. No discussion was had. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Corridors of Commerce Program

Patrick Weidemann, Program Director for MnDOT Capital Planning, presented about the history of the Corridors of Commerce Program. He noted the program has been popular with Minnesota legislators but that a 2015/2016 review of the program suggested that MnDOT needed to improve transparency of how projects were selected for funding. This direction led to a high number of candidate projects requiring scoping and evaluation, which caused difficulty with administering the program efficiently.

In a 2021 special session, an additional \$200M in bonds were allocated to the Corridors of Commerce Program. MnDOT was given until August 2022 to start a solicitation process for the funds, and MnDOT is now looking at strategies to address issues from the previous solicitation. In turn, MnDOT currently has three proposals:

- 1) MnDOT proposes to have each of the ATPs put forth three projects and to have the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Advisory Board put forth eight to 10 projects. This would limit the amount of candidate projects MnDOT would need to evaluate to 32. Then the \$200M would be divided into two funding zones: \$100M for the metro area, and \$100M for Greater Minnesota.
- 2) MnDOT proposes adjusting current statute to better define regional balance.
- 3) MnDOT proposes adding a "small projects" category so that smaller projects could be more competitive than in the past. The Greater Minnesota fund of \$100M would then be divided into two categories: \$75M for large projects (>\$10M), and \$25M for small projects (<\$10M).

Following his presentation, Weidemann asked for questions and concerns. Duane Hill asked for clarification about the breakdown and how likely future funding for the Corridors of Commerce Program would be; Weidemann said that was unknown at this time. Jamie Adams asked for clarification regarding the first proposal, and Weidemann said that local ATP stakeholders would be asked to come up with local processes for recommending three projects to MnDOT. John Welle, looking at the third proposal, asked for justification of the \$10M figure threshold between "small" and "large" projects; he then suggested that the \$10M threshold be raised and that more than \$25M be allocated for small projects outside both the Metro area and the inner ring of Metro suburbs. Jack Larson asked about multi-district projects; Weidemann said the ATP with the larger portion of a multi-district project would be responsible for that project. Bryan Anderson asked about timelines for this process, and Weidemann suggested that a solicitation would be open by August 2022, as noted in the legislation.

Weidemann noted meeting attendees could bring further thoughts and concerns to him by email at pat.weidemann@state.mn.us or by phone at (320) 295-9667.

6. Approval of FY 2026 Transportation Alternatives Application (Att. #4)

Russell Habermann, Senior Planner at ARDC Planning, noted that the Transportation Alternatives FY 2026 program is underway, with Letters of Intent (LOIs) for the \$900,000 in federal funds to be distributed to ATP-1 due on November 1, 2021. LOIs submitted will be reviewed for program eligibility, and eligible applicants will be invited in mid-November to submit a full application by January 14, 2022. Habermann called attention to proposed changes in the Transportation Alternatives (TA) application in a distributed attachment. Upon asking for questions, Cindy Voigt asked if the questions about Safe Routes to School activities “in the past year” should be changed to “in the past few years” to account for many schools operating remotely during the pandemic.

A motion to approve the FY 2026 Transportation Alternatives Application, with a change of language in the Safe Routes to Schools program questions from “past year” to “past few years”, was made by Bob Manzoline/Matt Wegworth. No discussion was had. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Election of CY 2022 Vice Chair

Russell Habermann reviewed the process for elections for NEMNATP roles for Chair and Vice Chair. At the end of 2021, Chair Duane Hill’s term will be complete. Current Vice Chair Karin Grandia from Itasca County will ascend to Chair. This leaves a vacancy for Vice Chair for 2022. Habermann asked if there were any volunteers or nominations. After a request to review who had served in these roles over the last ten years or so, Habermann presented this information and noted that it has worked well in the past to have a county engineer serve as Chair. Krysten Foster nominated Robert Hass from Cook County, and Hass declined. Russell Habermann asked if Jason DiPiazza would be willing to serve as Vice Chair. DiPiazza agreed.

A motion to elect Jason DiPiazza was made by Cindy Voigt/JinYeene Neumann. No discussion was had. The motion carried unanimously. Jason DiPiazza was congratulated and thanked.

8. Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan

Ashley Zidon, Statewide Multimodal Program Coordinator at MnDOT, presented updates about the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan process. Zidon noted that the SMTP is the highest-level policy plan, setting a 50-year vision and determining how to translate that vision into policy. Zidon gave updates about statewide initiatives and outreach examples, including attending two farmers market events in person with engagement activities in MnDOT D1. She gave an update about the process and noted that new to the 2022 plan is the inclusion of action steps.

Zidon then presented a series of slides of actions and asked for feedback. Feedback from attendees included a comment about equity in all modes by Bob Manzoline, a comment about the importance of regional hubs by Jack Larson, a question about what defines a destination by Duane Hill, and a comment about encouraging partnership between agencies who manage infrastructure serving the same mode by Russell Habermann.

Zidon thanked attendees for their time and responses.

9. Member Concerns/Future Agenda Topics

A reminder was noted that the Transportation Alternatives process is currently open, with Letters of Intent due November 1, 2021. The State Safe Routes to School infrastructure funding solicitation is also open, with Letters of Intent due October 29, 2021. Other Safe Routes to School grants, including Planning Assistance grants and Boost Grant opportunities, are also open, with due dates of January 10, 2022.

Brian Napstad noted that there is rapid growth of ATV use in Aitkin County and was curious about tools that communicate ATV-related laws (including speed limits) to ATV users and ways to communicate about ATV road crossings to people driving automobiles. Others added that there has been an increase in ATVs going the wrong way in the shoulders. Duane Hill noted he would check in with County Engineers and others at MnDOT to see if other areas are using signage. James Gittemeier noted the increase in use in electric mobility devices like e-bikes and motorized scooters has led to discussions about conflicts for pedestrians and traditional cyclists and was curious about system impacts as these types of devices increase on our streets, sidewalks, and trails. Russell Habermann noted that perhaps having an expert present about ATVs and other motorized vehicles could be lined up for a future meeting.

10. Meeting Adjourned

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:52 am was made by Brian Napstad/Gary Peterson. The motion carried unanimously.