



RTAC Meeting Summary

June 23, 2016

Lake County Law Enforcement Center
Two Harbors, MN

Attendees:

John McDonald	MnDOT
John Minor	District 1 State Aid
Mark LeBrun	Pine County
John Welle	Aitkin County
Brian Boder	St. Louis County
Mike Tardy	Carlton County
LaReesa Sandretsky	CCLSL & AIK Community Health Board;
Krysten Foster	Lake County
Jack Larson	Arrowhead Transit
Cari Pederson	City of Duluth
David Betts	Cook County
Ben Orne	Corps of Engineers
Bob Manzoline	St. Louis and Lake Co. Rail Authority
Rick Goutermont	Lake County
Ron Chicka	MIC
Michelle Pierson	ARDC
Russell Habermann	ARDC
Jarrett Valdez	ARDC
*Others may have been present but did not sign in	

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Meeting called to order by Krysten Foster, Chair at 10:04am
- b. Introductions

2. Committee Business

- a. Call for approval of the meeting summary from February 18, 2016. Motion to approve by Jack Larson/John Welle; passed unanimously.

3. Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) Update

- a. John McDonald led discussion.
- b. Mentioned that Nancy Sannes had accepted a position at MnDOT's central offices.
- c. Distributed two handouts, a packet of 2016 District 1 Highway Construction Program, and a MnDOT District 1 Construction Program 2016-2019 handout.



- i. Questions about these documents should be directed to Beth Petrowske at beth.petrowske@state.mn.us.
- d. John MacDonald then distributed the 2016 Local Projects and 2017 Local Project hand outs and gave a brief overview.

4. Repurposed Federal-Aid Funds Discussion

- a. John McDonald led a brief discussion about repurposed federal aid. He noted the FAST Act's goal is to earmark projects that can be repurposed within 50 miles of the original project. This pertains to projects that came in under estimates or projects that could not be delivered. This allows for federal funds to remain in the district.
- b. McDonald distributed a District/ATP 1 Data Input Worksheet handout and gave a brief summary of the seven projects listed for potential repurposed funding.
- c. Chairperson Krysten Foster called for a motion to approve the list of FAST Act repurpose projects. Motion made by Mike Tardy/Rick Goutermont; unanimously approved, carried.
- d. Brian Boder noted that some St. Louis County projects are underfunded and the county could potentially assist with future fund swaps.

5. Koochiching County Functional Classification Request

- a. As Joe Sutherland could not make the meeting, John McDonald brought forward a discussion about a proposed Koochiching County project that would provide a second access to the City of Ranier. A map was provided. Current roads are at times completely pinched off due to rail traffic. The proposed project would involve the proposed CSAH 23 that would span N/S from CSAH 20 to CSAH 23. Koochiching County requests the RTAC to make a motion to approve the proposed CSAH 23 as a minor collector. Motion moved by Mark LeBrun/Jack Larson, unanimously approved.

6. Corps Liaison – Ben Orne

- a. Ben Orne has been attending district meetings around the state and came to give background and answer questions.
- b. He works mostly with standard permits (for projects greater than 2 acres).
- c. Programmatic changes have been made to streamline timelines.
- d. The Corps has released sample exhibits and guidelines for city and county engineers.
- e. The Corps is working to get response times back to a pre-hiring freeze timelines. Reporting activities are taking about 59 days, 28 days for non-reporting which is in line with the national performance metrics.
- f. Ben works with the Northern Long-eared Bat under the 4D rule. This requires a 30 day consultation period and is often necessary for bridge work or tree removal.
- g. After a question from a county engineer, Ben noted that the protocol to send permit applications should remain as is unless project is over 2 acres and then



may be sent to him. He noted that he could help provide direction to city and county engineers if they do not know to whom they should be directing their questions, comments or applications.

- h. There was a question about the availability of wetland credits. Mr. Orne noted that there are credits available in the northern services area. With the bonding bill not looking likely, the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) may not have credits to fill gaps in the future. If you have a project, credits are receivable. (<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/>)
- i. Chairperson Foster thanked Ben for attending the District 1 RTAC meeting.

7. Transportation Enhancements (TE) Outreach

- a. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) has been renamed to Transportation Enhancements (TE) as a result of the FAST Act, though there are no significant changes from TAP.
- b. TE solicitation will be developed this fall for 2021 funding.
- c. Scenic Byways, SRTS, paved trails, streetscapes and other projects will be eligible.
- d. Funding does not cover engineering costs, still 80/20% split.
- e. Encourage applications from your agency/entity.

8. FY 2016 RTAC Planning Projects Updates

- a. Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)
 - i. Wrapping up Cromwell and Hermantown Schools.
 - ii. Continuing work on Laura MacArthur Elementary, Duluth Piedmont Elementary, and Moose Lake School.
- b. Superior National Forest Scenic Byway (SNFSB)
 - i. Implementation of logo signage project along byway.
 - ii. \$20,000 secured for part of TAP match for the Skibo Vista Overlook project.
 - 1. \$21,000 remains to be secured. Question from Bob Manzoline as to whose responsibility it is to deliver this project? USFS was applicant, with the SNFSBC pledging to find funding sources for the match. Council exploring Legacy funding through the Minnesota Historical Society funding streams.
- c. North Shore Scenic Drive (NSSD)
 - i. Completed Corridor Management Plan 2016 Update.
 - ii. Completed Wayside Rest Improvement Plan Phase II Document (<http://www.arrowheadplanning.org/nssd/2015.Update.WRIP.pdf>).
 - iii. Developed and managed social media presence for the NSSD Council.
 - iv. Assisted in TAP application to implement French River Wayside design improvements (was not selected for funding).
- d. Cook County Comprehensive Trails Plan
 - i. Comprehensive Trails Plan was completed and adopted by Cook County Board on April 12, 2016.



- ii. Plan addresses future development, connections and collaboration between all trail users and administrators.
- iii. Find a copy of the plan at www.arrowheadplanning.org/ccctp
- e. Gitchi-Gami State Trail (GGST) Technical Assistance
 - i. Completed Gitchi-Gami Scoping Project and Plan Update which can be found at <http://www.arrowheadplanning.org/nssd/2015.Update.WRIP.pdf>.
 - ii. Provided meeting facilitation and administrative support.
 - iii. The 2016 Trail Usage Study is underway.
 - iv. Promote trail usage and activities through GGTA social media presence.
- f. Healthy Northland's Active Living Component
 - i. Work continues with adding cities to the Regional Sidewalk Inventory. There are currently 28 cities represented. View interactive map here: <http://arrowhead.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=f2774f07e1d640dcb8c11e3db338338e&webmap=319b460cf21d45f99431ccf17adef318>.
 - ii. Work continues collecting the Regional Paved Trails Inventory. Currently 59 planned and existing trails are included in an online map developed by ARDC which can be found here: <http://arrowhead.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=22937c8d02f54b5cb9fb4e271a2cbc6a>
 - iii. Healthy resources map component is undergoing an update. New map designed to be simplified and more responsive.
- g. Scanlon Community Corridor
 - i. Completed the Master Plan for St. Louis River Trail Extension.
 - ii. Plans call for trail to connect Cloquet to Scanlon and points south.
 - iii. Plan has been submitted to the Cloquet Area Chamber of Commerce Trails Committee.

9. Proposed FY 2017 RTAC Planning Projects

- a. Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)
 - i. Wrap up Laura MacArthur Elementary and Piedmont Elementary plans.
 - ii. Conduct Marshall School (Duluth), Proctor Elementary and Proctor Middle School plans, updates at three schools in International Falls including Falls Elementary, Falls High School/West End Elementary, and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, and Vandyke Elementary and Greenway High Schools in Coleraine.
- b. Superior National Forest Scenic Byway (SNFSB)
 - i. Continued assistance with meetings, project facilitation and grant writing.
 - ii. Assist Council in efforts of implementing projects.
 - iii. Assist Council with obtaining a local match for the TAP awarded Skibo Vista Project.
- c. North Shore Scenic Drive(NSSD)
 - i. Provide continued assistance with meeting facilitation, documentation, and grant writing.



- ii. Continue efforts to promote active board membership throughout corridor.
- iii. Complete Hovland Dock Integrity Study and provide assistance with the Taconite Harbor View Finder project installation.
- iv. Undertake the 'North Shore Scenic Drive Interactive Map Tour project.
- v. Seek funding for design of new wayside project adjacent to Glensheen Mansion in Duluth.
- d. Gitchi-Gami State Trail (GGST) Technical Assistance
 - i. Assist with 2016 Trail User Study data analysis and report generation.
 - ii. Assist with MnDOT's US Bike Route 41 plans.
 - 1. ARDC developed a shoulder widths map along Highway 61 in the GGST corridor.
 - 2. ARDC attended USBR-41 open house events in the area.
 - iii. Update to the GGST Interactive Map Tour.
- e. Scanlon Community Corridor
 - i. ARDC will provide guidance to communities of Scanlon and Cloquet to help implement the plan.
- f. Lake Vermillion Trail Implementation
 - i. Planned 39 mile, 10 foot wide paved trail.
 - ii. Connect cities of Cook and Tower to the shores of Lake Vermillion.
 - iii. Will connect to Mesabi Trail, three local paved trails, two state parks and numerous resorts and residences.
 - iv. Will fill a gap in non-motorized transportation.
 - v. Proposed activities include providing assistance for committee meeting facilitation and documentation, assist in right-of-way or easement acquisition processes, develop a joint powers agreement/board, seek and pursue funding for acquisition/development and update trail plan.
 - vi. There was a question about obstacles to this effort. Russell Habermann noted that there is widespread support for the project from the county, cities and Bois Forte and an active steering committee, though wetlands, and landownership will offer challenges.
- g. Bicycle and Pedestrian Counting
 - i. Proposed activities include assisting with the MnDOT shared bicycle/pedestrian count program, and a 2017 trail usage assessment.
- h. MnDOT 10-Year Work Plan Engagement
 - i. Review 10 Year Work plan to examine future projects that will have the opportunity to incorporate bike/ped enhancements.
 - ii. Form a committee to address bike/ped concerns and opportunities.
 - iii. 2-3 meetings to be held.
- i. Questions?
 - i. Krysten Foster asked about an upcoming MnDOT policy for Scenic Byway Councils to contribute a match. Jarrett Valdez answered that it looks like this will be a new policy beginning in FY 2018, with details to be determined.



10. Other

- a. Area Transportation Partnership Meeting will be in November.
- b. October RTAC Meeting Location/Agenda Topics – should you have recommendations for a meeting location, please let Jarrett Valdez know.

11. Adjourn

- a. Motion to adjourn made by Rick Goutermont/Cari Pederson, carried unanimously at 11:05am.

12. Pavement Management Exploration Meeting (11:05 a.m.-12:40 p.m.)

- a. Ron Chika and Brian Boder led a discussion about the potential of implementing a system of collecting pavement data for the Arrowhead Region. Ron explained that this can be very beneficial data in regards to project selection, as a result of long-range planning that is increasingly becoming more performance-based at the federal level.
- b. Ron mentioned that different parts of the state have begun implementing data collection of pavement conditions for their roadways, such as the Metro area and some other places.
- c. So far meetings have been initially held between the MIC, St. Louis County, and MnDOT in regards to which direction to go to start the process, if feasible. Those discussions concluded by asking if there could be something done at a region-wide level with a possible opportunity for a pilot study, which would encompass a teaming effort between the counties.
- d. Brian explained that MnDOT has generally provided services in rating the pavement conditions for St. Louis County and many of the other counties. However, he expressed that it might be a better option for the counties to go out and examine their roads in case MnDOT is unable to complete the work.
- e. It was stated that collecting data for cities is a bit more challenging due to the fact that the MnDOT rating van doesn't work so well for speed limits less than 45 mph; the sensors are different; the accelerations and trigger cameras are different; more time consuming; etc. The City of Duluth is using ICON pavement management software to collect data for their roads.
- f. Brian asked the group if there is a desire amongst the counties to move forward with the opportunity. Discussion ensued with the following comments and concerns such as:
 - i. Equity of project selection at the ATP level. There may not be prioritization implications with obtaining pavement data for a particular project.
 - ii. For some of the smaller counties, a four year window for data collection is sufficient for them. Two year data is great but would be expensive for a smaller county.
 - iii. The data should be used primarily as a tool to strengthen the entirety of a project for selection purposes.



- iv. MnDOT could potentially acquire an additional van to do more roads due to demand from counties. It is much cheaper to utilize MnDOT than to hire a consultant to perform the work.
 - v. Ron stressed that the most important thing would be to have the pavement data obtainable. It is up to the governing bodies with how the data is used, such as determining policies, etc.
 - vi. How much time is MnDOT spending collecting data for the cities as opposed to the rural sections? Could there be a designated low speed van for the cities and higher speed van for beyond the cities within the region for MnDOT?
 - vii. Brian suggested that instead of the group agreeing on performing the data collection itself, that a more feasible option may be to singularly use a software package. It was expressed that ICON software is rather complex to use. It is easier to use their helpline to generate reports.
 - viii. MnDOT does a good job collecting the data, while being cost efficient. The only problem is the frequency of when the data is collected.
 - ix. Some counties have experienced that the PQI (pavement quality index) on roads with speeds of 30-35 mph have not been accurately recorded. This has led to questions about some municipal ratings. Mainly the county engineers focus on the surface ratings. A question was raised whether or not there a way for the counties to collaboratively get more accurate urban data.
 - x. Each county is different as far as capacity of being able to record, analyze and rate their roads.
- g. As discussion concluded, possible next steps towards a region-wide pavement management strategy included:
- i. Researching for a standardized software package that can be used for the entire region.
 - ii. Further discussions amongst the counties potentially at the next RTAC and ATP meetings.
 - iii. Further discussions with MnDOT Central Office and FHWA.