

**Northeast Minnesota ATP
Steering Committee Meeting
Monday, January 25, 2010 – 10:00 AM
Lake Superior Conference Room
Mn/DOT Duluth District Office**

Members Present

Wayne Olson
John Welle
Jim Foldesi
Shae Kosmalski
Paul Bergman
Cindy Voigt
David Salo
Walter Leu
Tom Pagel
Dennis Jensen
Jim Rohweder
Tom Peterson

Others Present

Bryan Anderson
Rondi Watson
John Minor
Rex Bordson
Denny Johnson
Lorraine Kramer
Alan Goodman
Earl Elde
Jeff Tillman
Bruce Martinson
Ron Johnson

Representing

Carlton County
Aitkin County
St. Louis County
Cook County
Lake County
City of Duluth
Cities > 5,000
Mn/DOT
Cities > 5,000
Transit
MIC
DNR/Environmental

Representing

ARDC
MIC
Mn/DOT
Mn/DOT
Mn/DOT
Mn/DOT
Lake County
MIC
City of Grand Rapids
Cook County
Port of Duluth

Call to Order

Chairman David Salo called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. Introductions were made.

Minutes of the October 21, 2009 Meeting

Action Item:

Motion by Shae Kosmalski, seconded by Jim Rohweder to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

2010 Program Status

Walter Leu reviewed the 2010 local program status (handout) to determine each project's current status. None of these projects are stimulus projects and many of the enhancement projects are getting bumped out of the program.

Denny Johnson reviewed the Mn/DOT 2010 program (handout), reviewing all projects. Projects highlighted in green are already let and the one project highlighted in blue is the TH 61 (Split Rock River to Chapins Curve) HPP project scheduled for a February, 2010 letting. Historically, this is the largest program we have had – \$175 million, mostly because of special funding. If we receive additional federal funding for economic stimulus projects in 2010, the total program could be over \$200 million.

As mentioned at the last meeting, Mn/DOT has applied for a federally funded TIGER Grant to fund a portion of the I-35 project in Duluth, which may effect the scheduled February 26th letting date if federal TIGER Grant decisions are not made soon. There will be major traffic delays in and adjacent to the I-35 corridor in 2010 and 2011 due to I-35 construction, traffic detours and ramp closures. Dennis Jensen and other members expressed concerns about other additional street closings and detours that occur for local construction projects and utility or road maintenance and the cumulative impact on City of Duluth traffic flow during the I-35 corridor construction. It was suggested that there is a critical need for the City of Duluth, Duluth Visitors Bureau, St. Louis County and Mn/DOT to coordinate and continually communicate any planned construction or maintenance related detours that could have an impact on City of Duluth traffic flow during the I-35 corridor construction. Cindy Voigt said that the City will need to improve communications with the DTA and freight carriers with the possibility of establishing a website. Dave Salo suggested that the MIC staff may also be of assistance with their extensive GIS mapping expertise.

The additional conflict with the staging of the construction for the Lester River Bridge project in 2010 was also mentioned as a concern due to traffic being re-routed to Superior Street. Paul Bergman asked if the project could be delayed until 2012 and Al Goodman wanted to know if any work could be done in the winter months through housing and heating to avoid the peak tourist season. The project cannot be delayed due to the poor condition of the bridge and different construction staging is not possible as the project needs to address stream issues and the work must be completed by September 15th.

Federal Economic Stimulus 2 Program/Process

Denny said that since there is still a large national focus on the high unemployment rate, there is a strong possibility of another federal stimulus program this year, very similar to last year's ARRA program. Mn/DOT has done some preliminary planning to be prepared if stimulus money becomes available. Denny reviewed a handout related to how funds may be distributed and said that 50% of the funds may need to have construction contracts awarded within 90 days of passage of a bill.

Walt reviewed a preliminary list of 10 local projects in northeast Minnesota (totaling approximately \$22 million) that are "on the shelf" and should be able to meet the 90 day award deadline should the funding become available. Because last year's ARRA program required that the money be spent in areas with 5,000 population or more, many projects were not funded. The Mn/DOT State Aid Office is not going to solicit projects. Local jurisdictions should be ready to

move fast to turn in project plans if a bill is passed. Walt reminded members that we will continue to look at an equitable distribution of all local federal funds within the NE MN ATP.

There were questions relating to the processing of TIP and STIP amendments for these projects. Denny said that we won't process TIP/STIP amendments until we have an actual bill passed by the Congress and a list of funded projects. However, we should be prepared to quickly process project amendments once a list of funded projects is determined. If necessary, the MIC TAC/MIC may need to have special meetings to amend the TIP.

Denny also distributed a handout of a preliminary list of Mn/DOT candidate trunk highway projects in northeast Minnesota. He said that many of the projects are well along in the design process and could meet the 90 day contract award deadline. However, all of these projects will not be funded if a bill is passed, as it is an over programmed list of candidate projects.

2011 – 2014 ATIP

ATIP Schedule: (handout)

Denny reviewed the handout and pointed out that the Enhancement Task Force will now meet on February 3rd and the next Work Group meeting will be on February 25th.

STIP Funding Guidance/Investment Guidelines: (handout)

Denny reviewed the handout and said that the average target for our region is \$42 million/year of federal formula funds. However, FY 2014 federal formula funds are reduced to \$35 million due to the TH 53 Trinity Road payback of \$6.5 million. This in turn reduces the cities/counties to \$6.5 million and Mn/DOT is reduced to \$20.6 million.

2011 20% Project Contingency List:

Denny said that we will need to identify a project contingency list totaling \$8.5 million for FY 2011 due to the uncertainty of federal funding. However, it is too early in the process to identify projects until we know more concerning the TIGER Grant, economic stimulus 2 projects and ATIP backfill projects. Walt pointed out that the contingency list will not include local road and bridge projects.

2014 Federal Aid Candidate Projects: (handout)

Denny reviewed the list of projects which is over programmed. The Mn/DOT's target is \$20.6 million, with approximately \$36 million of candidate projects (which includes the I-35 project that may be funded through the TIGER Grant). The local target is \$6.5 million, with \$7.7 million of candidate projects.

Paul Bergman asked if the DTA hybrid buses will save dollars in the long term. Dennis Jensen said that the capital cost for each regular bus is \$360,000 and \$560,000 for a hybrid bus. He said that in addition to fuel saving costs that the difference in capital cost should come down over time.

Jim Foldesi questioned whether some candidate rail crossing projects were missing from the list of projects. Walt said that there is only one expensive rail crossing project in Grand Rapids on the FY 2014 candidate project list.

Enhancement Process: (handout)

Bryan Anderson reviewed the eleven FY 2014 enhancement candidate projects (totaling approximately \$3.7 million of federal funds) of which most are trail projects. Approximately \$1.5 million of federal funds is available for enhancement projects in 2014. The Enhancement Task Force will meet on February 3, 2010 to prioritize the projects.

Action Item:

Motion by Paul Bergman, seconded by Shae Kosmalski to approve the FY 2014 Federal Aid Candidate Project listing. Motion passed.

County Team/County Board Meetings

Bryan Anderson advised that County Team Meeting are not necessary this year due to a limited number of projects in each county.

Bryan also advised that he will send out emails to the County Engineers to set up the individual County Board Meetings for March 2010. Paul Bergman requested that an update on the Split Rock River State Park project be given at the Lake County Board meeting.

Other Business

No other business to discuss.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the ATP Steering Committee is scheduled for March 8, 2010.

Adjourn

Chairman David Salo adjourned the meeting at 11:40 AM.