



Regional Transportation
Advisory Committee
February 27, 2014

RTAC Updates

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Solicitation: The Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (NE MN ATP) TAP Task Force serves as a committee of the ATP to make TAP project funding recommendations to the ATP. The Task Force met on February 10, 2014 to review and prioritize TAP project applications for 2017 & 2018 Federal funding. The Task Force discussed seven projects that were competing for \$1.8 million of funds, \$900,000 in 2017 and \$900,000 in 2018. The Task Force is recommending six projects for TAP funds. The recommendation is included in this meeting package. The Task Force seeks approval for this recommendation from the RTAC. Upon approval by the RTAC, the recommendation will go to the full ATP in April for final approval and will be included in the STIP.

The TAP Task Force also reviewed and developed a priority list of nine Safe Routes to School (SRTS) applications that were submitted in the ATP for a 2015 & 2016 MnDOT SRTS Infrastructure solicitation. This is a separate solicitation from the TAP and the RTAC/ATPs recommendation for priority projects will go to a statewide SRTS committee that will select projects for the approximately \$4 million available statewide. The amount of funds that will be awarded to the region will be determined by the statewide selection committee.

Current FY 2014 RTAC Planning Projects

Hat Trick Avenue Access Assessment: The intersection of Hwy 53 at Hat Trick Avenue in Eveleth is highly used and difficult to enter or exit Hwy 53 because of the higher speeds and reduced sight lines due to the elevation at that location. ARDC has gathered background information needed for this project and is prepared to move forward with the stakeholder/public input process that will be used to determine intersection improvements. This will include input from local businesses, residents, elected officials, and other stakeholders.

Safe Routes to School Planning: SRTS Planning is currently underway in the cities of Bigfork, Carlton, Cromwell, Floodwood and Wrenshall. All communities have completed the assessment phase and have identified key concerns. ARDC is working to draft strategy recommendations.

Regional Park and Ride Inventory: This project has begun and is identifying formal and informal park and ride locations throughout the region. This process is using GIS and an attribute table to describe each location. Other GIS layers, such as AADT and functional classification, are being overlaid on this shapefile to learn more about each location. The information gathered from this inventory will provide a unique look at the transportation system in the region.

Orr Downtown Improvement Design Project: The City of Orr recently completed a downtown design project to implement items from its comprehensive plan and transportation plan. ARDC assisted the city in those planning endeavors and has assisted with coordination and facilitation of public meetings that were held throughout the design process. The City is currently working to prioritize different elements



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of the design that will be sought to be implemented. RTAC Planning funds are being used to investigate and assist with grant writing to implement elements of the design project.

Regional Sidewalk Inventory Plan Scoping: This project has started to determine the cost of a systematic process to inventory sidewalks and prioritize critical connections in communities throughout the region. The City of Cloquet is being used as a pilot study and has assisted ARDC in the development of this scoping process. This process includes developing a GIS file with an attribute table for all the sidewalks in the Region. An estimate of funding needs would be determined for the critical connections. Once the project is scoped, funding will be sought to complete the inventory.

International Falls Gateway Project Implementation: The International Falls Area Gateway Corridor Task Force is a diverse group of key stakeholders that formed in 2006 to make the Highway 53/Highway 11 corridor an attractive, pedestrian friendly, and economic and community asset that provides connectivity to the areas attractions. This project will be ready to build this summer, which is when the Federal Transportation Enhancement funds become available. RTAC Planning funds have been used to assist the City of International Falls, Koochiching County, and the Task Force through the implementation steps. Koochiching County is now leading this project to construction.

North Shore Scenic Drive (NSSD) Council Planning Assistance: ARDC is assisting the NSSDC with multiple projects to implement the Byway's Corridor Management Plan. These projects include the Beaver Bay Trailhead, Wayside Rest Improvement Plan, Temperance River Wayside Design, ADA Waysides Plan, and the Caribou Falls State Wayside Design. The NSSD Council is assisting with the Minnesota State Scenic Byways Workshop, March 25-26 and will present achievements that have occurred along the Byway.

Superior National Forest Scenic Byway (SNFSB) Council Planning Assistance: ARDC has assisted the SNFSB Council with the extension of the Byway's designation to include the cities of Beaver Bay, Biwabik and Gilbert. ARDC and Council staff met with each city and determined the Byway would benefit from this expansion. The State Scenic Byway Commission approved this expansion on February 25, 2014. ARDC also assisted the Council with a TAP application for improvements to the Skibo Vista, which was recommended for 2017 TAP funds. ARDC will continue to work with the Council to determine the locations for wayfinding/gateway signs to be located at byway terminuses.

Other ARDC Planning Projects

Scenic Byway Planning: ARDC is working with MnDOT to amend the RTAC Planning grant to include scenic byway work to prepare scenic byway groups with the needed tools to compete under TAP for funds. This will include an update to existing corridor management plans (CMP) and a capital improvement plan addendum that identifies priority projects for funding. ARDC is proposing to work with five scenic byway councils in the region, including Edge of the Wilderness, Gunflint Trail, North Shore, Skyline, and the Superior National Forest.



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Helmet Hero: This bicycle helmet and safety education program is designed to relate issues of bicycle safety and helmet usage to youth in the Arrowhead region. This 30 minute program is taught during regular class time and provides helmet giveaways with special promotions and rewards for wearing a helmet. The goal of this program is to reduce the number of bicycle injuries or potential injuries by educating students and promoting safety as well as promoting bicycling as a lifelong healthy, active lifestyle choice.

Next Year's RTAC Planning Projects

Recommendations are currently being taken for 2015 RTAC Planning projects. Certain restrictions apply, including the project's relation to the State Trunk Highway system. If you would like to recommend a project, please contact ARDC to discuss details. Recommended projects will be discussed at the April ATP meeting, made available for comments/additional recommendations in May, and recommended to be included in the 2015 RTAC Work Plan at the June RTAC meeting.

For more information on these projects, contact:

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Or visit Arrowhead Regional Development Commission's Regional Planning Division website:

www.arrowheadplanning.org

Or the Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership's website:

www.nemnatp.org