



Improvin' Movin' in the Arrowhead

Summer 2011

"Working to guide transportation decisions in Northeast Minnesota"

Inside this issue:

In-Kind Grant Applications	1
Ranier Transportation System Assessment	1
Beaver Bay Trailhead Center Development	1
Lake Vermilion Trail Plan Implementation	1
Orr Transportation Plan	1
Babbitt Comprehensive Plan—Transportation	2
Hibbing Transit Plan	2
I-Falls Bike & Pedestrian Plan	2
Floodwood Depot Rest Area Impact Project	2

Next RTAC Meeting

The next RTAC meeting will be on **June 23** at the Mesabi Trail Office in Eveleth. The meeting will be at 1 PM. Afternoon refreshments will be provided.

Agenda items will include

- Review and ranking of RTAC applications for FY 2012
- Updates on FY 2011 projects
- Tour



Next MEETING DATE AND LOCATION:

1 PM at the Mesabi Trail Office, 111 Station 44 Road, Eveleth

In-Kind Grant Applications

The RTAC received four in-kind grant applications for FY 2012 consideration: Ranier Transportation System Assessment, Beaver Bay Trailhead Center Development, Lake Vermilion Trail Plan Implementation, and the Orr Transportation Plan. These project applications will be discussed and ranked at the June 23rd meeting.

Ranier Transportation System Assessment

The project will evaluate all transportation modes that exist in the City of Ranier. The primary focus will be on the local residential and collector streets gained by the City as part of the annexation and access issues along the state highway corridor. The plan will address long term maintenance and repair of residential and collector streets within the City, and look at access issues along State Highway 11. The plan will also address proper traffic signage and look at trail use and maintenance.

Beaver Bay Trailhead Center Development

Lake County is the sponsor for Enhancement funds to develop the Beaver Bay Trailhead Center. This trailhead will require multi-agency agreements and coordination with local citizens, organizations, and private property owners. This planning proposal would have ARDC advance the project from its concept to the preliminary design level (with Lake County and its consultant) and provide all necessary project agreements. Timing would allow for project completion around July 2012.

Lake Vermilion Trail Plan Implementation

In January, 2011 ARDC and the Lake Vermilion Resort Association commenced an eight-month planning process for the future development of the Lake Vermilion Trail—a trail facility connecting the lake and its residences and businesses to the communities of Cook and Tower. The completed *Lake Vermilion Trail Plan* outlines the general alignment for a proposed trail connection and describes opportunities for trailhead facilities, interpretive sites, recreational amenities as well as local and regional promotion for tourism. The plan is intended to be used as a tool for guiding the near term development of the first phases of the project and outlining a strategy for longer term phases of the project. The purpose of the Lake Vermilion Trail Plan Implementation will be for ARDC to provide a "Phase 2" level of technical assistance and planning to the local steering committee to advance priority action items of the plan for implementation (funding, trail routing study and organizing a trail management entity).

Orr Transportation Plan

The City of Orr is seeking to make several community aesthetic improvements and to enhance their role as a gateway to some of northeast Minnesota's premier public lands, including Voyageurs National Park and the Superior National Forest. The community is planning the development of a downtown focus point at its public access on Pelican Lake as well as a paved, non-motorized trail connecting key points including the existing bog walk and the City park and beach. Orr is asking ARDC to facilitate a design process for the improvements and to help them with project implementation steps.

In-Kind Project Updates

➤ Babbitt Comprehensive Plan – Transportation Component

The transportation element of the Babbitt Comprehensive Plan supports the overall vision of a modern community that retains its small town atmosphere by providing modern infrastructure and continuing with the development patterns that make Babbitt unique. The primary goal set forth in the plan is to provide an adequate and safe transportation system that equally serves automobiles, commercial traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists, and those with limited mobility; and links neighborhoods, businesses, and community destinations. Babbitt will do this by including Complete Street elements like sidewalks and trails in new residential development; locating future commercial and industrial growth along major transportation routes, separated from residential streets, working with St. Louis County to support transportation projects which improve Babbitt's regional connections; and completing and following a Capital Improvement Plan that includes maintenance and expansion of the trail system. Drafts of the plan are being reviewed by local officials and stakeholders before scheduling a public hearing for July.



➤ Hibbing Transit Plan

ARDC staff have been assisting the City of Hibbing and community stakeholders by facilitating a Transit Operations Study Committee which began in March 2011. The Committee reviewed the current operations and developed recommendations for strategies to create the most efficient service possible within the constraints of the budget. The study was prompted by a recent increase in service use to about 5,000 riders per month, requests for service to outlying areas and the need to review fare rates. Three meetings were held and the committee developed recommendations in these four topic areas. 1) Route and Operation Schedule, 2) Fare Rate Structure, 3) Pilot Service, and 4) Hibbing Transit Advisory Committee Formation. The study will be completed by June 30, 2011 with the Hibbing City Council scheduled to review a fare rate increase proposal in July.

➤ International Falls Bike and Pedestrian Plan

ARDC staff is providing planning assistance to the City of International Falls to complete a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This spring, ARDC assisted the City by facilitating a community walkability workshop. The workshop provided an opportunity for residents to examine what factors are important for a comfortable walking and biking environment and to help prioritize key local connections. Participants of the event were given walkability checklists/surveys as the group walked some of the City's sidewalks to generate ideas. The survey information and other discussions are being used in the development of the plan. The plan is being drafted and is scheduled for completion June 30th, 2011.

➤ Floodwood Depot Rest Area Impact Project

The City of Floodwood requested assistance in determining the impact of this facility on the community and in the region, to assist them in developing a sustainable plan for the site, and identify other uses for the Depot building. This unique situation of two entities owning separate properties working under a joint agreement presented some challenges. The study addressed the challenges of this site, provided strategies for increasing revenues and includes recommendations such as the need for marketing and increasing tourism.



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