



RTAC MEETING SUMMARY
June 24, 2010
International Wolf Center, Ely, Minnesota

Attendees:

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| Mike Forsman | St. Louis County |
| Denny Johnson | Mn/DOT |
| Doug Grindall | Koochiching County |
| Bruce Martinson | Cook County |
| Paul Bergman | Lake County |
| Alan Goodman | Area County Engineers |
| Rod Fournier | Duluth Transit Authority |
| Bill Bennett | Chambers (LHB) |
| Tom Peterson | DNR |
| Jack Larson | Arrowhead Transit/Rural Transit |
| Bryan Anderson | ARDC |
| Liz Sarabia | ARDC |
| Jon Mason | ARDC |
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1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Doug Grindall at 10:05 AM and introductions followed. Jared Johnson, Executive Director of the International Wolf Center, gave a short presentation about the Center and the work they do and current projects underway at the Center. Everyone was invited to attend the Wolf Enrichment program at 1 PM.

2. Committee Business

Motion to approval of agenda by Al Goodman/Bill Bennett; passed unanimously.

Motion to accept the summary of the April 8, 2010 meeting by Al Goodman/Denny Johnson; passed unanimously.

It was noted that Steve Kniefel will be the next Chair as he is currently the Vice Chair. Election for Vice Chair was called. Nominations were Paul Bergman by Bruce Martinson and Mike Forsman. With no further

nominations, nominations and white ballot was closed. Motion to elect Paul Bergman Vice Chair by Mike Forsman/Jack Larson; passed unanimously.

Bryan Anderson noted that Ann Spangler, the Ely SRTS Coordinator would be provided an update on the Ely SRTS program.

3. Project Updates

Bryan Anderson reported that work is still on-going for Mountain Iron Trails Plan, Big Falls Trails Plan and Moose Lake Safe Routes Community Assessment. With Cook County unable to move ahead with their request and Mille Lacs unable to meet their match, Moose Lake and Big Falls were chosen as projects. It was due to their late start that work is still being done.

Mountain Iron Trails Plan was led by Josh Bergstad. There has been another meeting since the last RTAC meeting and a map has been developed showing possible connections within the neighborhoods and to the Mesabi Trail. Josh is currently working on cost estimates; the Virginia Medical Center does SRTS education with the schools. There will be a meeting next week to review the map. Discussion centered on Hwy 169 and Denny Johnson reported that there is some planned road alignment, shoulders and new sidewalks approved; the final plan will be available on CD.

The Moose Lake SRTS Community Assessment was approved in April and work was begun by Ellen Pillsbury. There has been parent/student surveying, on ground assessment and sidewalk inventory. It appears that 94% of the kids take the bus or other vehicle, none ride their bikes. A student population density map has been generated. The report and recommendations will be completed in June. Moose Lake has a very enthusiastic Active Living group that will pick up some of the recommendations.

Bryan Anderson will be presenting the recommendations which would provide bike/pedestrian connections in the city for the Big Falls Trails Plan tonight. It has been recognized that there is a need for sidewalks on Hwy 71. Mn/DOT has also been approached regarding wider shoulders on State Hwy 6 East, and new overlay. The City is hoping for a loop through town with sidewalks along with some streetscaping and lighting improvements. One recommendation is to move forward with an enhancement request. This is a very wooded area and the population is about 150 people. Discussion followed that some progress is being made along Hwy 6 and there will be some road improvements in 2014.

The project update was for HelmetHero which has been approved a third year. Approximately 1,600 helmets were provided to third graders this year. Bryan asked for any more schools that might be interested in this excellent educational program.

An additional mention was about the Greater Minnesota Investment Plan. Mn/DOT was tasked with the transportation portion and the RDC's provide the technical assistance, as in the case of ARDC. The Greater Minnesota Transit Plan is in follow up to the 2009 transit plan and will identify current ridership trends and determine if there is level of unmet local need. Discussion followed regarding the various aspects of the plan, what will be the outcome, who will it benefit, who will use the information. It was agreed that rural areas can not compete on the same formula as cities.

Ann Spangler, the Ely SRTS Coordinator arrived and provided an update on the Ely SRTS program. Ann provided an overview of Ely SRTS program from its inception to current phase. With the decrease in student populations and cost saving changes, Ely became aware that transportation changes were needed and their SRTS grant helped them identify the current situation, the changes that would need to take place. The SRTS committee was able to garner support of parents, police assistance, the City and local businesses to help change the attitude about walking/biking to school. Though there is still a lot of work to be done, changes are coming and it is the kids who grasp the new concepts and carry them forward.

4. Review of the FY 2010 Annual Report by Bryan Anderson mentioned the membership list and the new 3 meeting schedule as well as the four projects chosen and reported on earlier. He also mentioned the work performed with various councils and committees.
5. The review of the FY 2011 Work Program included an overview of how monies are spent, allocation for the grant program, explanation of Community/Trails Implementation, base map updates and GIS services. ARDC currently doesn't have GIS Specialist, so work is contracted elsewhere.

New items for Statewide Planning Participation are that ARDC is a member of JARC/New Freedom Review Committee as well as a member of the 5310 Transit Review Committee.

Activities for FY 2011 include continuing with the NE MN ATP, North Shore Scenic Drive Council, SRTS planning, HelmetHero Bike Education. Additionally, ARDC supports the Superior National Forest Scenic Byway Council. Some discussion followed regarding budget overages, other activities and funding.

Motion to approve the FY 2011 Work Plan by Mike Forsman/Tom Peterson; passed unanimously.

6. RTAC In-Kind Grant Program Applications Review for FY 2011 projects covered four applications. It was decided that scoring would not be necessary if consensus was reached. Review of each application follows.

The City of Floodwood requested assistance to help conduct a study on the actual impact the Floodwood Depot Rest Area has on the community and region. The City desires to find a sustainable plan which keeps the rest area open or use the designated area for other purposes. As most attendees are familiar with the location, discussion followed on the impact of not having the rest area, other possible uses, funding for the future. The City is requesting \$6,000 in assistance, with \$1,500 in match.

The purpose of the International Falls Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to identify barriers and unsafe conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians within the City. Currently the sidewalks are outdated and in need of constant repair. With the change in the City's lifestyle, layout and vehicle usage, it has been determined that the current network needs to be updated and improved. The plan will also assist Koochiching County and the City as they participate in the SHIP program. Their request is for \$8,000 from RTAC with their local match in the amount of \$2,000.

As the Range undergoes changes with new industries, the City of Babbitt has become proactive in anticipation of these changes. As the City is updating its comprehensive plan, it has suggested a three part addendum which involves economic development, a housing action plan and a transportation action plan. The estimated cost of the project is \$17,400; with 3 funding sources being considered for the components. RTAC funds are requested in the amount of \$5,823.33 toward the transportation action plan which is estimated at \$6-\$7,000. ARDC will prepare the economic development and housing action plans. Discussion followed which included a request that it be clearly delineated that RTAC dollars be used for the transportation segment only.

The fourth application was from the City of Hibbing who would like to expand their operational transportation base to meet the needs of all residents. It is hoped that with better served residents that there will be an increase in employment, economic growth and improved overall general health of its citizens. Their request is for \$8,000 from RTAC with a \$2,000 local match.

Discussion followed on the distribution on RTAC funds for these projects. Bryan Anderson proposed that Floodwood may be able find funding

through the Northwest Minnesota Sustainable Development Program because the study would fall under their tourism/economy grant requests. Their funding would be \$3,800 from RTAC. Funding could then be as requested by the other three applicants.

Mike Forsman/Bruce Martinson put forth the motion to accept the proposal by Bryan Anderson that Floodwood be funded at \$3,800 with Hibbing and International Falls at \$8,000 each and the City of Babbitt for \$5,823. Motion passed unanimously.

6. A call was made for January meeting location and agenda topics. Usually the January meeting is held following the ATP meeting, Denny Johnson will let staff know the date and location as soon as it is available.

It was noted that a thank you letter should be sent to the Wolf Center.

Motion to adjourn by Paul Bergman/Al Goodman; passed unanimously.