



Improvin' Movin' in the Arrowhead

Winter 2011-2012

"Working to guide transportation decisions in Northeast Minnesota"

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Next Meeting Date: January 23, 2012

Location: Carlton County Transportation Bldg., 1630 CR 61, Carlton

Time: Noon (12 PM)

RTAC In-Kind Grant Projects

Four RTAC in-kind projects for FY 2012 are underway. ARDC staff are working on the following projects.

➤ *Beaver Bay Trailhead*

During the fall/winter of 2011, ARDC worked with Lake County to advance this project. A stakeholders meeting was held in Beaver Bay on October 19th to offer one-on-one focused discussions with various partners interested in or involved in the project. ARDC and Lake County met with representatives from Mn/DOT, MN DNR, Lake County, City of Silver Bay, Silver Bay Area Historical Association, North Shore Scenic Drive Council, and the City of Beaver Bay. An additional presentation was made to the full North Shore Scenic Drive Council in December to brief the Council on this important byway-related project.

The project seeks to guide planning for the development of a trailhead center to provide parking and interpretive information along the Gitchi-Gami bike trail. An updated design of the site scheduled for construction in 2014 will address elements such as paving of the existing parking lot at the corner of Hwy. 61 and Lax Lake Road; development of an interpretive kiosk for information on area history, amenities, and scenic byways; bridge and road improvements (rebuilding about 2/10th of a mile of County Road 4); paving of the Beaver Bay Visitor Center parking lot (located across the street) and installation of year-round vault toilets. ARDC and Lake County will continue to advance the planning for this project during early 2012 through stakeholder feedback and development of new design plans for review.

➤ *Ranier Transportation System Evaluation*

In 2010 the City of Ranier expanded its limits through annexation of two residential areas and a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ). With the annexation, Ranier gained a network of roads and streets and now contains a state highway and additional rail trackage. ARDC staff is performing an assessment of the local transportation system, developing a Transportation Improvement Plan, and policy recommendations for the City.

ARDC began the planning process by contacting the Koochiching County Engineering Department and requesting information on County and Township roads within the City of Ranier. Those roads were then mapped using GIS and a preliminary driving survey was

Next RTAC Meeting

The next RTAC meeting will be on January 23rd at the Carlton County Transportation Building. Lunch will be provided at 11:30 AM, immediately following the ATP Steering Committee meeting. The RTAC meeting will begin at 12:00 PM.

Agenda items will include

- Current RTAC projects report
- FY 2016 Enhancements Preview
- Membership Review



conducted to note the type and condition of construction. The trails were also surveyed.

A focused conversation with Ranier's Steering Committee was held in August to learn how the City viewed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the transportation system. In October, the Koochiching County Economic Development Authority Executive Director met with ARDC staff to discuss future transportation needs related to development of the FTZ. ARDC staff is currently conducting a land use analysis in the Highway 11 corridor and reviewing road, trail, and access drive development regulations.

➤ *Orr Transportation Plan Implementation*

ARDC has begun to assist the City of Orr to implement recommended transportation action steps from the recently completed Orr Comprehensive Plan. Following are the three elements they are currently working on.

Orr Community Improvement Design

ARDC staff had worked with the City to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a design project that would include a paved non-motorized connection through the City, public access and lakefront park redesign, lighting improvements, storefront redevelopment, parking improvements, pedestrian improvements, and signage enhancements. A RFP had been sent to landscape architect firms in the region and throughout the state, and proposals were received in December. The City has continued to work with ARDC staff to review these proposals. There should be decision on the choice of consultant forthcoming.

Orr Transportation Investment Plan

The City of Orr, with ARDC staff assistance, is developing a five year transportation investment plan that will list needed projects, their costs, and their priority level. The City's maintenance staff met with ARDC staff regarding this aspect in November. The City provided ARDC staff with detailed explanations of the current infrastructure and discussed potential projects that should take place based on the needs of the City.

Annual Transportation Review

Work has begun on the annual transportation review. This annual transportation review will have participation by City of Orr maintenance staff along with personnel from St. Louis County, Mn/DOT and other agencies. ARDC staff will assist in developing the agenda for the meeting and gathering contact information.

➤ *Lake Vermilion Trail Plan Implementation*

ARDC continues to assist the Lake Vermilion Trail Steering Committee with implementation of the Lake Vermilion Trail Plan finalized in September 2011. The implementation efforts ARDC staff have been working on include providing Committee members with samples of Letters of Support for the Bois Forte Reservation—Lake Vermilion Trail Transportation Enhancement Application. The application is requesting funds to construct a 2.5 mile trail section, which could be a future segment Lake Vermilion Trail.

In late December, ARDC staff released an invitation to local engineering consultants for Letters of Interest for a trail engineering study for the future Lake Vermilion Trail. The information collected will assist the Steering Committee in determining the cost of preliminary engineering. In addition, ARDC staff are talking with DNR representatives about the Trail and making initial inquiries to the DNR about future trail management. The Lake Vermilion Trail Steering Committee is anticipated to meet in February 2012.

FY 2015 Enhancement Projects

ARDC received 14 applications for FY 2016 Enhancements funding, requesting approximately \$5 million. The Enhancement Task Force will meet in early February and rank the applications. There is \$1.5 million available for projects. The applications received are as follows:

- Airport Road Trail-Fond du Lac
- Bigfork RiverWalk Trail
- Connections and Amenities-Cross City and Lakewalk Trails-Duluth
- Cuyuna Lakes State Trail-Aitkin Phase II
- Floodwood River Trail –Phase 3 Extension
- Gilbert Downtown Enhancements
- Gitchi-Gami State Trail-Beaver River Bridge and West Rd. Segment-North Shore
- Grand Rapids Mississippi Riverfront Pedestrian Bridge
- Helmet Hero Program–NE MN
- Lakewalk East Extension Phase VI-Duluth
- Mesabi Trail-Soudan to Ely
- Nashwauk Downtown Streetscape
- Preservation of Soo Line Steam Locomotive #2719-North Shore
- Vermilion Reservation Trail Extension to Hwy 66-Bois Forte

Membership Note

This year representative terms will be expiring except for the Vice Chair (who receives a one year extension). In the past, letters of appointment or intentions to continue to serve as a representative for another three year term have been provided in accordance with RTAC Bylaws. This will be an agenda item at the January meeting.

We have received a few recommendations for the remaining openings on the Committee. Representative openings are as follows: Airport from regional airports, Rail from Arrowhead region railroads, Environmental, MN DNR from MN DNR Trails and Waterways, US Forest Service from the Chippewa and Superior National Forests, and Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail. If you have someone you would like to invite to be a representative please contact Jon Mason with ARDC.



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