

April 2, 2009
Hermantown Public Safety Building

Attendees:

Bill Bennett	Chambers
Bob Manzoline	St. Louis/Lake Co. Regional Rail Authority
Catherine McLynn	Itasca County
Dennis Jensen	D.T.A.
Denny Johnson	Mn/DOT
Don Mohawk	Mn/DOT
Doug Grindall	Koochiching County
Jack Larson	Arrowhead Transit/Rural Transit
John Welle	Aitkin County
Les Ollila	MN DNR
Ron Johnson	Duluth Seaway Port Authority
Steve Kniefel	St. County Townships
Tom Peterson	DNR
Walter Leu	Mn/DOT
Wayne Olson	Carlton County
Ben VanTassel	ARDC
Bryan Anderson	ARDC
Kara Kent	ARDC
Liz Sarabia	ARDC

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Doug Grindall, Vice Chair and introductions were conducted.

2. Committee Business

Agenda had no changes. Motion to accept minutes of the January 8, 2009 by Dennis Jensen/Bill Bennett; passed unanimously.

3. Functional Classification Update

Kara Kent, ARDC GIS Specialist, gave a "live" demonstration of the functional classification update system. Updates are now available on the ARDC website. This provides more interaction with users; avoids printing maps, instead just use browser; and is cost effective (saves time and money) It is current to within 6 hours.

Kara reported that she came to develop this system from a discussion with John Minor of Mn/DOT. Housed at ARDC, the system uses the Mn/DOT base map and provides approximately datasets such as speed limits, bridges, etc. ARDC doesn't update the map but is able to pull other datasets together from other sources. In most cases is nearly always current.

It is hoped that in the future engineers will be able to do functional classification change applications submit them for preliminary review and if approved, forwarded for final approval.

Some discussion followed as to differences between Itasca County's parceled maps and DNR waters. Functional classification isn't available on Itasca County's parceled maps. The waters at present do show up on the Mn/DOT base map; however, the MN DNR is in the process of updating their waters data and will be sharing that shortly. It was pointed out that the Mn/DOT base map has sufficient labels so that additional labeling is not necessary by Kara. At the present time, the link to the functional classification maps is available at ARDCGis.org.

4. Project Updates

Aitkin Access Management Plan

Ben Van Tassel reported that this plan is nearly complete. He provided a review of the purpose, who was involved from the community, how the process was started, the identification of problems and the resulting recommendations. The result was divided between physical recommendations and policy recommendations. Some of the physical recommendations entailed alignment, congestion reduction, truck routing, railroad impact on a key intersection, and parking in the downtown area. The policy recommendations to try and avoid further problems by possibly integrating access into building permit process, attempt to create new safe accesses (visibility, location) and review the local route network. The Brainerd-Mn/DOT comments will be reviewed.

Discussion included the fact that having a bypass around town is not a new issue. Ben reported that the businesses are now in favor of a change because they realize the affect of too much truck traffic. A recommendation from Dennis Jensen was to move the issue of access from the building permit process and instead place it into zoning and planning for earlier identification of a potential problem. When asked about the need for additional roads versus diverting, the suggested option was to use existing roadways for diverting. The congestion problems with trucks are not from their pass through, but when they have to turn, especially onto 210.

Bimose (Squaw Lake) Trail Plan

Kara Kent reviewed the purpose of the plan, the reason for the name change, the recommendations. This 2.1 mile trail would provide a paved non-motorized trail for bicyclists and pedestrians to traverse from The Boys and Girls Club and the Community Center without using Hwy 46.

Kara reported that this community was very committed and active with this project. As a first step to changing the town's name which is perceived as detrimental to the community, tribal members on the committee suggested a new name for the trail – Bimose. On April 13, the plan will be presented to the City Council for final approval. There is some concern about funding for the trail surface. There are plans to use signage and striping in keys areas such as the crossings on Highways 46 and 4.

Ely Safe Routes to Schools

In review of the activity that has occurred since October, 2008, Bryan Anderson explained that the SRTS Coordinator position has been funded but not the sidewalk improvements. The coordinator's responsibilities will also include rodeos, walking bus, marketing and work toward implementation.

The ELY SRTS surveys revealed that 50% of the students live within 1 mile of the school but only 26% walking. The number one concern was weather which can not be changed, but the second and third highest concerns were for high traffic speed and high traffic volume, respectively This in turn could be construed as reasons for a low percentage of students walking to and from school.

Additional issues identified were the lack of pedestrian ramps and handicap accessibility; there are also missing sidewalk segments. .So far, switching safety patrols to different corners has helped, signage has been placed to reduce congestion around the school. Vermilion College Law Enforcement has been an excellent partner with those students helping by reporting speeding cars, supervising the patrols, making additional suggestions, etc.

The community has been very supportive and would like to see some sort of connection to the Mesabi Trail maybe by 2012 or 2013. They also would like to continue to work on improvements, so there may be a presentation to the County Board for assistance. Improvements may cost approximately \$86,000.

Other Safe Routes To School

There have been several successful SRTS applications funded – Deer River, Chisholm and Virginia – as well as the City of Duluth. International Falls was not funded. The Hibbing SRTS plan was done last year and currently some of their improvements have been funded.

North Shore Scenic Drive Council

Funding was found through the Byways Program. These funds will be used for cairn welcome signage and the Split Rock wayside improvement. The Beaver Bay Trail may also receive Byway funds.

It should be noted that the Byway Program has funds available to assist any Byway/Scenic Road. The local match required is 20% which has not been a problem to obtain from several sources (IRR, DNR, Chambers of Commerce, or in some cases, in-kind services from Counties).

Transportation Enhancements Map

Ben Van Tassel provided a map of the transportation enhancements trail projects from 1994 to 2012. Fifty three trail related projects were identified in the Arrowhead region with expenditures of \$14.7 million in enhancement funds. The map is available in digital or paper format by request.

5. RTAC In-kind Grant Program

Bryan Anderson reported that the In-kind grant program has been working well though it has experienced changes in dollars. Last year there was \$23,000 in funding; this year has \$24,000 for 2009-10. He suggested that the maximum request amount remain the same (\$10,000) and the minimum request remain at \$5,000 as well as the local match of 20%. The committee agreed that there should be no change.

Since applications have decreased over the last few years, Bryan asked that solicitation start immediately, deadline will be May 15. Their review will be at the June RTAC meeting and projects starting after January 1 the next year.

In order to expedite the solicitation, Bryan asked for approval for use of an electronic version of application and for assistance in distributing the applications. Doug Grindall suggested that the PowerPoint slide and info sheet be sent out to engineers. The committee agreed that the electronic application would be acceptable.

6. Other Business

As Bryan Anderson is beginning to put together the 2010 Work Plan, he presented a suggestion of having 3 meetings per year instead of the current 4 meetings. Meetings would be held in January, April and June with the January and April meetings coordinated with the ATP meeting. The third meeting in June could be held outside of the Duluth area and continue with a tour as part of the meeting such as last fall's visit to I-Falls.

Discussion followed with an explanation of why the fourth meeting could be eliminated (lack of attendance and insufficient material to report). Other efforts could compensate for its loss. Committee members agreed that it was good for them to get outside of the area; they've appreciated their learning experiences. Additionally, the newsletter could include additional information along with the website. Denny Johnson thought that there would be not be a problem to scale down to three meetings and the bylaws do allow for this change. Jack Larson put forth a motion to try the three meetings for one year, seconded by Les Ollila. It passed unanimously.

The June meeting site suggested was Biwabik with a tour of the area including the new Off-Road Vehicle recreational trail. Bob Manzoline has been asked to provide an update on the Mesabi Trail and the waterways of the area. An alternative site would be Gilbert.