



# Arrowhead Region Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

September 7, 2017 @ 10:00 am  
Lake County Law Enforcement Center  
613 3rd Ave, Two Harbors, MN 55616

## SUMMARY

1. **Welcome and Introductions – Meeting called to order at 10:05 am**  
In attendance: Mark LeBrun (Pine County), Annie Harala (CCLS CHB), Jim Sharrow (DSPA), John Minor (State Aid), Cindy Voight (Duluth), Bill Bennett (LHB), Rex Bordson (State Aid), John Welle (Aitkin County), Karin Grandia (Itasca County), Jim Foldesi (St. Louis County), John McDonald (State Aid), Bob Manzoline (St. Louis & Lake Co. RRA), JinYeene Neumann (Carlton County), Rick Goutermont (Lake County), Krysten Foster (Lake County), Jack Larson (Arrowhead Transit & Rural Transit), Russell Habermann (ARDC), Andy Hubley (ARDC), Michelle Pierson (ARDC)
2. **Approval of Meeting Summary – June 8, 2017 Meeting Summary**  
Copies of the meeting summary were emailed to all members prior to the meeting and hard copies were available. A motion to approve the meeting summary was made by J. Foldesi/K. Foster. Carries unanimously.
3. **Approval of Agenda**  
A motion to approve the meeting agenda was made by J. Welle/B. Manzoline. No comments or changes. Motion carries unanimously.
4. **Comments and Suggestions from Citizens Present – None put forward.**
5. **Unfinished Business**
  - a) **Transportation Alternatives (TA) Application (Attachment)**  
  
R. Habermann provided a summary about suggested changes to the Transportation Alternatives application and letter of intent (LOI). In response to previous discussions, he noted consideration was given to project deliverability and geographic equity, though it was decided the program must remain a competitive program and should not consider geographic dispersion. He provided a handout outlining two options for consideration.

With Option 1, all questions and scoring criteria were maintained from previous years, but deliverability scoring weight has been increased from 20% to 40% of points. Points were shifted away from project description factors.

With Option 2, the entire application and scoring criteria were overhauled to address changing facets of the TA program. The new application includes sections on project description, project support/partnerships, and project deliverability/sustainability. More weight is distributed to the deliverability component.

Open discussion:

J. Foldesi reminded the staff to include high/low scores being removed during the application scoring process. J. Welle asked for clarification about whether the LOI would change? It was noted that LOI is a statewide document, and the State is unwilling to make revisions at this time. C. Voigt asked for clarification for the highest and lowest scores being removed—R. Habermann noted that when a project goes up for scoring before the TA task force, if there are 10 voters on that project, each of the 10 scorers submits their score. The high and low of these 10 scores will be excluded before averaging the other 8 scores. J. Foldesi asked if we went with Option 1, with 40% towards deliverability, could Option 2's questions be applied to Option 1's rubric. It was noted a hybrid of the rubric could be formed if desired. A. Harala noted that as a TA task force member, she believes Option 2's questions may provide a clearer path for decision making.

After noting a clear interest for proceeding with Option 2, Chair B. Bennett called for a motion to recommend Option 2 to the ATP. Motion made by J. Welle/J. McDonald.

J. Foldesi asked for an explanation how Question 9 in Option 2 can better inform the task force on project delivery. C. Voigt suggested that having to list all the projects that have been delivered could be arduous for select agencies and questioned fairness in how the question is delivered. A. Harala noted the information the task force is seeking is when and why agencies turned back projects in the past and asked for this to be a straightforward question. C. Voigt noted she has had to turn back projects, but delivered 30 others. She expressed that it may not be relevant to list all projects, especially as they date back decades.

B. Manzoline drew out the boulevard development piece of the application to seek clarification how it fits in the TA program. C. Voigt noted a need to clarify boulevard development if Option 2 is chosen. M. LeBrun also asked for clarification about boulevards, and he suggested staff look at program eligibility and flesh out what it means in the context of our region. It may involve working with MnDOT/cities/counties to look at what regional projects would qualify. It was noted these standards are handed down from federal standards. Bill Bennett asked staff to provide clarifications on boulevard development.

C. Voigt asked what the purpose of evaluating the project outcome on Option 2, Question 14, and expressed concern it would prompt answers that applicants do not intend to uphold. In response, J. Welle noted that some projects are broad and that some questions may apply more to some types of projects over others. He gave example of an environmental mitigation project and how Question 14 may apply to that, but may not apply to a bike trail. R. Habermann noted that SHIP staff members frequently look at evaluation with active transportation, use of trail, use of a wayside rest. He noted

evaluation is an important part of measuring whether a project meets its goals and is a part of other federal funding applications reviewed in development of the new application.

B. Manzoline, referring to Question 13 in Option 2, asked about looking at how past TA projects have been maintained after their completion. He noted ongoing maintenance of projects is an important part of whether they are successful.

A. Hubley noted that ARDC staff pledge to do more investigative prep work to present additional information to task force members. Included in this work may be to look at past projects that were not delivered, evaluation if applicant communities haven't delivered a project but outlooks for deliverability, and could look at presenting background about maintenance of past awarded projects.

Chair B. Bennett reminded members that there was a motion on the table (J. Welle/J. McDonald) and called for a vote. A verbal vote approved recommending Option 2 with revisions from discussion to the ATP for adoption. Carried unanimously.

b) **ATP Guidelines** (Attachments)

Chair B. Bennett noted a task force was developed following the June ARTAC meeting to develop ATP Guidelines. The group included Lisa Austin, Jim Foldesi, Bill Bennett, and Russell Habermann. Chair B. Bennett turned the discussion to L. Austin. Austin said guidelines were originally developed to document how the ATP currently functions. However, the sub-group evaluated membership, past practices, and looked at several potential models to develop a model that addresses membership, attendance, and quorum concerns associated with the ATP.

The proposed revisions to the ATP's current model includes:

**Membership-**

**Model 1: Inclusive** – 52 voting members, comprehensive list. Everyone at the table, everyone gets a vote, most similar to current model.

Chair B. Bennett noted an issue the ATP has faced in the past is not enough voting members attending ATP meetings. R. Habermann noted that 25% is the quorum and that ATP meetings have struggled to meet a quorum. C. Voigt asked if additional voting members were added to freight/rail and freight/road and how that may impact attendance if it is unlikely they can attend. It was noted that BIA and the Environmental Representative were also removed from the proposed membership due to lack of attendance.

**Model 2: Government Model** – 52 members, list based on government agencies managing transportation systems, still maintains members but moves many to non-voting status. These people would form the voting membership of the ATP. Non-voting members would include modal stakeholders (ie bikes, peds, freight, ports) and would have an advisory role. Model 2 membership would be almost the same as Model 1, there would just be a distinction between voting and non-voting members.

**Model 3: Full consolidation of the ARTAC and ATP.** Has some ramifications with meeting logistics, but any consequences could easily be addressed. Voting members of the ARTAC would be identical with the ATP. Non-voting members would be regional modal stakeholders within our group.

**Terms:** No term limits for ex-officio members in good standing. (ie a county engineer). There would be term limits for elected officials. This would parallel an elected official's elected term.

**Officers:** With Model 1 & 2, the ATP would have its own officers, separate from the ARTAC. Under the Consolidation model, the officers of the ARTAC would be the officers of the ATP. Our ARTAC Chair Bill Bennett isn't on the ATP but serves as the Chair of the ATP.

**Voting:** In Models 1 & 2, motions shall be approved or denied by a majority vote of members present. In order to conduct official business in Model 3, a 33% quorum shall be required.

**Meetings:** In Model 3, the ATP/ARTAC would hold joint quarterly meetings, where Models 1 & 2 would maintain the current model of 3 ARTAC meetings per year, and 2 ATP meetings.

Chair B. Bennett mentions that with the voting issue, if you participate, you matter. The question remains to see what the outcome.

B. Anderson noted that using the combined Model 3 will allow the stakeholder decision makers that serve on both committees to attend one less meeting each year and that many of the decision makers are around the ARTAC table. He noted that many of the current ATP membership is advisory in nature and that they attend for informational purposes for the most part. Streamlining meeting schedule to quarterly meetings would allow for less redundancy in information provided as well.

Chair B. Bennett asked if county commissioners would feel a loss if they were no longer a voting member. J. Foldesi noted that County Engineers are in constant communication with the County Boards they serve and try to bring county perspectives to the table. Commissioner Goutermont noted that he attends to gain information. He appreciates a platform to help provide input, but would not be offended to not get a vote. A. Hubley noted that ARDC staff and MnDOT staff meet with County Boards each spring to provide updates.

A. Harala asked if public health representatives would still be represented. It was noted as the hope they could serve as experts in an advisory role and that RDC and MPO representatives would also serve in this capacity. It was asked how Ron Chicka feels about assuming an advisory role in place of a voting member. It was noted ARDC could correspond with the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council.

M. LeBrun mentioned that he supports Option 3. He noted that in his tenure on the ATP, there have not been examples of many 'nay' votes. Discussion can flush out concerns, having knowledgeable people present who can provide information can be very important.

J. Foldesi mentioned the sub-group evaluated how the number of votes were weighted in all three models. In focusing on Model 3, counties have 12 votes, cities have 8 votes, and the City of Duluth has one vote. The MIC informs and advises the City on projects. In the MIC arena, the City of Duluth has a large presence. And in the guidelines, the MIC is a player in administrative processes of the ATP by submitting projects for the MPO area. C. Voigt noted that Duluth is generally recognized as the regional center of Northeast Minnesota.

J. Welle notes that he supports Model 3 for the noted reasons but also wanted to reiterate that elected officials have mentioned they may not be comfortable voting when attending only two meetings per year.

J. Welle also asked a question about distinctions between the RDC and MnDOT boundaries and if it is a challenge that Pine County is incorporated in the ARTAC boundaries. R. Habermann documented the differences between the MnDOT D1 and ARDC boundaries. Chair B. Bennett mentioned that there could be added an item of discussion, whomever the right authority is to pursue a change in boundaries. B. Anderson noted that Pine County/East Central RDC is the only outlier. Anderson does not see any issue with these discrepancies. M. LeBrun noted that the RDC borders were defined by legislation. Perhaps it would be beneficial if MnDOT/RDC districts aligned. Chair B. Bennett suggests legislation should not be out of the question. Could it change, perhaps not soon. In addition, the ARTAC can't do anything about it on its own besides put it on the table. J. Welle noted he was referring to Pine County, but if Pine County doesn't have an issue with it, it should proceed as it has in the past. L. Austin noted that other MnDOT districts have many more differences in boundary areas. M. LeBrun asked if there is any one at MnDOT that could work on this issue, or a working group that could come up with a recommendation. Could a strategic planning process be established/a steering group of legislators/MnDOT/county commissioners to identify recommendations to make more parallels to streamline RDC/MnDOT districts? Chair B. Bennett asked for staff to document this request in a separate letter. This would be something distinct from the ATP guidelines document. B. Anderson noted that the communication is good for the meantime. Chair B. Bennett proposes that this option be outlined in a letter drafted by R. Habermann that can then be routed to the group, and when all are comfortable with the content/message, to be sent onto the appropriate person to bring.

It was asked when officers for the combined ATP/ARTAC would be elected. The group agreed things run on a calendar year makes sense, especially considering local budgeting processes.

It was asked if the ATP would need MnDOT approval, and B. Anderson said MnDOT has left it up to ATPs to decide how they run. MnDOT Central Office will be asked for their comments, however. L. Austin evaluated other ATPs to compare, and even with the reduced model of 35 members, District 1 would still be the largest ATP in the state.

It was asked how this would affect officer elections. It was noted the ARTAC/ATP could conduct elections of officers at the next meeting, but C. Voigt suggested the current officers carry on for the first term.

J. Welle inquired about the meeting length. B. Anderson noted that typical ATP meetings are about an hour and a half. ATP has about an hour of business, two times per year. If that could be distributed across ARTAC meetings, we could streamline the combined meetings and still conform to about a 2 hour meeting, perhaps with the potential to increase the meeting length if special presentations would be included in the meeting agenda. It was suggested the staff could consider scheduling meetings a little earlier. The meeting quality may be enhanced to four meetings. B. Bennett asks if any conflict may occur when looking to membership. R. Habermann noted that he did not

anticipate conflict. J. McDonald noted that increasing the ATP meetings to quarterly may make it easier to propose and approve changes to the STIP if needed.

Chair B. Bennett asked for action. A motion to bring a recommendation to the ATP to ratify changes to the ATP guidelines and institute a combined ARTAC/ATP model (model 3) effective January 1, 2018, with combined quarterly meetings was made by K. Foster/J. Foldesi. Carries unanimously.

- c) ARTAC Bylaws – R. Habermann noted that ARTAC Bylaws will be evaluated and discussed following a decision by the NEMNATP about the new combined model option at the November 2017 ATP meeting.
  - d) Update on ARTAC Membership – David Betts from Cook County is no longer with the County, interviews happening in September. Bill Whiteman is no longer with Bois Forte. Pedestrian/Bicycle Representative will also depend on the NEMNATP November 2017 meeting.
6. New Business
- a) Future Regional Initiatives: Air/Road/Water/Rail/Pedestrians/Bicycles
    - a) Are there any transportation initiatives, particularly multi-jurisdictional transportation initiatives, that ARTAC should consider for the Region?
      1. Chair B. Bennett noted Vanta Coda from the Port and Jonathan Lamb from Duluth Cargo gave a recent presentation that discussed transportation changes and tie-ins to economic impact. He feels this kind of discussion should be included in a future work plan to identify routes from air-truck-rail-shipping, a freight plan, and the broader region could work effectively communicate opportunity. J. Sharrow mentioned he is currently hearing from local businesses using containers that they have gotten quotes for a reduction of 35% cost to ship, which could lead to regional growth with a sizable impact for the region. The expectation is when shipping grows truck freight activity could also increase in the port. A presentation could be sought by the port/cargo for a future meeting. B. Anderson said this could build into the districtwide freight planning coming up in the next fiscal year. J. Sharrow said he would connect with Coda and Lamb to see if they can present at the November 15<sup>th</sup> ATP meeting. C. Voigt asked why several entities are undergoing freight plans at the same time and if there is any coordination. B. Anderson noted that the MIC is doing a truck study. Their work can be built into the upcoming MnDOT freight plan. The Manufacturer's Perspective Study will also feed into the district plan. In the district, we don't have a good handle on what our freight needs are.
      2. Other items we are missing?
        - a. J. Welle noted, if looking big picture/regionwide, funding disparity throughout the region should not be ignored. With LOST and wheelage taxes, each county's need is not the same. We need to recognize this and look to seek improvements. How we select/prioritize projects could use improvement. The region has also been affected by past successes, normalizing



what we have throughout the region in terms of improvement would benefit the entire region.

- b. A. Harala noted that when looking at a broad regional transportation perspective in regard to health/economic development/job development, looking at connecting to transit as a need for larger investments is important. Including education about a multi-modal approach to connecting the workforce to economic opportunity through job creation is vital for the region. She asked if there is a way to utilize the wellness component to direct the transportation agenda. A. Harala noted that our region has true health disparities by zip codes. Look to public health for evidence that public health can be included as a consideration in the work plan. A. Hubley noted that in work with Cook County, ARDC is looking to develop a checklist for Highway Departments to incorporate active transportation elements. Wellness items will be included in the checklist for construction projects.

- b) MnDOT District 1 Bicycle Plan – R. Habermann and L. Austin presented updates on the D1 Bicycle Plan. An opportunity to offer input was made available to the members following this meeting. The Statewide Bicycle Plan of 2016 spurred district wide plans to look more closely at long distance routes and regional connections. State bike routes provide opportunities for inter-community travel. Bike plan update slides will be emailed to members. Link to online input tool will also be emailed. It is hoped the BTAC will meet annually to submit recommendations and input on a revolving basis.

## 7. Workplan Updates and Subcommittee Reports

- a) SRTS – updated SRTS inventory online, developed a SRTS communication network. Designating SRTS liaisons for each school district. Piloting a system to implement SRTS plans – having 2 meetings/year to transition between planning staff at ARDC to passing baton of leadership to school district folks to continue engaging the team. R. Habermann and B. Anderson are on state SRTS teams.

Transportation Alternatives projects and SRTS solicitations will require that projects seeking funding are included as recommendations in the plan. Ensure that other recommendation items are also being implemented in the districts applying for funding. In 2015, MN legislature required that communities include sub-division language that requires “Safe Routes to School” development.

- b) Superior National Forest Scenic Byway Council – Secured funding for the match for the Skibo Vista Overlook. Applying for nonprofit/501(c)(3) status.
- c) North Shore Scenic Drive Council – Developing an interactive map tour, including 360-degree photos of waysides. Will begin working on Glensheen Wayside Design Project
- d) Gitchi-Gami Trail Association – Shoulder width data will be collected along Hwy 61 from Two Harbors to the Canadian border. Data will be collected with a measuring ruler, the widths and conditions will be entered into a collector application, and the data will benefit MnDOT with their work on USBR41 and the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association.

- e) Aitkin Area Active Transportation – Scoped out potential projects. Possibly updating the 2006 Aitkin Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and developing a strategic plan for Cuyuna Lakes State Trail implementation.
- f) MnDOT Trail Counter Program – Counts collected in Proctor for their SRTS program, DSMIC Michigan Street demonstration project employed the counter, as is the DSMIC Lakewalk assessment, and there is a counter at the Gitchi-Gami State Trail control site. Upcoming counts may include an assessment in Downtown Duluth by the Zeitgeist Center that will look at counts for the connection between downtown Duluth and Canal Park; on the North Shore to assess trail use at Sugarloaf Cove; and along the Duluth Lakewalk, the Gitchi-Gami State Trail, and the Munger State Trail by ARDC in spring 2018.

8. ATP/MnDOT Project/Local Project Updates (Attachments)

J. McDonald invited meeting attendees to look through the handouts highlighting project status. He also requested that engineers get 2018 project memos in early. C.Voigt noted there may be changes to her 8/9<sup>th</sup> Street project, may impact a Congdon project.

MnDOT Updates – B. Anderson went over the State Program. The agency received \$1B in bonding dollars, and \$50M will be kept in an opportunity funds pot. D1 will get \$114M as a part of that share. A priority project will be the Twin Ports interchange project. TED applications are due September 15<sup>th</sup> for trunk highways. Local solicitation will be November 15<sup>th</sup>. Scenic Drive Conference will be held October 3 & 4<sup>th</sup> if you are interested in registering; Commissioner Zelle will attend on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Chair B. Bennett asked about the TED program and D1's participation. The City of Duluth is submitting a signal project this year, the City of Ely has applied in the past. D1 has a difficult time proving that jobs are created when compared to projects in the metro area. Bennett encourages folks to think about the future of this program, and how it could fit with jurisdictions.

9. Member Concerns

J. McDonald noted the event where a rail bridge was hit and damaged on Hwy 61 in early September and expressed thanks to the counties for their assistance with developing a detour. C. Voigt expressed thanks to the subcommittees who met to evaluate bylaws and the bicycle subcommittee for their work.

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm. The next ARTAC meeting will take place February 14, 2018, at 10:00 am in IRRRB (4261 US-53, Eveleth, MN 55734).