



# Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership Meeting

April 9, 2025 @ 10:00 am\*

Carlton Transportation Building (630 Co Rd 61, Carlton, MN 55718)

## SUMMARY

**Members in attendance:** Bryan Anderson, Chris Belden, Ted Brokaw, Sarah Ciochetto, Jason DiPiazza, Derek Fredrickson, Karin Grandia, Rick Goutermont, Stehpen Hallan, Robert Hass, Duane Hill, Jason Holliday, Michael Kearney, Mark LeBrun, Susan Michels, Mike Moilanen, JinYeene Neumann, Trent Nicholson, Brandon Nurmi, Dan Reed, Whitney Ridlon, Penny Simonsen, Cindy Voigt, Matt Wegwerth, John Welle, Debra White

**Guests in attendance:** Brian Broder, Jason Fisher, James Gittemeier, Paige Holte, Travis Houle, Jim Johnson, Scott Johnson, Michael Kalnbach, Jeff Madill, Tina Neary, Michelle Pierson, Elinor Roseberg, Erika Shepard, Beth Ann Teskey, Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver, Nicole Westadt

### 1. Call to Order – Attendance

Travis Houle welcomed attendees and reviewed meeting protocols. Michelle Pierson reviewed attendance procedures. Chair Trent Nicholson called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees at 10:03am.

### 2. Committee Business

Chair Nicholson invited NEMNATP members to review the meeting summary from 02-12-2025. **A motion to approve the February 12, 2025 NEMNATP Meeting summary was made by John Welle/JinYeene Neumann. Motion carried.**

### 3. Comments from Citizens Present

No comments were brought forward.

#### 4. Corridors of Commerce Readiness

Nicole Westadt, MnDOT Capital Planning Director, working out of the MnDOT Office of System Management presented updates to the Corridors of Commerce Readiness program, a program that was funded with \$22M in the 2023 MN Legislative session. Westadt reviewed how this new effort is being phased and shared slides which were sent out to NEMNATP members and mailing list. Westadt noted that of the \$22 million in funding, \$11 million will be available for regional connectors, or for Corridors of Commerce outside the metro connector circle. Westadt noted that the solicitation is currently open for readiness applications, which are available via an online nomination form here: [https://mndotforms.formstack.com/forms/corridors\\_of\\_commerce\\_readiness\\_activity\\_nomination\\_form](https://mndotforms.formstack.com/forms/corridors_of_commerce_readiness_activity_nomination_form)

After the state collects all the nomination forms, the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase will include project review and will need to be conducted between April 28 and July 11. Westadt noted that each ATP would be tasked with doing an initial review of any projects nominated in their districts, and then selecting two projects to be officially scored in Phase 3. Westadt fielded questions about how geographic distribution would be handled, how ATPs were to be expected to review and suggest projects for scoring. Westadt was also asked if individual ATPs may desire to pre-score projects from their district so they would best know which projects to recommend the state score in Phase 3.

NEMNATP members discussed potential scenarios. It was noted that there may need to be a steering committee formed to evaluate nominated projects if there are many. However, if there are not many projects nominated by the April 24, 2025 deadline, it would be reasonable to review applications as a full ATP at the next ATP meeting which will take place on July 9, 2025, ahead of the July 11, 2025 Phase 2 deadline.

**A motion was made by JinYeene Neumann/Karin Grandia to direct a convening of a small subcommittee of the NEMNATP comprised of volunteers in the case that more than two nominations from the NEMNATP region are submitted to the Corridors of Commerce Readiness Solicitation. Volunteers would meet, review, rank, and present recommendations to the full NEMNATP body at the July meeting. Derek Fredrickson, Karin Grandia, Jim Johnson, and Trent Nicholson volunteered to serve on a review subcommittee should one be needed. Motion carried.**

#### 5. East Central RDC Updates

Penny Simonsen, Transportation Planner from the East Central Regional Development Commission (ECRDC) shared office is in Mora, and the ECRDC works with Chisago, Isanti, Kanebec, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties. Simonsen noted that the ECRDC is a Regional Development Commission that works with 5 counties that happen to belong to three MnDOT Districts. Simonsen also noted regular communication and partnership with the ARDC.

Simonsen shared updates about the ECRDC's Transportation Advisory Committee and noted particular updates that pertain to the NEMNATP, which would be projects located in Pine County. She provided updates about a Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan for the five counties, Safe Routes to Schools planning in Pine City, recent updates about

connections and advocacy for the Williard Munger State Trail, and current work to seek trail corridor planning connections between Mora and Hinckley, Minnesota. Simonsen also touched on ECRDC's work with Veterans Memorial Scenic Byway.

## 6. ARDC Workplan 2025

Travis Houle, ARDC Planner, began by introducing ARDC Planning's new Division Director Beth Ann Teskey. He also provided in-depth updates about ARDC's work in guiding the NEMNATP Taskforce facilitation, an update on where the current City of Carlton Transportation Plan is at, updates about ARDC work in facilitating the Avenue of Pines Scenic Byway Council, the North Shore Scenic Drive Council and work with the Superior National Forest Scenic Byway. Houle noted ARDC's current work with Active Living and Active Transportation, a Safe Routes to School Planning project for William-Kelley School in Silver Bay, and touched on ARDC's facilitation of the MnDOT pedestrian/cycling trail counter program. Michelle Pierson also provided updates about ARDC's work with MnDNR and MnDOT with facilitating the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association. Copies of the slide presentation deck will be provided to meeting attendees and mailing list members.

Following updates to the FY2025 Workplan updates, Houle invited meeting attendees online and in person to use a QR code to access a Mentimeter input activity to garner feedback from NEMNATP members to help guide ARDC's FY2026 Workplan.

See Mentimeter exercise results included at the end of this document.

Houle thanked all for adding contributions, and noted he would reach out to members to inquire if Mentimeter seemed like a good tool to garner feedback in a hybrid meeting format.

## 7. Draft ATIP Review

Bryan Anderson, MnDOT, presented slides that included updated information about targets for 2029 Federal Aid Projects that resulted in needed cuts. Anderson noted that March 2024 targeted cuts for 2028 resulted in the ATP agreeing to AC \$850,000 from FY 2029 to FY 2028 to keep whole projects for FY2028. St. Louis County volunteered to AC this amount on their project in 2028. The \$850,000 shortfall that St. Louis County AC'd from FY 2029 was ultimately reduced to \$684,250. It was forgotten to reduce the FY2029 targets by the \$684,250 prior to putting the numbers in the equity spreadsheet. The actual amount available will be \$4,321,750.00 for a total of \$1,240,583.33 for each project (Lake County CSAH 15, St. Louis CSAH 21, and Itasca County CSAH 52).

Travis Houle also presented projects recommended by the Federal Transportation fund Task Force, and by the ATP at the 2-12-2025 meeting are included in the Draft ATIP.

**A motion to approve the ATIP as presented was made by Duane Hill/ Robbie Hass. Motion carries.**

## 8. MnDOT Updates

Bryan Anderson also share some slides compiled by Erika Shepard which included Corridor Studies for TH45 and TH210, including the I-35/TH45 intersection in Carlton County. MnDOT anticipates a construction project in 2032 so will be looking at these areas to feed into the scoping process. The Corridor Study is anticipated to kick off in May 2025, be a year-long, consultant-led process. NEMNATP members noted the high logging traffic in this area, and the new Essentia facility in the Esko Industrial Park which may be impacted in this corridor.

Additionally, MnDOT anticipates conducting a TH61 Alternative Routes Study from Two Harbors to the border with Canada in Lake and Cook Counties. This will be a risk-based assessment of corridor vulnerabilities to future climate events. MnDOT will partner with ARDC and a consultant on an 18month process.

Anderson also again noted the open solicitation for the Corridors of Commerce Readiness program, anticipates a Corridors of Commerce solicitation if funds are authorized by the legislature, noted the Minnesota Highway Freight Program opens in June, and that the TED program may open in June if funded by the legislature. MnDOT would forego this solicitation if not funded by the legislature.

## 9. Member Concerns/Future Agenda Topics

Travis Houle noted the next meeting of the ATP would be held on July 9, 2025 at the Discovery Center in Chisholm. There may be a possibility for a walk or bike ride to look at new connections to the Red Head Mountain Bike system following the meeting.

## 10. Round Robin Discussion

Robbie Hass provided an update to the way the Minnesota County Engineers Association seeks nominations to the Board of Directors. Interest in each region putting forward a nomination of a board officer.

Dereck Fredrickson called attention to a handout distributed to the membership and noted status updates of Project Memos. He noted that all have been approved for FY 25. Asked that stakeholders look at their projects and advise if anything seems amiss.

John Welle asked if AC Agreements are still required and gave information of recent practices. Derek Fredrickson will investigate and provide information to county engineers on needed protocols.

Bryan Anderson also called attention to the addition of two projects that will need to be added to the ATIP that involve a fix in Cohasset on Hwy 2, and that D3 will be doing a fix in 169/210.

11. Meeting adjournment

**A motion to adjourn was made at 11:45am by JinYeene Neumann and Cindy Voigt. Motion carried.**

**Bold print denotes need for action.**

# ARDC FY2026 Workplan Brainstorming

April 9, 2025

# If our ATP-Area had a mascot, what would it be?

30 responses





# What are we doing here?

Identify priorities, opportunities, and gaps in planning  
resource investment

# Why are we doing this?

Develop recommendations for inclusion in the FY2026 ARDC  
Workplan that reflect the needs of our communities

Scenic Byway  
Development  
Bike / Pedestrian  
Network Planning  
Freight Planning  
Safe Routes to  
School (SRTS)  
Trail Development  
and Assessment  
GIS  
Grant Writing  
Street/Road/Highway  
Planning  
Transit Planning



Has your community identified any transportation **planning projects, initiatives, or priorities** for the next fiscal year?

Intersection analyses

Support USBR 41  
connections

Canal Park road and  
pedestrian  
improvements

Trail connections

Multi Modal options for  
GHTA

Recreational corridor  
planning

Urban core development  
Network resilience and  
alternative development 61  
corridor upgrades

SRTS plan for smaller  
communities

Has your community identified any transportation **planning projects, initiatives, or priorities** for the next fiscal year?

Interactive recreational trail  
map Multi modal trail head  
facilities

Corridor Planning

Road diets

MNDOT project through  
our City

Hosting a Tribal safety  
summit in 2026

SS4A Planning

Finding the  
infrastructure money  
tree

Side walk and trail  
around new apartments  
in Grand Marais

Has your community identified any transportation **planning projects, initiatives, or priorities** for the next fiscal year?

Reconnecting  
Communities Planning  
Grant.

Multi-use trail  
connections

Safer crossings Hwy 33

Think about the next few years of planned transportation investment. Will planned infrastructure projects impact existing transportation plans?

Skyline Scenic Byway

Yes. As more apartments are built we'll have to re-examine existing sidewalks/trails and ensure everyone is connected.

Area trail connection plan between city, county and FDL could use an update

Many SRTS plans are over 5 years old. We need to review where progress has been made and where we should focus next steps.

Creating trails that will connect to Munger Trail and other areas.

Housing projects will require street expansion.

Transportation Plan and Transportation Safety Plan should be updated in 2-3 years.

Do you see any **gaps in local or regional planning documentation** when you consider your community? What about communities who share borders?

Connection of bike trail  
from Hermantown and  
Proctor to the Munger.

MN 61 alt route planning

Cook and Lake have  
excellent regional cohesion  
with our border roads, all 2  
of them.

Probably more in person  
coordination of plans. Move  
on implementation.



What types of **professional services** does your community most commonly seek externally when delivering transportation planning projects?

Traffic and signal plans.

Engineering and Planning

Right of way Acquisition services

ROW acquisition

We contract out our transportation planning efforts. 20 Year LRTP, Safety Plan.

ROW, Geotech, Hydraulics, bridge design all outsourced.

Also contract out design and engineering for trails.

Reviews of comprehensive plans and assistance for adjustments.

What types of **professional services** does your community most commonly seek externally when delivering transportation planning projects?

Corridor Planning



Were there any particular suggestions that stood out to you during our discussion—one that you feel would make a meaningful impact if it were prioritized?

Project that improve multi-modal community connectivity

Look at the value of doing a region wide transportation plan such as the one ECRDC is working on

MN 61 Alt Route planning

Connections to the Munger Trail. Working with Cloquet, Carlton and Carlton County.

Update to ATP1 bike plan

Right-sizing roadways, lowering long term financial obligations.

Leveraging partnerships at the regional and state level to support multi modal solutions that are available to all residents.

# Thank You!

