



Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership Meeting

February 11, 2026 @ 10:00 am*

MnDOT D1 Office Conference Room (1123 Mesaba Ave, Duluth, MN 55811)

SUMMARY

Members in attendance:

Bryan Anderson, Kevin Beardsley, Ron Chicka, Sarah Ciochetto, Jason DiPiazza, Kate Ferguson, Jim Foldesi, Derek Fredrickson, Garry Gamble, Rick Goutermont, Stephen Hallan, Karin Grandia, Duane Hill, Jason Holliday, Nicole Klosner, Mike Moilanen, Mark LeBrun, JinYeene Neumann, Brianne Patton, Dan Reed, Beth Ann Teskey, Cindy Voigt, John Welle, Debra White, Brian Whiteman

Guests in attendance:

David Bolf, Paige Holte, Travis Houle, Jason Fisher, James Gittemeier, Scott Johnson, Michael Kalnbach, Jeremy Kroke, Jeff Madill, Brian McCoy, Patrick McGraw, Eli Norlander, Michelle Pierson, Dena Ryan, Erika Shepard, Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver

1. Call to Order – Chair Foldesi

Travis Houle welcomed attendees and reviewed meeting protocols and thanked Jim Foldesi for serving as Chair this year. Michelle Pierson reviewed attendance procedures. Chair Foldesi called the meeting to order at 10:05am and welcomed attendees.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary

Chair Foldesi invited NEMNATP members to review the meeting summary from October 8, 2025. A motion to approve the meeting summary was made by John Welle/Karin Grandia. No discussion. Motion carried.

3. Comments from Citizens Present

None were brought forward.

4. NEMNATP Taskforce Program Recommendations:

Travis Houle, ARDC gave an overview of programs and funds available for the PROTECT: Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation Program;; Carbon Reduction Program.

Houle noted the NEMNATP Taskforce had convened on 2/10/2026 and thanked the Taskforce members for their time and energy in reviewing the applications and convening. Houle gave an overview of applications for each program, and the NEMNATP Taskforce process.

Houle directed ATP members to a copy of the Taskforce Recommendation Summary document that was provided in print to the meeting participants in the room, and was included in the calendar item for invited meeting participants. He also showcased the matrix of recommendations on the screen.

Taskforce Recommendation Summary

PROTECT						
Project	Average Score	Request	Receive Less	Construction Year	Taskforce Recommendation	Comments
St. Louis County Stoney Point Landslide Repair	88.1	\$600,000		2029	\$600,000	Recommend full request award (\$600,000) in FY29 with \$180,000 AC'd from FY30
St. Louis County New County Bridge No. 238	69.1	\$600,000	\$240,000	2030	\$240,000	Recommend partial award (\$240,000) of remaining FY30 balance
CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM						
Project	Average Score	Request	Receive Less	Construction Year	Taskforce Recommendation	Comments
Fond Du Lac Cloquet-Sawyer Phase 3	13.5	\$600,000	\$438,744.48	2029	\$438,744.48	Recommended award of \$438,744.48 via CRP.
TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES						
Project	Average Score	Request	Receive Less	Construction Year	Taskforce Recommendation	Comments
City of Duluth Cross City Trail	36.8	\$600,000	\$600,000	2030	\$700,000	Recommend award of \$600,000 plus ~45% of available balance remaining
Fond Du Lac Cloquet-Sawyer Phase 3 Path	38.8	\$600,000	\$438,744.48	2030	\$0.00	Not recommended to receive TA funds, CRP funds recommended above
St. Louis County CSAH 56 Sidewalk	33.3	\$600,000	\$180,000	2030	\$180,000	Recommend award of \$180,000 via NEMNATP TA, Duluth-Superior MIC Staff will recommend \$420,000 from MPO CRP funds.
MN DNR Gitchi Gami Trail	44.1	\$600,000	\$600,000	2030	\$720,000	Recommend award of \$600,000 plus ~55% of available balance remaining

Houle called attention to application ceilings for the TA program at \$600,000, but also noted that there have been instances in the past where the ATP has awarded additional funds to TA projects in the past.

Houle also shared some feedback from a post-Taskforce survey that noted that the Taskforce would appreciate some changes to scoring rubrics, would appreciate updated guidance for Taskforce participation and scoring for projects that Taskforce members have ties to, and that Taskforce members would invite the ATP to consider elevating application ceilings for the TA program acknowledging inflation and higher project costs. Houle noted that ARDC staff would spend time developing some potential drafts to the NEMNATP Operating Guidelines and then work with the NEMNATP Steering Sub-Committee to review potential changes to the Guidelines. Then that group can bring updates to the Guidelines to the full NEMNATP membership at the July meeting for consideration with the goal of updating the Guidelines at the July or October meeting of the NEMNATP.

Houle also showcased membership on the Task Force. JinYeene Neumann noted her Taskforce membership is up for renewal and noted while she would be willing to consider continuing to serve representing County Engineers, this could be a conversation to see if another engineer would like to serve on the Taskforce. John Welle also noted he is willing to be the official member representing Local

Government #2. Houle noted that ARDC has worked to ensure we have a good geographic representation on this Taskforce. He noted ARDC would do some outreach to inquire who may be willing to serve on the Taskforce and would add an agenda item to the July meeting of the ATP to nominate and seek approval for new and renewing members.

At this point, Houle brought attention back to the recommendations of the Taskforce and sought a motion to approve the slate of recommendations for the CRP, PROTECT and TA projects as listed above. Bryan Anderson also acknowledged that there remains \$761,255.52 in unspent CRP funds (\$161,255.52 remaining from FY2029 funds plus \$600,000 in FY2030) that would be set-aside.

A motion to approve the recommendations provided by the NEMNATP Taskforce to award funds for CRP, PROTECT, and TA was made by JinYeene Neumann/Jason DiPiazza. No further discussion. Motion carried.

5. MnDOT program awards (MN Highway Freight Program, Transportation Economic Development, Corridors of Commerce Readiness Advancement)

Bryan Anderson, MnDOT D1 noted that there have been any solicitations over the last few months and called attention to a handout highlighting several programs.

Anderson noted that our region saw some projects awarded, and some not. He called attention to funds awarded to the City of Two Harbors through the Transportation Economic Development (TED) program, and noted that the Sappi Paper Mill had applied for funds through the MN Freight Program through the intermodal freight program. Discussion on that award saw inquiries about the potential need for a City or County sponsorship from Cloquet or Carlton County. Derek Fredrickson is still looking into this and will be in touch with Carlton County if a sponsorship resolution is needed.

The Grand Rapids Hwys169/2 application did not get selected for funding through that program.

Anderson also noted that the Corridors of Commerce Readiness Advancement applications from our region from Thompson Hill and Hwy 2 Railroad bridge were not selected for funding.

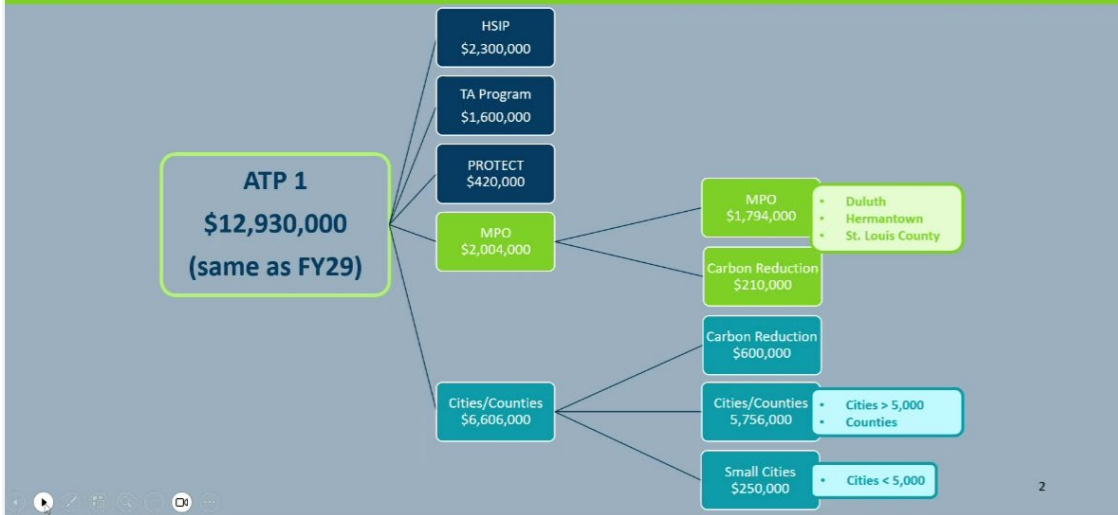
BA highlights TED application from City of Two Harbors. (\$4.9m)

Sappi paper mill applied for Cloquet Terminal railroad. Garage isn't tall enough for high cubed cars into their garage. (\$1.9m). Would have had to add 2500 trucks with out this, so this is a traffic reduction through freight funding.

6. FY 2027-2030 STIP Development Guidance

Bryan Anderson, MnDOT D1 provided updates about FY 2027-2030 ATP-1 Funding Targets and FY 2027-2030 District Funding Targets. Anderson noted that 2030 Targets look the same as FY2029 Targets when you take into consideration the Sappi Freight Grant.

FY 2030 Local Funding Target



2030: District changes?

Anderson showcased a slide that highlights changes to MnDOT funding targets by fiscal year and noted a significant difference resulting from the new guidance which will

be in effect in 2028. Anderson called attention to 2030 which shows a large difference between projects in the CHIP and funding targets below.

MnDOT Funding Targets

New guidance: 2027-2030	Last year: 2026-2029	Difference:
<u>2027: \$82,360,000</u>	\$82,560,000	-\$200,000
<u>2028: \$84,090,000</u>	\$85,090,000	-\$1,000,000
<u>2029: \$84,881,000</u>	\$82,020,000	+\$2,861,000
<u>2030: \$81,128,000</u>	\$118,000,000 (CHIP target)	-\$36,872,000

7. FY 2030 Local Candidate Projects

Bryan Anderson, MnDOT D1 invited County Highway engineers who were in the room to give context for the four projects identified as FY2023 Local Candidate Projects from Carlton, Cook, Pine, and St. Louis Counties.

JinYeene Neumann, Carlton County noted their project on CSAH 6 would involve 5.6 miles of bituminous surfacing to improve ride quality and eliminate spring load restrictions on the roadway. The federal aid request is for \$1,439,000 as part of a \$1.8M project.

Bryan Anderson noted that Robbie Hass was not available for today's meeting, so Anderson shared a slide highlighting the Cook County project for CSAH 12/Gunflint Trail which would involve resurfacing the last 10 miles of the Gunflint Trail replacing and right-sizing deficient and undersized culvers and strengthening the roadbed. This federal-aid request is for \$1,439,000 as part of a \$14M project and involves advance-construction to 2028.

Jim Foldesi, St. Louis County, highlighted the county's candidate project on CSAH 21 which would involve bituminous milling, full-depth reclamation, aggregate base stabilization and bituminous paving for 15 miles between CSAH 7 and Allaire St. Requesting FY30 federal-aid funds in the amount \$1,439,000 and requesting to advance to FY2029 as part of a \$5.5M project.

Mark LeBrun, Pine County highlighted the county's 2030 federal-aid candidate project on CSAH 61 for \$1,439,000 of a \$3,262,410.00 project that involves reconditioning 8.43 miles of pavement and shoulders and a medium depth mill and overlay with new pavement markings.

Pine CSAH 61:

Mark LeBrun noted project on CSAH 61.

A motion to approve adding these four 2030 Federal Aid Candidate projects to the ATIP was made by Cindy Voigt/John Welle. No further discussion. Motion carried.

8. ATP-Area Functional Classification Process

Travis Houle, ARDC, reviewed the current Functional Classification process and noted that all county engineers who had roadways identified in a statewide assessment process for proposed changes received a matrix from Derek Fredrickson. Houle followed up with those counties but also noted that counties that did not have roadways identified in that process are welcome to submit proposed functional classification changes to him for further consideration. Houle will reach out to those counties this week. Mark LeBrun also noted he hadn't received any changes, and Bryan Anderson noted they may be coming from ECRDC. At this juncture it was also noted the Penny Simonsen is no longer with ECRDC and Nicole Klosner from ECRDC noted she would be in touch with Pine County.

Next steps involve reviewing comments counties returned with accepting proposed changes or asking for the changes to be denied and offering justification. A review and appeals process will then be conducted by MnDOT central office.

9. Small Cities funds & Cost Participation Policy

Bryan Anderson, MnDOT D1 showcased a slide noting the set aside funds that have long assisted small cities when MnDOT comes through the communities with a project to offset local participation costs. Anderson noted no projects were identified in 2026, so funds were applied to cSAH21 in St. Louis County.

In FY 2027, he noted an anticipated higher need. Anderson showcased this slide:

Small Cities Funds

FY 2026- \$250,000
No projects were identified so the funds were placed on 069-621-038 St. Louis County CSAH 21 project.

FY 2027- \$250,000
No projects currently programmed. High need is anticipated this year
Two Harbors - \$32,000 **\$25,600**
Chisholm- \$130,000 (old CPP) **\$104,000**

******Proctor-** \$335,000 (old CPP) ~\$40,000 (new CMPP) **\$32,000**

FY 2028- \$250,000
No projects currently programmed.

FY 2029- \$250,000
No projects currently programmed.
Northome
Kettle River
Marcell

2/11/2026 Optional Tagline Goes Here | mndot.gov/ 12

Anderson noted that as Proctor is in the MPO, and the \$250,000 has been set aside for cities outside of the MPO region and requested discussion about what to do. He noted MnDOT is coming through Proctor in 2027 with a lighting project.

Jim Foldesi noted that with FY2027 just months away, he did not desire to leave Proctor in the lurch and that St. Louis County would prefer to keep Proctor whole by using federal dollars to pay for the \$32,000 from the local federal share.

John Welle note appreciation to Foldesi for St. Louis County's willingness to take this approach.

Jim Foldesi and Derek Fredrickson then provided a substantial update about the work the statewide Cost Participation Workgroup is undertaking for new cost sharing policies. It is anticipated that this may change the need to have the \$250,000 set aside in future years, but there may be a need for a grace period of a couple years to see new policies get underway. The new policy is anticipated to be adopted by MnDOT in March and would apply to projects starting July 1, 2026. The new policy will drastically reduce what counties, state aid cities, townships, and small cities will be required to pay on MnDOT projects on the

trunk highway system and will include capping costs. Examples were provided. Derek Fredrickson noted that this may result in changes to the formula, and the equity spreadsheet. It was noted that the current \$250,000 set aside for small cities may be able to be split four ways and added to the four candidate federal projects for a given year as long as the projects can absorb higher federal funds at the 80%/20% match requirements. It was noted that continued discussion about the potential to split the \$250,000 set aside and direct to the 4 STBG projects may be able to be added as an agenda item for the July meeting of the ATP.

For FY 2027 and FY2028, MnDOT is evaluating the programs district-wide to stay whole in ATP1. There is anticipated a statewide funding source that will help with this, with an anticipated amount of about \$3M (portion of a statewide fund of \$30M).

Discussion also noted that For FY26-29, federal funding would remain the same which would have the benefit of not requiring significant changes to the STIP. Going forward, this new policy will have a significant impact. It was noted that these changes will impact conversations with cities, towns, and counties regarding scoping of projects and cost sharing.

Several members thanked Foldesi for participating in the workgroup to highlight rural transportation needs. It is anticipate the new policy will benefit local communities and reduce cost share costs for them and will have project delivery benefits.

It was also acknowledged that there are concerns for rural transportation systems especially when looking at projects in the CHIP and the funding available. Bryan Anderson noted that this is the first time putting together an ATIP without a finalized federal transportation bill. He acknowledged with a set of unknowns, having projects that may be able to absorb federal funds if increased will benefit the district. Anderson noted the IJA bill is set to expire this fall and we don't know FY2027 federal funding levels.

JinYeene Neumann noted that Carlton County had been approved to absorb Itasca and Pine County's federal funds in 2027 and inquired if one of both of those projects should instead be left untouched in FY 2027. Karin Grandia, Itasca County, noted the Itasca project is near Grand Raids and could be put back in the STIP for FY2027 if needed. Derek Fredrickson requested that next steps involve communications between Carlton, Itasca, Pine County and State Aid to develop a course of action, and Scott Johnson requested that he is apprised of a decision as soon as possible. Follow up, Carlton County will continue to absorb Itasca County's federal funds and Pine County will keep their project federalized.

Travis Houle inquired if this overall discussion of cost participation, or any particulars may require an action item at an upcoming meeting of the NEMNATP and Jim Foldesi noted that as he is part of the Steering Committee, he will advise following next steps by MnDOT anticipated in March.

10. FY 2026 Federal Aid Spreadsheet Review

Derek Fredrickson, MnDOT D1 State-aid, drew meeting participants attention to the FY2026 Federal Aid spreadsheet. He invited any questions. He reminded all roadway managers that April 1st is the deadline to

get all Project Memos to Jeff Madill. Madill noted that some are in, but many projects are not yet submitted. He encouraged those working with consultants to encourage those folks to get Project Memos completed and submitted.

11. ARDC Workplan 2026 Updates

Travis Houle, ARDC provided project updates for current projects under the regional transportation workplan. He reiterated his work on Functional Classification. Michelle Pierson provided updates for ARDC's work with the Gitchi-Gami State Trail. Houle then provided updates on work with several scenic byway councils including Avenue of the Pines, North Shore Scenic Drive, Superior National Forest Scenic Byway, and upcoming work in collaboration with Headwaters RDC and Northwest MN RDC on an update to the Waters of the Dancing Sky Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. Houle also shared updates about ARDC's facilitation of the pedestrian/bike counter program and invited any entities desiring counts to be completed this year to reach out to Carson Polomis at ARDC at cpolomis@ardc.org. Additional information is included in Houle's slide deck that he has provided to meeting participants and invitees.

12. MIC Project Updates

Eli Norlander, Transportation Planner at the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council provided updates about the MIC's proposed projects awarded STBG program funding for FY2030 to include a reconstruction project on Hermantown Road and a project on 4th Street in downtown Duluth. Norlander also noted projects the MIC has selected to receive FY2028-FY2030 Carbon Reduction funds for the metropolitan area set aside to include a sidewalk project on CSAH 56 in Hermantown. Norlander also highlighted the MIC's current work on the Duluth-Superior Safety Action Plan which as the goal to reduce and eventually eliminate serious injuries and death from traffic crashes. He noted this plan is in it's second phase which as included garnering support from local leaders, and listening sessions and focus groups in the community. Ron Chicka, MIC Director, also noted current work on evaluating functional classification updates in the MPO region.

13. MnDOT Updates

Erika Shepard, MnDOT D1 Corridor Planner, provided updates on several corridor studies including that there will be an Open House on 2/26/2026 in Schroeder for the Hwy 61 Little Marais – Tofte study. More info may be found here: <https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/hwy61corridorstudy/littlemaraistofte>

Shepard also noted that there is a Hwy45/210 study kicking off in Carlton with an open house anticipated in early to mid-March. More info here: <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/d1/projects/hwy45-hwy210-corridor-study/>

The North Shore Resiliency Study's team will be holding a kick-off meeting in mid-February.

Shepard also noted that there are two studies in development stages to look at the urban sections of Highway 2 (which will be influenced by the current work ARDC is conducting with the Floodwood Safe Routes to Schools Plan) and a study for Mall Drive/Central Entrance Area.

14. Member Concerns/Future Agenda Topics/Round Robin Discussion

Scott Johnson, D1 reiterated the need for road managers and project managers to get project memos, and project numbers, and STIP descriptions to get Paige Holte, Jeff Madill, and Scott Johnson as soon as possible.

Chair Foldesi called the meeting adjourned at 11:57am.

The next hybrid meeting of the Northeast MN ATP will be held on Wednesday, April 8, 2026 either online via MS Teams or at the Virginia Public Works Training Center Building located at 7823 Hwy 135, Virginia, MN 55792.

***Bold print denotes need for action**