



Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership Meeting

April 8, 2026 @ 10:00 am*

Virginia Public Works Training Center (7823 Highway 135, Virginia, MN 55792) or via MS Teams

SUMMARY

Members in attendance:

Bryan Anderson, Sarah Ciochetto, Jason DiPiazza, Jim Foldesi, Derek Fredrickson, Karin Grandia, Duane Hill, Jason Hollinday, Nicole Klosner, Mark LeBrun, JinYeene Neumann, Trent Nicholson, Brandon Nurmi, Bri Patton, Dan Reed, Beth Ann Teskey, John Welle, Debra White

Guests in attendance:

Trish Crego, Sandra Davey, Paige Holte, Travis Houle, Scott Johnson, Michael Kalnbach, Sergius Phillips, Michelle Pierson, Eli Norlander, Erik Rudeen, Erika Shepard, Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver

1. Call to Order

Chair Jim Foldesi welcomed attendees. Travis Houle, ARDC reviewed meeting protocols. Michelle Pierson reviewed attendance procedures. Chair Foldesi called the meeting to order at 10:02am and welcomed attendees.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary:

A motion to approve the February 11, 2026 meeting summary was made by Karin Grandia/Jason Hollinday. No discussion. Motion carries.

3. Comments from Citizens Present

No comments were brought forward.

4. Small Cities Update (Bryan Anderson - MnDOT)

Bryan Anderson reviewed presented that showcased 2027-2030 Small Cities Funds and reviewed the discussion that took place at the February ATP meeting.

Discussion including reviewing the plan for 2027 process. It was noted the 2028 had no anticipated impacts. In 2029 it was noted two projects could face nominal impacts. In 2030, it was also anticipated that there were no impacts. Discussion about new de minimus clauses and impacts to small cities was had. It was noted due to structural changes, the Small Cities Funding source may be able to be discontinued in the future. Jim Foldesi reviewed each county and which projects may be impacted. Karin Grandia noted that Cohasset is not a State-Aid City and could therefore still benefit from a program like this as an example from Itasca County. Discussion noted that perhaps the \$250,000 annual program could be discontinued, but case by case instances could be considered in the future.

A motion to discontinue the regular small-cities set aside of \$250,000 per year beginning in Federal FY2028 was made by Karin Grandia/John Welle. Motion carried.

Scott Johnson asked if the ATP would like to re-allocate as draft STIP needs to be submitted next week. Members concurred that they should evaluate the 2028-2030 funds by program year and make motions to support re-allocations. It was noted that if there were projects already identified, it could be that the \$250,000 be split between the four projects as one idea.

In looking at the FY2028 Program, Karin Grandia noted that Itasca County has a large project that could absorb the \$250,000.

A motion to reallocate the FY2028 Small Cities funds in the amount of \$250,000 to SP031-604-012 /Jim Foldesi /JinYeene Neumann. No Discussion. Motion carries.

In evaluating 2029 projects, Jason DiPiazza noted that Lake County could absorb the funds into its project.

A motion to reallocate the FY2029 Small Cities funds in the amount of \$250,000 to SP 038-615-013 was made by Karin Grandia/JinYeene Neumann. No discussion.

Derek Fredrickson inquired about the evaluating the 2030 project. A discussion which acknowledged that projects for Carlton/Cook/Pine and St. Louis were currently recognized in 2030.

A motion to reallocate the FY2030 Small Cities funds by splitting the \$250,000 four ways and awarding

A motion to split \$250,000 in FY2030 Small Cities funds to each of the four counties in the amount of \$62,500 to each of the four projects Carlton CSAH 6, Cook CSAH 12, St. Louis CSAH 21, Pine CSAH 61 was made by Mark LeBrun/Karin Grandia. No discussion. Motion carries.

Discussion next touched on the FY2027 projects Bryan Anderson highlighted at the beginning of this discussion.

A motion was made by Jason DiPiazza/Jason Holliday to approve the federal FY2027 projects as noted on Bryan Anderson's presentation to include \$25,600 awarded to Two Harbors,

\$22,400 to Proctor, and the remaining balance of \$225,000 to be allocated to SLC 069-604-087. No discussion. Motion carries.

5. Draft ATIP Review (Travis - ARDC / Bryan Anderson - MnDOT)

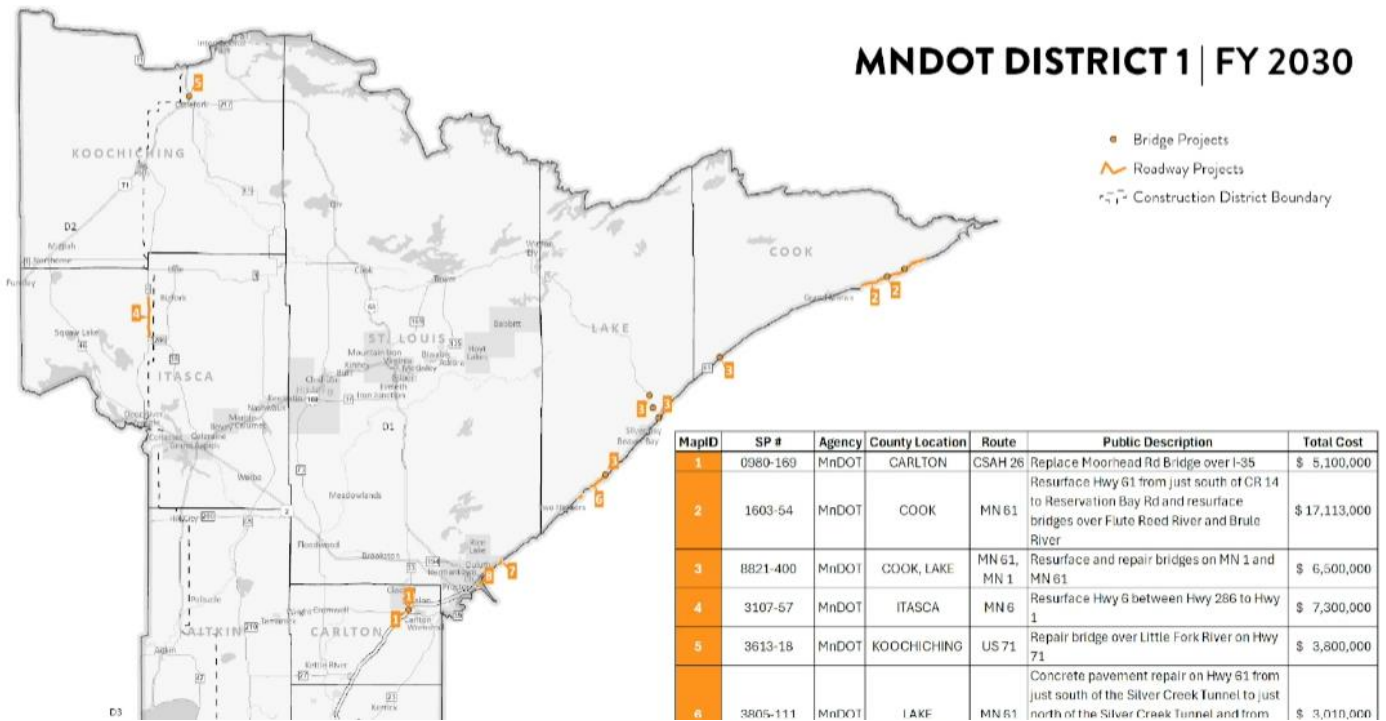
Bryan Anderson noted that this is a DRAFT, we have one more week. After discussion, Bryan Anderson is seeking NEMNATP approval of this draft, with the understanding there may be some changes within the next week. Anderson called attention to the matrix highlighting the draft ATIP which will be sent to members.

Anderson showcased a slide of MnDOT Funding Targets that showed new guidance for 2027-2030 as seen below:

MnDOT Funding Targets		
New guidance: 2027-2030	Last year: 2026-2029	Difference:
<u>2027: \$84,021,000</u>	<u>\$82,560,000</u>	<u>+\$1,461,000</u>
<u>2028: \$85,350,000</u>	<u>\$85,090,000</u>	<u>+\$260,000</u>
<u>2029: \$84,881,000</u>	<u>\$82,020,000</u>	<u>+\$2,861,000</u>
<u>2030: \$85,828,000</u>	<u>\$118,000,000(CHIP target)</u>	<u>-\$32,172,000</u>

Anderson highlighted the map showing FY 2030 projects as seen below. He noted that much of the focus on North shore/Duluth area.

MNDOT DISTRICT 1 | FY 2030



Carbon Reduction Program Residual Funding (Bryan Anderson – MnDOT)

Anderson noted that at the last NEMNATP meeting, approved FDL project CRP in 2029. There was \$160,000 left over in a set-aside. Anderson noted that while this could be kept in a set-aside, it would be difficult to solicit for such a small amount of money. In evaluating the program, Anderson noted that another project in the 2029 CRP program, a trail project in Mille Lacs along Hwy 65 could use additional funds due to an increased project scope. Anderson inquired of the Partnership if the Partnership would support him reaching out to the Mille Lacs Band to inquire about this project. Should the Mille Lacs Band be interested, they could be invited to request those \$160,000 funds. That request could be brought back to the Partnership for consideration at the July meeting of the NEMNATP. Several members noted support for reaching out to Mille Lacs Band.

In consideration of the draft ATIP, Jim Foldesi inquired if this would be the portion of the agenda to discuss the current situation in St. Louis County around federal funding and project labor agreements (PLAs).

Jim Foldesi, St. Louis County Engineer, presented background information about county guidelines for purchasing. He noted the county had long used PLAs for locally funded projects, and had been using PLAs any time purchases were over \$150,000 for federally funded projects since 2014.

St. Louis County (SLC) filed requests to the FHWA in August. In past years, the County has typically received an approval letter in September or October and then the process proceeds. This year, the county has not received permission to date, and the county has heard it is on an administrative hold.

This has impact on FY2026 projects.

Based on that, Foldesi noted that St. Louis County has been working with MnDOT to seek a one-time solution to this situation. St. Louis County, MnDOT and State Aid began looking for ways to address this issue. A potential solution has been identified that would seek to swap St. Louis County FY2026 federal funds for MnDOT/State Aid FY 2027 funds.

MnDOT would use FY2026 federal funds. Essentially, this would permit SLC to move 2026 projects to 2027. Foldesi acknowledged that this would permit kicking the decision down the road for 9 months, and delaying some projects for one year. In the coming months, if new guidance or laws from the federal government are passed, the County would need to reevaluate procedures to ensure this would not happen again in the future.

There are some other considerations. Foldesi noted that should changes be approved, it would allow SLC to exchange funds with MnDOT/State Aide's 2027 projects for SLC's 2026 projects. Another goal would be to defederalize the Grand Ave project.

Foldesi thanked MnDOT and State Aid. It was acknowledged that this is a rare situation, and a swap like this would not be something sought year after year.

Foldesi presented a matrix showcasing swaps and potential changes:

Rd #	Road Name	Br #	Project Number(s)	Lgth	Work Type	Project Termini/Location	Type	Amount	Funding Description
Construction Year: 2026									
0021			CP 0021-439116 SP 069-621-038	8.5	Reclaim & Overlay	CSAH 21 from TH 169 to TH 135	Federal	\$2,307,000	STBG 2026
							Federal	\$457,000	Add'l 2026 STBG (1-10-25)
							Federal	\$250,000	Add'l 2026 STBG (1-28-25)
							State Aid	\$1,386,000	
							Total:		\$4,400,000
			CP 0000-776409 SP 069-595-008	5.5	RRA Trail	Aurora to Hoyt Lakes segment of the Mesabi Trail	Federal	\$1,170,000	CRP 2026
							Federal	\$475,909	TA 2026
							Other	\$614,091	RRA Funding
							Total:		\$2,260,000
0088	Grant McMahan Blvd		CP 0088-885444 SP 069-688-014	0.1	Repair	CSAH 88 (Grant McMahan Blvd at 500' West of Camp Easton Rd Slide Repair	Federal	\$150,000	Federal FEMA Repair
							Total:		\$150,000
0084	Hwy 84	BR 736	CP 0084-880514 SP 069-684-006	0.1	Bridge Construction	Future Bridge 736, on CSAH 84, over Unnamed Stream, 1.2 Mi east of JCT Hwy 5, 600' long	Federal	\$600,000	PROTECT, FY 2026
							State Aid	\$25,000	
							Total:		\$625,000
0098	Canosia Rd		CP 0098-477576 SP 069-698-017	8.86	Reclaim & Overlay	CR 696 (St Louis River Rd) to CSAH 7 (Industrial Rd)	Federal	\$1	Possible Lk Co 038-602-035 leftovers
							Federal	\$971,750	STBG 2027
							State Aid	\$3,028,250	
							Total:		\$4,000,001
0091	40th Ave W		CP 0091-442363 SP 069-691-034	0.5	Reconstruction	Grand Ave to RR Tracks	Federal	\$2,799,000	STBG 2026
							Federal	\$200,000	2029 Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding
							Local	\$5,000	Local for Street Name Signs
							Other	\$150,000	City of Duluth Storm Sewer
							State Aid	\$2,101,000	
							Total:		\$5,255,000

Discussion also took place in what would happen to FY2027 and FY2028 federal funds. It was also noted that other counties in the state do have PLA requirements for their counties, but each county's guidance is written a bit differently.

A motion made by Duane Hill/John Welle to permit MnDOT to swap 2027 MnDOT funds with St. Louis County's Federal FY 2026 federal funds in the amount of approximately \$6.4M consisting in \$5.8M in STBG and \$600,000 in PROTECT.

The motion further allows St. Louis County to transfer STBG funds from 40th Ave West project to CSAH 21 and CSAH 98 projects. \$2.3M to CSAH 98 and \$500,000 to CSAH 21. This defederalizes the 40th ave west project.

Noted the motion includes un-ACing of CSAH 98 (\$1M) from 2027 to 2027. Motion carries.

Foldesi thanked the Partnership. Duane Hill shared comments about a MnDOT project on the Blatnik Bridge that also had a PLA and shared the process for approval.

Bryan Anderson noted that Transportation Alternative Funds that were AC'ed to 2029 would still need to be addressed. They had been awarded to an SLC project. Anderson inquired if portions of the Airport Road Project could absorb those \$200,000 in TA Funds. Foldesi noted that it would be good to look at TA projects awarded in 2029 and see if they could absorb those \$200,000 in funds first. Anderson noted he would look into this line item, and bring options to the NEMNATP at the July meeting of the body. Trish Crego noted that Hermantown has a 2028 AC project that could absorb those funds if permitted to AC 2029 TA funds to 2028.

At this point in the meeting, Anderson requested the Partnership go back to the topic of the Draft ATIP and requested a motion to approve the draft of the document.

A motion to approve the draft ATIP as presented today by Bryan Anderson was made by John Welle/Jason Hollinday. No discussion. Motion carried.

6. Legislative Update – Erik Rudeen (State) & Sergius Phillips (Federal)

Erik Rudeen, MnDOT, presented several slides showcasing updates with the Minnesota legislative session. Rudeen noted that we are past first and second committee deadlines. April 17th is the 3rd committee/omnibus/finance deadline, then one month left, with the Session ending May 18th. Rudeen highlighted several policy and technical changes in legislation. There are some technical changes in [HF 3926/SF 3988](#), and additional changes in [HF 3749/SF 3824](#). Rudeen also noted that this is a bonding year, and committee deadlines do not apply to bonding bills. He acknowledged that many years a bonding bill does not come together until the end of the session. MnDOT has a proposal for \$200M for Trunk Highway Pavement improvements. More to come on the bonding bill at the end of the session.

Sergius Phillips, MnDOT, presented several slides showcasing legislative updates at the federal level. Phillips touched on the 2026 DHS appropriations, Surface Transportation post-IIJA reauthorization which may see reauthorization language in mid- to late April. Phillips also presented that the 2027 Trump Administration OMB Transportation Budget Request has been released and noted highlights and changes. When asked if he had heard updates about the 2024 National Scenic Byway grant process, Phillips noted he had not heard any updates on that program.

7. ARDC Workplan 2025 (Travis Houle - ARDC)

Travis Houle, ARDC, presented updates on the Functional Classification process. Houle noted he had connected with all jurisdictions who had received a list. For jurisdictions that did not receive a list, if you have any additional suggestions for functional classification changes, please reach out to Houle.

Houle also provided updates about the Gitchi-Gami State Trail, updates with ARDC's work with several Scenic Byway Councils. Houle updated the partnership about a new process to update the Waters of the Dancing Sky Scenic Byway in collaboration with multiple MnDOT districts and Regional Development Organizations. A kick-off meeting is anticipated on May 12th.

Houle and Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver provided an update about work underway by the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council which has a survey open through April 17th about transportation challenges seeking to learn more about ways to improve access to care. The survey may be accessed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2NXCKJJ>

Houle provided an update about ARDC's work on Safe Routes to School planning processes in Floodwood and Duluth.

A slide showcasing the trail counter program was presented including photographs of a new piece of counting equipment. Jurisdictions may request access to trail counting equipment by contacting ARDC staff member Carson Polomis at cpolomis@ardc.org.

8. MnDOT Updates (Bryan Anderson- MnDOT)

Anderson noted that the City of Aitkin and Carlton County had each received Active Transportation Planning Assistance grants. He reminded the partnership that the TED solicitation is a biannual program, and that the next solicitation would be in spring 2027. Anderson also provided updates about the Local Program Partnership noting that the City of Virginia would receive \$1.09M in FY2028 for the 16th St. S. Corridor Project, St. Louis County would receive \$700,000 in FY 2028 for the US Hwy 53/CSAH 131 intersection improvement project, St. Louis County would partner with MnDOT on TH61 and CSAH 50 on intersection improvements with \$1M in FY2029, and Itasca County will receive \$1.12M in FY 2029 for TH 169 at CSAH 61 for intersection improvements.

9. ECRDC Updates (Nicole Klosner – ECRDC)

Nicole Klosner provided an introduction and noted she is serving in the position last held by Penny Simonsen. Klosner Been at ECRDC for 3 months. Open houses during the week of May 19th.

We are kicking off our Bluff Country Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan next week – this is a plan to update the current plan that was completed in 2002 – ECRDC will engage with partners and citizens to update ADA, mapping, marketing, and safety and design strategies

ECRDC assisted members of the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership score the Greater Minnesota Transportation Alternatives Solicitation applications.

The TAC held a meeting and decided on funding for the Local Surface Transportation Block Grant – amounts were divided up between the 2 applicants; Kanabec and Isanti Counties

ECRDC is continuing to work with other members of the District 3 ATP on the Managed Program Funding, and is looking into next steps for Safe Routes to School planning in Hinckley. She will also be working on Functional Classification.

10. Member Concerns/Future Agenda Topics

Sarah Ciochetto, Regional Rail Authority updated the Partnership about Mesabi Trail projects that have CRP and TA grant funding for a segment of trail between Aurora to Hoyt Lakes. Property issues/conservation easements are requiring scoping changes. Ciochetto thanked State Aid for helping evaluate and segment the project to address needs. Federal funds may be applied to paved sections and where a multi-use gravel portion is needed, other funding sources will be used. Hopeful construction will begin this summer. It was noted that as the RRR is project lead, if RRA lets the project impacts due to SLC rules will not apply.

Jason Hollinday noted that Fond du Lac Band of Ojibwe worked with MnDOT and received a federal grant for the Moorhead Road bridge project for design and engineering and noted the good partnership between MnDOT and local units of government.

Jim Foldesi also noted that in Bois Forte the Hwy 77/169 project showcased good partnership between local units of government.

Future agenda topics included the aforementioned potential about CRP and Mille Lacs/Hwy 65 Trail project and what to do with FY29 TA funds. No other topics arose.

11. Round Robin Discussion

Duane Hill informed the Partnership that he will be retiring from MnDOT at the end of August. He anticipates there will be a job posting anticipated soon. Many members offered thanks and congratulations.

It was noted that Duluth will be hosting the National Outdoor Recreation Conference from May 11-14 at the DECC. More info here:

Beth Ann Teskey from ARDC shared that ARDC Planning Division has a posting for a planner position. Posted through April 29th.

Travis Houle shared that the North Shore Management Board is finalizing the North Shore Management Plan and a Coastal Erosion Hazard Mapping project. Planning to approve and publish plan next week.

12. **A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jason DiPiazza/John Welle at 11:51am. Motion carries.**

Bold print denotes action items.

The next meeting of the NEMNATP will be held on July 8, 2026 from 10am-Noon at the Blandin Foundation Offices located at 100 N. Pokegama Ave Grand Rapids MN 55744. Hybrid meeting link will also be sent out ahead of the meeting.