

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 02, 2013

Committee Members Present: Chair Ron Biss, Kjensmo Walker, Margot Imdieke Cross, James Williams, Bob Anderson, Heidi Myhre, Darrell Paulsen, John Lund, Chad McGuire, Colin Stemper, Nichole Villavicencio and Patty Thorsen.

Committee Members Absent: Jerolyn Pofahl

Committee Members Excused: John Schatzlein

Council Staff Present: Erin Ellison, from the Office of Equal Opportunity, Pam Steffen and Rick Carey from Metro Transit, David Russell, Libby Starling, Katie White, Mary Karlsson, Andrew Krueger and Alison Coleman.

Public Present: Claudia Fugile, Kari Sheldon and Mark Hughes.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Biss called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:34 p.m. on Wednesday, October 02, 2013.

Chair Biss introduced two new members of the TAAC committee: Bob Anderson from the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging and Colin Stemper from MN State Council on Disability.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Lund, seconded by Walker to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by McGuire, seconded by Paulsen to approve the minutes of the Wednesday, September 4, 2013 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

BUSINESS & INFORMATION

a. Thrive MSP 2040 Update

Libby Starling spoke to the TAAC committee. She is the project manager for the Council's work on Thrive MSP 2040. Thrive MSP 2040 is fulfilling the Metropolitan Council's statutory role for a comprehensive development guide. They are looking specifically at the aspects of the region that over which the Council has role and authority. They are looking at transportation, the waste water system, regional parks and then housing and economic competitiveness. It does not look at education, social services and workforce development.

Thrive MSP 2040 is the successor to the Regional Development Framework, which was adopted in January 2004. Thrive and the Framework does not operate alone. They give guidance and direction to the set of systems and policy plans that the Council is responsible for. The systems plans are the Transportation Policy Plan, the Water Resources Policy Plan and the Regional Parks Policy Plan. With this cycle, the Council will also be doing a Housing Policy Plan for the first time since 1985. These plans collectively give the guidance and overall direction to all of the local comprehensive plans that all of the cities, townships and counties in the seven county metropolitan region are then responsible for putting together over the course later in the decade.

Thrive or the Framework is simply the tip of a very large planning iceberg containing a great many other documents. Thrive itself is focused on laying out the overall policy direction. Then additional plans will have greater levels of detail as the geography and the topic area become more focused.

They are increasingly thinking of a series of outcomes that the work in Thrive MSP 2040 is adding up to.

- Stewardship: Orderly and economical development of the Twin Cities region. This is for both the natural resources and financial resources.
- Prosperity: Creating and attracting wealth, growth and economic prosperity. The decisions that the Council makes, particularly in terms of our transportation network, the amenities they are creating through the regional park system or the places they are creating through Transit Oriented Development all play a role in creating prosperity and wealth in our region.
- Equity: Connecting all residents to opportunities. Whether that is a range of housing options, transportation options and accessibility to a range of jobs.
- Livability: Ensuring a high quality of life for our region's residents. Both as an end in itself and as a way of attracting people and businesses to our metropolitan region.
- Sustainability: Maintaining vitality over the long term.

Highlighting some key principles for the Council's operation and key principles to pervade the systems and policy plans:

- Integration: Aligning activities across policy areas to address issues. Looking at how the decisions that they make around transit investment influencing household costs around housing and transportation costs. How the transit network contributes to economic competitiveness. The interdependencies across all of the policy areas in which the Council has a role and responsibilities.
- Collaboration: Working together with local governments, stakeholders and regional partners to address shared goals. The Council cannot take things on alone. They can collectively work together to reach goals that no single entity can achieve on their own.
- Accountability: Measuring outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of goals and policies. Ensuring that they are achieving the intended outcomes of the goals and policies so that they can then make adjustments over time on goals and implementations as they become wiser about what works.

Thrive is the place of high level policy direction. They are looking at the area where they are looking at the key place of integration across the policy and systems plans such as the Transportation Policy Plan. The policy plans are where the specifics of the policy detail and criteria and specifics of implementation are. Written comments may be sent to thriveMSP@metc.state.mn.us. They will be scheduling some additional public forums in November. TAAC members will be invited to have input.

b. Update of the Transportation Policy Plan

Mary Karlsson spoke to the TAAC committee. They have added a representative from the MN State Council on Disability to our advisory groups. The Transportation Policy Plan is the region's long range transportation plan. The federal government requires that they have this. It focuses on how they spend the federal transportation funding. They are required to update it every four years. That is why they are now doing this. They want to make sure they are incorporating the direction from Thrive MSP 2040, including those new socio-economic forecasts (job, employment and household forecasts) that are coming out of Thrive.

A new federal transportation bill was passed July of 2012. It is called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century or MAP-21. The Council needs to respond to those with this Transportation Policy Plan update. Some of the key changes in that they are required to have a performance based plan. They are going to show today the start of the framework for that performance based plan and how they are approaching it.

Schedule: January 2013: Began internal staff work concurrent with development of Thrive. March 2013: Kickoff. April 2013 to March 2014: Task force, work group and other stakeholder discussions. Spring 2014: Thrive MSP 2040 adopted. May to July 2014: Draft for public comment to TAC/TAB,

Transportation Committee and the Council. July through September 2014: Public comment on DRAFT 2040 TPP. December 2014: Final plan adoption.

The partners in the TPP update: There is the Policymaker Task Force and the Partner Agency Work Group. The Policymaker Task Force consists of five Council members, three Transportation Advisory Board members, one Counties Transit Improvement Board member, two MnDOT representatives and the Council's MTS Director. It is chaired by Adam Duininck. It provides overall policy guidance for the DRAFT plan. The Partner Agency Work Group is based on Technical Advisory Committee Planning committee, plus other relevant local, regional, state and federal agencies. We have added the DNR and the MN State Council on Disabilities. It provides technical guidance for the DRAFT plan. There are periodic quarterly updates to TAB, TAC, Met Council, MnDOT and the TAAC.

In addition to that there is also a plan for doing outreach and engagement to other stakeholders and the general public. They will start to implement that later this year.

In April, June and July 2013 the meetings of the Partner Agency Work Group and Policy maker Task Force reviewed background information on travel behavior inventory preliminary results, peer regional transportation plans and Thrive MSP 2040. They discussed proposed plan document structure, issues, trends, questions and comments for the update and DRAFT goals and objectives.

The plan is to tell the region's transportation story. How the region travels today from information from the Travel Behavior Inventory. What the region will look like in 20 years – policy direction for the plan. Pulling that information from Thrive MSP 2040. Talking about what outcomes they want to achieve and how to make that happen through strategies, investments and performance measures.

Katie White spoke to the TAAC committee. Under the new federal law, MAP-21, they are required to have a performance based planning framework. For them this framework has taken on the structure of having goals, objectives and strategies. From there they can get into performance measures, targets and an investment plan. The current TPP doesn't have goals and objectives. It just has policies and strategies. That does not meet with what the federal government would qualify as a performance based plan. They have altered the current content and structured it to create this new structure.

Transportation system goals are broad statements, aspirations that describe a desired end state for the transportation system. There are six TPP goal areas:

1. Safety and Security: The regional transportation system is safe and secure for all users.
2. Access to destinations: People and freight are well connected to destinations within the region and beyond using a multi modal transportation system that is reliable, affordable and efficient.
3. Transportation Systems Stewardship: Stewardship of the region's existing and future transportation system is achieved through responsible and strategic asset preservation, maintenance and system operations.
4. Align transportation and land use: Transportation and land use decisions are aligned to support the regional vision for growth and make the best use of public and private investments.
5. Healthy environment: The regional transportation system improves the health and sustainability of communities and protects the natural, cultural and built environments. This includes everything from historic preservation of buildings, airport noise mitigation, etc.
6. Competitive economy: The regional transportation system supports the economic competitiveness and vitality of the region and state. There is a strong connection between the transportation system and the region's desirability for businesses and the workers who work at them.

The objectives represent outcomes that the region will hope to achieve and that stakeholders believe are achievable within the planning horizon of the Transportation Policy Plan. For the Council that means by the year 2040 these are things that can be expected to have happened with the ultimate end result of the goal language. Each goal has between two and six objectives. Under the objectives comes the strategies.

The next steps over the next part of 2013 are to talk about the strategies and get them to a point where the Policymaker Task Force and the Partner Agency Work Group can come to some consensus on an understanding of the content of them. They are moving into the stage for investment plans. How are they planning to spend their money using these strategies to achieve their goals and objectives?

They will also be doing some focused outreach later in 2013 and early in 2014 about these goals and objectives. They will be starting with social media pieces like: "Did you know how much it costs to build a mile of freeway?" How should they prioritize amongst these goals and objectives as they are making these investment decisions?

They have started conversations about Access to Destinations. They have a long list of possible performance measures. They are presenting them for each goal area. Right now their partner agency work group has seen possible performance measures for Safety and Security and for Transportation Systems Stewardship. Now in October they will be bringing them Access to Destinations and Competitive Economy. Some things they are thinking about for performance areas are number of jobs within a 40 minute transit trip. That would count towards transfers. The list includes 40 minute trip via transit or highways to job centers, hospitals and schools.

They are required by the federal government that they have a fiscally constrained scenario in this plan. They have to forecast their revenues during this timeframe out to 2040. Then they have to come up with an investment plan that stays within those revenues.

The other thing they are committed to developing in this plan is a scenario for unfunded priorities. That is currently in the Transportation Policy Plan for both the highway and the transit system. They will be looking at what reasonable additional revenues can they anticipate? Then trying to prioritize what the projects would be under that reasonable revenue scenario. One of the things they can build into the TPP is the outcomes from the Transportation Finance Advisory Committee that the governor convened last year that looked at revenue possibilities for both highways and transit and building off of that work. That is where they plan on starting the revenue discussion.

c. Response to LRV Concerns

Pam Steffen spoke to the TAAC committee. One of the things talked about at the light rail facility was the need to review all the different signage that they have whether it is on the type one or type two trains or on the buses. Pam and Rick Carey put together pictures of the variety of signage they have. The pictures were in the handout. One of the signs said: "Please allow elderly and persons with special needs to use these seats."

Erin Ellison, from the Office of Equal Opportunity, said the bus operators are told that under the law they are required to request passengers to move when they are sitting in the wheelchair area, but they are not to force them to move from that area. When they get into stronger language they could be crossing some lines. They want to be cognizant of the fact that there may be passengers who ride in this area who are disabled or elderly but don't have recognizable disabilities. That is why they have this kind of wording.

Imdieke-Cross said this language is disrespectful and outdated. The word senior is more respectful than elderly.

It depends upon which vehicle you are on that determines which stickers are there and the placement of them. It does vary a little.

There was a sign from a Chicago vehicle that says: "Priority Seating is for customers with disabilities and seniors. Please move when requested." The TAAC committee members liked this sign.

Ellison said that her department has been responsible for handling the initial complaint brought forward by Margot concerning the type two light rail vehicles. It was a complaint advanced through TAAC last month. Based on that complaint as well as the concerns that were raised during the last meeting, they have carefully reviewed the issues concerning the new type two vehicles. Taken into consideration the proposed changes and modifications. It is Metro Transit's position, as well as the Metropolitan Council that they are in full compliance with the law and even exceed ADA standards in some areas.

With that said, it is their goal to provide services and vehicles that accommodate customers who travel on their vehicles for any number of reasons. The conversations that they have had with Margot and with TAAC have certainly underscored that goal and brought to light potential space conflicts that can arise on the trains between passengers. After careful consideration Metro Transit offers to make the following modifications:

- Removal of one three seat flip down structure per vehicle.
- Addition of a stability bar or grab bar in that area
- Metro Transit will put up additional signage that indicates that the area is designated for wheelchairs.

They believe that these modifications will be in the best interest of those passengers who use wheelchairs as well as other mobility devices. When those areas are not in use by persons in wheelchairs and mobility devices, it could benefit other customers such as those traveling with walkers, strollers and even segways.

Rick Carey spoke to the TAAC committee. He is the Assistant Director of Rail Vehicle Maintenance. He was part of the project that procured the type two vehicles. There is labor involved to remove the brackets on the flip up seats. The larger portion of the labor involved is to install the grab bar. There is some engineering involved with Siemens to determine the proper location of the inserts that will mount that bar. There will be modifications made to the covers over the structures where the grab bar will be installed. Plus the labor to complete the manufacture of the grab bars themselves. This is going to be a considerable cost to the Met Council. They are willing to make this offer of a resolution. The cost is approximately \$85,000 to convert the fleet. There is a time estimate of when this can be done. It is going to be in two portions. One is to remove the seats without installing the grab bar at this time. There is engineering time to make the grab bars. That could possibly be done by the third quarter of 2014 on the 59 type two vehicles. The installation of the grab bars would take considerable time. They would implement that when they receive the final engineering and the manufacturing of the parts.

Paulsen addressed the issue of no companion seating in the wheelchair area.

The issue with putting something on the floor is that the type one's have the markings for a designated area but it is built into the tiles of the floor. They found that if they tried to attach any material to the floor after the fact, it came off.

Metro Transit does not intend to remove any of the bike racks.

Chair Biss will email the letter from TAAC to the members for feedback.

Imdieke-Cross said that the letter needs to include the companion seating and the dedicated seating.

Villavicencio will update the letter and send it to the Chair to send to the rest of the TAAC committee.

d. Advertising on Metro Mobility Buses

Due to lack of time, this item was tabled until the November meeting.

MEMBER COMMENT

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Hughes discussed issues he had.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary