

Transportation Advisory Board

of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

DATE: August 8, 2014
TO: TAB
FROM: TAC
PREPARED BY: Carl E. Ohrn
SUBJECT: Comments and Concerns expressed by the TAC on the Corridors of Commerce Program

REQUESTED ACTION: Direct staff to prepare a letter from Chair Hargis to Mark Gieseke with TAB's comments and concerns relative to the Corridors of Commerce Program.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:

In May the TAB sent a letter to MnDOT Commissioner Zelle requesting the opportunity to have input into the next phase of the Corridors of Commerce Program. Mark Gieseke presented to the TAB at its July meeting on the next Corridors of Commerce funding round in 2015. Due to a very long agenda, the TAB did not have time to discuss the program. Chair Hargis asked the TAC if it would forward any comments or concerns it had about the program for the TAB's consideration at its August 20 meeting.

Recorded below are the TAC comments and concerns following a presentation made by Mark Nelson, MnDOT, at its August 6th meeting:

- The TAB should know that the funding for the program in 2014 and 2015 is \$31.5 million compared to \$300 million in 2013. The legislature programmed \$6.5 million in Fiscal Year 2014 for projects outside the Metro Area and another \$25 million for Fiscal Year 2015. These funds will be split approximately 50/50 for projects in the Metro Area and Greater Minnesota.
- This year the funds can be used to get projects "ready", including design work and right-of-way acquisition, not just construction.
- Preservation and freight movement improvements will be the emphasis area for the next round of projects.
- Any interchange project in the Metro Area has to go through the Interchange Review Process. This should take place prior to final project selection. Preparing a project for this review should be made eligible for funding this year.
- MnDOT should make it clear to the public that this is not a formal solicitation. MnDOT should be as explicit as possible about the steps in the process and the schedule. When and how can the area transportation partners and other stakeholders recommend projects to MnDOT's Commissioner?
- While MnDOT's Commissioner will make the selection of projects, anything that can make the selection process more objective, for example using quantifiable criteria, would be beneficial.