

**Transportation Advisory Board**  
of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

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**ACTION TRANSMITTAL**

No. 2012-38

**DATE:** October 31, 2012  
**TO:** TAC  
**FROM:** TAC Planning and TAC Funding & Programming  
**SUBJECT:** Comments on “A” Minor Arterial System Evaluation Study Final Draft Report  
**MOTION:** That the TAB accept and recommend Metropolitan Council accept the “A” Minor Arterial System Evaluation Final Report

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:** The TAB developed and in partnership with local road authorities implemented the “A” Minor Arterial administrative classification system in the early 1990s, more than 20 years ago. On the region’s behalf, the Metropolitan Council initiated the “A” Minor Arterial System Evaluation Study given the amount of time passed since the last comprehensive study of the system, the availability of new data and analysis tools, and the active traffic management (ATM) and lower cost/high benefit project directions set in the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* (Nov. 2010). The Metropolitan Council (Council) initiated the “A” Minor Arterial System Evaluation Study in October 2011 and performed it under the advisement of a Project Management Team, Technical Steering Committee, the MnDOT Capital Improvements Committee, and the TAB Policy Committee. The study’s Draft Final Report was made available for TAC, TAB, and Council Transportation Committee review and comment on September 28, 2012. Council staff is scheduled to answer questions and accept comments at TAC, TAB, and Council Transportation Committee meetings in September, October, and November 2012.

**RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY:** The “A” Minor Arterial administrative classification system was developed and implemented to prioritize local investments in these interconnected, multimodal roads that the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* (Nov. 2010) says local authorities shall provide<sup>1</sup> to support the Metropolitan Highway (Principal Arterial) and local street systems. From 1993 to 2009, the TAB also dedicated approximately \$22 million per year (not adjusted for inflation) of the Regional Solicitation’s federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding to “A” Minor Arterials.

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<sup>1</sup> Policy 9: Highway Planning; Strategy 9e. Interconnected Roadway Network

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## Overall Comments

### TAC Planning

- The Metropolitan Council and TAB should maintain the “A” Minor Arterial administrative classification and its four types (Augmentor, Reliever, Expander, and Connector) because they have allowed the region and its partners to monitor regional investments in the Minor Arterial system. Surprisingly to some, the “A” Minor Arterial administrative classification and its four types (Augmentor, Reliever, Expander, and Connector) has not served as a tool to push development outward.
- The Metropolitan Council and TAB should debate if the past pattern for allocating regional funding toward the Minor Arterial System is appropriate given current needs and emerging trends, and the Metropolitan Council should work with local partners to collect the appropriate data to meaningfully support this conversation.
- The region should focus on funding all of the “A” Minor Arterial system locally. The region needs to either raise additional revenues to improve the system or lower our expectations for it.
- The Region should do more, meaningful economic development analyses and the Region should more regularly ask itself, “How do we want to grow?” Identifying and approaching the region’s economic development issues needs to be an emphasis in Thrive MSP 2040 and the 2040 TPP.

## Specific Comments and Recommendations for the Final Report

### “A” Minor System and Policy Recommendations

DRAFT Recommendation	TAC Planning	TAC Funding & Programming
<p>1. Council and TAB should continue to recognize the importance of the “A” Minor system and its strong connection to regional goals and policy and clarify its purpose in policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> Double check the percentages reported for Bus Miles Traveled (p.5; Response: double-checked and confirmed correct.)</li> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> Include the text from the Regional Development Framework &amp; TPP in an attachment to clearly demonstrate the cause &amp; effect relationship of the policy (p.5)</li> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> Give an example of how the TPP should more fully explain the purpose of the “A” Minor Arterial system and the difference between “A” and “B” Minor Arterials (p.6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “B” Minor Arterial system designation does not seem valuable.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Council and TAB should maintain four types of “A” Minors and update their definitions in policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> The four types should be maintained and definitions updated, including revisiting the definitions of developed and developing urban areas as part of Thrive MSP 2040</li> <li>• In updating the definitions, the Council and TAB should be aware that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some see value in different “A” Minor designations between and beyond I-494 and I-694. For example Augmentors located between I-494 and 694 and Expanders located beyond I-494 and 694.</li> <li>○ Some recommend Augmentors should be within the developed area, including beyond I-494 and I-694.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the four types of “A” Minors are redefined, the updated definitions should include reference to land use density.</li> <li>• Augmentors were added as a category so the areas between I-494 and 694 would have an opportunity to compete for some share of the Regional Solicitation’s federal funding.</li> </ul>
<p>3. The Council and TAB should complete further analysis of [the MnDOT-Co “A” Minor] investment imbalance and in the next TPP develop strategies for building, managing, and improving all of the Regional Highway System within the context of all transportation system needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to MAP-21, MnDOT will need measures to monitor performance on all State [Trunk] Highways. The targets will be set locally – and these roads are likely to get worse, not better -- but the requirement to establish performance measures for the state system is federal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> Strike, “... as appropriate within the context of all transportation system needs.” from the recommendation.</li> <li>• There are two ways to address the funding imbalance observed: increase funding or transfer MnDOT “A” Minor Arterials to the Counties or Cities.</li> </ul>

<b>“A” Minor Regional Solicitation Evaluation Recommendations</b>		
<b>DRAFT Recommendation</b>	<b>TAC Planning</b>	<b>TAC Funding &amp; Programming</b>
4. Met Council and TAB should continue directing federal funds through the Regional Solicitation process to the “A” Minor Arterial system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much new roadway capacity does the region need given future development trends? Will we start to see more concentration of development around job centers, for example?</li> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> The statement in the call-out box in the middle of p. 15’s margin is cut off.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>
5. TAB should continue to use the four types of “A” Minor Arterials to help target federal funding to different parts of the Regional Highway System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VMT is not an appropriate tool by itself for targeting funding because it does not capture congestion or the number of person trips taken. An estimate of person throughput is a better measure, even though precise measurement of daily person throughput is not yet feasible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “B” Minor Arterial system designation does not seem valuable</li> </ul>
6. As part of the Regional Solicitation Evaluation, the TAB and TAC should: (A) Evaluate MAP-21’s effects, (B) Evaluate increasing points for cost effectiveness, (C) Balance max. grant award with funding many projects, (D & E) Find ways to make applying & reporting easier, including online tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation:</i> Clarify what is being recommended in item (c) regarding the Regional Solicitation maximum grant award, consideration of increasing the maximum?</li> <li>• There is a relationship between (a) and (c). With fewer federal resources available, the region needs to look at local capacity to fund the “A” Minor system. The Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) is one potential model for local highway funding. The region should investigate if other MPOs (e.g., Denver) are doing something along the lines of the CTIB for highways that is more aggressive than our region’s approach with the Regional Solicitation.</li> <li>• There is a relationship between (b) and (d). Emphasis on analysis of the full, multi-modal benefits and costs of a project (look to Western Europe for examples) requires more effort on the part of project sponsors and should be approached cautiously. These recommendations appear to suggest a change of emphasis from answering a lot of different questions on paper to more easily answering fewer, very meaningful questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of MAP-21 should keep the Regional Solicitation’s STP program whole based on 2012 funding levels</li> <li>• It is not clear why this set of recommendations is a product of the “A” Minor Arterial System Evaluation Study.</li> </ul>

**“A” Minor Regional Solicitation Evaluation Recommendations (Continued)**

<b>DRAFT Recommendation</b>	<b>TAC Planning</b>	<b>TAC Funding &amp; Programming</b>
7. The TAB and TAC should define “Scope Changes”, roles, responsibilities, and the change process and communicate them to partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should “Scope Change” be determined based on the project purpose/intent or project construction elements?</li> <li>FHWA has said, “We don’t fund intent, we fund pieces of construction projects.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>
8. The TAB should showcase completed projects partially funded through the Regional Solicitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>

**“A” Minor Other Recommendations**

<b>DRAFT Recommendation</b>	<b>TAC Planning</b>	<b>TAC Funding &amp; Programming</b>
9. Met Council and TAB should forward this study’s information to agencies completing other studies affecting the “A” Minor system and should monitor them to respond to potential effects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Met Council and TAB should acknowledge the Minor Arterial system is the back up to the Principal Arterial system and produce a study of the implications of current policies for Principal Arterials on Minor Arterial system use and funding needs.</li> </ul>
10. Met Council and TAB should assemble data on “A” Minor freight, bicycle, and pedestrian use and investments as well as support for the economy. Met Council and TAB should consider the data and clarify multi-modal policy for the Regional Highway System, if necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The committee endorses this recommendation. The region needs to better understand the multi-modal and economic relationships of “A” Minors, and what is emerging for those relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>

<b>“A” Minor Other Recommendations (Continued)</b>		
<b>DRAFT Recommendation</b>	<b>TAC Planning</b>	<b>TAC Funding &amp; Programming</b>
11. MnDOT and Met Council should make this study’s database available to all agencies and decide how to maintain it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>
12. Met Council and TAB should evaluate if funding data by functional classification is valuable, and if it is work to deliver a more simple & consistent system for collecting it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment or recommended revisions.</li> </ul>

The Final Draft Executive Summary and Report are attached.

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## ROUTING

<b>TO</b>	<b>ACTION REQUESTED</b>	<b>DATE COMPLETED</b>
TAC Planning	Review & Recommend	October 11, 2012
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	October 18, 2012
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	
TAB Policy Committee	Review & Recommend	Committee suspended
TAB Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	Committee suspended
Transportation Advisory Board	Review, Recommend, & Accept	
Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee	Review & Accept	

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