
*Transportation Advisory Board
of the Metropolitan Council*

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 1, 2021
9:00 A.M.**

Members Present: Jon Solberg, Brian Isaacson, Joe MacPherson, Lyndon Robjent, Erin Laberee, Chad Ellos, Lisa Freese, Emily Jorgensen, Andrew Witter, Elaine Koutsoukos, Steve Peterson, Michael Larson, Adam Harrington, Andrew Emanuele, Innocent Eyoh, Bridget Rief, Danny McCullough, Karl Keel, Ken Ashfeld, Charlie Howley, Paul Oehme, Michael Thompson, Marc Culver, Robert Ellis, Jim Kosluchar, Jenifer Hager, Bill Dermody, Paul Kurtz

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Solberg at 9:03 a.m. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via video conference.

2. Approval of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda with no changes. Therefore, no vote was needed.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 4, 2021, meeting was presented to the Committee for consideration. A motion to approve the August minutes was made by Ms. Koutsoukos and seconded by Ms. Jorgensen. Motion carried.

(Meeting minutes for the March 4, 2020, minutes will be presented for approval at a future committee meeting.)

4. TAB Report

TAB Coordinator Ms. Koutsoukos provided a summary of the August 18, 2021 meeting. Ms. Koutsoukos noted that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) had adopted the Clean Cars Standard, which will go into effect for model year 2025 vehicles.

5. Consent Items

Chair Solberg noted that, due to the number of items on the agenda, this meeting would include six items on consent. All six of the items had been discussed in detail during previous meetings and there was general consensus on these issues. Mr. Isaacson made a motion to approve the consent items except for items 2021-27 and 2021-28, which will be discussed in more detail with the other action items. Mr. Keel seconded this motion. The motion to approve items 2021-31, 2021-33, 2021-34, and 2021-36 carried.

a. 2021-27: 2022 Regional Solicitation: Unique Projects Category Details

Mr. Isaacson noted that the unique projects category may put policymakers and TAB members in an awkward position and suggested that TAC offer a joint session between TAB and TAC to allow TAC to provide technical guidance and suggestions as they evaluate unique project applications. A motion to approve the item was made by Mr. Isaacson and seconded by Mr. MacPherson. Motion carried.

b. 2021-28: 2022 Regional Solicitation: Modal Funding Ranges

Mr. Isaacson noted the established funding ranges provide modal flexibility. Mr. Isaacson suggested that TAC make it clear that the purpose of the flexibility in the ranges is to allow a broad range of projects in the cohort in which TAB will end up choosing from. A flexible range helps ensure that the strongest project applications are provided to the TAB prior to the funding midpoint being accounted for. The ranges would be used to select the strongest suite of potential projects that fit into the modal funding ranges.

Mr. Peterson noted that TAB is generally focused on the midpoint and trying to come as close to the midpoint as possible. However, the ranges were provided to allow flexibility in the project selection process. The Committee noted that this should be conveyed to TAB as a reminder that the federal money is flexible.

Mr. Isaacson made a motion to recommend approval of the item and provide a summary of the comments to TAB for their consideration. Seconded by Mr. Eyoh. Motion carried.

6. Committee Reports

1. Executive Committee (Jon Solberg, TAC Chair)

Chair Solberg reported that the Executive Committee met prior to the TAC meeting. The committee discussed the details of items the agenda.

2. TAC Action Items

a. 2021-38: Streamlined TIP Amendment: MnDOT Security Gate

Joe Barbeau of MTS presented this item, a request from MnDOT to amend both the 2021-2024 and 2022-2025 TIPs to install an automatic gate and associated crime prevention features for nighttime closure of the Burns Avenue overlook in St. Paul. Mr. Barbeau noted that this was state-funded and not funded through the Regional Solicitation.

A motion to recommend approval of the item was made by Mr. Kosluchar and seconded by Mr. Keel. Motion carried.

3. Planning Committee (Emily Jorgensen, Chair)

a. 2021-23: 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

David Burns of MTS presented on this item, noting that the UPWP is prepared by Council staff annually and serves as an application for transportation planning funds from FHWA and FTA. The draft included in the packet was not reflective of public comment, which had not been completed.

Mr. Burns explained that the UPWP outlines all the work activities that will be performed by the MPO for calendar-year 2022, including both reoccurring work as well as specific products. It reflects the priorities and goals expressed in the Transportation Policy Plan and input from stakeholders and the public. Mr. Burns outlined the work categories and their associated activities and provided an overview of the budget.

A motion to recommend adoption of the item was made by Mr. Peterson and seconded by Mr. Keel. Motion carried.

b. 2021-25: Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) & Regional Bicycle Barrier Update for the Regional Solicitation

TAC Planning Chair Jorgensen presented this item. Ms. Jorgensen explained that local and state agencies responded to a request to propose new additions or changes to the RBTN or to propose new regional bicycle barriers. These were reviewed in-depth by the Bicycle-Pedestrian Peer Discussion Group. The purpose of this item is to accept the RBTN with the adjustments and accept the regional bicycle barriers for inclusion in the 2022 Regional Solicitation.

A motion to recommend approval of the changes was made by Mr. McCullough and seconded by Mr. MacPherson. Motion carried.

c. 2021-25: MnDOT Functional Classification System Changes

Mr. Peterson presented this item. He noted that MnDOT recently led a comprehensive review of the functional classification of all roadways within the seven-county metro area. A roadway's functional classification is important in that helps to define the role of a roadway in the overall transportation network. It also dictates which roadways are potentially eligible for federal funding.

Mr. Peterson noted that overall there were minimal changes to the Principal Arterial network; minor changes to the A-Minor system; and many of the roadways classified as Other Arterials were changed to either a Major or Minor Collector.

A motion to recommend the Council to administratively modify the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan to include the changes was made by Mr. Isaacson and seconded by Mr. Robjent. Motion carried.

d. 2021-26: MnDOT Functional Classification A-Minor Arterial Changes

Mr. Peterson presented this item, which was a follow-on to 2021-25. During the comprehensive update of the functional classification system, any roadway that was designated by MnDOT as a Minor Arterial must be classified by the Council into one of four A-Minor subclassifications. These subclassifications are unique to the Council. Overall, the net change to the A-Minor system is an overall decrease of 17 miles, or about one percent of the system. A-Minors were assigned a subclassification based on land use and the role they play in the overall system.

A motion to approve the A-Minor subclassification recommendations was made by Mr. Robjent and seconded by Mr. MacPherson. Motion carried.

4. Funding and Programming Committee (Michael Thompson, Chair)

a. 2021-37: Scope Change/TIP Amendment Request for Hennepin County Signal Revisions and Pedestrian Improvements

TAC Funding and Programming Chair Thompson introduced this item, noting that the Funding and Programming Committee unanimously recommended approval of the scope change with Hennepin County retaining the full allocation of federal funds associated with this project. Mr. Barbeau provided background information on the amendment and explained that the item included both a requested change in the scope of the project and a TIP amendment request. As the proposed scope change fulfills the intent of the original application and projects elements are being completed in the project, along with another project, the Funding and Programming Committee recommended that no federal funds be removed from the project.

A motion that TAC recommend the TAB to approve the request was made by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Keel. Motion carried.

b. 2021-30: 2022 Regional Solicitation: Funding Category Minimum and Maximum Funding Amounts

Mr. Peterson presented this item, highlighting two changes recommended by the TAC Funding and Programming Committee. The first was to increase the Traffic Management Technologies minimum federal award from \$250,000 to \$500,000. The second was the increase the Pedestrian Facilities maximum federal award from \$1 million to \$2 million. Mr. Peterson also noted that TAB is likely to explore a reduction in the Strategic Capacity maximum award from \$10 million to \$7 million. The maximum award for Strategic Capacity projects was increased from \$7 million to \$10 million for the 2020 Regional Solicitation.

Mr. MacPherson commented that the increase from \$7 million to \$10 million was a substantial benefit to the region, as Strategic Capacity projects often serve as a catalyst for additional projects. He expressed support for the maximum award to be kept at \$10 million. The Committee discussed how roadway projects also include bicycle and pedestrian facilities and often have a safety benefit.

A motion to recommend adoption of the funding category minimum and maximum federal funding amounts was made by Mr. Eyoh and seconded by Mr. Isaacson. Motion carried.

c. 2021-32: 2022 Regional Solicitation: Measures and Scoring Guidance

Mr. Peterson presented this item, noting two recommended changes from the Funding and Programming Committee. The first change was associated with the Risk Assessment criterion. Funding and Programming recommended changing the proposed layout criteria to accommodate an additional point value for 75% completion. The second recommended change was associated with Public Engagement in the Safe Routes to School category. The result of this change would be an increase in weighting to the Risk Assessment category by eliminating a redundant public outreach scoring measure.

A motion to recommend approval of the changes was made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Harrington. Motion carried.

d. 2021-35: 2022 Regional Solicitation: Release for Public Comment

Mr. Peterson presented this item, which recommended the release of the proposed 2022 Regional Solicitation application for public comment. A motion to recommend the release was made by Mr. Keel and seconded by Mr. Robjent. Motion carried.

6. Information Items

1. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Public Comment Summary

Sara Maaske of Council Communications provided a summary of the results of the public input received regarding the 2022-2025 TIP to the committee. Ms. Maaske noted that there were over 475 comments provided by nearly 150 individual commentors. She explained the methods for reaching out the public, which included email blasts, social media, newspaper advertising, and a public meeting.

Major themes from the public input included a push for increased focus on climate change and mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and a desire to increase funding to non-highway modes.

7. Agency Updates

No updates provided.

8. Other Business and Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m.

Prepared by:

Dave Burns