

# Minutes

## TAB Technical Advisory Committee



**Meeting date:** February 05, 2025

**Time:** 9:00 AM

**Location:** Council Chambers

### Members present:

- Anoka Co – Joe MacPherson (Chair)
- Carver Co – Lyndon Robjent
- Dakota Co – Erin Laberee
- Hennepin Co – Chad Ellos
- Ramsey Co – Brian Isaacson
- Scott Co – Craig Jenson
- Washington Co – Lyssa Leitner
- Extended Urban Area – Chad Hausmann

- Chanhassen – Charlie Howley
- Eagan – Russ Matthys
- Eden Prairie – Robert Ellis
- Fridley – Jim Kosluchar
- Lakeville – Paul Oehme
- Brooklyn Park – Dan Ruiz
- Plymouth – Michael Thompson
- Woodbury – Chris Hartzell
- Minneapolis Engineering – Jenifer Hager
- Minneapolis Planning – Kathleen Mayell
- Saint Paul Engineering – Nick Peterson
- Saint Paul Planning – Reuben Collins

- Met Council MTS – Steve Peterson
- Met Council CD – Patrick Boylan
- TAB – Elaine Koutsoukos
- MnDOT – Molly McCartney
- MPCA – Innocent Eyoh
- MAC – Bridget Rief
- STA – Matt Fyten
- Metro Transit – Adam Harrington
- Freight – Shelly Meyer
- DEED – Colleen Eddy
- MnDNR – Vacant
- Bicycle – Kyle Sobota
- Pedestrian Modal Rep. – Mackenzie Turner Bargaen
- FHWA – Josh Pearson (ex-officio)

= present, E = excused

### Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Joe MacPherson called the regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee to order just after 9:00 a.m.

### Agenda approved

Chair MacPherson noted that a vote is not needed for approval of the agenda unless a committee member offers an amendment to the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

### Approval of minutes

It was moved by Molly McCartney, MnDOT, and seconded by Craig Jenson, Scott Co., to approve the minutes of January 8, 2025, meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

### Public comment on committee business

None.

## TAB Report

Koutsoukos reported on January 22, 2025, Transportation Advisory Board meeting.

### Business – Committee reports

#### *Executive Committee (Joe MacPherson, Chair)*

Chair MacPherson reported on the February 5 TAC Executive Committee meeting before mentioning the March meeting will be virtual and the next in-person meeting will be in April.

1. [2025-08](#): 2025-2028 Streamlined TIP Amendment: MnDOT's CSAH 83 Dual Turn Lane Study Consultant Services (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning, summarized the action, which is a MnDOT request to amend the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) to add consultant services for a study of dual turn lanes on CSAH 83 (Canterbury Rd) near US 169 in Shakopee.

Lyndon Robjent, Carver Co., asked why an amendment is needed for this project type. Barbeau stated that because the project includes federal funds it needs to be added to TIP. McCartney added that most consulting work is funded with state funds and doesn't have to be in the TIP, but due to it being funded federally, this project must be included.

Motion by Robjent and seconded by Nick Peterson that the TAC recommend that the TAB approve an amendment of the 2025-2028 TIP to add consultant services for a study of dual turn lanes on CSAH 83 (Canterbury Rd) near US 169 in Shakopee. **Motion carried.**

2. [2025-09](#): 2025-2028 Streamlined TIP Amendment: MnDOT's I-394 Auxiliary Lane, Bridge, Retaining Wall, Signal, and Intersection Modification Project (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning, summarized the action, which is a MnDOT request to amend the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) to increase the cost of its I-394 auxiliary lane, bridge repair, retaining wall, signal, and intersection modification project.

Chair MacPherson said scope and cost has changed as project has grown. Adam Harrington, Metro Transit, asked for clarification on the location of the Auxiliary lanes. McCartney stated that the project involves auxiliary lanes between Xenia and Louisiana avenues, with project limits extending from Pennsylvania to Xenia avenues. The auxiliary lane itself is less than 1/3 of a mile. During the scoping phase, MnDOT identified the need for a full shoulder for the safety of people pulling over on the side of the road, as well as for maintenance personnel. That led to the replacement of existing retaining walls and the installation of a new retaining wall on Louisiana Ave. Additionally, this triggered a water-main replacement with the local authorities, and portions of Wayzata Avenue. This project is scheduled for construction to begin in 2026.

Innocent Eyoh, MPCA, asked if the application would have scored well enough in its funding category given the changes to the scope to which Barbeau replied the project funding was not awarded through the Regional Solicitation.

Motion by Issacson and seconded by Robjent that the TAC recommend that the TAB recommend approval of an amendment of the 2025-2028 TIP to increase the cost of MnDOT's I-394 auxiliary lane, bridge repair, retaining wall, signals, and intersection modification project. **Motion carried.**

#### *TAC Technical Working Group*

Cole Hiniker, MTS Planning, reported on the January 23, 2025, meeting of the TAC Transit Technical Working Group. He said that Stephanie Alexander, SW Transit, will now serve as chair and Ethan Buss, MVTA, will serve as co-chair.



## **Planning Committee (Gina Mitteco, Chair)**

Planning Committee Chair Gina Mitteco reported on the January 9, 2025, meeting of the TAC Planning Committee and introduced David Burns, MTS Planning.

1. [2025-05](#): Adoption of Adjusted Infrastructure Federal Performance Measures (David Burns, MTS Planning)

David Burns, MTS Planning, presented the Adjusted Infrastructure Performance Targets and outlined the associated actions, which include recommending the adoption of the revised federal infrastructure performance measures to the Metropolitan Council, with the following revisions:

- An adjustment of the 2025 target for non-interstate NHS pavement in good condition from 55 to 40%
- An adjustment of the 2025 target for NHS bridges in good condition from 35% to 20%

Isaacson clarified that the difference between federal and MnDOT standards lies in the higher federal standard, specifically regarding rutting. Burns acknowledged the difference in methodology and stated that MnDOT allows more rutting. Isaacson sought clarification that this only applies to the non-interstate National Highway System (NHS). Burns confirmed this was accurate.

Robjent raised concerns that adjusting these targets could affect maintenance decisions, such as when minor treatments like seal coating are done, suggesting that a lack of funding to meet federal standards might be a contributing factor. Burns explained that the change was due to methodological differences between MnDOT and federal standards and that there's preference not to repair roads in fair condition.

Chair MacPherson pointed out the importance of clearly communicating the narrative around performance targets, stating that local agencies rely on state bridge bonds for infrastructure support and that there is often confusion between what constitutes a target versus a goal. He raised concerns that failing to meet targets could have consequences. Nick Peterson expressed hope that this does not influence availability of funding.

McCartney clarified that performance measures are set by the central office, which guides how districts prioritize projects. The focus is on preventing roads from deteriorating to poor conditions. She emphasized that these changes wouldn't result in a loss of funding. However, funding allocation might shift between bridges or pavements based on conditions. Robjent added that advancements in technology, like more sensitive equipment used to assess road conditions, could be contributing to the perception that roads are in poor shape, with Chair MacPherson noting that the increased sensitivity of equipment detecting smaller cracks and grooves might be affecting ratings. Inflation and budget constraints also play a role in the ability to carry out maintenance. Isaacson asked whether this is a philosophical change from managing bridges as opposed to replacing bridges. McCartney replied that it might help keep bridges in fair condition longer before they slip into poor condition.

Motion by Isaacson and seconded by Chad Ellos, Hennepin Co., that the TAC recommend that the TAB adopt the adjusted federal infrastructure performance measures to the Metropolitan Council, with the following revisions:

- An adjustment of the 2025 target for non-interstate NHS pavement in good condition from 55 to 40%
- An adjustment of the 2025 target for NHS bridges in good condition from 35% to 20%

**Motion Carried.**



**Funding & Programming Committee (Jim Kosluchar, Chair)**

1. [2025-06](#): Program Year Extension Request: Columbia Heights's Central Avenue Lighting and Pedestrian Improvements (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning, presented item 2025-06, a program year extension request from Columbia Heights to move its MN 65 (Central Ave) lighting and pedestrian improvement from 2025 to 2028.

It was moved by Mackenzie Turner Borgen, Pedestrian Modal Representative, and seconded by Adam Harrington, Metro Transit, that the TAC recommend that TAB approve Columbia Heights's program year extension request to move its MN 65 (Central Ave) lighting and pedestrian improvement from 2025 to 2028. **Motion Carried.**

2. [2025-07](#): Program Year Extension Request: Minneapolis's Whittier Neighborhood Safety Improvements (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Barbeau presented item 2025-07, a program year extension request from Minneapolis to move its Whittier neighborhood intersection safety improvements project from 2025 to 2026.

Barbeau confirmed that MnDOT Metro District State Aid was on board with the request and did not anticipate any funding issues related to its timeline adjustment. Harrington said that Metro Transit is working with MnDOT on coordination with bus stops, particularly with pedestrian zones and bike lanes.

Robjent then questioned the alignment with the 2027 Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project and whether that project would be moved to 2026. Barbeau clarified that the one-year gap was intended to allow for better coordination between the two projects and that the SRTS project may start in 2026 and be reimbursed in 2027. Kosluchar said that the justification for extending the project timeline was to issue a single bid set for both projects, prompting Robjent to state that the SRTS project must be starting early. Harrington added that the SRTS project is a good project and contributes to MnDOT's bus route layout.

It was moved by Innocent Eyoh, MPCA, and seconded by Nick Peterson, Saint Paul Engineering, that the TAC recommend that TAB approve Minneapolis's program year extension request to move its Whittier neighborhood- intersection safety improvements project from 2025 to 2026. **Motion carried.**

3. [2024-40](#): Scope Policy Change Policy Update (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Barbeau, MTS Planning, presented item 2024-40, a request to recommend approval of the updated Scope Change Policy.

Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie, commented that the working group had agreed that the \$500,000 cap for projects to be approved administratively was reasonable, as it would cover items like a traffic signal or roundabout.

It was moved by Robjent, and seconded by Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB, that the TAC recommend that TAB approve The Scope Change and Program Year Policy working group's updated Scope Change Policy. **Motion carried.**

4. [2024-41](#): Program Year Policy Update (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Barbeau, presented item 2024-41, a request to recommend approval of the updated Program Year Policy.

Chair MacPherson acknowledged that there has been an increase in the number of extension requests in recent years, which is reflective of the nature of the projects being submitted.

Issacson expressed concerns about the program year extensions and how they could lead to multiple requests over time. He pointed out the difficulty of deciding whether to remove



funding from a project when it grows into a larger, more complex initiative, and expressed concerns about the impact of that on the program. While he acknowledged the efficiency benefits of connecting projects, he emphasized the challenge of managing the increasing complexity of these connections. Chair MacPherson responded by using the example of the Minnesota Highway 252 project, which has faced environmental and permitting delays. Its connected projects have already requested multiple extensions. Chair MacPherson shared Issacson's concern but noted that it's difficult to deny requests at the later stages when they are so deeply integrated into larger projects. The good thing, though, is that these requests will draw attention to potential issues, forcing decisions to be made.

Issacson added that the policy change that introduced the one-year extension requirement was aimed at resolving the issue of projects frequently shifting between years. That policy successfully brought projects closer to completion or resulted in them being withdrawn, and while this update may alter that approach, he suspects that the same issues might arise again in the next couple of years. He pointed out the rising trend in project extensions starting in 2019 and mentioned the importance of examining the culture around how projects are becoming increasingly connected to larger initiatives.

Koutsoukos added that projects are supposed to have independent utility and that connected projects have come in after Regional Solicitation awards, which could make it harder to separate and fund projects independently, leading to more complications when larger projects drive the timelines of smaller ones.

McCartney discussed the complexities surrounding the Highway 252 project, noting that it involved multiple funding sources that came in after the initial regional awards. She pointed out that this project became much more complex than originally planned due to unforeseen changes and developments, particularly the decision to go into an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase, which delayed progress. She also raised concerns about whether projects like this maintain "independent utility," questioning whether they should still be eligible for funding if their scope keeps expanding or if they are tied to a larger corridor project.

Harrington said that having pieces in place prior to an LRT project is valuable but also leaves timing uncertain.

Ellis noted that TAB had previously discussed flexibility in the funding process, particularly with large projects like Highway 252. He explained that TAB members wanted to ensure that applicants can articulate why their requests are unique or extraordinary. This would allow for a more personalized approach to granting extensions or exceptions, ensuring that decisions are made with a deeper understanding of a project's challenges.

Robjent added the funding rules for projects requesting extensions, specifically whether the money would be moved to the back of the queue. Barbeau confirmed that this is still the case; projects requesting extensions are effectively moved to the back of the line for funding reimbursement.

Issacson said that while the system works well when everything aligns, it becomes much more complicated when things don't go as planned. He acknowledged that the funding hierarchy and timing for when money is available are complex, particularly for projects like Highway 252 that involve multiple rounds of funding. Issacson emphasized that these complexities are challenging for TAB and that the process needs to accommodate these difficulties to ensure better outcomes.

Koutsoukos raised concerns about the impact of larger project requests, such as those worth \$10-15 million, on the available funding for future solicitations, which would involve the movement of a lot of money.

McCartney said that projects can withdraw and reapply for funding during future Regional Solicitations, though with the Regional Solicitation Evaluation underway, there's no guarantee the projects will continue to score high enough for funding. She also mentioned



that with the new greenhouse gas laws, reapplying may become more difficult. McCartney also clarified that EISs are rare in the Metro District, with only three being completed in the past 25 years, making such occurrences uncommon.

Nick Peterson pointed out the difficulty in securing multiple funding sources for bridge projects due to limitations on available funds. He emphasized the need for more flexibility in funding allocations to ensure that critical projects like bridges can come to fruition. Koutsoukos shared that withdrawing and reapplying for funding has worked in some cases, as it allows projects to potentially receive funding earlier. However, she clarified that in the case of the Highway 252 projects, not all of them would be eligible to reapply due to their interconnected nature.

It was moved by Robjent and seconded by Harrington, Metro Transit, that the TAC recommend that TAB approve The Scope Change and Program Year Policy working group's updated Program Year Policy. **Motion Carried.**

## Information

1. Regional Transportation and Climate Change Multimodal Measures Study (Tony Fischer, MTS Planning)

This presentation was not given to accommodate the next item.

2. Regional Solicitation Evaluation Update (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning and Molly Stewart, SRF)

Leitner asked when TAB will review the potential categories, to which Steve Peterson responded that it would be in April.

Chair MacPherson expressing general approval for the direction. He reflected on a recent conversation with the Technical Steering Group about challenges and improvements in the Regional Solicitation process. He acknowledged the value of the safety category and expressed his support for the HSIP program, which has been well-established and is easy to understand and evaluate. He also commented positively on the inclusion of climate change and natural systems in the plan, emphasizing their importance for future opportunities. Chair MacPherson noted the diverse opinions within the policy working group, where there was no consensus on the definition of equity.

Harrington raised a concern about how to navigate overlapping categories, particularly regarding safety and projects related to transit and highways. Steve Peterson clarified that guidance from the TAB members and council members would help determine the funding ranges for these categories. He also mentioned that working with applicants before they submit projects could help clarify which category to apply to, based on a project's primary focus.

Leitner said that while attending the policymaker workgroup, she noticed that participation had dropped off significantly, with fewer than half of the members attending the last meeting. She stressed the importance of being cautious about the weight given to the input from such a small subset of members. She also raised a concern about equity; specifically, if it was embedded in every category, equity might only account for a small percentage of the scoring, which could dilute its impact. She suggested considering whether equity should have its own dedicated category with more significant weight to ensure that it is treated as a priority. Koutsoukos suggested that equity could be delayed until a future Regional Solicitation while waiting for the results of the highway harms study. She also mentioned the uncertainty of federal direction related to things like equity and climate change. The discussion continued with members weighing the pros and cons of having equity as a standalone category versus embedding it within others as well as discussing equity scoring. Steve Peterson confirmed that the working groups will continue to address these concerns over the next six months.

Mayell questioned waiting until completion of the highway harms study to include equity. Ellos suggested that equity be included in the materials to TAB, so it is not forgotten about. McCartney said that MnDOT has a definition of equity. Eyoh added that MPCA also has a



definition, which is connected to the environmental work it does. He added that points assigned to equity should reflect their importance and that the 2050 TPP goals reflect health and safety but that only safety is highlighted on the slides. Using a special work group for equity is a good idea given the number of issues involved with equity. Hartzell added that TAB should have a philosophical discussion about this considering executive orders that have been signed. Leitner said that the process should proceed without guessing the federal outcomes.

Referencing discussion about removing local trails and leaving them for Active Transportation, Leitner cautioned against removing anything at this stage. She added concern that asset management doesn't seem to be visibly acknowledged.

Matt Fyten, suburban transit representative, asked when the percentages of funds will be assigned to categories, because that would inform his opinion. Steve Peterson said this will be a late step in the process.

Issacson asked whether HSIP is folded into this discussion or if it will continue to be separate. Steve Peterson replied that Council staff is going to meet with MnDOT staff on that topic, adding that any Regional Solicitation category would likely have a larger maximum federal award and a 20% match, as opposed to 10% in HSIP.

Robjent asked whether a backup plan is needed if the software update takes too long. Steve Peterson replied that delaying the release of the solicitation and using the old software package are options. Koutsoukos said that the current software, WebGrants, is getting an upgrade and could be used.

#### Other business

None.

#### Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned just after 11:00 a.m.

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