

Minutes

TAB Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting date: June 4, 2025,

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Virtual

Members present:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anoka Co – Joe MacPherson (Chair) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brooklyn Park – Dan Ruiz | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT – Molly McCartney (Vice Chair) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver Co – Lyndon Robjent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chanhassen – Charlie Howley | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MPCA – Innocent Eyoh |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dakota Co – Erin Laberee | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eagan – Russ Matthys | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MAC – Bridget Rief |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ramsey Co – Brian Isaacson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eden Prairie – Robert Ellis | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STA – Matt Fyten |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hennepin Co – Chad Ellos | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fridley – Jim Kosluchar | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metro Transit – Adam Harrington |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Co – Craig Jenson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lakeville – Paul Oehme | <input type="checkbox"/> Freight – Shelly Meyer |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Washington Co – Lyssa Leitner | <input type="checkbox"/> Plymouth – Michael Thompson | <input type="checkbox"/> DEED – Colleen Eddy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extended Urban Area – Chad Hausmann | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodbury – Chris Hartzell | <input type="checkbox"/> MnDNR – Vacant |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council MTS – Steve Peterson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minneapolis Engineering – Jenifer Hager | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bicycle – Kyle Sobota |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council CD – Patrick Boylan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minneapolis Planning – Kathleen Mayell | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian – Mackenzie Turner Bargaen |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TAB – Elaine Koutsoukos | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Saint Paul Engineering – Nick Peterson | <input type="checkbox"/> FHWA – Scott Mareck (ex-officio) |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Saint Paul Planning – Reuben Collins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present, E = excused |

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgement

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair MacPherson called the regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee to order at 9:00 a.m. on roll call.

Agenda approved

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

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB Coordinator, and seconded by Lyssa Leitner, Washington Co., to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2025, regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Public comment on committee business

TAB Report

Elaine Koutsoukos reported on the May 21, 2025, regular meeting of the Transportation Advisory Board.

Business – Committee reports

Executive Committee (Joe MacPherson, Chair)

Chair MacPherson reported on the June 4, 2025, regular meeting of the TAC Executive Committee.

1. **2025-21:** 2025-2028 Streamlined TIP Amendment: Two HSIP Project Adjustments (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning, presented. Chris Hartzell, Woodbury, moved, and Paul Oehme, Lakeville, seconded, that the Technical Advisory Committee recommend adopting an amendment to the 2025-2028 TIP to reduce the project cost of two MnDOT safety projects and to add two STBG Program-funded roundabout projects. **Motion carried.**
2. **2025-22:** Streamlined 2025-2028 TIP Amendment – MnDOT MN 280 Pavement and Bridge Rehabilitation (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning, presented. Jim Kosluchar, Fridley, moved, and Nick Peterson, Saint Paul, seconded, that the Technical Advisory Committee recommend adopting an amendment to the 2025-2028 TIP to reduce the length of MnDOT's Minnesota Highway 280 pavement and bridge rehabilitation project, add a bridge, and increase the project cost. **Motion carried.**

TAC Transit Planning Technical Working Group (Bradley Bobbitt, MTS Planning)

Bradley Bobbitt, MTS Planning, reported on the May 22, 2025, regular meeting of the TAC Transit Planning Technical Working Group.

Planning Committee (Gina Mitteco, Chair)

Gina Mitteco, MnDOT, reported on the May 8, 2025, regular meeting of the TAC Planning committee.

1. **2025-17:** Recommending 2050 Transportation Policy Plan Amendment 1: Blue and Gold Line Extensions (Bradley Bobbitt, MTS Planning; Nick Thompson, Metro Transit)

Bradley Bobbitt, MTS Planning and Nick Thompson, Metro Transit, presented. Brian Isaacson, Ramsey Co., asked how the operating costs are being identified and discussed in the plan for both the Blue and Gold Line extensions. Bobbitt responded by stating that for the Blue Line Extension, staff anticipates a net increase in operating costs of approximately \$329 million over the life of the plan, with the first full year of operations costing around \$56.5 million. Bobbitt explained that a portion of those costs would be covered by fares, which are expected to increase compared to the current plan. The remaining costs would be covered by unallocated sales and use tax revenues.

Isaacson asked whether the referenced unallocated sales and use tax referred to the regional sales tax administered by the Metropolitan Council or Hennepin County's local option sales tax. Nick Thompson, Metro Transit, clarified that the funding would come from the Metropolitan Council's regional sales tax. Charles Carlson, MTS Executive Division

Director, added that, by law, operating costs must be covered by the Metropolitan Council's share, and the amendment reflects that legal requirement. Isaacson noted that the term "sales and use tax" is often used to describe county-level local option taxes, so he requested clearer language in the documentation.

Isaacson also asked whether the fare recovery covered about 10% of the net increase in operating costs. Bobbitt confirmed slightly over 10% of the net change would be covered by fares, noting that fare revenues were already partially factored into the base plan for the Blue Line Extension. He added that he would need to consult the analysis to confirm the total fare recovery rate.

Isaacson asked if the net increase in operating costs for the Gold Line Extension was more than \$2 million annually. Bobbitt estimated the figure to be approximately \$3.7 million but stated he would verify the exact number.

Molly McCartney, MnDOT, noted that MnDOT will supply letters of support for both amendments in time for the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) meeting.

Russ Matthys, Eagan, asked whether the committee's action would indicate formal support for the project or merely support for releasing it for public comment. Chair MacPherson stated that the action is an endorsement for releasing it for public comment. Lyssa Leitner, Washington Co., clarified that she did not interpret the vote as a formal endorsement of the project by individual agencies but acknowledged that others might view it differently. Thompson stated that the only action at this stage is to release the amendment for public comment. He emphasized that the committee would receive the results of the public comment period but would not vote on whether to adopt the amendment. Final adoption will be the responsibility of the Metropolitan Council. Chair MacPherson thanked him for the clarification and noted that final action would likely occur between August and September.

Chair MacPherson asked about the potential impact of federal funding uncertainty on the Blue Line Extension. Specifically, he asked what would happen if anticipated federal funding does not materialize; would the project pause, or would local partners contribute more? Nick Thompson responded that the Gold Line Extension is fully funded and does not rely on federal funds, so the concern applies only to the Blue Line Extension. He explained that projects like the Blue Line Extension that seek Capital Investment Grant (CIG) funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) face uncertainty because the federal funding commitment isn't confirmed until late in the process. The Metropolitan Council plans to request 49% of the total project cost from the federal government in the coming year, likely next spring. The FTA decision is expected before the project enters procurement or construction. If the approved federal funding is less than requested, the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County would need to reevaluate funding options. Thompson noted that while the CIG program continues to be supported in the current federal administration's budget, competition for funds remains high. He assured the committee that staff will keep them updated as more information becomes available.

Isaacson moved, and Harrington, Metro Transit, seconded, that the Technical Advisory Committee recommend that the Transportation Advisory Board advise the Metropolitan Council to release the draft 2050 TPP Amendment 1 for public comment. **Motion carried.**

Funding and Programming Committee (Jim Kosluchar, Chair)

Jim Kosluchar, Fridley, reported on the May 15, 2025, regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee.

1. **2025-18:** Scope Change Request – Minnesota Valley Transit Authority's Technology and ADA Enhancements Project (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning, presented. Isaacson expressed confusion about the reduction from 53 locations to eight while still maintaining federal funding levels. He stated the amendment lacks sufficient explanation and wouldn't make sense to a TAB member.

Barbeau explained that staff considers the requested change analogous to roadway projects with multiple locations.

Heidi Scholl, MVTA, clarified that e-paper signage costs range from \$2,500 to \$5,000 per unit, including installation. Instead, the focus shifted to outfitting fewer, more significant stations like Burnsville Transit Station. Scholl explained that some previously listed locations already received upgrades through other grants, some are no longer served, and others were replaced based on projected ridership increases. She said the locations added either have high ridership, are planned for more service, or MVTA wants to see have higher ridership.

Harrington questioned the assumptions about the original 53 locations and what was assumed to be installed at the remaining 45 bus stops. Scholl noted that a separate MVTA initiative (not federally funded) addresses updates at other stops with static signage and QR codes. Matt Fyten, MVTA, explained that MVTA has shifted priorities based on ridership data, reallocating resources from low-ridership stops to microtransit. This strategic shift drove the focus to improving amenities at key hubs. Harrington expressed skepticism that the original budget could cover upgrades at 53 stops and noted that the revised plan seems more feasible. He expressed support for the focus on core locations but emphasized the need to clearly explain the shift scope.

Leitner emphasized that the current amendment would not pass TAB scrutiny. She suggested rewriting the memo to clearly explain the scope change, technology involved, service updates, and ridership rationale. Leitner also noted confusion in the original application where 53 locations are mentioned but not clearly mapped or listed.

Chair MacPherson reviewed possible next steps: reject the amendment and request a rewritten version, recommend rescoring based on 2022 applicants, and request resubmission in the 2026 Regional Solicitation. Harrington suggested a re-write including a better description of e-paper, adding that he would not want to see a re-application. Issacson said that an updated application makes sense, adding that he did not favor voting for it as written.

Koutsoukos noted that re-scoring wouldn't change outcomes since all applicants in the category were funded, and scoring relied on mapped points rather than the full 53 locations. Barbeau reminded the group that rescoring is not a preferred or effective tool under current policy and emphasized focusing on whether the project is substantially new.

Harrington, Mayell, and Jenson, stated that the revised submission should: include a side-by-side comparison of old vs. new scope, clarify ADA improvements as stated in the project title, and ensure local jurisdictions are aware of changes.

Leitner moved and Issacson seconded to send the amendment back to staff for revision and additional documentation, to be reconsidered by the Funding and Programming Committee and eventually returned to TAC. **Motion carried.**

2. **2025-19:** Adoption of the Draft 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), pending public comment (Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning)

Joe Barbeau, MTS Planning, and Molly McCartney, MnDOT, presented. Lyndon Robjent, Carver Co., clarified that the recommendation is subject to completion of public comments. Chair MacPherson confirmed.

McCartney moved, and Kosluchar seconded, that the Technical Advisory Committee recommend that TAB recommend adoption of the draft 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). **Motion carried.**

3. **2025-20:** Corridors of Commerce Local Recommendation: City of Anoka's Highway 47/BNSF Railway Crossing Project (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning)

Steve Peterson, MTS Planning, presented. Kosluchar moved, and Leitner seconded, that the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend that the Metropolitan Council

recommend the City of Anoka's Highway 47/BNSF Railway Crossing Project to MnDOT for scoring consideration in the Corridors of Commerce Readiness Advancement solicitation.
Motion carried.

Information

1. Transportation GHG Emissions Impact Assessment (Chris Berrens, MnDOT)

Christopher Berrens (MnDOT) presented.

Harrington asked for clarification on the assumptions behind the stated 2,700 metric ton carbon offset associated with electric buses. He inquired about the expected number of service days, the operational assumptions per vehicle, and how electric buses offset diesel usage, including passenger mileage factors. Berrens responded that the Carbon Emissions Tool assumes 250 annual service days and a 10-year vehicle lifespan. He offered to send the detailed assumptions to Harrington and the broader group, noting this is a frequently asked question.

Chair MacPherson asked about training opportunities. Berrens said training opportunities will occur.

Chair MacPherson asked where the group is in developing VMT procedures. Berrens responded that the emissions reductions assumptions in the tool are derived from VMT assumptions.

McCartney asked for updates on recent legislative discussions, particularly regarding a possible postponement of the 2027 assessment date. Berrens acknowledged that such language had been introduced in a bill but could not confirm its status due to ongoing legislative negotiations. He had not seen updates in the agreement documents and emphasized that MnDOT and partners are proceeding cautiously in interpreting and applying implementation timelines.

Robjert explained that the project assessment is just the first phase. Most current large expansion projects are already in the STIP and thus exempt. New projects beginning up to 2027 would be affected. He emphasized that the legislation requires programmatic-level assessments by 2027-2028, including all trunk highway projects in MnDOT's CIP and corresponding mitigation. Robjert added that TAC has started work on developing a system-wide programmatic approach, which he supports as more comprehensive than project-level assessments.

Peterson asked if the example shown during the meeting had been monetized and whether MnDOT had examples of packages of offsets with associated costs. Berrens responded that MnDOT did analyze cost ranges within the nine mitigation categories identified by the legislature. He explained that costs vary by and noted that some categories (e.g., land use changes and parking management) involve no capital costs. Berrens highlighted the legislature's creation of a mitigation account and compared the cost allocation structure to wetland mitigation. Responsibility for offset funding depends on the project sponsor and context, introducing complexity to cost estimates. Chair MacPherson added context based on working group discussions, noting that for capacity expansion projects, additional mitigation costs could range from 20 to 40% added to the project total.

2. Aviation System Plan Objectives Update (Joe Widing, MTS Planning)

To be rescheduled.

3. Regional Solicitation Evaluation Special Issue Working Group Update (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning)

Not addressed due to time constraint.

Other business

Adjournment

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

Council contact:

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Draft

