

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD  
Metropolitan Council  
390 N. Robert St., St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1805

Minutes of a Meeting of the  
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
January 15, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Mayasich (chair), Colleen Brown, Innocent Eyoh, Mark Filipi, Jenifer Hager, Brian Isaacson, Craig Jenson, Jane Kansier, Elaine Koutsoukos, Eriks Ludins, Gina Mitteco, Paul Oehme, Lyndon Robjent, John Sass, Cory Slagle, Carla Stueve, Michael Thompson, Cynthia Wheeler, and Joe Barbeau (staff)

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

Tim Mayasich suggested moving item 7, "Membership Update," to the front of the agenda.

**MOTION:** Brian Isaacson moved to adopt the agenda with "Membership Update moved" to the front of the agenda. Seconded by Michael Thompson. The motion was approved unanimously.

**3. Membership Update – Information Item**

Mayasich introduced himself as the new chair. Carla Stueve introduced herself as a new member representing Hennepin County. She replaced Tom Johnson, who is retiring.

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

**MOTION:** Mark Filipi moved to approve the minutes from the December meeting. Seconded by Eriks Ludins. Gina Mitteco noted that Lyndon Robjent's name was missing from the list of members present. The motion, including the addition of Robjent's name to the list of members present, was approved unanimously.

**5. Regional Solicitation Disqualified Projects – Action Item 2015-09**

Joe Barbeau said that staff reviewed all 121 applications to make sure that they qualified for the regional solicitation. Six applications were determined to be potential non-qualifiers. Carl Ohrn from Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) said that the Funding & Programming Committee is the final arbiter of whether or not applications qualify. The committee explored potential non-qualifying applications one-by-one.

**A City of St. Paul: Prince Street Extension to Kittson/Trout Brook Roadway Expansion (Roadway Expansion)**

Roadway expansion projects must be located on a non-freeway principal arterial or "A" minor arterial functionally-classified roadway and consistent with the map adopted by TAB on August 20, 2014. The roadways included in the application are not "A" minors or non-freeway principals.

Ludins, representing the applicant, said that the project does occur where a principal arterial is desired, though the connection to Prince Street is not a principal arterial. Ohrn said that planned principal arterials are eligible but that the east/west portion is located on a local street.

**MOTION:** Thompson moved to disqualify the project. Seconded by Craig Jenson. The motion was approved unanimously.

**B. Minnesota Department of Transportation: Regional Signal Optimization (Roadway System Management)**

Because some of the measures in the application are based on geographic orientation, this project cannot be scored. Further, the sample project in the application is also submitted as another application, rendering the application unable to be fairly compared to other projects. The project applicants could request of TAB that the

project be considered as a unique eligible project. Isaacson said that MnDOT knew this would be a difficult project to fit into the program but that MnDOT will try to find a way to move this forward.

**MOTION:** Isaacson moved to disqualify the project. Seconded by Robjent. The motion was approved unanimously.

**C. Metro Transit: Routes 30 & 32 Improved Crosstown Service (Transit Expansion)**

Two separate projects can only be bundled together in order to meet the project minimum, which is \$500,000 for Transit Expansion projects. The federal amount requested was \$4,915,826, so meeting the project minimum was not an issue for each of the two combined projects.

Jenifer Hager suggested that reduced efficiency is an unintended consequence of the rule limiting.

Mitteco asked why bundled projects are not desired. Ohrn replied that it is difficult to judge bundled projects, particularly on geographic-based measures. Filipi added that a minimum funding amount exists because small projects are difficult to manage given federal requirements.

Stueve asked why two side-by-side bridges on the same roadway are considered two projects. Elaine Koutsoukos replied that this will be revisited; the reason is that two bridges could have two different deficiency ratings.

**MOTION:** Robjent moved to disqualify the project. Seconded by Filipi. The motion was approved unanimously.

**D. Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge: Enhancement to the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge Parking Lot, Bluff Trail Head and Boardwalk Areas (Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities)**

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) requires all projects relate to surface transportation. Staff believes the proposed addition of a 0.5 mile loop trail with a fishing platform, a wildlife observation platform, signage kiosks, a wetland boardwalk and improved access for physically challenged visitors does not serve a surface transportation need. Federal Highway Administration concurs with staff.

**MOTION:** Isaacson moved to disqualify the project. Seconded by Paul Oehme. The motion was approved unanimously.

**E. City of West St. Paul: West St. Paul River to River Greenway, Robert Street Overpass and Connections (Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities)**

The City of West St. Paul was awarded \$7,280,000 in STP-UG funds (adjusted for inflation) in the 2009 regional solicitation for the reconstruction of Robert Street from Mendota Road to Annapolis Street to include center median, access closures, grade-separated trail crossing, and other elements. The City of West St. Paul requested a scope change for its Robert Street Improvements project. The proposed changes would increase the total project cost by over 58 percent from \$10,383,000 to \$16,470,000 (the federal funding amount would not increase) and remove the grade-separated bike/pedestrian crossing from the scope, which increased in cost from \$300,000 to a range of \$2.3 to \$3.8 million. Staff feels, given that TAB granted West St. Paul a scope change to remove the grade-separated bike/pedestrian crossing with the understanding bicycles and pedestrians would be safely accommodated as they crossed the Robert Street corridor, funding this application would result in the region and the federal government paying for the same facility twice.

Matt Saam, City of West St. Paul's Public Works and Parks Director / City Engineer said that the City disagrees with the idea that this would be funding the same project twice. The City's scope change to eliminate the bridge from the last project was never intended to preclude future grade separation. This is a newly-realigned trail. The proposed realignment will increase safety with grade separation and improve the trail experience.

Colleen Brown asked whether the trail will be built, which seemed to be an uncertainty when the previous scope change went through. Saam replied that the trail will be built.

Mayasich asked what will happen on Wentworth Avenue between the termini. Saam replied that the trail would be left in place and turned over to the City.

Robjent asked whether the original Wentworth Avenue project was federally funded. Saam said that he is unsure. Ohrn said that federal funding is going to Robert Street, which crosses Wentworth Avenue.

Mitteco replied that these upgrades are standard, with or without federal funding, rendering grade separation reasonable.

John Sass said that when the scope of the previous project changed, the City was still open to the possibility of a future bridge. Ohrn said that the scope change indicated that the bridge was not needed.

Mitteco suggested that this was starting to become a scoring committee discussion and suggested that the scoring committee decide on this project.

Brown said that in the original application, the bridge did not have good termini and this one does.

**MOTION:** Thompson moved to allow the project to be considered for funding. Seconded by Sass. The motion was approved unanimously.

**F. City of Minneapolis: Minneapolis High School Transit Improvements (Safe Routes to School)**

Multiple separate projects can only be bundled together in order to meet the project minimum, which is \$125,000 for Safe Routes to School projects. Each project, on its own, would meet the minimum.

Hager, representing the applicant, said that the project covers three similar high schools with three similar sets of sightline and safety issues. She added that each project is slightly over the minimum total funding amount to be a stand-alone project.

Forrest Hardy, Associate Transportation Planner from the City of Minneapolis added that the qualification language is not clear and that administrative costs for individual projects can be burdensome.

Hager suggested that each project could be scored individually and then the City could bundle them. Ohrn said that this project and Metro Transit's Routes 30 & 32 Improved Crosstown Service have to be addressed identically. Hager replied that the difference is that Metro Transit has two very different projects while the City's projects are part of the same program and address the same concerns.

Isaacson said that the process-wise the projects would be difficult to score.

Filipi said that the Committee has previously sustained disqualification recommendations on bundled projects and since one applicant did not attend the meeting it would be difficult to be equitable while breaking that tradition.

**MOTION:** Isaacson moved to have the project scored as a bundled project. Seconded by Hager. The motion was defeated 6 to 9.

**MOTION:** Filipi moved to disqualify the project. Seconded by Robjent. The motion was approved.

**6. Program Year Extension Request: CSAH 10 in Mounds View – Action Item 2015-10**

Barbeau said that Ramsey County, the sponsor of this project, requested a program year extension. Isaacson said that Ramsey County received \$630,000 of federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding for program year 2013. The County prepared to deliver the project in that program year. At the time, MnDOT was also developing a bridge replacement and ramp reconstruction project at the T.C. Arsenal entrance at County Road H for 2015 (#6284-162) using state funds. Due to the proximity of the project locations, a February 2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment moved the County's HSIP-funded project to 2015 to coordinate with the MnDOT project.

MnDOT's project has been moved into 2016. Because MnDOT's project limits on County Road H overlap with Ramsey County's limits on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 10/Trunk Highway (TH) 10/County Road H intersection improvements, Ramsey County would like to delay its intersection project until 2016 so that the improvements can be designed and constructed concurrently in the MnDOT program year. This approach also provides a mechanism for MnDOT to contribute funds toward the replacement of the CSAH 10/TH 10/County Road H traffic signal, which is proposed with the Ramsey County project. The County is asking for support for allowing this project to follow MnDOT's schedule.

Brown added that the 2013 delay of this project is not a program year extension and therefore, this request does not break the rule that only one extension can be requested.

**MOTION:** Robjent moved to recommend approval of the program year extension request. Seconded by Oehme. The motion was approved unanimously.

**7. Program Year Extension Request: North Creek Regional Greenway Trail in Lakeville – Action Item 2015-11**

Barbeau said that the City of Lakeville is requesting a program year extension for its North Creek Regional Greenway project. The request is being made because acquisition of one property has been delayed.

Brett Altergott, Parks & Recreation Director at the City of Lakeville, said that a developer influenced a property owner to ask for more funding. The City is confident that it can finalize property acquisition next year. Design is 40 percent complete.

**MOTION:** Robjent moved to recommend approval of the program year extension request. Seconded by Innocent Eyoh. The motion was approved unanimously.

**8. Other Business**

Jenson said that he would like to participate in the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) scoring committee. Hager, Robjent, Sass, and Stueve also volunteered. Isaacson said he will bring these names to HSIP project managers.

**9. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Filipi moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Isaacson. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned.