

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
October 20, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Oehme (acting chair, Chanhassen), Lynne Bly (MnDOT Metro District), Colleen Brown (MnDOT Metro State Aid), Kyle Burrows (Metro Transit), Jack Forslund (Anoka County), Jenifer Hager (Minneapolis), Jarrett Hubbard (Scott County), Jim Kosluchar (Fridley), Jen Lehmann (MVTA), Karl Keel (Bloomington), Elaine Koutsoukos (TAB), Lyssa Leitner (Washington County), Bruce Loney (Shakopee), Joe Lux (Ramsey County), Ryan Peterson (Burnsville), Steve Peterson (Metropolitan Council), Lyndon Robjert (Carver County), Amanda Smith (MPCA), Carla Stueve (Hennepin County), Michael Thompson (Maplewood), Anne Weber (St. Paul), and Joe Barbeau (staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Josh Bowe (Three Rivers Park District), Jan Lucke (Washington County), and Carl Ohrn (Metropolitan Council)

1. Call to Order

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

2. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: Keel moved to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Loney. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the August 18, 2016 Meeting

MOTION: Leitner moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Koutsoukos. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. TAB Report – Information Item

Koutsoukos reported on the October 19, 2016, TAB meeting. The TAB Executive Committee directed staff to prepare information for Funding & Programming Committee on Regional Solicitation inflation factors for decision prior to project selection and to develop a base funding scenario along with scenarios that emphasize expansion and reconstruction, respectively.

The following action items were approved:

- A streamlined TIP amendment for MnDOT's I-94 resurfacing project.
- The public comment report and 2017-2020 TIP amendment for the Dakota County US 52 / CSAH 42 interchange.
- Transportation Public Participation Plan, to send to Metropolitan Council for public comment.
- Scope change for the City of Minneapolis's Anderson School Pedestrian Crossings and Bikeway Safe Routes to School project.

Jonathan Ehrlich presented information on the Travel Behavior Inventory. A motion was made and passed at TAB directing staff to prepare Regional Solicitation funding scenarios assuming \$2.7 million is taken off the top for the Travel Behavior Inventory.

5. Three Rivers Park District Scope Change Request – Action Item 2016-52

Barbeau said that the Three Rivers Park District was awarded \$1,040,000 of 2017 program year funds as part of the Bicycle/Pedestrian category in the 2013 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Regional Solicitation. The project proposed to add "on ramp" transportation facilities meant to provide direct connections to the regional trail system. The project included six components. The Park District would like to eliminate the component in Edina and change the Brooklyn Park component from a 0.75-mile off-road trail to a 0.46-mile on-road bikeway and a 0.3-mile off-road trail. Working with the scorers from the Regional Solicitation, Metropolitan Council staff reviewed the original project and scoring. Scorers were

unsure how to score the project and were hesitant to deduct a lot of points. The project originally scored 678 points, 18 points higher than the top-scoring un-funded project. Scorers reported a total drop of eight points in the scoring, leaving the total at 670, still higher than the top-scoring un-funded project. The Brooklyn Park sub-project is proposed to change by constructing part of the off-street trail as an on-street bikeway. This change leads to an overall cost reduction of \$42,168 (\$316,368 for original application minus \$274,200 new project cost). The additional cost cited in the applicant's request, \$75,000 for signal upgrades and other needs, was not in the original application and should not be considered as part of this scope change request. The Edina sub-project, to be removed, made up 8% of the total project cost in the original application (\$83,200 of the federal allotment). Given that this portion of the project is being removed, TAB may consider removing this amount of federal funding. Between the reduction of the Brooklyn Park sub-project (\$42,168) and the removal of the Edina sub-project (\$83,200), TAB should consider a total reduction of \$125,368 to \$914,632.

Bowe said that the Edina component of the project was 300 feet of regional trail connecting a cul-de-sac to a trail. Three of the four property owners that were going to be impacted were resistant to the project. A connection to the trail was also made a half-mile to the west. In Brooklyn Park, the area was lacking the right-of-way and impacted properties so some of the trail will be moved on-street. Moving curb-and-gutter incurs some cost. There are also added costs on the Plymouth component due to increased slopes and the Richfield component because buffers are being added to the bike lane to increase safety.

Ryan Peterson suggested removing the Edina portion of the funding and keeping the Brooklyn Park portion, since new costs are incurred due to the rescope project. Keel said that projects traditionally absorb extra funds and that he therefore supports the staff-recommended reduction. Oehme added that scope changes are made at the applicant's risk.

MOTION 1: Keel moved to approve the scope change request with a \$125,365 reduction in federal funds. Seconded by Lux.

Keel said that this is a large enough amount of funding that it is worth addressing. Oehme added that recent scope changes with less than \$20,000 reductions cited by staff were not addressed due to the small amount. Loney added that if there was no scope change request, the applicant would have to absorb all cost increases.

Brown said the only risk in taking funds is that there is no guarantee that there will be projects to distribute the funding to.

Thompson said that the project intent is being met in Brooklyn Park and asked for comment from the Park District. Bowe replied that the intent is being met. Thompson said that he agreed with Ryan Peterson's suggested approach.

Smith suggested that the project is not worth its original funding amount even if the project is just as good as originally-proposed.

Members voted by show of hands. Barbeau informed the Chair that he does not have a vote as a way to address the possibility of ties. MOTION 1 failed by a vote of 10 to 11.

MOTION 2: Ryan Peterson moved to approve the scope change request with a reduction of \$83,200 of federal funds. Seconded by Thompson.

Keel said that he feels the Brooklyn Park change should lead to a reduction in cost.

MOTION 2: was approved with three votes against.

6. TIP Amendment; Three Rivers Park District Scope Change Request – Action Item 2016-53

Barbeau said that the enclosed TIP amendment includes the necessary project description change but did not include the cost change.

Keel moved to approve the TIP amendment adjusted to reflect a federal funding amount of \$852,640. Seconded by Steve Peterson. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. 2016 Regional Solicitation Release of Scores – Information Item

Barbeau reported that the Regional Solicitation Scoring Committees completed their activities. The applicants will now have the opportunity to appeal scores. Those appeals will be heard at the November meeting. A scoring error was found in the Transit Modernization application, but it was a minor error with no impact on the rank order that had been provided. The Committee decided to discuss the scoring process, application-by-application.

Roadway Expansion

Scoring Committee Chair Joe Lux said there were not many issues and that the scorers were thoughtful. He added that after the Scoring Committee meeting was over an applicant asked whether there is incentive to estimate costs low in order to score better on the cost-effectiveness measure. Keel said that the scores show a good mix for functional classification, though Lux added that non-freeway principal arterials are in four of the top six spots. Oehme said that this is because there are more interchange applications this year. Steve Peterson added that the Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study could impact the number of interchange applications in the next Regional Solicitation. Robjent suggested that interchanges could be its own category. Keel said that the criteria could change as well.

Roadway Reconstruction and Modernization

Steve Peterson said that TAB mandated one project be funded from each functional classification, meaning that a collector project from far down the list will be funded. Keel said that the Committee could make a recommendation countering this if it wishes. Robjent pointed out that expanders fared very well and suggested it could be projects that were already expanded through the Regional Solicitation process and perhaps are no longer “expanders.” Leitner said that Washington County staff questioned the safety score; a controversial bicycle/pedestrian crash reduction that some in the industry feel actually increases crashes. Given this, she questioned whether the applicant should be allowed to determine the approach that best suits its application.

Roadway System Management

Scoring Committee Chair Lyndon Robjent said that the criteria for Roadway System Management is similar to that of Roadway Expansion and Reconstruction/Modernization, though perhaps some criteria do not fit the category, given the frequent inclusion of multiple routes. Leitner said that some criteria lends itself to advantages and disadvantages based on applicants’ interpretation of questions.

Bridges

Scoring Committee Chair Jenifer Hager said that the process was pretty straightforward. She added that the application could ask for the most recent infrastructure condition report. Ryan Peterson said that the freight category he score, at only 15 points, was not particularly valuable.

Transit Expansion and Transit System Modernization

Committee Chair Jan Lucke said that usage in Transit Modernization may be an issue because the proportionate distribution led to a top score of 300 and all other scores were 96 and below. Equity had an issue regarding negative impacts of a project not being acknowledged and the scorer not being able to flag them. Three Modernization projects build upon three previously-funded Expansion projects and while that’s technically within the rules, she suggested that this be flagged going through the process to TAB. There was question as to whether rating percent travel time savings makes more sense than rating total travel time savings. Similarly, there was question regarding scoring emissions reductions on a terminal-to-terminal basis, which can benefit long routes carrying few passengers. A similar issue also exists scoring proportional, as opposed to total, cost savings.

Travel Demand Management

Scoring Committee Chair Paul Oehme said that Travel Demand Management was easier to score than it had been in the past. However, there were questions regarding how commuter trips were determined and the fact that projects with no completion date were penalized.

Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities

Oehme said that a lot of expensive bridge projects scored well. Robjert said that connection to the Regional Bicycle Trail Network was worth a lot of points and not being connected makes it difficult to be funded. Steve Peterson said that the \$5 million projects will absorb a lot of funding.

Pedestrian Facilities and Safe Routes to School

Scoring Committee Chair Lynne Bly said that while these are two separate applications, there are some similar criteria and some scorers scored in both applications. She said that there was a school that was not in the ACP-50 geography for equity but the walkshed for the school was, perhaps rendering that project underscored in that category.

Steve Peterson said that TAB could consider promising a small number of projects 2022 funding, encourage them to be prepared for 2021, having projects ready when withdrawals happen and not having to go through a redistribution process that provides less-than-optimum results. Keel replied that there could then be less funding in the subsequent Regional Solicitation.

8. Other Business

Barbeau said that MnDOT Metro District would like volunteers for scoring Highway Safety Improvement Program applications.

9. Adjournment

Steve Peterson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Keel. The motion was approved unanimously.