

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
Metropolitan Council
390 N. Robert St., St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1805
Minutes of a Meeting of the
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
May 18, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Oehme (Acting Chair, Chanhassen), Colleen Brown (MnDOT State Aid), Charles Carlson (Metro Transit), Innocent Eyoh (MPCA), Jenifer Hager (Minneapolis), Craig Jenson (Scott County), Karl Keel (Bloomington), Elaine Koutsoukos (TAB), Jen Lehmann (MVTA), Joe MacPherson (Anoka County), Gina Mitteco (MnDOT Bike & Ped), Ryan Peterson (Burnsville), Steve Peterson (Metropolitan Council), Lyndon Robjent (Carver County), John Sass (Dakota County), Michael Thompson (Maplewood), Anne Weber (St. Paul), and Joe Barbeau (staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Tony Fischer (Metropolitan Council)

1. Call to Order

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

2. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: Thompson moved to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Koutsoukos. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the April 20, 2017, Meeting

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

4. TAB Report – Information Item

Koutsoukos reported on the May 17, 2017, TAB meeting. Andrew Emanuele, FHWA, invited TAB members to attend the Congestion Management Process Peer Exchange on May 23 and 24, to be hosted by FHWA. David Thornton reported that because the Twin Cities metro area will no longer be an air quality maintenance area, CMAQ funding will likely drop from the current \$30 million received annually. Streamlined TIP amendments were approved for projects on Minnesota Highway 149 and US Highway 169, both requested by MnDOT. Information items on the 2016 Regional Solicitation survey results, the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, the Transportation System Performance Evaluation, and MnDOT's Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan were provided.

5. Draft 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program – Action Item 2017-16

Barbeau provided a brief presentation on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and funding sources and mode share within. Mary Gustafson, Metro Transit, provided a presentation on transit funding sources, key projects, and formula funds.

MOTION: Keel moved to recommend that the draft TIP be adopted by TAB for release for a public comment period. Seconded by Thompson. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Interchange Approval Process – Information Item

Tony Fischer from the Metropolitan Council presented an update on the interchange approval process for the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) update.

Ryan Peterson asked why interchange maintenance projects are not included in the process. Fischer replied that the process only concerns capacity expansions.

Hager suggested that local entities will be interested in engaging on the TPP. Steve Peterson replied that targeted outreach to cities and counties is planned.

Robgent said that the access management section makes sense and added that access points on linear projects are no longer scrutinized. Steve Peterson replied that in the past businesses would complain about reduced access and the projects would come back, successfully, for scope changes.

7. 2016 Regional Solicitation Survey Responses and 2018 Discussion Topics – Information Item

Barbeau discussed major changes that occurred prior to the 2016 Regional Solicitation and provided a 2018 Regional Solicitation timeline.

Discussion Questions

Members discussed the following discussion questions.

1. Should interchange projects have their own application category?

Steve Peterson said that interchange projects scored very well in the Roadway Expansion category. Keel asked whether other projects were doing poorly in any scoring measure, to which Steve Peterson replied that staff is uncertain, though the projects likely did poorly in safety and congestion. Sass suggested the possibility of putting more emphasis on cost effectiveness, given that interchange projects tend to be costly.

2. Should the use of two transit application categories (Transit Expansion and Transit Modernization) be continued?

Carlson said that both application categories are important, as they accommodate different project types. Lehmann suggested separating transitway and non-transitway projects. Eyoh suggested providing good examples of each type of project.

3. How can more clarity be provided to applicants about what types of projects should be applied for in Transit Expansion versus Transit System Modernization?

Barbeau said that there was some confusion regarding which projects fit into which of these categories. Staff will try to improve on that.

4. Should different project elements of the same transit route be allowed to apply in both transit categories in consecutive Regional Solicitation cycles?

Steve Peterson said that different elements of some arterial bus rapid transit routes were secured in the 2014 and 2016 Transit Expansion and Transit Modernization categories, respectively. It was decided that this was within the rules because the two projects have independent utility. Lehmann said that the routes are treated as one project in the TPP. Carlson said that they are separate projects and it would be difficult to invest in some projects if this were not allowed. Koutsoukos said that there was concern about the idea of modernizing something that has yet to be built.

5. Should the \$5.5M maximum federal award in the Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities category be reduced?

Barbeau said that in approving the 2016 Regional Solicitation, TAC recommended reducing the maximum federal award to \$3.5M but TAB elected to keep it at \$5.5M. In the past, bicycle projects had been served by two categories: Enhancements, with a \$1M maximum and STP Bike/Walk with a \$5.5M maximum. Mitteco said that since TAB cited the need for the larger maximum to fund large projects, she would like more information.

6. Should applicants be required or allowed to attach a one-page project overview pdf of their project?

Barbeau said that a survey respondent asked for the ability to create a one-page project overview and staff feels that this could be used while limiting the number and size of attachment pages. Robgent said that the one-pager should be prescriptive and Brown said that care should be taken to not be too specific with the one-pager in order to avoid scope changes.

7. Should TAB continue to fund at least one project from each of the five eligible roadway functional classifications?

Steve Peterson said that a connector was funded in the Roadway Modernization category, even though it scored fewer points than 15 un-funded projects. Thompson asked whether there were complaints from any of

the applicants whose projects were skipped, to which Koutsoukos replied there were none. Keel suggested that connectors could be in their own category. Members generally felt that the provision to fund at least one project from each functional classification should remain. Lehmann suggested that a similar technique could be used in the Transit categories.

8. Should the point distribution, criteria, and measures for the Roadway System Management application category be revamped to better-reflect the types of projects applying to it and to allow bundling of projects?

Robjent said that it makes sense to have a working committee, given the difference between Roadway System Management projects and other roadway projects. Eyoh said that the Synchro model does not work well and suggested the use of MOVES, which would better-capture the emissions impacts of some elements, including signal timing.

9. Should any measures for the Travel Demand Management projects be revamped to better-reflect the types of projects applying in the category?

10. Should more points be given to the freight measures on roadway projects?

Ryan Peterson said that the measure was not worth enough points to make a difference and, therefore, should either be eliminated or be worth more points. Thompson said that a lot of things he considered in scoring that measure are addressed in other measures.

11. Should the “infrastructure age” criterion be removed from Roadway Expansion and Roadway System Management since many of these projects include new elements compared to the Roadway Reconstruction application category?

Steve Peterson said that scoring “Infrastructure Age” has been challenging in the Roadway Expansion category, given that some roadway expansion applications are for new roadways. Perhaps even more difficult is scoring the measure for Roadway System Management projects, which often have brand new infrastructure along with various types of existing infrastructure of various ages. Keel said that he does not have a problem giving a new roadway zero points. Ryan Peterson questioned using age at all given that a roadway constructed in the 1980s can be in poorer condition than a roadway constructed in the 1950s. Members generally agreed with leaving the age criterion in Roadway Modernization and eliminating it from Roadway Expansion and Roadway System Management.

12. What improvements can be made to the way cost effectiveness is measured?

Barbeau said that at times there has been consideration of measuring cost effectiveness on the federal portion, though the likelihood that that would favor large projects has quieted any momentum for that. Further, the exemption of noise walls could lead to gaming the system. Two projects had very expensive noise walls that, if eliminated, will retroactively give the project bonus points. The Cost Effectiveness measure was impacted in Transit Expansion by a LRT station that had no operating costs and a 70-year useful life. Keel suggested standardizing costs of various project elements. Oehme suggested that more developed projects should receive more points, to which someone pointed out that this is the purpose of the Risk Assessment measure. Ryan Peterson said that with so much vulnerability perhaps Cost Effectiveness should just be removed.

13. Should the scoring committees have the flexibility to consider an alternative to prorating scores when high-scoring outlier projects diminish the separation given to most projects?

Members generally favored giving flexibility to scoring committees, perhaps with some guidance as to when or how it can be applied.

14. Do scoring measures that auto-calculate need to be scored by outside scorers or can it be done by Council staff?

Members generally preferred to let staff score the auto-calculated projects. Mitteco suggested that this could free up scorers to pair up on more difficult measures.

15. Should the methodology to distribute funds within a mode be tied back to priorities in the Transportation Policy Plan?

16. What other ways should regional balance of awarded funds be measured?

17 How should the results of recently completed and ongoing studies (e.g., Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study, Regional Truck Highway Corridor Study, and Bicycle Barriers Study) be incorporated into the scoring?

18. Should the “average distance to other arterials” measure be removed from Roadway Expansion, Roadway Reconstruction, and Roadway System Management due to the difficulty in accurately comparing projects?

Koutsoukos said that staff is in the process of improving the mapping application, which will help simplify the measure for applicants.

19. Should the 70 points for “Housing Performance Score” be reduced?

Members generally felt the point value should be reduced.

20. Should the “equity” measure be modified to better-incorporate the potential negative impacts of projects of various populations? If so, how?

Barbeau said that it has been difficult to score the negative elements of projects.

8. Other Business

None.

9. Adjournment

Robjent moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by MacPherson. The meeting was adjourned.