

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
Metropolitan Council
390 N. Robert St., St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1805
Minutes of a Meeting of the
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
September 21, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Mayasich (Chair, Ramsey County), Lynne Bly (MnDOT Metro District), Colleen Brown (MnDOT State Aid), Robert Ellis (Eden Prairie), Anna Flintoft (Metro Transit), Jack Forslund (Anoka County), Jenifer Hager (Minneapolis), Craig Jenson (Scott County), Emily Jorgensen (Washington County), Karl Keel (Bloomington), Elaine Koutsoukos (TAB), Jen Lehmann (MVTA), Paul Oehme (Chanhassen), Ryan Peterson (Burnsville), Steve Peterson (Metropolitan Council), Lyndon Robjent (Carver County), Amanda Smith (MPCA), Nancy Spooner-Mueller (Minnesota DNR), Mackenzie Turner Bergen (MnDOT Bike & Ped), Anne Weber (St. Paul), and Joe Barbeau (staff)

1. Call to Order

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

2. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: Steve Peterson moved to adopt the agenda with removal of the TPP finance item. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the August 17, 2017, Meeting

MOTION: Oehme moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Lehmann. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. TAB Report – Information Item

Koutsoukos reported on the September 20, 2017, TAB meeting. There were no action items. There was an information item showing the requested re-scoring of the DNR project removed from the TIP at the August meeting. TAB directed staff to prepare a TIP amendment to add the West St. Paul Wentworth Avenue Trail Gap project to the 2018-2021 TIP. An information item on the Regional Solicitation Roadway applications led to discussions on whether a two-to-three-lane conversion is an expansion or a modernization, how to use Regional Solicitation funds to prepare the region for autonomous vehicles, the end of MnDOT’s mobility funding in 2023, and requiring maintenance on trails funded by Regional Solicitation. There were also information items on the Congestion Management Safety Plan Part Four (CMSP IV) and the TPP.

Mayasich said that in Ramsey County two-to-three lane projects are done for safety and accommodate bicycles, but are not really expansion projects. Robjent said that he would consider it a reconstruction. The Committee generally felt that this project type should remain in the Modernization category.

Koutsoukos said that the CMSP IV study could contribute to scoring of roadway projects. Steve Peterson added that CMSP IV includes non-freeway roadways and could be scored as an “either/or” measure along with the Principal Arterial Study.

Koutsoukos said that trails should be maintained year-around, including snow removal. Keel said that Bloomington interpreted snow removal as part of the existing maintenance requirement, while Robjent said that he did not. Jenson said that sometimes trails are not plowed because they’re used for snowmobiles. The group agreed to have the discussion continued at TAC.

5. 2018 Regional Solicitation: Multiuse Trails and Bikeways Applications – Information Item

Barbeau said that while the Pedestrian and Safe Routes to School applications were discussed at a previous meeting, the Multiuse Trails and Bikeways application was held off to consider incorporating the Regional Bicycle Barriers Study. However, this study will not be ready in time for inclusion in the Regional Solicitation. Therefore, minimal change is proposed in this funding category.

Jorgensen asked whether the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) updates would be reflected in the Regional Solicitation, to which Koutsoukos replied in the affirmative.

6. 2018 Regional Solicitation: Transit and TDM Applications – Information Item

Barbeau said that the Transit Work Group wants TAB to determine whether there is a problem related to suburban applications' difficulties competing with urban applications. Lehmann said that projects in the urban center are much more competitive than suburb-to-suburb projects and other suburban-based projects. Keel asked whether this was a function of the equity category or ridership, to which Lehmann said that it is a function of several scoring measures. Barbeau added that ridership is worth 300 points. Keel said that more riders leading to more points makes sense. Mayasich added that the urban core has more transit-dependent residents, though there is still suburban demand.

Mayasich said that allowing transit maintenance and support facilities is inconsistent since that is not allowed in the roadway categories. Flintoft said that the work group wanted TAB to field this question and added that in order to run buses, they have to be stored somewhere. Bly asked why this would be disallowed, adding that it would make sense if it is related to limited funding availability. Koutsoukos said that scoring the Heywood garage expansion was difficult, as it took credit for riders on every bus route that will use it. She added that this also threatens to double-count in some categories if improvements to related routes occur. Mayasich said that entities are supposed to maintain their facilities so this is a modal equity issue. Robjent said double-counting is unfair.

Barbeau said that the work group recommends allowing for up to a 100-percent deduction to ridership projections, as one survey commenter suggested that a one-billion-rider projection could still be scored too high. Lehmann added that the work group suggested that Council staff can review the methodology.

Flintoft asked why average weekday transit trips are suggested to replace annual trips. Barbeau said he'd check with Cole Hiniker, transit planner.

Barbeau said that the work group recommended that the Transit Modernization application eliminate the rider count component to the emission reduction measure and reduce the service and customer improvement criterion from three measures to one by eliminating operating and maintenance cost reduction and merging travel time reduction into rider improvements. Koutsoukos asked whether the travel time reduction element needs guidance, to which Flintoft said that the entire measure is qualitative.

Barbeau said that the current scoring in the Transit Modernization application totals 1,150 points and it should be at 1,100. Fifty points should be eliminated, likely from service and customer improvements, which is recommended to increase 50 points because of its importance; equity, which is recommended to increase 50 points to reflect the Transit Expansion application; or usage, which is recommended to increase 50 points to reflect the Transit Expansion application. Flintoft suggesting keeping service and customer improvements at 200 points, with which Lehmann agreed. Koutsoukos suggested not increasing the equity score or removing 25 points each from equity and usage. The group agreed to the latter.

Barbeau said that the Travel Demand Management (TDM) work group suggested increasing role in the regional transportation system and economy and innovation by 100 points each at the expense of congestion reduction and air quality. Reducing the latter was because of the difficulty in quantifying the scores. Keel said that congestion and emissions reduction is the point of TDM. He said that it makes sense to increase the score in role in the regional transportation system and economy but perhaps the increase in innovation should be forgone in favor of returning 100 points to congestion reduction and air quality. Turner Barga asked who was on the work group, to which Koutsoukos replied that Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs) served. Turner Barga asked who applies in this category, to which Koutsoukos said that along with TMOs, non-profits apply. Turner Barga said that innovation is a valuable element.

Barbeau said that the TDM work group recommended shifting the focus of usage from projecting users to identifying target populations. Koutsoukos said that the number needs to be kept but needs to be better-explained.

Barbeau said that points can be reduced from the innovation criterion if duplication of efforts is proposed. Ryan Peterson asked whether innovative projects are high risk, to which Koutsoukos pointed out that they are high-risk by design, but there is only a \$300,000 maximum federal award.

The group agreed to shift the 300, 200, and 100 points in innovation to 200, 125, and 75.

7. 2018 Regional Solicitation: Risk Assessment – Information Item

Barbeau said that the Risk Assessment work group recommended four elements be included in the measure, as ten elements spread the impact too thinly. The group also recommends requiring better assurance from applicants that the local portion will be paid for. Koutsoukos added that this may be achieved through a board resolution.

Hager asked whether there is an understanding about what is meant by “geometrics” in the layout. Brown replied that lane widths are not needed. Robjent said that there needs to be evidence of progress and understanding of whether there is right-of-way impact. Hager suggested that location of modals access, turn lanes, right-of-way and the edge of project limits are needed. She will provide a sample to which the application can link.

8. 2018 Regional Solicitation: Equity Scoring Criterion – Information Item

Barbeau said that the equity work group recommends inclusion of community engagement and outreach as an equity scoring element along with better definition of negative project elements.

Lehmann expressed concern over the three points for public outreach. She suggested using Title VI reviews instead, though that occurs well after the application period. Barbeau said that this was a discussion point within the work group. Some work group members felt that outreach to impacted communities is key to the most equitable outcome; in some cases, this could be as simple of a question as “do we even want this project.”

9. Other Business

Lehmann asked about the extent of city representation on the TPP update and within the TAC Planning Committee, which reviews the TPP elements. She also asked whether the Funding & Programming Committee should be included. Peterson replied that TAC has city membership and that only the finance chapter from the TPP is slated for review by the Funding & Programming Committee.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.