

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAC FUNDING & PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 21, 2021

**Committee Members Present:** Michael Thompson (Chair, Plymouth), Jack Forslund (Anoka County), Angie Stenson (Carver County), John Sass (Dakota County), Jason Pieper (Hennepin County), Craig Jenson (Scott County), Joe Ayers-Johnson (Washington County), Elaine Koutsoukos (TAB), Cole Hiniker (Metropolitan Council), Anna Flintoft (Metro Transit), Molly McCartney (MnDOT Metro District), Innocent Eyoh (MPCA), Colleen Brown (MnDOT Metro District State Aid), Mackenzie Turner Barger (MnDOT Bike & Ped), Nancy Spooner-Mueller (DNR), Aaron Bartling (MVTA), Robert Ellis (Eden Prairie), Jim Kosluchar (Fridley), Ken Ashfeld (Maple Grove), Paul Oehme (Lakeville), Nathan Koster (Minneapolis), Anne Weber (St. Paul)

**Committee Members Absent:** John Mazzitello (Ramsey County), Karl Keel (Bloomington)

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thompson thanked Oehme for chairing the committee for the past three years. A quorum being present, Thompson called the regular meeting of the Funding & Programming Committee to order at 1:31 p.m. on Thursday, January 21, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via teleconference.

## II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Barbeau stated that item 2021-07, Distribution of \$4.5 Million in Unused CMAQ Funding, needs to be removed from the agenda, as Metro Transit needs to work with the Federal Transit Administration on carrying the funding forward.

MOTION: It was moved by Flintoft and seconded by Ellis to defer consideration of 2021-07 until next month and approve the agenda without the item. The motion was approved unanimously via roll-call and the agenda was approved without 2021-07.

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved by Koutsoukos and seconded by Spooner-Mueller to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2020, regular meeting of the Funding & Programming Committee. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call.

## IV. TAB REPORT

Koutsoukos reported on the January 20, 2021, TAB meeting.

Thompson added that he met with the TAC and TAC Planning chairs to discuss membership. He said that a new Metro Cities member has agreed to sit on TAC Planning. Barbeau said that with that replacement going to TAC Planning, the membership is set. Koutsoukos said that TAB Executive is going to discuss this in February to make sure that the membership is set.

## V. BUSINESS

1. 2021-05: Scope Change Request for St. Louis Park's CSAH 25 Beltline Blvd Pedestrian Improvements

Barbeau said that St. Louis Park was awarded \$560,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program funds to construct sidewalks and streetscaping elements on Beltline Boulevard, Ottawa Avenue, CSAH 25, and Lynn Avenue as part of the 2016 Regional Solicitation. The city proposes to eliminate the CSAH 25 portion and part of the Beltline

Boulevard portion from the project because they are going to be done as part of other projects. Barbeau said that historically, requests for which the applicant states the intention to complete part of the project elsewhere have been approved, though how much federal funding to remove does not have a consistent history. Staff suggested removing the cost of the federal portion of the two pieces being removed.

Pieper suggested that the request could be removed with no reduction because the city is spending its own funds to complete the parts of the project being removed and because the amount staff suggests removing is small. Wayne Houle, SEH, Inc., said that the Beltline Boulevard part of the project has already been constructed and that the CSAH 25 part is going to be constructed by a developer as part of another project.

Kosluchar asked if the applicant were to expand the scope to include the two additional connections and increase their match would federal funding be reduced? Thompson said that these two segments are lower-cost segments, the total cost for the remaining project is greater than the original projections and therefore, there is plenty of room for taking all the federal funding.

Barbeau asked whether there will be any MnDOT State Aid oversight over the removed parts of the project and whether there could be concern about the applicant constructing less than was applied for. Brown said that barring a motion to include State Aid oversight, there would not be any. She added that given the small amount of funding involved that she supports not removing federal funds from the project, which Oehme echoed.

MOTION: It was moved by Brown and seconded by Forslund to recommend that TAC recommend that TAB approve scope change request with no federal reduction. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call.

2. 2021-06: TIP Amendment for St. Louis Park: CSAH 25/Beltline Blvd Pedestrian Improvements

Barbeau said that the TIP amendment request should reflect the action taken for the scope change, which would change the TIP amendment form to reflect no reduction in federal funding.

MOTION: It was moved by Kosluchar and seconded by Ayers-Johnson to recommend approval of the TIP amendment request with no federal funding reduction. The Motion was approved unanimously via roll call.

3. 2021-08: Highway 252 Program Year Change

Steve Peterson, Metropolitan Council, said that the City of Brooklyn Center, City of Brooklyn Park, Hennepin County, and MnDOT are requesting an exception to TAB's Program Year Policy. The project partners would like to move four awarded Regional Solicitation projects to 2026 to align with construction of the larger MnDOT-led Highway 252/I-94 project. In 2018, MnDOT received \$119M in Corridors of Commerce funding to convert Highway 252 to a freeway and add a MnPASS lane to Highway 252/I-94. All the individual projects selected through the Regional Solicitation were incorporated into the larger Corridors of Commerce project as the environmental process began. In fall of 2019, MnDOT changed the project environmental document from an environmental assessment (EA) to an environmental impact statement (EIS), which has pushed the project letting beyond the years being programmed for the Regional Solicitation projects. The project is now scheduled to be let in fiscal year 2026. Peterson added that staff is looking for the committee to comment on the pro/con list included in the packet.

Mike Albers, City of Brooklyn Center, provided an overview of the projects and the need for the request.

Jeff Holstein from the City of Brooklyn Park said that the City of Brooklyn Park is in full support of the request.

Kosluchar asked what the impacts would be on the annual program, to which Peterson replied that the \$16 million being moved from 2023 can be covered by moving projects up and that the \$10 million scheduled for 2025 can be awarded through the next Regional Solicitation. Koutsoukos added that 2023 is still overprogrammed.

Stenson asked how to determine when to make an exception to the Program Year Policy and whether this has happened before. Thompson replied that it is difficult to coordinate large projects for one year. Koutsoukos said that this was done two years ago for two of the projects that are part of this request. That was done because of a MnDOT delay to the larger project and not the fault of the applicant.

Eyoh said that over 40 percent of the nearby population is people of color. He requested an air quality analysis in the area. He added that he supports the requested extension because a more in-depth public involvement process will be valuable. Thompson said that this could be a contribution to the “pro” list.

McCartney said that the Highway 252 project scored well in the Corridors of Commerce process in part because of local participation bringing other projects into the larger process. She said that the project was originally programmed for 2023. Thompson suggested that an exception to the policy could be when a project moves from an EA to and EIS.

MOTION: It was moved by Forslund and seconded by Eyoh to forward the comments to TAC, including incorporation of comments. The Motion was approved unanimously via roll call.

#### 4. 2021-09: CSAH 103 Program Year Change

Peterson said that based on issues with BNSF railroad, the City of Brooklyn Park is requesting an exception to TAB’s Program Year Policy. The City would like to move two projects back three years each to align with construction of the Blue Line Extension. In the 2018 Regional Solicitation, Brooklyn Park was awarded two projects that tie into the Blue Line Extension: a reconstruction and lane expansion project with the LRT running down the center median and a streetscaping and transit improvements project in between future LRT stations. The Blue Line Extension was originally scheduled to begin construction in 2019. However, Hennepin County’s and Metro Transit’s negotiations with the BNSF railroad have delayed the project until 2024 or 2025, as project partners explore options to advance the project without using the railroad property. Peterson added that staff is looking for the committee to comment on the pro/con list included in the packet.

Holstein added that neither of these projects has been extended yet.

Koster suggested that programming for 2025 or 2026 seems aggressive, given the difficulty of projecting the Blue Line Extension’s schedule. Therefore, he asked whether it makes sense to wait on moving the issue forward so there doesn’t need to be two actions. Hiniker asked why the change needs to occur now, to which Peterson replied that one project is in the first year of the upcoming Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which needs to be programmed soon.

Thompson asked what would happen if the Blue Line Extension is delayed more and how often requests like this come forward. Peterson replied that the amount is small enough that if the project is extended that it would not be difficult to shift funds. Thompson said that local partners are trying to make sure the local infrastructure ties into regional investment.

Stenson said consideration for when exceptions to the policy can occur and whether others can have exceptions is needed. Thompson suggested that the policy should be reviewed. Peterson said that TAB is going to review several policies this year.

MOTION: It was moved by Pieper and seconded by Brown to forward the comments to TAC, including incorporation of comments. The Motion was approved unanimously via roll call.

## **VI. INFORMATION**

### 1. 2021 Meeting Schedule

Barbeau said that the Funding & Programming Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month. This leaves the meeting the day after TAB (schedule for the third Wednesday of the month). However, in months in which the third Thursday comes before the third Wednesday, Funding & Programming Committee meetings are usually moved to the fourth Thursday (i.e., the 22nd). For 2021, this occurs in April and July. If members are agreeable, those meetings can be scheduled for the 22<sup>nd</sup> of those months. Members were in agreement and Barbeau said he would reschedule those meetings.

### 2. 2022-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Development Schedule

Barbeau shared a new TIP development schedule that will have TAB releasing the TIP for public comment in May rather than June. This is because the previous schedule allowed very little time to incorporate public comments, of which there were 210 last year.

## **VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: It was moved by Spooner-Mueller and seconded by Koutsoukos to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved via voice vote and the meeting was adjourned.

Joe Barbeau  
Recording Secretary