

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

Thursday, May 20, 2021

**Committee Members Present:** Michael Thompson (Chair, Plymouth), Jerry Auge (Anoka County), Darin Mielke (Carver County), Jenna Fabish (Dakota County), Jason Pieper (Hennepin County), John Mazzitello (Ramsey 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), Colleen Brown (MnDOT Metro District State Aid), Innocent Eyoh (MPCA), Mackenzie Turner Bargaen (MnDOT Bike & Ped), Aaron Bartling (MVTA), Ken Ashfeld (Maple Grove), Paul Oehme (Lakeville), Ethan Fawley (Minneapolis)

**Committee Members Absent:** Nancy Spooner-Mueller (DNR), Robert Ellis (Eden Prairie), Jim Kosluchar (Fridley), Karl Keel (Bloomington), Anne Weber (St. Paul)

## I. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Thompson called the regular meeting of the Funding & Programming Committee to order at 1:31 p.m. on Thursday, May 21, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via teleconference.

## II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved without a vote. A vote is only needed if changes are made to the agenda.

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved by Koutsoukos and seconded by Auge to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2021, regular meeting of the Funding & Programming Committee. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call.

## IV. TAB REPORT

Koutsoukos reported on the May 19, 2021, TAB meeting.

Hiniker added that the third meeting of the Unique Projects work group will occur on May 21, 2021 and will include discussion on potential metrics.

## V. BUSINESS

1. 2021-24: Recommend Approval of Draft TIP, Pending Public Comments

Barbeau provided a brief update on the schedule and contents of the draft 2022-2025 TIP. The TIP was released for public comment on May 19, 2021. The public comment period was moved up one month after 210 public comments were received in 2020.

Hiniker asked what percentage of the transit funds are for New Starts and Small Starts projects. Barbeau showed Table 10 from the draft TIP, which indicates that Section 5309 accounts for \$938 million of the roughly \$2.5 billion in transit funding.

Hiniker asked whether any stimulus funds are included in the 2022-2025 TIP. McCartney said that there are not. MnDOT is still determining how funds will be incorporated.

McCartney provided a brief presentation on MnDOT's programming of the TIP projects and the statewide TIP (STIP).

Eyoh stated that MPCA has provided a letter indicating that the draft TIP is approved for air quality attainment.

MOTION: It was moved by Pieper and seconded by Eyoh to recommend that TAB adopt the draft 2022-2025 Transportation Improvement Program, with consideration for public comments. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **VI. INFORMATION**

### **1. Regional Solicitation Before & After Study Report**

Consultants Lance Bernard, HKGi, and Ashley Hudson, Bolton & Menk, provided an overview of the Before & After Study, Phase II report.

Mielke asked whether the travel time reductions measure measures reductions from point A to point B or if it is an aggregate measure, to which Hudson replied that it is point A to point B.

### **2. Regional Solicitation Funding Ranges**

Steve Peterson from the Metropolitan Council shared the table of funding ranges, which included a shift to the midpoint in favor of transit. However, in 2020, transit was actually funded below its previous midpoint, while bicycle/pedestrian and highways were funded above their midpoints.

### **3. Policies, Qualifying Criteria, and Eligibility**

Peterson shared some proposed changes to the early chapters of the Regional Solicitation. The draft includes a brief goal statement for each application category. It shows sample measures removed, primarily smaller measures that share criteria with other measures. One example is Average Share of Student Population that Bikes or Walks in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) category. Additionally, in that category, there has been interest in limiting requirements related to planning given the impact of Covid. Simplification of the rules on proximity of projects was also suggested. Chair Thompson asked how proximity is determined for trail segments that are near each other, to which Peterson replied that two projects that are not adjacent or serve different users are not subject to limitations.

Bartling asked whether multiple projects on the same transit corridor could apply in three categories, to which Peterson said that BRT projects have a total dollar limit but for other transitway projects, the only limitation is total transit funding. Bartling asked whether skipping projects for being on the same transitway would still be in place, to which Peterson said it would. Bartling asked whether the ABRT setaside would still be awarded with no application process or if a scoring process might be set up. Peterson replied that this is not currently viewed as an issue, though members can bring it up.

Fawley said that in the Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization category, which shows elimination of the jobs and education measure in favor of Regional Truck Corridor Study tiers, he would prefer the opposite because truck corridors tend to be on principle arterials. He added support for consolidating the usage criterion in roadways. He said that in the Traffic Management Technology category, the Regional Truck Corridor Study does not belong because these projects do not tend to occur on principal arterials.

Mielke said that while simplification is a good goal, the measures shown eliminated on the draft are important and not time consuming. He added that in Carver County, MnDOT's heavy commercial traffic data is not accurate for minor arterials.

Turner Bargaen asked whether she could make suggestions on the goal statements, to which Peterson replied affirmatively. Turner Bargaen asked whether SRTS projects can get points only for inclusion in an SRTS plan or whether inclusion in a local plan can result in points. Barbeau replied that reduced points are awarded for inclusion in a local plan. Turner Bargaen said that a lot of infrastructure for walking to school is not in place, so she suggested support for consolidating the proportion of students walking and biking into the student population measure. She then suggested that multimodal language be weaved into the goal statements where possible. Pieper suggested examining point values as a way to inform the goal statements.

Pieper suggested that a \$1 million maximum for the Pedestrian category is low, given the impacts of projects on catch-basins and storm sewers. Thompson asked whether there was a lot of discussion on category minimum and maximum amounts, to which Peterson replied that there was almost no discussion at TAC.

#### 4. Twin Cities Highway Mobility Needs Analysis

Peterson and Paul Czech, MnDOT, provided an overview of the Twin Cities Highway Mobility Needs Analysis. Fawley said that driving increases along with lane miles and therefore the suggestion that expanding highways is going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions does not make sense. Czech said that greenhouse gas emissions would increase using a capital investment approach, though using a telecommuting approach may reduce congestion and emissions.

Hiniker asked whether there was examination of the impact of adding capacity on multimodal travel. Czech said that he is not certain. Paul Morris, SRF, said that while the investments are targeted at state-owned highways, time benefits are calculated everywhere. He added that there was a theoretical look at the negative impacts of regional travel on local travel near homes and multimodal safety. Hinker said that it is good to think more broadly about how investments can impact the rest of the system. A benefit could be to reduce some need for right-of-way that could be used for multimodal facilities.

## **VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting.

Joe Barbeau  
Recording Secretary