

Minutes

TAC Funding and Programming Committee



Meeting date: September 21, 2023

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: Virtual

Members present:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plymouth – Michael Thompson (Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban Transit Assoc. – Matt Fyten | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anoka Co. – Jack Forslund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bloomington – Karl Keel (Vice Chair) | <input type="checkbox"/> DNR – Nancy Spooner-Walsh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver Co. – Darin Mielke |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eden Prairie – Robert Ellis | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Bike/Ped – Mike Samuelson | <input type="checkbox"/> Dakota Co. – John Sass |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fridley – Brandon Brodhag | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Metro District – Aaron Tag | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hennepin Co. – Jason Pieper |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lakeville – Paul Oehme | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Metro District State Aid – Colleen Brown | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ramsey Co. – Scott Mareck |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maple Grove – Ken Ashfeld | <input type="checkbox"/> MPCA – Innocent Eyoh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Co. – Adam Jessen |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minneapolis – Katie White | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TAB Coordinator – Elaine Koutsoukos | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wash Co. – Maddy Dahlheimer |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> St. Paul – Anne Weber | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present, E = excused |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met Council MTS – Cole Hiniker | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metro Transit – Scott Janowiak | | |

Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Thompson called the regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee to order at 1:00 p.m.

Agenda approved

Chair Thompson noted that a roll call vote was not needed for approval of the agenda unless a committee member offered an amendment to the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by E. Koutsoukos and seconded by S. Mareck, to approve the change to the agenda and the minutes of the July 20, 2023, regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee. **Motion carried unanimously with three abstentions.**

Public comment on committee business

There were no public comments.

TAB report

E. Koutsoukos reported on the August TAB meeting.

Business

2023-45: TIP amendment for new TPP projects (Joe Barbeau, MTS) – roll call

Joe Barbeau, of the Metropolitan Council’s Metropolitan Transportation Services office, presented the TIP amendment request and background information to the committee. MnDOT requests the addition of a I-94 Albertville to Monticello Lane Expansion project in Wright County (SP# 8680-189) be added to the TIP. Scott County requests the addition of a grade-separated interchange on US 169 at CSAH 59 (Delaware Avenue) (SP# 7008-119) into the TIP.

C. Brown stated that the Scott County project is shown as a MnDOT project in the attachment and is not being let by MnDOT. She requested it be shown as a Scott County project.

M. Dahlheimer moved to recommend adoption of the projects, including the updated project number, and that the amendment be released for public comment and R. Ellis seconded.

Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by M. Dahlheimer and seconded by R. Ellis, to **“recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2024-2027 TIP to add two regionally significant projects:**

-Corridors of Commerce-funded I-94 expansion from Albertville to Monticello in Wright County

-Construction of US 169 Interchange at CSAH 59 in Scott County (070-659-001)

And that the amendment be released for public comment”. The motion passed unanimously.

2023-46: Scope change request – SW Transit (Joe Barbeau, MTS) – roll call

Joe Barbeau, of the Metropolitan Council’s Metropolitan Transportation Services office, presented the scope change request and background information to the committee. SouthWest Transit is requesting a scope change to remove the procurement, operation, and maintenance of carshare vehicles from its Transit Mobility Hub project at SouthWest Station.

C. Hiniker asked if the transit category had a multimodal connections category and captured travel demand management that we should maybe factor into our scoring in the future.

J. Barbeau responded he believes C. Hiniker was correct but would need to follow up on that.

C. Hiniker clarified staff have no concerns about this project.

E. Koutsoukos added that the carshare provides similar mobility to SW Prime and demand has grown for micro transit service. Further we are not sure if SW Transit were not provided the funding for the carshare if that would keep them from completing the rest of the project.

M. Thompson responded, if this request is approved the committee would be trusting the applicant to do the right thing with the funding.

M. Thompson asked if the scope and the budget are similar to what is in the staff report.

Nicole Clapp, Met Council, responded that the committee has the complete scope and budget and that the applicant would not keep the carshare in the project if this request was denied.

C. Hiniker stated he believes that the project was not evaluated based on the presence of the carshare program. The benefit was largely from other parts of the project. However, if it was

scored based on that, we should discuss how the scope change affects the project benefit.

E. Koutsoukos stated the scoring evaluated based on bicycle and pedestrian considerations.

M. Dahlheimer asked if current policy states if a project is cutting something out of its scope and it is not being completed by another project, the applicant will not keep those funds. This group has voted previously on projects where something is removed but it is getting completed by some other project and we have let the applicant keep all the funds. If we approve this request it seems somewhat precedent setting for future requests.

E. Koutsoukos replied that F&P has approved requests like this in the past on a case-by-case basis, but it has usually been a smaller amount.

J. Barbeau displayed policy for the group and noted that there is not language stating what needs to be done and TAB has suggested these requests be handled on a case-by-case basis. Staff may recommend funding reduction options but that was not done for this request. As this question is going addressed in the scope change and program year policies workgroups, he is not concerned about creating a precedent.

E. Koutsoukos stated that the funding in question is roughly five percent of the total federal award.

M. Thompson agreed it was a smaller amount of funding so it is up to the committee to discuss. Typically elements get done by another project and applicants keep the funding if they can still fund the required local match.

C. Hiniker moved approval of the scope change request. He also noted that it may be good to summarize this discussion for TAC and clarify that this element of the project was a bonus element of the project and did not factor into the project benefit.

E. Koutsoukos asked if the motion included no reduction of funding.

C. Hiniker replied yes.

E. Koutsoukos seconded the motion.

J. Pieper observed that innovation is a theme of projects funded by the regional solicitation and applicants will likely be urged to continue innovating. This may result in some project elements that need to be revised as they are developed further. He encouraged the group to keep an open mind in the future on questions like this.

Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by C. Hiniker and seconded by E. Koutsoukos, to **“approve the scope change request without reducing funding”**. **The motion passed unanimously.**

2023-47: TIP amendment request – SW Transit (Joe Barbeau, MTS) – roll call

Joe Barbeau, of the Metropolitan Council’s Metropolitan Transportation Services office, presented the TIP amendment request to the committee. SouthWest Transit requests an amendment to the 2024-2027 TIP to add its Transit Mobility Hub project at SouthWest Station (TRS-TCMT-22F).

M. Dahlheimer asked if this needs to go to public comment period.

J. Barbeau responded no it does not as it is not a regionally significant project.

M. Dahlheimer moved to approve the request. C. Brown seconded the motion.



Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by M. Dahlheimer and seconded by C. Brown, to **“recommend approval of SouthWest Transit’s request to add its Transit Mobility Hub project at SouthWest Station (TRS-TCMT-22F) to the 2024-2027 TIP”**. The motion passed unanimously.

2023-48: Program Year Extension Request: City of Blaine Trunk Highway 65 & 99th Avenue Interchange (Steve Peterson, MTS) – roll call

Steve Peterson, of the Metropolitan Council’s Metropolitan Transportation Services office, presented the program year extension request to the committee. The City of Blaine is requesting a program year (PY) shift for its Trunk Highway 65 and 99th Avenue interchange project (SP 106-010-020) to move Regional Solicitation grant funding from 2024 to 2026.

J. Pieper noted that there were multiple funding sources for this project including regional solicitation, corridors of commerce, and so on. He asked for how the sources are being aligned; are they all able to be moved to 2026 and if the projects all been combined into one.

Dan Schluender from City of Blaine replied that they are in the process of trying to align all sources. The project is fully funded if all sources can be moved to 2026. There are requests to move two other funding sources otherwise all others should align for 2026 construction. So there is some work ahead of the project team but the bulk of the funding is aligned.

M. Thompson stated he assumes that once the funding sources get aligned then they will be combined into one project number and asked if that is the crux of J. Pieper’s question.

J. Pieper replied yes and also the potential for local agencies to reapply in future cycles. With the Highway 252 project; if they were unsuccessful getting the program year extension they could not reapply to the regional solicitation based on how the new project was established.

Michael Corbett from MnDOT stated that he received an interchange review request from Anoka County for Bunker Lake Blvd and asked if the vision is to include this project with the Corridors of Commerce funded projects.

J. Forslund replied that would probably not fall within the same timeline as those are 2028 dollars.

P. Ohme moved to recommend approval of the request. M. Dahlheimer seconded the motion.

Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by P. Ohme and seconded by M. Dahlheimer, to **“recommend approval to move the Regional Solicitation funding for Blaine’s Trunk Highway (TH) 65 at 99th Avenue grade separation (SP 106-010-020) from 2024 to 2026”**. The motion passed unanimously.

Information

Regional Solicitation survey kick-off (Bethany Brand-Sargent, MTS)

Bethany Brandt-Sargent, of the Metropolitan Council’s Metropolitan Transportation Services office, presented on the Regional Solicitation Survey project kick-off to the committee. B. Brandt-Sargent along with Dani Hans, of Zan Associates, discussed the project scope, timeline, and survey components. The presenters also asked for feedback on if this engagement effort should be used to collect feedback regarding the new active transportation funds from the regional sales tax.

K. White stated that it is a good idea to incorporate the active transportation funding questions into this engagement effort. Given the timeline it might not work well to do a similar level of engagement at a different time. The funding is a bit different than the regional solicitation as it has

been prioritized for us by the legislature.

J. Pieper noted that the Regional Solicitation is used to award federal funds, whereas the active transportation funds are not so we should exercise caution in combining discussions about them.

B. Brandt-Sargent replied that our intent is not to collect in depth feedback on project design or other detailed considerations but mostly to help TAB think about whether they want to use these funds if the projects they see come in exceed the federal funds that we have.

M. Thompson stated regarding active transportation, that this is just for the upcoming solicitation as we have the larger workgroup to figure out how to address on the appropriation from the metro sales tax. There is a lot of discussion that needs to occur as there are tens of millions of dollars the counties will receive and questions around who should even be able to apply for the funding.

Intersection mobility and safety study (Steve Peterson, MTS and Michael Corbett, MnDOT)

M. Corbett, from MnDOT, and Steve Peterson from MTS along with Paul Morris from SRF Consultants provided an update on the results of the intersection mobility and safety study. Topics covered included the project methodology, how equity was considered, scoring and tiering results, next steps for implementation, and application of the study for the Transportation Policy Plan and Regional Solicitation.

There were no questions from the committee.

Program year and scope change policy – Introduction, key issues, and questions (Joe Barbeau, MTS)

J. Barbeau presented on the program year and scope change policies and the workgroup being formed to develop recommendations on the policies. Topics covered included the purpose of the existing policies, the main reasons why the policies need to be re-examined, and other potential topics that could be considered by the work group.

M. Thompson asked if staff were looking for another metro city to participate in the work group.

J. Barbeau responded yes.

R. Ellis volunteered to participate.

C. Hiniker stated that with the regional solicitation evaluation coming up there is an opportunity to do two things. First, look at how other regions handle these policy issues as this can't be an issue unique to this region. Second, there's a possibility we could restructure the entire solicitation which would impact the scope change and program year considerations.

D. Mielke asked if the goal of this committee is to look at the bare minimums of federal and state requirements versus where we as a region have gone beyond those minimum requirements such as plugging in a certain fiscal year where a project completed versus over a five year period.

J. Barbeau responded that the work groups for the current program year and scope change policy were not planned to look at other ATPs. In terms of the five year period, there is not much flexibility with FHWA. That is different with FTA. With FHWA if we do any program year changing, we must rectify that by moving around other projects.

M. Thompson asked if D. Mielke is getting at other MPOs having more flexibility around choosing a year for project delivery.



D. Mielke replied yes its weighing out what is allowable with FHWA and MnDOT requirements – is it possible to have a wider window of two or three years where applicants could complete a project. Have we developed practices as a region that restrict flexibility that are not based on federal or MnDOT requirements.

J. Barbeau replied we can cover that information in the work groups. We do things in the regional solicitation that are definitely beyond what FWHA requires. Our program year policy, however, is very much based on the lack of flexibility from FHWA.

S. Peterson added that staff did meet with MnDOT to discuss this issue and they said from their standpoint there is not flexibility in the program year for highway projects. There is flexibility from FTA. To the question of if there can be more flexibility in the program year, the answer could be yes on that but it is up to the group to work through. However, MnDOT staff had said there is not flexibility on how much needs to be delivered each year otherwise the funding goes back.

C. Hiniker said it is helpful for this group to look at elements of projects that aren't essential to the scoring of projects in the regional solicitation like with the southwest transit project. Maybe some generic language could be developed to provide guidance on that topic.

M. Thompson said J. Barbeau will follow up on next steps and keep the committees informed of progress on this topic.

Other Business

E. Koutsoukos said an announcement went out for the regional solicitation webinar it is scheduled for September 29th at 10:30. This webinar is just an overview of the changes of this solicitation compared to the previous one. Everyone on this committee is familiar with those changes. A training for the Web Grants and mapping application will be announced in the near future.

S. Peterson posted a link to the IIJA match program. Those who have received for IIJA/MnDOT recently, an email has been sent out to applicants that received funding. There are \$216.4 million on a first-come, first-served basis. If you do win an IIJA discretionary grant, you can get whatever the locally required match funded through this state set-aside.

M. Thompson recognized K. Ashfeld who is retiring from the City of Maple Grove who has been a member of TAC and Funding & Programming.

E. Koutsoukos replied that Metro Cities has posted to find a replacement.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Council contact:

Bradley Bobbitt, Senior Planner
Bradley.Bobbitt@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1724

