

Minutes

TAC Funding and Programming Committee



Meeting date: July 20, 2023

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: Virtual

Members present:

- | | | |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bloomington – Karl Keel (Vice Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TAB Coordinator – Elaine Koutsoukos | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anoka Co. – Jerry Auge |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lakeville – Paul Oehme | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Metro District – Aaron Tag | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver Co. – Jack Johansen |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eden Prairie – Robert Ellis | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Metro District State Aid – Colleen Brown | <input type="checkbox"/> Dakota Co. – John Sass |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fridley – Jim Kosluchar | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Bike/Ped – Mike Samuelson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hennepin Co. – Jason Pieper |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maple Grove – Ken Ashfeld | <input type="checkbox"/> MPCA – Innocent Eyoh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ramsey Co. – Scott Mareck |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minneapolis – Kathleen Mayell | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DNR – Nancy Spooner-Walsh | <input type="checkbox"/> Scott Co. – Adam Jessen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plymouth – Michael Thompson (Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban Transit Assoc. – Heidi Scholl | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wash Co. – Maddy Dahlheimer |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> St. Paul – Anne Weber | | <input 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 Vice Chair Keel called the regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee to order at 1:00 p.m.

Agenda approved

Vice Chair Keel added an item to the agenda noted to the new business section regarding the new active transportation funding.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by E. Koutsoukos and seconded by J. Auge, to approve the change to the agenda and the minutes of the June 15, 2023, regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee. **Motion carried unanimously with one abstention.**

Public comment on committee business

There were no public comments.

TAB report

E. Koutsoukos provided the TAB report on the July meeting.

Business

2023-41: Scope Change Request for Minneapolis E Line Route Signal and Pedestrian Safety Project (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. The City of Minneapolis is requesting a scope change to remove the Upton Avenue S/Sheridan Avenue S and 43rd Street intersection from its E Line route signal and pedestrian safety project (SP# 141-030-058).

Ryan Anderson, with City of Minneapolis, spoke on behalf of the applicant stating that all items proposed to be removed from this project will be completed by the E Line project.

S. Mareck moved approval and M. Dahlheimer seconded the motion.

J. Peiper noted that this project is an example of unfunded safety and complete streets needs along future BRT service. Further it feels like gymnastics to local agencies trying to ensure BRT project success by coordinating FHWA and FTA funds that are in play. He hopes the region can improve this situation given the new funding passed by the state legislature.

K. Keel highlighted that the total project costs well exceed the initial estimate so additional funds will easily be spent.

R. Anderson responded that since the City of Minneapolis wrote the application they have completed similar projects and, based on those, they believe the cost is reflected in the request.

C. Brown asked to clarify if the motion includes retention of federal funds.

J. Barbeau noted the recommended motion did not include retention of federal funds so it should be clarified in the motion.

S. Mareck stated that his intention in the initial motion was to include the retention of federal funds.

M. Dahlheimer stated, as the motion seconder, that was also her intent.

Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by S. Mareck and seconded by M. Dalheimer, to **“approve the scope change request including retention of federal funds”**. **The motion passed unanimously.**

2023-42: Program Year Shift Request for Brooklyn Park and Hennepin County's CSAH 103 and CSAH 30 projects (Joe Barbeau, MTS) – roll call

Joe Barbeau, of the Metropolitan Council's Metropolitan Transportation Services office, presented the program year shift request and background information to the committee. The City of Brooklyn Park requests a program year shift to 2028 for its CSAH 103 roadway project (110-020-041), CSAH 103 streetscape/trail project (110-020-042), and CSAH 30 roadway project (110-020-043).

Dan Soler spoke on behalf of Hennepin County, co-signer to the request. He stated they feel comfortable that an extension to program year 2028 would be doable for all three projects with the Blue Line LRT Extension, even with the challenges of that project. Originally the Blue Line LRT was on a different alignment to the south. The need to change things to the south is no fault of Brooklyn Park or these pieces of the larger project but did significantly impact these projects.

M. Dahlheimer moved to approve the program year shift request and was seconded by N. Spooner-Walsh.



Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by M. Dahlheimer and seconded by N. Spooner-Walsh, to **“approve the program year shift request”**. **The motion passed unanimously.**

2023-43: Regional Solicitation Application Release (Steve Peterson, MTS) – roll call

Steve Peterson, of the Metropolitan Council’s Metropolitan Transportation Services office, presented the request to release the Regional Solicitation application to the committee. A public comment period was held and 13 comments were received proposing various changes. Staff thought bringing the proposed changes back for committee review was warranted.

S. Peterson reported that Three Rivers Park District requested the multi-use trail application scoring guidance be clarified. A substantial number of points relate to if a facility is on the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network, and TRPD wanted to clarify if a project does not build a segment of the RBTN, it would receive 50 points given it was part of a local network system identified within an adopted City, County, or Regional Park system plan.

K. Keel asked if the proposed change affects the points.

S. Peterson responded that it does not.

C. Hiniker moved approval of the changes as written on page 185 of the attachment, R. Ellis seconded.

Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by C. Hiniker and seconded by R. Ellis, to **“approve the changes as written on page 185 of the attachment”**. **The motion passed unanimously.**

S. Peterson reported one comment noted the percent weighting for the Unique Projects application added up to 101%. Staff proposes a one percentage point decrease to significance, a one percentage point increase to environmental impacts, and a one percentage point decrease to partnerships to address this. There were also some small clarifying language changes.

E. Koutsoukos moved to accept the proposed changes for the unique projects application, K. Keel seconded.

Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by E. Koutsoukos and seconded by K. Keel, to **“accept the proposed changes for the unique projects application”**. **The motion passed unanimously.**

S. Peterson reported that Hennepin County commented that the bridge state aid federal funding eligibility changed in 2020 and recommended Met Council update the Regional Solicitation federal funding standard to reflect the new state aid standards. This change would primarily affect the qualifying requirements. The proposed change is that a bridge must have a local planning index (LPI) of less than 60 or a national bridge inventory rating of 3 or less for deck geometry, approach roadway, or waterway adequacy as shown in the most recent Minnesota structure inventory report. Previously Met Council used NBI rating of 6 or less for a rehab or 4 or less to complete rebuild the roadway. Met Council staff sought input from subject matter experts on these proposed updates and how they should relate to scoring in the Regional Solicitation. The proposed change is now that LPI would be used as a qualifying criteria and NBI would be used for scoring.

K. Keel asked if the application could simply state that it is in line with the new state aid standards or is there value in stating what those standards are.

S. Peterson replied given that the standards changed recently, there would be value in stating what the standards are specifically.



P. Oehme moved to approve the proposed bridges application changes and J. Pieper seconded.

Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by P. Oehme and seconded by J. Pieper, to **“approve the proposed bridges application changes”**. **The motion passed unanimously.**

S. Peterson reported that Three Rivers Park District requested to have a short guidance document with all of the scoring documents but that does not need to be voted on. Staff wanted to note it for the committee to show process is being responsive to public comments.

S. Peterson reported there was a request to replace the phrase “equity populations” with “disadvantaged communities” in the equity and affordable housing criteria.

M. Dahlheimer asked if this is defined somewhere in the application documents.

Amy Vennewitz, Metropolitan Transportation Services, responded that there is a description at the beginning of the measure description and suggested adding the language “defined as” before the description in the application.

M. Dahlheimer moved to approve the proposed changes to the Disadvantaged Communities measure and add the phrase “defined as” before the description of disadvantaged communities.

J. Auge seconded the motion.

Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by M. Dahlheimer and seconded by J. Auge, to **“approve the proposed changes to the Disadvantaged Communities measure and add the phrase ‘defined as’ before the description of disadvantaged communities”**. **The motion passed unanimously.**

E. Koutsoukos made a motion to approve the Regional Solicitation for release including all prior amendments and any needed minor corrections for typos. R. Ellis seconded the motion.

K. Mayell asked if it should be clarified that this motion does not include the new active transportation section.

K. Keel stated that language would need to be added into the application and since no such action was taken by the committee it would not be included in the proposed motion.

Roll call vote was taken on the motion, as moved by M. Dahlheimer and seconded by J. Auge, to **“approve the Regional Solicitation for release including all prior amendments and any needed minor corrections for typos”**. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Information

There were no information items.

Other Business

Active Transportation Funding Discussion (Steve Peterson, MTS)

S. Peterson reported on the new active transportation funding source and updates since the last committee meeting. TAB decided it was not ready to bring the new funding source into the Regional Solicitation. Staff wanted input from the committee on the idea of including work on answering questions that have arisen from TAB/TAC about these funds through the Regional Solicitation evaluation consultant project. The project would occur starting 2023 into 2025 and is a full evaluation of the Regional Solicitation process. This does not presume that the new active transportation funding would be distributed through the Regional Solicitation process.



K. Keel stated this discussion should probably focus on the process as opposed to funding specific projects and asked for comments, thoughts, or ideas other options.

M. Dahlheimer asked if there would be value in forming a work group or task group to brainstorm initial ideas to bring to committees or serve as an advisory team to the consultant.

S. Peterson responded that is the general intent for the proposed project, it would require a subcommittee of interested stakeholders.

K. Mayell agreed with M. Dahlheimer's comments.

K. Keel added that one of the complicating factors is if TAB members want to be involved, they are coming from a policy angle whereas F&P and TAC members have a more technical perspective. It may be worth having a policy advisory committee and a technical advisory committee.

J. Kosluchar asked if there is a need to spend or allocate some of the funding earlier than what would happen in the standard solicitation process. He also asked if it should be assigned within an existing category Regional Solicitation or somewhere else.

K. Keel replied that the proposal to look at this funding in the consultant contract does not necessarily include it in the Regional Solicitation but is a quick way to get some help in answering those questions.

S. Peterson replied that is correct. TAB spoke the day before about the consultant project schedule and the overlapping commitments the committees will have between the 2024 and 2026 regional solicitation evaluation and the TPP. The schedule is one of the trickier elements especially if the Active Transportation funds are solicited separately from the Regional Solicitation. Applicants will likely tend to prefer the state funds to the federal funds.

K. Keel added another complicating factor is these funds could be used for a wider range of activities than we normally fund with the Regional Solicitation like operations.

E. Koutsoukos clarified that along with the Active Transportation funds there are other new sources this study will address how to distribute like the Carbon Reduction Program.

K. Keel stated that the Regional Solicitations was once organized by funding source then switched to try to have more flexibility. Currently several new pots of money with very specific requirements are appearing so we may partially go back to solicitations organized by funding source.

E. Koutsoukos added the evaluation project will help us analyze how funding sources can be used.

J. Pieper emphasized that the active transportation funds are not federal. Federal funds come with their own set of headaches and local agencies ask themselves if they want to "federalize" a project. We should consider how the active transportation funds can be used to our advantage.

K. Keel added we should make sure we do not add too many requirements, so it is even worse than federal funding.

E. Koutsoukos clarified that she heard the active transportation funds be referred to as "state funds" but they are sales tax funds so they are local funds not state funds.

S. Janowiak asked how much urgency is there to determine an approach given that funds will start accumulating in October. Will funds accumulate, the longer this process takes, where we'll have a "reverse fiscal cliff" need to spend it in ever larger amounts.



S. Peterson replied that the funds do not expire like federal funds, but they will build up. That's one topic TAB discussed; there could be \$125-\$135 million accumulated before the next solicitation, and we want to signal back to the legislature that progress is being made. TAB said it would rather let funds accumulate than rush putting them into the Regional Solicitation. Staff would like to address this topic early in the consultant contract due this situation.

S. Janowiak stated he understood the logic of using the Regional Solicitation evaluation to look at these questions in an expedited fashion.

J. Kosluchar stated one reason to appropriate these funds earlier is the safety benefits of the projects they will fund are desperately needed in the region and asked that be kept in mind.

E. Koutsoukos added that TAB had some discussion on that and left open the possibility that as we figure out where we're heading on this more within next year, we could potentially add this to the project selection next summer, like how we did with PROTECT and Carbon Reduction funding.

2050 TPP Policy Development Groups (Cole Hiniker, MTS)

C. Hiniker informed the committee that at the 2050 TPP working group, which includes the TAC Planning Committee, staff put out a request for partner agencies to participate in policy development groups to shape early drafts of policies that will be put out for public comment. This is step one in redoing the Regional Solicitation – getting the right policies and actions into the TPP. If committee members want to participate or know of anyone who's a topical expert, please contact C. Hiniker or Bethany Brand-Sargent who used to staff this committee.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

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