

Action Transmittal

Transportation Advisory Board



Committee meeting date: July 17, 2025

Date: July 10, 2025

Action Transmittal: 2025-18

Scope Change Request – Minnesota Valley Transit Authority's Technology and ADA Enhancements Project

To: TAC Funding and Programming Committee

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Requested action

Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) requests a scope change to replace technology and ADA improvements at four transit hubs and 53 bus stops/shelters with enhanced improvements at eight transit facilities in its technology and ADA enhancements project.

Recommended motion

That the TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that TAC recommend approval of a scope change request to replace technology and ADA improvements at 53 bus stops/shelters and four MVTA transit hubs with enhanced improvements to eight transit facilities in MVTA's technology and ADA enhancements project (SP# TRS-TCMT-24K) with no reduction in federal funds.

Project history

This project has not had any scope changes or program year changes.

Background and purpose

Minnesota Valley Transit Authority was awarded \$500,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) funds in the Transit Modernization category of the 2022 Regional Solicitation. [The application](#) was awarded to fund elements such as e-paper, static signage, interactive kiosks, platform displays, annunciators, and real-time signage at 53 stops/shelters and four transit hubs.

MVTA reports logistical challenges and additional expenses to establish electrical connections to shelters without existing connections. Additionally, complications have been reported with exterior technology devices due to weather elements, specifically that Metro Transit's e-Paper pilot underperformed in Minnesota's climate. MVTA has prioritized non-federal dollars to support shelter and bus stop signage enhancements instead.

The original application included the following locations:

- Apple Valley Transit Station – MVTA will be utilizing AVTS Modernization Phase II funding (federal) to complete the technology/ADA enhancements at this location.
- Blackhawk Park and Ride – included in proposed update.
- Heart of the City (HOC) Park and Ride – During the pandemic, MVTA discontinued service to HOC and does not have plans soon to serve this location.
- Marshall Road Transit Station (MRTS) – Scott County's footprint at MRTS has been

modified (two vendors are now officed out of Scott County instead of staff) and the transit footprint has been reduced. MVTA is requesting to remove technology/ADA enhancement funding from this location.

- Rosemount Transit Station – included in proposed update.
- 53 Bus Stops/Shelters – non-federal dollars have been identified to support technology/ADA enhancements throughout the MVTA service area. Signage includes route description, QR code, contact information, route color, and stop ID, and is ADA compliant (reflective material, non-glare, font size to scale, font used, high contrast colors). Phase I of this project is due for completion in Summer of 2025 (273 bus stops). Phase II (321 bus stops) will begin after the 2025 State Fair, though this may be delayed until Spring/Summer 2026 depending on weather.

The locations identified in this scope change request are: MN Zoo Shelter (new shelter and electrical connection – 2025), Palomino Hills Park and Ride, Southbridge Crossings Park and Ride, Savage Park and Ride, Blackhawk Park and Ride (included in original application), Burnsville Transit Station, Rosemount Transit Station (included in original application), and 157th Street Station.

This reprioritization is further supported by MVTA's growing Connect microtransit service, which has seen considerable ridership growth since this application, a trend that is continuing. This curb-to-curb service does not require a bus stop/shelter and is an important consideration of how to tactfully plan for the future and allocate funds responsibly.

MVTA requests retention of its full federal funding amount, as the overall project cost remains unchanged. The revised scope focuses on fewer facilities with larger footprints, resulting in a higher cost per site due to more advanced technology investments. The original project emphasized lower-cost enhancements, mainly signage and e-paper, at a greater number of bus stops and shelters.

Relationship to regional policy

Projects that receive funding through the Regional Solicitation and HSIP Solicitation processes are subject to the regional scope change policy. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the project is designed and constructed according to the plans and intent described in the original application. The scope change policy allows project sponsors to adjust their projects as needed while still providing substantially the same benefits described in their original project applications

Staff analysis

Approval/Denial of the Scope Change

Scoring and Ranking: The [Scope Change Policy](#) directs the TAC Funding & Programming Committee to consider whether a project would likely have scored fewer points than the highest-scoring unfunded project. This is not applicable as all eligible projects in the Transit Modernization category were funded. (Note that one project was unfunded due to the limit on funding bus rapid transit projects.) That said, an analysis is presented below. While staff interprets the reduction in stations as a small potential overall reduction in score, the reduction would be far less than the 121-point gap the application has over the lowest-scoring project in category, which was funded. In all, the improvements being removed are fairly minor. Staff does not see rationale to deny the request based on scoring.

Table 1: Scoring Analysis

Measure	Max Score	Original Score	Scope Change	Notes
1A. Jobs and Ed	50	38	-	Possible minor decrease as overall area is a bit smaller
1B. Trips Connected	50	30	0	All routes connected
2. Ridership	325	29	0	No/limited potential for reduction given

				the original score
3A. Engagement	50	26	0	General MVTA demographics scored
3B. Benefits/impacts	75	55	-	Loss of e-paper removes lack of need of smart phones (cited in scoring notes)
3C. Housing	50	36	-	Benefits at fewer locations
3 Equity Bonus	-	0	0	
4. Emissions	50	23	0	
5. User Improvements	200	87	0	Fewer locations but more improvements at each
6. Bike/Ped Elements	100	77	-	
7. Risk	50	50	0	
8. Cost Effectiveness	100	71	0	CE not reviewable in Scope policy
TOTAL	1,100	522	-	Minor overall decrease; far less than scoring margin

* 0 = no change

+ = small improvement, ++ = moderate improvement, +++ = large improvement

- = small diminishment, -- = moderate diminishment, --- = large diminishment

New Project? Aside from scoring, the other consideration for whether a request should be denied is whether the change would create a new project, as opposed to a scope change. An obvious example would be an applicant asking to move the reconstruction of a roadway to an entirely different road. Cases with various minor changes become gray areas. The Scope Change Policy designates staff (TAB Coordinator) as responsible for this determination, which is to be made if a request is:

- Relocating the project away from the defined problem, need, or location, such as switching transit start-up service from one market area to another
- Moving funding from one project to another, such as moving funds awarded to a project on County Road A to the same, similar, or different work on County Road Z.
- Eliminating the primary improvement proposed in the project description (e.g., a bridge will not be improved for a project submitted in the bridge application category or a trail will not be improved in the multiuse trails application category).

Staff did not interpret these as being violated. However, finding precedent for changes like this is difficult. Transit projects tend to be more prone to impact from economic and behavioral shifts, the increased use of microtransit in this case, than permanent infrastructure projects. The following examples provide some parallels:

- [2024](#): Relocating SouthWest Transit route from the golden triangle to the Mall of America following demand shifts.
- [2024](#): Movement of two transit hubs along with budget shifting from technology to amenities following assessment of local safety and arterial BRT planning.
- [2015](#): Removing several intersection elements (ped ramps, countdown times, intersection markings) being done elsewhere and replacing with new intersection elements

MVTA recognizes two unforeseen events that precipitate this scope change; unanticipated high electrical costs and that the proposition to use e-paper for real time signage was not properly tested for cold weather environments. As a result, maximum impact of the funds awarded will be best realized by targeting eight higher priority facilities. Given this, that the project would have been funded as applied for, and that staff does not interpret the application as establishing a new project, staff recommends approval of the request.

Funding

The original application budget is displayed in Table 1 below. The requested scope change elements and their associated cost estimates are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2a: Original Application Budget

Project Element	Estimated Cost
Wayfinding	\$250,000
Transit Systems	\$375,000
Federal Funding Amount	\$500,000
Local Match	\$125,000
Total Project Cost	\$625,000

Table 2b: Original Application Budget Breakdown

Project Location/Element	Estimated Cost
53 Bus Stops/Shelters – Signage only (~\$375 /sign)	20,000
*10 Shelters – various technology elements (\$20,000 /shelter)	200,000
*20 Bus Stops – e-Paper (\$6,000 /bus stop)	120,000
5 Transit Hubs – various technology elements (\$57,000 /hub)	285,000
Federal Funding Amount	\$500,000
Local Match	\$125,000
Total Project Cost	\$625,000

* 30 e-Paper installations originally budgeted (20 bus stops, 10 shelters).

Table 3: Requested Change to Project Elements (See attached Letter for further breakdown)

Location	Estimated Cost
Minnesota Zoo Shelter	\$60,000
Palomino Park & Ride	\$70,000
Southbridge Crossings Park & Ride	\$70,000
Savage Park & Ride	\$70,000
Blackhawk Park & Ride	\$70,000
Burnsville Transit Station	\$165,000
Rosemount Transit Station	\$60,000
157th Street Station	\$60,000
Total	\$625,000

MVTA requests retention of its full funding. Given the original application's lack of specifics in assigning funds to individual project elements, it is difficult to attempt to suggest specific reductions. Therefore, staff recommends no funding change.

Committee Comments and Action

At its May 15, 2025, meeting, the TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommended that the Technical Advisory Committee recommend approval of MVTA's scope change request to replace technology and ADA improvements at 53 bus stops/shelters and four MVTA transit hubs with enhanced improvements to eight transit facilities in its technology and ADA enhancements project (SP# TRS-TCMT-24K) with no reduction in federal funds.

At its June 4, 2025, meeting, the Technical Advisory Committee voted to return the amendment for staff revision and additional documentation followed by reconsideration by the TAC Funding and Programming Committee. Members did not believe that the request adequately conveyed what is changing and why.

Routing

To	Action Requested	Date Completed (Date Scheduled)
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review and recommend	May 15, 2025
Technical Advisory Committee	Review and Send to Funding & Programming	June 4, 2025
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review and recommend	<i>July 17, 2025</i>
Technical Advisory Committee	Review and recommend	<i>August 6, 2025</i>
Transportation Advisory Board	Review and Adopt	<i>August 20, 2025</i>



ATTACHMENT 1: FUNDING DATA FOR SCOPE CHANGE REQUEST

Original Application:

Regional Solicitation Year	2022
Application Funding Category	STBG
HSIP Solicitation?	Yes No
Application Total Project Cost	\$625,000
TAB Award	\$500,000
Application Federal Percentage of Total Project Cost	80%

Project Elements Being Removed:	Original Application Cost
Facility Locations: Original application included 53 bus stops/shelters and four (4) transit hubs. Scope change request includes 8 transit facilities (1 bus shelter, 4 park and rides, and 3 transit stations).	\$625,000
Technology/ADA Enhancements: MVTA to remove ePaper technology due to logistical challenges and additional expenses to establish electrical connections to shelters without an existing electrical connection. In addition, complications have been reported with exterior technology devices due to Minnesota weather elements (Metro Transit's e-Paper pilot underperformed in Minnesota's climate). MVTA has prioritized non-federal dollars to support shelter and bus stop signage enhancements instead.	

New Project Elements: The proposed new locations are listed below, along with technology/ADA equipment plus cost.	Cost: (Based on Year of Costs in Original Application)
MN Zoo Shelter	60,000
Interactive Kiosks	40,000
Real-Time Arrival Information	5,000
ADA Annunciator System	10,000
Digital Wayfinding	5,000
Blackhawk Park & Ride	70,000

Scope Change Policy

TAB Adopted: February 19, 2025

Interactive Kiosks	45,000
Real-Time Arrival Information	5,000
ADA Annunciator System	10,000
Digital Wayfinding	5,000
Customer Service Intercom	5,000
Palomino Hills Park & Ride	70,000
Interactive Kiosks	45,000
Real-Time Arrival Information	5,000
ADA Annunciator System	10,000
Digital Wayfinding	5,000
Customer Service Intercom	5,000
Savage Park & Ride	70,000
Interactive Kiosks	45,000
Real-Time Arrival Information	5,000
ADA Annunciator System	10,000
Digital Wayfinding	5,000
Customer Service Intercom	5,000
Southbridge Crossings Park & Ride	70,000
Interactive Kiosks	45,000
Real-Time Arrival Information	5,000
ADA Annunciator System	10,000
Digital Wayfinding	5,000
Customer Service Intercom	5,000
157th Street Station	60,000
Platform Display	35,000
Real-Time Arrival Information	5,000
ADA Annunciator System	10,000
Digital Wayfinding	5,000
Customer Service Intercom	5,000
Burnsville Transit Station – Phase II	165,000
Platform Display	80,000
Real-Time Arrival Information	40,000
ADA Annunciator System	30,000
Digital Wayfinding	10,000
Customer Service Intercom	5,000
Rosemount Transit Station	60,000
Interactive Kiosks	40,000
Real-Time Arrival Information	5,000
ADA Annunciator System	10,000
Digital Wayfinding	5,000
PROJECT FUNDING	\$625,000
Federal Amount	500,000
Local Match (MVTA)	125,000

Revised Project Scope

The purpose of this scope change request is to allow MVRTA to adjust its implementation approach while continuing to meet the original project goal: to enhance accessibility and modernize rider-facing technology across high-priority transit facilities in the MVRTA service area. These upgrades will remove barriers for riders of all abilities and equip customers with real-time transit information and improved wayfinding.

Originally, this project proposed technology and ADA improvements at 53 bus stops/shelters and four transit hubs. However, during preliminary design, MVRTA identified several implementation challenges and cost constraints associated with this distributed model, including:

- Significant electrical infrastructure costs at many shelter sites without existing connections
- Operational limitations for outdoor technology (e.g., e-paper signage has shown performance issues in Minnesota's cold-weather environment, as demonstrated in Metro Transit's pilot)
- Reduced service patterns at some originally included locations due to post-pandemic route changes

MVRTA is proposing to shift the project to focus on eight transit facilities, where improvements can be implemented more efficiently, cost-effectively, and with greater benefit to riders. These sites include four park-and-rides, three key transit stations, and one new shelter location at the Minnesota Zoo.

Several facilities from the original scope were reassessed:

- Apple Valley Transit Station will receive enhancements through another federally funded modernization project.
- Heart of the City Park & Ride is no longer served by MVRTA due to route restructuring following the pandemic.
- Marschall Road Transit Station - Scott County's footprint at MRTS has been modified (two vendors are now officed out of Scott County instead of staff), and the transit footprint has been reduced. MVRTA is requesting to remove technology/ADA enhancement funding from this location.
- 53 bus stops/shelters - non-federal dollars have been identified to support technology/ADA enhancements throughout the MVRTA service area. Signage includes route description, QR code, contact information, route color, and stop ID, and is ADA compliant (reflective material, non-glare, font size to scale, font used, high contrast colors). Phase I of this project nears completion in Summer of 2025 (273 bus stops). Phase II (321 bus stops) will begin after the 2025 State Fair, which may be delayed until Spring/Summer 2026 based upon the weather.

The revised scope prioritizes locations with high ridership, multimodal service (fixed-route, local, and MVTA Connect microtransit), and strategic customer interaction points. Enhancements will include real-time signage, indoor kiosks, LED displays, annunciators, ADA-compliant features, and improved wayfinding tools. These improvements will increase accessibility, provide better transit visibility, and support growing ridership across the south metro.

This scope change does not request any increase or decrease in federal funds. The total project cost remains \$625,000, with MVTA retaining the \$500,000 federal share and providing the \$125,000 local match. While the number of implementation sites is reduced, the average cost per site is higher due to broader scope, facility size, and electrical needs. All project locations are existing transit facilities, minimal ground disturbance is anticipated.

A revised location map is included. The map displays 11 total locations, including the originally proposed sites, with a labeled red circle indicating “Key Locations in Original Map” to clarify why some previously included stops no longer appear.

Updated Project Locations

