

Summary Report

Transportation Advisory Board



Meeting Date: September 18, 2024

Reports

1. **Chair's Report** – Hovland reported that the Regional Solicitation Policymaker Work Group met prior to the TAB meeting. Discussion is on how to accomplish the most for the region and what to bring to the full TAB as approach. TAB has been using a modality approach. Should we be thinking more about an outcome-based approach. The underlying question is how we can best accomplish the most for the region through the regional association process that aligns with the 2050 TPP.
2. **MnDOT Report** – Sahebjam reported that construction will begin toning down. They are expecting a snowy season, so they would not be able to continue construction late into the year like last year. There was significant increase in fatalities from last month; in August there were 271 fatalities reported and in September total is 320. This compares to 280 at this time in 2023.
3. **MPCA** – Kohlasch reported that MPCA is in the process of working out the details of the \$200 million climate action grants that Minnesota was awarded under the inflation reduction act. The climate smart food system grant will cover the entire food system from the restoration of agricultural lands to proper agricultural processes equipment used to process industrial decarbonization in the food processing in Minnesota and the trucks that are used to transport through goods throughout Minnesota. Five other agencies are receiving funds: the Department Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, Board of Water and Soil Resources, Department of Health, and Department of Employment and Economic Development. MPCA has grants open right now for Volkswagen settlement for heavy duty vehicles that is available on the MPCA website. MPCA also has a grant opportunity for reducing the emissions of train engines.
4. **MAC Report** – There was no report.
5. **Metropolitan Council Report** – Barber reported on Network Now. Network Now is Metro Transit's plan to design transit service that best meets the needs of the region, grows transit ridership, and expands access to jobs. The plan outlines service changes that Metro Transit would be prioritized through 2027. The plan also accounts for four new bus rapid transit lines – the Gold Line, B Line, E Line and G Line – and the Green Line Extension that will be in service by the end of 2027. The Metropolitan Council authorized the start of the public comment period on the plan. Feedback is being sought through November 15. After the comment period ends, staff will revise the plan and bring it back to the Met Council for adoption in early 2025.
6. **Suburban Transit Association** – Hanson reported Maple Grove Transit provided State Fair service on weekends and Labor Day, setting a single-day service record on Sunday, September 1st. Minnesota Valley Transit Authority set a record for State Fair ridership, providing more than 127,000 rides – a 15% increase over MVTA's previous record set last year. MVTA set a new daily record on Sunday, September 1st, with 18,414 rides. MVTA's service to the Renaissance Festival continues to grow. To date, 21,000 rides have been

provided – a 25% increase over last year. Plymouth Metrolink ridership is up 20% on regular routes, while ride-on-demand is up 36%. Plymouth Metrolink will coordinate with Maple Grove Transit on a Northwest Service study for 2025 service. SouthWest Transit reported its largest State Fair ridership ever. SouthWest is working on its autonomous vehicle project, with launch expected in the first half of November.

Business

TAB approved the following items (forwarded to the Transportation Committee).

1. 2024-37: 2025 Unified Planning Working Program (UPWP) (October 14, 2024, Transportation Committee)

The Transportation Advisory Board recommended that the Metropolitan Council:

- adopt the 2025 Unified Planning Work Program with a budget of \$8,151,320, to be updated to reflect the staff salary and benefit adjustments included in recent union contract settlements, and
- Authorize the Regional Administrator to enter into an agreement with the State of Minnesota Department of Transportation for distribution of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning funds.

2. 2024-39: Scope Change Request – SouthWest Transit Mall of America Service

The Transportation Advisory Board recommended that the Metropolitan Council approve SouthWest Transit’s scope change request to adjust the service area to remove the Golden Triangle, add the Airport, and increase the operating time for its Mall of America service with retention of all federal funds.

3. 2024-40: Scope Change Policy Update

The Transportation Advisory Board discussed the updated Scope Change Policy. TAB members expressed concern for amount of funding that could be allowed to be removed from a project without coming to TAB for action. Ten percent on a project with a large total project cost would be a significant amount. TAB passed a motion to return the item back to the TAC for further input. An option could be to consider a dollar value as a cap.

Information

1. Regional Solicitation Evaluation Updates

Hovland reported that the Policymaker Workgroup met prior to the TAB meeting. The work is figure out how we want to fund projects and implement the goals objectives and policies of the 2050 TPP. We want to get alignment to the five TPP goals: equitable and inclusive, healthy and safe, dynamic and resilient, climate change, and protect and restore natural systems.

Johnson reported on the Active Transportation Workgroup. The Workgroup has discussed Policy Level Grant Management Considerations for pilot. Staff reviewed and discussed grant management requirements for similar programs.

Below are items which were determined to need policy level direction:

1. Program year
2. Grant disbursements
3. Eligible project costs
4. Project plan documentation and plan submittals
5. Environmental impact review



6. Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition process and documentation
7. Scope change process
8. Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) – to be discussed and recommended at September AT Work Group

An action item will be brought to the October 16 TAB meeting. Following this decision, the Work Group will turn the focus to the 2026 Regional Solicitation.

2. Program Year Policy Update

Joe Barbeau, MTS, and Jeni Hager, TAC Chair, presented the item. TAB discussed what they would like the committees to consider. TAB supports one-time, one-year requests for extensions. Supports having exceptions, with the project sponsor making the case for the exception. Applicant must show reasonable progress on the project. TAB would like to see a limit on the number of requests for exceptions. TAB asked the committee to consider allowing other exceptions for other hardships, in addition to projects that are requesting an exception because they are tied to another large project that is shifting to a later year. TAB requested that the action transmittals include a full description of all program year extensions previously approved for the project.

3. Local Forecasts to 2050

Todd Graham, Research, presented the item.

Link to September 18, 2024, TAB agenda and materials, [091824 Agenda - Transportation Advisory Board \(metrocouncil.org\)](https://www.metrocouncil.org/091824-Agenda-Transportation-Advisory-Board).

