



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION WORKING GROUP

### Meeting #14 Agenda

September 29, 2025

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

- Glen Johnson (Chair & TAB Citizen Rep)
- Brian Martinson (Vice Chair & TAB Non-Motorized Rep)
- James Hovland (TAB Chair)
- Mary Liz Holberg (TAB, Dakota Co)
- Peter Dugan (TAB Citizen Rep)
  - Alt: Rachel Chinitz
- Amity Foster (TAB Transit Rep)
  - Alt: Tim Marino
- Aurin Chowdhury (TAB, Minneapolis)
- Mark Steffenson (TAB, Maple Grove)
- Julie Jeppson (TAB, Anoka Co)
- Stan Karwoski (TAB, Washington Co)
- Mai Chong Xiong (TAB, Ramsey Co)
  - Alt: Maryjo Maguire
- John Ulrich (TAB, Scott Co)
- Don Do (TAB, Citizen Rep)
- Alexander Ask (TAB, Non-Motorized Rep Alternate)
- Joe MacPherson (TAC Chair)
- Brian Issacson (TAC Vice Chair)
- Michael Thompson (TAC F&P Chair)
- Marc Brieze (State-Aid AT Rep)
- Aaron Tag (TAC F&P, MnDOT)
- Craig Jenson (Bike-Ped WG Co-Chair)
- Jordan Kocak (Bike-Ped WG Co-Chair)

### Meeting Agenda

1. Meeting Objective Overview
2. Recap of Past Discussions and Recommendations
3. Decision Point Topics
  - a) Funding Target for 2026 Solicitation
  - b) Program Reserve Considerations
4. Review and Discuss Topics
  - a) Geographic Balance Options
  - b) Active Transportation Solicitation Timing
5. Next steps

## Meeting Notes

### Recap of Past Discussions and Recommendations

Staff presented a recap of decisions made and discussions the group has had on various topics in 2025.

Member Ulrich asked if shifting to a reimbursement process will make things more difficult for grant awardees in handling grant funds.

Staff replied that this change is coming from feedback from applicants and experience with the first grant where the applicant chose not to use the option of a partial up front payment. Most communities are used to the typical reimbursement process for many different types of grants both at the state and federal levels.

Member Holberg stated that she thought the local match requirement was either no or small match and not just no match.

Chair Johnson agreed that the group did not recommended no match specifically, and that the information should be changed to show that.

Member Maguire noted on a local match that it would always be easier to remove it in the future than add one and so a small match should be considered initially.

### Funding Target and Reserve for 2026 Solicitation

Staff presented the considerations for the 2026 funding target and the recommendation.

Chair Johnson noted that having this first solicitation with a big peak with a steep drop off in future solicitations could be an issue for future expectations with local partners, balancing and predictability is an important consideration.

Member Holberg clarified that as a funding target there would be some flexibility on the final funds depending on the quality and amount of applications in the solicitation.

Staff responded that calling this a target was meant to line up with language used for the federal solicitation and exactly to preserve flexibility on the final amount. Setting a target will give applicants a clear idea of how much money is to be released while also preserving final flexibility for the TAB when making final award decisions.

Member Ulrich stated he had some concerns about making this too flexible and asked what measures would be taken to make a decision on what will or wont be funded.

Staff noted that typically this process has clear natural breaks from projects which do or do not warrant funding by their scoring and that TAB will have the final say on project funding. The target flexibility would be used for a project or two past the target.

Staff presented the considerations for the planning category and subtarget for funding.

Member Jepson asked if it would be possible to portion out planning funds to each community to support comprehensive planning.

Staff noted that could be difficult to manage all the projects as there are 180 communities in the region and that many communities already are doing this sort of planning on their own. The intention to open up this funding to supplement comprehensive planning is to support communities who do not have the resources to implement robust planning. This source of funding is intended for that specifically. Providing the opportunity for funding should remove communities who already have plans in place from applying for funding to support this activity.

Member Ulrich stated that he did not think any funding should go toward planning and that these funds should be solely for the construction of facilities.

Vice Chair Martinson noted that the set up of the solicitation is in-line with how MnDOT's Active Transportation program is set up with both a planning and infrastructure solicitation. Providing planning assistance will aid communities to get to the phase of actually building projects, as many regional communities do not have plans which identify what is needed and where it is needed, this would aid those communities to do so for future infrastructure funding.

**Chair Johnson called for final comments and to vote for a \$50 million target for the 2026 Active Transportation for 2026 with a \$2.5 million reserve. All members voted yes on a voice vote. Recommendation passed.**

### **Geographic Balance Options Discussion**

Staff presented the considerations and potential options for geographic balance for the 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation.

Member Ulrich stated that this seems like a new use of the idea of geographic balance than what has been done in the past at TAB. Previously TAB has considered county level balance instead of geographical areas based on development patterns. Doing it by urban/suburban/rural could still leave out major parts of the region while still meeting these definitions of balance and he doesn't like the idea of changing the existing process which has worked.

Member Jepson stated that she does not know what the right answer is and that she thinks that projects will cost the same no matter where they are. She noted that Anoka County has not applied for projects in the past and so the look back of funded projects does not get at this nuance for balance purposes.

Chair Johnson noted that the previous years are likely not representative of what the new source of funding could look like as previously there was restrictions on what type of projects would compete well and skews the numbers somewhat.

Vice Chair Martinson clarified the legislative language in reference to equity and balance. The language is intended for project benefits for areas which are historically or currently unrepresented in the benefits of investments and not necessarily the dollar amount on the front end. The scoring framework for projects should be taking this into account for selection and that it is redundant to place additional policy measures on top of that. He believes that the do nothing option is the most appropriate. Scoring should address this and the TAB can take additional action if benefits do not seem to meet policy when that time comes.

Staff replied that scoring is taking this into account via the community considerations criteria and this will account for 20% of the project score to take into account the legislative requirements.

Member Holberg stated that the geographic buckets option gets at the kind of balance that is needed here. Not enough money available to truly get at balance if done this way. The past data showed that suburban areas have not fared well in the past and that option would not fix that in a way to survive scrutiny. She thinks that how the TAB has handled this in the past has usually worked out to get enough projects spread throughout the region without a specific policy as is considered in the options presented.

Chair Johnson noted that the do nothing option would allow TAB to conduct its usual process after applications are submitted and scored.

Member Dugan noted that he thinks the discussion is positive and feels good about the direction that this process is going.

Member Hovland agreed with member Holberg about the balance question and would like the TAB to weigh in more on this beyond just this group. He stated he has thought the past process the TAB has conducted has led to good outcomes.

Member Ulrich stated that urban projects are generally more expensive as there is more complexity to them with utilities and reduced space to construct and that is why generally urban projects are receiving higher shares of funding.

Chair Johnson summed up the conversation and noted that there may not be a recommendation from this group on this topic based on the discussion.

Vice Chair Martinson stated he hopes that there would be some direction for the next solicitation as it becomes difficult to be impartial about regional funding. Would like there to be a more blind process when making these decisions than members voting for projects in the districts or communities to be included. The do nothing option could be the best as there was a good balance of projects selected in 2024 without a policy in place.

Member Ulrich agreed with Vice Chair Martinson on the do nothing option. He stated that if there are any issues that can be worked out after these are known and if there is a formal process needed that can be decided after.

Member Hovland agreed with the other members and thought the additional funds could get us to a balance more naturally.

### **Active Transportation Solicitation Timing Discussion**

Staff presented considerations for the timing of the Active Transportation Solicitation

Member Holberg asked when solicitations are normally opened and what early would mean to separate them.

Staff replied that early would be maybe a month before the federal solicitation. Currently the federal solicitation is targeted to be released on May 1<sup>st</sup> and the AT solicitation could be opened in March or April. The hope is to select projects before new members or a new governor move into their roles in January 2027.

Member Holberg asked when applications will be public.

Staff replied that the call for projects will be public in March or April and that details will be going to public comment in January.

Member Hovland noted that this money is going to be available annually and so an annual solicitation would make sense as opposed to the federal process which is larger and for future year funding.

Vice Chair Martinson stated a concern on staff time for both internal staff to run solicitations but also on external staff who aid in scoring and review projects if the solicitation was held annually.

Member Karwoski through Washington County staff stated that it seems like a lot for people applying for Regional Solicitation and AT to deal with both of those application processes at the same time. Staff also help score which is a ton of work to do too. Staggering seems like a better option. This would give TAB and the TAB staff committees dedicated time to pay attention to the awarding process. We are open to having AT and RS happen at the same time this cycle to get this money awarded but then would like to see the cycle staggered.

Member Kosluchar offered an idea of keeping the AT solicitation biennial but to hold it on the off year from the federal solicitation.

Washington County staff noted that it seemed to make sense and that technical teams were considering this as a viable option.

Chair Johnson noted that it may be more difficult to achieve balanced results for each solicitation if annual with a smaller pot of funding.

Member Kosluchar stated that balance should be looked at over time and not for each solicitation individually.