



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION WORKING GROUP

Meeting #4 Notes

April 25, 2024

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Working Group Members Present

- 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)
- Amity Foster (TAB Transit Rep)
- Julie Jeppson (TAB, Anoka Co)
- Jeni Hager (TAC Chair)
- Brian Issacson (TAC Vice Chair)
- Michael Thompson (TAC F&P Chair)
- Marc Brieese (State-Aid AT Rep)
- Craig Jenson (Bike-Ped WG Co-Chair)
- Jordan Kocak (Bike-Ped WG Co-Chair)

Working Group Members not Present

- Hwa Jeong Kim (TAB, St. Paul)
- Aurin Chowdhury (TAB, Minneapolis)
- Mark Steffenson (TAB, Maple Grove)
- Aaron Tag (TAC F&P, MnDOT)
- Alexander Ask (TAB, Non-Motorized Rep Alternate)

Meeting 3 recap and 4.17.24 TAB meeting feedback ([Meeting 3 Notes](#))

Chair Johnson recapped meeting 3 and TAB feedback from their previous meeting.

Member Holberg asked if there should be a new line in the motion or reference to get at the geographic balance noted by TAB.

- Chair Johnson responded that due to the limited number of AT funded projects that it would be difficult to judge for the pilot – he asked if we could consider all the active transportation projects to be funded rather than just those funded with regional funds.
- Steve Peterson stated that he agreed with this assessment and that once we got the funding scenarios that it would be clearer the geographic spread of all projects in the bike/trail, pedestrian and safe routes to school categories.

Member Holberg stated that she thought that when the legislation was enacted that requirement 6 (geographic equity) meant that the benefits from the revenue would accrue to the entire region.

Active transportation 2024 additional requirements response summary

Joe Widing presented the summary and findings from the additional requirements responses from RS applicants.

Chair Johnson noted that all the bike and trail projects were likely found on the RBTN because the scoring gives those projects preference and may not be indicative of all projects in the bike and trail applications.

2024 Regional Solicitation active transportation funding scenarios

Steve Peterson presented the regional solicitation funding scenarios.

Member Hager stated that she is excited for the pilot to advance regional goals and getting more funding into active transportation projects. She noted that from the funding scenarios that Minneapolis is projected to be awarded for 4 projects and that seemed like an over representation from a single city. She offered to allow 2 Minneapolis projects (Nicollet Ave Pedestrian Improvements and Pleasant Ave Safe Routes to School Improvements) be switched to federal funding instead of regional funding in order to allow more spread of applicants to receive this funding for the pilot.

Chair Johnson stated that every applicant applied for these funds with the assumption that they would be federal funds and the regional funding is now come in as additional funding for projects.

Member Holberg said that she would like TAC to weigh in on these scenarios and what moving regional funding around could mean for applicants, too technical to get at in the working group level. She also stated that she does not want to overload the pilot program with too many projects and thinks the currently presented number is fine, should not add more projects.

Chair Johnson asked if we wanted to add more money, what would the capacity be for staff to handle in the pilot?

- Steve Peterson replied that staff will ask TAC the question on if there would be a major difference between getting regional or federal funding in the scenario discussion next week. He also stated that he was not sure on what the right number of projects would be, would need to do more assessment internally to know the extent of time staff may have and externally to better know what will be needed to manage the pilot.

Member Jepson stated that she sees a lot of Minneapolis and Hennepin County projects selected for funding. She stated that in Anoka County the strategy is to produce a few projects that they are more confident on attaining a high score, whereas other applicants may submit more applications without as much consideration for getting a high score in the solicitation. She brings this up as if Anoka County was aware of this additional funding this round, they may have submitted more applications. Does not think it is fair to add more funding this year with this consideration.

- Chair Johnson responded that this is a fair point and there is a fairness issue which could arise if more funding was put into this year's solicitation as this funding was not expected at the time of application submittal.

Vice Chair Martinson stated that the point of the pilot is to get capacity for staff to be able to handle larger program in the future and not just to add more money at the last minute to the solicitation. He stated it is helpful for Minneapolis to move some of the regional funding to other applicants – not just for the money but for Council staff to get experience with a bigger breadth of applicants. Important to build structures to ensure future success of the program.

Member Holberg stated that having this funding be limited this round is ok and that in the past other funding has been identified after applications were submitted, this would not be different to those situations and so is not concerned with this.

Member Holberg stated that because the categories are not compared with one another, that some projects with lower scores in certain categories are more likely to get funded than others in more competitive categories with higher scores. She stated that scoring should be looked at overall.

- Steve Peterson responded that scoring is not based on the other applications. We have heard in listening sessions that we should explore a minimum point threshold for receiving funding.
- Elaine Koutsoukos added that depending on the category scoring can be very similar, like the multiuse trail category, many trails will score similarly as the facilities themselves are very similar. Some categories can lead to much more varied scores and a reason why it is difficult to compare scores across categories.

Member Hovland stated that just looking at the AT categories, he thinks we have a good balance of projects across the region and look to meet the expectations of the pilot program.

Chair Johnson asked if the group could get a summary update of the selected projects with something like a map to show where each project is located as an addendum to the meeting for members to be able to reference.

Chair Johnson asked the group if they would like to consider adding more regional funding to the 2024 RS? The group did not want to consider this option.

Member Hovland asked for clarification on the Minneapolis decision regarding funding sources.

- Member Hager responded that Minneapolis could move all projects up early if needed, but that they will take federal funding for the top scoring pedestrian project – Nicollet Ave improvements and the Pleasant Ave Safe Routes to School project, the other two pedestrian projects should remain as regionally funded. They will be able to deliver those two on the early timeline.

Steve Peterson said that there may be more questions at TAC but there should be nothing more on the scenarios today.

Chair Johnson stated that a summary of the AT funded projects with maps for reference should be provided by staff to reference.

2025 Active Transportation Solicitation Discussion

Joe Widing presented on the potential timeline and pros and cons for a 2025 AT solicitation.

Member Hovland stated that he would like to see feedback from partners and stakeholders to understand what they would like to see in an AT specific solicitation? Clear that there are more opportunities here than with federal funds and would help to have more idea from partners to know what would be helpful to consider for future solicitations.

Chair Johnson asked how we could get public comments or more feedback to understand preference of funding options. Should think of opportunities to get more feedback as we are considering future solicitations.

Member Hovland noted that the timeline shows that there is a lot of work that needs to be done in a short period of time to make a 2025 solicitation successful. He asked if there is data around how much building out regional systems like the RBTN would cost and if this sort of study would be something to look at with AT funding? Other questions like what would the mix of projects we would like to see and others.

Chair Johnson mentioned that regional solicitation applications are tailored for the regional solicitation – and may not be a good barometer to think of how the future AT projects could look like.

Member Jepson asked how we build out our non-motorized systems in order to get to a truly regional system. Thinking of other things to fund with regional funding (planning, design etc.) could be a very effective way to ensure the system gets built out. There is also an equity component to opening funding to aid in planning as many smaller communities do not have the resources to embark on non-motorized system planning.

Cole Hiniker stated that an analysis of a build out of the RBTN has not been done as projects could evolve over time so hard to decide that a certain corridor could be “complete”. One benefit of the regional funding is iterations of projects, federal funding does not have the flexibility to test out improvements or experiment with designs.

Chair Johnson noted that ideas to think creatively about regional funding will be most relevant to long term process and that a 2025 solicitation will need to be more constrained and in-line with the existing solicitation due to time constraints.

Vice Chair Martinson stated that looking forward we should be thinking of making a distinction in bike infrastructure between recreational trail facilities and AT facilities to transportation. Thinking of how a 2025 solicitation would be restrained and somewhat rushed, he does not think we should do a 2025 solicitation, but rather focus on building a successful 2026 solicitation.

Chair Johnson said that the discussion on a 2025 solicitation is only to begin today and will carry over to May for an in-depth discussion and likely a decision.

Member Hovland stated that having multiple tracks (considering both a 2025 and 2026 solicitation at the same time) would be a lot to handle for the group. He also stated that we do not have a dedicated maintenance fund in the region, RS (and most other funding sources) focus on building new facilities but little focuses on maintaining existing facilities – would like to see something like that considered for this funding.

Chair Johnson noted that all these points will be great to use for a trade-off discussion on future solicitations next month.

For next meeting:

Staff will share summary of AT funded projects in 2024 RS details and map for group to reference.

May meeting will be focused on pros and cons, tradeoffs, potential details and discussion on a 2025 AT Solicitation.