
*Transportation Advisory Board
Of the Metropolitan Council*

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, October 7, 2015
9:00 A.M.**

Members Present: Doug Fischer, Lyndon Robjent, Carla Stueve, Brian Sorenson, Kevin Roggenbuck, Cory Slagle, Steve Bot, Elaine Koutsoukos, Mark Filipi, Michael Larson, Pat Bursaw, Innocent Eyoh, Bridget Rief, Danny McCullough, Jean Keely, Paul Oehme, Michael Thompson, Jim Kosluchar, Jenifer Hager, Paul Kurtz, Bill Dermody (Members Excused: Adam Harrington, Beverley Miller, Steve Albrecht, Bruce Loney, Jack Byers)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Paul Oehme at 9:04 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mark Filipi moved and Pat Bursaw seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

3. Approval of March Minutes

The September 2, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as written. Michael Thompson moved and Mark Filipi seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

4. TAB Report

Elaine Koutsoukos reported on the September 19, 2015 TAB meeting.

Reports:

TAB Chair: James Hovland reported that the TAB Executive Committee meeting will move to a larger room in the lower level of the Metro Council building beginning in October and the Executive Committee agenda will be posted online to inform the public. TDM application deadline was last Friday, Sept. 11; 11 applications were received requesting \$2.4 M federal funding out of \$1.8 M available.

Agency Reports:

MPCA – Shannon Lotthammer, director, announced that EPA will be releasing new ozone standards on October 1. This may affect that attainment.

MAC – Carl Crimmins invited TAB to tour the MAC facilities or hold a meeting at the facility in the future. Carl will work with Elaine Koutsoukos and Jim Hovland in scheduling. The 2035 Long Range Plan is underway.

TAC Report: Steve Albrecht, TAC Chair, reported that there is ongoing discussion on de-federalization. A Scott County proposal is going through the process. The Scott County proposal and a draft policy will come to TAB at future meetings. The remaining items from TAC are on the TAB agenda.

TAB Bylaws: Proposed changes were approved, including adding the new TAB member added by the legislature representing the Suburban Transit Association and changes to quorum and voting.

Action Items:

1. 2015-37 Scope Change: CSAH 116, Anoka Co. - approved
2. 2015-39 2016-2019 TIP Amendment: CSAH 116, Anoka Co., release for public comment
3. 2015-36 2016 Unified Planning Work Program - approved

Information Items:

1. 2016 Regional Solicitation Sensitivity Analysis – Steve Peterson and Jessica Schoner presented the Sensitivity Analysis
2. Heidi Schallberg presented an update on the Equity Workshops. A consultant contract was signed with Center for Policy Planning and Performance. The planning committee to work with the consultant on developing the workshop structure has been schedule on Tuesday, September 22, from 2-4 pm, in LLA.

5. Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee (Paul Oehme, Vice Chair)

At this morning's TAC Executive meeting the regional solicitation timeline and next steps were discussed, as were some amendments going through the streamlined TIP amendment process.

B. Funding and Programming Committee (Joe Barbeau, MTS)

Joe Barbeau said that there were no action items out of Funding & Programming, but that a discussion item is later on today's agenda to continue the conversation from their latest meeting.

C. Planning Committee (Paul Oehme, Vice Chair)

Paul Oehme said that the Planning committee did not meet in September.

6. Special Agenda Items

EPA Ozone Requirements (Jonathan Ehrlich, MTS)

Jonathan Ehrlich said that the new EPA ozone requirements were released and the Twin Cities and State of Minnesota are in compliance. The standard moved from 75 parts per billion to 70 parts per billion. The Council will continue to work with MPCA to reduce emissions through policy and action. Innocent Eyoh added that MPCA staffer Amanda Smith is available for questions as well. No discussion.

Regional Solicitation (Joe Barbeau and Carl Ohrn, MTS)

Joe Barbeau said that survey responses are included in today's packet. There were four surveys: (1) TAB members, (2) TAC and Funding & Programming members, (3) solicitation applicants, and (4) members of the scoring teams. Scoring consistency was perhaps that greatest unifying theme throughout the responses.

Carl Ohrn presented a PowerPoint on some points that were brought to Funding & Programming, summarized the discussion, and looked for feedback from TAC for next steps.

Interchanges. Pat Bursaw expressed agreement with the steps proposed to move forward. Steve Bot asked if the interchange process applied to the parts of region 7W that are in the MPO area. Pat Bursaw said that is likely the case, but that conversation will continue offline. Michael Thompson asked how long the interchange process takes to get approved. Karen Scheffing from MnDOT Metro District

responded that it can take anywhere from two weeks to six months depending on the issues involved. Michael Thompson would like to see outreach to affected communities.

Equalize Roadway Classification. Doug Fischer stated that the comparisons are not equal and that one criteria will not meet this need. Lyndon Robjent added that there were three years of funding available this past round so more projects were funded, and it is unlikely that as many projects will be funded in the next round as a result of only have two years of funding available. All of System Management projects were funded, even low scoring ones, so we should consider funding that category less. Having TMOs receive money off the top should also be under consideration for review. Lyndon Robjent added that there are lots of lane miles not being funded based on the requests. Doug Fischer would like to see the expanders funded. Brian Sorenson said that local staff try to determine what kind of connector would be funded, and what characteristics a successful application would have, but do not think it is possible to have a successful connector project with the criteria. There is no incentive to even apply for funds.

Railroad Crossing Safety. Carl Ohrn said that there is too much competition for the limited amount of funds already, so therefore it should not be a priority to fund railroad projects. Doug Fischer disagreed, saying that it is easy to quantify the hours of delay lost due to railroad traffic and the projects would compete well. Lyndon Robjent added that flooding projects are a similar issue; there is a significant need, we just have to find a way to fund it.

Cost Effectiveness. Lyndon Robjent said that the air quality component is most challenging here. Innocent Eyoh agreed. Doug Fischer liked the way this has been reworked, but asked who checks the validity of the cost assumptions. Carl Ohrn responded that the new cost estimation worksheet has been very helpful at getting reasonable estimates out of applications. Doug Fischer said that noisewalls are the most challenging component of these projects, as they can add \$1-2M but it is unknown if noisewalls are needed until after the community vote is taken.

New Alignments. Carl Ohrn said that the condition of roads currently carrying these trips will be used. Doug Fischer asked how many applications there were; it was 4-6.

Bridge Eligibility. Carl Ohrn said that after the region lost \$11M in federal funding it was decided that B minor bridges would be ineligible for this funding. There were six applications for this category last round. No questions or discussion.

Bundling/Geographic Coverage. Carl Ohrn stated that a bundled package has never met qualification criteria. Pat Bursaw asked if it was possible to address this through the regular process, and to modify the solicitation to enable eligibility. Carl Ohrn responded that this solicitation is very geography-based (scoring on job centers, equity, etc), so it is too easy for region-wide projects to manipulate the scoring. Lyndon Robjent said that the geographic criteria (job centers, equity) were least likely to prove decisive in the scoring and ultimate funding, and therefore, they could be eliminated entirely. Carl Ohrn said that the staff team is coming up with recommendations on those ideas for review at an upcoming meeting.

Trail Usage. Carl Ohrn is recommending no change to the forecast methodology for trail usage. Lyndon Robjent said that the safety numbers look incorrect; Steve Peterson agreed. Jen Hager added that MnDOT is working on counting methodologies, so maybe in the 2018 solicitation we can incorporate that information. Craig Jenson added that new trails are experiencing similar issues as new roadways, so the same methodology can be used in 2018.

Existing vs. New Transit Riders. Carl Ohrn said that there is no consensus here and that the Transit team will discuss in more detail.

Pat Bursaw thanked Carl Ohrn, Steve Peterson, and Joe Barbeau for their work on this so far. This is a good approach to evaluate, summarize, and tweak the solicitation. Lyndon Robjent said that

some categories could be eliminated with no impact. Elaine Koutsoukos said that the goal is to have two solicitations with these criteria before making that decision.

7. Agency Reports

Pat Bursaw reported that eleven applications for TED funding were submitted in the Metro area for \$73M; \$15M is available. Half of the funds are designated for greater Minnesota.

Bridget Reif reported that MAC CEO Jeff Hamil is retiring in the spring. They expect at least six months to find a new CEO.

8. Other Business and Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 10:27AM.

Prepared by:

Katie White