

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
Metropolitan Council
390 N. Robert St., St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1805

Minutes of a Meeting of the
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
January 21, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Mayasich (chair), Lynne Bly, Colleen Brown, Innocent Eyoh, Anna Flintoft, Jack Forslund, Jenifer Hager, Craig Jenson, Jane Kansier, Karl Keel, Jim Kosluchar, Elaine Koutsoukos, Bruce Loney, Eriks Ludins, Paul Oehme, Ryan Peterson, Steve Peterson, Ann Pung-Terwedo, John Sass, Carla Stueve, Michael Thompson, and Joe Barbeau (staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Ryan Anderson (City of Minneapolis), Allan Klugman (City of Minneapolis), Carl Ohrn (Metropolitan Council), and Katie White (Metropolitan Council)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

Mayasich informed members that TAB has requested that meetings be audio-recorded in an effort to help foster accuracy in the minutes. Meetings will be recorded starting next month. New members Anna Flintoft and Lynne Bly were welcomed and all members introduced themselves.

2. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: Ludins moved to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Bly. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the December 17, 2015 Meeting

MOTION: Ludins moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Loney. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. TAB Report – Information Item

Koutsoukos reported on the January 20, 2016 TAB meeting. Task Force Chair Hamann-Roland reported that TAB directed the Bylaws Task Force to look at a broader range of alternates for all forms of representation on the TAB. TAB acted on the following items:

- 2016-11: Approved the membership of the TAB Executive Committee for 2016.
- 2015-46 and 2015-47: Approved the Hennepin County request to de-federalize the CSAH 45 Godfrey Bridge Replacement project and allocate the funds to CSAH 53 reconstruction project and amend the TIP. Both projects will be completed as planned.
- 2016-01 and 2016-02: Approved the Minneapolis requests for a scope change and TIP amendment to its East-West Pedestrian Improvements project to remove project elements that are being completed as part of other projects. Project was approved with a reduced federal contribution.
- 2016-16: Approved funding a least one project in each of the five eligible roadway functional classifications in the 2016 Regional Solicitation.
- 2016-03: Approved the measures and scoring guidelines for the 2016 Regional Solicitation, with the recommendation that the freight elements added to the multi-modal measure be removed and a new measure be added under the Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy to address freight accommodations in the roadway applications.
- 2016-04: Approved the criteria and measures weighting, changing the weighting of the Multimodal and Risk Assessment criteria back to the weighting in the 2014 Solicitation.
- 2016-05: Approved the minimum and maximum federal funding amounts that applicants can request. Changed the maximum request for Multiuse Trails & Bicycle Facilities back to \$5.5 million.
- 2016-10: Approved modal funding ranges for distributing funds for projects selected in the 2016 Regional Solicitation, with a \$10 million to \$15 million set aside guarantee for bridge projects.

- 2016-08: Approved the 2016 Regional Solicitation Introduction and Forms, incorporating the changes approved in the other action items, and release of the draft 2016 Regional Solicitation packet for public comment.

Thompson asked why the recommended \$3.5 million maximum for Multiuse Trails & Bicycle Facilities projects was changed to \$5.5 million. Koutsoukos replied that projects are getting bigger and a larger maximum can accommodate them. She added that increasing the maximum does not mean that projects have to be awarded that amount.

Keel asked whether TAB members explored details of the applications. Koutsoukos replied that some members did.

Steve Peterson added that while a few Funding & Programming recommendations were changed, most remain intact.

5. 2015 TDM Solicitation Project List – Action Item

White provided the final list of Travel Demand Management (TDM) projects proposed for selection in the TDM Solicitation. A total of 11 projects were submitted, requesting, \$2,420,696. Because three years of funding are available, total availability is \$1,800,000. Eight projects are recommended for full funding, while partial funding is recommended for a ninth, the sponsor for which is comfortable accepting partial funding.

Keel asked whether staff is tracking how effective these projects are. White replied that the USDOT has requirements and staff will work with USDOT staff. Keel said staff should go beyond those requirements to determine whether projects are effective. Koutsoukos replied that TAB has requested that analysis beyond TDM and staff will be starting that process in 2016.

Mayasich asked how the projects were scored. White replied that they were scored much like projects were scored in the 2014 Solicitation.

MOTION: Thompson moved to recommend the projects be awarded funding through the Innovative TDM solicitation. Seconded by Oehme. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Scope Change Request – City of Minneapolis HSIP Project – Action Item

Barbeau said that the City of Minneapolis was awarded \$1,209,600 in the 2011 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Solicitation to improve 16 intersections. Because of overlap with another project, the City would like to remove four of those intersections from the project. HSIP projects are scored and administered by MnDOT and MnDOT has informed staff that the project, as proposed for scope change, would have been funded in the Solicitation. Because it will be adding a lot of additional Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-related improvements to the project, the City requests no reduction in funds. The four removed intersections cost \$70,000, \$63,000 of which would be federal.

Oehme asked whether there is any documentation of the \$70,000 cost for the four intersections to be removed. Klugman said that there is and added that the four intersections in question, unlike the other 12, already have overhead signals and are in need of less improvement.

Thompson asked how many mast arms are being installed per intersection. Krugman replied that two are being installed eastbound and northbound on 35th and 36th Streets.

Eyoh asked whether the removal of the four intersections would have impacted the project's score. Brown replied that the score would still have been high enough for the project to have been funded.

Sass suggested that if the cost is going to be reduced, it should be pro-rated over the entire project

Ryan Peterson expressed support for keeping the full federal amount. Keel suggested reducing the federal cost, as project costs always increase and federal costs are not increased along with the total cost.

Jenson said that in the past, there has been confusion as to whether ADA is required for a project like this. He added that historically, federal funding has been reduced along with project reductions. Brown said that there is precedent both ways regarding whether to reduce federal funding. She added that this request was based on the addition of ADA requirements and not project inflation and MnDOT therefore supports keeping all federal money with the project.

MOTION 1: Keel moved to recommend approval of the scope change with a \$63,000 reduction in federal funding. Seconded by Oehme.

Sass said that he did not agree with how the reduction was calculated. Koutsoukos replied that 90 percent of the reduced amount was removed and that the project, as originally programed, had 90 percent federal funding.

MOTION 1 was defeated by a vote of 11 to 10.

MOTION 2: Hager moved to approve the scope change as requested. Seconded by Ryan Peterson. The motion was approved, with some dissenting votes.

7. TIP Amendment – City of Minneapolis Scope Change – Action Item

Barbeau said that a TIP amendment is needed along with the previous scope change item. The amendment would reflect the total project cost change, the number of intersections being improved, and a spelling correction for Blaisdell Avenue.

MOTION: Hager moved to recommend approval of the TIP amendment to adjust the description and increase the cost of its 35th and 36th Street Intersection Overhead Signal project to TAC. Seconded by Keel. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. 2014 Regional Solicitation Transit Inflation Correction – Action Item

Steve Peterson said that TAB approved two conflicting items when it approved the 2014 Regional Solicitation projects. TAB approved a two percent per-year inflation factor that specified that transit vehicles were not to be inflated. The reason for this was that Metropolitan Council staff understood that bus purchases were negotiated as part of multiyear contracts with costs that remained flat. Staff has since learned that there is an inflation factor built into these contracts. As a result, bus purchases should have been inflated just like all other project elements. The total amount of this correction would be just under \$900,000.

Keel asked whether the funding is available. Steve Peterson replied that it is a small amount able to be accommodated. He added that the new Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act has additional funding.

Thompson asked whether providers know their future year amount and then deflate it for their cost estimations. Kansier replied that they use current year costs, as instructed. She then asked whether vehicle costs will be inflated in the future. Steve Peterson replied in the affirmative and Koutsoukos added that inflation is determined by TAB when the projects are awarded.

Ohrn said that the inflation percentage is smaller than provided by MnDOT's Construction office.

MOTION: Jenson moved to recommend approval of the inflation adjustment for bus purchases. Seconded by Keel. The motion was approved unanimously.

9. 2016 Regional Solicitation Discussion on Unique Projects – Information Item

Ohrn shared three possible ways to address unique projects. They were:

- Request unique project applications be submitted at the same time as the overall Regional Solicitation application schedule. This puts unique projects on a schedule that correlates with the Regional Solicitation, providing no formal criteria.
- Conduct a separate Regional Solicitation for unique projects. This creates a lot of work for staff and an expectation that at least one unique project will be funded.
- Consider unique projects as they arise. Here a funding source may be established, such as using “turnback” money. This is most similar to the current practice and avoids funding setasides, which create expectations.

Mayasich said that once funding such projects starts, it is difficult to change course. He prefers not to see too many unique projects go to TAB as the lack of criteria makes project selection political. He suggested not moving on this issue until TAB provides direction to do so.

Keel said that the region has narrowed down the types of projects it wishes to fund with federal money and there is more demand than supply. He suggested that unique projects can be funded through bonding.

Thompson said that putting a process on paper creates expectations. Mayasich added that it is very difficult to compare projects that are so different from one another.

Peterson said that there is language relating to unique projects already so the question is whether or not there is desire to provide more structure.

Keel expressed support for considering unique projects concurrently with the process. No motion was made and the general consensus was to take no stance on this issue.

Koutsoukos said that at its January 20, 2016, meeting, TAB recommended adding a Freight Accommodation measure to Role in the Regional Transportation System for Roadway applications in the 2016 Regional Solicitation. TAB directed staff to distribute points within the criterion.

MOTION: Kansier moved to recommend moving 15 points from Measure B, Heavy Commercial Traffic and to new Measure D, Freight Accommodations, with the exception of Roadway System Management for which 10 points would be moved. Seconded by Thompson. The motion was approved unanimously.

Koutsoukos said that the draft Solicitation approved for TAB did not include clarifying text that new roadways should use parallel roadways for Heavy Commercial Traffic and Age of Roadway and asked whether the Committee agreed that the intent was to include that. Committee members agreed and the clarifications will be included in the draft for public review.

10. Quarterly Report on Streamlined TIP Amendments – Information Item

Barbeau said that six TIP amendments started in Quarter 4, October through December. Three were streamlined and needed an average of 21 days between their first meeting – TAB – and Council concurrence while the three standard amendments needed an average of 74 days from Funding & Programming to Council concurrence. To date, the 2016-2019 TIP has seen three of seven amendments streamlined, with an average of 21 days between TAB and Council concurrence while standard amendments needed an average of 74 days between Funding & Programming and Council concurrence for non-regionally significant amendments and 276 days for the one regionally significant amendment.

11. Other Business

Mayasich asked whether there is interest in limiting the number of scope change requests for a project. Keel said that projects seeing multiple scope changes is not a frequent occurrence, so it is not necessary to consider a limitation. Barbeau said that if the recent project making its second request had not been allowed, several complications would have resulted. Brown said that MnDOT and the Council’s role should be discussed for HSIP projects, which are scored by MnDOT. A scope change was recently allowed administratively despite a lot of intersections being removed and replaced.

Brown said that the City of St. Paul recently withdrew a \$7.84 million project and the funds were redistributed to projects in Hennepin, Dakota, and Ramsey Counties. Peterson asked what years that funding is now available for, to which Brown responded 2017. MnDOT will report this to TAC.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.