

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
February 18, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Oehme (acting chair), Lynne Bly, Colleen Brown, Anna Flintoft, Jenifer Hager, Craig Jenson, Jim Kosluchar, Elaine Koutsoukos, Bruce Loney, Eriks Ludins, Gina Mitteco, Ryan Peterson, Steve Peterson, Lyndon Robjett, John Sass, Amanda Smith, Carla Stueve, and Joe Barbeau (staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Carl Ohrn (Metropolitan Council)

1. Call to Order

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

2. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: Koutsoukos moved to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Steve Peterson. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the January 21, 2016 Meeting

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

4. TAB Report – Information Item

Koutsoukos reported on the February 17 TAB meeting. Steve Albrecht reported that TAC approved several functional classification changes. These changes will come before TAB in April, along with previously approved changes, in one action item for approval of the Functional Classification map for use in the Regional Solicitation. Albrecht presented the draft policy and process for Defederalization that the technical committees have prepared. The policy and process will come before TAB for approval in March. TAB acted on the following items:

- 2015-40: Approved Scott County’s request to de-federalize the 2018 CSAH 42/TH 13 intersection project, which will be completed with local funds, and move the federal funds to the US 169/TH 41 interchange project. Both projects will be completed as per the scopes in their Regional Solicitation applications.
- 2016-15: Approved two changes to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) and a RBTN map for use in the 2016 Regional Solicitation.
- 2016-09: Approved the list of projects for funding selected in the Innovative Travel Demand Management solicitation.
- 2016-18: Approved the addition of inflation to the bus purchases for projects selected in the 2014 solicitation. The inflation factor will be the same factor that was applied to other capital projects awarded funds.
- 2016-19 and 2016-20: Approved the City of Minneapolis request for a Scope Change and TIP amendment to its HSIP project to remove project elements that are being completed as part of other projects.
- 2016-17: Approved a streamlined TIP amendment for increased project cost, using local funds, for ADA elements for a Minneapolis HSIP project.
- 2016-21: Approved a streamlined TIP amendment to add a box culvert in the project description for MnDOT’s US 169 project.
- 2016-22: Approved a streamlined TIP amendment for increased project costs, using local funds, for Bloomington’s Old Cedar Trail project.

5. 2016 Regional Solicitation Public Comment Report – Action Item

Steve Peterson said that four public comments, all from local entities, were provided. He addressed the points one-by-one.

- a. *Tie in projected future growth to address transportation and pedestrian needs.*
- b. *General Rules and Process - Eliminate provision of not funding more than one transit capital project in a transitway corridor.* Different modes can be funded within the same corridor, as was done in funding multiple projects along the Southwest LRT extension in the 2014 Regional Solicitation. Robjent suggested using a 3.5-mile gap, as is done for roadways. Ohrn stated that limiting projects along corridors started with highway applications and was added to transit to avoid funding too many projects in dominant corridors. Jenson added that this provision spreads the benefits, geographically.
- c. *SRTS Qualifying Criteria - Remove provision requiring a Safe Routes to School plan to be eligible for funding.* Koutsoukos said that MnDOT used to have this rule but that it no longer does; MnDOT lets applicants know whether they are eligible.

MOTION A: Robjent moved to recommend elimination of the requirement that Safe Routes to School plans be required for a project to be funded. Seconded by Loney. Motion A was approved unanimously.

- d. *General Qualifying Criteria – Disagree that a project must be consistent with the 2040 Transportation Plan.*
- e. *Transit Expansion application – Tying Thrive MSP 2040 to the Regional Solicitation is not a good idea.*
- f. *Transit Expansion application – Disagree with the scoring guidance for measure 1A for total employment and post-secondary enrollment.*
- g. *Transit Expansion application – Disagree with the scoring guidance for measure 1B for route connections.*
- h. *Transit System Modernization application – list of potential transit improvements, a provider proactive with improvements and amenities would not receive many points.*
- i. *General Comments in qualifying criteria – include supporting plans in addition to a long range plan, for example Emergency Preparedness Plan and/or Asset Management Plan.*
- j. *Equity and Housing Performance, Measure A - Inclusion/emphasis of socio-economic measure; particularly in highway projects.*
- k. *Equity and Housing Performance, Measure B - Inclusion/emphasis of housing scores and inconsistency of scores city-to-city.* Anoka County pointed out that the interchange at I-35 and TH 97 is in Columbus, which has a housing score of 17, but near Forest Lake, which has a housing score of 97. Robjent said that the County makes a good point, particularly given the degree to which the intersection serves Forest Lake. He added that it would be easier if county scores were used. Steve Peterson said that county scores are no long produced. Bly suggested using a buffer of, for example, one mile.

MOTION B: Robjent moved to ask staff to provide a way to equitably distribute housing points for an interchange project located near a municipal border to TAC. Seconded by Bly.

Koutsoukos pointed out that if the interchange happened to be in Forest Lake, a change could reduce the housing score in the County's example. Further discussion included the possibility of staff including bridges and other non-linear projects in its scoring options to TAC.

Motion B was approved unanimously.

1. *Railroad Grade-Separated Projects – Create a separate funding Category for railroad grade separations.*
- m. *Modal Funding Ranges – Reduce the level of bicycle and pedestrian facilities funding.*
- n. *Funding Maximum and Minimum - Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities \$5.5M maximum.*

Koutsoukos said that TAB kept this amount at \$5.5 million because large projects are being applied for, though members acknowledged the possibility that projects could be approved for less than the maximum amount. Robjent expressed disappointment that TAB ignored some recommendations, particularly this one, given how popular trail projects are. Koutsoukos said that TAB had thought that few changes would be recommended.

Steve Peterson said that the FAST Act will change funding levels and he guesses the regional will have \$200 million to award for this two-year period.

Steve Peterson said that in 2014, three projects applied for the maximum amount, which proves that there is demand for large projects. Brown said that some trail projects include visual elements, which are not allowed for roadway projects.

MOTION C: Koutsoukos moved to recommend to TAC the acceptance of the public comments for the 2016 Regional Solicitation for Transportation Projects, reflective of the recommendations to eliminate the Safe Routes to School plan requirement and to provide a way to equitably distribute housing points for an interchange project to TAC. Seconded by Mitteco. Motion C was approved unanimously.

6. 2016 Regional Solicitation Release – Action Item

Steve Peterson said that discussion from the previous item will be included in the recommendation to TAC.

Sass asked whether the solicitation package includes the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). Koutsoukos said that the HSIP solicitation is approved separately and probably will be brought to the Committee within a few months.

MOTION: Koutsoukos moved to recommend to TAC release of the 2016 Regional Solicitation for Transportation Projects, reflective of the recommendations to eliminate the Safe Routes to School plan requirement and with consideration of a way to equitably distribute housing points for an interchange project. Seconded by Robjent. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. Defederalization Policy and Process – Action Item

Barbeau said that this item was provided to the Committee in the fall as an informational item. TAB expressed two concerns. First, there is concern that the deadline requires very early application. Second, there is concern about the abandonment of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) requirements. Brown said that the State has no DBE requirements, though it does have Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) requirements. She added that defederalization opens a window for locals to use local hiring practices.

Barbeau asked whether federal DBE requirements can be retained while the rest of the defederalization is approved. Brown replied that MnDOT does not prefer that approach as the purpose of defederalization is to get away from federal requirements. She added that while the defederalized project loses its DBE requirements, the project absorbing the federal funding also absorbs the DBE requirement.

On the policy, Ryan Peterson suggested changing “All funds transfers should be one-to-one...” to “All funds transfers shall be one-to-one...” He added that the first sentence is inconsistent with the rest in the following bullet: “Defederalized funds may only be transferred to a project that is eligible to receive those funds. In cases in which the funds are not eligible to the project proposed to receive funds, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Metro District State Aid office may “flex” funds through the USDOT.” Members suggested eliminating the first sentence.

Ryan Peterson asked why when State Aid funds are to be exchanged for federal aid funds, transfers can only occur county-to-county or city-to-city. Brown replied that county-to-city is not allowed in state law and city-to-county is very difficult.

Ryan Peterson asked what happens to a project that has started but is not finished quite on time. Members replied that all projects are subject to the Scope Change and Program Year Policies.

Steve Peterson suggested adding local hiring practices to the attachments showing federal and State Aid requirements.

Kosluchar asked why 18 months prior to the program year is needed for applications. Brown replied that MnDOT is trying to line up with the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for awards and to not process TIP amendments.

Steve Peterson moved to recommend to TAC adoption of the attached Policy and Process to Defederalize TAB-Selected Projects with the change of “should” to “shall” and elimination of “Defederalized funds may only be transferred to a project that is eligible to receive those funds.” Seconded by Loney. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. Other Business
No other business.

9. Adjournment
MOTION: Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Loney. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.