

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 16, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Oehme (acting chair, Chanhassen), Lynne Bly (MnDOT Metro District) Colleen Brown (MnDOT State Aid), Bob Byers (Hennepin County), Innocent Eyoh (MPCA), Anna Flintoft (Metro Transit), Jenifer Hager (Minneapolis), Craig Jenson (Scott County), Elaine Koutsoukos (TAB), Lyssa Leitner (Washington County), Joe Lux (Ramsey County), Joe MacPherson (Anoka County), Ryan Peterson (Burnsville), Steve Peterson (Metropolitan Council), Nancy Spooner-Mueller (DNR), Michael Thompson (Maplewood), Anne Weber (St. Paul), and Joe Barbeau (staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Tony Fischer (Metropolitan Council), Lisa Freese (Scott County), and Katie White (Metropolitan Council)

1. Call to Order

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

2. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: Thompson moved to adopt the agenda with a reversal of agenda items 9 (Transportation Policy Plan Update Process) and 10 (Regional Highway Spending Study). Seconded by Koutsoukos. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the February 15, 2017, Meeting

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

4. TAB Report – Information Item

Koutsoukos reported on the February 15, 2017, TAB meeting. David Thornton from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency reported that public meetings will be held throughout the state regarding spending funds from Volkswagon settlement. Washington County Commissioner Karla Bigham reported that the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) is starting the process to dissolve.

The following actions were taken:

- Approval of a program year extension for St. Paul Parks and Recreation
- Approval of a streamlined TIP amendment for Section 5307 funds to be spend for a Metro Transit Police Facility.

5. Scope Change Request – Scott County TH 169/TH 41/CSAH 78/CSAH 14 Intersection Improvement Project – Action Item 2017-08

Barbeau said that Scott County was awarded \$7,560,000 of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds in the 2014 Regional Solicitation to construct an interchange on US 169 at its intersection with Minnesota 41 and CSAH 78. Since that award, the County has been awarded a Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to incorporate a frontage road. It has also been awarded funding for a grade separation at CSAH 14. In order to meet environmental review requirements, these elements all need to be a part of one project. The interchange project scored 180 points above the highest-scoring unfunded project and scorers found very little reason to reduce the project score significantly.

Lisa Freese from Scott County said that FHWA insisted that these projects become one project prior to completion of a categorical exclusion and environmental assessment worksheet.

Thompson asked what the scope of the TIGER grant application was, to which Freese replied that the entire project was in the application. She added that without that grant, the County would probably not being

completing the frontage road.

MOTION: Bly moved to recommend approval of the scope change as requested. Seconded by Lux. The motion was approved unanimously.

Barbeau said that staff will soon be exploring whether there are better ways to determine whether a scope change should be approved than re-scoring, which is time consuming and difficult. Brown added that there have been changes to addressing projects that add to the scope, but the size of the project warranted going through the scope change process.

6. TIP Amendment – Scott County TH 169/TH 41/CSAH 78/CSAH 14 Intersection Improvement Project – Action Item 2017-09

Barbeau said that this TIP amendment accompanies the previous scope change item and that the TIP needs to be changed to reflect the scope change in order to adhere to federal process. He added that because this project is regionally significant it is subject to a 21-day public comment period.

Eyoh said that because the project is regionally significant, MPCA must review for conformity analysis and will try to do so in time for the TAC meeting.

MOTION: Ryan Peterson moved to recommend to recommend to TAC that the amendment for the purpose of release for public comment. Seconded by Eyoh. The motion was approved unanimously.

Freese said that FHWA has made clear that the CSAH 14 grade separation is an overpass, as opposed to an interchange.

7. Overprogramming Regional Solicitation Projects – Action Item 2017-03

Steve Peterson shared some history of funding availability to illustrate the purpose of over-programming.

Leitner asked why over-programming was not done in the first place, as opposed to programming 2022 projects and whether there is a lot of difference between the two approaches. Steve Peterson replied that he had thought five percent was the maximum over-programming that MnDOT is comfortable with, but MnDOT feels that eight percent is acceptable. So, when the belief was that five percent was the maximum, the 2022 approach was creative but a more straightforward approach works now. The results are similar.

Thompson asked whether the new projects would get their requested program years. Steve Peterson replied that projects don not always get their chose program years, as there is usually more demand for the earlier year. Koutsoukos added that new projects would be programmed for 2021.

Ryan Peterson asked whether all applicants get paid in 2021. Steve Peterson replied that that is not a certainty, though history shows that this will most likely be the case. It could cause some advanced construction payback to not come as early.

Steve Peterson said that philosophy to project selection was one per mode and that no bridge project was selected because the current projects are within the \$10 million-to-\$15 million range established by TAB.

Leitner asked whether it makes sense to pick more projects rather than the Brooklyn Park project, which is rather large. Koutsoukos replied that the Brooklyn Park project was selected because it is regional.

Leitner said she would prefer another bridge project be funded since the \$10 million-to-\$15 million range is unclear.

Hager asked how the selection will impact modal balance, to which Steve Peterson said that anything the board recommends will keep the program within modal targets. Hager asked why one project per mode was suggested, to which Koutsoukos said that when a project drops out, a project in the same mode can be ready.

Flintoft asked which projects would have been funded had the eight percent been assumed from the start.

Bly asked why the DNR trail project was selected over the Bruce Vento bridge project when they have the same score. Peterson said it was because of cost. Leitner suggested that this seems inconsistent with the approach to the roadway project selection, which was a \$7 million project.

Ryan Peterson asked who much funding would get to the eight percent, to which Steve Peterson replied rough \$15 million to \$16 million.

Steve Peterson said that the SouthWest Transit project was suggested for its lower cost and contribution to geographic balance, which the bicycle/pedestrian choice was based on the smaller scoring gap and selection of the lower-cost of the two projects. Koutsoukos added that St. Paul already was awarded two trail projects for over \$5 million, each.

Steve Peterson said that the Washington County travel demand management project and the Shorewood pedestrian project could be done in addition to the suggested projects and still fit within the eight percent.

Leitner said that other things could be done by funding the lower-cost Minnetonka Roadway Reconstruction / Modernization project rather than the Brooklyn Park Roadway Expansion project. Koutsoukos replied that the Brooklyn Park project was viewed as more regional. Steve Peterson added that projects chosen mirror TAB's modal range. Leitner asked whether funding the Bridge and Roadway System Management projects would keep the program within the range.

Hager asked why the Roadway Expansion project was selected over the Roadway Reconstruction / Modernization project, to which Koutsoukos replied that the former is more regional. Steve Peterson added that the latter is going to be completed either way. Hager replied that Minnetonka could then fund a different project if TAB funds theirs.

Regarding the two tied trail projects, Brown asked whether the City of St. Paul could be offered partial funding to match the DNR amount. Ryan Peterson asked whether funds could be moved to the West St. Paul trail project, which scored one point lower than the tied projects, if St. Paul turned partial funding down.

Steve Peterson said that TAB programmed 12 Roadway Reconstruction / Modernization projects and six Roadway Expansion projects.

Hager suggested that funding the Roadway Reconstruction / Modernization project rather than the Roadway Expansion project could enable providing full funding to St. Paul. She added that the Roadway Reconstruction / Modernization project scoring gap is smaller than the Roadway Expansion gap.

MOTION: Leitner moved the fund the Minnetonka Roadway Reconstruction / Modernization project, the SouthWest Transit project, and the two tied trail projects. Seconded by Hager.

Byers stated the belief tht the Brooklyn Park project provides more regional benefit and it should therefore be funded.

Thompson asked what would have been funded based on the initial process of using the number of project applications as an indication of demand. Steve Peterson replied that that is difficult to determine, though most likely the Roadway Expansion project would have been funded. Thompson replied that he'd therefore stick with funding it. Leitner asked how the tied score would be addressed. Koutsoukos replied that TAB would have looked at the balance of which entities are being funded.

Hager requested that the question be called. The vote to call the question was unanimously approved.

The MOTION was approved by a vote of nine to six.

Thompson said that the original scoring philosophy was abandoned.

8. 2018-2021 TIP Development Schedule – Information Item

Barbeau shared highlights of the 2018-2021 Transportation improvement Program development schedule.

9. Regional Highway Spending Study – Information Item

Tony Fischer from the Metropolitan Council shared highlights of the Regional Highway Spending & Investment Needs study.

10. Transportation Policy Plan Update Process – Information Item

Katie White shared information on the upcoming Transportation Policy Plan update.

11. Other Business

Steve Peterson said that the Committee will see presentations on a freight solicitation and the Transportation Economic Development program.

12. Adjournment

MOTION: Eyoh moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by MacPherson. The motion was approved unanimously.