

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
March 20, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Isaacson, Colleen Brown, Craig Jenson, Adam Harrington, Greta Alquist, Tom Johnson, Jenifer Hager, John Sass, Jack Forslund, Steve Albrecht, Jane Kansier, Innocent Eyoh, Eriks Ludins, Cory Slagle, Mary Karlsson, Lyndon Robjent, Elaine Koutsoukos, and Heidi Schallberg (staff)

1. Call to Order

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

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Minutes from the January and February meetings were approved unanimously.

4. TAB Report

Elaine Koutsoukos reported on the March 19th TAB meeting. TAB approved several action items: the Conformity SIP, the 2017 CMAQ Request for Projects, CMAQ Travel Demand Management project selection, the scope change request and TIP amendment for Crystal Lake Regional Trail, the 2015-2018 TIP schedule, the acceptance of the public comment report and the TIP amendment for I94, and the regional solicitation criteria. TAB heard two information items. Marie Cote from SRF Consulting presented an update on the Regional Solicitation work groups. For the Transportation Policy Plan update, Amy Vennewitz covered information about transportation system finance, and Mary Karlsson presented on the highway investments direction and plan.

5. 2014-2017 TIP Amendment: St. Croix River Crossing, WisDOT

This TIP amendment is requested by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in response to extension of the federally- recognized Urbanized Area (UZA) boundary for the Twin Cities metropolitan area based on 2010 Census data. Urbanized areas are Census-designated areas with 50,000 or more residents. The update extended the Twin Cities UZA boundary beyond the seven-county region into Sherburne and Wright Counties in Minnesota and also into a small portion of Houlton, Wisconsin, in St. Croix County. Federal law requires a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) to cover at least the complete urbanized area boundary. Due to the small area in Wisconsin included in this boundary, TIP amendments for this area are expected to be infrequent. The St. Croix River bridge project is already included in the Transportation Policy Plan and the TIP for the Minnesota side; this amendment adds the portion of the project on the Wisconsin side. This portion of the region in Wisconsin is outside of the carbon monoxide maintenance area, and a Clean Air Act conformity determination is not required. The committee noted the simpler amendment format used by Wisconsin.

MOTION: Mary Karlsson motioned to recommend that TAB adopt the amendment to add the St. Croix River bridge replacement project using \$41.34 million of state funds for years 2014-2017. Innocent Eyoh seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

6. 2014 Funding Reallocation

Heidi Schallberg said that overall the region was in a much better position with the 2014 program than as was the case in 2013. Council staff worked with MnDOT State Aid to review the status of 2014 funding and wanted to start a placeholder item this month for discussion because April would be too late to start a TIP amendment for 2014 funding through the process. Both STP and TAP have relatively small amounts that can be used to pay back advance construction. Details for those could be reported at the next local program review update to the committee. For 2014, there is one CMAQ Metro Transit project that can't be done as programmed. Council staff checked with State Aid about the ability of any other CMAQ projects in 2014 to use additional federal funds, and there weren't any that could.

Adam Harrington said Metro Transit was awarded \$2,722,000 of CMAQ funds for the purchase of six articulated buses to support a growing express service from the County Road 73/I-394 park-ride. Growth in demand on I-394 at CR 73 has not developed as projected and Metro Transit is not able to use these funds in 2014. Metro Transit staff reviewed opportunities to use these funds on similar projects. Maple Grove has regular overloads on Route 785 and could use additional buses.

The committee asked if Metro Transit had reached out to all of the other transit providers to check on options. Harrington said they had not but could do so. The committee clarified if Metro Transit was withdrawing the project, and Harrington said yes. The committee discussed its preference for using the funds for a similar project and that any action forwarded to TAC should be a placeholder and not reference specific projects until the other transit providers have been contacted. The committee also discussed the possibility of other similar CMAQ projects moving forward.

MOTION: Brian Isaacson motioned to move the placeholder TIP amendment to TAC with direction to Metro Transit to contact the other transit providers to assess all options by the next TAC meeting. Karlsson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. TIP Amendment Process Streamlining

Schallberg reviewed the proposed streamlined process for TIP amendments through Council committees. A streamlined process would shorten the Council's process by about a month for amendments that qualify. The committee discussed concerns about project costs changing when the original application scoring included cost-effectiveness, so this was recommended as an addition to the conditions for projects funded through TAB.

MOTION: Isaacson motioned to recommend the approval of the TIP amendment streamlining process for the Council committee process with the changes discussed. Tom Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. 2015-2018 TIP Schedule and Local Projects

With the new TIP schedule adopted by TAB, project sponsors will need to check their project information is correct in the draft by June 1. In the past, local project sponsors have sometimes used the public comment period to submit changes, but with the schedule shift, these changes need to come earlier to allow MnDOT to incorporate them in their final STIP document. The committee asked that State Aid and the Council coordinate to communicate this information to all project sponsors.

9. Regional Solicitation Evaluation Update

TAB approved the criteria with direction for the roadways work group to look at including emissions as an addition to the criteria. The modal subcategories and the criteria are going before the Transportation Committee on March 24 and the Council on April 9 for concurrence with TAB. The transit and bicycle/pedestrian work groups have both met once, and the roadways work group will meet next week. The work groups are initially reviewing their roles and discussing percentage weightings for criteria. The bike/pedestrian work group felt it was difficult to compare new projects with reconstruction projects in

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the Infrastructure Age and Condition measures and proposed incorporating those elements in the Deficiencies and Safety measures. From the transit work group, points of discussion included using the RSIP in the solicitation since the plan is outdated, as well as if project readiness should be a measure or part of the qualifying criteria.

10. Other Business

The Council will be sending out a request in the next week for functional class updates in preparation for the next solicitation in the fall. The committee noted the task was not a small one since some jurisdictions use consultants for this process.

The next HSIP solicitation would likely be coordinated with the next Regional Solicitation, so a packet would likely come to this committee in the next month or two. HSIP funding will be for 2017 and will be for both proactive and reactive projects.

Thrive MSP2040 is out for public comment right now. The Transportation Policy Plan is expected to be released for public comment in July and adopted in December.

Dan Erickson is MnDOT's new State Aid Engineer. The defederalization work group is still expected to move forward in the near future to discuss that as an option.

11. Adjournment With no other business, the meeting adjourned.