

Minutes

TAB Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: September 7, 2022

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Virtual

Members Present:

- Jon Solberg, Chair, MnDOT
- Joe MacPherson, Anoka Co
- Lyndon Robjent, Carver Co
- Erin Laberee, Dakota Co
- Brian Isaacson, Vice Chair (Scott Mareck), Ramsey Co
- Chad Ellos, Hennepin Co
- Lisa Freese, Scott Co
- Lyssa Leitner, Washington Co
- Andrew Witter, 7W

- Karl Keel, Bloomington
- Charlie Howley, Chanhassen
- Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie
- Jim Kosluchar, Fridley
- Paul Oehme, Lakeville
- Ken Ashfeld, Maple Grove
- Marcus Culver, Roseville
- Michael Thompson, Plymouth
- Jenifer Hager, Minneapolis
- Jim Voll, Minneapolis
- Paul Kurtz, Saint Paul
- Bill Dermody, Saint Paul

- Steve Peterson, Council MTS
- Michael Larson, Council CD
- Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB
- Innocent Eyoh, MPCA
- Bridget Rief, MAC
- Matt Fyten, STA
- Adam Harrington, Metro Transit
- Praveena Pidaparathi, MnDOT
- Colleen Eddy, DEED
- Vacant, MN DNR
- Danny McCullough, Bicycle
- Vacant, Pedestrian
- Vacant, FHWA (ex-officio)

= present

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Solberg called the regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee to order just after 9:00 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

The committee approved the agenda with no changes. Therefore, no vote was needed.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Isaacson and seconded by Leitner to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2022, regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Following approval, Hager stated that she is incorrectly listed as present, and that Nathan Koster attended in her place. Barbeau said he would make that correction.

Public Comment on Committee Business

None.

TAB Report

Koutsoukos reported on the August 17, 2022, Transportation Advisory Board meeting.

Business – Committee Reports

Executive Committee (Jon Solberg, Chair)

Chair Solberg reported that the TAC Executive Committee met prior to the TAC meeting and discussed upcoming meeting agendas, \$500,000 in unprogrammed funds in the UPWP, and whether to continue meeting virtually. The committee decided it is appropriate to continue to meet virtually, though in-person meetings should be called as needed for TAC and its standing committees.

1. [2022-34: Revision of TAC Bylaws](#) (Joe Barbeau, MTS)

Barbeau said that the Council's Office of General Council suggested changes to the bylaws to accommodate remote meetings. Following discussing this item as an information item at the August 3, 2022, meeting, the updated draft includes language allowing for TAC alternates to chair standing committees and standing committee alternates to chair subcommittees.

It was moved by MacPherson and seconded by Robjent to adopt the revised TAC bylaws. **Motion carried** unanimously.

2. [2022-35: Streamlined 2023-2026 TIP Amendment: Hennepin Avenue BRT Platforms](#) (Joe Barbeau, MTS)

Barbeau said that the TIP amendments on the agenda are for the 2023-2026 TIP and that TAB can approve them this month. However, they will not be presented to Council until after USDOT approves the 2023-2026 STIP.

Barbeau said that this amendment request is to remove the bus rapid transit station platforms from the project. These platforms were added to the project to complete the projects together. Timing no longer works to complete them together so Hennepin County is asking to remove the platforms, which would return the project to its original form.

It was moved by Hager and seconded by Eyoh to recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2023-2026 TIP to remove bus rapid transit stations from the description of Hennepin County's bikeway project. **Motion carried** unanimously.

3. [2022-36: Streamlined 2023-2026 TIP Amendment: Bruce Vento Trail Extension](#) (Joe Barbeau, MTS)

Barbeau said that this amendment request is to add preliminary engineering for an extension of the Bruce Vento Trail. Federal funding comes from a federal award and is to be matched locally.

It was moved by McCullough and seconded by Oehme to recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2023-2026 TIP to add preliminary engineering for an extension of the Bruce Vento Trail. **Motion carried** unanimously.

4. [2022-37: Streamlined 2023-2026 TIP Amendment: Coon Rapids Boulevard Signal System](#) (Joe Barbeau, MTS)

Barbeau said that this amendment request is to add locally funded mill and overlay and a turn lane to an intersection signal system project in Coon Rapids's HSIP-funded signal system project.

It was moved by Eyoh and seconded by Ellos to recommend that the Transportation Advisory Board recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2023-2026 TIP to add mill and overlay and a turn lane to Anoka County's CSAH 1 signal system project. **Motion carried** unanimously.

5. [2022-38: Streamlined 2023-2026 TIP Amendment: MN Highway 36 Ramp Reconstruction](#) (Joe Barbeau, MTS)

Barbeau said that this amendment request is to expand Ramsey County's Highway 36 ramp reconstruction project in scope, length, and cost. The increase in length is related to the addition of a retaining wall.



It was moved by MacPherson and seconded by Isaacson to recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2023-2026 TIP to change the termini, add a retaining wall, and increase the cost for Ramsey County's Highway 36 ramp reconstruction project. **Motion carried** unanimously.

6. [2022-39: Streamlined 2023-2026 TIP Amendment: Southwest Transit Mobility Hub](#) (Joe Barbeau, MTS)

Barbeau said that this amendment request is to add the Regional Solicitation-funded Southwest Transit mobility hub to the 2023-2026 TIP. This project is included in the 2022-2025 TIP and needs to be added to the 2023-2026 TIP because it has yet to get underway.

It was moved by Eyoh and seconded by McCullough to recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2023-2026 TIP to add Southwest Transit's transit mobility hub. **Motion carried** unanimously.

Planning Committee/TPP Technical Working Group (Scott Mareck, Chair)

Mareck reported on the August meeting of the TPP Technical Working Group.

1. [2022-31: 2023 Unified Planning Work Program \(UPWP\)](#)

Mareck introduced the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) item, for which the TAC Planning Committee is recommending that TAC recommend adoption. He said that the TAC Planning Committee did not act on \$477,000 of additional funding available for 2023. David Burns, Met Council, provided a presentation highlighting the UPWP budget and activities.

Leitner asked about the process for getting input on the scope of the Regional Solicitation evaluation study. Peterson replied that \$500,000 to \$600,000 is allocated starting in 2023 and that the study could go into 2026, adding that there will be a lot of engagement. He said that incorporation the new Thrive and TPP into the funding decisions is the primary purpose.

Robjent asked for more information about the Regional Safety Action Plan and how it relates to county and MnDOT safety plans. Peterson said that one goal is to have a compliant USDOT plan for the Safe Streets and Roads for All program by summer of 2023. He said that applicants can mix and match which plans they use and this plan will be higher-level than county safety plans.

Robjent asked whether this plan is required for MPOs, to which Peterson replied that it is not. Robjent asked whether a climate change resiliency plan was considered for inclusion in the UPWP. Peterson said that the Council is working on an internal-focused plan for climate change and is currently considering whether to start an external plan or a transportation-specific plan.

Mareck asked whether there would be a benefit to have a more data-driven investment approach tied to the A-minor system, as opposed to the modal ranges that are tied to historic investments. This would require more data collection and could be incorporated into studies highlighted in the UPWP or a new effort. Peterson said that this could be a task for the Regional Solicitation evaluation.

Eyoh asked whether the electric vehicle (EV) parking station study is specifically to study the need for EV in the region or if it is similar to what MnDOT and MPCA are already doing. Burns replied that it is a needs analysis of where electric charging stations are needed to better equip the region for an influx in EV adoption. Eyoh said that the MPCA study is statewide. Burns said that MPO funding is to be used within the region.

Ellos expressed appreciation for starting a transportation safety plan that can help local agencies apply for funding.

Referring to Mareck's point about performance measures on the A-minor system, Robjent said that something like the A-minor study from 10-years ago could be done again. Burns added that tying performance-based planning to the Regional Solicitation is a good idea.

Solberg asked how these projects might fit into the TPP goals review and engagement update. Cole Hiniker, Met Council, said that the purpose is to do regional assessment of goals and objectives in the 2040 TPP with a look toward 2050.



Keel questioned whether studying adding EV charging stations is the best way to improve EV adoption and asked whether there has been a study of the best way to increase adoption. Burns replied that the study is going to focus on a development of a framework for policies on how to place charging stations, which will involve working with cities.

Robjent asked whether the Council will be asking for volunteers for these studies, to which Burns replied in the affirmative.

It was moved by Eyoh and seconded by Mareck to recommend adoption of the 2023 Unified Planning Work Program. **Motion carried** unanimously.

Funding & Programming (Michael Thompson, Chair)

1. [2022-32: Program Year Extension Request: MnDOT I-35W Continuous Street Lighting](#)

Thompson said the request is to extend a lighting project on I-35W in Burnsville by one year and that the request was recommended unanimously by the Funding & Programming Committee. Barbeau added that the request did not score well enough to be approved per the Program Year Policy but that the project is being moved to avoid needing to be undone and redone when a project is constructed the following year.

It was moved by MacPherson and seconded by Keel to recommend that TAB approve MnDOT's I-35 W continuous street lighting project from fiscal year 2024 to fiscal year 2025. **Motion carried** unanimously.

Information

1. [Regional Solicitation Public Input Tool Results](#) (Bethany Brandt-Sargent, Met Council)

Brand-Sargent provided a presentation on the public input survey, which had 560 responses.

Solberg pointed out past critiques of the survey related to the small sample size and that it was released following the release of draft project scores, the latter of which could impact replies.

MacPherson said that the tool could be useful but perhaps should be used at a different time such as when updating the TPP. He added a question on whether TAB members are expected to use the results when deciding upon funding. Brandt-Sargent replied that TAB had requested more public input but that the results probably will not be key in determining the final program of projects.

Leitner expressed concern that TAB will misunderstand the engagement data as statistically significant or believe it should be weighed highly because of how well the results are presented, citing the mention of weighting responses. Brandt-Sargent said that the weighing was done because Carver, Hennepin, and Ramsey counties were very well represented. She added that caveats about sample size and statistical significance can be added. Leitner suggested care be taken in describing Hennepin County as urban and asked whether the rural and urban residents were distinguished. Brandt-Sargent replied that zip code data enables that distinction.

Robjent said that a high-level summary to TAB is the way to go. He added that some of the summary is misleading, for example that Anoka County residents' allocation of 30% to transit came from only 11 participants.

Freese stated that the trunk highways are where capacity is needed, as opposed to the A-minor system but that residents do not make that distinction, which impacts the results, at least from Scott County residents.

McCullough asked what number of replies would suffice to place more consideration on the study. Brandt-Sargent said that the survey, as an opt-in available to those with technology, can lead to biases and renders it not statistically significant, adding that statistical significance was not the intent. She said that statistical significance could be explored in the future and that it is not clear what the ideal sample size would be. Leitner added that this is what TAB asked for, but it is important that TAB understand this is not academic research.



Ashley Asmus, a Met Council data scientist, stated agreement that this survey highlights the thoughts of non-stratified, self-selected participants and does not represent the full spectrum of the region, though she did not agree that the total number of respondents is concerning. She added that it is worth thinking of the survey as a representation of what vocal and concerned members of the public think. She expressed concern about the discussion of statistical significance, which she does not feel is necessary to capture the differences across the region in how people want to see funding distributed. Leitner replied in agreement with what Asmus said but expressed concern that TAB members will not understand the nuances of the survey's reach.

2. [Regional Solicitation Project Ranking and Funding Scenarios](#) (Steve Peterson, Met Council)

Peterson said that three projects have changed in ranking since the Funding & Programming meeting and that therefore the members of that committee have been invited to this meeting. He then provided an overview on the funding scenarios. This included discussion of the nearly \$350 million available including overprogramming, the new bridge and carbon reduction programs, the modal funding ranges, funding partially funded projects from 2020, and two funding scenarios. These scenarios are the usual “midpoint” scenario and a bike/pedestrian-heavy scenario, the latter of which was added based on the number of applications in those categories and the bicycle- and pedestrian-favorable response to the survey.

Peterson then shared the spreadsheet showing the draft funding scenarios. Solberg said that the carbon reduction money starts in 2023 and asked how the data on which projects can start early impacts the process. He also stated that based on detail from various states and within MnDOT, the process on how to activate the carbon funding is unclear and asked if that funding can fit within the program and whether some of the funding could be pulled into roadway projects because there may not be enough time to deliver in 2023. Peterson said that the carbon reduction funding is not meant to increase roadway funding. Solberg suggested taking the STBG funding currently shown as funding roadway projects and putting it on highways. Peterson said that there are transit projects that could start in 2023. He added that a separate meeting might be needed.

Freese suggested adding years projects could take money to the scenarios. She added that some of the unique projects might align with the carbon reduction program. She said that the number of trails applications keeps growing and that this may be an opportunity to fund more than shown in the bicycle- and pedestrian-heavy scenario.

Robjent said that the carbon reduction funding is a good opportunity to fund bicycle/pedestrian, and perhaps transit and technology, projects. He added that overprogramming could be used for roadways.

Keel ask what, aside from “midpoint,” have been other viable scenarios, historically. Peterson said there have been themes based on expansion, modernization, large projects, and small projects but the decision tends to go back to the midpoint.

Pieper asked how the bridge funding lines were determined in comparison to the \$10M bridge-funding target. Peterson replied that the bridge funding source for 2025, 2026, and 2027 is shown in the bridge category, and that 2023 and 2024 funds will be provided to past-funded bridges because there is no time to fund new projects in those years.

Robjent questioned whether the project shown to be funded both by HSIP and STBG was allowable. Peterson replied that it is because the request is being fully funded, as opposed to doubling up the request. Solberg asked whether fully funding the HSIP project can be covered through overprogramming. Peterson replied that this could be done, likely resulting in one more project funded from the HSIP list.

Koster asked whether there is uncertainty around the timing of the carbon reduction funding, adding that funding of additional roadway projects prior to distributing that money could diminish TAB's focus on safety and the desire of applicants to fund nonmotorized projects. Peterson said that the carbon reduction funding will be available in 2023. Solberg added that a carbon plan is not in place, but in lieu of that, FHWA allows programming of projects that are in the general parameters of the formula funds.



Solberg said that the three unique project applications are not strong and suggested keeping the \$4M set aside for the category. Hinkier said that TAB had discussed resiliency when it created unique projects and that it may take another round to get related applications.

Solberg asked for thoughts on suspending the \$7M maximum for bus rapid transit, given the large amount of available funding. Keel said that that seems reasonable, and Solberg expressed agreement.

Robgent stated that the scenarios show the bridge money and suggested that a carbon scenario should be shown.

Eyoh expressed surprise at the lacking quality and number of unique project applications related to unmet climate goals established in 2007.

Fyten asked whether the funding shown will cover all transit projects in both scenarios. Peterson said that in each scenario, \$11M is available, which is not quite enough to fund all projects. He added that whether to fund them all will be a discussion at TAB.

Koster asked how the scenarios are going to be presented to TAB. Peterson replied that TAB will see them in a simplified manner, adding that it could be difficult to take in all the information.

Referencing funding the previously awarded partially funded projects, Koster asked whether staff will provide history of TAB not favoring going back to fund projects that have already been partially funded, adding that such an action could lead to discussion of providing additional funds to all previously funded projects.

Other Business

Solberg said virtual meetings will be continued, though he is considering holding the November meeting in person, as that might aid in the final funding scenario discussion.

Given that the meeting had already run 30 minutes beyond its target end time, Solberg asked that anyone with an agency update email it to Barbeau, who can distribute them to the committee. Peterson added that any questions on the Solicitation can be provided to him.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned.

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