

Minutes

TAB Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: August 2, 2023

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Council Chambers

Members Present:

- Jenifer Hager, Chair, Minneapolis
- Joe MacPherson, Anoka Co
- Lyndon Robjent, Carver Co
- Erin Laberee, Dakota Co
- Brian Isaacson, Ramsey Co
- Chad Ellos, Hennepin Co
- Craig Jenson, Scott Co
- Lyssa Leitner, Washington Co
- Steve Bot, 7W

- Karl Keel, Bloomington
- Charlie Howley, Chanhassen
- Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie
- Jim Kosluchar, Fridley
- Paul Oehme, Lakeville
- Ken Ashfeld, Maple Grove
- Ross Beckwith, West Saint Paul
- Michael Thompson, Plymouth
- Kathleen Mayell, Minneapolis
- Nick Peterson, Saint Paul
- Bill Dermody, Saint Paul

- April Crockett, MnDOT
- Steve Peterson, Council MTS
- Michael Larson, Council CD
- Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB
- Innocent Eyo, MPCA
- Bridget Rief, MAC
- Matt Fyten, STA
- Adam Harrington, Metro Transit
- Shelly Meyer, Freight
- Colleen Eddy, DEED
- Vacant, MN DNR
- Kyle Sobota, Bicycle
- Mackenzie Turner Bargen, Pedestrian
- Josh Pearson, FHWA (ex-officio)

= present

Call to Order

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

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Isaacson and seconded by Ellis to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2023, regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Public Comment on Committee Business

None.

TAB Report

Koutsoukos reported on the July 19, 2023, Transportation Advisory Board meeting.

Business – Committee Reports

Executive Committee (Jenifer Hager, Chair)

Chair Hager reported that the TAC Executive Committee met prior to the meeting. Members discussed the results of a survey on in-person meetings, to which members generally responded in favor of adequately noticed occasional in-person meetings scheduled to coincide with important

decisions. The next big decision points will likely be release of the next TPP in April and decision-making for the Regional Solicitation in the summer of 2024.

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

1. 2023-38: Urban Area Boundary

Mareck said that every ten years, the Census Bureau identifies MPOs based on population density for urban areas with populations of at least 50,000. He said that the Stillwater and St. Francis areas have met the 5,000-population threshold to be considered urban areas but will still be a part of the Twin Cities MPO. David Vessel, MTS, provided a [presentation](#).

Harrington asked whether there will be any planning conducted within the new urban areas, to which Vessel replied that these areas are within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) as defined by state law and will therefore still be a part of the Council's planning efforts.

Sobota asked whether the boundaries are based on current geography or 2020 Census geography, citing that the City of Shakopee's boundary has changed. Vessel said that a change can be made, if needed, as part of the smoothing process. Steve Peterson added that a similar process has occurred with Scott County.

Isaacson asked what the implication of the smoothing process is. Vessel said that the process provides clear delineations between when a highway is urban versus rural along with creating identifiable boundaries.

Harrington cited free-standing areas used for transit market areas. He asked how close some of them may be to obtaining an urban status like Stillwater's. Vessel suggested that Metro Transit use its current metrics as opposed to the Census Bureau's metrics since the later brings very rural areas into urban areas.

In response to a question about the map, Vessel stated that state law includes all seven counties in the urban area. Leitner suggested that the map be made clearer for TAB. Jenson pointed out that the boundary line on the map did not reflect the change recently made to Scott County. Chair Hager agreed and said that the motion needs to be clear given that there is still smoothing occurring.

Motion by Koutsoukos to recommend adoption of the proposed smoothed urban area boundary. Isaacson asked whether there is time sensitivity to the action, to which Jonathan Ehrlich, MTS, said that delay would cause the Council to miss MnDOT's deadline. Harrington asked what the material impact of the map is, to which Ehrlich said that within the seven-county metro area it helps MnDOT determine what roadways to include in the urbanized area but in Wright and Sherburne counties, it defines the limit of the MPO. The **motion did not move forward** for lack of a second.

Given the impact on Sherburne and Wright counties, Leitner asked whether their staffs were consultant, to which Ehrlich replied that staff has had conversations with staff from those counties with no objections. Koutsoukos added that Wright and Sherburne counties remain ineligible for the Regional Solicitation.

Motion by Leitner and seconded by Ellos to recommended approval of the proposed smoothed urban area boundary assuming that Met Council staff will work with Shakopee and Scott County on smoothing the boundaries prior to the TAB meeting.

Motion carried.

2. 2023-39: Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) Adjustments for the Regional Solicitation

Mareck said administrative adjustments to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) are defined as minor extensions of up to a half-mile, minor alignment and corridor shifts of up to a quarter-mile and alignment designations within existing RBTN corridors. Several adjustments were requested by agencies, with two not accepted by staff.



Sobota asked what the changes are since they are not shown on any map. Steve Elmer, MTS, said that two were denied because they either reduced access to regional destinations or required more review with adjacent agencies. He said most of the requests were from Three Rivers Park District, along with two from Washington County and one more. Sobota asked whether the action is time-sensitive, to which Steve Peterson replied that it is.

Harrington asked what it means to be designated Tier 1 and Tier 2. Elmer replied that Tier 1 is a higher priority based on the data-driven prioritization from the original Regional Bicycle System Study. Harrington asked whether the type of bicycle facility is identified, to which Elmer replied that the network does not prescribe facility types to routes.

Leitner suggested that the information on the RBTN's impact on the Regional Solicitation be conveyed to TAB along with elaboration on the difference between this administrative update and a full update.

Elmer showed a map highlighting the locations for the administrative changes. Harrington asked for a description of an alignment shift, to which Elmer replied that it is a lateral or rotational shift of up to a quarter mile in core cities and up to a half-mile outside of core cities. Harrington asked whether the shifts are needed because of pending projects and whether these changes are requested by project sponsors, to which Elmer replied "yes" and "sometimes," respectively.

Sobota asked when the full RBTN is reviewed. Elmer replied that it is done through the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) updates and that major updates require an administrative modification or amendment to the TPP. He added that administrative adjustments can be made at any time, but that the map needs to be frozen prior to each Regional Solicitation cycle to incorporate changes to the map so it can be used in the project selection process.

Harrington suggested that a map of existing facilities be provided, along with clarification that the RBTN map is for planning purposes. Elmer said that there is no up-to-date database of what is on the ground.

Motion by Koutsoukos and seconded by Keel to recommend adoption of the updated RBTN with adjustments for the 2024 Regional Solicitation. **Motion carried.**

3. 2023-40: 2040 Transportation Policy Plan Amendment #2

Mareck said that the Transportation Policy Plan Amendment proposes inclusion of five projects, not included in the fiscally constrained plan, that have received funding from elsewhere. The requested action is to release the amendment for public review and comment. Steve Peterson provided a [presentation](#).

Motion by MacPherson and seconded by Ashfeld to recommend that an amendment to the Transportation Policy Plan to add five regionally significant highway projects be released for public review and comment. **Motion carried.**

Funding & Programming (Karl Keel, Vice Chair)

1. 2023-41: Scope Change Request for Minneapolis E Line Route Signal and Pedestrian Safety Project

Keel said that Minneapolis is requesting a scope change to remove one of four intersections from its E Line project. The project received \$1.9M of HSIP funding in the 2022 solicitation. The city wishes to remove the intersection because it makes more sense to construct it with the E Line project. The Funding & Programming Committee recommended approval with no reduction in federal funds, which is keeping in past practice for projects with removals being constructed elsewhere.

Motion by Keel and seconded by Harrington to recommend approval of the City of Minneapolis's scope change request to remove the Upton Avenue S/Sheridan Avenue S and 43rd Street intersection from its E Line route signal and pedestrian safety project with no federal funding reduction. **Motion carried.**

2. [2023-42: Program Year Shift Request for Brooklyn Park and Hennepin County CSAH 103 and CSAH 30 Projects](#)

Keel said that Brooklyn Park is requesting a program year extension for three projects, two on County Road 103 and one on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 30, to 2028 to coincide with a light rail transit project. One of these projects came through TAC for an extension but TAB recognized that there were associated projects and the applicant withdrew that request and bundled three projects together. Two of the projects have already received program year changes. Current policy is that only one extension is to be granted to a project, making this a request for an exception. The three projects have been consumed by a larger project, which reflects a recent trend in program year extensions. There has been question of whether it is likely the projects will be delivered by 2028, as is currently planned. There is funding in the program to cover the extension.

Motion by Keel and seconded by Thompson to recommend approval of the City of Brooklyn Park's request to shift its CSAH 103 roadway project, its CSAH 103 streetscape/trail project, and its CSAH 30 roadway project to 2028.

MacPherson suggested that more requests like this will probably be seen and suggested that TAB consider defederalization of some projects to move federal funding around. Keel said that a work group will be established to examine the policy, which was created when applicants were having a difficult time delivering projects and that today, applicants are doing a better job delivering projects.

Motion carried.

3. [2023-43: Regional Solicitation Application Release](#)

Keel introduced the topic, stating that this item is included to enable release of the 2024 Regional Solicitation and HSIP Solicitation. He said that TAB removed discussion of including the Active Transportation funds in the Regional Solicitation. He said that six changes are shown from the version released for public review and that they are typical of adjustments done in past cycles.

Motion by Keel and seconded by Koutsoukos to recommend release of the 2024 Regional Solicitation and Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) Solicitation with the changes listed.

MacPherson asked whether bridges below A-minors to be funded, to which Steve Peterson replied in the affirmative.

Motion carried.

Information

1. Active Transportation Sales Tax funding; Discussion and Next Steps

Steve Peterson reported that TAB does not want to include Active Transportation funding in the Regional Solicitation, given differences in required criteria and interest in slowing decisions on what to do down. The work will be included as part of the Regional Solicitation evaluation.

Chair Hager asked how work groups will be structured, to which Steve Peterson replied that this is undecided as the evaluation has yet to start. Leitner asked whether an Active Transportation solicitation can occur sooner than the regular Regional Solicitation cycle. Steve Peterson responded that there is too much going on in 2024, though 2025 is a possibility, as it is preferred to fund non-federal projects first. Koutsoukos added that there will not be program years for the funds. Ashfeld asked whether Active Transportation funding will have a match requirement and whether the funds can be used to match federal projects. Steve Peterson replied that there is no match requirement for the funding and that it could be used to match federal funds.

Thompson suggested that waiting too long before spending funds could show inefficiency to the Legislature. Chair Hager said that some TAB members shared that concern. Koutsoukos added that TAB members suggested that some funds could be used in the 2024 Regional Solicitation.

Leitner suggested that a small workgroup should be established, which could take some burden off Met Council staff. Koutsoukos added that some TAB members want to be involved.

Other Business

Harrington said that an outcome of the recent legislative session is that the Council will be studying transit signal priority and speed / reliability projects. The first meeting has been held. He added that Lesley Kandaras has been appointed as the new General Manager of Metro Transit.

Steve Peterson said that a work group will be formed to examine the Scope Change and Program Year policies. He added that it may be valuable to have some more seasoned participants from TAC along with Funding & Programming Committee members who usually staff work groups like this.

Chair Hager said that MnDOT State Aid staff will provide an update to TAB on project management and suggested that they could come to TAC as well.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned.

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