

# Minutes

## Transportation Advisory Board



**Meeting date:** February 19, 2025,

**Time:** 12:30 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Street

### Members present:

Chair, James Hovland  
1st Vice Chair, Debbie Goettel  
2nd Vice Chair, Victor Lake  
TAB Liaison, ~~Peter Dugan~~  
Doug Anderson  
Myron Bailey  
Deb Barber  
Husniyah Bradley  
Mai Chong Xiong  
Aurin Chowdhury  
Carl Crimmins  
Don Do  
Amity Foster

Gary Hansen  
Mary Liz Holberg  
Taylor Hubbard  
Mark Jenkins  
Julie Jeppson  
Glen Johnson  
Stan Karwoski  
HwaJeong Kim  
Frank Kohlasch  
William Lindeke  
Brian Martinson  
John Morast

Becky Petryk  
Jess Robertson  
Khani Sahebjam  
George Schember  
~~Mark Steffenson~~  
Jon Ulrich  
Christopher Vaughan  
Jeffery Weisensel  
Tom Workman

### Staff

Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB  
Joe MacPherson, TAC  
Charles Carlson, MTS Director

### Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Hovland called the regular meeting of the Transportation Advisory Board to order at 12:30 p.m.

### Agenda approved

It was moved by Anderson, seconded by Bailey to approve the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. Motion carried.

### Public invitation

There were no members of the public who wished to speak to the TAB.

### Reports

1. TAB Chair's Report – Jim Hovland reported that the TAB Executive Committee selected Debbie Goettel as 1<sup>st</sup> vice chair and Victor Lake as 2<sup>nd</sup> vice chair. TAB Liaison will be Peter Dugan.
2. Agency Reports – MnDOT, MPCA, MAC, and Metropolitan Council

#### MnDOT

Sahebjam reported that MnDOT staff will present MnDOT's Safe System Implementation Plan at the next TAB meeting on March 19th. There have been 35 fatalities so far in 2025, including four vehicular, four pedestrian, two motorcycle, one bicycle, and one snowmobile. MnDOT will release a draft of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan for public comment in March. Sahebjam mentioned that his understanding of the new administration's funding

plan is that transit projects are at the highest risk of losing funding. Foster asked for clarification, noting that projects that are funded but not contracted are most at risk of having their federal funding rescinded. Chair Hovland added that if there is no contract in place to support transit-related funding, those projects are at the greatest risk of losing federal funding.

#### MPCA

Kohlasch reported that MPCA is monitoring the USDOT Secretary's letter to the Federal Highway Administration, which requests a review of corporate average fuel economy standards. MPCA has confirmed that its federal funding has been released from a pause. This funding includes a Climate Pollution Reduction planning grant, which will support the Climate Action Framework Update. MnDOT is leading the stakeholder input process for the transportation chapter of the framework to help the state meet statutory emissions reduction goals. MPCA and the Environmental Quality Board will lead the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Taskforce, which will focus on recruitment, environmental review, and regulation of sustainable aviation fuel sources. A Taskforce on Extreme Heat and Air Quality has also been formed. The Governor's Advisory Council on Climate Change will meet at MPCA's St. Paul offices on 2/20/2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

#### MAC

Crimmins reported that TSA has a full staff of employees at MSP. MSP served 37.2 million passengers in 2024, a 9.2% increase over 2023. The airport recorded 342,000 operations, and Terminal 2 saw an increase in operations compared to 2023. Overall, reliever airports experienced an increase in operations, although Flying Cloud and Crystal Airports experienced decreases. MSP received an award from ACI North America for excellence in marketing. Rief added that MAC is self-funded but does receive some federal grants, which are currently waiting for appropriation. Crimmins noted that 40% of all passengers depart MSP before 9 a.m. Rief mentioned a new program called MSP Reserve, which is free of charge. Travelers can now reserve a spot in the security line at both terminals. They will receive a reserved time to avoid long lines and complete security check-in.

#### Metropolitan Council

Barber reported that the regional development guide, Imagine 2050 was approved by Met Council at their February 12th meeting. System plans, including the Transportation Policy Plan, were also approved. Council Members are willing to engage with individual communities on implementation. The Gold Line BRT service begins on March 22nd.

#### Suburban Transit Providers

Hansen reported that Maple Grove Transit and Plymouth Metrolink expect draft reports on their joint transit needs assessment study will be ready in April. They are particularly interested in seeing how and where their micro transit programs can work together. Minnesota Valley Transit Authority's Connect micro transit service continues to set daily ridership records since the service was expanded to Shakopee and Prior Lake. MVTA will break ground in March on its Burnsville Bus Garage Modernization project, which will include construction of a new maintenance area, office space, driver training area, and other much-needed improvements. Construction is expected to be completed in early 2026. SouthWest Transit reported a 9% increase in ridership over the prior year. SouthWest's 494 fixed route service to the Mall of America and the airport is expected to launch at the end of March.

3. TAC Report – Joe MacPherson, TAC Chair, reported that TAC received updates on the Regional Solicitation and recommended two consent business items to TAB.

### Approval of minutes

It was moved by Anderson and seconded by Goettel to approve the minutes of January, 15 2025, regular meeting of the Transportation Advisory Board. **Motion carried.**

## Consent business

Consent business adopted

1. 2025-08: 2025-2028 Streamlined TIP Amendment MnDOT's CSAH 83 Dual Turn Lane Study Consultant Services
2. 2025-09: 2025-2028 Streamlined TIP Amendment MnDOT's I-394 Auxiliary Lane, Bridge, Retaining Wall, Signal, and Intersection Modification Project

Jenkins questioned the verbiage of the amendment, stating that it was confusing regarding whether there was a scope change. Sahebjam clarified that the main scope remains the same, with an added focus on safety.

It was moved by Jenkins and seconded by Martinson. To recommend the adoption of the consent business items in a single motion.

**Motion carried.**

## Non-consent business

1. 2025-05: Adoption of Adjusted Infrastructure Federal Performance Measures (Joe MacPherson, TAC Chair)

Martinson remarked that the proposed rating system does not follow a traditional Likert Scale scoring matrix and expressed concern that this might be negatively interpreted in the future.

Jenkins asked why MnDOT is not using the NBI and IRI scales. Molly McCartney, Planning and Programming Director at MnDOT, explained that the performance measures are aligned with federal performance measures and how MnDOT reports to FHWA. These measures are not related to structural ratings.

Jenkins emphasized the need for further clarification on how the new performance measure categories apply, to prevent public confusion.

Sahebjam clarified that there is a distinction between bridges in the "poor condition" category and bridges that are "unsafe." He added that there are currently zero bridges in the "unsafe condition" category.

It was moved by Goettel, and seconded by Anderson, that the Transportation Advisory Board recommend the adoption of the Adjusted Federal Infrastructure Performance Measure Targets to the Metropolitan Council with the following revisions:

- An adjustment of the 2025 target for non-interstate NHS pavement in good condition from 55% to 40%.
- An adjustment of the 2025 target for NHS bridges in good condition from 35% to 20%

**Motion carried.**

2. 2025-06: Program Year Extension Request: Columbia Heights' Central Avenue Lighting and Pedestrian Improvements. (Joe MacPherson, TAC Chair)

Vaughan asked what Columbia Heights would do in the interim to address vulnerable road users. Kevin Hansen, Director of Public Works and City Engineer for Columbia Heights, said there has been collaboration with MnDOT, excellent public and community engagement, and coordination with the police department to ensure safe motoring speeds.

Johnson asked what the TAB process would look like if funding sources change or become available before the anticipated start date. Koutsoukos explained that entities can advance construct their projects. If funding becomes available, they will be reimbursed within the same year; otherwise, they will wait until the funding is available. If projects are moved up to construct a year earlier, they would still follow the three-year cycle for when the money is allocated. However, advance construction is always an option.



It was moved by Jepson, and seconded by Lake, that the Transportation Advisory Board approve Columbia Heights's program year extension request for its MN 65 (Central Avenue) lighting and pedestrian improvement from 2025 to 2028. Johnson asked about funding

**Motion carried.**

3. 2025-07: Program Year Extension Request: Minneapolis's Whittier Neighborhood Safety Improvements (*Joe MacPherson, TAC Chair*)

It was moved by Chowdhury, and seconded by Goettel, that the Transportation Advisory Board approve Minneapolis's program year extension request for its Whittier neighborhood intersection safety improvements project from 2025 to 2026.

**Motion carried.**

4. 2024-40: Scope Change Policy Update (*Joe MacPherson, TAC Chair*)

The updates to the scope change policy include:

- 1) adding as a type of informal scope change projects that have elements moved from the original project and completed with another project, as long as the cost of the elements moved are under 10% of the total cost or a maximum of \$500,000. Scope changes with costs of above these amounts would continue through the formal scope change process.
- 2) For Informal scope changes with a cost reduction under \$100,000 the funds would be removed administratively. Cost reductions are occurring automatically and this adds language to the policy.
- 3) For projects with elements removed from the project, costing less than \$50,000 would be approved administratively with the funding remaining with the project. Any projects with major scope changes, even if there is no cost change, will still go through the formal process.

Jenkins expressed concerns about projects losing visibility and asked if it would be possible to receive a report on administratively approved exceptions to ensure that projects don't lose focus. Koutsoukos confirmed that this information is documented and can be shared with members.

It was moved by Morast, and seconded by Petryk, that the Transportation Advisory Board approve the updated Scope Change Policy.

**Motion carried.**

5. 2024-41: Program Year Policy Update (*Joe MacPherson, TAC Chair*)

The updates to the program year policy include allowing project sponsors to request more than one one-year program year extension, if there are extenuating circumstances. Project sponsors must include justification to the exception in their request.

It was moved by Jenkins, and seconded by Martinson, that the Transportation Advisory Board approve the updated Program Year Policy.

**Motion carried.**

## Information

1. Regional Solicitation Evaluation (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning)

Policymaker Workgroup (Jim Hovland, Chair)

Hovland reported on the Policymaker Workgroup that met prior to TAB. The Policymaker Workgroup will next meet May 21st prior to the TAB meeting. Goettel mentioned the need for flexibility in the Regional Solicitation applications given the current administration.

Active Transportation Workgroup (Glen Johnson, Chair)

Johnson made a request for volunteers to serve on the work group. Group will meet again in March and will bring any findings to the March TAB meeting. Karwoski has volunteered to be a member as well as Ulrich and Xiong.

2. Regional Transportation and Climate Change Multimodal Measures Study (Tony Fischer, MTS Planning)

Presentation did not take place.

## **Adjournment**

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

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### **Council contact:**

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