
*Transportation Advisory Board
of the Metropolitan Council*

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, June 2, 2021
9:00 A.M.**

Members Present: Jon Solberg, Brian Isaacson, Joe MacPherson, Lyndon Robjent, Gina Mitteco, Chad Ellos, Lisa Freese, Emily Jorgensen, Andrew Witter, Elaine Koutsoukos, Steve Peterson, Michael Larson, Anna Flintoft, Andrew Emanuele, Innocent Eyoh, Matt Fyten, Praveena Pidaparathi, Danny McCullough, Ken Ashfeld, Charlie Howley, Paul Oehme, Robert Ellis, Jim Kosluchar, Ethan Fowley, Bill Dermody, Paul Kurtz

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Solberg at 9:03 a.m. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via video conference.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 5, 2021 meeting were presented to the Committee for consideration. A motion to approve the May minutes was made by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Ms. Jorgensen. Motion carried.

(Meeting minutes for the March 4, 2020, minutes will be presented for approval at a future committee meeting.)

4. TAB Report

TAB Coordinator Ms. Koutsoukos provided a summary of the May 19, 2021 meeting. Ms. Koutsoukos reported on the Regional Solicitation Unique Projects Workgroup and the goals that the group discussed.

5. Committee Reports

1. Executive Committee (Jon Solberg, TAC Chair)

Chair Solberg reported that the Executive Committee met prior to the meeting. Discussion topics included the agenda and the process for reviewing and making recommendations on updates to the 2022 Regional Solicitation criteria. Chair Solberg also noted that the TAC Executive Committee would be taking over the duties of updating the TAC Bylaws, as there were no volunteers amongst TAC members to participate on a planned workgroup. The bylaws will be presented to TAC for their consideration towards the end of 2021.

2. TAC Action Items

No items.

3. Planning Committee (Emily Jorgensen, Chair)

No items.

4. Funding and Programming Committee (Michael Thompson, Chair)

**a. 2021-2: Adoption of the Draft 2022-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP),
Pending Public Comment**

Due to the absence of Mr. Thompson, this item was introduced by Chair Solberg and presented by Joe Barbeau of MTS Planning and Molly McCartney of MnDOT. Mr. Barbeau explained that the purpose of this action was to request the Transportation Advisory Board to adopt the 2022-2025 TIP after consideration of all public comments received during the public comment period. The public comment period is scheduled to be complete by July 6, 2021. The request for TAC recommendation of adoption pending public comment is due to the high volume of public comments received in 2020, which necessitates an alteration of the TIP timeline to bring the public comment period one month earlier than in previous years.

Mr. Barbeau and Ms. McCartney provided an overview of the TIP and how it is incorporated in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Ms. McCartney also outlined some of the major projects that will be occurring within the metro area over the 2022 to 2025 timeframe.

Mr. Dermody requested clarity on the timeline and process, noting that the public comment period ends after TAC action on the item. As such, TAC would not have time to consider any significant public comments that might be received. The committee discussed this issue, noting that it was likely that any public comments would not be of a technical nature. As TAC is reviewing the TIP for its technical merits, public comments are unlikely to significantly alter the TIP after the public comment period is over. Mr. Peterson recommended that staff could provide an overview of the nature of the public comments to the TAC in order to keep the committee informed.

A motion to recommend adoption of the TIP upon the condition that staff provide a report of the public comments received in August was made by Mr. Dermody and seconded by Mr. Isaacson. Motion carried.

6. Information Items

1. Regional Solicitation Before and After Study 2

David Burns of MTS Planning presented this item. Mr. Burns provided an overview of the findings of the Regional Solicitation Before and After Study Phase 2, noting that a final version of the document would be provided after the meeting. The study was performed in response to the first phase of the study and focused on determining whether the criteria and performance measures used in the Regional Solicitation are successful in garnering the desired outcomes and to help determine potential changes to future Regional Solicitations.

The main objective of the study was to create a database that will be used to help monitor the after conditions of projects funded by the Regional Solicitation. This will be used to examine the anticipated effects versus the actual benefit provided by projects. The project also provided recommendations on how to streamline and improve the application process; examined the multiuse trail usage scoring criteria; explored the fate of projects that were submitted but did not receive funding; and examined the factors that may cause a project from being built on-time or altogether. Additionally, a “how to” guide of determining the best crash modification factors to use in Regional Solicitation and HSIP applications was developed as part of the study.

Mr. Burns concluded by noting some of the key takeaways of the study. Based on discussion with focus groups and other regional stakeholders, it was noted that the Council could provide greater clarity on the overall goals of the Regional Solicitation program and the types of projects that are prioritized. He noted that focus groups reported funding is being spread across too many funding categories and that many participants felt it was unclear how some of the performance measures relate to the funding categories. Overall, this may point to a need to provide greater transparency on how projects are scored and selected and what the Regional Solicitation is ultimately trying to accomplish.

2. 2022 Regional Solicitation: Modal Funding Ranges

Steve Peterson of MTS Planning presented this item. Mr. Peterson noted that there will be a number of information items related to the Regional Solicitation presented to the TAC and its subcommittees over the next few months, and the intention is to gather feedback from the committees prior to bringing the items forward for approval in the fall of 2021. He continued by showing a table of the ranges and midpoint of the modal categories of the Regional Solicitation, which had been altered slightly in 2020 from what had been used between 2003 and 2018. This was due to a set-aside for unique projects, which are projects that benefit the region but do not fit within the established categories. This change resulted in the midpoint of roadway funding shifting downward slightly, the midpoint of transit increasing, and a very slight decrease in the midpoint for non-motorized modes.

Chair Solberg commented that as the region looks forward into the future, the modal funding ranges should be reexamined. He continued by noting that the priorities of the region have changed over the past 20 years and that the funding ranges should reflect these shifting priorities.

3. Regional Solicitation: Policies, Qualifying Criteria, and Eligibility

Mr. Peterson presented this item, noting that the potential changes being presented were based upon feedback from the scoring committees, surveys from TAC and other stakeholders, the sensitivity analysis, and the Regional Solicitation Before and After Study. Based upon that feedback, Council staff recommended and asked for input on the following:

- the creation of goals for each application category; and
- simplification of measures that are redundant and/or are so low in point value that they don't affect which projects are funded.

Mr. Peterson noted that TAC Funding and Programming members were not in favor of the simplification of the measures but would like to explore how to tweak the weight of some the measures. Committee members expressed interest in exploring how the measures are weighed but felt it might be more valuable to spend extra time examining the implications of the weighing and thus waiting until the 2024 Regional Solicitation.

4. Twin Cities Region Complete Streets Leadership Academy

Cole Hiniker of MTS Planning introduced Beth Osborne of Smart Growth America. Smart Growth America contacted the Council and offered to provide a series of workshops focused on complete streets to transportation professionals and other interested individuals in the region. Ms. Osborne explained the overall mission of Smart Growth America and invited interested parties to complete an online application should they wish to participate.

7. Agency Updates

Mr. Hiniker reminded the committee that edits and changes to the Regional Bicycle Transportation network (RBTN) were due the previous week and that staff will bring the proposed changes to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Peer Discussion Group in the coming weeks. He also noted that potential

changes to the freight truck corridors would be due soon and encouraged members to contact Steve Elmer of MTS Planning.

8. Other Business and Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Prepared by:

Dave Burns