

Minutes of the SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, July 10, 2013

Committee Members Present: Smith, Schreiber, Munt, Van Eyll, Elkins, Brimeyer, Cunningham, Reynoso, Rummel, Melander, Kramer, Commers, Chávez, Haigh

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Haigh called the special meeting of the Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 5:12PM on Wednesday, July 10, 2013.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Cunningham, seconded by Reynoso to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Reynoso, seconded by Van Eyll to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2013 special meeting of the Committee of the Whole. **Motion carried.**

THRIVE MSP 2040

Overview of Transportation Policy—Libby Starling and Dan Marckel

A discussion outline for transportation policy, specifically highway issues, was distributed. The two page document highlighted existing policy direction and some key points from the 2010 Transportation Policy Plan. The proposed Thrive goal that is aligned with this topic is: a multi modal transportation system safely and reliably connects people and freight with destinations in the region and beyond. Libby and Dan presented a map of the regional highway system, which highlighted the principal arterials and the A-minor arterials. This system includes only about 15% of the roadways, but accounts for 74% of the miles traveled in the region. MnDOT has ownership and jurisdiction over most principal arterials. Most of the region's federal highway funds are spent on the principal and A-minor arterials. The Council and its Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) serve as the region's federally-required Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible for preparing a long-range Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) and programming federal transportation funds for the region. Federal law requires the TPP to be updated at least every four years. The most recent TPP was adopted in 2010. The 2030 Regional Development Framework called for eliminating bottlenecks in the regional highway system and investing in selected capacity improvements. Both strategies were specific to the 2001 TPP. The 2010 TPP, however, focuses on transportation investments that preserve, manage, and optimize the capacity of the existing highway system, provide for transit preservation and improvements, and offer modal choices. The 2010 TPP also emphasizes a different set of highway investment priorities for the region. There is an emphasis on projects that enhance transit, leverage preservation projects with lower cost and high benefit investments. Revenue sources are not keeping up with the construction costs. The most recent Minnesota State Highway Plan (MnSHIP) states that the region will have \$56 million available annually from 2014 to 2022 for mobility improvements. Beginning in 2023, MnDOT's funding will be devoted to preservation of the existing system. Smart highway investments are imperative. To illustrate how much \$56 million can buy in respect to highway projects, the following examples of projects and their costs were given: I-35E Cayuga Project \$175 million, I-494/Highway 169 Interchange \$172 million, I-694 Unweave the Weave \$120 million, Highway 36/English Interchange \$17 million.

Discussion: Direction for Transportation Policy—Highway Issues for Thrive MSP 2040

The group discussed whether they specifically wanted to address the highway capacity improvement strategy in Thrive MSP 2040 or let the TPP address it. The group agreed to incorporate a specific highway capacity investment strategy focusing on preservation and optimizing existing capacity into both Thrive and the TPP, realizing that being too specific could make Thrive out-of-date with a 2018 update of the TPP. The next question posed to the group was what priorities Thrive and the next TPP should set for highway capacity improvements after system preservations needs have been met. The staff recommendation was to take a smart capacity investment approach. Libby provided examples of highway capacity improvements within

priorities, including the I-35E Cayuga Bridge, which integrates preservation and the addition of a managed lane. The final discussion question asked the Council which expectations Thrive and the Council should set around the availability of highway capacity improvements to support growth on the developing edge. The two options given were to discourage growth in areas not well-served by highways, or allow growth without expectation of future highway capacity improvements funded by federal and state highway resources and focus growth along corridors with potential for future transit investment. The group agreed that it is a complicated issue, and perhaps a mixture of the first option and the second half of the second option would work well.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:00PM.

Emily Getty, Recording Secretary