

Minutes

TAC Funding and Programming Committee



Meeting Date: September 22, 2022

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: Virtual

Members Present:

- | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Bloomington - Karl Keel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TAB Coordinator - Elaine Koutsoukos | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anoka Co - Jerry Auge |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lakeville - Paul Oehme (Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT - Molly McCartney | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver Co - Darin Mielke |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eden Prairie - Robert Ellis | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Metro District State Aid - Colleen Brown | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dakota Co - Doug Abere |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fridley - Brandon Brodhag | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Bike/Ped - Mike Samuelson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hennepin Co - Emily Buell |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maple Grove - Ken Ashfeld | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MPCA - Innocent Eyoh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ramsey Co - Scott Mareck |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plymouth - Michael Thompson | <input type="checkbox"/> DNR - Nancy Spooner-Walsh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Co - Craig Jensen |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minneapolis - Jennifer Hager | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban Transit Assoc - Aaron Bartling | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wash Co - Joe Ayers-Johnson |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> St. Paul - Anne Weber | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met Council - Cole Hiniker | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metro Transit - Anna Flintoft | | |

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Acting Committee Chair Oehme called the regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee to order at 1:01 p.m.

Agenda Approved

Acting Chair Oehme noted that a roll call vote was not needed for approval of the agenda unless a committee member offered an amendment to the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Ashfeld, seconded by Brown to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2022 regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee. **Motion carried** unanimously.

Public Comment on Committee Business

There were no public comments.

TAB Report

Koutsoukos reported on the September 21, 2022 Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) meeting.

Business

1. **2022-43: Regional Solicitation Scoring Appeal (Joe Barbeau, MTS)**

Barbeau presented the Waconia appeal and noted that it was submitted on time but was errantly omitted in the previous appeal review. The applicant requested re-evaluation of three measures: Measure 3B: Equity Population Benefits and Impacts, Measure 6B: Pedestrian Crash Reduction (Proactive), and Measure 8: Risk Assessment. He discussed the appeal requests and the scorers' responses, which recommended no change in score be made.

It was moved by Mareck, seconded by Auge, that no change in scores should be made.

Motion carried, 18 ayes and 1 nay.

Information

1. Highway Safety Investment Plan (Kaare Festvog, MnDOT)

Festvog discussed the Highway Safety Investment Plan (HSIP) project prioritization. He noted that one applicant's applications were received but not scored so the scoring committee will be convening to score the applications, so this list is tentative. He added that every county has at least one project through this program.

Hager asked how the process made the determination to spend more on proactive projects when in previous cycles more reactive projects were funded. Festvog responded that previous cycles have had set amounts, but more recently they have not made those delineations and that the merits of the projects submitted was more of a driving force in the project selection. Hager then asked whether the detailed scoring will be provided to applicants and what the process is moving forward. Festvog cannot recall how they have previously shared the detailed scoring but that it is an open record. The three projects received but not scored will be scored, review the project rankings again, and the list sent out for a review. Once finalized it will become an action item for this committee. Peterson added that this will be an action item in October/ November and goes through the same process as Regional Solicitation and through the Met Council.

Koutsoukos asked whether it would be possible to have those applications rescored so an info item can be presented at the Technical Advisory Committee? Festvog noted that staff from MnDOT are out of the office until Tuesday, so he cannot say how quickly the re-scoring can occur.

2. Regional Solicitation Funding Scenarios (Steve Peterson, MTS)

Peterson discussed the Regional Solicitation funding availability and current funding scenarios. IJJA has provided significant additional information, including one new program, Carbon Reduction. Eligibility is wide ranging so the staff is seeking additional guidance from TAB and Transportation Committee to determine how to allocate this new funding. The State will have to provide a carbon reduction strategy within two years, but the funding will be available before that. MnDOT has encouraged the Council not to spend all the carbon money before the plan is developed and Peterson added the council is working on two studies, the Regional Travel Demand Management Study and the Multimodal Climate Change Measures Study to provide additional guidance. TAC has discussed using regional solicitation projects for the early carbon money; TAB discussed using the carbon money towards the extensive list of bicycle and pedestrian projects that are currently unfunded.

Koutsoukos provided a summary of TAB's conversations regarding the Carbon Reduction program. TAB did not want to do a separate solicitation and requested information on additional bicycle and pedestrian projects that could be funded.



Peterson showed the two scenarios and noted that TAB did not provide any specific guidance. He suggested it may be due to the IJJA increase providing around \$100 million above what was expected and the number of projects that can be funded. Peterson also discussed the unique projects with \$4.5 million set aside. The four projects requested about the amount of money available. The scoring committee is currently reviewing these projects and they will be discussed at the next TAB meeting. He briefly discussed the schedule.

Peterson then reviewed the project lists. He discussed the Regional Solicitation rule that says a project cannot receive money from both Regional Solicitation and Highway Safety Investment Plan programs, with the intent of the rule to not stack funding between the two programs and to prioritize lower cost projects in HSIP. There were two projects, #5 on spot mobility and #16 on roadway reconstruction, that applied to both programs. These projects are proposed to be partially funded between the two programs to allow additional projects to be funded in each program. The result would be fewer projects in Regional Solicitation but more in Highway Safety Investment Plan. At the September TAB meeting, Hennepin County requested feedback on whether this rule is appropriate.

TAB also discussed how to fund the bridge projects with the new bridge money and whether it should be spent on these bridges and to fund all projects; the Travel Demand Management category and whether the 6th and 7th ranked projects could and should be funded; and the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) rule which was intended to prevent BRT projects from absorbing too much funding. TAB also requested future guidance on where to more strategically apply to categories. No additional scenarios were requested. Staff was asked to identify where additional IJJA funding has made an impact on project funding, including where carbon impacts would be and projects that have received federal earmarks and funding. TAB asked whether next round of Regional Solicitation should consider earmarks as a scoring criteria to leverage the most amount of Federal money. TAB also discussed concern about funding the lowest scoring projects. Staff said comparisons should not be made to projects in different categories because they are scored against projects within the same category and that scoring measures are different. TAB members also requested an evaluation of what we are scoring and whether that's a good way to evaluate them. TAB members were encouraged to send in funding scenario requests for consideration. Hiniker noted a project moved from transit to trails because of the BRT rule.

Weber asked about the project tables and asked why some projects were previously shown as funded but are no longer shown as funded. Peterson responded that the money is still shown in the modal area, but that some money has not yet been programmed because it will be combined with the Carbon Reduction funds. Jensen asked whether there will be scenarios presented that include the Carbon Reduction funds. Peterson responded it may be iterative in the carbon reduction money that may be separated a month; staff are waiting to hear from Transportation Committee and will bring it through the committees after that.

Oehme asked about the Bridge funding levels. Peterson responded there is about \$4.5 million per year and that near term money will be spent on previously selected bridge projects, with about \$15 million included in this solicitation. Oehme asked what money would be taken away from other projects. Peterson said the bridge money would fund the four currently shown as funded projects without taking away from other roadway projects.

Mareck asked whether there's official action required. Peterson said it is not an action item but looking for feedback and discussion on a few of these items to bring to TAB and Transportation Committee. Overprogramming is currently at nine percent, but that TAB may elect to add more to overprogramming. What was the logic behind not increasing the bridge funding compared to the last solicitation based on IJJA increasing bridge funding. Oehme noted that there is a significant drop off between some of the lowest ranked projects and where the funding lists stopped.



Jensen voiced his concern regarding the HSIP rule stating splitting funding may encourage people to game the system in the future. Buell asked whether they should be funded through Regional Solicitation, even if it would increase overprogramming. Peterson stated that both projects requested higher amounts through Regional Solicitation and it would eliminate at least one spot mobility project, as an example. Mielke added that if splitting funding between the two programs, the county would look for assurances in writing to ensure the projects will receive funding. Koutsoukos interpreted the rule to state a project cannot receive funding from both but does not mention the split funding. In previous HSIP cycles the maximum was a lower amount but this cycle the maximum was removed which created this scenario. Hager added to the concern that this complicates the development of funding scenarios and how the funds are split between the two projects. Peterson summarized the discussion as needing more clarity in the future but staff will follow a strict interpretation of the rule.

Oehme asked for clarification on eligible projects for Carbon Reduction adding there are very few projects in the SRTS and ped projects that are funded but are very cost effective. Peterson said Transportation Committee will weigh in on this and then it will be brought back to the committee.

Jenson asked about funding all the projects in one category. Funding levels in the categories should consider any major point breaks and relative low scores to determine where those lines fall. Koutsoukos noted that applications are scored against other projects submitted so the scores are relative and not always a representation of a projects value. Oehme suggested not fully funding the project categories.

Mielke noted in past cycles there have been multiple scenarios but this cycle there are only two and asked whether there will be more scenarios developed. Koutsoukos responded that TAB requests the scenarios but at the September meeting none were requested; TAB members were asked to submit any scenario requests through email. Peterson noted that TAB has provided feedback that too many scenarios is overwhelming. TAB and Transportation Committee will give final guidance on the scenarios they would like to see as well as what to do with Carbon Reduction.

Hager asked how the yet to program money will get worked into scenarios. Koutsoukos said some of that will come after direction from TAB and Transportation Committee, but that it could be combined with Carbon Reduction or over programming but ultimately provides wiggle room in developing scenarios and could be used in partially funding projects. Peterson said there are decisions/guidance needed so that is why the money was left over in the bike/ped heavy scenario. Peterson pointed towards the HSIP discussion of not splitting and the bridge funding as examples of flexibility in the funding. Mareck asked whether there would be a new bridge scenario. Peterson responded that it was more likely to be an adjustment to the midpoint scenario.

Hiniker discussed the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Council and MnDOT which covers how the funds are managed. The MOU defines TAB's role is STP, CMAQ, and HSIP, but it does not include new programs so there may be unclarity in how we allocate those funds. The Transportation Committee will be reviewing this and providing guidance.

Reports

There were no reports.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.



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