
*Transportation Advisory Board
Of the Metropolitan Council*

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 1, 2017
9:00 A.M.**

Members Present: Doug Fischer, Lyndon Robjant, Brian Sorenson, Carla Stueve, Tim Mayasich, Lisa Freese, Jan Lucke, Steve Bot, Elaine Koutsoukos, Steve Peterson, Michael Larson, Pat Bursaw, Innocent Eyoh, Bridget Rief, Kris Riesenberg, Jen Lehmann, Danny McCullough, Karl Keel, Jean Keely, Steve Albrecht, Paul Oehme, Michael Thompson, Kim Lindquist, Bruce Loney, Jim Kosluchar, Jack Byers, Bill Dermody, Paul Kurtz (Excused: Adam Harrington, Jeff Rossate, Peter Dahlberg, Jen Hager)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Steve Albrecht at 9:00 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was moved by Pat Bursaw and seconded by Tim Mayasich. No discussion. Motion passed.

3. Approval of July Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was moved by Pat Bursaw and seconded by Lisa Freese. No discussion. Motion passed.

4. TAB Report

Elaine Koutsoukos reported on the January 18, 2017 TAB meeting.

REPORTS

TAB Chair's Report: 2nd Vice-Chair Denny Laufenburger introduced new TAB members and alternates.

Agency Reports (MnDOT, MPCA, MAC and Metropolitan Council)

MnDOT: Scott McBride reported that MnDOT has completed two plans, a policy plan, 20-year Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP) and the highway investment plan, Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP). I-94 between Brooklyn Center and Minneapolis will be under construction from March 2017 through summer 2018; the interstate will be reduced to two lanes from May to August.

TAC Report

Steve Albrecht reported that the TAC recommended that the project selection for additional projects for the year 2022 be referred back to Funding & Programming Committee for further discussion and recommendations.

ACTION ITEMS

1. 2017-01: TAB Executive Committee – selected members to serve in 2017
2. 2017-02: 2016 Regional Solicitation – selected projects to award federal funds
 - i. The 58 projects selected for funding include highway, bridge, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects in all seven counties in the region; in 45 different cities and townships.
3. 2017-04: 2016 Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP) Solicitation – awarded funds to 22 projects

Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee (Steve Albrecht, Chair)

Steve Albrecht welcomed Jen Lehmann from MVTA as the new representative from STA, and congratulated Bruce Loney on being awarded City Engineer of the Year for 2016.

B. Planning Committee (Lisa Freese, Chair)

2017-05 Scott County Functional Classification Request. Lisa Freese presented this item. There were no questions. Lisa Freese moved and Bruce Loney seconded the recommended motion. Motion passes.

C. Funding and Programming Committee (Tim Mayasich, Chair)

2017-06 St. Paul Parks Department Program Year Extension Request. Tim Mayasich presented this item. There were no questions. Tim Mayasich moved and Innocent Eyoh seconded the recommended motion. Motion passes.

Tim Mayasich also reported that there was good discussion regarding the 2022 Project Selection item, and it will hopefully come to the TAC at its March meeting.

6. Special Agenda Items

Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study. (Steve Peterson, MTS; Paul Czech, MnDOT, Doug Abere, Bolton & Menk)

Steve Peterson, Paul Czech, and Doug Abere presented the draft of the final report for this project. Karl Keel asked what components made up the “context score.” Paul Czech responded that it includes the presence of other modes (transit, bike/ped), land use, freight (truck volumes), availability of land and comprehensive plans and prior planning. Innocent Eyoh asked if this study would contribute to EPA work needed on congestion and air quality. Paul Czech said that it would. Jack Byers asked if the solutions on slide 22 would not exclude other potential solutions, such as the availability of transit. Paul Czech responded that the plan will likely be updated every four to eight years, which would integrate some of these solutions being implemented in the interim period. This report is a starting point to find solutions, not a definitive answer to a congestion problem. Doug Fischer asked if adding mainline capacity would be comparable to improving interchanges. Doug Abere responded that the red dots indicate a need for capacity solutions at grade or through an interchange. Adding capacity as a whole is an idea but this study was at a high level. Mainline capacity would be examined in the future.

The Air We Breathe. (Amanda Smith, MPCA)

Amanda Smith presented the final report from MPCA. Karl Keel asked where transportation has made the biggest gains in air quality – through vehicles or congestion. Amanda Smith responded that the biggest gains have been through vehicle and gasoline standards from the federal government, but that those gains are offset to a degree because there are more larger vehicles (as opposed to sedans or smaller cars) on the road, which use more fuel. Innocent Eyoh added that our region has effective environmental programs and coordination with state agencies and local partners. Steve Bot asked about the cost-effectiveness of better vehicle types as opposed to improving congestion. Amanda Smith responded that many studies show that retrofitting diesel vehicles is extremely cost-effective. Pat Bursaw asked what qualifies as an “old” diesel engine; Amanda Smith responded that the cut off is 2010. Pat Bursaw asked what that impact was from a 2008 diesel retrofit project that TAB funded to MnDOT. Amanda Smith was unsure but will find out.

Doug Fischer said that if the region improved the high priority interchanges in the PA Study which was just presented it would also improve air quality. Doug Fischer said that new diesel vehicles are more friendly to the environment, but do cost more. Doug Fischer asked if emissions testing could return. Amanda Smith responded that if the region became non-attainment again and the source was determined to be auto emissions, then yes. The region is currently at 93% of the ozone standard. Bruce Loney asked if “good” air quality days are mostly in the winter. Amanda Smith responded that the air quality index measures ozone as well as particulates. Bad ozone days are more common in the summer due to sun and heat. Bad particulate days have traditionally been in the winter due to clouds trapping emissions, but more recently large fires in Canada and elsewhere have created bad particulate days in the summer.

Jack Byers asked about the money from the Volkswagen settlement. Amanda Smith responded that MPCA will be receiving \$47 million to manage, and a stakeholder process will be announced soon to determine what to do with that money. There will be some kind of split between electric vehicle infrastructure and diesel retrofit projects. Brian Sorenson asked if the new federal administration will loosen air quality standards. Amanda Smith responded that some industries believe the standards are too strict, but federal regulations are very difficult to undo.

7. Agency Reports

There were no agency reports.

8. Other Business and Adjournment

Doug Fischer thanked TAC committee members, MTS staff, and the leadership of Chair Albrecht for their work on the Regional Solicitation.

Elaine Koutsoukos said that TAB sent their thanks as well.

Steve Albrecht relayed that TAB said it was clear that a lot of thought went into the Base scenario.

Steve Peterson said that over 50 people worked on the scoring committees, and of the 58 projects awarded funds, they are located in 45 cities and townships.

Elaine Koutsoukos said that surveys will be coming out soon to evaluate the process. The timeline for the next solicitation could change due to timing conflicts, including: (1) a January vote at TAB means there are many new members who are not familiar with the scoring process and prior discussions, and

(2) with application work happening over the summer it is hard for schools to gather data without school being in session.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 10:17am.

Prepared by:

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