

Minutes

TAC Funding and Programming Committee



Meeting Date: February 16, 2023

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: Virtual

Members Present:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" 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 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Metro District - Molly McCartney | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver Co – Darin Mielke |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eden Prairie - Robert Ellis | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Metro District State Aid - Colleen Brown | <input type="checkbox"/> Dakota Co - Jenna Fabish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fridley - Jim Kosluchar | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Bike/Ped – Mike Samuelson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hennepin Co - Jason Pieper |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maple Grove - Ken Ashfeld | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MPCA - Innocent Eyoh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ramsey Co – Scott Mareck |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plymouth - Michael Thompson (Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DNR - Nancy Spooner-Walsh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Co – Adam Jessen |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minneapolis - Nathan Koster | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban Transit Assoc – Vicky Loehrer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wash Co – Madeline Dahlheimer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> St. Paul - Anne Weber | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present, E = excused |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met Council - Cole Hiniker | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metro Transit - Anna Flintoft | | |

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Thompson called the regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee to order at 1:00 p.m.

Agenda Approved

Chair Thompson 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 Karl Keel, seconded by Madeline Dahlheimer to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2023 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 presented the report from the February 15, 2023 TAB meeting.

Business

There were no business items.

Information

1. Climate Action Work Plan (Jeff Freeman, Metro Transit and Tony Fischer, MTS)

Jeff Freeman, Metro Transit and Tony Fischer, MTS presented the Metropolitan Council's Climate Action Work Plan, which has been in development over the last two years and unifies climate efforts across the council, and defines the commitments, strategies and actions to implement.

M. Dahlheimer asked about the Environmental Justice element of the plan and whether that could be mapped to highlight the populations bearing the brunt of impacts. J. Freeman responded that this is the policy framework but that there are other people working on the implementation tools.

I. Eyoh added that MPCA completed the greenhouse gas inventory and was released early February. He offered to forward to the committee. He also discussed some of the activities and programs the state is working on.

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

Tony Fischer, MTS presented an overview of the Council's upcoming Regional Transportation and Climate Change Multimodal Measures Study, including the issues, tasks, and intended outcomes.

N. Koster asked about the induced vehicle travel optional task, noting it is very foundational for the work. T. Fischer responded that the \$300,000 budget includes the two optional tasks but that an additional contract amendment will be added for electric vehicle charging and travel demand management.

3. Potential Changes to the 2024 Regional Solicitation Cycle (Joe Barbeau, MTS and Steve Peterson, MTS)

Joe Barbeau and Steve Peterson of MTS presented the potential changes for the 2024 including:

- **Prioritize scoring measures for safety and emissions.** Staff recommended adding 100 points to some roadway categories for safety with no change to the emissions scoring measure.
 - S. Peterson added that TAB has been focused on the safety scoring measures and is looking to the technical committees to provide a recommendation.
 - D. Mielke asked which safety scoring measures would be changed because some safety measures are qualitative so would support more quantitative changes. J. Barbeau responded that they would be changes to the quantitative scoring measures.
 - K. Keel cautioned that making changes to the scores, the criteria should help differentiate project selection. J. Barbeau responded that the focus of added safety points are in the quantitative categories.



- **Funding outside of the range.** Staff recommended no change, noting that it is policy determined by TAB but that they reserve the right to go outside the ranges.
 - M. Dahlheimer suggested reviewing the geographic balance when funding goes outside of the funding ranges. J. Barbeau stated that geographic balance is a consideration when funding projects towards the end of the list, but a larger review of that would occur in the overhaul.
 - D. Mielke requested a reminder of the funding ranges at the beginning of the cycle. There was a perception that funding precedent would not permit going out of the ranges. S. Peterson stated that from the staff perspective, no scenarios were developed that went outside of the funding ranges, but that the decision was directed by TAB to add projects due to new funding sources which ultimately resulted in changes to the modal ranges.
 - N. Koster stated that strict adherence to this policy is too prescriptive in selecting the projects and that flexibility should remain.
- **Include consideration of high-priority projects from individual sponsors.** Staff recommended to review this in the larger solicitation review.
 - S. Mareck voiced support for policies driving investment decisions, noting that scenarios have typically been developed based on applicant interest or category popularity.
 - J. Pieper supported a data driven process in prioritization and does not believe this change would benefit the process's transparency or improve project selection.
 - N. Koster suggested applicants could pull projects to get funding to their priority projects.
 - M. Thompson said agencies should submit their highest priority projects and agencies should not get to pick and choose their projects.
- **Tied Scores.** Staff recommended maintaining flexibility.
 - M. Dahlheimer supported flexibility but to provide more specific scoring guidance, especially for narrative elements. S. Peterson agreed.
 - K. Ashfeld noted that historically, the funding lines have typically been drawn where there is a major gap in scoring and that tied projects are equally good. There may be an opportunity to move funding around.
 - C. Hiniker asked whether staff could contact applicants to see if they would decline awards or look for other differentiating factors like safety high scores, equity bonuses, etc.
 - D. Mielke liked the idea of identifying priorities to assist TAB with the decision making.



- **Scoring appeal process.** Staff recommended a response letter and a coordination meeting before Funding and Programming as well as not permitting new information at the appeals approval meeting.
 - N. Koster requested information in the approval meeting to understand how the appeal would change the overall score and ranking of the project.
 - D. Mielke had concerns about when the decision point would be made. S. Peterson responded that it would allow more time for the scoring committees to process and provide guidance to the committee but that the committee would still approve the decision.
 - E. Koutsoukos disagreed with providing information about how the scores would change because the projects when originally scored, are not considering other projects. N. Koster responded that the appeal process should not consider the project ranking but that the committee would be able to better understand the impacts of their decision. J. Barbeau added that any change in score will change the cost-effectiveness scoring.
 - S. Mareck stated that the project funding lines appear to be illogical, should follow the midpoint scenario first, and that TAB should be directing any other scenario development. S. Peterson stated that the midpoint scenario is developed with the funding estimates and then drawing the line based on the number of applications in each funding category.
 - I. Eyoh discussed a scoring appeal from the 2022 cycle and the challenges with getting the correct data to allow for modifications.
- **Highway Safety Improvement Program rule.** Staff recommended no rule change, allowing applicants to apply to both programs but only receive funding from one.
- **Bus Rapid Transit rule.** Staff recommended basing the BRT limit on the number of projects submitted requiring that at least two projects not directly tied to BRT projects to be funded.
 - E. Koutsoukos suggested separating BRT and LRT from other types of projects and requested the Transit Working Group vet these decisions. C. Hiniker responded that during the 2022 cycle, TAB did not like funding projects to the bottom of the list so adding new rules or being more restrictive would likely continue to fund projects at the bottom of the list. C. Hiniker also stated that two projects are likely appropriate given past funding levels, project selection, and recommendations.
- **Trail and sidewalk maintenance.** Staff recommended that winter maintenance should be required for all facilities, including trails/sidewalks funded under the roadways categories.
 - M. Samuelson supported this change and reminded members of MnDOT's current maintenance study that may provide further guidance.
 - K. Keel agreed with staff's recommendation.
 - I. Eyoh supported cities and counties in their maintenance decisions and that MPCA has guidelines for snow and ice removal.



- **Regional Bicycle Transportation Network administrative modifications.** Staff recommended an open period to submit requests for administrative adjustments; eligible adjustments will be limited to specific categories and considered based on RBTN guiding principles.
 - D. Mielke asked whether changes to the RBTN could change tiers. Steve Elmer, MTS responded that no changes to the tiers have occurred because of its complicated methodology that would require an overhaul. S. Elmer listed the appropriate changes, including minor extensions up to one mile and connect to existing RBTN and/or a regional destination; shift in corridor centerline or alignment. D. Mielke requested a specific list of those changes.
- **Bridges.** Staff recommended that if the On-System Bridge program continues, expand eligibility for bridges to all federally-aid eligible bridges for the 2024 cycle.
 - J. Pieper supports the change.

S. Peterson discussed other comments from TAB including a minimum scoring requirement. C. Hiniker compared the usage/ridership rates from BRT to local routes with freeways to A-minor arterials. E. Koutsoukos added that the transit providers typically apply for a few projects that are the most competitive each cycle and there are limited transit providers, which limits the total number of applications.

J. Pieper discussed the roadway impacts that BRT stations are creating to sync up project delivery coordination. He requested a way to promote efficiencies with project coordination, citing recent scope changes to better coordinate projects.

Reports

There were no reports.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Council Contact:

Bethany Brandt-Sargent, Senior Planner
Bethany.Brandt-Sargent@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1725