

Minutes

TAB Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: January 8, 2024,

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Robert St. Chambers

Members Present:

- Joe MacPherson Chair, Anoka Co
- Lyndon Robjent, Carver Co
- Erin Laberee, Dakota Co
- Brian Isaacson, Ramsey Co
- Chad Ellos, Hennepin Co
- Craig Jenson, Scott Co
- Lyssa Leitner, Washington Co
- Chad Hausmann, Extended Urban Area

- Russ Matthys, Eagan
- Charlie Howley, Chanhassen
- Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie
- Jim Kosluchar, Fridley
- Paul Oehme, Lakeville
- Marc Culver, Brooklyn Park
- Chris Hartzell, Woodbury
- Michael Thompson, Plymouth
- Jenifer Hager, Minneapolis
- Kathleen Mayell, Minneapolis
- Nick Peterson, Saint Paul
- Reuben Collins, Saint Paul
- Molly McCartney, MnDOT

- Steve Peterson, Council MTS
- Patrick Boylan, Council CD
- Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB
- Innocent Eyoh, MPCA
- Bridget Rief, MAC
- Matt Fyten, STA
- Adam Harrington, Metro Transit
- Shelly Meyer, Freight
- Colleen Eddy, DEED
- Vacant, MN DNR
- Kyle Sobota, Bicycle
- Mackenzie Turner Bargaen, Pedestrian
- Josh Pearson, FHWA (ex-officio)

= present

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Joe MacPherson called the regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee to order just after 9:00 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Brian Isaacson, Ramsey Co., and seconded by Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie, to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Molly McCartney, MnDOT, and seconded by Lyndon Robjent, Carver Co., to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2024, regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Public Comment on Committee Business

None.

TAB Report

Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB Coordinator, reported on the December 18, 2024, Transportation Advisory Board meeting.

Business – Committee Reports

Executive Committee (Joe MacPherson, Chair)

1. TAC Standing Committee Membership

Chair MacPherson thanked outgoing chair Jeni Hager, Minneapolis, outgoing TAC Funding and Programming chair Michael Thompson, Plymouth, and outgoing TAC vice chair Issacson for their work. He announced that Gina Mitteco will continue to serve as TAC Planning chair, Jim Kosluchar, Fridley, will be the chair of TAC Funding and Programming, and McCartney will serve as vice chair of TAC.

Committee members and staff introduced themselves.

Chair MacPherson reported on TAC Planning Committee and TAC Funding & Programming Committee membership, specifically Metro Cities appointees. Dan Ruiz, Brooklyn Park, Charlie Howley, Chanhassen, and Chris Hartzel, Woodbury will be on TAC Planning while Paul Oehme, Lakeville, Kosluchar, Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie, Thompson, and Russ Matthys, Eagan will be on TAC Funding and Programming.

2. [2025-03: Streamlined 2025-2028 TIP Amendment Request: MnDOT's I-94 & I-35E Bridge Improvements Project Cost Reduction \(Robbie King, MTS Planning\)](#)

Robbie King, MTS Planning, summarized the action, which is a MnDOT request to amend the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to reduce the cost and combine the scopes of the following projects:

- Rehabilitation of Marion Street Bridge over I-94 and eastbound ramp
- Improvement of several bridges over I-94 and I-35E

Motion by Chris Hartzell, Woodbury, and seconded by Adam Harrington, Metro Transit, to recommend that the Transportation Advisory Board recommend amendment of the 2025-2028 TIP to reduce the cost and combine the scopes of MnDOT's I-94 and I-35E bridge improvements project. **Motion carried.**

3. [2025-04: 2025-2028 Streamlined TIP Amendment: MnDOT's Section 5310 Bus Purchases \(Robbie King, MTS Planning\)](#)

King summarized the action, which is a request to amend the 2025-2028 TIP to add six new projects to purchase a total of 15 transit vehicles:

- Purchase two expansion mini vans for Lifework Services
- Purchase three expansion mini vans for Midwest Special Services
- Purchase four expansion mini vans for RISE
- Purchase one expansion minivan for DARTS
- Purchase two expansion mini vans for Newtrax
- Purchase three expansion mini vans for TSE

Motion by Harrington and seconded by Innocent Eyoh, MPCA, to recommend that the Transportation Advisory Board recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2025-2028 TIP to add six new projects to purchase a total of 15 transit vehicles. **Motion carried.**

Planning Committee (Gina Mitteco, Chair)

Funding and Programming (Jim Kosluchar, Chair)

Information

1. [Regional Solicitation Evaluation Workgroup Debrief \(Steve Peterson, MTS Planning & Molly Stewart, SRF\)](#)

Steve Peterson, MTS, and Molly Stewart, SRF, presented about the December 18, 2024, policy group workshop.



Chair MacPherson, who attended, mentioned that participants made connections between modes and goals and that some of the goal cards were hard to visualize as either a goals or measures.

Lyssa Leitner, Washington Co., also an attendee, pointed out that technical staff and policymakers often do not speak the same functional language. For example, policymakers may not understand the meaning of going “above and beyond” ADA requirements. Further, “Invest in asset management projects” does not translate directly to “roadway and bridge repair and reconstruction,” leading to a disconnect. She recommended revising language in some instances.

Oehme attended as well and noted that the working groups lacked overlap between policymakers and technical staff. He felt the dialogue about how categories would fit into future solicitations was limited. He added that many category items did not align with the goal areas of the TPP 2050 and expressed that understanding how these categories would translate into applications was still difficult.

Hager, who attended, supported the idea of changing the wording on some of the goal categories so that both policymakers and technical staff could better understand.

Isaacson, another attendee, echoed concerns about terminology confusion within the technical group. He expressed concern over the lack of ability for the process to directly affect goal areas that are impacted by other things, such as land use. He lamented the inability for debate and shared understanding among policymakers and technical staff regarding potential goal areas due to the separation of policy and technical participants, citing the lack of understanding of ADA rules.

Koutsoukos clarified that while ADA standards must be met on each project, the Regional Solicitation could also address implementing ADA transition plans as a potential project category. Leitner said that the language on the card at the event need to change to better-reflect that, as it currently uses “above and beyond.” Isaacson echoed this struggle and suggested that it could give policymakers an inflated impression of how much of the system is not compliant. Hager stated that the ADA requirements keep changing. Barbeau suggested that “above and beyond” alludes to a category to update ADA transition plans.

Chair MacPherson asked Steve Peterson whether workgroup participants were shown how other MPOs with goal-oriented applications approach similar work. Steve Peterson explained that a packet of information had been sent to participants prior to the workshop, but facilitators did not discuss it in detail during the meeting. Robjent suggested discussing how other MPOs, particularly the San Francisco MPO, approach this work using a goals-based framework. He also asked for more background on the origin of the 31 goal cards used at the workshop. Steve Peterson explained that the card language was based on TPP objectives, policies, and investment priorities, many of which were condensed and combined. Steve Peterson acknowledged the difficulty of condensing a large volume of work into a few sentences and offered to investigate how to better align the verbiage of the cards with the 2050 goals.

Leitner noted that the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) solicitation meets its objectives, likely because it only has one goal, unlike Regional Solicitation categories, which spread multiple goals more thinly. She wondered whether there are before-and-after results in peer regions that use goals-based approaches, stating that it would be helpful to understand whether their approaches are achieving the intended outcomes. Leitner also asked when an application will be available. Steve Peterson responded that the goal is to have an application available by the end of 2025. Leitner requested that Steve Peterson send a draft recommendation for discussion at the next technical committee meeting so that both policymakers and technical staff have time to discuss and provide meaningful input. Steve Peterson and Koutsoukos provided a timeline of next steps.

Adam Harrington asked whether a shift to outcomes-based criteria would impact the evaluation of projects, such as connections to the bike network or greenhouse gas reductions and how projects would compare within a category. He noted that the transit category’s outcomes have changed significantly over the past decade.



Hager inquired about whether there will be turnover in the policy workgroup. Steve Peterson confirmed that two members would be leaving the TAB Executive Committee due to retirements.

Chad Ellos, Hennepin Co., asked whether options for modal, hybrid, and goals-based approaches would be presented together at the next TAB meeting. Stewart confirmed that all relevant information is available on the project website but would ensure it is distributed again.

Eyoh mentioned that the MPCA TAB representative is retiring in January and that a replacement will be sought soon and noted that MPCA did not attend the workshop. He said he liked seeing goals related to greenhouse gas reduction, equity related to harm and impact reduction, transit, bikes, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction. Regarding air quality, he is unsure where it would fit, adding that the PM 2.5 emissions standard was reduced from 12 to 9, meaning that one or two areas within the region will be above the standard and a strategy will be needed to address this. He said transportation has health impacts and a strategy is needed on how to address them. McCartney added that MnDOT's work on greenhouse gas legislation and VMT reductions is still evolving.

Ellos asked whether the scoring system could be updated to be more consistent with the TPP, and Steve Peterson explained that there are several ways to align project categories with TPP goals.

Thompson asked whether moving to a more outcome-focused process would lead lost control over modal investments. He also asked whether there would be a minimum allocation by mode to avoid revisiting the issue every cycle. Steve Peterson responded that many transportation categories would remain modal-based, with a few exceptions such as complete streets projects.

Hager said that an outcome-focused structure needs to include a baseline understanding of what level of investment is needed to reach outcomes. Steve Peterson explained that the consultants will explore how to incorporate performance measures.

Isaacson asked how outcomes-based projects would be compared across modes, and Steve Peterson suggested that a solution could be developed to determine which options yield the highest benefits.

Mackenzie Turner Borgen, pedestrian member, asked whether an outcome-based or hybrid approach would better integrate modal goals with larger regional investments. She expressed excitement for the ability to integrate ADA and active transportation, adding that the ADA language needs further clarification to help foster inclusive design and broader access. Leitner said that if an outcomes-based approach is adopted, policymakers need to understand that not all applications will meet every goal and that measures and metrics must be directly tied to the project outcomes to achieve meaningful results. Steve Peterson noted that most other MPOs use simpler and fewer criteria measures than the current Council approach. Harrington added that some of the categories discussed in the workshop could be criteria. Koutsoukos added that TAB is working with input from Council members and that many of the goals in the last evaluation were directed by the council. Leitner asked about the feedback loop for project selection with the Council. Steve Peterson said that the policy working group includes four Council members. He said that the process will remain with the working groups and that the Council would only review applications when they are ready for final approval.

Leitner expressed a desire to see and provide recommendations on a scoring matrix before it is presented to the policymaker workgroup, which would help a vote to reduce the number of measures, as TAB members would be hesitant to eliminate equity, housing, and public engagement. and as opposed to focusing just on, for example, safety. She also suggested that goal areas not directly related to outcomes be moved into separate categories if the focus is on planned outcomes. Marc Culver, Brooklyn Park, responded with disagreement on stripping other goals from projects, adding that location of investments and who they are impacting should be considered. Robjent stated that TAB always considers fairness and regional balance and that it is important to guide them to a fair decision.

Craig Jenson, Scott Co., asked whether the decision on whether to use an outcome-based,

modal-based, or hybrid process must be made in spring 2025. He expressed that neither he nor his commissioner had enough information to make a decision. Chair MacPherson asked Steve Peterson whether there will be a testing phase to see how projects move through an outcomes-based process. Steve Peterson said that the development team considers how past projects would fit into the applications. Robjent asked whether the source of funding would affect modal spending and McCartney explained that some federal funding programs have specific rules, while others are more flexible.

Leitner noted that categories such as Unique Projects and Traffic Management Technologies historically had few applications and suggested channeling them into other categories. Robjent said there are missing investment areas not being addressed. Koutsoukos explained that in 2014, TAB selected modal categories and relied to TAC to craft the scoring measures and since then technical committees have complicated the measures when some projects have been unable to compete. Leitner replied by asking whether TAB needs the message that fewer project types should be funded. Kosluchar said that TAB members should be asked whether geographic balance is a desired outcome. He added that the scores have been watered down. Steve Peterson said that Unique Projects could go away with an outcome-based approach but there will always be outlier projects that members will want to see considered for funding, including the possibility of funding planning projects.

Koutsoukos said that TAB has used geographic balance as a final lens in project selection. Leitner replied that the stakeholders favor making suburban and rural areas more competitive. Hager said that it is important to have conversations about goals and geographic balance. Steve Peterson said this has been a topic at the policy working group. He added that the active transportation funding could help with geographic balance.

Eyoh asked whether simplifying the application is an objective of the process. Steve Peterson replied that simplification is one of the consultant tasks.

Other Business

Koutsoukos will host a TAB orientation meeting via Teams on 1/10/24 that will be open to TAC members as well

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by McCartney and seconded by Kosluchar. **Motion carried** and the meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Committee Contact:

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