

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAC FUNDING & PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

Thursday, July 22, 2021

**Committee Members Present:** Michael Thompson (Chair, Plymouth), Jerry Auge (Anoka County), Angie Stenson (Carver County), Jenna Fabish (Dakota County), Jason Pieper (Hennepin County), John Mazzitello (Ramsey County), Craig Jenson (Scott County), Joe Ayers-Johnson (Washington County), Elaine Koutsoukos (TAB), Cole Hiniker (Metropolitan Council), Anna Flintoft (Metro Transit), Molly McCartney (MnDOT Metro District), Colleen Brown (MnDOT Metro District State Aid), Mehjabeen Rahman (MPCA), Aaron Bartling (MVTA), Ken Ashfeld (Maple Grove), Paul Oehme (Lakeville), Robert Ellis (Eden Prairie), Ethan Fawley (Minneapolis), Ann Weber (St. Paul)

**Committee Members Absent:** Mackenzie Turner Borgen (MnDOT Bike & Ped), Nancy Spooner-Mueller (DNR), Karl Keel (Bloomington), Jim Kosluchar (Fridley)

## I. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, chair Thompson called the regular meeting of the Funding & Programming Committee to order at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 22, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via teleconference.

## II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved without a vote. A vote is only needed if changes are made to the agenda.

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved by Koutsoukos and seconded by Oehme to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2021, regular meeting of the Funding & Programming Committee. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call.

## IV. TAB REPORT

Koutsoukos reported on the July 21, 2021, TAB meeting.

## V. BUSINESS

None.

## VI. INFORMATION

### 1. Regional Solicitation: Measures

#### 1. Pedestrian Safety Measure in Roadway Applications (Strategic Capacity, Modernization and Spot Mobility)

Heidi Schallberg, Metropolitan Council, and consultant Jessica Schoner, Toole Design, Inc. shared a proposed updated pedestrian safety scoring measure. The proposed measure consisted of three equally weighted sub-measures: 1) Project-Based Pedestrian Safety Enhancements and Risk Elements; 2) Existing Location-Based Pedestrian Safety Risk Factors; and 3) Existing Location-Based Pedestrian Safety Exposure Factors.

Jenson said that the measure is going to lead to applicants putting in a lot of work for only 30 points, along with a lot of scorer interpretation and discretion. He added that the existing measure provided scoring challenges and using checkboxes had been discussed. Ayers-Johnson said that he'd thought the goal was to simplify and added that sub-measure 2 provides added complexity.

Fawley said that the measure is moving in the right direction, though it would be helpful to simplify the measure. He suggested that pedestrian safety could be a requirement, as opposed to a scoring measure. He added that making it too easy to score the maximum points will not address recent trends of increasing pedestrian-related crashes. Hiniker added that in the Spot Mobility and Safety category, the measure may be worth more than 30 points.

Stenson said that sub-measure 1 meets the intent to take from benefit/cost and assigns points to pedestrian facilities and that perhaps that sub-measure could be weighed higher than the others. Regarding sub-measure 2, she said that given that projects are on A-minor arterials, every application would probably meet the mile-per-hour thresholds and suggested an average daily traffic range, as opposed to the one-level 7,000-mile threshold. Thompson echoed those sentiments and suggested that simplifying sub-measure 1 is a popular sentiment. He asked whether the comments could be taken back to the work group. Schallberg said that the feedback can be considered. Thompson asked how the mile-per-hour and ADT threshold were established. Schoner replied that those speeds provide more comfort for pedestrians compared to faster speeds; faster roadways see fewer incidents because there are few pedestrians.

Regarding sub-measure 3, Stenson asked whether this could be simplified or have points shifted to sub-measure 1. Ayers-Johnson expressed support for removing the urban center checkbox, given that urban centers also are likely to get points from the transit checkboxes. He asked how sub-measures 1 and 2 impact new roadways, which may be disadvantaged. Thompson said that those projects would score lower.

Thompson summarized that there's interest in simplifying sub-measure 1, sub-measure 2 is based on studies on reasoning, and in sub-measure 3 the urban center is redundant and can be removed.

## 2. Traffic Counts and Transit Usage

Steve Peterson, Metropolitan Council, said that staff is looking for feedback on the dates to use for traffic count and transit data. MnDOT staff recommended not using 2020 data and using an historic count instead. He suggested using 2019 transit data.

Flintoft said that similar consideration should be given to ridership data in the transit categories, particularly for Transit Expansion projects that improve frequency. She said that it will be difficult to use 2019 data to project future ridership, given the reduction in ridership in 2020. Thompson asked how to address the changes in 2020, suggesting that ridership will hopefully be back to normal by 2026. Hiniker said the 2019 data should be used for Transit Modernization and transit connections. For new ridership calculations, no year is specified, so it is up to applicants to share how they calculated their projections. Thompson suggested that the Solicitation provide guidance. Peterson said that staff can look into other language to provide clarity.

## 3. Potential Point Changes in Spot Mobility and Safety

Peterson said that following comments from Technical Committee members that the Spot Mobility and Safety category should weigh safety higher at the expense of congestion reduction and air quality, TAB suggested that congestion reduction and air quality should not be diminished. He provided three options that took points from congestion reduction, risk assessment, and role in the regional transportation system and economy, respectively.

Stenson expressed a preference towards Option 3, taking points from the role in the regional transportation system and economy, stating that the scoring committee was not supportive of the regional truck corridor measure contained therein. Fawley expressed appreciation for the options and agreed that Option 3 is the best option. Pieper added that roundabouts can require right-of-way purchase, indicating that taking from risk assessment might not be wise. Thompson expressed support for Option 3, expressing concern for taking points away from vehicle delay.

McCartney asked whether there is anything to anticipate TAB discussing. Thompson said that TAB expressed concern with taking points from congestion and emissions reduction, leading staff to create additional options.

#### 4. Crash Modification Factors

Peterson said that one of the recommendations in the Before and After Study was to establish crash modification factors that have been used in the Regional Solicitation and HSIP Solicitation. This will be an optional resource.

Ayers-Johnson said that this list is a good idea, though he asked how it will be maintained. Peterson said that it will probably need to be updated every cycle.

#### 5. Equity and Affordable Housing

Amy Vennewitz and Jed Hanson, Metropolitan Council, talked about proposed changes to the Equity and Housing criterion. The Housing Performance Score part of the Affordable Housing is proposed to be removed, as it has fallen out of favor with the Metropolitan Council's Community Development staff. The proposed criterion would have three measures: outreach, benefits and impacts, and affordable housing access. The bonus points would remain but would apply to housing. The negative points for disbenefits is removed in the proposed criterion, as scorers found it confusing.

Pieper asked whether there will be training options, to which Vennewitz said that this is being considered.

Stenson said that the character limit might need to be larger. She added that a half-mile buffer might not work well in rural and suburban areas, where projects tend to impact people further away and that it sends a message to some populations that they do not count. Vennewitz said that this is a good suggestion that could potentially be addressed by using Thrive communities. She added that a group could discuss this and bring it back next month. She said character limits could be larger. Koutsoukos said that that staff can change the character limits in the Web Grants program.

## 2. Regional Solicitation: Outlier Adjustments

Barbeau said that outliers were discussed in the previous meeting and that this discussion is meant to narrow down options, which include not changing anything to how scoring committees address outliers, disallowing outlier adjustments, and providing parameters for when and how to use adjustments. He said that adjustments tend to have the greatest, negative, impact on the top-rated application.

Stenson said that there needs to be a way to benefit the top-rated project. She added that she is in favor of guidance being provided to the scoring committee. Thompson said that there is a lot of subjectivity, which is why there are scoring committees. He added that adjustments should be rare.

Hiniker suggested that guidance could include a rule that outlier adjustments have to be authorized by staff. Thompson said that he would be happy to be part of a group that would vet the process. Barbeau said that after adjustments were allowed, scoring committees did not scrutinize the result of the adjustment.

### 3. Regional Solicitation: Unique Projects Update

Hiniker provided a background on the history of unique projects. A policymaker workgroup met five times, providing policy direction. A technical advisory group met twice to provide guidance on the metrics. He then addressed the application process and the evaluation metrics.

McCartney suggested having a technical person to chair the scoring group. Hiniker said that this is being left open to see what type of person is needed after applications arrive.

### 4. Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Application

Barbeau said that the only potential change to the HSIP application from 2020 is the possibility of incorporation of the pedestrian safety measure. Jenson said that safety is already a focus in HSIP and he doesn't see any need to add other measure. Peterson said that the proactive sub-measure already includes a pedestrian element.

## **VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

With Chair Thompson having left the meeting, Jenson adjourned the meeting.

Joe Barbeau  
Recording Secretary