

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
Metropolitan Council
390 N. Robert St., St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1805

Minutes of a Meeting of the
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
February 20, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karl Keel (Chair), Joe Lux, Brian Isaacson, Colleen Brown, Cynthia Wheeler, Craig Jensen, Tom Johnson, Jenifer Hager, John Sass, Steve Albrecht, Eriks Ludins, Cory Slagle, Mary Karlsson, Lyndon Robjent, and Heidi Schallberg (staff)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Minutes from the January meeting were not available and will be presented for approval at the next meeting.

4. TAB Report

Heidi Schallberg reported on the February TAB meeting. Elaine Koutsoukos will be the new TAB Coordinator; congratulations and welcome to Elaine. Robert Lilligren has rejoined TAB representing transit and will also be on the TAB Executive Committee. The TAB approved an amendment to the Unified Planning Work Program to carry over or add studies in 2014. TAB approved the following action items: a one-time process to award 2017 CMAQ funds to regionally significant transit projects, the program year extension request for Black Dog Greenway in Burnsville, the reassignment request for SouthWest Transit bus purchase and the related TIP amendment, the TIP amendment for Highway 610, and the regional solicitation evaluation subcategory revisions. Informational presentations to TAB included revisions to the Transportation Policy Plan amendment for Corridors of Commerce, updates on the Regional Solicitation Evaluation and the Transportation Policy Plan, and the 2015-2018 TIP schedule.

5. CMAQ Travel Demand Management (TDM) Solicitation

Katie White presented on the \$1.2 million solicitation for CMAQ funds for transportation demand management activities. The scoring committee recommended that out of the 13 applications, six projects be fully funded and one project be partially funded (and that project can still be done with the lower funding amount).

MOTION: Brian Isaacson motioned to recommend the approval of the selected project list. Steve Albrecht seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

6. 2017 TAP Solicitation – Project Qualifications Review

Heidi Schallberg distributed an updated handout about the four remaining Transportation Alternatives Program applications with qualifying issues.

- The Minneapolis Midtown Corridor Bridge Preservation Program Phase II original application was not well-defined enough because it did not specify which bridges would be rehabilitated and the costs for each. The applicant provided a revised application with additional clarification.
- Nice Ride Focus Area Densification and Infill Initiative – Nonprofit organizations are not eligible project sponsors under the federal regulations without a partner from an eligible entity, and the support letter

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from the City of Minneapolis was general and did not indicate willingness to sponsor the application. The city provided an email agreeing to sponsor the project.

- Saint Paul had two applications for Wheelock Parkway Bicycle and Streetscape Improvements for Phases I and II. Both applications had similar concerns about the federal eligibility of the roadway section work referenced in the applications. The city provided clarification of the cost estimate for the nonmotorized portion of work. FHWA was consulting with headquarters on the eligibility issues.

Regarding the Saint Paul applications, the committee discussed allowing the federal funding request for only the nonmotorized portion of the projects. The 20% local match would not include the road costs, but the total project cost should remain the same. Eriks Ludins said the city would commit to funding the road portion of the projects with local funds.

MOTION: Tom Johnson motioned to qualify the Minneapolis and Nice Ride applications as clarified and to qualify the two Saint Paul Wheelock Parkway applications with revisions to show the federal funding requests only for the nonmotorized portions of the projects. Brian Isaacson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Scope Change Request – Crystal Lake Regional Trail

David Juliff from SRF Consulting presented the scope change request for Three Rivers Parks District for the Crystal Lake Regional Trail. The changes would increase the length by 0.4 miles, change the trail alignment, eliminate three bridges that would no longer be needed, change approximately 0.5 miles of the project from off-road trail to on-street facility with shared lane markings, and move the regional trail head facilities. The change would reduce the budget to a total of \$2,600,000 with \$1,840,000 in Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds (less than the \$2,163,200 originally programmed) and an increased local amount of \$760,000. Committee discussion focused on the portion of the project that would not have pedestrian accommodations under this proposed change since there are no existing sidewalks in that segment. As proposed, pedestrians would be in the street, which is low volume. Acquiring additional right of way from residents for a sidewalk would be a difficult option for this location. The committee asked about additional options for pedestrians such as signs to drivers, wayfinding, striping or another way to add a sidewalk. The committee was also interested in seeing more cross-sectional information in addition to the aerials for clarity.

MOTION: Tom Johnson motioned to recommend the approval of the scope change request based on receiving additional information about adding pedestrian accommodations before the TAC meeting. John Sass seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. 2014-2017 TIP Amendment – Crystal Lake Regional Trail

MOTION: Isaacson motioned to recommend the approval of the TIP amendment conditional to the scope change approval. Mary Karlsson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

9. 2015-2018 TIP Schedule

Schallberg presented the draft schedule for the next Transportation Improvement Program, which includes changing the month the committee sees the draft from April to May to better align MnDOT State Transportation Improvement Program development schedules with Council committee meeting schedules. The final TIP will go directly to TAB after the public comment period instead of coming back through the full TAC/TAB committee process to be consistent with approaches for other MPO products and processes.

MOTION: Isaacson motioned to recommend the approval of the selected project list. Karlsson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

10. CMAQ 2017 Funding

Amy Vennewitz presented to the committee last fall about options for addressing 2017 funding as the Regional Solicitation Evaluation winds up and a new solicitation is being designed for this fall. The proposal for addressing CMAQ funds for 2017 went through the TAB Executive Committee because of a short timeline. Last fall a CMAQ solicitation was not considered in part due to staffing concerns. She handed out the TAB action transmittal regarding the process for allocating 2017 CMAQ funds, which is to do a special, one-time process to allocate CMAQ funds for regionally-significant transit projects. The portions of CMAQ used for transportation management organization (TMO) base funding and a set aside for system management projects (based on historical amounts awarded to this project type in previous solicitations) would be separate from this transit process. Vennewitz reviewed the process schedule and criteria and five example projects. The focus is on regionally-significant projects, not route expansion. The committee discussed the need for more definition of what “regionally significant” means since every project sponsor will think their projects meet that. The committee thought that as much objectivity as possible would be helpful. Other comments included making a commitment to a full funding package a qualifying element, including leveraging funding in the criteria, not adjusting amounts for inflation to make the process easier, including benefit/cost in the criteria in some way (emissions or with ridership, such as cost per ride or user), and using documents such as the Transportation Policy Plan to show support for projects that apply.

The committee also discussed how to potentially address the anticipate \$7 million of STP funding available for 2017. The amount was not large enough to justify a solicitation and discussion included the idea that including these funds in the next full solicitation might be the cleanest way to allocate this funding for roadway projects.

11. Local Program Status Review

Dan Erickson from MnDOT State Aid provided a handout of the projects in the local 2014 program year. Of 69 projects, 18 have been authorized to date, 1 withdrawn, and 1 moved. An upcoming March 15th deadline for plan submittals will determine if many of the remaining projects stay on schedule. The committee noted that the State Aid program review updates are useful and helping with peers reinforcing the need to deliver the local program.

12. Regional Solicitation Evaluation Update

Schallberg thanked those who volunteered to serve on solicitation work groups. The TAC Executive Committee will be reviewing the lists of volunteers and determining the membership of each work group, so more information should be coming by the end of the month. Work groups will begin meeting in March. TAB received the draft criteria as an information item at the February meeting and will be asked to approve the criteria at the March meeting.

13. Adjournment With no other business, the meeting adjourned.