

Minutes

TAB Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: May 3, 2023

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Council Chambers

Members Present:

- ☒ Jenifer Hager, Chair, Minneapolis
- ☒ Joe MacPherson, Anoka Co
- ☒ Lyndon Robjent, Carver Co
- ☒ Gina Mitteco, Dakota Co
- ☒ Brian Isaacson, Ramsey Co
- ☒ Chad Ellos, Hennepin Co
- ☒ Craig Jensen, Scott Co
- ☒ Lyssa Leitner, Washington Co
- ☐ Andrew Witter, 7W

- ☐ Karl Keel, Bloomington
- ☒ Charlie Howley, Chanhassen
- ☒ Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie
- ☒ Jim Kosluchar, Fridley
- ☒ Paul Oehme, Lakeville
- ☒ John Hagen, Maple Grove
- ☒ Ross Beckwith, West Saint Paul
- ☒ Michael Thompson, Plymouth
- ☒ Kelsey Fogt, Minneapolis
- ☒ Nick Peterson, Saint Paul
- ☒ Bill Dermody, Saint Paul

- ☒ April Crockett, MnDOT
- ☒ Steve Peterson, Council MTS
- ☒ Michael Larson, 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 Bargen, Pedestrian
- ☒ Josh Pearson, FHWA (ex-officio)
- ☒ = present

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Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Hager called the regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee at about 9:00 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with no changes. Therefore, no vote was needed.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Isaacson and seconded by Koutsoukos to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2023, regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Public Comment on Committee Business

None.

TAB Report

Koutsoukos reported on the April 19, 2023, Transportation Advisory Board meeting.

Information (1)

1. [MSP Airport Long-Term Plan and Stakeholder Engagement Update](#) (Eric Gilles and Dana Nelson, MAC)

Eric Gilles and Dana Nelson from the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) provided the presentation. Isaacson asked about the landside access. Gilles said that there will be spinoff preliminary design-level projects for Terminals 1 and 2, both of which have curbside congestion issues. Eyoh asked how many projects meet the requirement for environmental analysis. Gilles replied that an environmental assessment will occur in 2025.

Business – Committee Reports

Executive Committee (Jenifer Hager, Chair)

Hager reported that the TAC Executive Committee met prior to the meeting and discussed the agenda items and in-person versus virtual meetings. Barbeau will follow up with a survey for members.

1. [2023-28: Streamlined 2023-2026 TIP Amendment – New Projects](#)

Barbeau said that the requested action involves two actions adding projects to the 2023-2026 TIP:

1. MnDOT requests addition of a post-project traffic study consultant service. This is a follow-up to a reconstruction project on Minnesota Highway 316 in Dakota County.
2. Council staff requests the addition of 17 projects selected in the 2022 Regional Solicitation. The attached 17 projects are programmed for fiscal year 2024, which begins on July 1, 2023. Because the 2024-2027 TIP, which is currently in development, will likely not be approved until roughly November 1, 2023, staff suggests placing the 2022 Regional Solicitation projects programmed for 2024 into the 2023-2026 Regional Solicitation to prevent the need for individual time-sensitive requests over the next several months.

Mitteco asked whether the follow-up to the MN 316 project was planned. Nobody at the meeting was certain.

Motion by MacPherson and seconded by Mitteco to recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2023-2026 TIP to add new projects. **Motion carried.**

2. [2023-29: Streamlined 2023-2026 TIP Amendment – Fare Collection Equipment Cost Increase](#)

Barbeau said that This amendment is needed to increase funds for fare collection equipment. Metro Transit is implementing a cubic fare collection system upgrade, which costs well more than the 2023 funds anticipated to be spent at the time the original TIP was drafted.

Motion by Harrington and seconded by Isaacson to recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2023-2026 TIP to increase the cost of Metro Transit's bus and rail fare collection capital equipment project. **Motion carried.**

Planning Committee/TPP Technical Working Group (Scott Mareck, Chair)

Mareck provided an update on the TAC Planning Committee and the TPP Work Group.

Funding & Programming (Michael Thompson, Chair)

1. [2023-20: Scope Change Request for Hennepin County CSAH 153 \(Lowry Avenue NE\) Reconstruction](#)

Thompson reported that the requested scope change involves removing improvements at the MN 65 intersection of Hennepin County's CSAH 153 reconstruction project so they can be completed with another project. The Funding & Programming Committee recommended approval without a federal funding reduction. Chad Ellos, Hennepin County, added that it is less impactful to the community to construct the project in one, as opposed to two, projects. Hager said that the Funding & Programming Committee has been asked to review the Scope Change Policy.

Motion by Ellos and seconded by MacPherson to recommend approval of Hennepin County's

scope change request to remove the MN 65 intersection improvements from its CSAH 153 reconstruction project with no federal funding reduction. **Motion carried.**

2. [2023-21: Highway Safety Improvement Program HSIP](#)

Thompson said that staff recommends approval of the draft 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Solicitation, which shows minimal change from 2022.

MacPherson asked about the impetus for adding language about the rationale for applicants apply for projects. Steve Peterson said many applications included this language and MnDOT decided to have it included by all. MacPherson suggested removing the following sentence: “To meet the intent of HSIP, we want to ensure agencies are selecting projects with the greatest safety benefits rather than responding to public or political pressure.”

Motion by MacPherson and seconded by Robjent to recommend approval of the draft 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) application for release for public comment with removal of the following sentence “to meet the intent of HSIP, we want to ensure agencies are selecting projects with the greatest safety benefits rather than responding to public or political pressure”. **Motion carried.**

3. [2023-22: Regional Solicitation – Criteria and Weighing](#)

Thompson said the Funding & Programming Committee recommends a 100-point safety increase on all categories aside from the Transit categories. MacPherson noted that all 100 points in Bridges are assigned to the multi-modal measure and suggested putting half of the points towards bridge conditions.

Motion by Leitner and seconded by MacPherson to recommend approval of the weighting of the criteria and measures for the 2024 Regional Solicitation with the following adjustments from 2022: a) Adding 100 points to safety-related criteria for all application categories except Transit Expansion and Transit Modernization and b) Distribution of the additional 100 safety points based on current measure weighting within the safety criterion in the Roadway categories, except for Bridges, for which 50 points go to National Bridge Inventory Condition Rating and 50 points go to Multimodal Elements and Existing Connections. **Motion carried.**

4. [2023-23: Regional Solicitation – Minimum and Maximum Awards](#)

Thompson said Funding & Programming Committee members had various opinions on which if any categories should have increases to the maximum awards and that ultimately it was decided to recommend no change and to address the issue going into the 2026 Regional Solicitation.

Harrington stated that while it makes sense to leave the amounts alone this time, in the long run whether to fund more smaller projects or fewer larger projects is important because fewer larger projects can be better from an administrative standpoint. Robjent asked whether the amount of funding for the 2024 Regional Solicitation is known. Steve Peterson replied that it should be around \$250 million plus overprogramming. Isaacson said that there are more programs than ever, and consideration should be given to focusing on larger priorities. He also expressed concern that there may be a diminishing demand for applications.

Leitner said there are two separate philosophies to why federal maximum funding amounts could be raised: to reflect inflation and focus on fewer high-priority projects. She suggested that while the former is worth discussing, the latter is probably a long-term issue for discussion in the review process. Harrington suggested that the impetus for the discussion was for inflation and that an inflation adjustment could be considered now.

Motion by MacPherson and seconded by Koutsoukos to recommend adoption of the minimum and maximum federal funding amounts with no changes for the 2024 Regional Solicitation and to revisit the issue going into the 2026 Regional Solicitation. **Motion carried.**

5. [2023-24: Regional Solicitation – Mode Splits](#)

Thompson said that the Funding & Programming Committee recommended no changes to the modal funding ranges. Isaacson requested a history of where within the ranges programs from previous Regional Solicitations fell.

Motion by Isaacson and seconded by Robjent to recommend no changes to the modal funding ranges. **Motion carried.**

6. [2023-25: Regional Solicitation – Policies, Qualifying Criteria, and Eligibility](#)

Thompson said that the Funding & Programming Committee recommended tiebreaker option 2, which favors the tied project with the higher score in the most valuable criterion in each category. It further enables a sponsor with two tied projects in the selected category to pick which project is favored. The Funding & Programming Committee recommended moving the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) total federal funding maximum to \$39M. Steve Peterson said that the rationale for this change is based on the increased total funding relative to when the rule was established.

Mitteco said that high-scoring projects have been skipped due to the BRT rule and that funding was moved out of Transit because of the rule in 2022. She added that that BRT projects are often sponsored by local agencies. Leitner said that the rationale for the rule was to enable smaller projects to compete. Thompson said that the Transit Working Group recommended no changes. Harrington suggested that some transit applications could apply in other categories.

Leitner suggested separating actions within the topic.

Steve Peterson said that, based on the likely funding availability, there would be about \$29 million available for non-BRT competitive transit projects.

Fyten suggested not changing the rule given the confusion around it and the potential for transit funding to come through the legislature.

Hager asked whether there had been consideration for creating a BRT category. Steve Peterson said it was considered but the rule was selected as a temporary measure to work within the existing structure. Harrington suggested that the evaluation is an opportunity to consider a different focus, using microtransit as an example. Leitner suggested that ridership isn't going to be the dominant consideration for how to fund transit.

MOTION 1: Motion by Isaacson and seconded by MacPherson to recommend use of tie breaker Option 2. **Motion 1 carried.**

MOTION 2: Motion by Leitner and seconded by Fyten to keep the BRT maximum at \$32M. **Motion 2 carried.**

Thompson said a TAB member had asked whether applicants can submit a roadway application that includes a trail and a separate application for the trail alone. Koutsoukos clarified that an identical application could not be provided to multiple categories.

Koutsoukos said that currently a letter confirming snow removal is required for Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities but that the Funding & Programming Committee recommended requiring it for bicycle and pedestrian elements of all applications.

MOTION 3: Motion by Isaacson and seconded by Thompson to require letters from the operator of the facility confirming that they will remove snow and ice for year-round bicycle and pedestrian use for any bicycle or pedestrian facility, including in roadway projects. Jenson suggested that this is going to be difficult to enforce and will create extra work in the application process. He suggested that a checkbox be used instead of a letter. Turner Bergen expressed comfort with the checkbox, adding that ADA requires a certain amount of snow and ice removal. Isaacson suggested changing the words in the checkbox to set expectations. Robjent suggested that some multimodal elements are recreational. Leitner asked whether using a checkbox instead of a letter would also be reflected in Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities. She added that all facilities are transportation facilities. Kosluchar added that there are other outdoor facilities, such as transit facilities that are not discussed. Dermody expressed concern about whether a portion of a trail that cannot yet be maintained would be ineligible. Turner Bergen said that if pedestrians are

going to use facilities, the ADA requires they be maintained all year. Hager asked whether an agency could have the option to create a detour rather than remove snow. Isaacson said that some people do not want to maintain facilities, which is counter to the ADA. MacPherson said that the need to maintain in the winter can impact prioritization. Leitner said that Washington County does not apply for trails in cities that will not maintain facilities in the winter.

Hager suggested that the discussion was leading toward preference for a checkbox that says facilities will be maintained without defining how, who, or to what level of service; it is simply a commitment. She then asked Isaacson to reiterate his motion, to which he replied that her suggestion summarized it.

Motion 3 carried.

7. [2023-26: Regional Solicitation – Measures and Scoring Criteria](#)

Thompson said that the Funding & Programming Committee recommended approval of the measures and scoring criteria and highlighted the following:

- Shifting transit ridership and route coverage from 2019 to 2022. In the 2022 Regional Solicitation, 2019 data was used because of uncertainty early in the COVID-19 pandemic. The Transit Technical Working Group recommends using 2022 data.
- Clarifying that a Safe Routes to School Plan does not have to be MnDOT sponsored.
- Allowing applications for Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement projects on collectors to ensure that the bridges with the worst condition on the transportation system are being funded regardless of functional classification.

Steve Peterson said that allowing bridge projects on collectors leads to a question on whether to allow Measure 1A, Distance to Nearest Parallel Bridge, currently required to be on an A-minor or principle arterial, to include collectors. Peterson said that staff recommends this change.

Motion by Steve Peterson and seconded by Isaacson to recommend adoption of the measures and scoring guidance for the 2024 Regional Solicitation with allowance for barrier crossings at any federal aid eligible roadway in Measure 1A, Distance to Nearest Parallel Bridge in the Bridge category. **Motion carried.**

8. [2023-27: Regional Solicitation – Release for Public Comment](#)

Motion by Thompson and seconded by Eyoh to recommend approval of the draft 2024 Regional Solicitation (inclusive of the approvals made in Action Transmittals 2023-22 through 2023-27) for release for public comment. **Motion carried**

Information

1. [PROTECT](#) (Steve Peterson, MTS)

Steve Peterson presented on the topic.

Leitner suggested that the Reallocation Policy does not apply since this is new funding. Koutsoukos replied that the policy covers all new funding that needs to be allocated.

Regarding Option 2, Leitner said that the Solicitation is not designed to fund PROTECT projects. She added that all three projects highlighted in this option have PROTECT-eligible elements, even though the Carver County project is more obviously related. She said that the other applicants should have the opportunity to share how much of their projects are PROTECT eligible. Robjent asked whether there is enough funding to fund more than one of the projects. Steve Peterson replied that there is another \$5.1M available. Jenson said that the Federal Funds Reallocation Policy is not responsible for distributing funding from other sources. Robjent stated that if the newer money was on the table at the time of programming the Regional Solicitation the Carver County project would have been funded.

Kosluchar said that projects can be entirely PROTECT-funded, contradicting language that states otherwise.

2. [Transitway Advancement Policy TPP Modification](#) (Charles Carlson, MTS)

Charles Carlson presented on the topic. Ellos said that while it is important to identify risks, benefits need to be acknowledged, as well.

Other Business

Eyoh said that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the availability of \$400 million to improve school buses, which could include buying new buses or taking measures to reduce emissions. He said he would send Barbeau information to distribute.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned.

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