
*Transportation Advisory Board
of the Metropolitan Council*

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, August 4, 2021
9:00 A.M.**

Members Present: Jon Solberg, Brian Isaacson, Jack Forslund, Darin Mielke, Erin Laberee, Chad Ellos, Lisa Freese, Emily Jorgensen, Andrew Witter, Elaine Koutsoukos, Steve Peterson, Michael Larson, Adam Harrington, Andrew Emanuele, Mahjabeen Rahmann, Matt Fyten, Praveena Pidaparathi, Danny McCullough, Karl Keel, Ken Ashfeld, Charlie Howley, Paul Oehme, Michael Thompson, Marc Culver, Jim Kosluchar, Ethan Fowley, Jim Voll, Paul Kurtz

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Solberg at 9:02 a.m. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via video conference.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 7, 2021, meeting were presented to the Committee for consideration. Chair Solberg noted that there was an error in the minutes that required correction. The minutes incorrectly stated that Michael Thompson provided the Funding and Programming Committee report. Mr. Thompson was absent on July 7, and Mr. Oehme provided the report.

A motion to approve the July minutes with the change was made by Mr. Keel and seconded by Ms. Jorgensen. Motion carried.

(Meeting minutes for the March 4, 2020, minutes will be presented for approval at a future committee meeting.)

4. TAB Report

TAB Coordinator Ms. Koutsoukos provided a summary of the July 21, 2021 meeting. Ms. Koutsoukos reported that the Regional Solicitation will go to the TAB to be released for public comment in September.

5. Committee Reports

1. Executive Committee (Jon Solberg, TAC Chair)

Chair Solberg reported that the Executive Committee met prior to the TAC meeting. Discussion topics included details on Regional Solicitation items on the agenda. The Executive Committee also began the discussion on the TAC Bylaws changes but were unable to finish the discussion. The Committee will meet at a later time to finish the discussion.

2. TAC Action Items

No items.

3. Planning Committee (Emily Jorgensen, Chair)

No items.

4. Funding and Programming Committee (Michael Thompson, Chair)

Mr. Thompson noted that the Funding and Programming Committee met in July to discuss items on the TAC agenda, but that there were no action items.

6. Information Items

1. Regional Solicitation: Measures

I. Pedestrian Safety Measure in Roadway Applications

Heidi Schallberg of MTS introduced this item. Ms. Schallberg, along with Jessica Schoner of Toole Design, discussed the pedestrian safety measures used in the Strategic Capacity, Modernization, and Spot Mobility and Safety categories. The proposed safety measure, which stems from work done in the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, and would be more sensitive to project context. It would also slightly change the weighting to more heavily weigh risk factors. Specific comments for this item included:

- that the overall point value for the measure should be increased, particularly in the Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization category;
- that the measure could be difficult to score in certain suburban contexts where transit is based less on specific stops and more on riders who “flag down” a bus;
- that the 500-foot threshold for walksheds may need to be increased; and
- that there should be consideration given to using either projected or existing pedestrian counts as opposed to generators.

The Committee discussed details of the proposed changes in depth, ultimately showing general support for the proposed changes. The recommendations will be discussed in more detail at the August meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee.

II. Traffic Counts and Transit Usage

Mr. Peterson presented this item, which proposed allowing applicants to choose to use historical traffic and transit volumes for the 2022 Regional Solicitation application. Mr. Peterson explained that traffic counts are completed every three years in the region. As 2020 (and likely 2021) volumes are significantly lower than previous volumes, this disadvantages roadways which had counts in these years versus those counted in 2019. The change would allow applicants to choose a historic AADT volume from MnDOT for roadways that have a 2020 or 2021 count.

Mr. Peterson continued by introducing Daniel Pena of MTS Planning. Mr. Pena explained that the use of 2019 or 2020 transit ridership data may provide similar problems. The proposed solution would allow applicants to use their best judgement in deciding which year to use for annual ridership for peer routes in the Transit Expansion category. For ridership in the Transit Modernization category, along with connecting trips in both the Expansion and Modernization categories, a weighted average of 75% from 2019 and 25% from 2020 is proposed. The Committee showed general support for the proposed changes.

III. Potential Point Changes in Spot Mobility and Safety

Mr. Peterson presented this item, which is aimed at assigning more points to the Safety criterion in the Spot Mobility and Safety application category, to the Committee. The Safety and Congestion Reduction/Air Quality criteria are each worth 25 of the points, for a total of 50%, in the category and a

previous proposal recommended reallocating points from the latter to the former so that 2/3 of these points reflect safety and 1/3 are for congestion and air quality.

Mr. Peterson noted that this was discussed at the July 22, 2021, meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee, during which members expressed the following:

- a desire to support vehicle delay, as this was one of the primary reasons why this funding category exists;
- that risk assessment still applies to Spot Mobility and Safety projects; and
- that the Truck Corridor Study tiers measure is not pertinent to this application category and would be a good option to reduce in order to increase the points for safety.

The recommendation from the Funding and Programming Committee was that an additional 60 points would be assigned to the Safety criterion, with 30 points taken from the regional truck corridors measures and 30 from congestion within the project area measure. TAC showed general support for the proposed changes.

IV. Crash Modification Factors

Mr. Peterson presented this item, which would update text to reflect the addition of a list of Crash Modification Factors from the Regional Solicitation Before and After Study Phase 2. In this study, a list of commonly used Crash Modification Factors was developed to assist applicants. Applicants would be provided the option to use this list as a resource but may also opt to use different modification factors if desired. TAC showed general support of the proposed change.

V. Equity and Affordable Housing

Amy Vennewitz and Jed Hanson of MTS Planning presented this item. Ms. Vennewitz noted that the Council had received feedback from applicants that the measures are difficult and time-consuming to calculate. Previously, Equity and Affordable Housing were separate measures. The proposed change would aim to combine these measures and examine equity more holistically. The change would be more qualitative in nature and would allow the applicants to discuss the process they employed in order to engage BIPOC, low-income, and other equity populations. TAC showed general support for the proposed change.

2. Regional Solicitation: Unique Projects Update

Cole Hiniker of MTS Planning presented this item. Mr. Hiniker noted that historically, unique projects were funded on a case-by-case basis. During the development of the 2020 Regional Solicitation, TAB directed staff to create a Unique Projects application category and form a Policy Workgroup to discuss the criteria and evaluation of applications after completion of the 2020 Regional Solicitation.

The Unique Projects application category is taken directly from the Regional Solicitation funding allocation and not from the modal categories. It comprises 2.5% of the total funds, which is approximately four-to-five million dollars for the 2022 Regional Solicitation. The Unique Projects Policy Workgroup met a total of five times from April to July. The recommendations that resulted from this process were that applications must: demonstrate that their submittals do not fit into any other funding category; fit the purpose of the category, and meet thresholds related to innovation--reducing adverse environmental impacts, improving racial equity, supporting multimodal communities--and have a regional impact and build collaboration within the region. The Policy Workgroup would evaluate and rank projects based upon these criteria. TAC showed general support for the Policy Workgroup's direction and suggestions.

7. Agency Updates

Due to time constraints, Chair Solberg recommended TAC table the remaining three information items on the agenda. Mr. Harrington of Metro Transit noted that transit service that had been on temporary hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic would be returning September 1st. Service will also be improved for Route 3.

8. Other Business and Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Prepared by:

Dave Burns