

Minutes

TAB Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: March 1, 2023

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Virtual

Members Present:

- Jenifer Hager, Chair, Minneapolis
- Joe MacPherson, 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
- Andrew Witter, 7W

- Karl Keel, Bloomington
- Charlie Howley, Chanhassen
- Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie
- Jim Kosluchar, Fridley
- Paul Oehme, Lakeville
- Ken Ashfeld, Maple Grove
- Ross Beckwith, West Saint Paul
- Michael Thompson, Plymouth
- Kathleen Mayell, 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
- Praveena Pidaparathi, 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 Hager called the regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee at 9:02 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Ellis and seconded by MacPherson to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2023, regular meeting of the TAB Technical Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Public Comment on Committee Business

None.

TAB Report

Koutsoukos reported on the February 15, 2023, Transportation Advisory Board meeting.

Business – Committee Reports

Executive Committee (Jenifer Hager, Chair)

Chair Hager reported that the TAC Executive Committee met prior to the meeting and discussed action items along with the information item related to changes for the 2024 Regional Solicitation.

1. [2023-16: Streamlined 2023-2026 TIP Amendment: Four Project Changes](#)

Barbeau said that the requested action involves changing four projects in the TIP:

1. MnDOT requests a cost increase for its US 169 cable median barrier and drainage project from Blakely Township to Belle Plaine along with a correction to the project length. The project is funded with state funds as well as Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds not funded through the HSIP Solicitation.
2. MnDOT requests a small reduction to the length along with addition of transportation management Systems (TMS) to its US 169 mill-and-overlay project. This project is funded through the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), which is not programmed through the Regional Solicitation.
3. MnDOT requests a cost increase to its US 169 bridge replacement at 6th Avenue in Brooklyn Park and Maple Grove. The project is state-funded and includes no Regional Solicitation funding.
4. Hennepin County requests a cost increase to its University Avenue and 4th Street SE bikeway project in Minneapolis. The project was funded in the 2018 Regional Solicitation, but all additional funds are local.

Motion by MacPherson and seconded by Isaacson to recommend that the Transportation Advisory Board recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2023-2026 TIP to change four projects. **Motion carried.**

2. [2023-17: Streamlined 2023-2026 TIP Amendment: US 8 Reconstruction](#)

Barbeau said that the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) currently includes a project reconstruction and expansion of US 8 (Lake Blvd) in Chisago County. MnDOT wishes to expand the cost and termini of the project, with the southern end being extended to Forest Lake in Washington County. The portion of Washington County is reconstruction. Because this is in the Twin Cities MPO area, the project needs to be added to the TIP.

Motion by Keel and seconded by MacPherson to recommend that the Transportation Advisory Board recommend adoption of an amendment to the 2023-2026 TIP to add the reconstruction US 8 (Lake Blvd) in Washington and Chisago counties. **Motion carried.**

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

1. [2023-15: 2023 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment 1](#)

TAC Planning Chair Scott Merrick said that TAC Planning considered the red tracked changes in the [document](#) while staff suggests other changes highlighted in yellow. David Burns, MTS, provided a [presentation](#) on the topic.

MacPherson asked whether the online engagement tool for the Regional Solicitation should be done earlier in the process (i.e., before the project scores released). Steve Peterson said that the intent is that this would be complete before the scoring is complete so there will not be ranked lists when the survey closes.

Motion by Steve Peterson and seconded by Eyoh to recommend that the Transportation Advisory Board recommend the proposed amendments to the 2023 UPWP as shown in the attached document, 2023 UPWP Amendment 1, including the yellow-highlighted changes.

Harrington expressed appreciation for the STOPS regional forecast. He asked whether the salary costs are paid with this fund or if it is a charged account. Burns replied that there was no change to the salaries. He added that salary is shown in the budget based on weeks each staff member

puts into each task. Harrington asked what salary was used versus budgeted compared to last year. Burns replied that CPG funds are used to fund staff salaries and if there is unused CPG funding, that would reduce the allocation of consulting versus the original budget.

Motion carried.

Funding & Programming (Vacant, Chair)

Chair Thompson reported that there were no action items at the February 16, 2023, meeting, though there were information items on the Climate Action Work Plan, Regional Transportation and Climate Change Multimodal Measure Study and potential changes to the 2024 Regional Solicitation. Most of the focus was on the Regional Solicitation items.

Information

1. [COVID and Driver Shortage Impacts on Transit Planning](#) (Adam Harrington, Metro Transit)

Adam Harrington provided the [presentation](#).

Fyten said that SouthWest Transit's ridership is down about 60% of pre-pandemic for express services, though it has seen significant growth in on-demand micro transit. Harrington said that Metro Transit is starting a micro transit pilot project in north Minneapolis.

Isaacson said that it appears that the approach is to restore the transit system to what it once was and asked whether any systemic changes are being considered instead. Harrington said that in the short-term, how the transit system will grow will be explored.

Eyoh asked whether more people are applying to be operates now that requirements have been reduced and wages have increased. Harrington replied that interest has increased, but interested parties need to go through CDL training before Metro Transit will be confident that it will see a larger number of drivers.

Leitner asked what the plans are to release the agency and public survey links. Harrington said that the survey was finished yesterday and Metro Transit will use the survey to inform next steps. He added that he would provide it to members.

2. Potential Changes for 2024 Regional Solicitation (Joe Barbeau, MTS)

Steve Peterson reported that the 2024 Regional Solicitation will be on an expedited timeline. Barbeau provided a [presentation](#) of 12 potential changes for the 2024 Regional Solicitation. These are shown in the below bullets:

- **Prioritize scoring measures for safety and emissions.** Staff recommended adding 100 points for safety to four roadway categories with no change to the emissions scoring measure. The Funding & Programming Committee generally agreed but suggested shifting the proposed scoring balance towards crash reduction as opposed to pedestrian safety. The increase is only shown for highways because in other categories, safety measures are qualitative. Turner Bergen asked why the change from 50% pedestrian safety and 50% crash reduction to 30% and 70%, respectively after only one comment. She added a question of whether the crash reduction measure rates property damage as highly as deaths and significant injuries. Barbeau replied that the original number was a starting point devised by staff so staff deferred to a member's discussion. He said that the comment was that the former is location-based. He added that crash language weighs crashes with fatalities and serious injuries more heavily than other crashes.

Kosluchar suggested consideration for increasing safety scores in non-roadway modes.

Eyoh said that EPA is revising fine particulate standards, which could bring the metro area close to missing the standard.



Hager said that safety is included in all applications in one way or another, even if only indirectly part of some measures and suggested F&P consider other options for increasing safety in evaluation and scoring for 2024. Merrick expressed support for the idea of pursuing additional points for safety and added that the funding of these projects is meant to try to help achieve certain outcomes, including safety, for which the MPO has not met its targets in recent years. Thompson suggested TAC provide direction to F&P, including which areas to reduce points for in favor of safety. Hager said that by simply adding points to safety, the other measures remain in the same position relative to each other and reduced relative to safety. Thompson said that to truly address safety, wholesale changes need to be made to attract projects that achieve safety and suggested that in the short term, a step is being made in the right direction.

- **Funding outside of the modal ranges.** Staff recommended no change, noting that TAB policy allows for the flexibility go outside the ranges. Funding & Programming Committee members suggested that this be promoted more. Ellos suggested that overprogramming could be used to try to meet goals, though in 2022 it was included in the full mix. Steve Peterson replied that adding overprogramming at the end may have been a better approach.
- **Include consideration of high-priority projects from individual sponsors.** Staff recommended to review this in the larger solicitation review. Dermody asked whether consideration of local priorities would be problematic with USDOT. Barbeau expressed doubt that this would be a concern. Koutsoukos said that care should be taken to make sure such weighting does not favor applicants that serve on committees versus those that do not. She added that TAB was concerned that the 2022 funding scenario discussion was focused to a great degree on which projects are funded.
- **Tied Scores.** Staff recommended maintaining flexibility. MacPherson suggested that holding back on overprogramming until scores are done and added that target funding by category could help identify funding lines early.
- **Scoring appeal process.** Staff recommended a response letter and a coordination meeting before Funding and Programming as well as not permitting new information following the appeals due date.
- **Highway Safety Improvement Program rule.** Staff recommended no rule change, allowing applicants to apply to both programs but only receive funding from one.
- **Bus Rapid Transit rule.** Staff recommended basing the bus rapid transit (BRT) limit on the number of projects submitted requiring that at least two projects not directly tied to BRT projects to be funded. Fyten said that STA is likely against removing the limit. Leitner said that a lot of effort was needed to set this rule and suggested that it not be changed in the short term.
- **Trail and sidewalk maintenance.** Staff recommended that winter maintenance should be required for all facilities, including trails/sidewalks funded under the roadways categories.
- **Bridges.** Staff recommended that in case the On-System Bridge program continues, expand eligibility for bridges to all federally-aid eligible bridges for the 2024 cycle.
- **Minimum Point Value.** Staff recommended not establishing minimum thresholds in the short term. Merrick suggested that instead of looking at points, cut off lines should be based on addressing unmet performance measures. Hager added scoring is not consistent across categories and she is therefore comfortable with F&P's position.
- **Regional Bicycle Transportation Network administrative modifications.** Staff recommended an open period to submit requests for administrative adjustments.



- **Federal Maximum and Minimum Funds.** Staff shared the federal maximum and minimum amounts by category. MacPherson suggested that this subject can be broached given recent inflation.

Other Business

None.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned.

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