

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the  
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
January 16, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karl Keel (Chair), Joe Lux, Brian Isaacson, Colleen Brown, Cynthia Wheeler, Innocent Eyoh, Craig Jenson, Tom Johnson, Jenifer Hager, Ann Pung-Terwedo, John Sass, Eriks Ludins, Andrew Witter, Susan Moe, Adam Harrington, Mary Karlsson, 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 from the December 19, 2013, Meeting**

Minutes from the December meeting were approved unanimously.

**4. TAB Report**

Heidi Schallberg reported on the January TAB meeting. TAB elected its executive committee with one additional seat to be approved after new members are finalized. TAB approved TIP amendments for St. Paul's Western Avenue Streetscaping and Section 5307 Funding for Target Field Station Construction and approved drafts of TIP amendments for TH 610 and I-94 for a public comment period. TAB adopted a draft Transportation Policy Plan amendment to add I-94 and I-694 projects for the purpose of a public hearing. TAB approved regional solicitation application subcategories for the roadways modal category (Expansion, Reconstruction/Modernization, Roadway System Management, Bridges). Informational presentations were given about the regional bikeway master study and the Transportation Policy Plan investment factors workshop.

**5. Program Year Extension Request**

The City of Burnsville presented the program year extension request for the Black Dog Greenway. This is the committee's first request under the new program year policy. The trail construction is related to a conversion of the Black Dog Power Plant, which has taken longer than expected. The extension is requested to avoid potential power plant construction and remediation from damaging the trail. The MPCA needs to approve the plant remediation plan. The city is ready to go with the trail and has an easement in place; construction could begin on the other end of the trail. The committee discussed the nature of the delays with the trail and acknowledged the city has done significant work on the project.

The committee discussed the form requesting the extension. The approval of the project memorandum was noted as pending but it received full points. The committee discussed that the form structure did not allow for partial points. The form was designed to have fewer gray areas where possible and aimed to ensure project sponsors were making progress and the project could be completed within the year. The committee wanted to revisit the point structure on the form in the future to discuss if the current scoring structure is the best possible approach, considering that the first (and only, so far) request was close to not being able to be considered for an extension in spite of making significant progress.

**MOTION:** Tom Johnson motioned to recommend the approval of the scope change. Brian Isaacson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**6. Request for Reassignment of Funds – SouthWest Transit**

The reassignment request would change the project sponsor from SouthWest Transit to the Metropolitan Council and modify the project description to include bus purchases for local and arterial bus rapid transit service in addition to express service for the \$6,600,000 of federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds in 2014. This request does not fit within the current scope change guidelines and is a policy decision. The committee discussed concerns about the process used to decide on this request and if it involved other suburban transit providers.

**MOTION:** Keel motioned to move the amendment forward without a recommendation and with the following comments. Isaacson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

*Committee comments*

- The committee notes the urgency to this decision in order to meet a June 2014 deadline for applying for the CMAQ funds.
- The committee recognizes the authority to make this reallocation decision is the TAB's and that this is a policy issue, not a technical issue. The reallocation request does not fit within existing policy used by the technical committees for reallocating funds.
- The committee supports SouthWest Transit's request for eight buses, regardless of which grant is used to buy them, and recognizes that the TAB should decide how to handle the remaining funding.
- The 2014 federal fiscal year for the SouthWest Transit CMAQ grant began on October 1, 2013. However, for several reasons CMAQ grants for transit are typically awarded near the end of a federal fiscal year and these funds were not available at that time. The funds will not be available for use until the CMAQ funds are transferred from FHWA to FTA, which can take 1-3 months, and the FTA's grant application and award process is completed, which takes at least 90 days.

**7. 2014-2017 TIP Amendment**

The TIP amendment for the SouthWest Transit reassignment is contingent on approval of the reassignment request.

**MOTION:** Karlsson motioned to move the amendment forward without a recommendation. Isaacson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**8. TIP/STIP Amendment Process Discussion**

Schallberg provided a handout of a potential approach to streamlining TIP amendments based on earlier discussions the committee had in 2008. The committee discussed which amendments should go through the full committee process beginning with Funding and Programming, and those included projects funded through the regional solicitation or projects that are determined to be regionally significant. The item will be brought to a future committee meeting as an action item. The committee discussed that if an amendment is streamlined, goes directly to TAB, and TAB has any concerns, it can always send it back through the technical committees.

Schallberg also said staff has been looking at the TIP development schedule for 2015. In previous years, the final TIP comes back through the full committee cycle after a public review period. This is inconsistent with other MPO products and processes. By changing the schedule to take the final TIP back to TAB directly after a public comment period, the schedule could be better aligned with MnDOT STIP development timelines, allowing more to be done up front with the draft. The committee sounded supportive of this change as long as the draft was presented to the committee. This will be a future action item.

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**9. Regional Solicitation Evaluation Update**

Schallberg provided a brief update on the evaluation study status. TAB approved the subcategories for the roadway modal category at their January meeting. The Project Management Team is reviewing criteria, and the Steering Committee will discuss the criteria at their next two meetings in January and February.

**10. Other Business**

Schallberg thanked Craig Jenson, who volunteered to chair the Transportation Alternatives Program scoring committee. Scoring will be done in February and March.

**11. Adjournment** With no other business, the meeting adjourned.