

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the  
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
November 19, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Mayasich (chair), Colleen Brown, Kyle Burrows, Innocent Eyoh, Craig Jenson, Jane Kansier, Andrew Korsberg, Elaine Koutsoukos, Eriks Ludins, Molly McCartney, Gina Mitteco, Steve Peterson, Cory Slagle, Carla Stueve, and Joe Barbeau (staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Grube (Hennepin County), Mary Karlsson (Metro Transit) and Carl Ohrn (Metropolitan Council), and Katie White (Metropolitan Council)

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

MOTION: Slagle moved to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Peterson. The motion was approved unanimously.

**3. Approval of the Minutes from the October 15, 2015 Meeting**

MOTION: Ludins moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Peterson. The motion was approved unanimously.

**4. TAB Report – Information Item**

Koutsoukos reported on the November 18, 2015 TAB meeting. TAB directed the Bylaws Committee to look at a broader range of alternates for TAB representatives.

The following action items were voted upon:

1. 2015-42: TAB adopted an amendment into the 2016-2019 TIP to include funding for Metro Transit's project to improve, replace, and construct bus facilities.
2. 2015-43: TAB adopted an amendment to the 2016-2019 TIP to adjust the scope and description of MnDOT's I-35W pavement resurface and rehabilitation project.
3. 2015-48: TAB adopted an amendment to the 2016-2019 TIP to adjust the cost of Three Rivers Park District's Bassett Creek Regional Trail project.
4. 2015-44: TAB approved Hennepin County's scope change request to include stairs at the crossings in its Cedar Lake Trail project and to include the project in the Southwest Light Rail Transit New Starts application.
5. 2015-45: TAB adopted the amendment into the 2016-2019 TIP to adjust the cost, change the sponsor, and add stairways to the scope of Hennepin County's Cedar Lake LRT Regional Tail Crossings project and reserve reallocation of funds until notified by Metropolitan Council, but no later than year end 2016.

TAB heard presentations on the Public Participation Plan, Clean Air Minnesota, and the 2016 Regional Solicitation.

**5. Hennepin County STP Defederalization – Action Item**

Barbeau said that Hennepin County wishes to take the federal funds from one project and move them to another. This is related to agenda item number 7, the in-progress defederalization policy and process.

Brown said that the draft policy has a deadline of December 31 of the fiscal year prior to a project's program year. This was established as a way to minimize State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) amendments. The proposal in question would violate that part of the proposed policy.

Jim Grube, Hennepin County Engineer, said that the County would like to defederalize its CSAH 46 Bridge project, moving its STP funds to the CSAH 53 reconstruction project and fund the entire CSAH 46 Bridge project with local funds.

Barbeau said that the County will meet the concerns addressed in the in-progress policy and process, including assuring that the defederalized project will be completed as it was applied for.

Peterson asked whether there was a sense of how much cost savings may result from this action. Grube replied there will be a 20 to 50 percent savings, due in large part to eliminating historic preservation requirements. Barbeau suggested that other projects would not see savings of that magnitude.

MOTION: Koutsoukos moved to recommend approval of the request. Seconded by Mitteco. The motion was approved unanimously.

**6. TIP Amendment – Hennepin County CSAH 46 and CSAH 53 – Action Item**

Barbeau said that this item accompanies the previous item. He said that the item shows both projects being amended. However, the CSAH 46 Bridge project, now devoid of federal funds, can be removed from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

MOTION: McCartney moved to recommend approval of the TIP amendment for the CSAH 53 project and removal of the CSAH 46 project from the TIP. Seconded by Koutsoukos. The motion was approved unanimously.

**7. Process to Defederalize TAB-Selected Projects – Information Item**

Barbeau said that two recipients of TAB-awarded funding have expressed interest in, and applied for, defederalization of projects. This prompted the creation of a work group to establish a policy and process for defederalization. The draft policy and process addresses concerns that projects may not be completed as applied for or on time. It also states that projects must be funded with the minimum 20 percent local match, and that defederalized projects are subject to the scope change and program year policies. He added that the work group never provided clarity on whether to include language that federal funds cannot be moved to a later year, which would leave TAB with the burden of having to reallocate funds. No such language is included in the current draft. Brown said that a lot of tracking will need to occur and that MnDOT Metro State Aid would prefer a statement making it more difficult to move a project to a future year.

Brown added that State policy regarding such transfers in Greater Minnesota include the provision that state aid funds can only be transferred county-to-county or city-to-city.

Kansier asked whether allowing defederalization opens a door to any abuse. Mayasich replied that the work group considered this possibility and tried to guard against it when creating the policy.

Mitteco asked whether and how a defederalized project is held to the standards expected out of all TAB-funded projects. Brown replied that MnDOT Metro District State Aid will continue to track the projects to assure they are being done as proposed and on time. A sponsor that wishes to change its project will have to go through the scope change process.

Referencing a handout showing federal requirements that can be forgone with defederalization, Ohrn noted that disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) requirements are diminished. He suggested that policy makers may raise concerns about this and asked whether the federal requirements can still be followed. Kansier replied that the State has a DBE policy that still has to be followed.

Peterson asked whether sponsors can apply for defederalization before the December 31 deadline. Brown replied that they can, according to the policy and process as currently written.

**8. 2015 TDM Solicitation Score List – Information Item**

Referencing the list of Travel Demand Management (TDM) application scores provided in the agenda packet, White said that the scores will be shared with applicants, who will have the opportunity to appeal their scores at the next meeting. Eleven projects were submitted requesting a total of \$2,420,696. Three years' worth of funding, \$1,800,000, is available. Future solicitations will only be for two years.

## **9. Regional Solicitation Changes and Key Topics – Information Item**

Peterson said that deadlines were recently sent to potential applicants for applying for functional class changes, changing the regional bicycle transportation network (RBTN), and applying for interchange approvals in time for the Solicitation.

Peterson discussed potential changes to applications, starting with the Transit Expansion application. In the Usage criterion, there had been debate regarding to what degree the focus should be on new versus existing riders. The Transit work group convened and came to a compromise that Usage should be based entirely on new riders for Transit Expansion and on total riders for Transit Modernization.

Koutsoukos asked to which application an applicant should apply if a project is both expansion and modernization. Kansier suggested that it is up to the applicant to make that choice. Koutsoukos said that this will be clarified in the instructions.

Peterson said that the measure showing ridership of directly-connected transit routes now shows the average daily number of trips for those routes, as this is a better indication of access.

Burrows said that the work group had discussed combining of students and employees versus separating them and giving points based on proportion to the top number of each. Given that student numbers tend to be lower than employee numbers, this could cause a small number of students to score very high. Therefore, he suggested combining the two. Mitteco added that giving proportional points to only one or the other punishes those that are strong in both. Peterson said that the applications in the last Regional Solicitation did not often go through educational institutions so one application with a small number of students could get full points.

Mayasich asked how suburban projects can compete with urban projects. Kansier replied that they cannot. Burrows said that students could be weighted higher than employees, for example, two to one.

Kansier said that the work group had decided to allow for additional employees to be counted for "last mile" services such as employer shuttles. Barbeau said he recalled that the work group thought that was difficult to track. Koutsoukos said that a text box can be added for employees that are accessible via such services with a letter of commitment required.

Peterson next discussed the Travel Demand Management (TDM) application. He said that many geographic-based measures are difficult to score because many projects are region-wide. Staff, therefore suggests deleting the job/education/manufacturing concentrations measure. Staff also suggests removing the risk assessment form, as the projects, given their cost, are not very risky. Staff suggests removing mapping from equity and focusing on the written explanation, which could address impacted geographies and populations. Another suggestion is combining project innovations and new geographic areas into one measure, which rewards innovation more than moving to a new area.

In Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities, staff suggests clarifications and condensing of the point spread to the RBPN measure. Staff also suggests combining gaps and barriers into one measure to help simplify the scoring.

In all applications, staff is suggesting a cost-benefit ratio. Point value of that measure will have to be determined. The point value could be the same for all applications or could vary by application.

In the Safe Routes to School application, staff suggests eliminating the Multimodal Facilities and Connections criterion, as transit is not a big player in primary and secondary transportation. Karlsson said that Metro Transit serves Minneapolis and St. Paul schools. Peterson replied that the rationale was to make those cities compatible

with the rest of the region. Kansier replied that sidewalk connections are the key. Burrows said that sidewalks to transit should be able to score points, to which Koutsoukos replied that projects would receive credit for that. Mitteco said that transit riders could be included in the Usage measure that counts students that bike and walk to school.

**10. Other Business**

No other business.

**11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.