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

Minutes of a Meeting of the
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
March 15, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chuck Ahl (Chair), Craig Jenson, Joe Lux, Ann Pung-Terwedo, Kate Garwood, Colleen Van Wagner, Brian Isaacson, Jenifer Hager, John Powell, Richard McCoy, John Sass, Cynthia Wheeler, Innocent Eyoh, Carl Ohrn, Kevin Roggenbuck, and James Andrew

OTHERS PRESENT: Jon Solberg – MnDOT, Russ Mathys – Eagan, Tim Plath – Eagan, Marie Cote – SRF Consulting, Peter Dahlberg – MnDOT, Mary Karlsson – Metropolitan Council

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 p.m by Chuck Ahl, standing in as Chair for Karl Keel.

II. Adoption of Agenda

Kate Garwood asked that a discussion of the regional TDM program be added to the agenda. C. Ahl said it would be covered under “other business.” J. Powell **moved** to approve the agenda, B. Isaacson seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

III. Approval of the Minutes from the February 16, 2012 Meeting – Action Item*

J. Lux **moved** to approve the minutes. J. Powell seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

IV. TAB Report (Kevin Roggenbuck) – Information Item

K. Roggenbuck reported that the TAB had not yet met in March. He said that the TAB will hear special agenda items on the Regional Development Framework and the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan.

V. Scope Change request for SP#145-010-010: TH 149 Reconstruction from TH 55 to I-494 – Action Item*

Russ Mathys from City of Eagan and Tim Plath from Eagan and Marie Cote from SRF presented the item. When the project was originally submitted, it followed several planning studies that identified it as a six-lane road. After funds were awarded, there were concerns from MnDOT about forecast numbers that came out of the original planning studies. The City then started a two phase re-scoping process, identifying appropriate forecast volumes and moved into operations analysis and moved into the corridor with those new numbers to determine the right scope. This is a five lane concept with three lanes northbound and two lanes southbound. This project adds one northbound through lane. The signal revisions and multi-use trail remain the same. There is one additional westbound dual-left turn lane that had been programmed by MnDOT prior to the

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award, and it was incorporated into this project. The project scope change reduces the cost slightly.

K. Roggenbuck described the findings in the staff memo from K. Roggenbuck and J. Andrew.

J Powell stated that this seems to be the result of a natural evolution of the project. J. Powell **moved** to approve the scope change. J. Lux seconded the motion.

K. Roggenbuck asked that the TIP letter be revised prior to TAC.

C. Ohrn asked why the project was revised smaller. Marie Cote stated that they did numerous studies and analysis, and the traffic needs were only in the northbound direction. Typically you go from a four lane to six lane but MnDOT questioned the need for that wide of a roadway, and so they reduced the scope where they could. We did not want to increase the width of the bridge so we dropped a southbound lane at the bridge. So the decision is in part driven by the width of the bridge.

The motion carried.

VI. 2012-2015 TIP Amendment Request from MnDOT to add SP#s: 13-00001, 27-00306, 27-00307, 62-00206, 62-00207: Rail Crossings Projects – Action Item*

Peter Dahlberg from MnDOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations presented the request. This amendment is to include projects funded partially from a bonding bill last year to replace antiquated equipment at several rail crossings. MnDOT has asked for \$5,000 in federal funds to be applied to each of these projects. These projects are the result of a solicitation to the railroads for their list of their crossing priorities based on the age of the equipment.

J. Lux asked if these projects will have any bearing on any other rail crossings projects. P. Dahlberg stated that it is separate from projects already identified in the STIP. This is coming out of FHWA funds that the Freight office has control over.

K. Garwood **moved** to approve the TIP amendment. C. Ohrn seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

VII. 2012-2015 TIP Amendment Request for cost increase on Maplewood SP#138-010-018: TH36/English Street Interchange – Action Item

C. Ahl presented the request. The design process resulted in a decision to address a longer segment of the project than just the interchange. MnDOT determined that the roadway needs to be lowered under the bridge, and most of the funds for this are coming from TH funds, but federal amounts will stay the same. Ramsey County and Maplewood funds comprise the local cost. This TIP amendment adds the trunk highway funds and some additional local funds. This amendment also moves the project into 2012.

K. Roggenbuck handed out the staff analysis on the cost increase and its impact on cost effectiveness. This is not technically a scope change because the project elements are not changing but the cost increase does affect the evaluation criteria in the cost effectiveness criteria and the project would have likely received a lower score with the higher price.

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B. Isaacson stated that we should think about how other projects have also resulted in higher costs. He knew, for instance, that the top ranked project from Dakota County has also increased in cost.

J. Sass stated that because of this difficulty, we should have standard costs for everyone on different types of projects. K. Roggenbuck stated that we have considered this but have encountered opposition because of different contexts for projects. J. Lux has stated that we have better cost estimate requirements now and is confident that we should have less variation in the future.

C. Ohrn stated that he was uncomfortable with this request because this project received a scope change last year that made it inconsistent with regional policies. They made it a complete diamond interchange rather than the split diamond interchange of the application. He questioned whether this scope change would have passed had these significant new costs been identified at that time.

C. Ahl explained that as they went through the design process, their task was to put a bridge over TH 36 and add the signal. They were prepared to build the roadway without touching TH 36. MnDOT looked at their segment, they chose to address the mainline as well to take advantage of the construction. From Maplewood's standpoint, the project is the same. MnDOT has asked to take advantage of this work in the area to do work they feel is needed. The original intent of the project is the exactly as it was proposed. This increase has nothing to do with the access management. We are trying to create efficiencies among partners.

I. Eyoh asked if they expect better traffic flow with the full diamond than the split diamond interchange. C. Ahl stated that they do and that they looked at the various movements between 61 and English that required the full diamond.

J. Powell **moved** to approve the TIP amendment. J. Sass seconded the motion.

C. Ohrn stated that the cost of the additional work on the mainline should have been attached to the scope change when it came forward. The suggestion about needing to modify the elevation of TH 36 should have been made apparent at the scope change request. B. Isaacson stated that the approval of the full diamond wasn't approved until June. The decisions to change elevation came from final design issues that were the result of grade problems at the ramps. He stated that MnDOT and Maplewood did not hold any information back but that these needs came to light after the scope change request.

K. Garwood stated that there are rules that we have on this committee that keep us from doing the practical thing. She felt this work makes sense.

C. Ahl relinquished his chair position because of his stake in the question on the table. J. Powell acted as the Chair for the remainder of the item.

C. Van Wagner stated that the project sponsor was not as far in design when they asked for the scope change. This project is barely at the point where it would need a TIP amendment for cost increase but they chose to do this in case the costs increase any more.

B. Isaacson stated that MnDOT could say that the lowering of the highway is not associated with the scope change. MnDOT is taking advantage of the closing of the roadway to do work it feels is

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necessary. The moving of the Vento Trail bridge and other project elements stalled out the design effort so we are learning things as we go along.

The motion carried one vote of no.

J. Powell relinquished his position as Chair. Chuck Ahl assumed the role of Chair.

VIII. Adoption Schedule for 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program – Action Item*

J. Andrew went over the adoption schedule for the TIP. A question was raised about how the unselected projects will affect the TIP. B. Isaacson stated that they will have one line item that has regional federal dollars as a set-aside for an amount that is consistent with previous years.

K. Garwood **moved** to approve the schedule. B. Isaacson seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

IX. Other Business

K. Garwood stated that she had been told that the committee would hear a report from Metropolitan Council staff on the regional TDM program. She requested that this be brought to the committee as soon as possible. K. Roggenbuck stated that he has spoken with Council staff. We will need to get this information to you. He agreed to ask them to attend the next meeting to give us a status report.

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Submitted by:
James Andrew