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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
February 16, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karl Keel (Chair), Greta Alquist, Carl Ohrn, Craig Jenson, Joe Lux, Ted Schoenecker, Colleen Van Wagner, Brian Isaacson, Kate Garwood, Adam Harrington, Jenifer Hager, Jennifer Levitt, John Powell, Richard McCoy, John Sass, Chuck Ahl, Innocent Eyoh, Lyndon Robjant, Susan Moe, Kevin Roggenbuck, and James Andrew

OTHERS PRESENT: Chuck Rickart – WSB & Associates, Wayne Houle – Edina, Scott Neal – Edina, Steve Michaud – Lakeville, Chuck Ballentine – Hennepin County, Jon Solberg - MnDOT

I. Call to Order

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

II. Adoption of Agenda

K. Keel announced the amended agenda. C. Ahl **moved** to approve the agenda as amended. J. Powell seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

III. Approval of the Minutes from the January 19, 2012 Meeting – Action Item

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

IV. TAB Report (Kevin Roggenbuck) – Information Item

TAB met the previous day. The TAB heard a report from the Executive Committee on the status of local projects falling behind in the TIP. They would like to have a similar report on the status of the local projects after the March program review. TAB agreed to reassess the regional solicitation process more than in typical years. Arlene McCarthy, Pat Bursaw and Kevin Roggenbuck agreed to work on a scope of work for this effort. The TAB also heard a presentation on the transit governance report from the legislative auditor. TAB approved the scope change request and all five sunset date extension requests and reversed the TAC recommendation by granting the City of Anoka a sunset date extension on the parking garage. TAB also approved the MPCA request for the electric vehicle stations using the unspent funds balance. Greg Coughlin discussed the additional funding coming to the region for additional year because of the lack of federal earmarks. The committee discussed how to program the funding and agreed to more fully fund projects already in the TIP.

DRAFT

C. Ahl asked if the City of Anoka had more progress on securing a local match for the parking structure. K. Roggenbuck reported that the City did say they were going to try to put together funds from the Anoka County Rail Authority.

V. Scope Change and Sunset Date Extension Request for Edina SP#120-020-037: France Avenue/72nd Street Pedestrian Bridge – Action Item

Scott Neal, City Manager of Edina, began the City's presentation. The reason for the request is that there has been quite a bit of change in staffing and planning efforts since the time of the application. The City believes it can accomplish the important attributes of the ped/bridge project by taking a different approach to use the same funding to enhance at-grade crossings of France Avenue in the vicinity of the proposed bridge. The trail that was going to connect to the bridge ended up using a different route. The City is also pursuing a complete streets approach to ped/bike needs throughout the city and this new project proposal is more in line with that approach.

Chuck Rickart from WSB associates presented the details of the proposed project. He stated that the pedestrian bridge would not be used as much as improved intersections because it is too far away from the major destinations for pedestrians. The project includes three intersection improvements in lieu of the bridge. They will narrow the lanes, provide median refuge islands, pedestrian push buttons, enhanced pedestrian refuge areas at the corners, and bicycle detection on 70th Street. The new project proposal is supported by Hennepin County and Metro Transit. The corridor study that Hennepin County completed of France Avenue was the impetus for these recommendations.

Construction plans have not been completed thus far, but Mr. Rickart believed that they have completed 30% plans. C. Van Wagner asked if the bicycle facilities are on-road facilities. Most of the red lines are sidewalks, and bike lanes are on 70th Street. CV: ADT on France is 28,000, posted speed is 35 mph. What lane widths? There was a question that the new project would still result in a crossing that is ominous for pedestrians because the ADT and speeds do not change and the sidewalks are still narrow.

A. Harrington stated that he thinks it is a great idea to keep pedestrian safety improvements at the street level rather than a bridge, which are proven to only be effective when part of a larger bicycle trail system. However, he thought that the refuge islands should be bigger in order to be truly effective. He asked if the signal cycle time would change to allow for a full crossing. Mr. Rickart stated that the City has not begun negotiating with the County about the signals but that this is an important part of this work. He added that the City wants to get a minimum of ten feet for the refuge islands.

C. Ohrn asked why it took so long for the City to come to the F&P Committee with a scope change request when the County study on the road was completed in 2009. Scott Neal stated that the people who advocated for the original project were not able to get the necessary support from the transportation commission that they thought they had. Soon after the award, discussions about what to do started to change. He said there has been a lot of turnover in City staff since then and that he himself has only been working with the City for less than a year. C. Ohrn then asked if the City considered withdrawing this project and resubmitting it in the most recent solicitation. Mr. Neal stated that this was not considered.

DRAFT

K. Keel asked if this project would also serve bicyclists as well as the original. G. Alquist followed up with this and asked how many bicycle routes exist that would use the three intersections. Mr. Rickart explained that there is an existing bicycle route on 70th Street with a striped bike lane, 66th Street is a primary route on which the City is preparing a bike boulevard but 76th Street is not a bike route. G. Alquist then asked what this project would do to help bicyclists using those routes to cross France Avenue since they are on-road routes. Mr. Rickart stated that they would have the same signal timing benefits as pedestrians. He said they could consider striping across the intersection to the other sides to make bicycle movements more clear. G. Alquist stated that the pedestrian benefits appear to be better than the original proposal but she was concerned that there are not obvious improvements for bicyclists from this project. Public Works Director Wayne Houle stated that they are working on several bicycle crossings of France Avenue as part of the Bicycle Plan for the Edina. They are pursuing a strategy of providing loop detectors for bicycles that would be part of this project. He also explained that 70th Street continues to be bicycle friendly on the east side of France Avenue and that it connects to the Promenade to Centennial Lakes and the Richfield trail system.

C. Ahl questioned whether this could be accomplished in one year when it is clear that there is still planning left to do. The City Manager stated that the City is confident it can accomplish it in one year.

There was a discussion about how far from the original construction project is reasonable when granting scope change requests. This project includes entirely different construction elements from the original and is essentially an entirely new project. There was some discussion of whether this project provides as much safety benefit as the original since bicyclists are not getting a separate facility. G. Alquist felt that the safety aspect is debatable because the new proposal provides better network connectivity and when there are pedestrian bridges that do not lead directly to the destination, people will cross at-grade instead.

There were a few statements to the effect that the committee should have heard about this project last year regardless of whether the new proposal is a better project or not.

On the safety issue, J. Sass felt that this project did not provide as much of a safety benefit because it does nothing to prevent right-turn crashes and he questioned whether the County would allow for pedestrian actuation because it would lead to a traffic breakdown on such a busy route.

G. Alquist **moved** to approve the scope change request and concurrent sunset date extension request. C. Ahl seconded the motion. C. Ahl further explained that he was comfortable with the answer that the City Manager gave on being able to complete the project and believed that the City had done careful consideration of this project and identified a better solution to the original. C. Orhn spoke against the motion because it was so late in the process to be asking for a sunset date extension with no plans submitted and that he was not convinced that the City was unable to work on this earlier. K. Keel stated his support for the motion because he felt that the City had done a considerable amount of redesign work and that this project is better for pedestrians than the original. S. Moe stated that if this change is granted it would be for a new project and not a scope change since the project elements are so different. The committee voted on the motion. 8 voted in favor of the motion, 10 voted against. **The motion did not carry.**

VI. Scope Change Request for Lakeville SP#188-118-004: Lake Marion Trail – Action Item

Steve Michaud, Lakeville Director of Parks and Recreation, presented the request. He stated that the City hoped to construct this in 2012. The only difference between the original project scope

DRAFT

and the new proposal is that the piece along the bluff will now be constructed along 195th street and without any right of way acquisition.

L. Robjent **moved** to approve the scope change request and concurrent TIP amendment. J. Powell seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

S. Moe asked for a clarification on the cost change. Mr. Michaud explained that the City was awarded \$1 million in federal funds and the new scope only requests \$826,000 in federal funds.

VII. 2012-2015 TIP Amendment Request from Hennepin County to add Section 5309 FTA Discretionary Funding from TIGER III to construct the Transportation Interchange Facility – Action Item

This project needs to be identified in the TIP for Hennepin County to be able to have access to TIGER III funds it was awarded toward construction of the transportation interchange in Minneapolis. C. Ohrn **moved** to approve the TIP amendment. T. Schoenecker seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

VIII. 2012-2015 TIP Amendment Request from MnDOT SP#164-070-025: Nice Ride Expansion, St Paul Capitol Complex and State Offices – Action Item

Jon Solberg from MnDOT presented the request. This TIP amendment is the result of the MnDOT Programming Committee to award Commissioners Opportunity Funds to this project that has a substantial match from the Minnesota Management and Budget Office and Blue Cross Blue Shield.

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

IX. Programming Challenges, Sunset Date Extension Policy – Discussion Item

Brian Isaacson distributed a sheet that described the status of projects affecting program deliverability. Many local projects are slipping into the next program year and there does not appear to be enough MnDOT projects available to fill the amount available to the region from its obligating authority for 2012. The committee began discussion about revisiting the sunset date policy since so many projects are slipping into their sunset year and many are easily given sunset date extensions. There are currently no major incentives or penalties built into the process for local project sponsors to deliver their projects on time. Opinions were expressed that the sunset date policy should be discussed but it should not be changed until we have figured out what the problem is. An option that merited consideration was looking at swapping federal funds with local funds. MnDOT was prepared to bring in an analysis of projects that have been slipping for the TAC to consider.

X. Regional Solicitation Scoring Results – Information Item

J. Andrew distributed the draft scores for the Regional Solicitation. Applicants have until March 9 to request a reevaluation of any scores. The scores will be finalized at the April Funding & Programming Committee meeting and forwarded on to TAC and TAB in May for consideration.

XI. TAB Direction on Use of Additional Federal Funding – Discussion Item

DRAFT

K. Roggenbuck briefly discussed the TAB decision on putting more federal funds on projects already programmed in the TIP. He said that the TAB will want options at a later date. They emphasized job creation as a major criterion for spending additional federal funds.

XII. Other Business

There was no other business.

XIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Submitted by:
James Andrew