

Transportation Advisory Board
of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

ACTION TRANSMITTAL

No. 2012-23

DATE: May 10, 2012
TO: Transportation Advisory Board
FROM: Technical Advisory Committee
SUBJECT: Adoption of the Draft 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the purpose of holding a public hearing.

MOTION: That the TAB adopts the Draft 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area for the purpose of a public hearing and sets the hearing date for June 20, 2012.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: The Metropolitan Planning Organization is required to prepare a four-year Transportation Improvement Program that meets a number of federal requirements. The regional transportation planning process conforms to these requirements and the draft TIP and its development process will meet applicable requirements once the public input process is fully carried out. The TIP meets the transportation air quality conformity requirements and is consistent with and assists in the implementation of the Twin Cities Transportation Policy Plan adopted on November 10, 2010. Additional background material is attached.

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY: Federal law requires that all transportation projects that will be partially funded with federal funds must be in an approved Transportation Improvement Program and meet the following four tests: fiscal constraint; consistency with the adopted regional transportation plan; air quality conformity and opportunity for public input. It is the TAB's responsibility to adopt and amend the TIP according to these four requirements.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	April 19, 2012
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	May 2, 2010
TAB Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Adopt	



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

520 Lafayette Road North | St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4194 | 651-296-6300
800-657-3864 | 651-282-5332 TTY | www.pca.state.mn.us | Equal Opportunity Employer

May 8, 2012

Mr. Kevin Roggenbuck
Transportation Advisory Board Coordinator
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

RE: Draft 2013-2016 Draft Transportation Improvement Program

Dear Mr. Roggenbuck:

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff has completed its formal review of the draft 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The MPCA staff has examined the draft TIP for conformance with a check list of requirements from the joint Transportation Conformity Rule (Rule) of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The intent of the Rule is to ensure compliance with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficiency Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), when a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or state department of transportation serves as a distribution agency for federal transportation funds.

The Rule requires that the MPOs base their TIPs and long-range comprehensive Transportation Plans (Plan) on the latest planning assumptions. As a result, the draft TIP's air quality conformity analysis is based on the most current Metropolitan Council (the Council) socioeconomic data used in the Council's 2030 Regional Development Framework that was adopted by the Council on January 14, 2004. The latest update to these forecasts was published May 31, 2009. The planning document provides the Council with the socio-economic data (planning assumptions) to develop long range forecasts of regional highway and transit facilities needs.

On November 8, 2010, the EPA approved a Limited Maintenance Plan request for the Twin Cities maintenance area. Under a limited maintenance plan, the EPA has determined that there is no requirement to project emissions over the maintenance period and that "an emission budget may be treated as essentially not constraining for the length of the maintenance period. The reason is that it is unreasonable to expect that the Twin Cities maintenance area will experience so much growth within this period that a violation of CO National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) would result. Therefore, no regional modeling analysis is required, however federally funded projects are still subject to "hot spot" analysis requirements. The limited maintenance plan adopted in 2010 determines that the level of CO emissions and resulting ambient concentrations will continue to demonstrate attainment of the CO NAAQS.

The current TIP was also prepared in accordance with the public participation plan for transportation planning adopted by the Council on February 14, 2007. This process satisfies SAFETEA-LU requirements for public participation involvement, as well as the public consultation procedures requirements of Conformity Rule. Based on this review, the analysis described in the conformity Appendix B submitted by the Council has resulted in a Conformity Determination that the projects included in the 2013-2016 Draft TIP meet all relevant regional emissions analysis and budget tests as described therein. The

Mr. Kevin Roggenbuck

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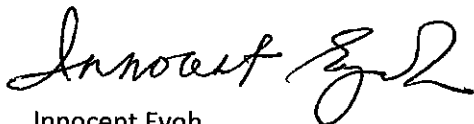
May 8, 2012

2013-2016 TIP also conforms to the relevant sections of the Federal Conformity Rule and the applicable sections of the Minnesota State Implementation Plan for air quality.

The MPCA staff appreciates the opportunity given to review this document as part of the EPA Transportation Conformity Rule consultation process. The MPCA staff also appreciates the cooperation of the interagency consultation group that includes the Council, EPA, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and Federal Highway Administration for their immediate assistance in resolving all policy and technical analysis issues with respect to the projects' air quality classification and their willingness to accept the suggested course of action. We also understand that projects from the current regional solicitation have not been programmed for 2015-2016 in the TIP, and a complete conformity analysis for all regionally significant projects will be completed when projects are added to the TIP by amendment.

Please contact me if you have any questions. By telephone at: 651-757-2347, or by e-mail at: innocent.eyoh@pca.state.mn.us

Sincerely,



Innocent Eyoh
Planner Principal
Air Assessment Section
Environmental Analysis and Outcomes Division

IE:jab

cc: Susan Moe, Federal Highway Administration
Michael Leslie, Region 5, U.S. EPA
James Andrews, Metropolitan Council
Arlene McCarthy, Metropolitan Council
Patricia Bursaw, Mn/DOT and TAC Chair
Karl Keel, City of Bloomington, F & P Chair
Bobbi Retzlaf, Mn/DOT
Brian Isaacson, Mn/DOT
Dave Thornton, MPCA
Frank Kohiasch, MPCA
Mary Jean Fenske, MPCA