

Transportation Advisory Board of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

TO: Transportation Advisory Board

FROM: Bill Hargis, Transportation Advisory Board Chair
Kevin Roggenbuck, Transportation Coordinator

DATE: May 7, 2012

RE: Summary of comments and issues raised in meetings with TAB members.

From February 7 through May 7, TAB Chair Bill Hargis and TAB Coordinator Kevin Roggenbuck met with all 32 members of the TAB to discuss your concerns about the TAB's role in regional transportation planning and programming of funds, our working relationships with other state and regional agencies and our own adopted policies and processes. They are compiled below.

Administrative

- Consider having Committee of the Whole meetings monthly; replace Policy and Programming subcommittees with ad hoc committees for major action items like the regional solicitation and TIP adoption.
- Explore ways to better inform the public about the TAB and what we do in order to foster more public involvement.
- Consider taking advantage of internet or other electronic communications to avoid mailing so much paper to the members.
- Hold TAB meetings off-site more often and couple them with tours of projects or transportation operations.
- New members on the TAB could benefit from a historical perspective added to presentations made to the TAB.
- Acronyms and other planning terms are confusing; slows down the discussion at meetings. Staff will prepare a glossary of acronyms and planning terms.
- Add notation on the action transmittals for scope changes and TIP amendment identifying projects that came through the regional solicitation process.

Transportation Policy

- It is important to keep regional constituency in the TAB's deliberations.
- Perception that the Metropolitan Council has conflicts with suburban transit providers.
- Pull apart the Transportation Policy Plan and have information presentations; TAB gives comments and recommendations for future updates.
- Several members suggested scheduling presentations from transportation organizations so the TAB could learn about them and what they do; also schedule presentations on specific programs or planning studies to keep the TAB informed.
- "A" Minor Arterial System – State Aid needs to recognize that design issues and capacity needs are different in urban areas than in suburban areas.

- Regional decision making is needed for locating truck terminals because local government resistance prevents them from being located where they can be the most efficient.
- The TAB and Met Council Transportation Committee should periodically share information about what they are working on.
- TAB could benefit from a special session on certain topics.
- The TAB should be more involved in the implementation of MnDOT plans and the regional Transportation Policy Plan; more involved or informed when MnDOT and the Met Council decide which major projects to advance and which ones to delay.
- Policy positions define what the TAB is. TAB should clearly define its policy on things like project scope changes and how it decides whether to allow them.
- The Policy Committee would benefit from having more significant issues to discuss. Consider how work is spread between the Policy Committee and Programming Committees.

Transportation Finance

- Want to know more about MnDOT plans and funding programs and how they relate to each other and how MnDOT evaluates and chooses major/large projects to receive funding.
- Want to know how Metro Transit will fund the large capital expansion of the region's transit system; long-term operating fund outlook.
- The region should have more involvement by local elected officials in transportation investment decisions.
- The TAB needs to stay on top of federal reauthorization to understand how the traditional pots of money will be combined and how eligibility might be affected.

Regional Solicitation

- Need to improve local project delivery to avoid so many sunset date extensions although some things (environmental review, SHPO) out of our control; possible role for TAB and technical committees in tracking progress or setting benchmarks for project development.
- Bring back the Annual Implementation Report.
- TAB should evaluate traffic signal retiming projects funded through the regional solicitation to see if they provided the benefits expected.
- The regional solicitation should emphasize preservation of roadways and the transit system.
- Prepare a list, map, summary of funds allocated by the TAB by mode and location. Could do this in four regional quadrants.
- Three things potentially lacking in the regional solicitation process: commitment to providing the local match; governing body endorsement of the proposed project; and consultation or permission for the proposed project from affected governments or agencies.
- Regional solicitation has added dozens of small projects to the region's TIP, making it necessary for MnDOT State Aid to increase staff and use greater resources to deliver projects.

- It is difficult to fund medium-sized projects (e.g. TH 13/CSAH 5 interchange, \$15M) through the regional solicitation.
- The TAB should learn about how other MPOs allocate federal funds through their solicitation processes.
- The regional solicitation process should be more efficient, more holistic and more creative in its approach. The solicitation should also reflect more Met Council goals associated with land use and include a regional pot of money similar to TIGER to fund valuable projects that come up unexpectedly outside the solicitation process timeline.