

DRAFT

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the
FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
September 20, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karl Keel (Chair), Craig Jenson, Joe Lux, Kate Garwood, Colleen Van Wagner, Brian Isaacson, Cynthia Wheeler, Steven Hay, Adam Harrington, John Powell, Ted Schoenecker, John Sass, Lyndon Robjent, Kevin Roggenbuck, and Ann Braden (staff)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jon Solberg - MnDOT

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as written.

3. Approval of the Minutes from July 19th, 2012 meeting

The minutes from the July meeting were approved without change. (The committee did not meet in August.)

4. TAB Report (Kevin Roggenbuck) – Information Item

K. Roggenbuck reported that the TAB Policy Committee and full TAB met September 19, at the MSP Airport. The Policy Committee met at noon and took up the Transportation Policy Plan amendment to include the Bottineau Transitway LPA and the arterial transitway corridor study results. The Policy Committee was not comfortable recommending the amendment without Golden Valley's support and saw no urgency to vote on it so they tabled it to the October 17 meeting. Golden Valley will be invited to that meeting to address the Committee. Chris Roy, Director of MnDOT Office of Aeronautics, presented the State Aviation System Plan to the Policy Committee for information. TAC and TAB do not have a role in reviewing the Plan.

The Full TAB recommended adoption of the 2013 Unified Planning Work Program as did the Policy Committee.

TAB discussed changing the organizational structure – eliminating Policy and Programming committees and having only one TAB meeting each month. Discussion will continue at the October meeting with consideration of bylaw changes and web broadcast of meetings. The Policy Committee and full TAB did not have time to discuss Thrive MSP 2040, the Council's next long-range development framework plan. Council staff asked TAB to provide comments and recommendations on four questions. Thrive policies will influence the policies in the next TPP, so TAB comments at this stage are important. Everyone is encouraged to respond.

K. Garwood asked about the status of the Regional Solicitation Study. K. Roggenbuck said the RFP was just published and proposals are due October 5. After the consultant has been hired and a work plan prepared he will report back to the group as needed. It is about a \$125,000 study with a 6 month timeline. It should be finished with time for discussion and before the next project solicitation.

5. Information: Minor Arterial Study presentation

Mary Karlsson gave a brief update on the Minor Arterial study. A preliminary draft report was included in the packet. Comments are being taken through tomorrow. The study was prepared for the Council and the TAB. It has three key objectives: to determine if the A minor system successfully supplements the principle arterial system; to determine if the A minor system aligns with the current regional development framework and transportation policy plan and to identify the role of federal funds, including the regional solicitation, in support of the system.

Committee members posed the following questions: Should “B minors just be renamed “collectors. Do the costs of the system include bridges, right of way, engineering, etc or just capital costs? How is non-motorized travel served on the A minor system? What are the implications of MAP-21 on the minor arterial system. The Minor Arterial study could inform Thrive MSP 2040 and the Transportation Policy Plan. K. Garwood suggested highlight the congestion reduction and safety improvements of the system. Formal comments on the study will be made at next month’s meeting.

6. Recommendations of the Federal Program Delivery Work Group.

Sunset Date Policy

Kevin presented a memo on the work groups proposed changes to the region’s adopted sunset date policy and a proposed consultation process for requested project scope changes to regionally selected projects. The biggest change the group is recommending is the removal of the sunset date. Projects should expect to be authorized by their program year but can be granted a one year extension if they can show that progress has been made. J. Olson said it shouldn’t be easy to move dates and projects should start earlier. T. Schoenecker said shortening the front end of the regional solicitation could help—it takes 22 months between looking at the previous selection and having the next round of projects selected. C. Van Wagner said FHWA used to look at projects before they were in the STIP; now they don’t. She said projects must be authorized by June 30 even if March 31 is the end of the program year.

It is expected that the new program year policy will be adopted by TAB at the end of the year and would apply to projects programmed through the 2011 solicitation. T Johnson said that this changes the program deadline date included in the solicitation process, which is not fair. C. Ohrn disagreed—During the course of the solicitation, applicants were told that the TAB was considering changes to the sunset date policy so they shouldn’t be surprised. L Robjent said it would be helpful to provide the project sponsors with a schedule/time line of everything that needs to be done to stay on track. C. VanWagner said that they are invited for a kick-off workshop, but many of them do not attend. . J. Powell suggested that the cities should be given a schedule for delivering their projects based on the program year.

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Scope Change Policy

Kevin reviewed his memo regarding the scope change consultation process. Because projects have been selected to receive federal transportation funds based on the benefits they provide, the project scope is important. FHWA uses it as the basis for authorizing funds and must compare the scope of the project as described in the TIP to the project scope in the environmental documents. As stewards of the federal funds, TAB must ensure the two project scopes match, otherwise the FHWA will not authorize the use of funds to build or implement the project. FHWA is also concerned about oversight of public involvement and accountability to the public. TAB's perspective is somewhat different in that the TAB wants to ensure that the benefits from a re-scoped project are substantially the same as the original project and can justify using the federal funds that were awarded to the original project. It is important to the TAB that any change in project scope does not substantially reduce the project's benefits and value to the public, especially if it would mean the revised project scope would not have scored as well as the original scope and may not have ranked high enough to be selected.

Changes to the sunset date and scope change policies will be considered further at the October committee meeting.

7. Information: Map-21 and eligibility of 2012-2015 TIP Projects and local program impacts for 2013-2014*

MnDOT has done an initial analysis of the STIP projects based on MAP-21 funding levels and changes to the eligibility requirements and has not found there to be a significant problem. B. Isaacson suggested going to MnDOT's website and linking to "MAP-21" for more information.

8. Information/Discussion: Availability of Unspent Earmarks

MnDOT is trying to determine how to spend approximately \$11 million in unspent federal funds earmarked to Minnesota project. They need to submit a plan to D.C. by October 1 and obligate the funds to projects by December 31st. MnDOT wants to honor appropriations as much as possible or allow their partners to use it for something else. The vast majority of the funds are for the Lake Street Project and about a dozen projects that are mostly less than \$100,000 each. They all came through the annual appropriation.

9. Other Business and Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm.

Submitted by:
Ann Braden