

## **Area Transportation Partnership 7 (ATP 7)**

Draft Minutes of November 4, 2022, Meeting – MnDOT, Mankato (in-person and via Teams)

**Members Present:** Jack Kolars, Greg Ous, Nick Klisch, Mike Kuhle, Patrick La Course, Robert Goblirsch, Zachary Tess, Shawn Schloesser, Lisa Bigham, Dave Tiegs, Seth Greenwood, Richard Peterson, Troy Nemmers

**Members Absent:** Don Wachal, Jeff Johnson, Ronda Allis

**Others Present:** Sam Parker, Angie Piltaver, Matt Rottermond, Deb Yates, Angelica Tejada, Jeremy Monahan, Joe Stadheim, Joel Hanif, Leah Petricka, Jeff Domras, Nate Willey, Dan Sarff, Aaron Holmbeck, Cathleen Amick, Paul Vogel, Michael McCarty, Christopher Talamantez, Derek Leuer, Anna Pierce, Chuck Ackman (for Senator Klobuchar), Rep. Susan Ackland

### **Welcome, introductions, and opening business (Jack Kolars)**

- Jack Kolars welcomed the group and called first for Legislative updates
- Approval of the minutes for the September 9, 2022, meeting given after the legislative updates

### **Legislative Updates**

- Chuck Ackman provided an update for Senator Klobuchar's office. He stated that they are hearing bids for county road construction are coming in a lot higher than anticipated.
- Representative Susan Ackland said she was looking forward to next session. She stated there is broad bipartisan agreement on transportation funding. House members are in favor of using some general tax funds to avoid increasing gas taxes. She also stated that a bonding bill is likely, and they are hoping to be able to authorize spending the new federal (IIJA) funds.

### **STIP amendments and Modifications (Matt Rottermond and Deb Yates/handouts)**

Matt Rottermond provided a handout and described the amendments for MnDOT projects in the 2022-25 STIP. There are two amendments, including one on Hwy 15 and one on Hwy 4. The project on Hwy 4 was moved from 2023 to 2024 to allow time for bring design to a full 10-ton road.

Deb Yates discussed nine different amendments to local projects, most being increases to funding and some with movements to different fiscal years.

### **New 2023 Federal Funding Recommendations**

- Updated funding overview (*Sam Parker*)
  - Sam indicated locals will be able to use new federal funds in FY23 since they have budget authority to use IIJA money. MnDOT did not get authority to spend the new IIJA money so no funds can be used on FY23 MnDOT projects.
  - Greg Ous stated it would be ideal to get budget authority early in the next Legislative session if possible. We are scenario planning in the background if this does not happen.
  - Lisa Bigham pointed out that since budget authority was not needed for locals to use new IIJA funds, these funds were able to be distributed to various local projects.

- STP-Rural projects (*Dave Tiegs*)
  - Dave Tiegs reviewed the recommendations for the STP-Rural projects. For FY23 there is an additional target of nearly \$1.2M. With the Cottonwood County project funded, about \$592,000 is left to fund two additional projects in FY23.
  - Dave also indicated that the additional target for FY24 is just under \$1M, and two projects have been added with these funds.
- STP-Small Urban projects (*Michael McCarty*)
  - Michael shared that the selected small urban projects will receive the full 80% of eligible costs.
- Transportation Alternatives (*Nick Klisch*)
  - Nick shared that the Janesville project will move from FY 22 to FY 23. Nick also stated that the TA-eligible components of four small urban projects will have these costs covered by the additional TA funds, including two in New Ulm, one in North Mankato and one in St. Peter.
  - Sam added that it was unusual to have had the TA target increased by nearly \$800K for FY23. Quick decisions were needed to find ways to spend the funds. He cautioned that spending FY24 funds will be more difficult, but this approach limited the loss of FY23 funds to about \$99,000.
- Tentative On-system Bridge (*Lisa Bigham*)
  - Lisa shared that this is a new program with the IIJA. Federal Highway will need to agree by December 2022 to allow MnDOT to use the method that was proposed for this new program.
  - Lisa provided eligibility criteria and using these criteria 40 bridges could qualify. After further evaluation, 10 bridges made the final list.
  - Rock County CSAH-1 Bridge 67501 has been tentatively selected. This bridge has the lowest LPI and a cost of \$1.1M with a federal share of \$880,000 and a target of \$460,000. This bridge will go into the STIP if FHWA approves.
  - The ATP members approved the recommendation.

### **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (*Derek Leuer*)**

Derek Leuer introduced himself and gave a presentation on the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

- Derek shared that this is a Federal Aid Program, with a goal to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes on all public roads. The program uses data driven methods. It is not an exact science, but we do have data for most safety solutions. The projects are typically standalone projects. Project max is \$750,000 per agency per location.
- Program has strong federal requirements to use data. Crash data must be collected and be accurate. The money available is not a “slush fund,” and is highly competitive. Must be able to demonstrate a real problem with the data to be awarded.

- Derek stated that we don't have sufficient funds for safety. They have asked for an additional \$16M. OTE and State Aid have been discussing the need for a dependable state-funded safety program. Since many counties and cities aren't set up to follow federal process, the discussion has been to add those funds to the HSIP or LRIP programs.
- There have been more crash problems on local systems, so it will continue to be important for local road authorities to fund safety-specific projects from other federal, state, and local funding sources.

Lisa Bigham asked whether we would be getting input from locals about additional funds. Derek indicated this will be the case.

### **Active Transportation Funding Update (Angie Piltaver)**

Angie Piltaver provided an update on the Transportation Alternatives and Active Transportation solicitations to the ATP. The Active Transportation LOI period closed on October 14, and District 7 received 14 applications, with 6 from small cities, 5 from State-Aid cities, 2 from counties and one from a non-profit. The Transportation Alternatives LOI period closes today (Nov 4) at the end of the business day. As of Wednesday, only one application has been received, but Angie reminded the group that LOIs are not required and there might still be applications submitted today. She also shared that the LOI is worth 5 bonus points for scoring, and in past years, that has factored into selections.

Angie also shared that the SRTS Non-infrastructure grant solicitation is open. Two types of grants are available – a Planning Assistance grant and an SRTS Boost grant. Angie referred to the one-pager and provided quick summaries of each grant type. Primary difference is that Planning Assistance grants are for the creation or update of SRTS plans and would follow a year long process led by the RDO to develop a Safe Routes to School plan, while the SRTS Boost grants must be used within a short time frame (four months) and fund mostly equipment and material purchases that are for activities and programming in an existing SRTS plan. Angie referred members to the SRTS Non-infrastructure grant websites to apply.

### **MnDOT Project Updates (Zachary Tess)**

Zachary Tess provided updates for several upcoming and current projects. These included:

- I-90 project – 22 miles - \$81M for the winning bid – which was under the cost estimate/budget. This is a design-build, with design activities happening over the winter.
- Hwy 93 – originally a 2023-24 project. Some geotechnical issues were uncovered. Raising road about 8 feet. Additional 8 feet of new soils needed due to Geotech findings. Project is \$10M over budget but looking to potentially use PROTECT funds to supplement.
- Hwy 19 – Winthrop culvert – during work, it was determined that the underlying soils were too soft for the new culvert. Crews have restored the site with the old culvert still in place and temporarily paved it. MnDOT will return to this project next summer.
- Hwy 4 – St. James to Sleepy Eye – concerns and resolutions raised by the counties about the weight restrictions on Hwy 4. District 7 is going to risk manage the road and bring it up to 10-ton by adding 2" (grade raise) of pavement. Will be constructed in 2024 instead of 2023.

- Hwy 14 – Nicollet to New Ulm – Last week the contractor finished up some paving work. They paved about 10.5 miles of concrete from the east side of Courtland to just east of Nicollet, and paved about two miles of bituminous on the New Ulm side of the job. Contractor will button up the grade over the winter. Project is slightly ahead of schedule. Courtland interchange – look for bridge construction over the winter. A webcam will be put out so people can see the bridge construction. If no issues next season (weather, etc.), road will be open next fall to through traffic.

## **Transportation updates**

### 1. MAPO (*Paul Vogel*)

Paul Vogel stated that planning studies are being wrapped up for 2022. RFPs have been sent out for three pedestrian studies. Lookout Drive Corridor Study and 2nd Steet studies coming to an end. Kicking off the Riverfront Drive access study and Balcerzak Drive study. Chris Talamentez has joined MAPO as the new Transportation Planner.

### 2. Transit (*Patrick LaCourse and Shawn Schloesser*)

- a. Shawn Schloesser provided an update for Mankato Transit.
- b. Patrick LaCourse provided an update for Brown County Heartland Express. He shared that although they have ordered new buses, they have not received many. They are having to keep older buses with more than 200,000 miles on them repaired/in service.

### 3. Regional Development Commissions (*Joel Hanif*)

#### a. Joel Hanif – Region Nine Development Commission

- Joel Hanif provided a summary of RNDC activities to the ATP members. Joel indicated that the Mapleton City Council voted unanimously at their September 13, 2022 meeting to adopt the completed Comprehensive Plan.
- The Madelia SRTS Plan process is progressing well. Region Nine staff along with Madelia city staff, school administrators, and a city councilman, and District 7 staff conducted the School Zone Hazards Observation Assessment. It proved to be a valuable exercise as a few near-miss incidents occurred at multiple sites near schools during arrival and dismissal.
- Joel also indicated that he attended the RDO Transportation Planners quarterly meeting, which was combined with the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO) All Staff Conference. Joel stated that other transportation planners are also reporting low numbers for TA applications.

## **Other Updates**

- Sam Parker introduced Anna Pierce to discuss the newly created Carbon Reduction Program.
- Anna asked ATP members to keep in mind possible Carbon Reduction Program eligible projects, especially those that could use FY23 and FY24 funds. She also provided eligible project information.

## **Adjournment**

Greg Ous thanked everyone for their support and efforts.

Greg also noted that Mayor Mike Kuhle and Troy Nemmers will be leaving ATP-7, and thanked them both for their efforts, time, and service to ATP-7.

Mayor Kuhle thanked MnDOT staff for their hard work. Appreciated the HSIP presentation and remarked that efforts for trails are important.

Troy Nemmers also thanked Greg for the acknowledgment and thanked staff for their hard work putting these meetings together and providing various services.

Jack Kolars commented that these meetings remind him how all levels of government can work together and then adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting: January 13, 2023.