

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Region 7W Transportation Policy Board (TPB)**  
**Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) District 3**  
**Teams Meeting / Conference Call**  
**October 28, 2022**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>REPRESENTING</b>
Jack Brosh	Benton County Cities
Raeanne Danielowski	Sherburne County
John Dietz	Sherburne County Cities
Scott Johnson	Benton County
Robert Olson	Wright County Cities
Joe Perske	Stearns County
Nick Stay	Sherburne County Cities
Darek Vetsch	Wright County

<b>EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT</b>	<b>REPRESENTING</b>
Tom Cruikshank	MN Department of Transportation District 3 Planning
Klara Grochulska	MN Department of Transportation Transit
Tori Hunkus	MN Department of Transportation Transit
Jeff Lenz	MN Department of Transportation District 3 Planning
Mary Nieken	MN Department of Transportation District 3
Angie Tomovic	MN Department of Transportation District 3 State Aid
Steve Voss	MN Department of Transportation District 3 Planning

<b>MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	<b>REPRESENTING</b>
Dale Graunke	Wright County Cities
Jim Hemmesch	Stearns County Cities

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

- Meeting was called to order and introductions were made.

**APPROVAL OF THE JULY 28, 2022, MEETING MINUTES**

- Motion by Mr. Johnson, second by Mr. Perske to approve the July 28, 2022, meeting minutes with no changes or additions. Motion carried.

**PROGRAM UPDATE**

*FY 2022-2025 Local Federal Project Update*

- Ms. Tomovic updated TPB members on the FY 2022 projects.
  - Local Federal/HSIP Projects - All projects moving forward.
  - Project Memos are due by December 1, 2022, and Plans are due by April 1, 2023.

### Local Partnership Program

- District is soliciting candidate projects for FYs 2026 and 2027 funding. There is approximately \$2.6 million available (\$1.2 million-FY 2026, which is the remaining balance after last year's solicitation, and \$1.4 million for FY 2027). The final amount has not yet been determined.
  - Application Deadline is January 27, 2023. Project selection will take place in March 2023 and will be presented for approval by the ATP at the April 2023 meeting.
  - There is no minimum or maximum award amount, but awards are limited by available funding.
  - Scoring is done on a 100-point scale. The scoring criteria was reviewed.
  - Questions can be directed to Angie Tomovic or the MnDOT State Aid office.

### **FY 2023-2026 DRAFT STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP) UPDATE**

- On September 30<sup>th</sup>, MnDOT submitted the Draft FY 2023-2026 STIP to the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration for approval. Approval is anticipated in October or November. Until approval of the Draft STIP, we are continuing to work with the approved FY 2022-2025 STIP.
- Once approval is received, Staff will send ATP members the approved District 3 pages and a link to the online version of the approved FY 2023-2026 STIP.

### **ATP-3 FY 2024-2027 STIP DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE**

- Review of the FY 2024-2027 STIP Development Schedule. The schedule was previously approved at the ATP-3's April meeting and minor adjustments were made by the ATP at its October 6, 2022, meeting to align with statewide solicitation dates, such as the Transportation Alternatives (TA) program, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), etc.
- The following dates were changed on the approved STIP Development Schedule to align with the state solicitation dates:
  - Deadline for TA Letter of Intent changed to November 4, 2022.
  - Commence full application phase for TA solicitation changed to November 21, 2022.
- The deadline for locally sponsored road and bridge projects is January 9, 2023.
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Solicitation
  - Solicitation will run through November 23, 2022, for all years because of the new transportation dollars received through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).
  - Jeff Lenz serves as Region 7W's Transportation Planner.
- Transit Solicitation
  - Will be soliciting for candidate projects but will be led by MnDOT's Office of Transit and Active Transportation (OTAT) Office staff. It is anticipated information may be provided to ATP-3 by February 2023.
- Staff will be rescheduling ATP-3's January meeting at their request due to a conflict with the County Engineers conference. Anticipating the meeting will be held between January 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Funding guidance for FY 2027 will be reviewed at the January meeting.
- Region 7W Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will be meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup> and TPB will be meeting on February 17<sup>th</sup> to review the TAC's recommendations.

- The Transportation Alternatives Review Committee will meet on March 7<sup>th</sup> to review and score the TA projects and submit a recommendation to the Area Transportation Improvement Program Committee (ATIP). The ATIP Committee will meet on March 15<sup>th</sup> to review all regional priorities and to draft a recommendation to ATP-3 for their April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- MnDOT is working on their program to be combined with the Local program and a Draft ATIP submitted to MnDOT's Central Office by April 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **ATP-3 FY 2023 AND FY 2024-2026 ATP MANAGED PROGRAM TARGET CHANGES AND GUIDANCE**

- Mr. Voss updated the TPB on ATP-3's strategy to manage the increased federal funding to Central Minnesota resulting from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that was signed into law November 15, 2021.
- Members were provided background on this topic that included a review of the activities of MnDOT's Programming Update Work Group (PUW). The PUW was established to review and respond to changes and other requirements that may affect the distribution and use of federal funding to MnDOT and the ATPs.
- Due to the short time frame to address how to spend FY 2022 funding, MnDOT took the lead on spending that funding with the intent to payback the Locals their share of the FY 2022 dollars in later years of the STIP.
- With the PUW recommending the funds be distributed to the Locals, new funding guidance for FY 2023 through FY 2026 has been released, which shows sizeable increases for both the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) and the Transportation Alternative (TA) program.
- Mr. Voss indicated MnDOT is no longer able to act as "banker" (i.e., use funds in earlier years to allow for a larger pot of funds for Locals to program in the outer year of the STIP. The four Local entities (Regions 5, 7E, 7W and the St. Cloud Area Planning Organization) will need to determine how to handle the increase in funding.
- ATP-3 approved the ATP-3 Recommended Strategy for Balancing the Program for FY 2023 through FY 2026 at their October 6, 2022, meeting.
- Staff presented the approved framework for managing the increases in local federal STBGP and TA funding for years FY 2023-FY 2026 of the STIP. The framework recommends maintaining the equitable distribution of the new funding according to the ATP's approved distribution formula to the Regions. It also prioritizes advancing projects already in the program to use the available funding in the early years of the STIP to free up funding and provide greater flexibility in later years to identify new projects. The proposed framework is as follows:

#### STBGP Funding:

- FY 2023:
  - Identify any authorized Advance Construction (AC) projects from FY 2023 or earlier that have AC payback amounts remaining and fund them.
  - Identify existing projects in the program that can be advanced to FY 2023 and be authorized before June 30, 2023.
  - Increase federal share up to 80 percent if the project is overmatched locally.
  - Increase project costs to account for inflation and/or other cost changes not resulting from scope changes; then increase federal amount up to 80 percent.

- Identify new projects in the STIP that can be authorized prior to June 30, 2023.
- FY 2024-2026:
  - A similar process would be undertaken for projects programmed in these years.
  - Staff will work to first determine “revenue neutral” options, which includes the advancement of existing programmed projects to utilize the new funding but does not increase the amount of federal funds programmed for the project. Next, staff will consider options requiring “regional collaboration,” which includes existing programmed projects receiving additional (new) funding or new projects that are being added to the program with the increased funding targeted to the ATP.
  - The main concern is to ensure funding allocated in FY 2023 is spent. Decisions involving 2024-2026 can be considered as part of the update of the FY 2024-2027 Draft ATIP.
  - With the new funding, District staff will work to ensure the equitable distribution of the funding over the four years according to the regional percentages, as necessary.

TA Funding:

- Solicitation is ATP-3 wide based on the established percentages, which is determined by each Region’s share of the amount of federal TA dollars received to their percent of the population.
  - Staff will work to determine options for utilizing additional TA funding provided in 2023. A process like the STBGP process above will be taken to determine how to program the additional federal TA funding in 2024-2026. Any changes to equitable distribution of funding and award of equity points will be made, as required.

**NEW SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT ON-SYSTEM BRIDGE FUNDING CATEGORY**

- Under the IIJA, a new bridge formula program was created called the Bridge Formula Program (BFP). Approximately \$60 million a year in increased funds would be received.
- Discussions on how best to use those funds have been taking place. For past bridge programs, the formula has been a 70/30 percent State/Local split with one-half of the local share or 15 percent being targeted to off-system bridges.
- MnDOT has a large program and utilized the funding for FY 2023 and is working to seek a waiver from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to allow MnDOT to use the off-system bridge funding for on-system bridge projects. Currently the off-system bridges needs are being met.
- Mr. Voss noted the ATP-3 area will see an increase of \$3,320,000 under the new Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) On-System Bridge program for FYs 2023-2026.
- Projects that are already receiving federal funding are not eligible for the new STBG On-System Bridge funding. It was noted that ATP-3 is recommending Staff identify bridges that can utilize the FY 2023 as well as others that can be programmed in FYs 2024-2026 as part of the update of the STIP.
- Staff have asked TAC members to contact them with any on-system bridge projects that currently are not receiving federal funds and could be completed in FY 2023.
- For FY 2024-2026 candidates, Staff will be conducting a separate solicitation and selection process to identify bridge candidates that will be considered in the update of the Draft 2024-2027 STIP. If a project is selected but only partially funded or not funded at all, it could potentially access the

road and bridge STBGP funding under the ATP Managed Program as part of the solicitation for 2027 projects.

### **ATP-3 DRAFT FY 2024-2027 STIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS KICK-OFF**

#### *FY 2027 ATP-3 ATP Managed Program Federal Funding Project Solicitation*

- Review of the FY 2027 application materials. It was noted that the materials had been updated to reflect Region 7W's eighth factor. Cost Justification had been added to No. 7 Project Qualifications on Part 2 of the Application Instructions and the Application rather than having applicants include the information on the Application under No. 12 Additional Project Details.
- Discussion on the application and score sheet used in Region 7W and the other Regions. Similar applications and score sheets are used in the other Regions except for the Cost Justification criteria.

#### *FY 2027 ATP-3 Transportation Alternatives Program Project Solicitation*

- On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, jurisdictions and local agencies received an email announcing the kickoff of the FY 2027 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Solicitation. A TA Workshop was held in Baxter on October 6<sup>th</sup> and was held in St. Cloud on October 11<sup>th</sup>. It is anticipated that \$2.78 million will be available for FY 2027. A maximum of \$800,000 can be requested by an applicant.
- Mr. Lenz noted that changes were made to the TA application and scoring criteria to better address historic and scenic byways/environmental applications. It was noted that these types of applications had difficulty in the past competing with more traditional bicycle/pedestrian applications.
- Three new applications and score sheets were created for each category. All score sheets are based on a 100-point scale. The existing Bike/Pedestrian application was updated and continues to have six criteria. The Historic and Scenic Byway/Historic groupings have five criteria. The new TA application forms and score sheets were approved by the ATP-3 at their October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting and will be used for the upcoming solicitation.
- Mr. Lenz reviewed the TA timeline and TA documents, including the TA Letter of Intent Worksheet, Guidebook, the revised and new TA applications, and score sheets.
- Letters of Intent are due November 4, 2022. The full application period runs November 21, 2022, through January 13, 2023. Upon receiving the Letter of Intent, a determination will be made on whether applicants are eligible to proceed to the Full Application. Based on their project, applicants will be provided to the appropriate application.
- Mr. Lenz reviewed the Regions' equity points. Regions 5 and 7E are within the 4 percent equity band buffer while the St. Cloud Area Planning Organization and Region 7W are above the buffer. No equity points will be awarded for FY 2027.
- Discussion on equity and equity points. Each Region assigns regional significance points to their top two TA applications (#1-10 points/#2-five points). Discussion on lack of resources for small towns and townships. Townships can access TA funds but would need a sponsor, which is usually the county.

## REGION 7W LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION HUMAN SERVICE COORDINATION PLAN

- Mr. Cruikshank updated TPB members on the progress of the Local Public Transportation Human Service Coordination Plan that has been underway for the last 12 to 18 months. The last update was done in 2016 and completed in 2017. It is on a five-year cycle for updating.
  - As a requirement of the FAST Act, grantees under the Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program must have projects under a “locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” to receive federal funding.
  - Staff had received some recommendations seeking a few clarifications on the plan, which Staff will be making. The St. Cloud Area Planning Organization received approval on October 13<sup>th</sup> from their Policy Board.
  - The TAC is recommending approval of the 2021 Region 7W/St. Cloud Area Planning Organization Area Local Human Service Public Transit Coordination Plan. The five goals and strategies will be moving forward to the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council to complete.
- Motion by Mr. Johnson, second by Mr. Stay, to approve the 2021 Region 7W/St. Cloud Area Planning Organization Area Local Human Service Public Transit Coordination Plan. Motion carried.

## 2022-2023 CORRIDORS OF COMMERCE SOLICITATION

- Mr. Voss said the solicitation of projects seeking Corridors of Commerce (COC) program funding for 2024 and 2025 has begun. The solicitation deadline is November 30, 2022. It is anticipated there will be approximately \$200 million available with the same split of 50 percent Twin Cities metropolitan area and 50 percent Greater Minnesota. Last year MnDOT had attempted to receive a better definition of equity from the Legislature, but no action was taken so it remains the same split as previous solicitations.
- There was a slight modification from the 2018 solicitation pertaining to the online procedure. The procedure for submitting applications has been modified to establish greater accountability and a better understanding of the projects being requested at the time of submission.
- Part of the scoring criteria includes points for community consensus. The Corridors of Commerce definition under this criterion is support and consensus for the project among members of the surrounding community. To best achieve that, MnDOT asks for resolutions and letters support from three different groups.
  - Resolutions of Support from Impacted Jurisdiction(s) – 45 points (If all jurisdictions provide a resolution, otherwise no points.)
  - Letter of Support from the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Regional Development Commission or Regional Planning Agency – 45 points (If more than one planning agency touched by the project, must have all provide letters of support or no points awarded.)
  - Letter of Support from any Chamber of Commerce – 10 points
- Sherburne County is planning to submit a couple of projects for this solicitation and had contacted staff regarding the letter of support. Wright County may also be submitting a project for this solicitation.
- Discussion on the Corridors of Commerce fund split between the Twin Cities metropolitan area and Greater Minnesota.



- It was determined to table the Letters of Support discussion until the TPB February meeting since the Corridors of Commerce solicitation period is open until November 30, 2022.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

- Friday, February 17, 9:30 a.m. – 12 Noon –MnDOT District 3B Headquarters Building in St. Cloud with a MS-Teams option.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

##### Local Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) 2024-2027 Solicitation

- MnDOT had announced information regarding the Greater MN solicitation for District and Local HSIP funds. Applications are due November 23, 2022.

##### Local Safe Routes to School Solicitation

- Safe Routes to School solicitations:
  - Planning Assistance – Application deadline is January 22, 2023.
  - Boost Grants for Non-Infrastructure Strategies – Application deadline is November 30, 2022.
- Additional details can be found on MnDOT’s website on the Safe Routes to School page.

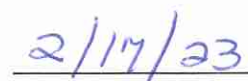
#### **ROUND ROBIN**

- Mr. Johnson – Chris Byrd’s has resigned as the Benton County Public Works Director. Anticipate the County Board will be appointing an Interim Public Works Director at their Tuesday meeting.
- Mr. Dietz – Expressed his appreciation to MnDOT for their work on U.S. Highway 169 in Elk River.
- Mr. Stay – Expressed his appreciation to MnDOT for their work on the interchange at U.S. Highway 169 and Sherburne County 4.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Motion by Mr. Johnson, second by Mr. Vetsch to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

  
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Presiding Officer

  
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Date