

Minutes

TAC Funding and Programming Committee



Meeting date: December 18, 2025,

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: Virtual

Members present:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eden Prairie – Robert Ellis | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Metro District – Aaron Tag | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anoka Co. – Jerry Auge |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fridley – Jim Kosluchar (Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Metro District State Aid – Colleen Brown | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver Co. – Darin Mielke |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lakeville – Paul Oehme | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Bike/Ped – Molly McCormick | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dakota Co. – Jacob Chapek |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minneapolis – Katie White | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MPCA – Innocent Eyoh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hennepin Co. – Emily Buell |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plymouth – Michael Thompson (Vice Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DNR – Nancy Spooner-Walsh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ramsey Co. –Codie Leseman |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eagan – Russ Matthys | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban Transit Assoc. – Heidi Scholl | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Co. – John Rudolph |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> St. Paul – Anne Weber | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wash Co. – Madeline Dahlheimer |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met Council – Cole Hiniker | | <input type="checkbox"/> FHWA – Scott Mareck (ex-officio) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metro Transit – Scott Janowiak | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TAB Coordinator – Elaine Koutsoukos | | |
- ☐ = present, E = excused

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Kosluchar called the regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee to order at 1:00 p.m.

Agenda approved

Chair Kosluchar noted that a roll call vote was not needed for approval of the agenda unless a committee member offered an amendment to the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Katie White, Minneapolis, and seconded by Madeline Dahlheimer, Washington Co., to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2025, regular meeting of the TAC Funding and Programming Committee. **Motion carried**

Public comment on committee business

TAB report

Elane Koutsoukos, TAB Coordinator, reported on the December 17 regular TAB meeting.

Business

1. **2026-02:** 2026 Regional Solicitation Qualifying Requirements (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning)

Russ Matthys, Eagan, presented a real-world example from the City of Eagan regarding a Highway 149 project completed in 2007. He stated that the project expanded the roadway from two lanes to a four-lane divided highway to address transportation system needs and included trails along the corridor. He noted the project covered approximately two miles and that while roadway improvements were necessary, the surrounding trail system had not yet fully developed. He added that the city is currently working on a Highway 3 corridor study that will eventually connect to the southern end of the segment.

Steven Peterson stated that staff revised the relevant paragraph based on policy workgroup input and added examples. He asked whether the intent was to reflect a long-term plan and requested that Matthys provide clarification in writing.

Cole Hiniker, Met Council, inquired whether, in cases where the ultimate plan involves a cross-jurisdictional agreement, if a letter from the partnering agency acknowledging a long-term maintenance plan could satisfy the applicable requirement.

Matthys responded that, to his knowledge, the City of Eagan entered into an agreement requiring the city to maintain the trail, which it currently does, apart from winter maintenance for a specific mile-long segment. He stated that the trail lies within MnDOT right-of-way and that maintenance responsibilities were established as part of the project agreement. He emphasized that the issue is timing, noting that constructing the trail alongside roadway improvements made sense even though it preceded full development of the broader trail network. He explained that discussions within the Highway 3 corridor study include the possibility of a trail along some or all of the 12.5-mile corridor, but that differing priorities have delayed implementation. He stated that he can only act within the City of Eagan's authority.

Hiniker stated that his understanding was that an agreement to maintain the facility exists and that the issue is timing rather than willingness or obligation. He stated that providing the maintenance agreement could satisfy the qualifying criterion, specifically bullet #3, and that the project would therefore meet the rule requirements.

Matthys clarified that the only outstanding issue relates to winter maintenance and reiterated that the city otherwise maintains the trail.

Codie Leseman, Ramsey Co., asked whether the committee was being asked to adopt a strict pass/fail rule or whether there was flexibility to treat the requirement as a scored criterion, allowing partial credit for projects demonstrating effort or partial compliance.

Chair Kosluchar responded that the intent of the application process is to differentiate between projects through scoring. He stated that winter maintenance had previously been discussed as a scoring criterion but that, because maintenance or an agreement is a mandate, all qualifying projects would receive the same score or fail to meet federal requirements. He stated that this makes the item more appropriate as a qualifying criterion rather than a scoring factor.

Koutsoukos confirmed that the requirement functions as a qualifying criterion. She stated that if an applicant can provide any of the required information, the project is qualified to apply; otherwise, it is not. She emphasized that the requirement is not part of project rating.

Dahlheimer stated that she had considered making a motion to approve the item with edits but deferred because another member had requested to speak.



Paul Oehme stated that, in response to Matthys' comments, bullet #2 could be modified to explicitly include a letter agreement or resolution, or otherwise require an agreement, to address future maintenance obligations. He stated that this would reflect the existence of an agreement in cases such as Eagan's.

Peterson suggested that bullet #3, which addresses cross-jurisdiction agreements with another agency, may already cover that scenario.

Oehme agreed that either bullet could be used if the language sufficiently captures the intent.

Chair Kosluchar acknowledged the point and thanked the speaker. He invited further comments on the qualifying criteria and thanked staff for providing tracked changes, noting that the edits were helpful for review.

Matthys raised a separate question regarding pedestrian facility projects. He stated that he could not identify pedestrian or bicycle facilities in Eagan that are located outside of right-of-way and asked whether other cities have such facilities. He requested clarification of the requirement stating that projects must exclude right-of-way costs and asked whether this refers specifically to right-of-way acquisition costs or to any studies or improvements occurring within the right-of-way.

Chair Kosluchar responded that his interpretation is that the requirement refers to right-of-way acquisition costs. He deferred to staff for confirmation.

Peterson confirmed that the requirement is intended to exclude right-of-way acquisition costs.

Matthys acknowledged the clarification and requested that the language be explicitly clarified to state "right-of-way acquisition" to avoid confusion.

It was moved by Dahlheimer, and seconded by Russ Matthys, Eagan, that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommend adoption of the attached qualifying requirements for the 2026 Regional Solicitation.

Motion carried

2. 2026-03: 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation Qualifying Requirements (Joe Widing, MTS Planning)

Hiniker noted that a similar issue exists with requirement #13, consistent with an earlier issue raised by Matthys, and stated that the language should be clarified by adding the word "acquisition." He stated that a similar motion could address this issue and asked whether there were any comments or questions before proceeding.

Dahlheimer stated that policymakers have provided guidance on what constitutes maintenance. For the official record, she reiterated that Washington County does not support snow removal as a qualifying criterion. She explained that the county's position is based on efforts to make the application process more accessible to smaller entities and that requiring snow removal would undermine those efforts by preventing some applicants from qualifying. She emphasized that this comment was entered for the record due to the extensive discussion on the topic. She also asked a procedural question regarding whether counties and cities may submit comments during the public comment period, including comments on specific language changes.

Peterson confirmed that jurisdictions may submit comments during the public comment period and that language-related comments could be shared at that time. He further stated that staff have elevated prior comments, including those related to active transportation, to the policy work group. He reported that the chair and vice chair of the Active Transportation Work Group discussed the possibility of allowing future use of active transportation funds for purchasing trail snow removal equipment, noting that this option would not apply in the current funding round but could be explored in the future.

Darin Mielke, Carver Co., stated he supported the comments made by Dahlheimer. He stated

that requiring year-round maintenance, particularly snow plowing during winter months, would deter smaller agencies from applying for funding because they may believe they cannot complete or maintain the project. He requested that this position be reflected in the official record.

Chair Kosluchar stated that he would entertain a motion regarding the qualifying criteria, including potential amendments. He summarized that the amendments discussed included clarification of winter maintenance demonstration requirements and clarification that the right-of-way language refers specifically to right-of-way acquisition costs.

It was moved by Hiniker, and seconded by Matthys, that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommend adoption of the attached qualifying requirements for the 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation.

Motion carried

3. 2026-04: 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation Match Requirement (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning)

Jerry Auge, Anoka Co., asked for clarification on the minimum and maximum funding amounts within the applicable categories, asking whether projects ranged from approximately \$200,000 to \$2,000,000.

Joseph Widing, MTS Planning, responded that, for local bicycle facilities, the minimum eligible amount is \$150,000 and the maximum is \$3.5 million. He stated that for local pedestrian facilities, the minimum is \$150,000 and the maximum is \$2.5 million. He added that planning projects have no minimum funding amount and a maximum of \$200,000.

Emily Buell, Hennepin Co., stated that Hennepin County operates a program that funds sidewalk and bikeway improvements for city partners and includes a local match requirement. She stated that the county has found local buy-in to be helpful and noted that several small cities have successfully applied for funding, been deemed eligible, and completed projects through the program.

Matthys expressed concern about using tax dollars to construct infrastructure that may not be maintained over the long term. He stated that while maintenance commitments may be made, the absence of strong asset management and long-term planning creates risk. He asserted that requiring applicants to contribute a portion of construction costs encourages thoughtful planning and long-term stewardship. He acknowledged that some communities lack staffing and financial capacity for long-term planning but stated that, in such cases, funding improvements may not be appropriate.

Widing stated that he understood the concern and noted that a qualifying requirement for the program is that projects originate from an adopted planning or programming document. He stated that this requirement is intended to ensure projects are not selected arbitrarily and to support long-term maintenance considerations.

Mielke asked what project costs are eligible for funding and whether eligibility includes construction, engineering, and planning costs, or is limited to construction for facility projects and planning documents for planning projects.

Widing responded that, for bicycle and pedestrian facility projects, eligibility includes engineering costs, including advanced engineering and preliminary design. He stated that for planning projects, eligibility is limited to systemwide planning efforts rather than single-corridor or single-project studies.

Mielke asked whether right-of-way costs are eligible. Widing confirmed that right-of-way acquisition costs are not eligible.

Chair Kosluchar stated that the recommended motions presume no local match requirement for planning projects. He summarized that the committee's recommendation narrowed options to either no local match or a small match for facility projects, noting that a 5% match had been



discussed.

Michael Thompson, Plymouth, made a motion to move forward with a 5% local match requirement for local bicycle and local pedestrian facility improvement categories.

Chair Kosluchar restated the motion, clarifying that it applies a 5% match to local bicycle and pedestrian facility categories and no match to planning projects.

Thompson provided additional commentary in support of the motion emphasizing that the use of tax dollars warrants shared investment. He stated that a vested local interest improves efficiency and stewardship and noted that a 5% match is relatively low compared to other programs.

It was moved by Michael Thompson, Plymouth, and seconded by Paul Oehme, Lakeville, that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that the Technical Advisory Committee recommend a local match requirement or lack thereof for the Active Transportation Solicitation

Motion carried

4. **2026-05:** 2026 Regional Solicitation Criteria, Measures, and Scoring Guidance (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning)

It was moved by Dahlheimer, seconded by Emily Buell, Hennepin Co., that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommend adoption of the attached criteria, measures, and scoring guidance for the 2026 Regional Solicitation.

Motion carried

5. **2026-06:** 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation Criteria, Measures, and Scoring Guidance (Joe Widing, MTS Planning)

It was moved by White, seconded by Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie, that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommend adoption of the attached criteria, measures, and scoring guidance for the 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation.

Motion carried

6. **2026-07:** 2026 Regional Solicitation Scoring Criteria and Measure Weighting (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning)

Darin Mielke emphasized that the Funding and Programming Committee's role is to provide a technically sound, defensible recommendation focused on scoring integrity, clarity, and alignment with the stated purpose of each funding category. He went on to say that Carver County did not oppose the inclusion of Community Considerations but was concerned about the amount of weight assigned. Mielke noted that the Technical Steering Committee had already invested significant effort in its recommendation and that Carver County supported that work. He expressed concern that Community Considerations could become a narrative-based "writing contest" that is difficult to independently verify or appeal. He stated that Carver County supported weighting Community Considerations at 10 percent for the two safety categories and 15 percent for all other categories.

Matthys asked for clarification regarding whether the proposed percentages would apply across all funding categories or only safety. Mielke responded that the proposal would apply 10 percent to proactive and reactive safety categories and 15 percent to all other categories, consistent with the Technical Steering Committee recommendation.

Peterson responded to the discussion by noting that the Technical Steering Committee recommendation had been brought forward to the Policy Work Group, which viewed the matter as a policy decision and provided direction accordingly. He cautioned that deviating from the Policy Work Group's compromise could create process concerns, as this item was

now at the action stage

Koutsoukos reported that the topic had been discussed briefly at TAB and that additional discussion was anticipated. She noted that several TAB members expressed support for a lower Community Considerations percentage but clarified that no formal vote was taken and no numerical consensus was reached at that level.

Oehme stated that he also attended the Policy Work Group meeting and that there was no consensus to uniformly reduce Community Considerations. He noted that some members supported following the Technical Committee's recommendation, particularly in the safety categories. Oehme emphasized that the Funding and Programming Committee serves a technical role and is not intended to make policy decisions. He reiterated that the Technical Committee recommended 10 percent for the safety categories and 15 percent for all others and noted that transit categories had been discussed as a potential exception, with some policymakers expressing interest in retaining a 20 percent weight. Oehme stated his support for advancing the Technical Committee recommendation.

Innocent Eyoh, MPCA, stated that he supported the recommendation of the Policy Work Group, expressing a preference for a 15 percent Community Considerations weighting for both proactive and reactive safety categories and retaining a 20 percent weighting for the remaining funding categories.

Codie Leseman, Ramsey Co., raised concerns about potentially reducing emphasis on safety and community considerations. Leseman requested a brief explanation from staff regarding how the proposed changes might affect urban counties.

Peterson responded that Community Considerations had evolved from prior equity-based demographic measures to a broader framework consistent with federal guidance. He stated that any project across the metro area could score well under Community Considerations if applicants adequately addressed community context and need. He noted that pilot scoring demonstrated that some urban projects scored poorly due to insufficient discussion of community need, not geography.

Hiniker added that the Technical Steering Committee vote was not unanimous, attendance was incomplete, and that no transit providers were present, emphasizing that the recommendation did not represent technical consensus.

Dahlheimer stated that proposals to reduce Community Considerations should not be interpreted as minimizing their importance. She explained that concerns raised in prior discussions focused on the relative weight of Community Considerations compared to criteria supported by quantitative measures, and that there was interest in emphasizing metrics that are more readily measurable. She requested that this context be noted for the record.

Hiniker stated that safety is embedded within Community Considerations and should not be viewed as separate from that criterion. He reported that policymakers had expressed frustration when technical committees advanced recommendations that differed from policy direction and stated that forwarding a recommendation not aligned with the policymakers' compromise could cause confusion at TAB. Hiniker noted that the Council supports maintaining Community Considerations at 20 percent, referencing equity-focused work conducted by a special working group not represented in the committee.

Dahlheimer asked whether a compromise approach could be considered, such as retaining 20 percent for non-safety categories while reducing safety categories to 10 percent.

Leseman asked staff whether reducing the weight from 20 percent to 10 percent could result in worse safety outcomes, particularly for smaller or rural communities.

Hiniker responded that higher Community Considerations weighting can benefit smaller applicants that may lack extensive quantitative data and could improve funding outcomes for those communities.

It was moved by Mielke and seconded by Buell to recommend adjusting Community Considerations weighting to 10 percent for the two safety categories (proactive and reactive) and 15 percent for all other funding categories, consistent with the Technical Steering Committee recommendation.

It was moved by Mielke, and seconded Buell, that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommend adoption of the weighting criteria and measures for the 2026 Regional Solicitation as attached.

Motion carried

7. **2026-08:** 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation Scoring Criteria and Measure Weighting (Joe Widing, MTS Planning)

Mielke suggested that Carver County's perspective would be to adjust a certain category from 20% to 15%, to keep it consistent with other categories. He also suggested that the motion should mirror the previous agenda item for active transportation.

Leseman raised questions regarding the proposed 5% adjustment to the community considerations category. He noted that much of the crash and traffic data used to evaluate outcomes is largely vehicle-based, with pedestrian and bicycle crashes often underreported, making it difficult to fully assess the impact of the adjustment. While the rationale for the previous adjustment was based on well-established data and measurements, she explained that it is less clear when applied specifically to pedestrians, cyclists, and other rolling users. Leseman acknowledged that the change improves consistency and user-friendliness but suggested that additional clarification or justification would be helpful, particularly given the time constraints for decision-making.

It was moved by Mielke, and seconded by Jacob Chapek, Dakota Co., that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommend adoption of the weighting of the scoring criteria and measures for the 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation as attached.

Motion carried

8. **2026-09:** 2026 Regional Solicitation Release for Public Comment (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning)

It was moved by Matthys, and seconded by Dahlheimer, that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that the Technical Advisory Committee recommend approval of the draft 2026 Regional Solicitation (inclusive of the approvals made in Action Transmittals 2025-31, 2025-33, 2025-35, 2026-02, 2026-05, and 2026-07) for public comment.

Motion carried

9. **2026-10:** 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation Release for Public Comment (Joe Widing, MTS Planning)

It was moved by Ellis, seconded by Oehme, that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that the Technical Advisory Committee recommend approval of the draft 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation (inclusive of the approvals made in Action Transmittals 2025-32, 2025-34, 2025-36, 2026-03, 2026-04, 2026-06, and 2026-08) for release for public comment.

Motion carried

10. **2026-11:** 2026 Highway Safety Improvement Solicitation Release for Public Comment (Steve Peterson, MTS Planning)

It was moved by Oehme, and seconded by Dahlheimer, that TAC Funding and Programming Committee recommend that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommend approval of the draft 2026 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) applications for release for public comment.



Motion carried

Information

Reports

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Council contact:

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