

# TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Friday, January 20, 2023 | 10:00a  
Boardroom - Main Level of the Metro Transit Building

## Minutes

In attendance:

### TTAC Voting Members

Matt Cox (Council Bluffs)  
Dan Gittinger (Gretna)  
Pat Dowse (La Vista)  
Derek Miller (Omaha)  
Krista Wassenaar (Omaha)  
Bryan Guy (Omaha)  
Todd Pfitzer (Douglas County)  
Craig Wacker (NDOT)  
Tim Weander (NDOT)  
Eric Williams (PMRNRD)  
Dennis Wilson (Sarpy County)  
Alex Evans (Papillion)  
Ivan Maldonado (Metro)

### TTAC Non Voting Members

Adam Denney (F, H, & U)  
Matt Selinger (JEO)  
Katie Salerno (Olsson)  
Tim Adams (WSP)  
Jacob Weiss (HDR)  
Maurice Hinchey (NDOT)

### MAPA

Court Barber  
Michael Blank  
James Boerner  
Lindsey Button  
Travis Halm  
Laura Heilman  
Mike Helgerson  
Carlos Morales

*\* Attended virtually. Voting members are not eligible to vote while attending virtually and do not count for quorum.*

Dennis Wilson (Sarpy County) called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

## Action Items

For TTAC Approval

### **A. Approval of the Minutes from the December 2nd, 2022 meeting**

Derek Miller moved to approve the minutes, Pat Dowse seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Recommendations to MAPA's Board of Directors

### **B. Amendment 4 to the FY2023 Transportation Improvement Program**

Court Barber (MAPA) presented the amendment which includes the addition of a project from NDOT, and an update to an existing project.

Tim Weander moved to recommend approval of the amendment, Todd Pfitzer seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **C. Nebraska Critical Freight Corridor Review**

Jim Boerner (MAPA) provided an update of MAPA-recommended Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridors for inclusion in the Nebraska State Freight Plan and recommended changes to the National Highway Freight Network system.

Tim Weander (NDOT) asked about specifics regarding U.S. 275 in relation to what is shown.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) agreed with Tim Weander (NDOT) that MAPA will clean up the tables to make it more clear on U.S. 275.

Eric Williams (PMRNRD) asked about the Pershing Dr./Highway 75 area.

Jim Boerner (MAPA) clarified what is going on with regards to Pershing Dr. and Highway 75, that portions of Pershing Dr. aren't truck routes for Omaha, along with the ongoing MAPA study of Highway 75.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) and Eric Williams (PMRNRD) discussed a bit further the details of the Highway 75 area.

Tim Weander (NDOT) motioned to approve pending review and update based on conversation, Todd Pfitzer (Douglas County) seconded. Motion carried.

## Discussion Items

### D. Processing NDOT 530 Forms

Carlos Morales (MAPA) and Court Barber (MAPA) discussed kicking off the federal-aid process in Nebraska by streamlining the process by usage of electronic forms.

Eric Williams (PMRNRD) asked to clarify which forms is MAPA currently pursuing for an electronic process, and he along with the PMRNRD support the usage of electronic documents, as it resolves various challenges and makes the process faster.

Carlos Morales (MAPA) clarified that it is only 530 forms currently.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) continued further that this electronic process would speed up our process.

### E. Regional Funding Committee Recap

Carlos Morales (MAPA) presented MAPA's thoughts on the creation of a new, unified project selection committee.

Court Barber (MAPA) discussed the Equity Resolution that MAPA's Board of Directors passed previously, along with the Federal Certification Review.

Tim Weander (NDOT) asked about the RFC voting amounts that were decided back in the December 2nd meeting and why TTAC should have greater voting power if it gets more funding, and more votes overall for both TTAC and RPAC.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) clarified that TTAC and RPAC aren't getting removed, we are only altering the subcommittees below them. Why this proposed combined funding committee below TTAC and RPAC isn't larger is because we had recommendations to keep a funding committee smaller, and prevent quorum issues. Additionally this will help the process and make it both more meaningful and responsive to both the Equity Resolution and Federal Certification Review.

Tim Weander (NDOT) asked why it seems we are looking at the process as if it's broken, because it isn't broken, so it doesn't seem like there is anything we should fix.

Dennis Wilson (Sarpy County) asked about details on quorum with regards to the RFC.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) clarified some details on quorum, and went on to discuss how the RFC is not the only solution, but something needs to be done. It's not that the current process is broken, but that there is an opportunity to make it better. What we wish to do is over the next few months get a better understanding as to what TTAC values to build a framework.

Pat Dowse (La Vista) asked about voting power, as smaller communities may be worried that they may lose voting power in such a small funding committee, even when smaller communities face big city problems.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) clarified that we are currently in an ongoing process to build a framework, and are open to suggestions such as this to improve our proposed framework. This is why we set time in this meeting on this, to get feedback.

Court Barber (MAPA) stated that MAPA will likely send out a survey that will give you opportunities to give feedback.

Tim Weander (NDOT) asked about where funding is coming from for MAPA.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) and Court Barber (MAPA) clarified that it's all transportation money, the funding that RPAC oversees is Heartland 2050.

Tim Weander (NDOT) stated that voting should be based on the amount of funding that each committee oversees.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) went on to clarify that this isn't what we are trying to focus on, while it is an interesting committee structure idea, the goal here is we need to open up the decision making table to more expertise outside of transportation funding.

Todd Pfitzer (Douglas County) stated that he voted the way he did because as a transportation professional he already has to consider various issues related to transportation that can affect equity. There are roads out in the rural and suburban areas that need fixing based on our arterial program, and there is a concern that the pendulum will swing too far. Based on the proposed voting structure, it's possible that in this committee the requirements for funding will be rewritten and then houses and communities out around 204th street won't have streets, gutters, sidewalks, which can cause traffic accidents.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) stated that the amount of projects, and what types of projects submitted won't change, rather, it's about changing the decision making process so that other professionals can help us achieve our goals in for example, our arterial program. To me it's not an either or, but rather, an all the above. What we are trying to do is widen the net to find areas that may have a larger impact that we didn't consider before. What should our organization chart look like to achieve our goals? According to our Board, our current organization should change. Could our limited regional funding be used in more effective ways?

Eric Williams (PMRNRD) stated his support of the better breakdown and explanations from MAPA for this meeting. He then discussed the process within MAPA, and that in TTAC everyone has similar professional and community experience, but what the Board wants is professional and community experience that is different to give us better input. Different projects are felt differently in different parts of the community, and some of the expertise to be aware of these problems can fall outside of transportation expertise, and in fact the DOT is already moving in the direction of adding more expertise. Transportation expertise is helpful in many parts of the transportation project process, but there are parts of the process that other expertise both professional and in the community can be quite helpful.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) discussed the recent history of the transportation priorities with MAPA and the DOT, and how it has changed over time. The way we have organized ourselves is based on prior pots of money.

Dennis Wilson (Sarpy County) asked for details into how we organized ourselves and the funding sources related to that.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) went into further detail into prior organization and changes to our process and committee structures in the past based on Federal funding. Other MPOs will have different committee structures to prioritize certain pots of money and make them better suited for funding.

Carlos Morales (MAPA) discussed further that there isn't much discussion between CTC and TTAC with regards to paratransit.

## **F. Highway 75 Corridor & Freight Strategy Study**

Court Barber (MAPA) presented the results of the study which wrapped up in December.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) went into detail in the history of the Highway 75 study, and where we ended up.

Tim Weander (NDOT) asked about the option to just eliminate the highway designation on this street.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) stated that while that is an option, why it wasn't evaluated on its own is because Omaha does not support it. He also clarified that a lot of the benefits in any scenario come from alternative 4 or some combination with it.

Eric Williams (PMRNRD) expressed that a lot of the findings in the Highway 75 study came from community input and expertise from the community, and professionals outside of our traditional transportation committee decision making process, and why an idea such as adding more voices and expertise is good.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) and Eric Williams (PMRNRD) went into more discussion on the safety benefits of the different options on the project and the inverse relationship between travel times and safety on the corridor.

## **G. Member Agency Updates**

Maurice Hinchey (NDOT) work right now is stopped if it's not completed on current projects, but will resume work and start on new projects soon.

Krista Wassenaar (Omaha) Baby Bob Bridge is beginning bids in March. Vision Zero is still ongoing.

Ivan Maldonado (Metro) additional services and adding frequency to certain services will occur in February.

Matt Cox (Council Bluffs) work continues on the south expressway.

Todd Pfitzer (Douglas County) we are looking into a new cement mix that will last longer for more cost effectiveness.

Pat Dowse (La Vista) trail and 84th street bike and ped projects are still continuing. City center is going up, cranes are up.

Craig Wacker (NDOT) carbon reduction strategy is underway to figure out how we will spend carbon reduction money.

Dennis Wilson (Sarpy County) sanitary sewer is getting put in on the other side of the ridge.

Mike Helgerson (MAPA) there are some new bills on the Nebraska side that may be beneficial to our member jurisdictions, if you are interested I'll provide the bill numbers after the meeting. NDOT is looking more into the geographic distribution of funding by the different NDOT districts. Our new urban area boundary has been updated, and the little sliver into Cass County has now been removed. We also have some extra metropolitan area funding that will be given out to the member jurisdictions to help various planning projects, the contact for that is Carlos Morales (MAPA).

## **H. Additional Business**

Krista Wassenaar (Omaha) moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:37 am .