

**Minutes of the Meeting**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING FOR THE MILWAUKEE URBANIZED AREA**

DATE: September 28, 2023  
TIME: 9:30 a.m.  
PLACE: Large Conference Room, 2nd Floor  
Milwaukee County Department of Transportation  
10320 W. Watertown Plank Road  
Wauwatosa, WI

Milwaukee Urbanized Area Members Present

Donna Brown-Martin, Chair ..... Director, Department of Transportation, Milwaukee County and  
Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
James Bohl ..... Director of Intergovernmental Relations, City of Milwaukee  
Scott Brandmeier ..... Director of Public Works, Village of Fox Point  
Allison M. Bussler ..... Director of Public Works, Waukesha County  
Alex Damien ..... Director of Public Works, City of Waukesha  
Jon Edgren ..... Director of Public Works/Highway Commissioner, Ozaukee County  
Julie Esch ..... Deputy Director, Department of Transportation, Milwaukee County  
Ashley Fischer ..... Executive Assistant, Waukesha County  
(Representing Karen Braun)  
Traci Gengler ..... Principal Engineer, City of West Allis  
(Representing Melinda Dejewski)  
Thomas M. Grisa ..... Director, Department of Public Works, City of Brookfield  
Jerrel Kruschke ..... Commissioner of Public Works, City of Milwaukee  
Mason Lavey ..... Budget and Fiscal Policy Analyst, City of Milwaukee  
(Representing Nik Kovac)  
Sam Leichtling ..... Planning Manager, Department of City Development,  
City of Milwaukee  
Kevin Muhs ..... City Engineer, Department of Public Works,  
City of Milwaukee  
Scott Schmidt ..... Highway Commissioner/County Engineer,  
Washington County  
David Tapia ..... Major Projects Manager  
(Representing Robert Bauman) ..... Department of Public Works, City of Milwaukee  
Andrea Weddle-Henning ..... Director of Transportation Engineering,  
Department of Transportation, Milwaukee County  
William Wehrley ..... City Engineer, City of Wauwatosa

Non-Voting Members Present

Ben McKay, Secretary ..... Deputy Director,  
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
Jacob Varnes ..... Local Program Manager, Southeast Region,  
(Representing Roberto Gutierrez) ..... Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Guests and Staff Present

Tony Barth ..... Systems Planning Chief, Southeast Region  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Bryan Haas..... Project Engineer, City of Greenfield

Christopher Hiebert..... Chief Transportation Engineer,  
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Ben High ..... Project Manager, raSmith

Ryan Hoel .....Deputy Chief Transportation Engineer,  
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Brad Holz .....Board Member, IndependenceFirst

Ethan Johnson ..... Senior Engineer,  
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Jeff Katz ..... City Engineer and Director of Neighborhood Services,  
City of Greenfield

Scott Kroger ..... Public Works and Development Director, City of Muskego

Glen Morrow..... City Engineer, City of Franklin

Matthew Sullivan .....City Engineer, City of Oak Creek

**ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m. by Ms. Brown-Martin, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Transportation System Planning and Programming for the Milwaukee Urbanized Area (Milwaukee TIP Committee). She welcomed all present and asked Committee members and Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) staff to introduce themselves. Ms. Brown-Martin asked if anyone in attendance had any public comments. No comments were made.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 17, 2023, MEETING**

Ms. Brown-Martin stated that the Milwaukee TIP Committee is being asked to consider approval of the minutes of the July 17, 2023, meeting. Ms. Brown-Martin asked if the Committee members had any suggested changes to the minutes, and upon hearing none, called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Grisa made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting held on July 17, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mr. Muhs, and the Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

**REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF MEMORANDUM ENTITLED, “EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE PROCESS TO EVALUATE, PRIORITIZE, AND RECOMMEND PROJECTS FOR FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM—MILWAUKEE URBANIZED AREA FUNDING”**

At the request of Ms. Brown-Martin, Mr. Hoel reviewed the SEWRPC memorandum entitled, *Evaluation of Potential Changes to the Process to Evaluate, Prioritize, and Recommend Projects for Federal Highway Administration Surface Transportation Block Grant Program—Milwaukee Urbanized Area Funding*, which was provided to Committee members by email prior to the meeting.

[Secretary’s Note: The SEWRPC memorandum can be accessed from the following link:  
[https://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Transportation/Files/tip/23-26\\_TIP/2023-09-26-STP-M-ChangesReviewMemo.pdf](https://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Transportation/Files/tip/23-26_TIP/2023-09-26-STP-M-ChangesReviewMemo.pdf)]

Mr. Hoel stated that the Milwaukee TIP Committee has asked Commission staff to work with the Committee to review, and potentially revise, the process for evaluating and prioritizing projects for years 2028-2029 STP-M funding that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) currently is soliciting projects for. He noted that the Committee began reviewing and considering potential changes to the process at its previous meeting held on July 17, 2023. Mr. Hoel stated that the Committee could come to a consensus on potential changes to the process at this meeting, or the Committee could request a third meeting, if desired, to consider preliminary recommended changes to the process or to consider additional alternatives. Mr. Hoel then reviewed Commission staff's analyses and recommendations for potential changes to the process for evaluating and prioritizing projects for years 2028-2029 STP-M funding requested by members of the Milwaukee TIP Committee and described in the SEWRPC memorandum.

Reconsider the Procedure to Transfer, or Flex, FHWA STP-M Funding for Use on Transit Projects

Mr. Hoel stated that, as there is still a general need for STP-M funding for bus replacement projects, the Commission staff continue to recommend that a portion of STP-M funding, if there is interest by MUA transit operators, be made available each funding cycle for transit vehicle replacement projects. He further stated that Commission staff are recommending that the initial distribution of STP-M funding to transit projects be no longer based on the longstanding procedure of combining STP-M and FTA Section 5307 funding and distributing those funds between transit and highway projects based on their relative need identified in VISION 2050. Rather, Commission staff recommend the initial distribution of STP-M funds to transit funds be done in a similar manner done for initially distributing STP-M funding to the three highway categories, up to a maximum of 10 percent.

The following summarizes the discussion by Milwaukee TIP Committee members on this potential change to the STP-M evaluation process:

1. Mr. Grisa stated that available Federal highway funding does not come close to meeting roadway funding needs. While sympathetic to the needs of the transit systems, Mr. Grisa stated that the growing needs of the roadways should not be ignored, noting that the buses need good roads to operate on. Mr. Grisa noted that since 2013 only about 5 percent of the Milwaukee urbanized area's lane miles have received STP-M funding and that at this rate, it would take about 200 years to fully fund work on all the lane miles in the urbanized area.
2. Mr. Grisa noted that Milwaukee County will implement a new sales tax. Ms. Esch replied that funding generated by the new sales tax can only be used for operations, and that the State does not provide any transit capital funding. Ms. Esch noted that the population of the Region is aging, increasing the need for transit services in the future.
3. Mr. Grisa noted that Milwaukee County's sales tax can't be used for capital, but Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5307 funds can be. He stated that Milwaukee County has made a management decision to use FTA 5307 funds for operations and maintenance. Ms. Brown-Martin responded that, while Federal and State funds have increased in recent years, that has not been the case for transit funding. She further stated that she does not want to see the Region's roads deteriorate. However, the Region's transit operators have done well at operating their systems more efficiently with the funds they have but there is still a great need for transit capital funding. She stated that the Milwaukee TIP Committee has been trying to be equitable by recommending funding for the Region's highway and transit systems.
4. Mr. Grisa asked if the Milwaukee TIP Committee's recommended transit funding runs counter to Federal highway funding goals. Mr. Hiebert replied that the Federal government provides flexibility for using STP-M funding on transit and he stated that transit funding is more

constrained than highway funding. Mr. Hiebert noted that in the past, transit funding could be flexed to highway projects, but such transfers are no longer allowed under current Federal law.

5. Mr. Brandmeier inquired whether the Region needs to continue to expand its roads and transit systems based on the way people work having changed in recent years. Mr. McKay responded that while more people are working from home, many transit-dependent workers cannot work from home. Ms. Esch noted that FlexRide Milwaukee is connecting workers to businesses, and she stated that many businesses need transit to bring employees to work.
6. Ms. Bussler stated that she hears both from businesses that need workers and from people who want roads to be fixed. She noted that some road funding is declining. She further noted that there is some new State funding meant for roads that support agriculture, but this funding will likely not be directed to Southeastern Wisconsin. She stated that the State needs to increase transportation funding and that the Milwaukee TIP Committee cannot fix the State's funding issues.
7. Responding to statement by Ms. Bussler, Mr. Hoel stated that the analysis of the capital needs of the transit operators included all the transit operators in the Milwaukee urbanized area.
8. Mr. Damien stated that the City of Waukesha is attempting to be as efficient as possible with its use of Federal funds, and he indicated that eliminating the transfer of STP-M funding to transit would be problematic for the City. He stated that the Committee needs to find a balanced approach.

#### Consider Increasing the Amount of Funding Allocated to the Smaller Sponsor Set-Aside

Mr. Hoel stated that, to better ensure achievement of this recommendation with respect to the sponsors having a smaller share of existing VMT, Commission staff recommends that the sponsor set-aside be increased from its current level of 10 percent to 20 percent.

The following summarizes the discussion by Milwaukee TIP Committee members on this potential change to the STP-M evaluation process:

1. Ms. Bussler stated that this is an issue that clearly needs to be addressed. She suggested that in 10 years there could be a group of the largest of the smaller communities that gets all the smaller sponsor funding, and she asked if the project selection process can be adjusted so that communities that have not had their projects recommended for funding get priority for funding. Mr. Muhs stated that this idea is worth considering. Mr. Hoel stated that currently the STP-M process limits eligibility for the smaller-sponsor set-aside to one project every three STP-M funding cycles. He suggested that a way to ensure a larger number of sponsors have a chance of receiving funds under the smaller-sponsor set-aside could be to increase that threshold.

#### Consider Separate Criteria for Evaluating Projects for the Smaller Sponsor Set-Aside That Better Align with The Goals of the Smaller Sponsors

Mr. Hoel stated that Commission staff believe that the results of the evaluation conducted for this requested change confirm the long thought belief that the application of the criteria favor arterials under the jurisdiction of the larger sponsors, which in some part has been alleviated by the smaller-sponsor set-aside. In evaluating projects for the smaller sponsor set-aside, he stated that the Commission staff believe the current evaluation process provides enough variation in scores amongst the projects eligible for the smaller sponsor set-aside to appropriately prioritize the projects. However, should the Committee be

interested in a simplified version of the STP-M evaluation process, he noted that the Commission staff have developed a potential process for evaluating projects eligible for the smaller sponsor set-aside that utilizes a smaller number of evaluation criteria and utilizes thresholds of those criteria that are better suited for the arterials under the smaller sponsor jurisdiction. In addition, Mr. Hoel stated that Commission staff also developed, for the Committee's consideration, potential changes in the thresholds for the measure of use criterion, as described in the memorandum.

The following summarizes the discussion by Milwaukee TIP Committee members on this potential change to the STP-M evaluation process:

1. Responding to an inquiry by Mr. Grisa, Mr. Hoel stated that the projects from the smaller sponsors would be scored under both the current process and the proposed simplified process for the smaller-sponsor set-aside. Mr. Hoel noted that the criteria utilized to evaluate the smaller projects under the simplified methodology would utilize the same information as under the current process.

#### Reconsider Using the Measure of Safety Criterion

Mr. Hoel stated that Commission staff propose that, given the recent trends of increased crashes involving fatalities and serious injuries and the national goal to address those crashes, a safety criterion continue to be utilized to evaluate candidate STP-M reconstruction, resurfacing/reconditioning, and reconstruction projects. If the Milwaukee TIP Committee remains concerned about the effort needed to evaluate this criterion, he stated that an alternative methodology for the safety criterion could be to base points on the rate of fatal/serious injury crashes, rather than the rate of total crashes.

The following summarizes the discussion by Milwaukee TIP Committee members on this potential change to the STP-M evaluation process:

1. Mr. Grisa noted that he had previously recommended that the process for evaluating and prioritizing projects for STP-M funding include a measure of safety criterion, and that he now suggests that this criterion no longer be used. Mr. Grisa suggested that the Committee should encourage project sponsors to use other funding sources, like Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding, to minimize the use of STP-M funding specifically for safety improvements.
2. Ms. Bussler suggested that the State could increase the cap for HSIP funding, noting that project costs for safety projects in Southeastern Wisconsin are increasing. Mr. Varnes replied that the State is hiring a new statewide safety coordinator, and he noted that the State has a lower cap for Southeastern Wisconsin to maximize the number of projects that receive funding.
3. Responding to an inquiry by Mr. Grisa, Ms. Bussler stated that STP-M funding is more competitive than HSIP funding. Mr. Grisa then suggested that the STP-M process could be adjusted to favor projects that also leverage HSIP funding. Mr. Muhs stated that the HSIP project evaluation process does not always align with the safety needs of the City of Milwaukee and that some engineering solutions the City of Milwaukee has considered have not been deemed eligible for HSIP.

#### Reconsider Using the Transit Accessibility Criterion for Capacity Expansion Projects

Mr. Hoel stated that Commission staff recommend continuing to use the provision of transit in the evaluation of capacity expansion projects, consistent with the recommendations of the regional housing plan.

There was no discussion by Milwaukee TIP Committee members on this potential change to the STP-M evaluation process.

Consider Including Non-Traditional Transit, Along with Traditional Transit, in the Criteria Utilized

Mr. Hoel stated that the Commission staff propose that the scoring procedure utilized for the transit be revised to incorporate on-demand microtransit services (currently only FlexRide Milwaukee) based on the communities served with capacity expansion projects located in such communities receiving 1.5 points.

The following summarizes the discussion by Milwaukee TIP Committee members on this potential change to the STP-M evaluation process:

1. Mr. McKay noted that, while FlexRide Milwaukee is an example of an existing non-traditional transit service, there could be other types of non-traditional transit services that would be eligible for the bonus points in the future under the recommended change to the transit accessibility criterion.
2. Ms. Bussler noted that the current STP-M process is valuing FlexRide Milwaukee less at 1.5 points, compared to other types of transit services. Mr. Muhs suggested that two or three points would be appropriate to award to communities served by FlexRide Milwaukee. He noted that FlexRide Milwaukee has a smaller service area, but that its on-demand service is valuable. Mr. McKay responded that FlexRide Milwaukee technically is available to non-workers, and that it differs from regular taxi service and Uber in that it is more affordable.
3. Mr. Edgren asked how FlexRide Milwaukee is funded. Mr. Hoel responded that it is funded by ARPA grants through the State Workforce Integration Grant Program and Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties and fare revenues.
4. Mr. Grisa asked for clarification on the definition of shared-ride taxi, noting that the City of Brookfield has a senior taxi service and that it was his understanding that shared-ride taxi service was available to all residents. Mr. Hoel responded that shared-ride taxi service is an on-demand service provided by certain counties and municipalities in areas not served by local-fixed bus service. It is available to anyone traveling in or adjacent to the service area. Mr. Edgren noted that Ozaukee and Washington Counties signed a memorandum of understanding allowing their shared-ride taxis to cross the county line.

Consider Adding a Criterion Related to Whether Projects are Located on Roadways on the National Highway System (NHS)

Mr. Hoel stated that since projects on principal arterials—about 94 percent of which are on the NHS—are already receiving additional points compared to other roadways, the Commission staff proposes that a criterion related to the NHS not be utilized to evaluate candidate projects for 2028-2029 STP-M funding.

There was no discussion by Milwaukee TIP Committee members on this potential change to the STP-M evaluation process.

#### Consider Adding a Freight-Related Criterion

Mr. Hoel stated that Commission staff propose that the Committee consider adding a new criterion related to freight (at a maximum of 15 points) that involves calculating the number of truck trip ends, as estimated by the Commission's travel simulations models, within a half-mile radius of the project limits.

The following summarizes the discussion by Milwaukee TIP Committee members on this potential change to the STP-M evaluation process:

1. Mr. Kruschke suggested the maximum points for this criterion should be 10 points rather than 15 points.

#### Additional Discussion on Potential Changes to the Evaluation and Prioritization Process

The Milwaukee TIP Committee had the following additional discussion on potential changes to the evaluation and prioritization process for the 2028-2029 STP-M funding cycle:

1. Mr. Grisa stated that there are some roads in the Milwaukee adjusted urbanized area that will never receive STP-M funding and that communities could receive bonus points if they request a lower percent of Federal funding. Mr. Hoel noted that the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) includes a similar bonus in its STP project evaluation and prioritization process.
2. Mr. Muhs stated that, when compared to peer regions in the Midwest, this Committee is an outlier with respect to how STP funds are distributed, noting that other metro areas have a higher proportion of their points received by projects based on policy-based or outcome-based criteria—such as, housing and equity measures—compared to the Milwaukee urbanized area. He stated that the Committee should continue to discuss including such measures in the STP-M project evaluation and prioritization process. Mr. Hoel noted that the Committee previously discussed seven potential outcome-based criteria but took no action and suggested that Committee members provide Commission staff specific outcome-related criteria for consideration.
3. Mr. Grisa asked how progress towards improving job/housing balance can be measured, noting that some communities in the Region are largely built out and that single-family homes will not be torn down to facilitate construction of multifamily housing. Mr. McKay responded that the Commission staff tracks activities by local units of government to monitor progress in achieving the recommendations of the regional housing plan. Mr. Grisa stated that he is concerned that the jobs/housing map used in the STP-M evaluation is not going to change. Mr. McKay agreed, but stated that bonus points could be provided for projects in communities having a job/housing imbalance that have implemented activities supporting affordable housing. Mr. Grisa asked what the connection is between efforts to improve affordable housing and efforts to improve roads. Mr. Leichtling responded that VISION 2050 recommends a balanced transportation system that supports the plans recommended land use.
4. Mr. Brandmeier stated the Committee needs to consider that more people are working from home and may not need roadway expansion. Mr. Hiebert replied that about 75 percent of jobs in the Region are not eligible for remote work, but he noted that more data is needed on this topic.

Committee Agreement on the Proposed Changes to the Evaluation and Prioritization Process

Following discussion of all the proposed changes, the Milwaukee TIP Committee agreed to the following with respect to the evaluation and prioritization process for years 2028-2029 STP-M funding:

- Continue to make transit projects eligible for STP-M funding and to utilize the staff-recommended process to allocate up to 10 percent of STP-M funding for use on transit bus replacement projects;
- Initially recommend 20 percent of STP-M funding be allocated to the smaller sponsor set-aside and to utilize a simplified process for evaluating projects eligible for the smaller sponsor set-aside suggested by Commission staff;
- Modify the thresholds for the measure of use criterion as suggested by Commission staff;
- Continue utilizing the measure of safety criterion, with the modification that points are awarded based on the rate of fatal/serious injury crashes, rather than the rate of total crashes;
- Continue utilizing the transit accessibility criterion;
- Include non-traditional transit, along with traditional transit, in the transit accessibility criterion utilized to evaluate capacity expansion projects, with two bonus points received by capacity expansion projects being served by on-demand microtransit service (currently only FlexRide Milwaukee);
- Not include a new criterion related to whether projects are located on roadways on the National Highway System (NHS); and
- Include a freight-related criterion as recommended by Commission staff, with up to 10 points awarded to projects based on the number of truck trip ends, as estimated by the Commission's travel simulation models, within a half-mile radius of the project's limits.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business coming before the Milwaukee TIP Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m. on a motion from Mr. Edgren, a second from Mr. Schmidt, and a unanimous vote to adjourn by the Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Benjamin R. McKay  
Secretary