Minutes of the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board  
Technical Coordinating Committee  

January 22, 2014  Fitchburg Community Center, Fitchburg Room  2:00 p.m. 

1. Roll Call  
Members Present:  Baker, Scheel, Dunphy, Even, J. Berens (for Hoelker), McComb, C. Petykowski (for Phillips), Sayre, Woodard, Violante  

Members Absent:  Kugler, Beaupre, Beck, Bertch, Cornwell, Coville, Dryer, Stauske, Hessling, Stephany, Kennedy  

Others Present:  W. Schaefer, D. Kanning, M. Erickson, J. Gust, R. Rieder  

2. Approval of November 20, 2013 Meeting Minutes  
Even moved, Scheel seconded, to approve the November 20, 2013 meeting minutes.  Motion carried.  

3. Presentation on U.S. Highway 51 (McFarland to Stoughton) Corridor EIS Study  
(WisDOT SW Region Staff)  
Schaefer introduced Jeff Berens, project manager with WisDOT SW Region. Berens described the limits of the EIS study and environmental constraints throughout the corridor. He stated that the purpose and need of the project was to improve safety, accommodate forecast travel demand, improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and to preserve the corridor. Berens presented information on total crashes and fatal crashes for different segments of the corridor and projected traffic operations. He described the two final “build” alternatives. Alternative A is a low build alternative that involves replacing pavement and intersection and other non-capacity expansion improvements. Alternative B includes expansion of USH 51 to a four-lane expressway and a “bypass” east and north of Stoughton with a posted 55 mph speed limit. Schaefer questioned the need for a 55 mph speed limit on the bypass. Berens said that the speed limit was initially going to be 45 mph, but that the engineers chose the higher speed for safety reasons because of the straight flat rural nature of the roadway now. He said the speed limit could be lowered in the future as development occurred. Berens presented different cross sections for Alternative B. Schaefer said that four-foot wide bike lanes would not be sufficient for cyclists, and suggested that six-foot wide lanes with 11-foot travel lanes be considered instead.  

Berens compared the major impacts of Alternatives A and B, which fall into three categories: relocations, land needed for ROW, and environmental impacts. Berens noted that the bypass is the most controversial part of the study. He explained that a bypass was being studied because USH 51 does not meet the level of service requirements for a NHS route in downtown Stoughton. A capacity expansion along the existing route in downtown Stoughton is not feasible because of impacts to businesses and historic buildings. Berens explained that a bypass would serve travel needs when land north and east of Stoughton is developed. Berens described the Stoughton bypass alternatives, which consist of an east, west and north link. He highlighted the bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, which include completing the southern section of the Yahara River Trail, from CTH B to Skyline Drive. Berens said the cost of Alternative A was estimated between $75 and $90 Million, and the cost of Alternative B between $250 and $290 million. The current schedule calls for the draft EIS to be published in March 2014 and the Final EIS/Record of Decision to be completed in October 2014.  

Woodard asked if Alternative B would be phased, and Berens said that was likely, especially given the low forecast volumes on the east link of the bypass. Woodard asked if the east link route would need to be officially mapped, and Berens said that the communities would need to do that. Schaefer noted that the state had just released updated population forecasts, which are much lower than the ones published in 2008. The state is only predicting a 1,500 increase in Stoughton’s population between 2010 and 2040. Schaefer asked Scheel if the City of Stoughton had considered the
development impacts of the bypass and how it might change their land use plan. Rodney said the city has been delaying an update to the Comprehensive Plan until after the study was completed and an alternative recommended. He emphasized the importance of CTH B between USH 51 and CTH N to the city because of the lack of complete east-west routes due to the river. Overall, he said the city saw the Alternative B improvements as a positive.

4. **Discussion of Issues Associated with WisDOT Administration of the STP Urban Program (WisDOT SW Region and MPO Staff)**

Schaefer introduced Jeff Gust, Planning Chief, and Michael Erickson, Local Program Manager, from WisDOT SW Region. Erickson said there have been changes in how WisDOT Central Office will be administering the STP-Urban Program. The changes affect the allocation of funding for projects and project oversight. He noted that Central Office still has not written a formal policy on these changes, but that has been requested. Erickson described the current process of how SW Region, Central Office, and MPO coordinate project selection and management. He explained that Central Office – not the SW Region – allocates funds to the MPO. Erickson said the reason for the changes was largely due to meeting federal fiscal constraint requirements. Gust added that other reasons for the change were: (1) projects were not being delivered on time; and (2) large urban projects take more than a two-year program cycle to complete. For these reasons, WisDOT increased the program from a two-year program to a four-year program, and then from a four-year program to a six-year program.

Gust described the fiscal constraint issue, saying WisDOT can no longer program more money statewide than it has to spend in any given year. In the past, WisDOT programmed more projects than they could fund. Some of the projects were completed on time, while others were not. WisDOT then had to make sure everything balanced out, from a state-wide perspective. This is no longer acceptable from FHWA’s perspective. To address this issue, WisDOT developed a new method for meeting the fiscal constraint requirement. McComb acknowledged that the FHWA has concurred with WisDOT’s proposed changes for how to meet fiscal constraint requirements. Erickson said the changes will be a challenge for MPOs to implement, however the changes do present new opportunities as well. Larger MPOs with more projects that are ready for construction may be able to shift projects up if another MPO has to delay a project. This is a possible benefit.

Gust compared the old and new fiscal constraint requirements. He noted that in the past, money from delayed projects could be shifted to the next year. With the new policy, the money is no longer carried over. If all of the allocated money within the current two-year funding cycle is not spent because of project delays, the MPO will receive a lower allocation when the next funding cycle is developed; however the allocation will increase again during the following two-year funding cycle, if the delayed projects get constructed, provided there is sufficient funding. Schaefer added that in the past, if there was not enough money left to fund a high-scoring project in a given year, the MPO would program that project in a future year and roll over the balance to that year. Now, WisDOT has informed the MPO that it will receive a new allocation every two years in conjunction with the biennial budget. With the new method, the MPO will program five years of projects, and indicate when the project sponsor would like the project to be scheduled for constructed. WisDOT Central Office will review all of the programmed projects statewide and may require a project to be moved up or down in the schedule. This will require some negotiation due to the various factors involved in scheduling projects. Erickson said that WisDOT Central Office was implementing a more comprehensive change management process to ensure projects are completed in a timely manner. The goal is ensure project schedules are reasonable and to track projects closely to identify issues complicating project delivery. This will also allow the possibility of advanceable projects.

Petykowski asked if the project sponsor will get to request the construction years first, and Erickson said yes. Petykowski said there are things that delay a project that are out of a project sponsor’s control. Erickson concurred. WisDOT may ask the MPO to delay a project because there is not enough statewide funding or because of the impact on another WisDOT project. There is a question as to how this would affect the MPO’s allocation of funding. All of the issues have not been worked
out. Gust said if a project was ready for construction, but was delayed by WisDOT it may not count against the MPO’s allocation. This is still being discussed. In most cases, if a project sponsor asks for construction funding in a given year but does not get it, WisDOT will provide the project sponsor with an advanceable date that would move the project up if funds become available due to a delay in another project statewide.

Erickson said the goal should be to program projects to the allocation amount each year, even though that is obviously not going to be achievable. Currently, the Madison MPO receives a about $6.4 million allocation per year. Petykowski asked if that meant projects totaling over $13 million could not be funded. Erickson said no, but it would require working with WisDOT Central Office. Gust said there will be a benefit to completing a large project early as it may temporarily increase the MPO’s allocation in the next two-year “refresh” of the program. Schaefer said the goal is to understand the rules we can maximize funding to the region.

Schaefer said that with the 6-year program cycle and refresh of the allocation amounts every two years, the MPO would transition to a biannual solicitation of projects. However, the MPO will solicit project applications again this year because communities didn’t know about the change and we are in a transition period. Schaefer said that at the time of application it is important that project sponsors be further along in planning with some initial design work desirable to ensure projects approved can be delivered on time. There will be an incentive to get design work done ahead of time as the project might be able to be advanced.

Sayre asked if CTH PD, which was slated for 2018, will be funded in 2018. Erickson said it should be, but that will need to be approved by WisDOT. Schaefer said an update will be provided when the projects are put into the state’s system. Gust said he and Erickson would come back to talk with the committee when the change management policy and other details are finalized and put in writing.

5. Presentation on Requirements and Expectations for STP Urban and Other Federal Funding Program Projects
(WisDOT SW Region Staff)

Erickson distributed some materials that addressed requirements for federally funded projects, including WisDOT’s management consultant requirements, the Complete Streets law (Trans 75), and portions of a presentation covering WisDOT local program management. He said he could discuss some of these more when they came to a future meeting. Woodard noted that WisDOT can grant requests for exceptions to Trans 75. Erickson said that exceptions are reviewed on a case-by-case basis with many requests being denied.


Schaefer reviewed the changes that had been made to the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) policies and criteria since the initial draft was reviewed with the committee at the November meeting. In accordance with the committee’s recommendation, a sliding scale table for the required cost share was created. He said Phillips had proposed to instead use a formula to calculate an exact cost share percentage. Petykowski handed out the formula. Some changes were also made to the weights for the different criteria based on a recommendation from the MPO’s citizen committee. The Health and Environmental Justice criterion was incorporated into the Usage and Accessibility criterion. That criterion and the Enhance Mobility one were reduced from 25% each to 20%. Safety increased from 10% to 20% and Project Readiness and Cost Effectiveness increased from 10% to 15%.

Even moved, Petykowski seconded, to approve the revised draft policies and project scoring criteria for 2014-2018 TAP applications. Motion carried.
Schaefer reported that WisDOT received 15 TAP project pre-scoping applications totaling about $10 million. WisDOT was reviewing them, and would invite qualified applicants to apply for funding. MPO staff will work with any sponsors whose projects had deficiencies to correct them.

7. Committee Member Reports

Even stated that construction of Waunakee’s first roundabout at STH 19 and STH 113 would commence soon.

Scheel reported that Stoughton was working on a development plan for the Southwest side that included a Wal-Mart. Final plats have been submitted for the area. Wal-Mart is planning a 150,000 square feet building. Future phases near the commercial center will include a residential component. Baker noted that construction of the USH 51 freeway conversion project would start up again this spring.

Petykowski indicated that Madison was waiting for WisDOT’s comments on the design for the East Johnson Street project scheduled for construction this year. Plans would then be finalized. The Mineral Point Road/Junction/CTH M intersection construction would continue after the winter season. It is on schedule. The design for the southern section of CTH M, in particular the CTH PD intersection, had changed and he offered to present the changes at the next meeting. The Cottage Grove Road and CTH PD projects were moving forward. There was some discussion about the impact of let dates on the MPO’s allocation since WisDOT follows a fiscal year. Erickson said this would need to be examined. He said it might be beneficial to let projects in November or December since contractors will bid at a lower price then.

Woodard mentioned WisDOT’s ongoing Verona Road project. He said two local streets, called Spoke and Sprocket Drive, will be constructed connect McKee Road to the Verona frontage road.

8. Staff Reports

Schaefer reported that the MPO Policy Board did not have a quorum at their last meeting, and therefore did not review or make a recommendation on Amendment No. 1 to the 2014-2018 TIP. It was a minor amendment. It included adding $107,000 in STP Urban funding to the East Johnson Road project. This had been originally allocated to support the MPO’s planning program. That project was deleted. WisDOT allowed the funding to be transferred to another project, but said it must be spent by June so the East Johnson project was the only one the money could be used for. Schaefer said he had mentioned this at the last meeting. Schaefer reported that MPO staff was in the process of updating the STP-Urban project scoring criteria. More information will be presented at the next meeting. Staff is proposing to use the same categories for each type of project, but with different specific criteria. Schaefer also mentioned that staff was working on updated growth forecasts, and has also started work on the regional bicycle plan update. An advisory committee was being set up. If interested in serving on it, members should contact him. Schaefer also reported that the MPO would be hiring a consultant to develop a regional ITS plan. The MPO was working closely with City of Madison Traffic Engineering staff on the project.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date is scheduled for February 26, 2014.

10. Adjournment

Dunphy moved, Baker seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Minutes recorded by David Kanning and Bill Schaefer