Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2013 Madison Municipal Building, Room LL-130 5:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: R. Ferrell, J. Rider, T. Stoebig, R. Williams, F. Bartol, G. Rylander, G. Hull (left during item #3)

Members Absent: C. Gjerde, D. Newton

Staff Present: W. Schaefer, M. Cechvala

2. Approval of May 16, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Stoebig moved, Williams seconded, to approve the February 20, 2013 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Presentation on the Transit Corridor (BRT) Study Findings

Schaefer stated that Madison Mayor Soglin made some nice introductory remarks at the April 15 public information meeting on the BRT study. The Mayor indicated he supported moving forward with BRT, but the community needed to first agree on the details. Work could then begin on issues such as funding. Schaefer said the proposed BRT system would be one of the first topics addressed as part of the preparation of the city’s Sustainable Transportation Master Plan. The planning process has not started yet. The city is still in negotiations with the consultant team and a steering committee has not yet been formed. Schaefer said MPO staff would be making a presentation on the BRT study to the Madison Common Council on April 30. He said the draft BRT study report had been posted on the MPO’s website along with other study materials. MPO staff would be reporting on the public meeting, presentations, etc. at the MPO Board’s meeting on May 1. Because the MPO has already gone on record as supporting continued efforts to plan for implementation of BRT, a recommendation of the TDP, he didn’t think any further MPO action was necessary. Cechvala presented the slide show from the public meeting, which included information on the study findings.

Williams asked if the Minneapolis BRT project was included in the list of BRT systems. Cechvala said that Minneapolis has a transitway between the two UMN campuses and will soon be opening the Cedar Avenue BRT line. These two systems are not on the list, which is older, but are on an updated list MPO staff has. Ferrell and Hull asked about Metro’s recent ridership increases. Cechvala and Schaefer responded that ridership had increased at a rate of about 5% per year since 2005, but had declined slightly in 2012 in part because of UW’s budget cuts affecting campus routes and two snow days when service was cancelled. Rylander asked if park-and-ride (PNR) lots were included in the study, and commented that they could substantially increase ridership. Cechvala said they are assumed to be included in the plan, but the study did not develop them in great detail (e.g., identify specific locations, sizes of facilities, etc.) nor include them in the cost or ridership estimates. There would ideally be at least one for each corridor. Cechvala guessed that a PNR lot with about 200-300 spaces on each line might be viable and could perhaps increase ridership by 5-10%. Bartol commented that PNR lots and associated express bus service to outlying communities like Sun Prairie would make the system more regional.

Rider asked about public comments received at the public meeting. Schaefer said there were an estimated 65 people there. There were a few opposed, but most comments were positive. Bartol asked about New Starts/Small Starts federal funding. Cechvala said that the capital costs of the project would likely be eligible for Small Starts or Very Small Starts funding because of the scope of the project. To be eligible, a BRT project must have either 50% of its length be a fixed guideway or be a
corridor project with a certain minimum list of features like branding, stations, frequent service, and transit signal priority. The design process could be initiated without a regional transit authority (RTA), but prior to approval of funding a demonstration of the financial capacity to operate the system would be needed. This would likely require an RTA. Williams commented that he thought the project shouldn’t move forward until a site for an inter-city bus terminal had been established. He said he was also concerned about the impacts to existing local bus service. He stated that he would be angry if the frequency on Park Street was increased to every 15 minutes while Monroe Street, which has been adding transit oriented development, still had 30-minute service. He stated that the signals on the Capitol Square would be a good location for transit signal priority. Rylander added that he had worked for the City of Madison in the 1970s and optimized the signal timing for buses at the request of the Common Council. After some complaints from motorists, that strategy was abandoned.

4. Presentation on the Stoughton Road/USH 51 (Terminal Dr. to STH 19) Study

This item was deferred to the next meeting due to lack of time. Schaefer stated that WisDOT is currently working on the draft environmental impact statement (EIS).

5. Committee Member Reports

This item was skipped due to lack of time.

6. Staff Reports

Schaefer stated that the Transit Development Plan (TDP) was approved by the City of Madison Transit and Parking Commission and Common Council, and by the MPO Board. The MPO board approved the revised urban area and MPO planning boundaries. The planning boundary includes the Village of Oregon even though the village had requested not to be included. The board felt it made sense from a planning perspective to include the village. MPO staff was working with WisDOT staff to revise the functional classification of the roadways based on new traffic count and land use data. With the approval of the new planning area, the board would need to consider changes to the policy board structure. Schaefer also mentioned that MPO staff had started work to review and revise the STP-Urban and Transportation Alternatives program project selection criteria. Research was being done on other MPO criteria.

Rylander suggested that staff reports be moved to the top of the agenda in case members needed to leave early. Schaefer agreed to do that.

7. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date will be Wednesday, May 15, 2013 at 5 pm.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes recorded by William Schaefer and Mike Cechvala