Minutes of the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
Technical Coordinating Committee

April 25, 2012 Fitchburg City Hall, Conference Room 2:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Paoni (for Beaupre), Dunphy, Stauske, Hoelker, Kennedy, McComb, Trowbridge (for Murphy), Petykowski (for Phillips), K. Sellner (for Beck), Sylvester, Woodard

Members Absent: Boardman, Coville, Stephany, Dryer, Even, Kirchner, Kugler, Scheel, Bertch, Violante

Others Present: Schaefer, Cechvala, L. Nelson

2. Approval of February 22, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Stauske moved, Kennedy seconded, to approve the February 22, 2012 meeting minutes with one correction that Stauske was present. Motion carried.

3. Presentation on East Johnson Street Traffic Study and Potential Recommendation to MPO Policy Board

Schaefer stated that a city of Madison resolution to accept the study report and move forward with the design for reconstruction of East Johnson Street as a one-way street was moving through city committees. Thus far, all of the city committees had recommended approval of the resolution. He said he asked city of Madison Engineering staff to make a presentation on the study because it is an important regional transportation corridor and is an STP-Urban funded project. He said a presentation was made to the MPO Policy Board at their last meeting and board members expressed support for the recommendation to maintain the Johnson-Gorham one-way pair. It was on their next meeting agenda to make a recommendation to the city.

Petykowski provided a PowerPoint presentation on the study. He noted that the Johnson Street reconstruction project was between Butler Street and Baldwin Streets and that work was scheduled to begin in Spring 2014. It would include replacement of pavement, curbs, water mains, storm and sanitary sewer, sidewalk as needed, and streetscaping. He said the neighborhood had requested a study of potential two-way conversion. The study evaluated alternatives to the current one-way couplet, but did not study final design details. While other one-way streets have been converted back to two-way, the geography of the isthmus and capacity constraints on East Washington Avenue presented a unique challenge. Four alternatives were considered:

1) The current one-way couplet (Johnson and Gorham Streets)
2) A full two-way conversion from Wisconsin Avenue to Baldwin Street
3) A two-way conversion east of Blair Street with peak period, peak direction parking restrictions (similar to Williamson Street), and
4) A two-way conversion east of Blair Street with a morning parking restriction westbound on Gorham Street and an evening parking restriction eastbound on Johnson Street.

As part of the study, an online survey was conducted with about 500 responses, 60% of which were from residents in the neighborhood and 40% of which lived directly on Johnson or Gorham Street. Respondent’s top goals were improving conditions for bicyclists, improving pedestrian crossings, and maintaining parking. The survey did not ask whether respondents whether they favored a one-way or two-way Johnson Street, but many expressed their opinion and they favored maintaining one-way operation by a factor of about two to one.
Petykowski reviewed the existing and proposed cross sections under the different alternatives. The two-way design required substandard 10-foot lanes, which would have the effect of squeezing the bike lanes. Petykowski described the evaluation matrix used to score the alternatives. The pedestrian crossings were better with the one-way alternative because of longer and more predictable gaps in traffic. Transit would suffer with the full two-way conversion because the projected traffic congestion would impact the schedules. For Alternative 3, he said Johnson and Gorham Streets would work like Williamson and Jenifer Streets with Gorham Street primarily serving local traffic and transit and Johnson Street serving regional traffic. This would be an improvement for transit over the one-way couplet. Exposure to two-way traffic would benefit businesses, but overall traffic diversion to other streets would be a negative. Petykowski stated that the MPO’s regional travel model was used to estimate traffic diversion under the different scenarios. Optimistic assumptions of no growth in traffic volumes and ideal traffic signal timings were used. A high volume of traffic diversion to Mifflin Street, Dayton Street, and East Washington Avenue was projected for the two-way alternatives, pushing the volumes on East Washington Avenue close to 60,000 vehicles per day. The increase in traffic volumes would change the character of Mifflin and Dayton Streets.

Traffic congestion was projected using a Synchro model with extra attention given to key intersections, such as Blair Street at East Washington Avenue and Johnson Street at Wisconsin Avenue. For the two-way conversion alternatives, substantial back-ups are projected at those two intersections. With Alternative 2, traffic was projected to back up on Johnson Street into the University of Wisconsin area. With Alternatives 3 and 4, traffic was projected to back up the length of Blair Street and continue onto Johnson Street. The increased traffic congestion was projected to have a slight negative effect on traffic safety. The costs for all the alternatives were comparable, but retaining the one-way couplet (Alternative 1) would be slightly lower. Petykowski said the study conclusion was that a two-way conversion was not impossible, but that Alternative 1 best balanced the goals of the neighborhood.

Schaefer complimented Petykowski on the study and the comprehensive approach, looking at all of the potential impacts and not just traffic congestion. He said he thought the survey was important as well. Petykowski added that the design would not preclude a two-way conversion in the future if that was desired. Trowbridge commented that some are seeking to reevaluate the decision as part of the City of Madison Transportation Master Plan process, but staff was recommending against that because the same conclusion would likely be reached and the budget for the plan was constrained. He said the scope of work for the transportation plan would include some analysis of traffic circulation in the central Madison area. Schaefer said he listed the item as a potential action item if the committee wanted to make a recommendation to the MPO Board, but there wasn’t a motion to do so.

4. **Review and Recommendation on Amendment #2 to the 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Schaefer stated that there was a request by WisDOT for a minor TIP amendment to add two resurfacing projects on USH 151 north of Verona and STH 69 south of Verona, revise the funding source for the USH 12/18 (Interstate to CTH N) reconstruction project, and move up a year the schedule for design and reconstruction of the Milwaukee Street Bridge over the Interstate.

Sylvester moved, Stauske seconded, to recommend approval of the TIP amendment. Motion carried.

5. **Presentation on 2010 Madison Urbanized Area Boundary Delineated by the U.S. Census Bureau**

Schaefer showed a map of the existing 2000 urbanized area and the new 2010 urbanized area as delineated by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau uses criteria based on population, population density, and impervious surface area to delineate the urbanized area. The impervious surface area criterion was used for the first time as a proxy for employment to include non-residential developments. He said that the Villages of Cross Plains and DeForest had been added to the
urbanized area. The next steps would be for the MPO, working with WisDOT, to delineate an urban area boundary by smoothing the urbanized area boundaries and possibly adding some small areas expected to become urbanized in the next few years. Once the urban area was delineated, the new MPO planning area would then need to be delineated. The planning area defines the official jurisdictional area of the MPO within which projects must be approved for federal funding. The roadway functional classification system will also need to be revised to reflect the new urban area and any other necessary changes based on WisDOT criteria. The MPO will be working with WisDOT on this effort. WisDOT must approve the new urban and planning areas and the revised roadway functional classification system.

Schaefer pointed out that the urban area boundary has important funding implications. For example, projects receiving STP-Urban funding must be located within the urban area boundary while STP-Rural projects must be outside the boundary. This was particularly important for Dane County, which has had more success obtaining STP-Rural funds than STP-Urban funds for projects on the urban periphery. The amount of STP-Urban funding the Madison MPO receives may increase slightly, but it depends upon the changes in other areas of the state and country. He said the boundary also has important transit funding implications. The other potential impact of the urban area expansion was a possible change in the make-up of the MPO Board. Any change would need to be approved by the current board and then also approved by communities making up at least 75% of the population in the planning area. Woodard asked about a possible change in the make-up of the Technical Coordinating Committee, and Schaefer said that would need to be considered as well. Schaefer said the urban area boundary needed to be finalized in two years and the planning area in four years, although he said it should be done well before then.

6. **Update on the Transit Corridor (BRT) Study**

Schaefer stated that staff had reviewed the scope of the BRT study at a previous meeting, but that it would be examining potential bus rapid transit lines, primarily on arterial streets. He showed the alternatives universe map of primary and secondary alignments and projected future extensions that had been developed by MPO staff. The consultant will complete an initial screening of potential alignments. The study will also evaluate the feasibility of and make recommendations on transit priority treatments (bus bulbs, queue jumps, etc.), transit network changes, signal priority, station location and design, and branding. The results will likely be incorporated into the City of Madison’s Transportation Master Plan and future MPO plans. Schaefer said a study oversight committee had been formed and had met once to review the scope of work. The consultant selected for the study was SRF, which is based in the Twin Cities. SRF recently completed a similar study for Metro Transit in Minneapolis/St Paul. Staff and SRF were working to schedule a public information meeting and all-day staff workshop to kick off the project. This was originally planned for July, but was likely to be pushed back to September due to scheduling conflicts. The revised schedule calls for a final report in March 2013. Schaefer said that the Capital Area Regional Plan Commission (CARPC) was hiring a consultant for a transit-oriented development (TOD) market study focusing on the BRT corridors. That study would provide some information to facilitate long-term ridership estimates.

7. **Brief Report on Metro Transit Bus Size Study**

Cechvala stated that Metro Transit had received a planning grant from WisDOT to hire a consultant to conduct a study on the benefits and feasibility of moving to a fleet with different sized vehicles (i.e., 30-foot buses for lower ridership routes and 60-foot articulated buses for high ridership routes). Currently, Metro employs 209 fixed-route transit buses, and all of them are a 40-foot standard length. Overcrowding on some of Metro’s routes had become a major problem. Metro currently handles the problem by running extra buses on overloaded trips. This is an expensive fix to the problem and staff believed that cost savings could ultimately be realized with larger buses. Also, Metro continually receives feedback that the 40-foot buses are too big for low-ridership peripheral service. Metro staff believed that any operating cost savings from smaller buses would be minimal, but it was worth
exploring at least to address the perception of “empty” buses. Cechvala explained that a major challenge to implementing a mixed fleet was that trips are thoroughly interlined and a single bus might perform low-use peripheral service, then medium-use service, and then become overloaded on campus. As a result, the schedules would need to be substantially rewritten. The consultant will look at this and make recommendations. The consultant will also conduct a screenline analysis in the field to obtain better data about the extent of overloading and the routes which are experiencing the highest crush loads. This data is not currently available because Metro has boarding data but no way of accurately obtaining alighting data.

8. Committee Member Reports

Woodard: Fitchburg staff was still waiting for the USH 14 interchange work to resume. Construction of the Post Road extension would start in late May or June.

Petykowski: A public information meeting on the CTH M project would be held on May 24 at 6 pm at the Verona Senior Center. The plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E) for the CTH M and CTH S intersection project was expected to be completed by the end of May and a public meeting would be held in June.

Hoelker: The Stoughton Road (USH 51) EIS would be starting at the end of May with a kickoff meeting scheduled for July. WisDOT hoped to have a contract signed by July for the traffic impact analysis for the Interstate 39/90 corridor – the first phase of the EIS. This would be looking at potential new crossings and interchanges. WisDOT is currently negotiating with a consultant for the O/D study for the Beltline study. They hoped to have a contract signed by September for the second phase – a “planning and environmental linkages” study.

McComb: Work on a federal transportation reauthorization bill continues. In the meantime, SAFETEA-LU was extended for six more months.

9. Staff Reports

Schaefer asked if the transition to electronic meeting packets was acceptable. He said hard copies would still be sent to those who requested it. He said Woodard had a good idea to post the packet to the MPO’s website rather than attach the documents to the email. The Board packet was handled the same way. Hoelker suggested bringing a projector to the meetings to view materials where that was appropriate. Hard copies and CDs of the Regional Transportation Plan 2035 Update were distributed. Schaefer reminded members that TIP project listings and STP-Urban applications were due June 4. He also mentioned that Safe Routes to School applications were due April 4. Schaefer noted that appointments to the MPO policy board were in progress. Steve Ritt and Eileen Bruskewitz would no longer be on the board. He also mentioned that Nick VanderZwan had left the MPO and the planner/travel modeler position was being refilled. In the meantime, HNTB was providing modeling support. Interviews were being held for the vacant rideshare program coordinator position.

10. Next Meeting Dates

The next TCC meetings are scheduled for May 23 and June 21, 2012. The May meeting could be cancelled.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Mike Cechvala and Bill Schaefer