Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2012
Madison Municipal Building, Room LL-130
5:00 p.m.

1. **Roll Call**

   *Members Present:* F. Bartol, R. Ferrell, D. Newton, J. Rider, G. Rylander, R. Williams
   *Members Absent:* C. Gjerde, G. Hull, T. Stoebig
   *Staff Present:* M. Cechvala

   Cechvala stated that the MPO Policy Board confirmed Rylander’s appointment and he is now a member of the Citizen Advisory Committee. Ryland is a traffic engineer with 35 years of professional experience who recently moved back to Madison.

2. **Approval of February 15, 2011 Meeting Minutes**

   Ferrell moved, Rider seconded, to approve the February 15, 2012 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. **Presentation on Major Issues to be Addressed in the Transit Development Plan (TDP) and Analysis of Metro Service and Boarding Data**

   Cechvala stated that the Transit Development Plan is a five-year short- to mid-range transit planning exercise that the MPO is leading with Metro’s assistance. The last TDP was for 2004-2008. A 2009-2013 TDP process was started but was not completed because the MPO was assisting with the development of the RTA, was short-staffed, and other projects took priority. MPO prepared a TDP Issues memo, which highlights the major issues the TDP will address. He encouraged members to review it and provide feedback. The Issues memo lays out the major challenges that the TDP will attempt to address, such as fixed route service improvements to maximize the utility of the system and reduce overcrowding, bus stop spacing, and also notes related transit studies like the City of Madison Transportation Master Plan, bus rapid transit (BRT) study, Metro maintenance facility, and others.

   Cechvala stated that there is a TDP committee that will guide the process and one meeting was held. He went through an abbreviated version of the presentation showing the analysis of transit service and ridership data, a full version of which is available on the MPO’s website in the “Other Projects” section. He stated that most of the ridership data shown was from a three-week set of farebox data in early October 2011 that was provided by Metro.

   Cechvala explained that the system data and farebox boarding data analysis is the first step to developing conceptual future service changes. The MPO is also working with Metro to develop a service design guidelines and performance standards document; the effort was started with the 2009 TDP and a draft document produced. Cechvala said he would like the TDP to list and prioritize conceptual future service changes – right now, no such document exists. Metro planners have some ideas for improvements but most planning is short-term out of necessity.

   Cechvala stated that Metro had made an effort to reduce the number of bus stops on the isthmus in order to reduce travel times and increase reliability, but was met with substantial opposition. The TDP will use a data-driven and comprehensive planning approach to develop some concepts for discussion. Bus stop spacing involves a trade-off between convenient access to the system with close stops and fast, reliable service with longer stops. Williams stated that factors need to be considered
such as land use densities and proximity to retirement homes, etc., and that he was concerned that stops may be removed without sufficient planning.

4. **Update on the Transit Corridors (BRT) Study**

Cechvala stated that the BRT study was funded through CARPC’s Sustainable Communities grant, a multi-million dollar planning grant intended to connect transportation and development planning, among other things. The MPO released an RFP for the work in January and three proposals were submitted from SRF, URS, and Nelson\Nygaard. All were good proposals, and the selection committee chose SRF because they had the most well-rounded experience and expertise and just finished a similar study in the Twin Cities. Nelson\Nygaard had a very good proposal for transit planning but it was weaker on traffic engineering and signal priority. URS had extensive experience with major transit investments like heavy rail and commuter rail in large cities, but was lighter on overall transit planning and smaller bus rapid transit studies. Joe Kern will be the lead for the project from SRF and Katie Roth will be involved with transit planning; she has extensive experience working for Metro Transit in Minneapolis.

Cechvala and Newton briefly mentioned the transit-oriented development (TOD) market study that CARPC is conducting, which will provide input to the BRT study. Cechvala stated that CARPC had issued an RFQ and then followed with an RFP. He did not believe that the proposals were received yet. The market study will determine the potential for transit oriented development along the BRT corridors.

5. **Brief Update on the Metro Transit Bus Size Study**

Cechvala stated that Metro had received a grant from WisDOT to study a more diverse bus fleet that would include smaller, 30-foot buses as well as larger, presumably 60-foot articulated buses. The potential advantage of smaller buses is that they may reduce fuel consumption and fit into peripheral neighborhoods better than the standard 40-foot buses. 60-foot buses could reduce overcrowding on Metro’s busiest routes, especially Route 80 and west-side University Avenue corridor service.

Metro has repeatedly taken the position that 30-foot buses are not practical because of passenger loads during peak periods and would not reduce operating costs, so they wanted to be at an “arm’s length” from the study so that their opinion would not affect the outcome. As a result, the MPO is leading the effort while Metro is doing the administrative work and will be involved. Metro has expressed a strong interest in 60-foot buses, but there is substantial planning work to be done to implement them: bus stops would need to be lengthened, maintenance facilities may need to be modified, and the current maintenance/parking facility is already over capacity. The RFP for the work is currently in development.

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

Cechvala stated that the Census Bureau had released its revised urban area boundaries from the 2010 Census and he presented a map showing the new boundary, the old boundary, and the MPO planning boundary. A new algorithm was used to delineate the boundary that included not only households but also impervious areas to capture office parks and other employment and retail areas. The Villages of DeForest and Cross Plains have been added to the urbanized area.

Cechvala continued that the next step is for the MPO to smooth and finalize the boundary which needs to be approved by the state. The boundary is important because projects inside the boundary are eligible for STP-Urban federal funds while projects outside the boundary are eligible for STP-
Rural funds. The MPO will also have a chance to revise its planning area boundary and the roadway classifications.

Williams suggested that the Village of Oregon should be added to the MPO planning boundary.

7. Committee Member Reports

Williams stated that the Talgo trains that were purchased for the Milwaukee-to-Madison high-speed rail line were currently sitting unused in Milwaukee and there is a group trying to find a way to put them into service. There is a section of railroad in north Milwaukee that needs to be repaired, and there is disagreement between Amtrak and the railroad as to how much it should cost. Williams also stated that the U.S. House of Representatives has voted to defund the American Community Survey. He suggested that the MPO draft and send a letter voicing their concern and support for continued funding for the ACS.

8. Staff Reports

Cechvala stated that the RTP 2035 was complete and has been adopted by the MPO Policy Board. He distributed the print and CD copies. He reported on a proposed Amendment #2 to the 2012-2016 TIP. The USH 12/18 reconstruction project east of I-39/90 was to be designed in 2012. WisDOT is looking at converting the segment east to CTH N to a freeway. The USH 151 resurfacing (CTH VV to the CNR rail line) would be designed in 2012 and constructed in 2017-2018. WisDOT is adding a resurfacing project on STH 69 from Valley Rd to CTH D.

Cechvala reported that there are 14 policy board members with two-year terms and half of the appointments are currently up – three from the City of Madison, two from Dane County, Steve Ritt from the cities and villages who will be replaced, and Eileen Bruskewitz from the towns who will be replaced because she is not running for reelection to the Dane County Board of Supervisors.

Cechvala stated that the MPO currently has two staff vacancies, the Rideshare Coordinator, formerly held by Ward Paxton, and the Planner/Travel Modeler, formerly held by Nick VanderZwan. Final interviews for the Rideshare Coordinator will be held in the next week or two. Applications for the Travel Modeler are currently being reviewed; interviews will be held in June.

Cechvala stated that the City of Madison had asked the intercity bus operators to fund the removal of parking spaces in front of the Red Gym and Pyle Center so that the intercity bus stop could be moved there from its current location in front of the Memorial Union while the Union is undergoing renovations. They had agreed and that is moving forward. There were not currently active planning activities that Cechvala was aware for the long-term development of an intercity bus/rail terminal, but the issue may be included in the City of Madison Transportation Master Plan.

Cechvala briefly mentioned that WisDOT was conducting an origin/destination study on the Beltline Highway using blue-tooth technology. WisDOT is also conducting an EIS for the USH-51 project and a study of I-39/90/94, which may look at potential new interchanges.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 18, 2012.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Mike Cechvala