Madison Area Transportation Planning Board  
Citizen Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  

January 22, 2014 Madison Municipal Building, Room LL-130 5:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Absent: E. Fisher, C. Gjerde, J. Rider
Staff Present: B. Schaefer, M. Cechvala

2. Approval of November 20, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Rylander moved, Newton seconded, to approve the November 20, 2013 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Staff Reports

Schaefer said that the MPO Policy Board did not meet on January 15, 2014 due to lack of quorum. The TIP amendment that was supposed to be approved will be on the February meeting agenda. Schaefer distributed the project cost/funding, schedule, and scope changes for the amendment. He mentioned the additional STP Urban funding for the East Johnson Street project. This is additional funding beyond the MPO’s original allocation that WisDOT agreed to provide because of the elimination of the MPO planning support project. The MPO no longer needs to use STP Urban funds to support its program. The funding had to be spent by June 2014 so it had to be applied to the East Johnson Street project.

Staff prepared a Program Management Plan for the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities program, which is a federal requirement. The MPO will select projects and Metro Transit will administer the program. Funds will be used in 2014 to continue Metro’s in-person paratransit eligibility assessments and Dane County’s mobility management program, as well as passenger amenities for Metro Transit and travel training services for Dane County. Stoebig asked why the Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee wouldn’t be more appropriate to administer the program. Schaefer responded that Metro has experience in administering federal transit grants. Stoebig suggested coordination of the paratransit eligibility assessments and travel training services with the Aging and Disabilities Resource Center.

Schaefer distributed a draft comment letter staff prepared on behalf of the MPO Policy Board to WisDOT on the draft 2030 Rail Plan. He said the MPO Board Chair would probably go ahead and send the letter since the MPO Board wasn’t able to approve it at the January meeting and the official deadline for comments had already passed. He said staff had already sent in similar comments. The main concern is that Madison is only mentioned as a possible reroute on the Chicago-to-Twin Cities route in the long term, but extending the Hiawatha service from Milwaukee to Madison as planned prior to 2010 is not included. The plan does, however, include additional frequency on the Hiawatha Service and one additional train in each direction between Chicago and the Twin Cities. Williams said that Minnesota studied the route for high speed rail between Chicago and the Twin Cities and Wisconsin did not participate; as a result they chose the existing Empire Builder route through Columbus, La Crosse, and Winona. Williams added that the City of Madison should continue to pressure WisDOT to include Madison in high speed rail planning.

Schaefer said that the Stoughton Road (Beltline to I-94) EIS will be completed in 2-3 months. Mayor Soglin has asked WisDOT to respond to various requests to study a boulevard alternative to the planned limited-access expressway. Rylander commented said that Stoughton Road was the original long-distance highway, and the land uses reflect that. Schaefer said that there were also concerns related to motorists being able to see business with the depressed roadway design in the
Buckeye/Pflaum area. Schaefer said that the Beltline Highway study is working out roadway and transit improvement concepts to evaluate.

Schaefer mentioned that staff are developing a scope of work for an ITS plan and Rylander is assisting with the project.


Schaefer said that the citizen committee recommendations from the last meeting were incorporated into the revised draft. The City of Madison Engineer suggested a formula rather than the step approach for determining the maximum allowable federal share for projects, based on total project cost. The technical committee recommended approval with that change. In response to a question, he said $2.5 to $2.9 million would be allocated to the Madison area; additional funding allocated statewide also may be available for area projects.

5. **Presentation on U.S. Highway 51 (McFarland to Stoughton) Corridor EIS Study**

Schaefer reviewed a Powerpoint presentation that had been provided by WisDOT staff on the study to the MPO Policy Board. He said that the project limits were set as south of the Beltline Highway through Stoughton to the Interstate, which affected the alternatives under consideration. WisDOT looked at expanding STH-138 and CTH-N as alternatives to expanding USH-51, but those alternatives were dismissed. Hull asked about traffic congestion on Highway 51. Schaefer said there are about 10,000 vehicles per day. The congestion is not bad now, but there are significant safety and access problems. The area south of McFarland has four times the state average number of crashes for comparable facilities with 6 fatal crashes between 2010 and 2013.

Schaefer reviewed the two final alternatives being considered. Alternative A is a low cost project with retrofits at intersections and along the corridor as well as access management. Alternative B adds auxiliary lanes through McFarland and reconstructs the highway with an urban cross section. Alternative B includes a 4-lane expressway to Stoughton and a controversial bypass to the north and east of Stoughton. The bypass is necessary because it is not possible to expand Main Street in Stoughton with the buildings that are close to the sidewalk. There are several alternative alignments for bypass; it would likely be built in stages because of the low projected volumes – about 4,000 vehicles per day. Schaefer noted he project has many challenges, including archaeological sites, parks, and wetlands. He said MPO staff would be preparing comments on behalf of the board when the EIS document is released in the next couple of months or so.

Williams asked about the City of Stoughton’s position on the bypass. Schaefer said the city was less interested in the eastern portion of the bypass, but supportive of the project in general.

6. **Presentation on Draft Metro Bus Size Study Report**

Cechvala said that the bus size study is nearing completion and there will be a presentation to the City of Madison Transit & Parking Commission in February. The MPO served as project manager. He reviewed the methodology of the study, which was conducted by Nelson\Nygaard. He explained that as buses cycle through the system during a typical day, they often begin trips empty and then fill up in the downtown area and some people may not realize that. Among the study conclusions was that 5 or 6 buses in Metro’s fleet could be converted to small buses in order to save fuel and reduce the perception of large empty buses. Based on the consultant’s experience, however, it would be inefficient to have less than 10 buses from a dispatching and logistics perspective. In the future, with some service restructuring and future implementation of BRT or regional transit service, there may be a niche for smaller buses. It was also concluded that 40 or more buses could be converted to large articulated buses, but many of the routes that were observed to be overcrowded were peak-only, which would be inefficient if the large buses were not used throughout the day.
Stoebig asked if Metro could have some small buses that are only used during evenings and weekends. Cechvala said that would be very inefficient from a cost perspective because they would have to buy additional vehicles rather than replace a standard bus with a small bus, and Metro currently does not have enough funding for the regular replacement of its buses, let alone storage space for additional buses. Rylander asked about the status of the BRT project. Cechvala said that it is moving along, but slowly. The City of Madison Transportation Master Plan will likely recommend moving forward with BRT; the next steps will be to define a project and use Transport 2020 grants for project planning and development work.

7. Presentation on Draft Market Study of Walkable, Transit-Supportive Development in Dane County
   The Committee deferred discussion of this item to the next meeting.

8. Committee Member Reports
   Williams said he is interested in knowing whether bus carriers can be required to use the proposed intermodal terminal; he sees that as a critical issue. He is also concerned with the amount of space on the site recommended by the South Capitol TOD Study Committee.

9. Next Meeting Date
   The next meeting date is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26, 2014. Schaefer noted that was the fourth rather than the regular third Wednesday.

10. Adjournment
    The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Minutes were recorded by W. Schaefer and M. Cechvala