

Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (an MPO)
April 2, 2008 Meeting Minutes

1. Roll Call

Members present: Tom Clauder, Joe Clausius, Ken Harwood, Duane Hinz, Brett Hulsey, Chuck Kamp, Jerry Mandli, Al Matano, John Vesperman, Robbie Webber

Members absent: Eileen Bruskewitz, Mark Opitz, Satya Rhodes-Conway, Paul Skidmore

Staff present: Bob McDonald, Bill Schaefer, Bob Pike

2. Approval of March 5, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Moved by Harwood, seconded by Hinz, to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

None

4. Public Comment (for items not on MPO Agenda)

None

5. Consideration of MPO Appointment to Madison's Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission

Matano recommended reappointment of Rhodes-Conway to the position. Moved by Webber, seconded by Clauder. Motion carried.

6. Presentation on the Beltline Safety and Operations Study by Larry Barta, WisDOT Southwest Region

McDonald said there are many ongoing projects and corridor studies in the MPO area, and staff is scheduling presentations on these to get all of the Board members up to speed on them, particularly since many of the members are new. The presentation tonight is on the Beltline study, which is focusing on safety and traffic operations issues, particularly at the interchange areas. He introduced Larry Barta with WisDOT, the project manager.

Barta provided a power point presentation on the study. The project limits run from USH 14 in Middleton to CTH N east of the Interstate. The study objectives are to identify existing and future safety and operational issues, develop and prioritize solutions that reduce crashes and extend the useful life of the Beltline without adding mainline capacity, and to increase interchange capacity/efficiency. He noted the Beltline's importance as part of the State's backbone system and only continuous east-west route south of the downtown Isthmus. He showed a graphic indicating that despite the regional importance of the route, a high percentage of trips are "local." In response to a question from Webber, he said "local" in the context of this facility meant that the trip origins and destinations were within the metropolitan or central county area. Barta reviewed crash statistics from 2000-2004, high crash rate segments compared to other urban freeways in the state, traffic volume data, and traffic forecasts by segment. The majority of segments are projected to operate at Level of Service (LOS) E or F by 2030 with a lot of stop-and-go traffic, increasing to the traffic diversion to the local street network that is already occurring during peak periods. He also showed a table ranking the interchange (merge/diverge) areas in terms of crash rate compared to other interchanges on the State's backbone system, this time not distinguishing urban from rural. The top two crash locations on the Beltline—Fish Hatchery Road Eastbound and Park Street Eastbound Weave—are also the top two in the entire state. The movements were broken down by weave, merge, and diverge. Webber asked if the diverge movement crash would involve a vehicle being rear-

ended. Barta said yes and in large part that relates to the need for more ramp space. He showed a chart illustrating the analysis done for each segment, looking at the physical condition (pavement, bridges), roadway geometry (how well it meets current freeway standards), crash experience, and traffic operations.

WisDOT is looking at low-cost short-term solutions that can be easily implemented and might handle traffic for another 6-8 years and higher cost, mid-term solutions that might improve operations another 5+ years beyond that. For the mid-term solutions they want to make sure the improvements are compatible with any longer term solutions. The focus of short- and mid-term solutions is two fold: (1) reduce crashes by eliminating ramp back-ups into the mainline roadway, eliminating weave conflicts, and fixing geometric deficiencies; and (2) increasing interchange capacity by adding and extending ramp turn lanes, lengthening ramp merge/diverge areas, and improving side road intersections, typically adding turn lanes. The ramp backups are, in large part, because enough traffic can't get through the intersection in the signal time. Adding turn lanes on the ramps allows more vehicles to get through in a cycle. Lengthening the ramp merge lanes provides more space for vehicle conflicts to get worked out without resulting in slow downs or crashes on the mainline. Another issue in some locations is the side road and ramp intersections are too close together, reducing the ability of the signals to work well. Webber commented that adding turn lanes makes it more difficult for pedestrians to cross the intersections. Barta said WisDOT is also trying to make improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists where they can do so.

Barta reviewed projects in the different interchange areas. The short-term projects are already programmed for construction in late 2008. He reviewed those first. At both Old Sauk and Mineral Point Roads, the improvements involved adding and lengthening turn lanes on the ramps and at the intersection. Also, the eastbound third lane on Mineral Point Road will be extended from the southbound ramp to Tree Lane with the bike lane reconstructed. At Seminole Highway, signals and left turn lanes will be added with to both ramp intersections to improve traffic flow through the intersection. The capacity of the westbound off-ramp will be increased. Bike lanes will be retained and bus stop improvements made. Turn lanes will be added on the westbound off-ramps at Park Street and Rimrock Road. Part of the reason for the needed off-ramp capacity at Rimrock Road and other locations is the interchanges function as escape routes when there is a crash or incident on the Beltline. Turn lanes are also being added to both ramps at Stoughton Road. The eastbound off-ramp is particularly problematic because of the heavy eastbound-to-northbound traffic movement. The separate Stoughton Road study is looking at longer term solutions for that interchange.

Barta next reviewed the mid-term projects. At Fish Hatchery Road, in 2009 the southbound-to-eastbound loop on-ramp will be removed. A traffic signal will then be added at the south ramp intersection and left turn lanes added. Deceleration lanes will be created for eastbound traffic entering the loop off-ramp to head north. WisDOT was going to add turn lane capacity to the westbound off-ramp, but now will have funding to make longer term improvements in 2012 that will involve realigning the off-ramp to the south. The 2012 improvements will remove the northbound to westbound loop on-ramp and realigning the westbound on-ramp to create a diamond interchange for the two ramps. The frontage road will need to be moved as a result, requiring the acquisition of two businesses. The bridge over the Beltline will be reconstructed and widened. Total cost is estimated at \$6.4 million.

At Park Street, similar improvements will be made to address the same eastbound weave problem with construction sometime between 2010-'12. The eastbound to northbound loop off-ramp will be removed and a full signal added at the intersection south of the Beltline by splitting the eastbound to southbound ramp. By eliminating the loop ramp, the northbound to eastbound on-ramp can be relocated to provide more distance for vehicles to increase their speed before entering the Beltline. An auxiliary lane between Rimrock and Park Street will be added in both directions, which is effective in improving the weave. Total cost for this work is estimated at \$6.7 million. The interchange with the Interstate has been studied as part of the Interstate expansion study from Madison to the Illinois State line. Sub-standard features

include the left exit ramps and the two loop ramps. The proposal is to separate out the through traffic from the turning traffic with a collector/distributor system. The work is not programmed and needs approval from the Transportation Projects Commission as a majors project.

In terms of next steps, Barta said the report for this phase of the study will be finished, prioritizing the alternatives, including auxiliary lanes on the West side and ramp meters. WisDOT will then need to begin programming the projects as funding becomes available. A third phase of the study will then be initiated looking at construction of additional grade-separated crossings. Some of these were already given an initial look as part of the Verona Road/West Beltline EIS. The reason is that a substantial amount of the traffic traveling through the interchange areas is simply crossing, but not getting on the Beltline. Neighborhood impacts must be considered, however, and it will be difficult at this point to add any.

7. Consideration of Letter of Response Regarding Invitation to Become a Participating Agency on the USH 151/Verona Road Corridor Study

McDonald said that SAFETEA-LU is now requiring that for any Federally funded project potential participating agencies, including environmental agencies and the MPO, must sign off on the EIS. The MPO is in fact already a participating agency because the MPO reviews the plans and comments on EISs. However, the acknowledgement must be in writing. Included in the packet is a draft letter accepting the invitation to become a participating agency in the development of the Supplemental DEIS for the study focusing on short-term improvements to Verona Road and possible modifications to long-term alternatives evaluated in the DEIS. Moved by Harwood, seconded by Kamp to approve release of the letter. Motion passed.

8. Consideration of Press Release, Citizen Participation Effort, and Generalized Schedule for Preparing the 2009-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Dane County Area

McDonald said that it's that time of year when we start the TIP process. A draft schedule and press release have been prepared. The schedule includes meeting dates and the steps for adoption of the TIP. McDonald said staff would like to make one change to the Citizen Participation Schedule, adding item #11, which notes the November 3 deadline for submittal of the TIP to WisDOT for inclusion in the State TIP. Moved by Kamp, seconded by Clausius to approve the schedule and press release. Motion carried.

9. Consideration of Letter of Transmittal Requesting Projects for the STP-Urban Funding and TIP Update

McDonald said this is the letter sent out to all units of government within Dane County requesting projects to be submitted for inclusion in the TIP and to units in the MPO planning area requesting applications for STP-Urban projects. There is a typo in the Re: line. The date should be June 9. Schaefer also noted that staff plan to add a sentence at the top of page 2 (after it says forms are included in the mailing) to say that the forms will also be available on the MPO's website for filling out electronically. Along with the letter are the project listing form and the STP-Urban project application form. The STP-Urban project application form has been revised and expanded to ask for more information to help in scoring and ranking the projects. Staff has been working on the revised form with the TCC, and previously discussed this with the Board. Moved by Kamp, seconded by Webber, to approve letter with the changes. Motion carried.

10. Overview of Selection Process for Surface Transportation Program (STP) – Urban Transportation Projects

McDonald said the Board had requested that staff review with them how projects are scored and ranked. There is a paper that describes the process, which is included in the TIP. Staff planned to provide an overview of the process tonight and then have more discussion and review some example projects at the

following meeting. Schaefer then reviewed the paper. The introduction includes background information, including other Federal funding programs. This helps show how the STP-Urban program fits in with all the other programs as it is only a small piece of the overall Federal funding “pie.” One of the goals of the TIP process is to maximize funding that comes to the region from all funding sources. The STP Urban funds are part of the overall surface transportation program. States receive an allocation of STP funding based upon lane miles of roadway, estimated VMT, etc. Ten percent of the STP funding must be set aside for the Local Transportation Enhancement Program, which is the primary source of funding for independent bicycle projects. The remainder of the funding is then distributed among the different areas of the state. As an urban area with over 200,000 in population, the Madison area receives a direct allocation of funds. The list of projects eligible for funding under the STP is extensive and includes just about any type of capital project. One limitation for roadway projects is the roadway must be local and on the Federal aid system, which includes those classified as regional arterials and urban or major rural collectors. The classification of the roadways is done periodically by the MPO in cooperation with FHWA, WisDOT, and local units of government. McDonald added that this is quite a lengthy process. Other eligible projects include pedestrian and bicycle projects, transit capital projects, ITS, TDM, etc. Some non-infrastructure projects such as bicycle education are eligible as well. Hulseley asked if the current \$6 million allocation to the Madison area under SAFETEA-LU is in jeopardy. McDonald said the future allocation is uncertain because SAFETEA-LU expires in 2009. In the past the allocation was cut, but WisDOT utilized other funds to prevent the program allocation from being reduced.

Schaefer highlighted the SAFETEA-LU, RTP, and TIP goals and objectives for the TIP process, and the process used to develop the prioritized listing of STP-Urban projects. He then went over the project criteria. There are two types: (1) initial screening criteria that projects must meet before staff will score and rank them; and (2) scoring criteria. The screening criteria are that the project must be in the RTP (or for a smaller project consistent with the plan), be consistent with SAFETEA-LU goals (including public participation in developing the project), and have reasonable cost estimates with a local commitment of funds. McDonald said staff check this by seeing if the project is in the local unit of government’s capital improvement program. Schaefer then went over the scoring criteria and how each is typically applied to roadway and other projects. Some such as Congestion Prevention and the five criteria under External Impacts only apply to TDM and TSM type projects. This is why, for example, the ridesharing program scores well. There are two criteria that address Congestion Relief, one that focuses on existing congestion and another that address future and/or latent demand.

Schaefer said that at the next meeting staff will go over the scoring of some example projects from the current listings and perhaps some already completed projects. This will help give the Board members an idea of how certain projects shake out in terms of the scoring. Harwood said he was concerned that the traffic projections don’t take into account recent or changed development circumstances, and wondered if there was an opportunity to reevaluate those projects. McDonald responded that the criterion on page 8 under VI (Land Use and Transportation System Change Interrelationship) addresses this. Perhaps even more important, the RTP is updated every five years and as part of that process staff compares recent development activity with the RTP forecasts to see where changes might need to be made in the land use assumptions. That work has actually already begun. Schaefer said that updated forecasts for particular areas are being done regularly as communities ask MPO staff to prepare forecasts for new or revised neighborhood plans. If new information was available related to a project, staff would re-score the project based on that. McDonald added as part of the analysis done for neighborhood plans a build out scenario is assumed along with the official year 2030 forecast. This allows staff to see how traffic might grow if growth trends shift within the metropolitan area. Hinz asked about the TCC review of the scoring of projects, and McDonald said staff review the draft scoring and ranking of projects with the TCC, which then makes a recommendation on the project listings. Kamp asked if staff had researched the criteria that other MPOs use. McDonald said this has been done in the past and there are wide

variations in the criteria that different MPOs use. For smaller MPOs, their criteria tend to not be as multi-modal.

11. Status Report by TPB Board Members on Projects Potentially Involving the TPB:

- **Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force**
McDonald said that the New Starts application to FTA is ready or just about ready and would probably be submitted in the near future. Some changes to the supporting technical data will need to be made. For example, an on-board survey is being conducted to gather O-D and other data to make sure that the transit/mode choice model is accurately calibrated.
- **USH 51 (USH 12/18 to I 90/94/39) Corridor Study**
McDonald mentioned that public meetings have been scheduled to present the final alternatives for the three levels of potential improvements for each segment of the roadway between the Beltline and the Interstate.
- **North Mendota Parkway Implementation Oversight Committee**
McDonald said another meeting is being set up to review potential roadway corridor alignments. At the last meeting, staff reviewed the maps of the environmental resources in the corridor and the committee discussed the boundaries of the planned E-Way. They still need to consider how the E-Way and the roadway will be integrated. Both will be officially mapped after the conclusion of the study.
- **USH 51 (McFarland to Stoughton)**
McDonald reported that an engineering team had completed a value engineering study, and the consultants had presented their recommendations, which included adding some sub-alternatives. The consultants are now trying to decide how to fold these in to the study.

12. Discussion of Future Work Items:

- **Continued Discussion of Selection Process for STP Urban Projects**
McDonald said staff would review the scoring of some example projects at the next meeting.
- **Verona Road/West Beltline Interim Improvements**
McDonald stated that WisDOT and the consultants were working on the southern segment of Verona Road (Williamsburg Way/CTH PD), looking at different alternatives as part of the Supplemental DEIS. Some public meetings and presentation for the Board will be scheduled in the future on these.
- **Dane County Clean Air Coalition**
McDonald said that he would be scheduling a presentation by the staff person for the coalition to discuss what the coalition is doing and provide data on the county's air quality designation status.
- **Restructure of the Citizen Advisory Committee**
Ongoing.
- **Ped/Bike Safety Education Program**
McDonald said a presentation would be scheduled on this program, which is partially funded with STP-Urban funds.

13. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

McDonald indicated that he wasn't sure if the next meeting would be held at the Water Utility or in the MMB.

Webber requested that staff post the MPO Board meeting packet on the MPO website for members of the public to access. She said this would have been helpful for the power point presentation, for example. McDonald said staff could do this.

14. Adjournment

Moved by Webber, seconded by Clausius, to adjourn. Motion carried.