Minutes of the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
Citizen Advisory Committee

April 15, 2008 Madison Municipal Bldg., Room LL-120 5:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call


   Members Absent: R. Ferrell, C. Gjerde, C. Wittke

   Staff Present: B. Schaefer

   Others Present: G. Hull

2. Presentation on Beltline (USH 12/14/18/151) Safety and Traffic Operations Study

   Schaefer said there were a number of ongoing corridor studies that staff wants to keep the committee up to speed on. At the last meeting, staff made a presentation on the Stoughton Road (USH 51) (Interstate 90/94 to Beltline) Study. This is another one focusing on safety and traffic operations issues, particularly at the interchange areas. Schaefer went through a power point presentation that WisDOT staff had provided to the MPO Board at its April meeting. 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. Despite the regional importance of the route, a high percentage of trips are “local” (i.e., trip origins and destinations within the metropolitan area). Schaefer then reviewed crash, traffic volume, and forecast data.

   Schaefer said 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) reducing 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. Schaefer then reviewed recommended short- and mid-term projects in the different interchange areas. The short-term projects are already programmed for construction in late 2008. Some of the mid-term projects are scheduled for 2009-2012 (e.g., Fish Hatchery Rd., Park St.), while others (e.g., Interstate interchange) are not currently programmed.

   In terms of next steps, Schaefer said WisDOT will first finish the report for this phase of the study, prioritizing the alternatives, including auxiliary lanes on the West side and ramp meters. WisDOT will then begin programming the projects as funding becomes available. A third phase of the study will 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. Sundquist asked if any consideration had been given to the demand side (i.e., land use changes). Schaefer responded that the traffic forecasts are based upon the MPO’s regional forecasts and those are based upon local comprehensive plans. WisDOT doesn’t have any authority over land use development nor does the MPO. Schaefer added that the only thing that would have a major impact on travel demand is pricing strategies for which there is no
political support. Hiniker commented that he also thought we need to start looking at reducing travel demand rather than just supply.

3. **Overview of Surface Transportation Program (STP) – Urban Transportation Project Selection Process**

Schaefer said he had reviewed the process once before with the committee. However, he wanted to go over the process and project selection criteria in more detail, particularly for the benefit of the new members. He explained that as an urban area with over 200,000 in population, the Madison area receives a direct allocation of funds that the MPO prioritizes for funding. Currently, the allocation is about $6 million per year. The STP – Urban program is a subset of the overall STP program. States receive an allocation of STP funds based upon roadway miles, estimated VMT, etc. Ten percent of STP funds are set aside for the Transportation Enhancements program, which is the main source of funding for independent bicycle projects. The remainder of the funds is distributed to different areas of the state. The introduction includes background information such as the 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 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. 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.

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. In response to a question from Hiniker, Schaefer 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 a future meeting staff could go over the scoring of some example projects from the current listings and perhaps some already completed projects. Sundquist asked if a priority was assigned to the criteria. Schaefer responded that all of the criteria are scored the same. Any priority is based on the number of criteria addressing a particular topic. This is something that could be explored further. Sundquist said he thought it would be helpful to assign a priority to each criteria as an initial step in assessing the project selection process.

4. **Committee Member Reports**

Item deferred.
5. **Staff Reports**

Schaefer reported that the appointments of one-half of the Board are up. There may be a change in one of the small cities/villages appointments, but otherwise it looks like the others will be reappointed. He noted that staff is continuing to look at expanding the citizen advisory committee. Staff will take Greg Hull’s name to the Board for approval. Greg attended the first part of the meeting, but had to leave early. He also reported on a minor TIP amendment that was processed. The major item at the next meeting will be reviewing the draft scoring and ranking of Statewide Multi-modal Improvement Program project applications for FYs 2009-2011. MPOs rank projects in their planning area for consideration by the state committee that has final authority for selecting the projects.

Williams asked that the Dutch Mill Park-and-Ride lot be put on the list as a future agenda item. There was also some discussion about the Regional Transportation Authority and the potential for a legislative council committee to be created on the topic.

6. **Next Meeting Dates**

   - May 20, 2008
   - July 15, 2008

7. **Adjournment**

   The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Bill Schaefer*