Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (an MPO)
February 1, 2012 Meeting Minutes

1. Roll Call
   
   Members present:  Eileen Bruskewitz, Mark Clear, Ken Dahl, Ken Golden, Jeff Gust, Steve King, Jerry Mandli, Al Matano (Chair), Mark Opitz, Steve Ritt, Chris Schmidt, Robin Schmidt, and Paul Skidmore
   
   Members absent:  Chuck Kamp
   
   MPO Staff present:  Bill Schaefer, Mike Cechvala, and Nick VanderZwan
   
   Staff, Officials, and Commissioners from City of Fitchburg present:  Tom Hovel, Steve Arnold, Richard Bloomquist, Troy Klein, Kim Lobdell, Carol Poole, and Patrick Stern

2. Approval of January 4, 2012 Meeting Minutes
   
   Moved by King, seconded by Opitz, to approve the January 4, 2012 meeting minutes.  Motion carried with R. Schmidt abstaining.

3. Communications
   
   None.

4. Public Comment (for items not on MPO Agenda)
   
   None.

5. Presentation on City of Fitchburg Land Use & Transportation Plans and Projects
   
   Tom Hovel, City of Fitchburg planner, gave a presentation on the City’s land use plans and upcoming developments.  As part of discussion on the Arrowhead Redevelopment Plan, Opitz asked about the trail connection for planned Cannonball Trail with the Military Ridge Trail.  Hovel stated that the plan is for a new crossing (either at-grade or grade-separated) further east of Verona Road.  The Military Ridge trail would be relocated south of McKee Road in the former rail corridor.  Steve Arnold added that there is interest in using federal project money to build a grade-separated crossing as part of the first phase of the Verona Road/W. Beltline interchange project.  As part of discussion of the Southdale Neighborhood Plan, Golden asked if a bus route was planned for the neighborhood.  Arnold responded that the #16 Metro route serves the neighborhood, but perhaps could be reconfigured as development occurs.  Matano asked about the dissolution of the Town of Madison, and Hovel responded that it would be split between the Cities of Fitchburg and Madison.  Hovel reviewed the Nine Springs development plan, which will be built in accordance with the City’s new form-based Smart Code.  The code is an optional alternative for developers to the conventional zoning code.  Golden asked about the block lengths in the Smart Code, and Hovel responded that the code sets requirements for block perimeters (e.g., 2,050 feet in the Urban Center (T-5) area).  Hovel also clarified that the code requires a grid street network with cul-de-sacs requiring special approval.  Arnold added that the main streets are required to connect, but other local residential streets might not line up—something that was actually favored as it created natural traffic calming.  Hovel pointed out the planned grade-separated street crossing near the new Lacy Road interchange to maintain street connectivity in that area.  Hovel discussed the bicycle “module” for the Smart Code and the proposed “cycle track” for relocated Lacy Road.  The cycle track is essentially a bike lane separated from vehicle traffic and pedestrians.  Gust commented on the conflicts at intersections and other street access points between the different roadway users with such a design.  He also said there would be winter maintenance issues due to a lack of storage for snow removal.  Arnold said that snow clearance may not be possible.  Opitz complimented the City for its comprehensive approach to planning, including the new Smart Code and the Nine Springs plan.  He asked if the City of Madison had implemented ordinance changes...
to facilitate mixed-use development. Clear said the City had adopted a new zoning code and was finalizing the zoning map for it. It was focused more on existing developed areas, but created some new mixed-use districts.

6. Review of 2035 Regional Transportation Plan Update Draft Report and Approval of Release for Public Comment

Schaefer said the draft plan report was included in the packet, but without the environmental justice section. That section and an executive summary were handed out. Schaefer said a compressed schedule for review of the draft plan was necessary due to the TIP currently being frozen. If approved by the Board, the draft plan would be released for public comment next week with public meetings and presentations in February and the public hearing and adoption by the Board at the March 7 meeting. He said there are not that many new project recommendations. Most of the general policy related recommendations have been carried forward from the 2030 plan. He briefly reviewed the major projects, transit corridors, and bikeway plan maps with a focus on the Fitchburg area.

R. Schmidt asked about the transit corridors identified on the east side. Schaefer responded that Monona Drive is shown as a potential future high frequency local route. Gust again suggested adding to the major projects and corridors map a future major EIS study of the USH 14 (West) corridor between Middleton and Mazomanie. Schaefer responded there are major environmental issues with a project in that corridor as well as right-of-way constraints through the Village of Cross Plains. Forecast traffic volumes are also not that high west of Cross Plains. He said that was a policy issue for the Board to decide. Another policy issue relates to the recommendation related to future high capacity transit service. The new recommendation calls for revisiting the appropriate technology and routing for such service, at least the highest priority option to pursue first.

Golden suggested approving release of the draft plan with Board members sending comments to Schaefer before the next meeting. He said that given the short time frame for review he didn’t think all of the city committees would be able to provide committee comments on the plan update. He suggested in the correspondence regarding the plan that it be noted it is a compliance plan with a deadline, and that the next major update would be initiated in a couple of years when there would be more extensive opportunities for input. Schaefer stated that any comments should be sent to him at least a week before the March 7 Board meeting so that he could compile them, provide staff responses, and include that information in the packet.

Moved by Golden, seconded by Opitz, to approve release of the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan Update Draft Report for public review and comment. Motion carried.

7. Appointment to the Steering Committee for the Transit Corridor (BRT) Study

Matano asked for clarification on the Transit Corridor Study Steering Committee. Schaefer responded that it was intended to be an informal committee to guide the consultant’s work on the study. The proposed membership list consisted mostly of staff persons since it was a technical study, but also included some policymakers as well. He said he welcomed Board input on the committee membership. He noted that the study was not like Transport 2020 where a recommendation would be made leading to a potential project. The BRT study is purely informational at this time. Golden stated that Transport 2020 was a totally different project, which was very political and very visible. He said this study was an informational one and the committee would simply guide the study. The MPO Board will provide comments on the study and may accept or reject it. Matano asked if the committee meetings would be subject to the Open Meetings Law, and Golden said he thought they would be. Opitz asked if the study would be done by consultants, and Schaefer said yes. Opitz asked if the study is being commissioned by CARPC, the MPO, or both. Schaefer said both. He said CARPC is handling the administrative tasks, including issuing the RFP, because CARPC is the lead agency for the Sustainable Communities grant that is funding the study. MPO staff is in charge of overseeing the study, including setting up the steering committee. He said the committee would select a panel to select
the consultant and the committee would oversee and guide the consultant’s work. Asked if updates would be provided to the MPO Board, Schaefer said yes. Golden said that CARPC staff defer to MPO staff on transportation issues and that even though CARPC is technically the lead agency, functionally the MPO is. Bruskewitz asked if the study committee makeup had been discussed with the MPO’s Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). Schaefer responded that staff had reviewed the scope with the TCC, but not the committee make up yet because the TCC didn’t meet in January.

Opitz expressed support for the proposed committee, and suggested it include representatives from the Dane County Public Works & Transportation Committee and WisDOT SW Region. King also expressed support for the committee membership. Golden suggested adding a representative from the City of Sun Prairie. He also expressed a willingness to serve on the committee. Gust agreed with Golden’s statement on adding a representative or representatives from outlying communities. Schaefer said he would see if there was interest from staff of the Cities of Sun Prairie and Verona. R. Schmidt suggested that Opitz serve on the committee as well. Dahl asked if cost estimates would be generated for the express bus service, and Schaefer said he thought so.

Moved by R. Schmidt, seconded by Clear, to appoint Ken Golden and Mark Opitz to the Steering Committee for the Transit Corridor (BRT) Study. Motion carried.

8. Discussion of Future Work Items

Schaefer mentioned that Madison Metro had received a planning grant to hire consultants to conduct a study to look at whether it made sense for Metro to add different sized buses to its fleet, both smaller and larger. Metro has asked MPO staff to assist with the study. He also said that WisDOT would be re-starting the Stoughton Road Corridor Study as an EIS and would be using both policy and technical advisory committees for the study. The Board will need to appoint someone to serve on the policy committee. He also informed the Board that the U.S. Census Bureau will be releasing the 2010 urbanized areas at the end of March. The MPO will then start the process of refining the urban area boundary and creating a new planning boundary, which the MPO and WisDOT would need to approve. He said he anticipated that the DeForest/Windsor area would be added to the urbanized area.

Clear asked if the MPO Board would be presented updates on the City of Madison’s transportation plan. Schaefer said yes, and that Dave Trowbridge would be presenting on the scope of work for the plan at the March meeting. He said there would also be a presentation on the Johnson/Gorham 2-way conversion study at the March meeting. Gust stated that WisDOT would be undertaking an area-wide traffic impact analysis to evaluate potential new interchanges on Interstate 39/90 as part of a new EIS study to be done for the Interstate from the Beltline north past the Wisconsin Dells.

9. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held March 7, 2012 at 7:00 pm in Room 354 of the City-County Building in downtown Madison. Schaefer stated the reason for the location change is because the public hearing on the regional transportation plan.

10. Adjournment

Moved by Bruskewitz, seconded by King, to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:55 PM.