

**Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
January 4, 2006 Meeting Minutes**

1. Roll Call

Members present: Eileen Bruskewitz, Ken Golden, David Kluesner, Al Matano, Laura Rose, Chan Stroman, Robbie Webber, Doug Zwank

Members absent: Corey Finkelmeyer, Lisa MacKinnon, John Vesperman

Staff present: Bob McDonald, Bob Pike, Bill Schaefer, Dan Seidensticker

2. Approval of the November 2, 2005 Meeting Minutes

Moved by Webber, seconded by Bruskewitz, to approve November meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

- Letter from Kathleen Falk, Dane County Executive, announcing the appointment of David Kluesner to the MPO Board. The letter also reaffirms the appointments of Lisa MacKinnon and Al Matano.

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

None

5. Review of Draft Regional Bikeway Plan Map for the Regional Transportation Plan Update

Schaefer said that as part of the update to the Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Bicycle Way System Map would be updated. The MPO adopted a comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan in 2000, which included maps of proposed bicycle facilities and bicycle routes. The Bicycle Way System Map will combine the two maps, but focus on the proposed route system and off-street bicycle facilities. Schaefer clarified that staff would not be updating the entire bicycle facilities plan, including recommendations for on-street as well as off-street facilities. This would require updating the bicycle compatibility analysis for all of the regional roadways done as part of the bike plan and expanding it to the whole MPO area. This is not as critical, because bike lanes are almost always added as part of street reconstruction. The decision on whether to add a bike lane can be made as part of project development consistent with policies in the plan. Preparation of the bicycle way system plan will identify important roadways that should be considered for addition of bike lanes if traffic volumes warrant them. Bike routes are typically on parallel streets to arterials or on collectors.

Schaefer said that preparation of the updated Bicycle Way System Plan will allow incorporating recent detailed neighborhood and bicycle facility planning, particularly on the West side and in the Westport/Waunakee area. The MPO planning area was also much smaller when the bicycle plan was done. A system of regional routes will be identified that provides for longer-distance travel, connecting the surrounding communities to the Madison area and providing connections to major destinations (i.e. employment centers, shopping centers). This wasn't done as part of the bike plan. Identification of the regional system will help in prioritizing projects for funding. Also, communities and developers can use the planned regional system as a framework from which connections can then be planned as part of new neighborhoods. Schaefer pointed out the proposed regional system on the draft map. An updated list of major off-street projects will be prepared and assigned a priority based on our existing criteria, which includes whether the project is on the regional system or provides an important connection to it.

Schaefer then reviewed some of the major planned bike path projects likely to be given a first level priority. These include: Yahara River path; “Sherman Flyer” path in the rail corridor from Johnson Street at the Yahara River north to Sheridan Drive; completion of the eastern segment of the Capitol City Trail to the Village of Cottage Grove; CTH M corridor path around the north side of Lake Mendota; Junction Ridge overpass of the Beltline south of Old Sauk Road; Ice Age Junction Area Trail from Elver Park to the Military Ridge Trail; and South side path in the abandoned rail corridor that crosses the Beltline west of Fish Hatchery Road. Schaefer also pointed out a couple of other bike path projects that Dane County Parks Department staff has been working on in the Waunakee/Westport area and from McFarland through Kegonsa State Park to Stoughton. He also showed a map of the draft West Side Bicycle Plan to illustrate the detailed level of analysis in some areas that went into preparation of the draft regional map.

Webber asked about the status of the Badger Trail. Schaefer said WisDNR had recently released a plan for the trail corridor, which proposed paving of the trail south to Sun Valley Parkway. He said WisDNR planned to start construction of the trail this year, but didn’t know if they had all of the funding needed for the whole trail or where they planned to start construction work. Webber also asked about the proposed path in the rail corridor running through Oregon. Schaefer said the project is likely a long-term one. Oregon and Fitchburg are planning to resume freight rail service in the corridor in conjunction with a planned joint industrial park, which complicates planning for the bike path. Matano asked about the status of the Campus Drive path. Schaefer responded that UW-Madison is planning to build it in 2008 with its own funds, from University Bay Dr. east to somewhere short of Babcock Drive where it will connect to Linden Drive to the north. Zwank asked about the funding source of the projects. Schaefer said that as part of the plan the cost of the major off-street projects would be estimated and compared to anticipated Federal funding. Since the mid-1990s, the region has been receiving around \$1.5 million per year in Federal funds. Some of the projects would be funded with private, local, or state funding. McDonald added that on-street bike projects on arterial roadways are typically included as part of the overall project. Projects proposed for STP-Urban funds score higher if they include bike and pedestrian accommodations. Golden commented on the lack of bicycle routes on the East side east of the Interstate. Schaefer said that because of the development along the west side of the Interstate, there are no opportunities for bike/pedestrian crossings. Cottage Grove Road could be added to the route system, but isn’t a very attractive option. Golden encouraged staff to look at opportunities for adding to the proposed system on the East side.

6. Continued Review of Preliminary Results From the New Regional Travel Demand Model for the Regional Transportation Plan Update

McDonald reviewed the process that staff is using to develop the alternatives for the plan. The impact of a major transit expansion with a fixed-guideway facility has been tested. Next, staff has looked at new two-lane roadway connections to help complete the grid system. Following that, the recommended projects identified in the current plan will be evaluated, before looking at additional potential projects for which studies are underway such as the USH 51 corridor, North Mendota Parkway, and the Verona Road/West Beltline project. Finally, some new interchanges will be looked at, such as the one by Lacy Road and USH 14 and a possible future one at CTH AB and USH 12/18. Staff has been refining the calibration of the new travel model. A major issue came up with the Beltline and the capacity that should be used. The capacity had to be increased to account for the spreading of the peak period traffic that we’re starting to see. The model was diverting too much traffic from the Beltline with the 2030 growth allocations. Staff is feeling more comfortable with the model. Further analysis is needed, but staff wanted to provide an update to the Board. He said further refinements to the transit model at the corridor and route level will be done as part of the final phase of the Transport 2020 study.

McDonald reviewed maps showing the projects that are part of the first three roadway scenarios being evaluated: the existing plus committed (E+C) projects; E+C plus connections; and arterial capacity expansion projects in the current long-range plan. He then briefly reviewed maps of the projected congestion for each of the scenarios. He said that further analysis was needed to look beyond the congestion levels to look at shifts in traffic that were occurring with each scenario. There was some further discussion of the current congestion in the CTH M and S corridors during peak hours. McDonald mentioned a new urban-type interchange design that is being evaluated for the CTH M/CTH S intersection that appears to address the current problem without significant negative impacts.

7. Progress Report on Signatures Received from Units of Government on the New MPO Agreement Concerning Composition of the Policy Board

McDonald said that to date signed agreements have been received from the City of Stoughton and the Towns of Blooming Grove, Burke, Cottage Grove and Sun Prairie. The City of Madison has approved the agreement, but not yet sent it. This would put us at 64.4% of the population in the planning area versus the 75% required. Agreements from the Cities of Fitchburg and Sun Prairie would put us over the 75% requirement. Golden asked if this was a case of public officials not paying attention to the issue or not wanting to sign the agreement. McDonald said he thought that at least some of the communities were interesting in negotiating a different agreement. He said this is a major issue for the MPO's Federal certification review. FHWA staff was supposed to provide a report tonight, but postponed it because of the Board composition issue. McDonald said he met with FHWA staff prior to the holidays to discuss the issue, and they said they are considering recommending that the MPO Board have only elected officials. Federal law requires MPOs formed after 1991 to have policy boards "consisting of local elected officials and representatives from major transportation providers." The issue was raised during the certification review process. If FHWA takes this position, the MPO may need to move in that direction, although the timetable and definition of "elected official" is uncertain. Golden asked if this could be appealed and McDonald said it could be appealed to FHWA headquarters. McDonald said he asked why the issue wasn't brought up before and FHWA staff didn't have an answer. Webber said FHWA needed to clarify the requirement of having only elected officials.

Golden said there are two issues—the representation issue and the elected official issue. Regarding the former, he suggested sending out another letter to local communities and asking for a response by a certain date. If we don't have signatures from units of government representing 75% of the population in the planning area by that date, the Board could then consider a resolution to rescind its previous action and start over on the issue. Zwank said the issue has been further complicated, because the small cities and villages and towns officials are trying to negotiate with City of Madison officials and the County Executive on reconstituting the RPC. Until that process gets further along, the cities and villages association is recommending against any communities signing the agreement. Zwank said a meeting of the association was scheduled for the following week to discuss these issues, and suggested that Golden and McDonald attend the meeting. Golden and McDonald agreed to do so. Golden suggested that McDonald draft the letter to send out to local units of government, but wait to send it until after the association meeting. It may be unnecessary, depending upon the discussion at the meeting. The other Board members agreed to this.

8. Status Report by MPO Board Members on Projects Potentially Involving the MPO

Transport 2020 Study: Golden stated that the final PE/DEIS phase of the study would soon be getting started.

North Mendota Parkway Study: Bruskevitz reported that an intergovernmental agreement is being finalized that will be reviewed again by the oversight implementation committee at its meeting in the next month. McDonald added that a draft scope for the environmental study had also been prepared.

USH 51 Corridor (McFarland to Stoughton) Study: Matano said the scope of the study had been expanded to look at other routes. McDonald noted they are looking at the STH 138/USH 14 corridor now as well.

9. Discussion of Future Work Items

Deferred.

10. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

The meeting schedule was provided. McDonald said the meetings would now be in Room 309 of the City-County Building. Golden restated his desire to hold some meetings in other communities.

McDonald suggested the next meeting be in the City of Middleton, and it was agreed. It was also agreed to begin the meeting at 5:30 p.m. rather than 5:00 p.m. to provide time for Board members working downtown to get there.

11. Adjournment