1. Roll Call
Members present: Eileen Bruskewitz, Kris Euclide, Ken Golden, Lisa MacKinnon, Al Matano, Rose Phetteplace, Laura Rose, Chan Stroman, Robbie Webber
Members absent: Bob Dye, John Volker
Staff present: Bob McDonald, Bill Schaefer, Bob Pike

2. Approval of February 2, 2005 Meeting Minutes
Moved by Euclide, seconded by Matano, to approve November meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications
- Letter from Dane Co. Board Supervisor Dave de Felice to Madison Area MPO Board regarding concerns about conditions on Stoughton Rd. (USH 51). De Felice requested that the board support advancing the schedule of major improvements on Stoughton Road. McDonald said he would include the letter with other comments received thus far on the regional transportation plan update.
- Letter from Frank Busalacchi, WisDOT Secretary, to Fitchburg Mayor Thomas Clauder and the Fitchburg Common Council regarding a potential interchange at USH 14. Busalacchi wrote that WisDOT could not support the City of Fitchburg’s request for an interchange that connected directly to East Cheryl Parkway without a direct connection to Lacy Road. Busalacchi’s letter stressed the importance of Lacy Road’s operation as an arterial/collector serving regional traffic and long-term development. While WisDOT was willing to discuss alignment options of the East Cheryl Parkway and Lacy Road connections to the interchange, he said the department would require that any design include a free flow connection to Lacy Road. Golden asked whether the interchange was in the city’s land-use plan and if the land use surrounding the interchange was appropriate. McDonald said the plan shows a potential interchange. A major employment center is proposed east of Syene Road to USH 14. There is residential development west of Syene and west of that is the city’s existing business park. Golden suggested the MPO Board monitor the issue and possibly have a future briefing on it in order to engage in an early dialogue with the city. In response to a question from Matano, McDonald said the plan is to eliminate the southern legs of the McCoy Road interchange if the new interchange is constructed. The northern legs would remain to provide access to the existing businesses in the area.

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

5. Consideration of Resolution MPO No. 47, Amendment #2 to the 2005-2009 Transportation Improvement Program for the Dane County Area
Schaefer reviewed a revised resolution with the board. The amendment would add the following projects: a Metro Transit grant project to provide reverse commute bus service to the City of Verona; three WisDOT maintenance projects on the Interstate and other highways; and development of a corridor plan for USH 12/18 from the Interstate to CTH N. Funding for the maintenance projects was coming from the District’s maintenance budget and reflected some shifting priorities. Schaefer said the corridor plan would look at the at-grade intersections along the corridor, particularly CTH AB. Moved by Bruskewitz, seconded by Matano, to approve Resolution MPO No. 47. Motion carried.

6. Presentation on the Status of the USH 51 Alternatives Analysis Study and Environmental Documentation by Kim Lobdell (KL Engineering) and Barbara Feeney (WisDOT District 1)
Feeney said WisDOT was initially planning to conduct an environmental assessment for the project, but FHWA requested an environmental impact statement (EIS) be done. As a result, WisDOT has had
to wait to present the alternatives to the public until additional meetings can be held with the different Federal resource agencies. Those meetings are scheduled for early April. WisDOT will then conduct neighborhood meetings to get initial feedback on the alternatives. Travel modeling will then be done. She estimated it would take about four years for completion of the EIS and approval of it by FHWA. Improvements being considered are long-term and funding won’t be available for them until 2012 or later. Kim Lobdell reviewed the entire corridor under study and indicated that a range of improvements is being considered from relatively simple to more major. It is assumed that lower-level improvements will be used to extend the functionality of the roadway for as long as possible. Higher-level improvements would be made as need develops and funding becomes available in the next 10-20 years. The goal is to plan ahead so that property owners and developers know what to expect. She then reviewed some alternatives being considered at major intersections along the corridor through Madison. For the South Beltline area, low-level improvements include extending off-ramps from the westbound Beltline onto USH 51, and possibly constructing a triple left coming from the eastbound Beltline onto USH 51 northbound, and signal timing adjustments. Higher-level improvements being considered include constructing two fly-over ramps, one from the eastbound Beltline to northbound USH 51 and one from southbound USH 51 to the westbound Beltline. At the Pflaum and Buckeye intersection, the continuum of improvements includes signal timing adjustments, moving frontage roads back, a split diamond interchange, and full interchanges at both Pflaum and Buckeye.

Discussion followed regarding the new Dean clinic. Phetteplace and Feeney noted that it was designed to allow for a future interchange.

Feeney said Cottage Grove Road has an interchange already, but one short-term improvement being considered is the addition of an auxiliary lane between Cottage Grove and Buckeye Roads. For the EIS, Lobdell said they are looking at lengthening ramps and acceleration/deceleration lanes, which are inadequate now. Feeney then discussed the STH 30 interchange and Lexington Avenue intersection areas. The rail crossing would need to be grade separated if high-speed and/or commuter rail were implemented. A short-term improvement would be lengthening ramps on STH 30. Lobdell then discussed potential longer-term improvements. Lobdell also discussed two alternatives being considered for the East Washington Avenue intersection area, which would involve construction of an interchange at East Washington and an overpass at Anderson Street. Golden mentioned the WisDOT study of the intersection conducted about 20 years ago. He noted that a recent neighborhood plan recommended an interchange, because the intersection had become such a barrier, and Lobdell said the design is consistent with the plan. Lobdell mentioned a project that is proceeding to provide a new street connection from Portage Road to USH 51 at Kinsman Blvd. The only EIS alternative being considered at Hoepker and Hanson Roads is a connection from Hanson to CTH CV and a full diamond interchange at Hoepker Road with frontage roads. CTH CV would be realigned into the interchange. Lobdell said pedestrian and bicycle needs along the corridor are also being analyzed. A subconsultant is in the process of creating a map consolidating all of the bicycle improvements proposed in the MPO plan, city plans, and other plans. The consultants will be looking at new links and connections and incorporating ped/bike facilities as part of interchange designs. For transit, the study is assuming the implementation of the Transport 2020 system with commuter rail and a series of express bus routes. The consultants will be looking at park-and-ride lot options. While the focus of the study is on intersection improvements, the impact of adding a third lane in each direction on USH 51 will be modeled. As part of that analysis, the consultants will be looking at the feasibility of high occupancy vehicle lanes in that third lane to see how it would work and if it is feasible. The study policy advisory committee approved taking the current alternatives presented out to the public.

In response to a question from Euclide regarding the next steps and timeline, Feeney said they would present the alternatives to neighborhood groups. At the same time, regional travel and operations modeling will be done to forecast future traffic volumes and the level of service at the intersections under the different alternatives. The impacts of the alternatives will be evaluated at the same time. The consultants will then prepare information with the impacts and costs of the alternatives, and present that at public information meetings and to local committees. A draft EIS will be prepared.
followed by the public hearing process and then a final EIS. A value engineering analysis will also be done by a group of independent engineers, which is a new requirement. The public hearing on the draft EIS will be in late 2006 with selection of the preferred alternative in early 2007. The final EIS on the preferred alternative would be drafted throughout 2007. MacKinnon expressed concern about the land use implications of all the full diamond interchanges. She was also concerned that most of the crashes are speed-related, yet the alternatives would increase the speeds on the roadway. Feeney responded that most of the crashes are at the intersections where traffic is coming to a stop and there are opposing movements. Traffic speeds are already in the 55-65-mph range. The higher build alternatives are intended to keep the traffic moving and keep the speeds up to avoid diversion to the Interstate and into the neighborhoods. Golden asked about the availability of origin-destination (O/D) information to determine how much of the traffic could be served by a transit alternative that could be evaluated to determine its impact on roadway capacity needs in the corridor. McDonald said O/D data was available, and some select link analyses could also be done to determine travel patterns in certain areas. Webber suggested looking at a design alternative that incorporated lower speeds (e.g., 40-45 m.p.h.) with or without free flow at the intersections. She said studies have shown people are more frustrated by having to change speeds versus moving at a consistently lower speed. Feeney responded that the speeds will be lower with the lower-build alternatives, but the crash problems won’t be solved. The higher build alternatives deal with the intersection problems, but it would be hard to get the traffic speeds down to 45 mph without constant enforcement. Webber said it’s a design issue as well as an enforcement issue. Euclide expressed support for consideration of a lower speed design, and noted the changing land use in the area. Golden suggested getting information on the long-range land use plans for the area.

7. Consideration of Scenarios to Set for Public Hearing on Possible Changes to Representation on the Madison Area MPO Board

Webber questioned whether there was an assumption that there would be a change in representation on the Board, and said she wasn’t sure they were ready for a public hearing. Euclide clarified that not making any change was one of the options. Euclide reviewed the other options that have been discussed and the factors to be considered (population distribution, environmental justice, and operators of the major modes of transportation). In response to discussion regarding the need for a change, McDonald clarified that Federal law does not require a change. It is required that MPOs consider a change when new units of government are brought into the planning area in order to ensure that the MPO reflects its constituency both in terms of ethnicity and distribution of local units of government. At the MPO certification review this summer, FHWA will be asking whether the MPO has considered a change. There is not a mandate, but a strong recommendation that the MPO representation structure reflect the communities and populations served. MacKinnon said that, based on the considerations the federal regulations say are appropriate, it doesn’t appear a change is necessary. Matano said he supported addressing the issue as part of the certification review process. Golden said he preferred that some decisive action be taken sooner rather than later, because otherwise it looks like the board is stalling. Bruskewitz suggested holding a public hearing to open up the issue to a larger group and let other communities express their views. Rose agreed, but suggested narrowing down the number of alternatives being considered to keep the comments more focused. Golden questioned whether the “right” alternatives have been identified, given the need to consider other issues besides the residency of the appointee or the unit of government making the appointment. If we keep a geographic perspective, we may want to qualify it by saying that some of the appointments must have a second qualification (e.g., a social justice connection). Euclide suggested changing the wording of the public hearing notice, if we are going to have one, to simply say “public hearing on the issue of representation on the Madison Area MPO Board.” This wording doesn’t assume any changes or scenarios and doesn’t identify what the issues should be. She agreed with Golden about the need to resolve the issue and be clear about it, and said it should be stated in the hearing notice that the Board may act following the hearing. Golden raised the issue of geographic representation in terms of general area (east, west, etc.), not just local unit of government being represented. McDonald suggested stating on the notice that action may be rather than will be taken.
Motion by Bruskewitz, seconded by Rose, to schedule public hearing. Motion by Euclide to amend main motion, seconded by Golden, to change wording of the notice to state that a hearing would be held “on representation on the Madison Area MPO Board” and that “action may be taken following the hearing.” Motion to amend carried. Main motion carried.

8. Report on First Round of Public Meetings on the Update of the Regional Transportation Plan
McDonald reported that approximately 25-30 people attended the first meeting at Warner Park, with around half being local elected officials. There were around 15 attendees at the meetings in Middleton and south Madison. He then reviewed some of the discussions that occurred at the meetings. MacKinnon added that she introduced the south Madison meeting and was disappointed there didn’t appear to be any ethnic or economic diversity of the attendees, despite the effort made to get notification out to the Hispanic community about the meeting. Golden said based on his experience with the Verona Road study if you want to get participation from low-income populations, you need to go to them (i.e., attend their meetings).

9. Initial Discussion of Regional Transportation Plan Alternatives for Plan Update
McDonald reviewed the general alternatives that staff are considering. The first is the “no build” (i.e., only projects programmed in the TIP). Staff will run the travel demand model with the 2030 forecast land use and look at transit ridership and traffic congestion. Staff will then add an enhanced transit system, such as the recommendation from Transport 2020 or a variation. The model will be run again before any potential roadway improvements in the region are considered. Then we could selectively identify some TSM-type improvements and perhaps a couple of roadway capacity expansion projects, such as the North Mendota Parkway, as part of a “low-build” alternative. Some additional projects might then be added as part of a “moderate build” alternative. McDonald said he wanted to avoid looking at extreme alternatives, which simply anger and confuse people. He mentioned that as part of the enhanced transit system, a change in land use would be made to allocate more development around the transit stations and greater Isthmus area. That would be a second land use scenario. MPO staff is currently developing their data sets in order to evaluate these alternatives. In response to a comment from Matano, McDonald said the transit component would be part of all the alternatives. Matano suggested possibly looking at different mixes of transit and highway improvements. Golden suggested considering a retreat or special meeting for this topic rather than a routine meeting in order to stimulate discussion. Others agreed. Further discussion on the item was deferred to a future meeting.

10. Status Report by MPO Board Members on Projects Potentially Involving the MPO
- Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force: Golden reported that the task force approved an RFP to solicit consultants to conduct the DEIS/PE phase of the study. Madison Mayor Cieslewicz has made his appointments for the streetcar study. Scott McDonnell and Golden will be forwarding names of four individuals from the Transport 2020 committee to the Mayor for appointment to the streetcar committee.

11. Discussion of Future Work Items
Matano said there was interest within his district in discussing the potential of a pedestrian overpass at Midvale Boulevard and University Avenue, and a group was formed to initiate discussions.
- Discussion of RTP Alternatives for Plan Update
- Dane Co. Clean Air Coalition
- West Side Bicycle Corridors Study
- Mid-West Regional Rail

12. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings
McDonald said Michael King had contacted him regarding a status report King would like to do to new County Board members, as well as to the cities and villages association and the towns association on the RPC-type of work staff are doing (e.g., urban service area reviews, population
projections, etc.). King suggested that it be a joint meeting to also talk about the MPO. McDonald said he wasn’t sure if this was appropriate and asked the MPO board for advice. McDonald said he was a bit uncomfortable sending a joint letter asking to be put on the agenda of their meetings, particularly in the case of the towns association. There was some confusion as to the purpose of the meeting and concern about how the information would be presented. Golden expressed concern that the City of Madison wasn’t included. McDonald said King suggested doing presentations to the city boards and commissions. Golden said he didn’t like the approach, because it contributes to the existing division in the county. McDonald said he was concerned that local officials may be suspicious of the motives for the presentation. Golden agreed. McDonald said he would respond to King that the MPO would prefer not to be part of a joint presentation, but rather have King let the cities and villages association know if they are interested in finding out more about the MPO, MPO staff would be happy to attend one of their meetings.

Next meeting scheduled for April 6, 2005, 5 p.m., City-County Building, Court Room 2-D.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.