Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (an MPO)
March 7, 2012 Meeting Minutes

1. Roll Call

Members present: Eileen Bruskewitz (arrived during #6), Mark Clear, Ken Dahl, Jeff Gust, Chuck Kamp, Steve King (Vice Chair), Jerry Mandli, Mark Opitz (arrived at #6), Chris Schmidt, Robin Schmidt

Members absent: Al Matano (Chair), Ken Golden, Steve Ritt, Paul Skidmore

MPO Staff present: Bill Schaefer, Mike Cechvala

Others present in an official capacity: Jeff Held (Strand Associates), Chris Petykowski (City of Madison Engineering), and Brian Smith (City of Madison Traffic Engineering)

2. Approval of February 1, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Moved by Clear, seconded by C. Schmidt, to approve the February 1, 2012 meeting minutes. Motion carried with Kamp abstaining.

3. Communications

- Letter from WisDOT approving the MPO’s 2012 Work Program and funding.
  Schaefer noted that USDOT had previously approved the work program.

- E-mail from Tom Wilson, Town of Westport Administrator, regarding a town resolution concerning the North Mendota Parkway.
  Schaefer said Wilson asked that the note be shared with the board. He said a similar resolution had been introduced at the county level and in other communities. The resolution referenced the previous planning work and requested WisDOT to include the North Mendota Parkway (NMP) as part of the Beltline study and a future State Trunk Highway (STH) 19 study, and also asked WisDOT to consider a jurisdictional transfer between CTH M and STH 19. Schaefer said he responded that the Beltline study might analyze the NMP, but only as an alternative to address Beltline congestion. The STH 19 study is recommended in the draft MPO regional plan and would include the NMP corridor, but that study won’t be initiated for at least two years. Gust agreed, but clarified that WisDOT might consider only parts of the NMP.

  Schaefer said other communications were related to the long-range plan update, and would be addressed as part of item 7.

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

None.

5. Public Hearing on Draft 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County

King opened the public hearing. There were no registrants to speak on the item. King closed the public hearing.

6. Presentation on Johnson-Gorham Two-Way Conversion Study (Strand Associates – Consultant to City of Madison)

Schaefer said he asked for a presentation to the Board on the study because Johnson and Gorham streets were regional arterials and important transit and bicycle corridors. Also, the reconstruction of Johnson Street,
scheduled for 2014, is being funded with the MPO’s STP-Urban funds. He introduced Jeff Held with Strand Associates and noted that city of Madison staff was available to answer questions.

Held provided a power point presentation on the East Johnson Street traffic study. It covered the unique aspects of the corridor, conversion scenarios analyzed, results from an online survey, and the study results and recommendation. There were 500 responses to the survey with 57% of the people residing in the neighborhood. Improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrian crossings were the two most important transportation goals cited and maintaining and/or attracting new businesses was the most important livability goal. Held reviewed the different cross sections and bicycle conditions under the scenarios. The two-way conversion results in deficient bike facilities. There were also concerns due to the reduced 10-foot travel lanes needed. There was discussion of the switch of the bike lane from the left to the right side of the street. Kamp said there were some concerns about bike safety and the impact on bus speeds. Schaefer said keeping the bike lane on the left eliminated conflicts between bicyclists and the buses. Held said Metro staff did say they preferred the buses stop in the travel lane rather than parking lane because it is then difficult to merge back into traffic. Held reviewed the evaluation matrix indicating the impact of the different alternatives on the goals (positive, negative, neutral). He also reviewed the forecast diversion of traffic to other streets and intersection congestion with the two-way conversion scenarios. Gust noted that with reduced lane 10-foot widths the congestion and diversion numbers could be worse. Held noted that a person’s view on the diversion depends upon where he/she lives. The diversion to Mifflin and Dayton is generally viewed as negative vs. East Washington Avenue, but there are concerns that East Washington won’t be able to handle the significant amount of additional traffic. Conditions for bicycles and pedestrians can be improved with the one-way scenario. Held said the conclusion is that the two-way conversion is not impossible, but there are significant tradeoffs. Maintaining one-way operation was recommended as it best balanced the various corridor goals.

King, Bruskewitz, and others expressed support for the recommendation to maintain one-way operation. Clear commented that the results of the survey were pretty surprising. He said there was an important lesson to not just listen to the loudest voices on an issue. He said the data and the survey showed that maintaining one-way operation was preferable. Held added there were other things that could have been analyzed such as air quality, noise, etc. Schaefer commented that he thought the advocates for two-way were doing so on general principle without consideration of the unique circumstances with the isthmus and lack of alternative routes. Held noted there are 100,000 cars per day on the three isthmus arterials, similar to the Beltline. King asked about the next steps. Petykowski said city of Madison staff agreed with the recommendation and would be drafting a resolution to accept the study recommendation and authorize design of East Johnson Street with one-way operation. The resolution would be referred to the various committees and go back to the city council in May. Board members requested that the resolution be referred to the MPO or put on the next meeting agenda to allow the board to make a recommendation in support.

7. **Resolution TPB No. 60 Regarding the Draft 2035 Regional Transportation Plan Update for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County**

Schaefer said that both the MPO’s citizen and technical advisory committees had recommended approval of the draft plan update. The technical committee recommended a couple of minor changes. Those changes and two other minor changes based on public comments received are reflected in the short addition/correction sheet at members’ places. Schaefer reviewed the changes, which included some corrections or clarifications to the interregional travel section, an editing change to the policy objective related to non-interchange crossings, extension of the CTH PD project west of Nine Mound Road to accommodate a potential new access street to Epic, and the addition of language in the recommendations regarding the City of Middleton’s multi-modal transportation center. He also mentioned staff responses that were prepared to questions submitted by Susan DeVos.

Moved by R. Schmidt, seconded by Kamp, to approve Resolution TPB No. 60 Regarding the Draft 2035 Regional Transportation Plan Update for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County. Motion carried.
8. **Resolution TPB No. 61 Regarding Amendment #1 to the 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County.**

Schaefer said the most significant new projects were the three EIS studies for the Beltline, Stoughton Road, and Interstate 39/90 north of the Beltline. Another was a project for design of the reconstruction of USH 12/18 (Interstate to CTH N) as a possible freeway conversion. He said there were significant safety issues with the at-grade intersections, particularly the one for the Ho Chunk gaming facility just east of the Interstate interchange. Gust added that this was not part of the Interstate EIS, but WisDOT was hoping to add it to the Interstate project so the funding for that project could be used.

Moved by Mandli, seconded by Bruskewitz, to approve Resolution TPB No. 61 Regarding Amendment #1 to the 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County. Motion carried.

9. **Letter of Support for TIGER IV Program Grant Application by Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Co. for Track Rehabilitation on the Rail Line Between Middleton and Prairie du Chien**

Schaefer said there was a new round of TIGER program funding, and Wisconsin Southern Railroad (WSOR) Company has asked the MPO to provide a letter of support for their application for track upgrades on the rail line from Middleton to Prairie du Chien. The section being upgraded is about 37 miles. The project also includes reconstructing at-grade rail crossings and signal switches. Schaefer said the project was consistent with the goals and policies in the MPO’s long-range plan, and so he thought the MPO would support the project. He said there was information on the project in the packet along with a draft letter of support.

Opitz said that the City of Middleton had been asked for a letter of support as well. He said the city has been working with other communities on the planned Good Neighbor Trail in the rail corridor, and has been seeking the support of WSOR for the project. He suggested linking the trail with the project by noting it was a multi-modal corridor. Clear agreed with the idea, noting the trail was in the MPO’s plan. C. Schmidt suggested writing directly to WSOR. R. Schmidt agreed. Mandli said the county was also asked for a letter of support. He said there was an issue recently in a small community where WSOR upgraded the tracks to allow faster train speeds, but didn’t address a rail crossing issue near a school. He said he wondered whether the crossing improvements would address pedestrian safety. Gust suggested mentioning the need to consider safety at crossings in the letter to WSOR as well as the Good Neighbor Trail. Others agreed. It was suggested that perhaps support for the project should be made contingent on addressing these issues. It was then discussed that due to the deadline for applications there probably wasn’t time for that approach. Opitz suggested the letter should say the MPO is seeking cooperation of WSOR on these issues. Bruskewitz said there were other issues as well. She mentioned the problem with garbage on the trestles that would be flushed into the water when the lake levels rise. Dahl mentioned a crossing safety issue in Cottage Grove that wasn’t addressed for many years. Mandli commented that the project would be beneficial from an economic development standpoint, especially with the grain elevators near Mazomanie. R. Schmidt suggested voting first on whether to send the letter of support and then on voting on sending a letter or note to WSOR reflecting the discussion. Opitz suggested editing the letter to refer to a transportation rather than a freight corridor.

Moved by R. Schmidt, seconded by Opitz to approve sending the letter of support. Motion carried. R. Schmidt moved, Opitz seconded to send a separate communication to WSOR reflecting the discussion of the Board regarding the desire for more cooperation on trails with rails projects and pedestrian crossing safety issues and inviting WSOR to a future Board meeting. Motion carried.
10. Resolution TPB No. 62 Approving Amendment to the 2012 Unified Planning Work Program and Budget

Schaefer said that the recently hired planner/travel modeler resigned. Therefore, a budget amendment was needed just like last year to shift some funds from staff to consulting services to provide travel modeling support until the position is re-filled and the person is trained. Schaefer said WisDOT had a contract with a consultant to provide model support to MPOs. WisDOT’s consultant would be able to assist the MPO with some tasks such as revising the TAZ structure based on the 2010 Census geography. However, the MPO would need additional support for traffic forecast requests and supporting traffic or corridor studies. Schaefer said a supplemental agreement could be used with the MPO’s existing consultant, HNTB.

Moved by Kamp, seconded by Bruskewitz, to approve Resolution TPB No. 62 Regarding Amendment to the 2012 Unified Planning Work Program and Budget. Motion carried.

11. Appointment to the Stoughton Road (USH 51) Study Policy Advisory Committee

Schaefer said WisDOT would be starting work again on the Stoughton Road corridor study, but this time as an EIS. He said WisDOT would be using technical and policy advisory committees again and an MPO Board appointment was needed for the policy committee. Dahl said he was familiar with the corridor and would be willing to serve on the committee.

Moved by Kamp, seconded by Bruskewitz to appoint Ken Dahl to the committee. Motion carried.

12. Appointment to the MPO Citizen Advisory Committee

Moved by Kamp, seconded by R. Schmidt to approve the appointment of Gary Rylander to the citizen advisory committee. Motion carried.

13. Discussion of Future Work Items

Schaefer said that three excellent proposals were received in response to the RFP for the transit corridor (BRT) study. An initial meeting of the study oversight committee would be set up and an evaluation team selected to score and rank the proposals. Schaefer also reported that a team of five people would be attending a workshop in Cleveland on BRT sponsored by the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC). ISC is covering travel and lodging expenses. Kamp recommended watching a video on Cleveland’s new BRT line available at the BRT Institute website. Schaefer also provided an update on the inter-city bus terminal issue. He said the short-term recommendation to address the issue of the Memorial Union being under construction was to move the stop further east on Langdon Street in front of the Red Gym and Pyle Center. This would require removing six parking spots. The City of Madison would be meeting with the bus companies to seek funding to recover the lost parking revenue.

14. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held April 4, 2012 at 7:00 pm at the Madison Water Utility Building, 119 E. Olin Avenue, Room A-B.

15. Adjournment

Moved by Opitz, seconded by Bruskewitz, to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 PM.