1. Roll Call

**Members present:** David Ahrens, Mark Clear, Chuck Kamp, Steve King, Paul Lawrence, Jerry Mandli (arrived during item #3), Al Matano, Ed Minihan, Mark Opitz, Chris Schmidt (arrived during item #3), Robin Schmidt

**Members absent:** Judd Blau, Ken Golden, Jeff Gust

**MPO Staff present:** Bill Schaefer, David Kanning

2. Approval of February 5, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Moved by R. Schmidt, seconded by Clear, to approve the February 5, 2014 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

Schaefer summarized an email message dated March 4, 2013 from WisDOT’s Statewide Multi-Modal Programs Manager, which was distributed at the meeting. The message stated that the Madison Area TPB (MPO) will not receive any new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding for programming during the current cycle due to policies WisDOT decided to use to administer the program similar to those applied for the STP Urban and other local programs. He said each MPO’s sub-allocation of funding was adjusted to reflect projects approved in the last funding cycle, but not scheduled to be completed until SFY 2015 or later. The MPO’s sub-allocation for 2015-2018 is $2.4 million, but the projects in the queue exceed that, primarily due to the $3.2 million Lower Yahara Trail project. Schaefer commented that he didn’t think it was fair to count these against the MPO’s sub-allocation because these projects were approved as part of a statewide competitive process prior to MPOs’ receiving a sub-allocation. Also, WisDOT created the shortfall of funding by re-allocating one half of the TAP funding for roadway projects. He said he was also unhappy about the timing of the announcement. He said communities within the Madison MPO area would still be eligible to compete for the statewide funding program.

Clear asked if any other communities were negatively affected by the policy change. Schaefer said that Appleton and Milwaukee will also see a reduction in funding for the current cycle. Clear asked if a legislative action produced this change in funding. Schaefer said that this was a policy change initiated by WisDOT. Clear suggested that the MPO board might draft a letter to the Madison area legislative delegation regarding this matter. R. Schmidt commented on the lack of transparency with how this change was implemented and indicated that WisDOT needs to provide written guidelines that outline the changes. Schaefer agreed and noted that WisDOT has indicated it would provide written guidelines pertaining to the STP-Urban program, but has yet to do so.

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

None

5. Resolution TPB No. 87 Approving Amendment #2 to the 2014-2018 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Area & Dane County

Schaefer described the project revisions and new projects requested by WisDOT for the amendment. He noted that the Military Ridge Park & Ride lot project would now be constructed in 2014 in order to be done for the Verona Road/Beltline interchange construction project. The Lower Yahara River Trail project has been delayed from 2014 to 2015-'16. The Hoepker Road Bridge project over the Interstate was changed from a bridge deck replacement to a bridge deck overlay since the bridge would be replaced within ten years or so. R.
Schmidt asked if the bike lanes were eliminated, and Schaefer confirmed that. Schaefer reported on the other project revisions and the four new rail warning device projects, including one in downtown Stoughton. Schaefer said the STH 69 project was removed from the TIP amendment since WisDOT now planned to use only state funding for the design. Construction is not scheduled until 2018.

Moved by Minihan, seconded by King, to approve revised Amendment #2 to the 2014-2018 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Area and Dane County, which drops the STH 69 project. Motion carried.

6. Consideration of Appointments to the MPO Technical and Policy Advisory Committees for the Bicycle Transportation Plan for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County

Matano said that he wanted to postpone the item due to procedural issues with how the citizen advisory committee member list was generated. Matano explained that he thought the board charged him with forming the committee. Schaefer said it was his understanding that staff was to recruit members as well. He explained that he sent a note to technical committee members asking for names of alders or residents that might be interested in serving on the committee. The response was overwhelming and a great list was generated with persons from various communities, ages, and backgrounds, including a business representative from the CUNA Green Team. Schaefer said there were 22 potential committee members are on the list, but it should be pared down by the board because that number would be unwieldy for getting input at meetings.

Opitz commented that he didn’t think the committee size was an issue. He asked Matano if he had a concern with persons on the list. Matano said no, that his concern was about the process. R. Schmidt moved, Lawrence seconded, to postpone the item. Opitz said that he understood Matano’s concern, but didn’t see a reason to postpone the item. Clear asked if the committees would be formally constituted with quorum requirements. Schaefer said that for advisory committees the meeting agendas are posted, but if a quorum were not present staff would still review information but not seek any action or formal recommendation. Following further discussion, the motion to postpone was withdrawn.

Opitz moved, Minihan seconded, to approve the appointments to the advisory committees for the bicycle plan. Motion carried.

7. Review and Discussion on Preliminary Draft of Revised Policies and Scoring Criteria for STP Urban Projects

Schaefer introduced the item and advised the members that it was still a work in progress. He said staff reviewed the document with the technical committee at its last meeting, and they had concerns with how the projects would be scored using the various criteria. They were interested in seeing how the new criteria would be applied for some example projects. Schaefer said the current project scoring criteria dated to the late 1990s following the passage of ISTEA, and that a comprehensive update has never been done. He noted that board members have made comments or suggestions about the criteria at various meetings. He said it was important to update the criteria to reflect changes in federal emphasis areas such as environmental justice and public health and reflect revisions to MPO policies such as those related to sustainability. Schaefer said that MPO staff researched project scoring systems used by other MPOs across the country. The proposed system uses a 100-point scale similar to that developed for the Transportation Alternatives Program criteria. Schaefer indicated that the new criteria categories and their different weights were similar to the current scoring system. The most significant change is the tailoring of criteria to the project type. The categories are the same for each project type, but each project type has unique evaluation criteria tailored to the type of project. The category weights also vary slightly between project types.

Schaefer reviewed the program objectives. He mentioned that Golden, who couldn’t make the meeting, suggested revising the first objective to eliminate “cost effective” or add other objectives. Schaefer said he didn’t intend for that to mean that cost effectiveness was most important, but said he would drop the words since the issue is covered in the criteria. He said that nearly every project type eligible for federal funding
would be accepted, but that alternative sources of funding for some projects would be considered. Schaefer reviewed the draft policies covering eligible project and cost categories, minimum/maximum project cost amounts, project funding, and the screening criteria. He noted that Golden suggested removing the reference to intercity bus facilities. He said the language was taken from the statute, but he would delete the reference. Golden also suggested adding low income transportation service program, but that wasn’t an eligible project category under federal law. Schaefer said the eligible cost categories were the same. No change was being recommended. Golden suggested adding bus garage/storage facilities to the transit facility examples, and Schaefer said that was fine. A sliding scale cost share formula for small projects was being proposed similar to that for TAP projects. Schaefer said Golden suggested possibly varying the cost share based on project score, but he was not comfortable with that given the subjectivity in scoring. Schaefer then reviewed the project screening criteria. Regarding the financial requirements, he said staff might need to develop guidance on how project costs should be calculated so that all applications are consistent.

Schaefer described the set of project categories and evaluation criteria for roadway projects. The project categories are (1) Importance to Regional Transportation System, (2) System Preservation, (3) Congestion Mitigation & Transportation System Management, (4) Safety Enhancement, (5) Enhancement of Multi-Modal options, (6) Supports Transportation Efficient Land Use, Livability, and Economic Prosperity, (7) Timely Implementation and Complexity of Project, (8) Cost Benefit, and (9) Environment, Public Health, and Environmental Justice. These project categories are the same for each project type.

Schaefer said the technical committee wanted to know how the individual criteria within each category would be used in calculating the category scores. Clear asked if the technical committee wanted each criterion to have a percentage, and Schaefer affirmed. Matano said there is some subjectivity to the scoring as currently proposed. This could be of some benefit, since a project that would appear to meet certain criteria may fall short in other ways. Regarding the importance to the regional system, Schaefer said Golden suggested adding whether the roadway was a transit route. He said that that was a good suggestion. Clear asked if a criterion could be added that addresses availability of alternatives. Schaefer said that was a good idea as well. R. Schmidt asked if that meant the available points for another criterion needed to be reduced. Clear said he was not necessarily arguing for a system that assigns points to each criterion. Regarding system preservation, Schaefer noted that the feasibility of the life cycle cost criterion needed to be studied further. He mentioned that Golden suggested the Environment, Public Health and Environmental Justice category be split into three categories with a 5% weight each.

R. Schmidt asked if the concept of sustainability could be incorporated into the project categories in a more visible way. Clear said that sustainability was already built into categories such as Environment, Public Health and Environmental Justice, and Schaefer agreed, mentioning the Efficient Land Use/Livability category as another example. Schaefer reviewed some of the differences in the criteria for transit and ITS projects. For a number of the categories, the criteria were the same.

Schaefer said that the new criteria would help applicants understand more precisely how we score and rank projects. Clear added that this would help applicants know what kind of projects the board would like to see. Schaefer said that MPO staff, at the request of technical committee members, will score and rank some old projects with the existing and proposed criteria for comparison purposes and share the results. He said the technical committee was also interested in when the new scoring system would take effect if it was approved. Schaefer said that this would be a function of when the proposed changes could be finalized and approved by the board.

Schaefer described the rationale for assigning different percentage weights to the various project categories, according to each project type. Clear asked if there was a way to be more explicit about encouraging alternative or innovative projects that would help delay the need for a roadway capacity expansion or reconstruction project. Schaefer said that is partially addressed by the life cycle criterion. He said that it might be possible to give credit for communities that have travel demand management programs.
8. Brief Update on Follow-up Activities from the Madison Transit Corridor (BRT) Study

Schaefer said that staff was making some progress with moving the BRT study forward. Kamp added that the FTA is now more supportive of using the leftover Transport 2020 Study funds for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The Mayor, MPO, City Planning and Metro Transit have all been involved, and there is a plan for moving forward. Schaefer and Kamp said that momentum is building for BRT. Schaefer said David Trowbridge from City Planning was working with the county and WisDOT to get agreement to use some of the Transport 2020 funding for an on-board transit passenger survey and for some transit modeling work. Kamp said that FTA asked for regular conference call meetings to monitor progress and to provide technical support.

9. Brief Update on Dane County Bicycle Wayfinding Project and Potential MPO Role as Project Manager

Schaefer stated that Dane County included in the 2014 budget a $175,000 bicycle wayfinding project. Because of time constraints, Chris James from Dane County Parks asked if MPO staff could serve as project manager for the project. Schaefer said that the county offered to pay the MPO to cover the staff time. Schaefer said staff had discussed entering into a purchase of service contract with the county that would cover the local share cost since the MPO had sufficient funding. This would leave more money for implementation. Schaefer said the goal of the project is to partner with municipalities to produce guidelines for uniform signage, including destination information and mileage markers, and to potentially develop a mobile application for way finding. Funding that is left over from the planning and design phase of the study will be used for sign manufacturing and installation.

Opitz noted that Middleton’s wayfinding project had been on hold, and that he was anxious for this project to move forward. Schaefer said that Renee Callaway would be the project manager. She was waiting to get everything worked out with the county before proceeding. The first task would be to develop a scope of work to include in the RFP. Schaefer said he confirmed with FHWA and WisDOT that a work program amendment would not be required since the work fell within general work activities included in the program and we were only seeking to recoup the local share costs for the work.

Opitz mentioned that Fitchburg was moving forward with their signage program and not waiting for the new guidelines. R. Schmidt commented that Monona had installed new signage for the lake loop. Opitz said that the Middleton tourism board would like its signs to incorporate QR technology to show what destinations are nearby. He noted that he likes Madison’s street signage template for trail junctions. Matano added that signage is needed along portions of the Capital City Trail. R. Schmidt asked if there would be communication with the communities regarding the sign program. Schaefer said yes and that an advisory committee would be set up as well.

10. Discussion on WisDOT Plans for Verona Road (USH 18/151) and Corridor Studies of Stoughton Road (USH 51), USH 51 (McFarland to Stoughton), and the Beltline (USH 12/14/18/151)

Matano said he would like the MPO board to be more proactive in communicating policy recommendations to WisDOT on these projects. He added that it always seemed to be too early or too late to comment on individual studies. The collective impact of the capacity expansion projects being studied, including USH 51, the Beltline and Verona Road, would be significant. Clear shared the concern about the timing of input and the impact of that as evidenced by the Stoughton Road capacity expansion project study. Minihan said he was concerned with safety issues on USH 51. He was frustrated by how long the study has been going on. He said town officials have asked WisDOT to address the immediate safety concerns rather than focusing solely on long-term improvements being studies in the EIS. He said the money used for the study could have been used for safety improvements. Schaefer said there is an incentive for WisDOT region offices to plan for large projects that are eligible for funding under the Majors program, a statewide, competitive program.

Minihan said that he received news that the Stoughton Road study was delayed until August 2015. Schaefer said that the schedule for the final EIS and Record of Decision was delayed until then, but the draft EIS would be available before then. Ahrens commented that constituents tell him that the condition of Stoughton Road is
very bad, especially the southern section. Schaefer said that learned at a meeting earlier in the week that a resurfacing project was being planned for 2015 on the worst sections of Stoughton Road. Matano offered to draft a comment letter to WisDOT reflecting the discussion.

11. Status Report by Madison Area TPB Members on Studies and Plans Involving the TPB

Schaefer said that a progress meeting was recently held on the Beltline Study. The results of travel demand modeling of a North Mendota Parkway were shared. The modeling indicated that the parkway would not have a significant impact on isthmus or Beltline traffic. He also reported on a progress meeting for the Interstate study. At the meeting, WisDOT reviewed results of the initial screening of potential new interchanges. Many were eliminated from further consideration because they would negatively impact Interstate traffic operations. Interchanges to be carried forward for further study include Cuba Valley Road in DeForest, Hoepker/Hanson Road, and Milwaukee Street extended/Gaston Road (with I-94). Clear asked why the interchanges were being considered. Schaefer said that several communities have asked WisDOT about the feasibility of constructing various interchanges at different times. FHWA asked WisDOT to conduct a comprehensive system-wide study of all potential future interchanges rather than conducting studies of individual locations. The next phase of the study will examine capacity expansion of the interstate between Madison and Portage.

12. Discussion of Future Work Items

Schaefer said that he would like to get the RFP for the ITS Plan published by early April.

13. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

Schaefer said at the next meeting City of Madison Traffic Engineering staff will present changes to the design for the CTH M/CTH PD intersection. Dave Trowbridge with City of Madison Planning will make a presentation on the South Capitol Transit Oriented Development District study. Clear announced that a public meeting would be held on March 11 regarding the possible reduction of Gammon Road to three lanes – two travel lanes and one center turn lane – north of Tree Lane. Schaefer said MPO staff prepared a traffic forecast for the city under the lane reduction scenario. Future year traffic was predicted to decrease by 4,000 – 6,000 with the lane reduction scenario between Tree Lane and South Avenue. Traffic would increase by around 1,000 on Westfield Road with other traffic diverted to the Beltline and other routes. The model produced different results for the lane reduction scenario between Old Sauk Road and Tree Lane. The traffic diversions off of Gammon Road were less for this scenario.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. at the Madison Water Utility Building, 119 E. Olin Ave., Rooms A-B.

14. Adjournment

Moved by Opitz, seconded by Clear, to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:20 PM.