

Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (an MPO)
March 3, 2010 Meeting Minutes

1. Roll Call

Members present: Paul Skidmore, Steve King, Al Matano, Mark Opitz, Mark Clear, Robin Schmidt, Eileen Bruskevitz (arrived at Item #5), Joe Chase, Jerry Mandli, Chris Schmidt (arrived at Item #7), John Vesperman,

Members absent: Duane Hinz, Ken Harwood, Chuck Kamp

Staff present: Bill Schaefer, Bob Pike

2. Approval of February 3, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Moved by R. Schmidt, seconded by Skidmore, to approve February meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

Schaefer said the following two communications were in the packet:

- Email from Susan De Vos who is interested in serving on the MPO Citizen Advisory Committee when an opening becomes available.
- Newsletter from WisDOT SW Region concerning a public information meeting on March 9, 2010 for the U.S. Highway 14 Corridor Study that was just recently completed.
Schaefer said the study focused on access management and safety issues and did not address capacity expansion. Opitz added that there was a public officials meeting in Cross Plains that he attended as a City of Middleton staff person. He said the City of Middleton prepared some comments on the draft report, which he provided to Schaefer. He said the city's two main concerns centered on access to the city's planned intermodal facility and the Pleasant View Road intersection with USH 14.

Schaefer distributed one additional communication. Former City of Madison Engineer Larry Nelson prepared a detailed summary of the status of major bike path projects in the area. While it wasn't addressed to the MPO, Schaefer said he and Matano thought it would be of interest to the Board.

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

None

5. Discussion of Process and Status of Hiring of the New MPO Transportation Planning Manager and Consideration of Potential Recommendation Regarding the MPO Board's Role in the Process

Matano asked Brad Murphy, City of Madison Planning Division Director, to comment on the hiring process. Murphy said that about forty applications had been received, and that 8-9 have been certified for interviews following the initial screening by City Planning and Human Resources staff. He said the plan was to put together an interview panel of about five persons with representatives from the MPO Policy Board, WisDOT, Metro Transit, and a planner. The interview panel would rate the candidates and a final interview would then be held with the top 1-3 candidates. The same final candidates might also be interviewed by other individuals, possibly by the MPO Policy Board, but that part of the process hasn't been worked out. Murphy said he welcomed Board members' suggestions for participants on the interview panel and for questions to ask of the applicants.

Skidmore asked who would make the final decision on the hiring and Murphy said that he would be making the final selection. Murphy added that this position is in the city's Planning Division with the position being head of one of the three Sections within the Division that he heads. Murphy said he was interested in those Board members who were willing to serve on the interview panel. Matano, Mandli, Vesperman, and R. Schmidt offered to serve on it.

6. Consideration of Resolution TPB No. 37 Regarding Amendment #2 to the 2010-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County

- **Safe Routes to School Program project to construct pedestrian island on Mineral Point Road at Owen Drive intersection**

Moved by Opitz, seconded by Skidmore, to approve Resolution TPB No. 37, Amendment #2 to the 2010-2014 TIP. Motion carried.

7. Consideration of Madison Area TPB Appointment to the USH 51 (USH 12/18 to I-39/90/94) Study Policy Advisory Committee

Matano said that former Fitchburg Mayor Tom Clauder was the previous MPO representative on the committee. Schaefer asked Vesperman about the status of the study, which has been on hold. Vesperman said the study would resume fairly soon. He noted that quite a bit of work had been done already with three different levels of alternative improvements developed for different segments of the corridor. Schaefer asked if the State Transportation Projects Commission (TPC) had approved the study as an EIS. Vesperman said the TPC has not met in many years. He said the study was started as a planning level study in preparation for a possible EIS in the future. WisDOT Central Office staff are currently re-evaluating projects for possible listing in the Major Highway Program with a new list of statewide priorities expected this summer. In the meantime, the study will be resumed as a planning study. Bruskevitz said that since the North Mendota Parkway is on hold for now she would volunteer to serve on this study committee. Matano asked if there were any others interested. Mandli said he serves on the committee already as the county representative. Matano appointed Bruskevitz to the committee.

Opitz moved, R. Schmidt seconded, to approve the appointment of Bruskevitz to the committee. Motion carried.

8. Consideration of Potential Response to WisDOT Letter Requesting Comment on the Fish Hatchery Road/South Beltline Interchange Project (ID #1206-01-04)

Matano commented that the interchange improvement has many benefits. He said eliminating the free flowing traffic would improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. He said he was concerned though after reading the comment letter from Metro staff about the elimination of the diamond lanes on the bridge. Vesperman showed a large copy of the cross-section of the structure. He noted the short distance between the ramps, which would be even closer with the diamond interchange. Two left-turn lanes are needed for each direction on the Beltline along with three through lanes. He said WisDOT determined the three through lanes were needed for traffic capacity on the bridge. He said buses would still use the outside lane so operationally it wouldn't be much different than now. If signed as a diamond lane many cars would still use it. Schaefer added that the roadway will operate the same way regardless of whether the outside lane is signed as a diamond lane. Traffic exiting the Beltline and turning right on red will use the outside lane and then merge into the two inside lanes because the roadway is two lanes with the diamond lane on each side of the bridge. There won't be much through traffic using the outside lane on the bridge. He said some people might be hesitant to turn into the diamond lane, causing back ups on the ramp. Vesperman agreed, saying the design staff was concerned about the flow of traffic through the short distance on the bridge. Schaefer said Metro staff pointed out

that the loss of the diamond lanes would result in a loss of funding the agency receives each year based on a complicated formula that takes into account miles of diamond lanes, service hours on the lanes, etc. Metro estimated a loss of around \$30,000 per year. Vesperman commented that there might be more value in trying to extend the diamond lanes north of Emil Street rather than trying to force them on the bridge. Schaefer said extension of the diamond lanes has been recommended since Fish Hatchery Road is an important transit corridor. Chase asked if there were any plans for use of the land in the southeast corner of the interchange that will be opening up with the elimination of the loop ramp. Vesperman said WisDOT would determine if it was needed for potential future improvements. If not, it would become available for sale.

Schaefer asked the Board if there was a desire to prepare a letter of comment. He said the letter seeking comment focused on the frontage road alternatives, but Schaefer said he saw that as a local versus regional MPO type issue. Matano said he might draft a letter of comment for review by the Board at the next meeting. Clear asked about the status of the proposed ped/bike overpass of the Beltline to the west of the Fish Hatchery Road interchange for the Cannonball Trail. Schaefer said the City was moving forward with the design and environmental documentation so that the project would be ready if there was additional economic stimulus funding or more likely for the next round of federal Enhancement funding that would occur this summer. The project will be more likely to be funded if the design is done and any issues have been worked out. Schaefer noted that the MPO ranked the project #1 for the ARRA Enhancement funding cycle.

9. Consideration of Potential Response to Letter Requesting Comment on the University Avenue (Allen Blvd. to Segoe Road) Reconstruction Project (ID #5992-08-18, 79)

Schaefer said there isn't any additional information. The consultant for the City of Madison is simply asking for any comments that the MPO might have to consider as they prepare the design for the project. The design is planned to include the addition of a bike lane, bicycle path, and improvements to intersections and pedestrian crossings.

Clear commented that the addition of the bike lanes would be difficult on the bridge with the merging for the off ramp for Old Middleton Road. He said there are two existing sections of path. He heard some oppose reconstructing the path to a standard ten feet, but he supports that since many people wouldn't feel comfortable using the bike lanes. Matano allowed Brian Weinholt, who was in the audience, to comment. Weinholt said a bike lane with a barrier separating the through travel lanes might be considered. Opitz said he supported reconstructing the path from Allen Boulevard to at least Baker Street where it ends now. There are many driveways south of that so he said would understand if the path wasn't continued past that. Opitz said there are right of way concerns and engineering challenges as well. Clear said the Spring Harbor Neighborhood Association has been very active on the project even though the design process hasn't really been started. Schmidt commented that the Hill Farms redevelopment plan suggested an underpass to connect the area directly to the roadway corridor. He suggested that consideration be given to this potential project in the placement of the utilities for the reconstruction project.

10. Update on the Dane County Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and Discussion of the MPO's Role in Assisting the RTA in Implementing its Goals

Schaefer said the agenda for the first meeting of the RTA Board was in the packet along with the resolution that is on the agenda. He said the resolution is essentially a policy statement that the RTA Board will not impose a sales tax until passage of a referendum at a regularly scheduled election. It also says a plan for transit would be done prior to the referendum. Chase commented that he thought the word "binding" referendum would be used. King responded that the RTA Board cannot legally hold a binding referendum. Opitz said the Governor stripped the referendum requirement out of the legislation

so the referendum can't be binding, but that is the intent. It is the reason why this resolution was drafted, which is to emphasize the commitment to the referendum.

11. Discussion of the Milwaukee-Madison High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Service Project and Potential Madison Station Location(s)

Schaefer said some background information was provided in the meeting packet, including some pages from WisDOT's application for funding and a memo to the Joint Finance Committee for approval of the Governor's request to accept the federal funding. Schaefer said the project has been held up by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). FRA is administering the grant program and isn't adequately staffed to handle this new responsibility. FRA has not yet given WisDOT approval to start spending the grant money, but WisDOT is in the process of hiring consultants for the work. The work will be divided into three contracts: (1) preliminary engineering and design of the new stations, including the Madison station; (2) final engineering design for the rail infrastructure improvements from Milwaukee to Watertown; and (3) final engineering design for the rail infrastructure improvements from Watertown to Madison. WisDOT hopes to have the consultants hired and be ready to start in a month or so. Schaefer said there are questions regarding the process at this point, including who will make the final decisions and the involvement by the public, local communities, MPO, etc. He said that for studies such as this a policy advisory committee is typically created. He said he'll update the Board again at the next meeting. He said he contacted the project manager to let him know that the MPO may need to process a TIP amendment to add the federal funding for the project.

Matano said he asked to have the item on the agenda because of all of the discussion and newspaper articles on the Madison station location. He mentioned that a station near the First Street and East Washington Avenue intersection ("Yahara Station") has been proposed as an alternative to the airport. Matano said the MPO could perhaps have the person who has been advocating for the Yahara Station and someone from WisDOT provide presentations to the MPO. Schaefer said that a presentation would be appropriate at a future time, but it is a bit premature at this point. Vesperman and Mandli agreed. Vesperman said it would be appropriate for the MPO to provide the consultants with some comments and concerns early in the process. Matano agreed. Matano also commented that someone suggested to him the extension of service to the Twin Cities might not take place for quite some time and perhaps a true downtown station location should be considered. Schaefer said that even when service to the Twin Cities is added that the service plan calls for every other train to terminate in Madison. Matano also suggested perhaps a joint meeting on the issue with the City of Madison Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission and/or Transit & Parking Commission.

12. Discussion and Consideration of Potential Recommendation(s) on Initial Steps to Locate an Interim Intercity Bus Station in the City of Madison

Matano said he had hoped that Kamp would be at the meeting to provide an update on this issue. He asked Brad Murphy while he was still in attendance if he had any information. Murphy said he thought Greyhound and City of Madison staff were investigating alternative locations for the intercity bus station. One possibility is some real estate close to the East Transfer Point, but not the same property that had been discussed for a potential park-and-ride lot. He said the city approved a new bus stop on W. Washington Avenue across the street from the old depot for Badger Bus Company.

13. Discussion of Potential Change to Madison Area TPB Meeting Location

Schaefer said Kamp raised the issue at the last meeting after the issue of changing the time of the meeting was discussed. He expressed concern that the current location does not have good bus service. Schaefer said staff investigated potentially available room locations downtown. He said there are a couple of rooms on the third floor of the City-County Building. One other possibility is Room 300 in the Madison Municipal Building, but that isn't a great room. He said that if the meetings were moved

downtown an issue to consider is the Concerts on the Square, which would make parking difficult on those nights. Schaefer said that the meetings are moved downtown whenever a meeting or public hearing is held at which a large turnout is expected.

Skidmore said he preferred a more central location. King said he preferred this location. R. Schmidt and others said they preferred this location as well. R. Schmidt said she appreciated the fact that the meetings would be moved downtown where a large public turnout was expected. Matano commented that the location was convenient for bicyclists. Clear mentioned that the meeting time conflict he and Ald. Schmidt had is no longer a problem because the City of Madison's Economic Development Committee now meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Bruskewitz suggested moving the meetings around. Schaefer said the clear consensus is to keep the regular meeting location at the Madison Water Utility.

14. Status Report by Madison Area TPB Members on Projects Potentially Involving the TPB:

- **USH 51 (USH 12/18 to I 90/94/39) Corridor Study**
- **USH 51 (McFarland to Stoughton)**

Matano said the USH 51 North study was already discussed. Schaefer said he gave an update on the USH 51 South Study at the last meeting.

15. Discussion of Future Work Items:

- **2009 Federal Certification Review of the MPO**
- **Transit Development Plan (TDP)**
- **MPO Congestion Management Process**
- **Five-year Interim Update of the Regional Transportation Plan**

Schaefer said FHWA staff told him they would be ready to provide a presentation on the Federal Certification Review at the next meeting. However, he asked that MPO staff receive a copy of the draft report to review beforehand. He said work on the TDP and the RTA service scenarios was ongoing. He said he might give a brief presentation on the congestion management process at the next meeting.

16. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2010 at the Madison Water Utility at 7 p.m.

17. Adjournment

King moved, Opitz seconded, to adjourn. Motion carried.