Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (an MPO)
May 6, 2015 Meeting Minutes

1. Roll Call

Members present: David Ahrens, Mark Clear, Ken Golden, Jeff Gust, Chuck Kamp, Steve King (arrived during item #3), Al Matano, Ed Minihan (arrived during item #6), Mark Opitz, Chris Schmidt, Robin Schmidt, Patrick Stern (arrived during item #3)

Members absent: Paul Lawrence, Jerry Mandli

MPO Staff present: Bill Schaefer, Mike Cechvala

2. Approval of April 1, 2015 Meeting Minutes
Moved by Kamp, seconded by Golden, to approve the April 1, 2015 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

- Flyer regarding local officials meeting on the USH 12 freeway conversion study from Middleton to STH 19 West.
  Schaefer noted the meeting occurred last week, but staff could provide the materials to the board or schedule a presentation by WisDOT staff on the project to the board. There was general agreement to include a presentation on the project as a future agenda item. Gust stated that the study was conceptual and no funding for a freeway conversion is currently available. The study would be used to reserve right of way.

- Letter of comment from the Association of MPOs (AMPO) and other local organizations to Congressional Transportation Committee members regarding the reauthorization of the federal transportation bill. The letter urges for the sub-allocation of more funding to the MPOs under the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

- Flyers regarding CARPC-hosted presentations by Robert Grow from Envision Utah on how the Madison region can forge a regional vision and strategy for growth. Schaefer and several board members plan to attend.

- Letter from Mayor Soglin responding to the letter from the MATPB to him, the County Executive, and others regarding support for integrated regional land use and transportation planning.
  Golden commented that some have raised concerns about how well CARPC was doing in terms of working with communities on future urban development planning. The separation of the MPO from CARPC has led to a lack of communication between the two agencies. He said a tremendous amount of future urban development planning had been done when CARPC had extra staff from the Sustainable Communities grant. He suggested CARPC staff be invited to provide a presentation on their work at a future meeting, which would be timely given the work to begin on the regional transportation plan update.

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

5. Resolution TPB No. 103 Approving Amendment #2 to the 2015-2019 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Area & Dane County
Moved by Opitz, seconded by Clear, to approve Amendment #2 to the 2015-2019 TIP for the Madison Area & Dane County. Motion carried.

Schaefer reviewed the proposed final draft of the document outlining the selection process, policies, and scoring criteria for STP Urban projects, focusing on changes made to the program objectives and policies from earlier drafts. He mentioned the new “project management” section that indicates the MPO reserves the right to withdraw approval of a project if the sponsor is not meeting the schedule and MPO funding may be jeopardized. This is in response to new WisDOT policies, including the prohibition on carrying over funding from one program cycle to the next. Schaefer said this policy will probably need to be invoked for the CTH PD reconstruction project west of CTH M. No progress has been made on this joint Madison and Verona project due to boundary agreement negotiations and other issues. It is probably not possible at this point for the project to be completed in 2018 as scheduled. Schaefer said he has had discussions with staff about this. If this is required, Verona could apply for funding in the upcoming program cycle for projects in 2019 or 2020.

Gust mentioned that there is also a “ten-year rule” that requires projects to be initiated within that time frame or the federal funding will be lost, including any funding already spent. He said FHWA also imposes an “end date” by which the project must be completed and the funds drawn down, typically 3 years from the anticipated end of construction. Both rules have potential exceptions like environmental constraints that caused a delay, but they are not easy to obtain.

Schaefer described two new project screening criteria, one related to bus purchase projects requiring a maximum 17% spare ratio. Matano asked for a definition of “spare ratio”. Schaefer and Kamp said the spare ratio was how many extra buses the agency has beyond what it needs for peak period service. Extra buses are needed for both corrective and routine preventive maintenance. Clear asked what Metro’s current spare ratio was, and Kamp said 20%. Metro uses a maximum of 178 buses during the peak. Twenty percent of that is 214, the current fleet size. Kamp stated that he would prefer to not reduce the spare ratio, referring to the 17% goal in the draft criteria. Schaefer said when the criterion was discussed with Metro staff they indicated the ratio was 17%. He said the reason for the criterion was to reflect a policy to use STP Urban funding for bus acquisition only when absolutely necessary given the other capital funding sources available to Metro. Schaefer noted Metro cannot exceed 20% per FTA regulations. Kamp clarified that the percentage is based on the peak schedule, not the entire fleet, which is a common mistake.

Kamp moved, Opitz seconded, to change the maximum spare ratio to 20% calculated based on the peak operating requirement.

Golden stated that Metro has two separate fleets, one for paratransit and one for fixed route, and also may have large, articulated buses in the future. He wondered how that would affect the spare ratio. Kamp said the ratio is calculated strictly for the fixed-route fleet, but didn’t know how acquisition of larger buses would affect it. In response to a question by Stern, it was clarified that the difference between 17% and 20% was five buses for Metro.

R. Schmidt noted the requirement that roadway projects be consistent with the State’s pedestrian/bicycle accommodations law, and wondered if that should be modified in case the state eliminates the law. Matano suggested referencing the law “as it read on January 1, 2015.” Golden agreed that was a good way to handle the issue. Stern said other options were to change the policy to something more specific about such accommodations rather than referencing state law or amend the policy if the state law was later repealed. There was discussion about these options. Clear noted that adopting similar language would be cumbersome since the law is long with an associated administrative rule. Gust stated that there have been one or two cases where he thought the law’s exceptions weren’t flexible enough due to the requirement that the on-street accommodations must account for at least 20% of the total project cost. He referred to a case with the STH 113 (Northport Drive) project where they used an off-street accommodation for a short segment, but said this was done before the law passed and wouldn’t have been allowed. Stern said there were some roads in
Fitchburg where bike lanes might not be feasible due to wetlands and restricted right of way. Gust responded that those would probably meet the 20% requirement.

Golden moved, King seconded, to change the language to read “statutes and administrative rules as they read” followed by the date the MPO adopts the document, with possible editorial revisions from Schaefer.

King suggested that the board convert the two motions on the floor to one motion to approve with the two changes. There was unanimous consent.

Golden commented that with the change to use of different scoring criteria for the different project types and not directly comparing scores of different types of projects he thought the board would be more engaged in the project scoring and selection process.

Moved by Golden, seconded by Stern, to adopt TPB Resolution No. 104 approving the Selection Process for STP Urban Projects document with the following changes: (1) modify screening criteria #4 related to bus purchase projects to state “the transit agency shall maintain a maximum spare ratio of 20% of the maximum vehicles operated in peak service.”; and (2) modify screening criteria #3 to state that “all roadway projects must at a minimum comply with the State of Wisconsin’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations law and regulations in effect on May 2015.” Motion carried.

7. Letter of Support for City of Madison/Metro Transit TIGER 7 Application for Funding to Design and Construct a Satellite Bus Garage Facility

Matano commented that it was a well-written letter. Kamp said that Metro had received letters of support from the City of Middleton, a joint letter from the City of Verona and Epic, Downtown Madison, Inc., and others. He appreciated that WisDOT Secretary Gottlieb’s name was on the letter. It may help the WisDOT letter come soon. Golden suggested to ask Shorewood Hills for a letter of support. Kamp said Metro did. R. Schmidt stated that a letter of support from the Dane County Board was on the agenda for next week’s Public Works committee meeting. Opitz clarified that Middleton’s support was in the form of a resolution.

Moved by Opitz, seconded by R. Schmidt, to approve sending the support letter. Motion carried.

8. Presentation Providing Update on the Regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Strategic Plan

Schaefer provided a short PowerPoint presentation on the ongoing ITS plan that explained why the plan was being done and the definition of ITS, and summarized the results of the ITS needs workshop. The plan vision statement, goals, objectives, and draft performance measures were reviewed, along with the schedule for completing the project. Schaefer said the plan consultant would provide a presentation to the board later this summer.

R. Schmidt asked where the funding would come from for implementing the recommended ITS projects. Schaefer said that there isn’t any special federal funding program for ITS projects at this time. Some areas such as Milwaukee have access to federal Congestion Mitigation - Air Quality (CMAQ) funding, but the Madison area does not since it has always been in compliance with federal air quality standards. He said the MPO’s STP Urban funding was an option for local projects or possibly a federal discretionary grant such as the TIGER program. Otherwise, it would be local funding.

Golden said that the word “environment” only appeared once in the vision statement and goals. There are many potential positive impacts to the environment from fuel and time savings. An example was the ramp metering on the Beltline. He suggested emphasizing that more. Schaefer said that was a good comment and that is one of the major benefits of ITS.
9. Appointments of MPO Board Representatives to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Intergovernmental Oversight Committee

Matano stated that there are more people who wanted to be on the committee than there are seats. He said he decided to appoint himself and Mark Opitz on the theory that Ken Golden and Robin Schmidt, who also expressed interest, could be appointed by other appointing authorities such as the Madison Mayor and Dane County Executive.

10. Discussion Regarding Participation with CARPC on Project to Conduct a Regional Values and Priorities Survey

Schaefer said he had included money in the budget this year for a random public survey to support the update to the regional transportation plan. CARPC had budgeted for a values and priorities survey to use as a first step in updating the regional land use plan. MPO and CARPC staff have recently talked about collaborating and including transportation related questions in with the other questions on the values survey. Schaefer explained the benefits of the values based approach, which has been used in a number of other urban areas. He referenced the survey report for Orlando that was included in the packet. Schaefer said he wanted to make sure that the board was comfortable with collaborating on this joint survey. He said the MPO would cover around one-third of the cost.

Ahrens asked what the anticipated cost was for the survey. Schaefer said that CARPC has had discussions with the consultant, Heart+Mind Strategies, that has done these types of surveys. They provided a cost estimate of $90,000, but this includes some qualitative research with a group of residents to identify key challenges facing the region and an understanding of values, priorities, and potential solutions to issues identified.

Golden said that the City of Madison was providing the other funding for the survey. He participated on some conference calls with Steve Steinhoff from CARPC and Robert Grow, who will be in Madison next week, and this was the methodology that Envision Utah used in their process. He said he was impressed with the process. Clear said he did not have a problem with doing the survey with CARPC, but raised a concern that political foes will use the results against us because it will demonstrate that Dane County is different than the rest of the state and needs to be managed differently. R. Schmidt stated that she likes the idea of combining these efforts, but wondered if it would minimize the transportation issues because of the other issues like affordable housing and human services. Golden responded that in Utah the values survey placed a high priority on air quality, which led to their long-term transportation plan including a commitment to build 140 miles of rail in fourteen years, and they did it. Stern said he had similar concerns. Schaefer said he would make sure that transportation issues were adequately addressed and said the benefit of a joint survey is that it ties transportation issues to many of the other issues such as access to jobs and amenities and quality of life. There was general agreement to pursue the joint survey with CARPC.

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

Schaefer said the current schedule calls for the Stoughton Road (USH 51) study draft EIS to be released in August. He said he would contact WisDOT staff about providing a presentation on the recommended alternative at that time. He said WisDOT staff had been working with the City of Madison on plans for access and redevelopment of the East Washington Avenue intersection area and also doing outreach to environmental justice groups in the corridor. Beltline study work was ongoing to develop and analyze alternatives for Beltline improvements, including interchanges and crossings of the Beltline. MPO staff has been involved in meetings to discuss ped/bike crossing issues. Regarding the Interstate-Beltline Interchange EIS study, this was separated out from the larger Interstate reconstruction and expansion project from Madison south to the state line. A coordination meeting was held and WisDOT is still in the early stages of that study.
Schaefer said that for the City of Madison’s Sustainable Transportation Master Plan packages of projects are being developed and cost out to evaluate based on the goals identified for the plan.

12. Discussion of Future Work Items

Schaefer said he hoped to have a draft update of the public participation plan to review at the next meeting. The surveying work for the Metro on-board survey was completed and consultants are now tabulating the data. The consultants exceeded the target number of surveys by a large margin. An RFP was issued for the transit related travel model improvements work and the proposals are due June 4. The survey and this modeling work is being done in preparation for continued study of BRT.

Schaefer mentioned the new bicycle plan webpage and interactive mapping tool to provide comments. He said the MPO had received quite a few posts and staff were in the process of setting up some meetings in June. The bicycle wayfinding plan consultant was selected by the committee and there are negotiations going on right now regarding the scope of work and associated budget. The requests for projects and STP Urban applications went out for the TIP update. Regarding the regional transportation plan update, Schaefer said staff received a draft of employment forecasts at the county level and the urban service area level that CARPC prepared. A write up will be provided. Schaefer said he had some concerns about the forecasts and a meeting was scheduled to discuss. He said he planned to have CARPC staff come to a future board meeting to review their population and employment forecasts.

13. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

Schaefer reported that the MPO Board appointments process was still ongoing. King, Golden, Kamp, and Mandli were either reappointed or are in the process of being reappointed. For the cities and villages appointments, there are four candidates for three slots, including the one to finish Paul Lawrence’s term. In addition to Opitz and Stern, the other candidates are Jim Schuler, Village President of Maple Bluff; and Jason Kramar, DeForest Village Trustee.

Matano asked if he should look into having a meeting in another community. Schaefer said that was a good idea. Golden mentioned that CARPC had done this with success in the past in a format where the main agenda item was a presentation by local staff and officials on current local issues and projects. It was noted the MPO had done the same thing in the past. Matano suggested Sun Prairie, Fitchburg, and Middleton as possible locations. Schaefer said the next meeting would be a good one to do as an outreach meeting.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, June 3, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the Madison Water Utility Building, 119 E. Olin Ave., Room A-B, or another location to be determined.

14. Adjournment

Moved by Clear, seconded by R. Schmidt, to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.