1. Roll Call

Members present: David Ahrens, Mark Clear, Ken Golden, Jeff Gust, Chuck Kamp, Jerry Mandli, Al Matano, Ed Minihan, Mark Opitz (arrived during item #5), Chris Schmidt, Robin Schmidt (arrived during item #3), Patrick Stern

Members absent: Steve King, Jason Kramar

MPO Staff present: Bill Schaefer, Mike Cechvala

Others present in an official capacity: Ahnaray Bizjak, Cory Horton, Patrick Marsh, Steve Arnold (all with City of Fitchburg)

2. Approval of September 2, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Moved by Minihan, seconded by Clear, to approve the September 2, 2015 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

- Letter from USDOT regarding the MPO’s federal certification review that was held two years ago. The letter indicates that the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board is certified as meeting the federal transportation planning requirements. A report with some findings and recommendations will be forthcoming.

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

None.

5. Presentation on Proposed Design for the Lacy Road (City Hall to Syene Rd.) Reconstruction Project (City of Fitchburg Staff)

Schaefer said that the Lacy Road reconstruction project was approved by the MPO for STP-Urban funding as part of the last program cycle. The City of Fitchburg has been working with its consultant on a design for the roadway and has undertaken a public involvement process for the project. A typical cross section has been developed that includes one ten-foot travel lane in each direction, bike lanes, and a shared-use path on the south side. It does not include sidewalk on the north side as originally envisioned and as indicated in the application for STP-Urban funding. Because of the change, Schaefer said he asked Fitchburg staff to provide a presentation to the board on the process and the reasons for the change in design. He noted that the newly adopted STP-Urban program policies and project evaluation criteria include a requirement that projects continue to meet WisDOT’s Complete Streets policy codified in TRANS 75, and the lack of sidewalk on the north side makes the project arguably not fully compliant with that. The project is currently scheduled for construction in 2017.

Ahnaray Bizjak, Project Engineer for the City of Fitchburg, provided a presentation on the Lacy Road project that provided background information, reviewed the project goals and constraints, the public involvement process, and reasons for arriving at the proposed design eliminating the sidewalk on the north side.

Minihan asked where the stormwater would be directed to with the improved stormwater collection. Bizjak said that they were looking at two options: acquiring land for a bio-retention pond and incorporating bio-retention swales along the roadway. Ahrens said that the proposed design was a good solution to the constraints faced with the project and he supported the modification. He said in his opinion the City of Madison is taking a much too doctrinaire view of complete streets despite often very rigorous public
opposition. R. Schmidt asked if the project would accommodate any future transit service on Lacy Road. Bizjak said the project design would not incorporate bus pads at the time of construction, but the project could accommodate transit service in the future. In response to a question from Schaefer, she said they were trying to match the slopes back in as soon as possible in order to minimize the tree impact and therefore were not pre-grading for the sidewalk on the north side. In the undeveloped area to the east, she said the city planned to have the developer incorporate sidewalk into the development. In response to another question she said the average daily traffic on the roadway was about 5,000 vehicles a day and is expected to grow to 10,000 vehicles a day.

Golden asked about the species of the trees potentially impacted. Bizjak said that a tree inventory had not been completed yet due to the fact the city arborist retired about a month ago. She acknowledged that many of the trees have been impacted by the overhead utility lines and are not in the best of shape. The overhead utilities will be undergrounded at the cost of the city. Clear asked about the city’s experience with having pedestrian accommodations on just one side of the street. Bizjak said that many of the neighborhoods that abut Lacy Road are on the south side. The north side is primarily single family residential with the exception of the Swan Creek neighborhood on the north side. There are good crossing accommodations on the roadways serving that neighborhood and a bike path network in their community as well as a parallel path on East Cheryl Parkway, which parallels Lacy Road. East Cheryl Parkway has an off-road path on the south side and no accommodation on the north, and that seems to be operating well. She said residents in Swan Creek would have the option of walking along East Cheryl Parkway. Ahrens asked about measures to reduce speeding. Bizjak said that traffic lanes would be narrowed from 11 feet to 10 feet and a roundabout is planned at the Fahey Glen intersection. Flashing travel speed driver feedback signs are also being considered. Golden asked about the shared-use path. Bizjak said the path will be ten feet wide but in a few cases will be narrowed to eight feet due to right-of-way constraints and grades. Opitz suggested that they narrow the terrace instead of narrowing the path. Gust added that there should be one foot of clear distance on either side so that users can use the full width of the path.

Matano said he did not support eliminating the sidewalk, which he saw as compromising a long-term investment to accommodate short-term political realities. He said he empathized with the Mayor having to balance the views of residents in a city that is a former town and part urban and part rural, and noted that sidewalks were an issue in the election. He said he was skeptical about the complaints regarding loss of trees. Opitz asked about the functional classification of Lacy Road, and Schaefer said it was a minor arterial. Gust added that the City of Madison has many minor arterials with 10-foot lanes. Clear said that he does not have as strong a concern as Supervisor Matano about the compromise, noting as an example Old Middleton Road where sidewalk was only installed on one side in order to save some quality trees and because of terrain problems. Golden commented that a more informed discussion was needed regarding when to allow for the lack of sidewalks.

Schaefer asked about the timeline for finalizing the cross section and completing the project. Bizjak said the schedule was very tight. The city council will be taking action on this typical section on Tuesday, October 13. If we can’t move forward with a final design soon after that, she said she had serious concerns whether the 2017 construction schedule could be met. R. Schmidt said that she thinks allowing a community to meet the complete streets goals by ways that are different than the prescribed guidelines should be considered. She thought a wider multi-use trail was actually more attractive than two smaller sidewalks. Matano asked if the bedrock, which is shallow, is prohibitively expensive to remove. Gust said yes, and that the need to install utilities was also a factor.

Stern said that he had never seen a neighborhood rise up and express its opinion as clearly as this one against the sidewalk. He said the city was attempting to get the most urban design possible while still trying to adhere to the spirit of the complete streets policy. Matano introduced Mayor Arnold from the City of Fitchburg to add closing comments. Arnold thanked the board and introduced other city staff. He said he would like to advocate for the proposed section as a good compromise and perhaps the best we can get. He warned that there is potential to lose federal funding and end up resurfacing the road without the other
proposed improvements. He said that he is normally pro-sidewalk but in this case, considering the pedestrian- and bicycle-shed, traffic calming, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities, the design would be sufficient. The people who would walk on this road are primarily the people who live along it, and these sixteen or seventeen homeowners are telling us that they do not want sidewalks. Golden asked about how the change to the design would affect the application process and scoring. Schaefer said that the removal of the sidewalk would lower the score slightly. Arnold continued to describe an area along Fish Hatchery Road from Sparkle Stone Crescent to the old city hall that was rebuilt in a similar fashion some years ago. It has a multi-use path on the west side. The neighborhoods are inward-facing, so there aren’t conflicts with driveways. There are no sidewalks on the east side because there are no sources for pedestrian traffic.

6. Resolution TPB No. 109 Adopting the 2016-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County

Schaefer said there were no changes to the STP-Urban projects from the list in the draft TIP. The only changes are to the funding amounts for a couple of the projects. An underpass for the Badger State Trail was added to the scope of the McKee Road reconstruction project with added funding to reflect that. The cost estimate for the first phase of the Atwood Avenue reconstruction project was also revised. The project includes a ped/bike overpass of Starkweather creek. He said WisDOT verified that the MPO’s funding allocation for this program cycle was sufficient to cover all of the projects at 60%, the new cost share policy. He said about $15.5 million would be available for the next program cycle in two years. It is also proposed that the MPO conditionally approve the first phase of Pleasant View Road and the second phase of the Atwood Avenue project provided sufficient progress is made on these projects within the next two years. These projects would be programmed in 2021-2022. Schaefer described changes to other projects listed in the addition/change sheet as well as the Section 5310 funded projects. The WisDOT project changes delayed the projects one or two years due to the state budget situation. A brief discussion followed regarding how to address the Lacy Road project.

Moved by Opitz, seconded by R. Schmidt, to approve Resolution No. 109 adopting the draft 2016-2020 TIP with the changes listed in the addition/change sheet dated 9/30/15. Moved by Clear, seconded by Ahrens, to amend the motion to also approve the design for the Lacy Road project that is approved by the City of Fitchburg. Clear then withdrew the motion. Moved by C. Schmidt, seconded by Opitz, to amend the motion to modify the project description for Lacy Road to delete the reference to sidewalk on the north side, thereby approving the proposed typical cross-section of buffered bike lanes and a shared-use path on the south side of the roadway. Motion to amend carried. Main motion then carried.


Schaefer described the major 2016 work efforts, including work on the regional transportation plan, which must be adopted by March 2017. Other significant efforts include further BRT planning (including travel model improvements and assisting the City of Madison with the Urban Footprint tool and station area planning), assistance to Dane County Parks in managing the Bicycle Wayfinding Plan project, assistance to local governments with implementing recommendations in the bicycle plan, making progress with the Congestion Management Process, and implementing the ITS plan. Schaefer noted that a new planner will be starting on Monday to help with the last two efforts in particular.

8. Review and Recommendation of Draft 2016 MPO Budget

Schaefer reminded board members that the MPO makes a recommendation, but the MPO’s budget is part of the City of Madison Planning Division’s budget. He said the overall budget was slightly lower than last year. The significant increase in staff costs is due to the additional planner as well as cost of living and step increases for existing staff. The staff costs increase is being offset by a reduction in supplies and services,
including consultant costs. He pointed out some of the savings in supplies and services, including a $10,000 savings for the office lease which was renegotiated.

Moved by R. Schmidt, seconded by Stern, to recommend approval of the draft 2016 MPO budget. Motion carried.

9. Presentation on the Metro Transit On-Board Passenger Survey Results

Cechvala provided a presentation on the survey, which included an overview of the project and sampling methods, survey weighting process, and a results summary. He said the survey database was currently being cleaned up by MPO staff and the consultant and would be available in a final form soon.

Stern asked why the survey was only done on weekdays. Cechvala said that is common practice. Weekdays have by far the highest ridership and travel and transit ridership forecasting is done for weekdays. He acknowledged that weekend surveying would be helpful and could be done with future surveys. Weekend riders had been surveyed in the past, though not the most recent one in 2008. Ahrens asked how rejected surveys were handled. Cechvala said that they were discarded, and to make up for them, and for people who were not surveyed, each survey is weighted by route, direction, time-of-day, and passenger flows estimated by a separate on-to-off survey and boarding/alighting counts. Riders could also fill out the survey later and mail it back or complete it online. Golden asked about seniors and fare types. Cechvala said there was a question specific to senior/disabled fares. In response to a question about comparing results to past surveys, Cechvala warned about comparing the data because of differences in the questions and other survey procedures.

In response to a question about the tendency of low-income and minority riders to pay cash fares, Cechvala said he thinks the fact that many lower income neighborhoods do not have access to places where Metro sells 10-ride cards is a contributing factor. C. Schmidt asked if passes could be sold on buses. Kamp said that is problematic and the closest thing would be selling tickets at BRT stations in the future. Ahrens asked if the findings were statistically significant. Cechvala said that we have a pretty good sample compared to other onboard surveys, over ten percent. The differences mentioned in the summary are likely statistically significant. Cechvala gave a brief overview of the spreadsheet tool to summarize the data, which he said could be shared with board members when the data has been cleaned and finalized.

Kamp thanked the MPO and Cechvala. Some fascinating things to Metro are transfer rates by race and fare payments to inform the city’s Transit & Parking Commission as Metro looks at a potential fare increase. The results will also be useful for Title VI and BRT planning. Cechvala also thanked Metro staff for their efforts on the project.

10. Report on Dane County Transit Listening Sessions

R. Schmidt said that Dane County hosted five transit listening sessions with very good turnout and engaged discussion. She said that Golden had presented it to the Public Works and Transportation Committee meeting last night and the results will be used by County Board members in the budget negotiations. The results have been positively received.

11. Status Report on Studies and Plans Involving the TPB

Schaefer said that there will be public meetings in November about the Beltline Highway PEL study to review strategy packages that WisDOT is putting together to address all modes within the Beltline corridor. In most cases, they’re proposing to carry the strategies identified forward for further more detailed review, but some will be eliminated. He said the main purpose of the PEL process was to eliminate stand alone alternatives like the North Mendota Parkway, BRT, and a southern reliever from further consideration as alternatives for improving the Beltline. He said WisDOT was looking at crossings for both vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists, transit priority at some of the interchanges, and a whole host of other strategies.
Gust said that he did not have all the details regarding projects affected by the state budget, however projects that had not been started were generally delayed by a few years. WisDOT staff are assuming at this time they will be getting the lowest amount of money possible and they will not have the additional $300 million for bonding. However, the Governor just said in the last couple days that he is recommending additional money for bonding. Gust continued that the law changed in July and WisDOT no longer has Community Sensitive Solutions (CSS) or other funds for enhancements on projects. At the same time form liners on bridges are now considered CSS and are no longer fundable.

12. Discussion of Future Work Items

Schaefer said that he pushed the initial public meetings for the regional plan back to January. He is developing an advisory committee for the plan and may contact board members for ideas. It will be mostly a policy committee but will have some staff.

13. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the Madison Water Utility Building, 119 E. Olin Ave., Room A-B.

14. Adjournment

Moved by Opitz, seconded by Gust, to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.