

**Greater Madison MPO
Technical Coordinating Committee
Meeting Minutes**

September 29, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

2:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members present: Batuzich, Blau (for Hall), Bruun (for Stephany), Clark, Hedgepeth, Holt, Larson, McFadden (for Balke), Paoni, Petykowski (for Phillips), Scheel, Stauske, Stouder, Tao, Violante, Semmann (joined during item #3)

Members absent: Hessling, Koprowski, Wheeler

MPO Staff present: Schaefer, Lyman, Hoesly, Brucaya

Other staff present: Aaron Jahncke (Waunakee), Shawn Ulsrud (Middleton), Asad Rahman (WisDOT Traffic Forecasting)

2. Approval of June 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Tao moved, Paoni seconded, to approve the June 23, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Presentation on Metro Transit Network Redesign Study (Mike Cechvala, City of Madison Transportation)

Cechvala shared an overview of the Metro Transit Network Redesign Study. The study will coordinate local service with the planned BRT system, address long-standing issues, and help Metro recover from the pandemic in a way that reflects future needs. There is a trade-off between optimizing ridership and coverage; the network can prioritize one or the other, or land somewhere in the middle. Existing ridership is clustered downtown and on the UW campus; future demand is projected by looking at existing residential and employment density. Other decision-making factors include the roadway network and equity-related data (race, income, car availability). The city has generated two planning alternatives to illustrate the potential extremes of optimizing ridership or coverage. The ridership alternative would remove the existing transfer points. Public opinion so far skews toward emphasizing ridership. There is an ongoing public survey and the city will seek direction from the Madison Transportation Planning & Policy Board (TPPB) on the ridership/coverage split on October 4 as an action item. The projected schedule includes final design in late 2022, implementation in '22-'23, and beginning of BRT service in late 2024.

Paoni asked about the paratransit implications of the ridership/coverage discussion. Cechvala stated that paratransit boundaries are defined as being within three-quarters of a mile from all-day fixed-route service, which does not include commuter service. In nearly all scenarios there will be new areas served by paratransit, such as on the far southwest side and east of the interstate; however, under a full ridership scenario some areas could hypothetically lose paratransit service under Metro's current policy. Cechvala also noted that Sun Prairie service tangentially relates to this project, as the current commuter route (#23) serving the Sun Prairie Park and Ride Lot will become part of the all-day BRT system. Metro and the MPO are working with the city to implement local bus service in conjunction with the new BRT service. Stauske asked how "walking distance" is defined. Cechvala stated that the industry standard definition is one-quarter mile from transit service, but that there are a few ways this can be measured. These include basing the measurement on the

shortest distance from a residence to a transit route (which may or may not include an access point); to the nearest transit stop; or by walking along the sidewalk network, which usually drastically reduces the number of people considered to be within ¼-mile of bus service, because this method accounts for features like freeways that cannot be crossed on foot. For this project, the consultant measured access based on the walking network, which is more accurate, but results in a lower number of people. Schaefer asked about the impact of the re-design, particularly the ridership model, on potential extensions to other communities to expand service. Cechvala said that the BRT system with the ridership alternative in the network redesign would have more opportunities to connect to higher-frequency service, but Metro can work with partner communities to implement more service under any scenario. Cechvala also noted that the new Planning Manager, Sean Hedgpeth, will be leading implementation of the new service model. He also mentioned that Metro has seen a drastic increase in ridership with the return of the UW to more normal operations.

4. Review and Recommendation on Draft 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area and Dane County (STBG Urban Priority Project Listings and Addition/Change Sheet)

Schaefer reviewed the list of STBG Urban program projects that the MPO is proposing to fund. He noted the City of Madison was the only community that submitted projects during the most recent cycle this past June. The MPO ended up having about \$11 million more in funding available to allocate due to the Pleasant View Road project being moved up a few months into FFY 2022 in order to fill gap in total cost of projects statewide. The MPO is able to fund all of the road and bike/ped projects submitted by the city, although only partial funding is available for the John Nolen Drive project. He noted that the Autumn Ridge ped/bike overpass project was the first independent bike project funded through the program. Schaefer then reviewed the addition/change sheet listing proposed changes to the draft TIP. Changes proposed are minor, including some changes to cost estimates and schedules and adding some rail crossing projects that the state just approved for funding.

Paoni moved, Larson seconded, to recommend approval of the draft TIP, including the STBG Urban Priority Project Listings, with the changes listed in the Addition/Change Sheet. Motion carried.

5. Review and Recommendation on Proposed Revisions to Scoring Criteria for Transportation Alternatives Program Projects

Schaefer noted that some changes to the Transportation Alternatives (TA) program criteria were made prior to the last application cycle, and staff decided to propose some additional changes for this cycle to make the criteria more consistent with the STBG Urban scoring criteria as recently revised, while recognizing that the STBG Urban program funds many types of projects and the TA program exclusively funds bike/ped projects. Lyman reviewed the proposed changes using the document provided in the meeting packet.

Blau moved, Larson seconded, to recommend approval of the proposed revisions to the criteria. Motion carried.

6. Update on *Connect Greater Madison Regional Transportation Plan 2050*

Schaefer provided a brief update and noted that staff will present additional information at the next meeting. There is an interactive mapping tool on the project website that is open for public comment until October 3. We have received over 1,200 comments so far and received press

coverage from the Wisconsin State Journal. Staff will group applicable comments and pass them along to local staff in member communities, especially comments about specific locations that are outside the scope of the RTP. The MPO now has a new regional travel forecast model and the consultant is nearly done with a user guide to assist staff with running the model. Staff has developed preliminary draft maps for future planned regional bikeway and transit networks, and has coded these into the travel model. The consultant will provide a memo soon with guidance on scenario planning to explore possible impacts related to drivers of change like connected and autonomous vehicles, telework, and others. Two public meetings are planned for the evening of November 11 and afternoon of November 16. Notices will go out soon and staff will review materials for those meetings at the next committee meeting. Schaefer and Lyman then reviewed preliminary draft maps of the planned future bikeway network, transit network, and planned park-and-ride locations, stating that the MPO will eventually share online interactive versions of these with staff and the public to more easily allow for comment.

Hedgpeth asked whether the future transit network map is for informational purposes, or whether it will be voted on as a plan to work from. Schaefer said that this version is preliminary, but it will eventually be incorporated into the approved long-range plan. He also noted that the RTP is fiscally constrained, so the entire future transit network may not be part of the official plan. Lyman added that what is shown on the map does not dictate future decisions such as the exact location of a future bus route. Hedgpeth said he understood it was to some extent a planning exercise to determine the impacts of such an investment on transit. He just curious about the level of analysis and whether the new service was costed out. Schaefer said there is value from a local planning standpoint to identify potential future transit routes. Paoni said she thinks there have been updates to what WisDOT had previously planned for PNR lots. Schaefer said that staff would connect with Michelle Brokaw at WisDOT SW Region. Stauske noted that the number of comments received so far on the interactive map is impressive and wondered if there is a mechanism to reply to them. Schaefer said that originally there was, but that they discovered a glitch that would make commenters' emails visible to everyone if that feature was used, so they decided to turn it off; the alternative was to require people to register with their emails before commenting on the map, which staff deemed to be too much of a barrier to participation.

7. Presentation on Second Regional Telework Survey Results and Next Steps

Brucaya presented on the background and highlights from the 2021 regional telework survey compared with responses from the 2020 survey. The 2021 survey was conducted from July 20-August 19 and received 1,179 responses. Overall, participants reported more benefits and fewer challenges than last year, as well as a desire to continue with a hybrid work schedule following the pandemic. The findings offer implications for transportation and land use planning, as well as employer decision-making. Next steps for the MPO include producing a short summary report for public release with the full survey results; sharing this information with Dane County policymakers and employers; and working with Sustain Dane and the Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change to integrate findings into a scoping study that is underway.

Stauske asked whether there will be a follow-up study to look at what is happening post-pandemic when we get to that stage, maybe another year from now. Brucaya stated that staff has not yet discussed conducting another survey in 2022, but that it would be possible. She also noted that additional analysis may also be conducted to follow up on the Streetlight analysis of VMT and traffic trends that the MPO conducted in September 2020, shown at the beginning of the presentation. Stauske noted that the bounce-back we have seen in overall trips that are not necessarily occurring

during peak times anymore is of interest. Paoni asked about the potential resilience of the transit system in the face of continued teleworking. Hedgepeth noted that the UW has a large impact and that with the return of students they are seeing the PM peak return. He also stated that people working from home will need to be served by an all-day transit network that can help them make other trips such as errands. He added we have yet to see the full impact of local companies' return-to-work plans, which are likely still under development. He also noted that a slight whittling down of the peak periods can help Metro better serve existing riders during those times, which prior to COVID was a struggle. That said, he noted that it could be a challenge for Metro financially if ridership decreased significantly. Finally, he noted that ridership in Madison is already bouncing back much better than in many other areas around the nation. Lyman added that in looking at data for the transit network redesign, Metro saw that ridership among low-income and essential service riders did not drop off as substantially during the pandemic, because they cannot telework and often do not have other transportation options; so, the redesign is looking at how to re-direct resources from the AM/PM peak periods in order to spread service more equally throughout the day. Semmann asked whether there was a difference in data between the public and private sector responses, given that 61% came from the public sector. Brucaya said there was not a significant difference between the two sets.

8. Committee Member Reports

Stouder: The City of Madison is working on a Transportation Demand Management ordinance; at a recent meeting, local developers suggested that the city interface with suburban communities to make it a more regional effort, so if other communities are interested in taking a look at TDM, please reach out to Zia or her. If Madison can be of any assistance, they are happy to work with surrounding communities. Second, in order to better align land use planning with future transit investments, Madison is looking to implement a transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning overlay along the BRT corridors, which will essentially boost the develop-ability of properties near BRT stations. They will be working on this over the next year and presenting a basic framework for the Plan Commission to discuss tomorrow. As with TDM, Madison is happy to be a resource and interested communities can reach out directly.

Petykowski: The first public meeting for the John Nolen Drive reconstruction project is scheduled for October 4th on Zoom. No plans will be shared; the meeting will mostly focus on understanding public desire for how the area will be shaped, and the city will work on design after that.

Yang: The Vision Zero group is finalizing the Vision Zero Action Plan, which can be presented to the committee at a future meeting. He also wanted to update the group on the safety problems the city has experienced along East Washington Avenue. Staff provided a report to the Common Council Executive Committee last night on these safety issues, which are reflected to some degree throughout Dane County and around the nation. The city has seen sharp rises in speeding and alcohol consumption, which are leading to more fatalities and disproportionately affecting pedestrians. The MPO presented its 2020 Traffic Safety Report to the Dane County Traffic Safety Commission yesterday. In Dane County, we lost 34 people in 2020 due to crashes, and have lost 40 people so far in 2021, with three more months to go; seven of the fatalities this year happened on City of Madison roadways, six on East Washington Ave. Five of these occurred at night and all six occurred in areas with 35mph+ speed limits. Investigations are ongoing and the city is working to understand all of the factors behind the crashes. The city has a response team, including staff from the Mayor's office, Traffic Engineering and Police, and staff have started to implement a variety of environmental controls and enhanced enforcement along East Washington. These changes are

starting to have positive impacts. Yang would be happy to present at a future meeting. He said Madison would like to continue to work with other communities to improve safety in the region.

9. Staff Report

Schaefer reported the following:

- 2022 MPO Work Program – Staff has prepared the draft work program for 2022 and will send out after the board meeting next week. A summary is included in the meeting packet. If TCC members have anything they would like MPO assistance on, let us know.
- MPO board appointment – With the recent passing of Ed Minihan, who was the Towns’ representative to the MPO board and long-time Town of Dunn Chair, the MPO is looking for a new Towns representative.
- Request for financial support of 2022 MPO budget – This was the first time that a request had been sent out to member communities in a while. Staff received a much better response this time, with one village and three towns having committed funding, and six cities/villages considering a contribution through their budget process.
- Potential change to area of eligibility for STBG Urban and TAP funding to the planning area vs. urban area – In discussing the request for financial support with Village of Oregon staff, it occurred to MPO staff that it is somewhat unfair that the village is excluded from eligibility for MPO funding under the STBG Urban and TAP programs, because it is not part of the urban area. The MPO chose to include Oregon in its planning area, even though it is not part of the urban area, because it is still part of the metro area, similar to Stoughton. Federal rules allow the MPO to fund projects in the planning area, but the MPO’s policy has always been to fund projects in only the urban area. That leaves the area in between, which does not qualify for either STBG Urban or Rural funds. The reasons for excluding Oregon are: 1) the amount of MPO funding is based on the urban area, so Oregon’s population does not contribute to that; and 2) the village receives a funding entitlement under the STBG program as a small urban area, although this is fairly small. The entitlement has averaged about \$50,000 per year, so it would take quite a long time to build up enough funding for a project. Staff placed this on the MPO board agenda for next week and is planning to recommend a change in policy, either to allow projects in the planning area or to add Oregon; staff does not have a strong preference either way. Schaefer requests feedback on this by next Wednesday, prior to the board meeting.
- Issue related to WisDOT calculation of sub-allocated MPO funding and CRRSSA funding – The MPO continues to seek resolution with WisDOT to two issues: 1) the lack of transparency with MPOs about the calculation of sub-allocated STBG Urban and TAP funding, and 2) their use of the \$3.2 million in COVID-related CRSSAA funding for state projects instead of passing this to the MPOs, which is in violation of federal law and guidance. Schaefer will keep the TCC posted.
- 2022-2026 Transportation Alternatives Program cycle – The TAP program application cycle is open with applications due in January. Staff expects to find out the amount of funding we have available at the end of next month.
- Phase 2 intersection safety network screening analysis and high injury network identification – The UW TOPS Lab has completed work on the phase 2 intersection safety screening analysis for the MPO, using updated data and a new crash prediction model with additional variables. They also created a tool to identify cost effective countermeasures and will provide a training for local staff. They or MPO staff will present on the analysis at the next meeting. They are also going to identify a high injury network for the MPO, building on work they are doing for Madison.

10. Next Meeting Dates

The next scheduled meetings are October 17 and November 17, 2021.

11. Adjournment

Tao moved, Paoni seconded, to adjourn. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Brucaya and Schaefer.