

**Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)  
September 4, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

Virtual Meeting hosted via [Zoom](#)

---

Opitz called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**1. Roll Call and Introductions**

**Members present:** Mark Opitz, Derek Field, Charles Myadze, Kristi Williams, Clement Abongwa (arrived during item No. 5) Liz Callin, Paul Esser, Doug Wood, Phil Caravello, Richelle Andrae, and Barbara Harrington-McKinney

**Members excused:** Tom Lynch, Steve Flottmeyer, and John Duncan

**MPO staff present:** Alex Andros, Ben Lyman, David Kanning

**Others present in an official capacity:** Nathanael Brown, Dane County Department of Human Services

**2. Approval of August 7, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

Williams stated that the sentence on page 6 which says, “The next Policy Board meeting would normally be held on July 3rd but given the inconvenient date and the lack of pressing business, it will be cancelled” needed to be struck. Opitz stated that page 5 contained a highlighted time mark. Lyman stated that this time mark should also be struck. Andrae moved, Wood seconded, to approve the August 7, 2024, meeting minutes with the referenced edits. Motion carried.

**3. Communications**

Andros stated that WisDOT and FHWA recently approved our most recent amendment to the UPWP to include language about the Connecting Communities grant that the City of Madison recently received.

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

None.

**5. Election of Officers (Chair and Vice Chair)**

Williams nominated Opitz to serve as Chair of the MPO Policy Board. Opitz accepted the nomination. The Board unanimously voted to elect Opitz as Chair. Esser nominated Wood to serve as Vice Chair. Wood accepted the nomination. The Board unanimously voted to elect Wood as Vice Chair.

**6. Public Hearing on the Draft 2025-2029 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County**

- *No members of the public spoke during the public hearing. Action on the 2025-2029 TIP by the MPO is anticipated at the board's October 2nd meeting to be held virtually. Written comments on the TIP are invited through Monday, September 23, and should be sent to the MPO offices at 100 State St., Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703 or e-mailed to [mpo@cityofmadison.com](mailto:mpo@cityofmadison.com).*

**7. MPO 2024 Resolution No. 14 Approving Amendment No. 6 to the 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County**

- USH 18/151 (USH 151 to CTH PD) Environmental Document/Study (Design in '24, NEW)

Kanning described the project scope and extents. Esser moved, Williams seconded, to adopt MPO 2024 Resolution No. 14 approving Amendment No. 6 to the 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program

for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County. Motion carried.

**8. Preliminary award of Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities) Program 2024 Funding**

Lyman provided an overview of the Section 5310 program. He noted that the MPO received more applications than we can fund. MPO staff and a staff member from the WisDOT Transit section reviewed and scored the applications. A total of six projects were selected to receive funding:

- City of Madison-Metro Transit Paratransit Eligibility & Mobility Coordinator
- Dane County DHS One-Call Center
- Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin Accessible Vehicle Purchase
- New Bridge Madison Driver salary, benefits, and operations
- The Hmong Institute Accessible Vehicle Purchase
- City of Madison-Metro Transit Grant Administration program.

Lyman reviewed some minor funding/cost edits that were made to four of the six projects. Wood said he was pleasantly surprised to see so many applications. In the past, fewer applications were submitted. Lyman stated that the Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin and the Hmong Institute were new applicants.

Lyman stated that final approval of federal Section 5310 funding will not occur until the Final 2025-2029 TIP is approved in October.

Wood moved, Abongwa seconded, to preliminarily approve federal Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities) Program 2024 Funding, as edited. Motion carried.

**9. MPO 2024 Resolution No. 15 Adopt Support for a Week Without Driving (10 minutes)**

Andros provided an overview of the Week Without Driving challenge. Supporting this initiative aligns with the Greater Madison MPO's mission to lead the collaborative planning and funding of a sustainable, equitable transportation system for the Greater Madison region, as well as the goals of the MPO's RoundTrip transportation options program. Andros stated that the County Board will act on a similar resolution. Andrae confirmed that the County Board will act on that resolution tomorrow night. She thanked MPO staff for their input on the County resolution. It is a good opportunity to put yourself in the shoes of people who have different transportation options. Abongwa asked how this challenge should be implemented. Andros explained that ideally, local officials would adopt proclamations to acknowledge a Week Without Driving. One step further is for local officials, community members, and local leaders to take the challenge. It is a great opportunity for policy makers to experience a week without driving firsthand. We are going to encourage people to take the challenge. Opitz stated that he would like to challenge all board members to report back at the next board meeting how many non-driving trips they took. Opitz said that the City of Middleton recently adopted a Week Without Driving resolution, and that he intended to participate in the challenge.

Abongwa asked if carpooling meets the intent of the program. Lyman said the idea is to experience what it is like to not have access to a vehicle – you would need to ask someone for a ride or use an alternative form of transportation. Abongwa indicated that he would like to encourage people in his department to take the challenge. He noted that it would be helpful to post a copy of the County's resolution in their office to encourage people to participate. Andrae stated that the County will have a press release that will make suggestions on how people can participate. Callin said that she hopes that designers of our transportation system will participate. It is also a good opportunity to sign up for

RoundTrip. Andros stated that the MPO just launched a TDM program called “Smart Trips”. The intent of that program is to offer people alternative transportation choices, with opportunities for prizes. The intent of a Week Without Driving is to experience what it is like to not have access to those options, to put yourself in the shoes of someone who must rely on others for transportation.

Williams moved, Andrae seconded, to approve MPO 2024 Resolution No. 15 adopting support for a Week Without Driving. Motion carried.

## **10. Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Discussion**

Andros stated that Charles Myadze asked for this item to be added to the board agenda since it has recently been given some press. A summary document called “A Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority – In Brief” written by Lyman was included in your packet. Having an RTA as a funding mechanism is acknowledged in our RTP. Opitz noted that he served on the Dane County RTA as vice chair during its tenure. The RTA discussed the concept and the possibility of a sales tax, but never made a motion to propose a sales tax. As noted in the staff report, we never had a chance to proceed with our work, since the state took away the authority. Andrae stated that she appreciated the synopsis. She asked if any RTAs were fully implemented before the state legislation change took effect. Opitz stated that Dane County was interested proceeding, but there was a concern about not agitating those who were critical of RTAs. He explained that he wasn’t aware of any community or metro area in the state where an RTA proceeded. There was an attempt to later consider legislation for an RTA specific to the Fox Cities, but that did not go anywhere. Lyman added that he read some of the old documents from the time when the Dane County RTA was meeting. The body was established, but never requested taxation approval from the communities. The RTAs were formed, but never went anywhere because of the legislation that prohibited them. Opitz added that this occurred during the same era when high speed rail funds were returned. Andros explained that the RTA was an important piece for paying future high-speed rail operating costs.

Callin stated that regional transit can be implemented without an RTA and noted the success of Waukesha County working with Milwaukee County on workforce transportation crossing county lines. However, there are limitations. Regions with strong transit systems almost always have an RTA. Abongwa asked if there is a reason why this is being brought up again. What is the goal? We have struggled with this in the past. Myadze described why an RTA would be beneficial for the Madison area. With the statewide redistricting that recently occurred, there could be an opportunity for this to be revisited. Andrae asked if there are other regions in the state that have started to talk about the development of RTAs. Wood said that this could be a good time to express support for a change in state law to allow for the creation of RTAs. Lyman stated that the East Central Regional Planning Commission has been pursuing an initiative for workforce transportation that would accomplish some of the same goals as an RTA. Abongwa stated that we need to study the previous challenges before seeking solutions. Opitz stated that the 2011-2013 State budget dissolved all RTAs. There were a group of people who did not want local governments to form a regional entity with taxing authority. There was a sentiment against local control for transit. Andrae added that this was a political decision by the previous administration. Callin stated that the Chippewa Valley Transit Alliance has had some discussions about how to get RTA legislation enabled.

## **11. Status Report on Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC) activities**

Andros reported that Jason Valerius will provide a status report on Capital Area RPC activities at our next meeting.

## **12. Staff Reports**

Andros reported that the MPO is still accepting comments on the amendment to the MPO Public Participation Plan. No comments have been submitted to date. Dane County has received a \$13.2 million dollar Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) award that will be used to construct new charging infrastructure. A major TIP amendment will be required. MPO staff will be tabling at the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association conference next week, which is being held in Madison. RoundTrip tabled at 12 different events in the second quarter. Andros provided an update on the vacant transportation planner position, noting that it had been posted.

## **13. Adjournment**

The next Policy Board meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.

Williams motioned, Caravello seconded, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.