

**Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)  
January 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

[Virtual Meeting hosted via Zoom](#)

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Opitz called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**1. Roll Call and Introductions**

**Members present:** Richelle Andrae, Phil Caravello, Paul Esser, Steve Flottmeyer, Tom Lynch, Jerry Mandli, Mark Opitz, Nasra Wehelie, Kristi Williams, Doug Wood

**Members absent:** Barbara Harrington-McKinney, Grant Foster

**MPO staff present:** Bill Schaefer, Colleen Hoesly

Others present in an official capacity: Carolyn Clow (McFarland Village President), Matt Schuenke (Village Administrator), Tim Stieve (Village Consultant), Forbes McIntosh (DCCVA)

**2. Approval of November 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Caravello moved, Wehelie seconded, to approve November 2, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**3. Communications**

- MPO Letter of support for Metro Transit's federal grant application for funding to deploy advanced driver assistance systems for BRT.
- Letters approving work program amendment approved by board approved at last meeting as well as letters from both WisDOT and USDOT approving the MPO's 2023 work program and federal planning funding.
- Letter from WisDOT approving 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Email from Steve Steinhoff, Director of the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC), providing brief report on CARPC's recent activities.

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

None

**5. Presentation on MPO Funded Exchange Street Project and Request for Approval of Design Change (Village of McFarland Consultant and Officials)**

Schaefer explained that the MPO is providing STBG-Urban funding for the Exchange Street reconstruction project, scheduled for 2024. The Village of McFarland is in the process of finalizing the design. Projects that the MPO approves for funding must comply with our Complete Streets policy that references the former State Complete Streets rule. We are planning to prepare and have the MPO adopt our own policy, which would replace the current policy.

When the Village was applying for funding, they indicated that bike lanes and sidewalk would be added on the north side of the street, along with pedestrian crossing improvements. There already is a sidewalk on the south side. During the design process, there was discussion about potentially omitting the sidewalk on the north side due to ROW constraints created by the addition of bike lanes and some resident concerns about that. Staff informed the Village that this would be problematic from a Complete

Streets policy compliance standpoint. The Village has now decided to go with an option that omits parking from one side of the street to allow room for the sidewalk on the north side, except for the southern-most block adjacent to the bridge over the Yahara River. At this point the proposed design change is relatively minor in the scheme of things, but staff decided it would be a good idea to have Village representatives speak to the board about the project and about the reasons for the desire to omit sidewalk from that southern segment of the project. He noted that Village President Carolyn Clow, Village Administrator Matt Schuenke, and Tim Stieve, the project consultant, were present to go over the project and sidewalk issue.

Clow thanked the board for the opportunity to speak about the project design. Clow said that she understands the reasons for complete streets, but that this is an area of the Village where there is sidewalk on only one side of the street. Sidewalk on both sides is new and different. There are tree impacts with adding sidewalk to the north side, so the Village has done a lot of work with the residents. The sidewalk that will be constructed as part of this project will improve access to the two schools north of Exchange Street. Clow talked about the challenges of adding sidewalk on the north side of Exchange Street, west of Jaeger Road, and explained why it did not make sense to construct a new sidewalk for that portion of the project. She asked the Board to consider the quirky spots in their communities where it doesn't work out to add sidewalk due to constraints.

Stieve described the project limits, scope, and roadway cross section. The cross section will have two 10-foot travel lanes, two bike lanes, sidewalk on both sides of the street, and a parking lane on the south side of the street. Next, Stieve described the issues with adding a sidewalk in front of the house that is on the north side of the road, immediately east of the Exchange Street Bridge. If a sidewalk were added at that location, vehicles parked on the driveway of the residence would extend into it. Stieve stated that there is currently only space for a sidewalk on the southern edge of the bridge, and that the bridge may not be reconstructed for at least another 20 years. Besides this, adding a sidewalk on the north of the street would also require several trees to be removed and some grading on private property.

Clow said that half of Exchange Street Bridge is in the Village of McFarland and that half is in the Town of Dunn. The request is to omit sidewalk on the north side of Exchange Street, west of Jaeger Lane. The rest of the project will have sidewalk on both sides of the street. The Village has an agreement with the Town of Dunn to not extend sidewalk into the town west of the river. This goes through 2025. The Village is working on a new agreement with the Town of Dunn. The Town of Dunn does not have sidewalk facilities anywhere.

Lynch asked if the house that is on the north side of the roadway, immediately east of the bridge, has eight vehicles, and if it has storage for eight vehicles. Stieve responded that the residents of this property typically park vehicles on the west end of the driveway. Four cars are shown on the driveway for illustration purposes. Lynch commented that in Madison, sidewalk is sometimes placed on only one side of the street. This can be seen as unfair, since residents of one side of the street are responsible for maintenance, while residents of the other side are not. Wood stated that the City of Monona recently built sidewalk in existing neighborhoods and noted that the retrofitting process can be challenging. He expressed concerns with not having a continuous sidewalk. Wood asked if the sidewalk will be extended on the south side of the street to Sleepy Hollow Road with an accessible ramp. Stieve responded that it would. Wood asked how the house ever got constructed so close to the roadway. He noted that half of the driveway is in the street right-of-way, which seems to be a major obstacle. Schuenke stated that the house was built in 1970, and likely predates the current zoning code and setback requirements. The road has been reconstructed since then. Clow said that there is wetland behind the house, so there was incentive to build the house as close to the roadway as possible. Clow said that the residence would have been in the Town of Dunn at that time. Wood asked where the sidewalk would be ended if it didn't

continue west, past Jaeger Road. Stieve responded that the sidewalk would end at Jaeger Road, and that a crosswalk would be constructed to connect it to the sidewalk on the south side of street.

Andrae asked Village of McFarland staff if it's more important for sidewalk to be constructed, or to retain parking. Stieve responded that previous iterations had parking lanes on both sides of the street. The Village Board and committees have approved the design as it stands today with parking on one side of the street with two bike lanes and two travel lanes. Clow explained that adding sidewalk on the north side of the road, west of Jaeger Street, would not serve a purpose or provide a benefit since there is no sidewalk on the north side of the bridge, and because there is no sidewalk in the Town of Dunn. It would not be a good use of the MPO or Village's funding. Opitz asked if there was a possibility of adding parking to the side of the garage of the subject property. Clow said that the proximity of the house is what they are trying to show with the drawing, not the ability to park more cars. Opitz explained that the driveway location is part of what is interfering with the concept of adding sidewalk.

Esser stated that the Village has made a fairly persuasive argument for omitting sidewalk on the north side of the road in front of the last house, but why not construct sidewalk in front of the two houses immediately west of Jaeger Road? How do residents access the transit network without going into the street? Clow stated that residents would need to use the street. The house closest to Jaeger Road fronts Jaeger Road, so there would only be two residences facing Exchange Street without sidewalk. Esser again asked why sidewalk couldn't be constructed along Exchange Street in front of the two houses immediately west of Jaeger Road. Stieve said that terminating a sidewalk mid-block with a crosswalk at that location is not customary.

Williams stated that she was impressed that the Village has a 20-year agreement with the Town of Dunn. She indicated that she was fine with stopping the sidewalk at Jaeger Road. She mentioned that she is also older and recognizes the importance of accessibility for all people, but that this was a unique situation.

Schaefer explained why staff is recommending construction of sidewalk on that block. There is no urban development plan west of the bridge, but the bridge will eventually be replaced, and it seems likely there will be development there at some point in the long-range future. While sidewalk could be added in the future, it is very difficult to do that and highly unlikely that it would be added if it isn't done now. Schaefer mentioned that staff provided suggestions on how to accommodate the sidewalk. This included omitting parking from both sides of the street for this block and shifting the street further south. However, some ROW acquisition would possibly be needed to extend the road without reducing the width of the terrace.

Caravello stated that extending the sidewalk for only the two houses west of Jaeger Street, and then creating a mid-block crosswalk, could create a safety concern. People wouldn't expect a cross walk there. He mentioned that he was fine with the Village's proposal to omit sidewalk in front of the three houses. Lynch said that he supports staff's recommendation for adding the sidewalk. The street parking, which will likely never be used, could be removed and bump outs could be added with parking bays if needed. Lynch stated that he was impressed with what McFarland has done, but there are other ways to add sidewalk such as eliminating on-street parking for a short segment of the street. Opitz also expressed support for the staff recommendation. He referenced the question he asked about parking in front of the garage, and whether parking could be added to the side of the house. He said it wasn't about parking, but rather the proximity of the house to the sidewalk. The issue with the proximity is really related to vehicles and the house, not the sidewalk. Pedestrians on a sidewalk have much less impact on a residence than proximity of vehicles on a street. The MPO is trying to promote complete streets, and the periodic pedestrian on a sidewalk does not have the same impact on a residence as a vehicle in close proximity. Opitz stated that he understood the concerns that if sidewalk is not added, it

will be more difficult to add later. He appreciated the back and forth discussion and noted there was some division on the board on this issue.

Caravello mentioned that long vehicles could block the sidewalk if it is constructed, and a situation could arrive where a pedestrian or bicyclist on the sidewalk has to go into the street to get around a vehicle. Opitz stated that he imagined there is an ordinance that prohibits blocking a sidewalk. Schuenke said that is accurate, and that they are trying to remove that conflict. Andrae asked if the three households have a stated an opinion on the sidewalk issue. Clow responded that the residents have stated that a sidewalk does not work well in front of their homes. The Village concurs. Opitz asked if McFarland has a policy that adjoining homeowners must maintain sidewalks. Schuenke and Clow said that they do.

Schaefer said that staff is recommending that the Village include the sidewalk, but is not recommending that funding should be contingent on whether the sidewalk is added or not. The board needs to decide on whether funding should be contingent on the sidewalk or not, or if they will only make an advisory recommendation. Opitz asked if removal of a small percentage of sidewalk in a corridor would affect the project's ranking. Schaefer said it's more of an issue with compliance with the complete streets policy than a scoring issue. Lynch stated that his preference was for the board to take an up or down vote. Right now, with this design, we are saying that street parking for three houses is more important than a sidewalk. Opitz said the central question is whether the sidewalk should be tied to funding. Lynch responded that if there was no other way, it should be advisory, but there are other ways to make it work. Wood said that he agreed with Lynch, and that funding should be contingent on the sidewalk. If we don't make funding contingent, the sidewalk won't get built. If we are going to vote on this, it should have some meaning. Esser stated that he likes the overall project. He would prefer that McFarland see the same need for the sidewalk to continue farther west, but did not wish to tie the vote to funding. The community should decide for themselves what is best, even if they don't see it the same way as I do.

Clow stated that it is important to know that the Village is not bringing this to you because we don't feel like constructing the sidewalk. We are bringing this to you because there are some considerations to this piece of the project that make it very difficult to construct, and there is questionable value to adding the sidewalk. We have looked at alternatives. Clow said that she hopes the MPO will create guidelines that allow communities to bring a concern and not say that complete streets is the complete solution to every problem. We know there are good reasons for complete streets, but it's not a solution that solves all of the problems for all of the communities. It's important that as you provide funding to smaller communities, that you realize these things will come up more often, and I hope there is a place for the voices of the communities you are looking to serve.

Andrae said that we need to be thoughtful about our objections. There could be more creative solutions to fit a sidewalk, but her own preference is to provide funding regardless of the sidewalk. Andrae asked how often do we make exceptions once a project has been moving along. Schaefer responded that this has occurred one other time, with the Lacy Road project in the City of Fitchburg. In that case, the board allowed the City to omit sidewalk on the north side of the road. The City put in bike lanes and a ten-foot shared-use path on the south side. There were significant grade issues, though, so much more difficult challenges, than here. Opitz expressed his thanks to Village of McFarland staff.

Andrae moved, Williams seconded, to not make MPO project funding contingent on including sidewalk on the north side in the southernmost block. Motion carried.

## **6. Presentation on Metro Transit Safety Planning Efforts (Justin Maki, Safety Coordinator, Metro Transit)**

Schaefer indicated that at the last meeting, the board had adopted a resolution endorsing the safety targets that Metro adopted. Following that, there was a request to hear more about Metro's safety

planning efforts. Maki provided a high level overview of the federally mandated Metro Safety Plan, using what's known as a safety management system (SMS). The SMS is a comprehensive, collaborative approach that brings management and employees together to build on the transit industry's existing safety foundation to control safety risk better, detect and correct safety problems earlier, share and analyze safety data more effectively, and measure safety performance more carefully. Maki explained the four pillars to the plan: Safety Management Policy; Safety Risk Management; Safety Assurance, and Safety Promotion. Within the Safety Assurance pillar, Maki showed the 2021 Safety Performance Targets and explained how Metro performed. The only goal that Metro Transit did not meet was the System Reliability/State of Good Repair target. He then showed the 2022 Safety performance targets. Maki presented Metro Crash/Accident Data and Roadway Crash/accident data. Schaefer said that the purpose was to show the relative safety record of buses versus cars. Wood asked Schaefer to send a copy of the presentation to the board.

#### **7. Request to Become Participating Agency for the Interstate 39/90/94 (Madison to Wisconsin Dells) Study**

Schaefer provided background on the request to become a participating agency for the Interstate 39/90/94 (Madison to Wisconsin Dells) Study. He noted that this is a federal process. When there are major studies like this, there is a process by which participating agencies are designated. As a result of the designation, there are additional opportunities for comment on things like project purpose and need, alternatives, and impacts. WisDOT invited the MPO to be a participating agency. The next step is to notify the department that the MPO is accepting that invitation. The first coordination meeting for the Interstate study is currently scheduled for January 30. Staff will likely schedule a presentation to the board at their March meeting.

Williams moved, Wehelie seconded, to accept invitation by WisDOT to become participating agency for the Interstate 39/90/94 Study. Motion carried.

#### **8. Brief Update on Regional Safety Action Plan Project**

Hoesly provided a brief update on the regional safety action plan. Preliminary data show that 2022 was the second deadliest year for road fatalities. One fatality has already occurred in 2023. Our RFP was released in fall 2022. The MPO only received one proposal, submitted by SRF Consulting. SRF submitted a good proposal, which the MPO accepted. Hoesly reviewed the project schedule. There are two phases. In Phase 1, the tasks include (1) Development of Work Plan/Project Management, (2) Analysis of Existing Transportation System; (3) Review of Policies and Identification of Best Practices; (4) Prioritization of Safety Strategies and Improvement Projects; and (5) Regional Action Safety Plan. In Phase 2, there will be a regional application for the Safe Streets and Roads for All Implementation Grant. Hoesly described the benefits of submitting a regional application compared to communities submitting individual applications on their own.

#### **9. Brief Update on Recruitment Process for New MPO Manager**

Schaefer said that applications are due January 25. Heather Stouder has been reaching out to board members about participating in that process. Schaefer stated that Wood has agreed to be involved in the interview process, Andrae has agreed to participate in the screening process, and that Opitz has also agreed to participate if needed. Lynch will likely participate as well in his role as City Transportation Director. Schaefer said that he will have one more board meeting -- February 1 -- and will be taking vacation time after that. Hoesly will be taking over most manager responsibilities for that gap and will be your point of contact after February 3. The gap period shouldn't exceed three months. Wehelie asked for more specific details on the timeline. Schaefer responded that with applications being due at the end

of January, interviews would likely be scheduled for February, with an offer made after that. Wehelie asked if she, as an alder, could participate in the hiring. Schaefer said that he would communicate Wehelie's interest to Heather Stouder in participating in the process.

#### **10. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings**

Schaefer announced that the Census Bureau released the list of 2020 urban areas at the end of 2022. At this point, they only released the list of areas and the population information for the urban areas. The GIS files with the actual boundaries of the urban area won't be released until later this month. Based on the population total and the analysis we did using 2020 census data, it looks like we will not lose any cities or villages in the Madison urban area. We could possibly lose Cross Plains, but it is hard to tell for sure. We will have more information at the end of the month. Schaefer explained that not losing any communities is a good thing from both a planning and funding perspective. The greater the population in the urban area, the greater the funding that we will receive. Schaefer indicated that he suspected both our planning funding and project funding will increase relative to other areas of the state due to Madison growing faster than other areas over the last decade.

Schaefer stated that he been checking with chief elected officials from cities and villages to confirm whether contributions towards the MPO budget were included in their local budgets. The MPO will receive over \$46,000 towards the MPO budget from suburban cities, villages, and towns with a number of additional communities contributing including the villages of DeForest and Windsor. That is about three times the amount of funding that we received two years ago. This is reflective of the value communities place on the MPO and the services we provide. Opitz added that it also reflects on the outreach the MPO has provided to the local communities and being a visible presence in the area for all these communities.

Next MPO Board Meeting: Wednesday, February 1, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

#### **11. Adjournment**

Lynch moved, Wehelie seconded, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.