

Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)¹
March 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting hosted via Zoom

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

1. Roll Call

Members present: Samba Baldeh, Margaret Bergamini, Paul Esser (joined during item #6), Steve Flottmeyer, Grant Foster, Patrick Heck, Dorothy Krause, Tom Lync, Jerry Mandli (joined during item #5), Ed Minihan, Mark Opitz, Mike Tierney, Doug Wood

Members absent: Yogesh Chawla

MPO staff present: Bill Schaefer, Colleen Hoesly

Others present in an official capacity: Brandon Lamers and Michael Hoelker (WisDOT SW Region), Brian Porter (WisDOT Traffic Forecasting)

2. Approval of February 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Krause moved, Wood seconded, to approve the February 3th, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

None

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

None

5. Public Hearing on Amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan and 2021-2025 Transportation Improvement Program to Add U.S. Highway 51 (McFarland to Stoughton) Reconstruction Project

Opitz opened the hearing at 6:34 pm. Schaefer noted he received an emailed comment from a Stoughton resident, which was shared with the board and WisDOT. The resident expressing concern over bike and pedestrian safety around the Kettle Park West development area and the corridor generally, and asked for consideration of options to support safe crossings of USH 51. Minihan reiterated the need for highway signage for the storm shelter. Opitz closed hearing at 6:36 pm.

6. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 3 Approving Amendment #3 to the Regional Transportation Plan 2050 for the Madison Metropolitan Area to Add the U.S. Highway (McFarland to Stoughton) Reconstruction Project

Schaefer started the discussion by asking WisDOT if they had any response to the bicycle and pedestrian safety issue brought up, noting he had corresponded with Stoughton officials about the comment. Lamers replied that they have had conversations with Stoughton as well as developers in that area about the matter, which will be further addressed during final design. Hoelker commented that regular meetings with Stoughton and McFarland about specific design issues had begun and will be ongoing.

¹ Formerly named Madison Area Transportation Planning Board

Wood asked about the role of the MPO in terms of project design details, and why the storm shelter sign was not included. Schaefer explained that broadly, the MPO's role was to approve or deny the project for inclusion in the RTP and TIP, but the MPO could certainly weigh in on design details and could ask WisDOT to return to make presentations during final design. Hoelker noted that roadway signage is a matter of policy rather than project design, but the issue has been raised at WisDOT. Foster requested that the MPO be included in commenting during final design to ensure that it is consistent with MPO policy. Lamers confirmed that WisDOT was willing to come back and present on the project during final design. Lynch commented that while he didn't agree with all aspects of the project, to not approve it after more than 10 years of public involvement seemed extreme. Krause asked how locked in the project was to the planned financing. Lamers replied that the project was authorized by the Transportation Projects Commission (TPC) for major funding at \$174 million in current dollars, which accounts for some contingencies. Any changes in project cost would be reported and need to be approved through the TPC. Lynch asked about the schedule for signing of the environmental assessment (EA). Lamers replied that a public hearing was requested, which would be mid to late April, and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) would likely be signed in late May. Lynch asked about the process if a reevaluation was necessary. Lamers replied that discussions between the design team and communities would be ongoing, and if there would be any significant design changes a reevaluation may be done then depending on the magnitude of the changes.

Wood moved, Esser seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 3 approving Amendment #3 to the Regional Transportation Plan 2050 to add the USH 51 project. Motion carried.

6. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 4 Approving Amendment #3 to the 2021-2025 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County

Schaefer reviewed the projects included in the amendment, which includes two WETAP projects, the new Interstate study, and USH 14/Pleasant View Rd. intersection project, along with the USH 51 project.

Esser moved, Krause seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 4 approving Amendment #3 to the 2021-2025 TIP. Motion carried.

7. Presentation on Draft Population, Household, and Employment Forecasts and Development of the Land Use Development Scenario

Schaefer introduced Steve Steinhoff with CARPC, and explained that the MPO contracted with CARPC to update county and municipal population, household, and employment forecasts and, along with City of Madison Planning staff, to develop a future land use development scenario to be used for allocating households and employment at the TAZ level for the MPO travel model. Steinhoff gave a presentation on the process for how the projections were developed, and an overview of CARPC's Regional Development Framework plan.

8. Update on Revisions to Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) – Urban Policies and Project Evaluation Criteria

Schaefer explained that in 2015 the MPO conducted a comprehensive review and revision of its policies and project evaluation criteria for the STBG (formerly named STP) – Urban program in order to more closely align them with the goals and policy objectives of the Regional Transportation Plan. In 2019 some revisions were made to the program policies, mostly to document policies that the MPO Board had previously agreed on related to conditional approval of projects beyond the 5-year TIP and reallocation of funding in the event of a delay or cancellation of a project. Staff had intended to make some minor updates to the scoring criteria and policies for the upcoming round of STBG applications,

and the board had previously indicated they would be interesting in reviewing the scoring criteria weights. Schaefer indicated the updates to the scoring criteria ended up being more significant than originally intended. Schaefer reviewed the proposed changes to scoring categories and weights for roadway projects and to the policies. He said staff hadn't yet reviewed this with the MPO's technical committee, but would be doing so at their next meeting.

Foster said he thought the board would have a broader policy discussion before getting into the detailed breakdown of the scoring criteria. He requested that a few projects that received STBG funding in the past be used as tests to see how the proposed criteria changes would impact scoring. Schaefer said staff is adding a table that relates the RTP goals and policies to the criteria, and also plans to score some past projects with the new criteria. Lynch indicated that he thought it was a good idea to eliminate the benefit/cost analysis, since it was difficult to do and incorporated many assumptions that don't necessarily hold true. Opitz indicated that the board could provide more feedback after they had more time to review the proposed changes.

9. Approval of Application Eligibility and Selection Process for Projects to be Funded with CRRSAA (COVID Relief) Section 5310 Program Funding

Schaefer briefly reviewed the proposed scoring criteria that was presented at the last board meeting, which staff was recommending for approval. Schaefer noted that it sounded like another round of CRRSAA Section 5310 funding may be available in the near future, and, if so, the approved selection process would be used to evaluate those projects as well. Opitz noted there was no objection by the board with the proposed selection process for CRRSAA Section 5310 projects.

10. Appointments to the MPO Citizen Advisory Committee

Opitz noted that the MPO received the resignation of two Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members, and through recruitment, letters of interest from four individuals. Schaefer noted he was still trying to recruit some additional members to reflect greater diversity. Schaefer explained that according to the MPO operating procedures, the Policy Board approves the appointment of members to the CAC.

Foster asked how prospective CAC members are recruited and expressed concern that the four candidates did not represent a diverse citizen makeup. Schaefer replied that in the past he has sent a request to all the chief elected officials requesting nominations, and most recently, staff noted the open vacancies and encouraged interested individuals to apply at the Downtown Madison Inc. Transportation Committee and during the last MPO/CARPC webinar event. Otherwise, it is just through contacts staff make during their work. Foster stated he would like more information about the CAC, including more defined roles and prospective stakeholders.

Lynch noted that he was concerned that as a high level committee, it would be difficult to get people interested in the committee when there are so many other transportation-related committees and initiatives in the region, leading to engagement fatigue. Wood stated that he was on the CAC for a year before being appointed to the Policy Board, and while his experience was positive, he didn't feel that the committee had much influence. Krause stated she was also on the CAC previously, and its role seemed to be that of an idea-generator for staff, and to be a touchpoint with neighborhoods.

Foster moved, Bergamini seconded, to defer the CAC appointments until the next Board meeting. Motion carried.

11. Status Report on Capital Area RPC Activities

No update

12. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

The next meeting is Wednesday April 7th.

13. Adjournment

Moved by Esser, seconded by Bergamini, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.