

**Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)  
May 5, 2021 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:** Yogesh Chawla, Paul Esser, Steve Flottmeyer, Grant Foster, Gary Halverson, Dorothy Krause, Tom Lynch, Jerry Mandli, Ed Minihan, Barbara Harrington-McKinney, Mark Opitz, Doug Wood

**Members absent:** Margaret Bergamini, Nasra Wehelie

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

**Others present in an official capacity:** Forbes McIntosh (DCCVA), Caryl Terrell (Capital Area RPC)

**2. Approval of April 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Esser moved, Wood seconded, to approve the April 7, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**3. Communications**

- Letter from Roger Springman and response from WisDOT Southwest Region regarding concerns about the roundabouts planned on USH 51 in Stoughton. In response to question from Schaefer, Flottmeyer indicated that the roundabouts will be multi-lane and pedestrian signals are not a standard design element in the facilities design manual. As such, WisDOT generally would require the local community to fund them. He said construction on the roundabouts in question is scheduled for 2022.

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

None

**5. Approval of Revisions to the MPO's Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) – Urban Policies and Project Evaluation Criteria**

Opitz noted that a change was made in the final evaluation criteria document to allow reconstruction of multi-use paths as an eligible project type if a significant enhancement was being made. Schaefer said this policy was changed for TAP projects, and that it made sense to have the same policy for STBG-Urban projects. Schaefer there were no other substantive changes from the draft document. The MPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) recommended approval of the proposed changes at their last meeting. Schaefer said there was discussion at the last board meeting on whether the specific project types should be prioritized for funding. Schaefer said that staff recommends against that in order to give the board maximum flexibility in selecting the priority projects in a given funding cycle.

Chawla asked when applications will be received and evaluated. Schaefer stated that they are due in mid-June. Staff will then review and evaluate them, and present recommendations to the TCC and then the board at its August meeting. Final approval of the projects is done as part of approval of the TIP in October. Wood asked why independent sidewalks are not an eligible project. Schaefer said that

independent sidewalk projects would likely not meet minimum cost criteria, and nonetheless are not an efficient use of funds given the extra costs associated with federally funded projects.

Esser moved, Krause seconded, to approve the revisions to the MPO's Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) – Urban Polices and Project Evaluation Criteria. Motion carried.

**6. Approval of Grant Projects for Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities) Program Supplemental 2021 Funding (CRRSAA and ARPA)**

Schaefer said the MPO received \$109,000 in supplemental CRSSAA and ARPA funding under the Section 5310 program. The MPO received two applications: (1) Dane County application to fund rides to vaccination sites for seniors, persons with disabilities, and veterans; and (2) Capital Express application to support payroll for a person due to loss of revenue. They are a private operator and provide some of the county specialized transportation services. Both are eligible projects. The two applications will only use 63% of available funding. Staff proposed to fund them and roll over remaining funds into this year's regular application cycle for 2022 projects.

Esser moved, Wood seconded, to approve the applications from Dane County and Capital Express requesting Section 5310 Program Supplemental 2021 Funding. Motion carried.

**7. Discussion on and Potential Action to Disband the MPO Citizen Advisory Committee for Use in Public and Stakeholder Engagement**

Esser commented that he has been on the Policy Board for four years, and that he doesn't recall hearing about a recommendation from the committee. He supported disbanding the committee and said that members could still provide their input on an unofficial basis. Lynch said that serving on a committee is a large commitment and there is little discernable impact on the committee member's daily lives. Opitz said that several committee members have provided good insight, and that he would like to thank them for their service and dedication to the MPO and the community.

McKinney asked Schaefer to describe the committee's original purpose. At what point did it disconnect? Schaefer said that the purpose was to seek input from a diverse, cross section of the community and to keep them updated on MPO activities and have members serve as liaison to groups they are involved with. It was intended as one of several vehicles for engaging with the public. Schaefer described some of the challenges of recruiting members given the nature of the MPO's work. It would probably be more productive to engage the public by going to them (e.g., sponsor webinars, provide presentations to local officials, community groups, etc.). He acknowledged that the committee ended up being more of a staff advisory group.

Chawla asked if staff has had a discussion with the committee about this. Schaefer said that staff talked to committee members about how to improve communication between the committee and the board and make the committee more effective. Staff informed committee members that the board would be discussing the committee, and that disbanding was a possibility. Staff recently informed committee members that the board appeared inclined to disband the committee. Tom Wilson, a committee member, said that he would miss the committee, but was fine with that; he just wanted to understand reasons for eliminating the committee. Krause commented that she feels reassured by staff's proposal to redirect efforts to community outreach. This is a better use of staff time. Krause asked if we could have some ad hoc committees when specific community input is needed. Schaefer stated that we have had ad hoc committees in the past and will continue to have them.

Terrell introduced herself as a member of CARPC's board and a citizen advocate. She said that the MPO needs to hold itself accountable to creating ad hoc committees and initiating public engagement

if they disband the CAC. Community input is vital when the board develops policies as citizens have a different viewpoint than technical committee members. McKinney cited an example of how community engagement helped achieve better transit service for underserved areas in St. Louis when she worked there. She urged the MPO to commit to public outreach if the citizen committee is disbanded. Opitz commented on the lack of public participation at previous RTP and TIP public hearings. The MPO needs to create ways to connect with all members in the community, and meetings are not the best way to accomplish this. Providing opportunities is one thing; connecting with people is another.

Chawla stated that he intends to vote against disbanding the committee. He suggested that the committee be reimagined rather than disbanded. Foster said that he understands Chawla's point, but that he thinks everyone here agrees that we want to maximize public input. He noted that the City of Madison's Task Force on Government Structure Work examined how we could shift the structures of our boards and commissions to improve public engagement. Meetings are not the best way to obtain input; we need to go to folks instead. We must focus our effort on public engagement when working on plans. Foster expressed support for disbanding the committee, but said we need to be thoughtful and intentional in getting citizen input when working on planning efforts that will resonate with the community.

Halverson said that he likes what Foster and everyone has been saying. He asked if our public outreach has been successful. Hoesly said that the board approved a new public participation plan last November. Now that we are kicking off our Long Range Regional Transportation Plan, we are implementing new innovative methods to reach communities that are traditionally underrepresented at public meetings. We had our first focus group yesterday with Madison's Bayview Foundation. We are giving a stipend to community organizations and focus group participants for providing feedback. We will be working with the Latino Academy later this week. We are always looking for new ways to reach out.

Krause said that staff can devote more time to reaching out to the community if they don't have to focus on the citizen committee. She mentioned her membership on the committee before joining the board. Meetings require a substantial investment of staff time. Participants in those meetings are not a diverse group. They do not reflect the community that we should be engaging. Krause indicated that she would welcome outreach efforts to gain diversity in public engagement. Opitz expressed his thanks for the service of CAC members and suggested that the board extend an invitation for them to continue to be engaged and to help inform our work to benefit the region. Schaefer said that he will do that and ask for their input on how we can do a better job with outreach.

Foster moved, Esser seconded, to disband the MPO Citizen Advisory Committee for use in public and stakeholder engagement. Motion carried.

#### **8. Appointment of MPO Representative to the Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission**

Schaefer provided an overview of the Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission. The commission is primarily responsible for overseeing administration of county specialized services. Staff member Ben Lyman currently serves as the MPO representative, but we would welcome the appointment of a board member if anyone is interested in serving. If not, then it would be appropriate for Ben to continue serving on the commission.

Esser moved, Opitz seconded, to appoint Ben Lyman as the MPO representative to the Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission. Motion carried.

#### **9. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 5 Approving Amendment #2 to the 2020 Unified Planning Work Program**

Schaefer stated that an amendment to the Work Program is required because the travel model project, along with work that the TOPS Laboratory is doing for us, will not be completed by the end of May. An official work program amendment is therefore needed. Krause asked if additional funding is needed. Schaefer stated that no additional funds are needed.

Krause moved, Halverson seconded, to approve amendment No. 2 to the 2020 Unified Planning Work Program. Motion carried with Flottmeyer abstaining.

#### **10. Summary of Local Staff Responses to Questions Asked to Inform Update to the Regional Transportation Plan**

Schaefer said that staff had put together questions and sent them to the MPO technical committee and other municipal staff to get their input for our RTP update. We received some valuable information, and will have meetings with some of the communities as we get further in the process. Schaefer noted the responses were included in the packet. He provided a high level summary of responses received regarding short to medium-range priorities/plans, policies, and long-range priorities.

Esser noted that the information provided from each community varied widely. Some information was precise; other information was high level, or more of a vision. Esser asked if staff is satisfied with the responses, and if there is ever a time when the MPO meets with community planners from other communities. Schaefer agreed that some communities provided responses that were more specific than others due to the level of planning. As we go through the process, staff can request more information when needed. The survey was just a starting point. Schaefer noted that he had participated in meetings held with CARPC staff about development projects and plans, used to inform the growth scenario for the RTP. Krause provided an example of the difficulties with multi-jurisdictional issues.

#### **11. Review of U.S. Census Bureau's Proposed Revised Criteria for Defining Urban Areas, its Impact on Madison Urban Area, and Consideration of Submission of Comments**

Schaefer presented a map showing the current planning area and urbanized area boundaries. He stated that the Census Bureau is proposing to revise criteria for drawing the boundaries of urban areas. 2020 Census data will be used to determine urban area boundaries. Urban area boundaries determine the amount of funding the MPO gets for projects and planning purposes. Projects must be located in the urbanized area to be eligible for STBG-Urban funding. The change that is of most concern is the decrease in the allowance "jump" distance over areas not meeting the density criteria to pull in areas that do. Staff has made an attempt to determine the potential boundary based on the new criteria and 2016 housing unit data. Using the new criteria, he said it is likely the City of Stoughton and Village of Cross Plains would be removed from the urban area. It is also possible that the Villages of Cottage Grove, DeForest, and Windsor would be removed.

Lynch suggested that the board write a letter in opposition to the proposed boundary criteria changes. We have a regional transportation system, and separating the region into different urban areas is not good policy. Schaefer noted that 36-48% of residents living in those communities work in the City of Madison. Minihan agreed with Lynch. He stated that the current urban boundaries are sufficient. He noted that the rural area between McFarland and Stoughton is due to the Town of Dunn's land use policy. Opitz agreed it would be appropriate for the board to write a letter in opposition to the criteria changes.

Schaefer said that staff has informed the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) about our concerns, and hoped that AMPO would oppose the jump criterion change in their

comments. Opitz asked about the timeline for submitting comments, and Schaefer said the deadline was late-May. Terrell suggested that MPO discuss the matter with CARPC staff and request their support.

Foster moved, Minihan seconded, to approve staff submitting comments on urban area criteria opposing the change to the jump distance.

#### **12. Status Report on Capital Area RPC Activities**

Foster and Minihan stated that Larry Palm is no longer on the commission. David Pfeiffer is the new Chair. [Correction: Palm was not reappointed, but is continuing to serve until replaced.]

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

The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 2.

#### **14. Adjournment**

Moved by Krause, seconded by Chawla, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.