

**Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
November 3, 2021, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

[Virtual Meeting hosted via Zoom](#)

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

1. Roll Call and Introductions

Members present: Margaret Bergamini, Yogesh Chawla, Paul Esser, Steve Flottmeyer, Grant Foster, Dorothy Krause, Tom Lynch, Jerry Mandli, Barbara Harrington-McKinney, Nasra Wehelie, Kristi Williams, Doug Wood

Members absent: Mark Opitz, Gary Halverson

MPO staff present: Bill Schaefer, Zia Brucaya

Others present in an official capacity: Forbes McIntosh (DCCVA), Diane Paoni (WisDOT Planning)

2. Approval of October 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Esser moved, Wehelie seconded, to approve the October 6, 2021 meeting minutes. Williams abstained. Motion carried.

3. Communications

Schaefer described a series of letters and emails regarding WisDOT's use of CRRSAA (Covid Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act) funding suballocated for the Madison area:

- WisDOT letter indicating that they had consulted with FHWA and that the agency had supposedly confirmed WisDOT has the authority to spend that money on projects as long as they are in the Madison metropolitan area, and that the required coordination with the MPO is satisfied as long as the projects being funded are listed in the approved Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- After receiving WisDOT's letter, Schaefer confirmed the letter's accuracy with Wisconsin Division FHWA staff. Schaefer noted that he still questioned the legality of WisDOT's use of the funding for state projects without consent by the MPO.
- Letter from Kevin Muhs, Executive Director of SEWRPC (Milwaukee area MPO), making the argument that a TIP amendment would be required for this due to the change in funding source and because the funding is sub-allocated funding that must be spent in the MPO area.

Schaefer noted that the only possible leverage that the MPO has at this point would be to convince FHWA that a TIP amendment is required or remove the project from TIP. Otherwise, the only recourse would be to involve higher level officials—mayors, county executives, etc. He explained that he found it appalling that WisDOT would take this \$3 million, which is meant to be used by the MPO. He said that Kevin Muhs had also noted that WisDOT had not even asked the MPO for its input as to which state project in the MPO area should receive the funding.

Foster suggested that the MPO contact a city attorney to discuss its options, and discuss the matter with state representatives and others to bring awareness to the issue. Lynch asked whether the MPO had considered approaching the WisDOT secretary about the issue. Schaefer replied that the large MPO directors had been in the process of drafting a letter to the WisDOT Secretary asking for a meeting on this issue and the larger issue of lack of transparency in the calculation of the MPOs' suballocated funding. Schaefer said he expects that the Secretary would have some familiarity with this issue, but

that he may not know the full story, so pursuing a meeting with him still makes sense. Lynch responded that the current WisDOT administration seems receptive to trying address MPOs' needs. Krause said that she had met with the WisDOT Secretary a couple of times and that she expects that he would at least give the MPO a hearing on the issue. She suggested use of county legal counsel as well as city counsel. Schaefer responded that he was hesitant to involve county legal staff because the city is responsible for staffing the MPO. Krause said that since the CRRSSA funding is directed to the entire MPO area the county should be made aware of the issue.

Harrington-McKinney asked whether the discussion was in order and whether, since this topic was not on the agenda, the board should be discussing it in such depth. Wood said he agreed, and that Schaefer had probably heard enough about the Board's thoughts on the issue at this time, and that the item should be added to a future meeting agenda. Schaefer said that resolution of the issue is not urgent, but it should be done by the first half of next year as the MPO could use the funding on projects scheduled in 2022-'23. Foster asked Schaefer to ask a city attorney about the ability for the board to discuss an issue like this without it being on the agenda as long as the board takes no action.

The following were the other communications:

- WisDOT letter, signed by FHWA, approving the work program amendment to carry over funding.
- MPO letter of support for MadREP's workforce innovation grant application, which includes a regional vanpool program.
- Newsletter from WisDOT on the USH 51 (McFarland to Stoughton) project announcing public meetings on the project design (emailed to board).
- MPO letter of support for Madison Metro's route restoration grant application to support implementation of the network redesign study (emailed to board).

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

None.

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

Brucaya presented the background on and results of the 2021 Madison Region Telework Survey. She then outlined the next steps: production of a summary report, sharing the results with employers and policymakers, and supporting Sustain Dane in completing the telework scoping study grant.

Foster noted the importance of this survey and suggested that it would be good for the MPO to continue to focus on telework, and to include telework under the RoundTrip program—initially by including tips, resources, etc. on the website. Lynch said that he is cautious about promoting telework for its sustainability benefits because its environmental impact is not yet clear. Chawla said that we need to increase our understanding of telework and why travel has increased back to the levels it has despite elevated levels of telecommuting. He wondered whether telecommuting may in fact be reducing travel, while some other factor may be increasing it. He also noted the importance of neighborhood design and land use mix—that in some neighborhoods, such as his own, people can meet all of their daily needs without a car but in other places they cannot. Foster agreed with Chawla's comments and said that even if teleworking just reduces peak period congestion that is still a major benefit, as it can reduce the need for capacity expansion. He also echoed the need for more research into the impacts of telework on VMT. If some of the off-peak VMT increase is due to choice trips, there may be better ways to shift those trips onto alternate modes than focusing on peak period work commuting.

Harrington-McKinney noted the importance of looking at the totality of how people travel, how people are able to travel, how their neighborhoods affect the travel they need to do, and the disparities in these areas. Wood asked Brucaya how VMT today compares to 2019. Brucaya said that total daily VMT

in September 2020 was about 5% below 2019 levels, but that peak hour travel was far lower relative to 2019 levels. Schaefer said that while the MPO intends to look at more recent data, he felt anecdotally that peak period traffic, particularly on the Beltline, remains well below its 2019 peak. Wood noted that even a small change in traffic volumes has a big impact. Lynch said he checked volumes on University Avenue last week and found they were about 92% of prior levels. He said he remains uncertain as to how permanent the change in travel habits and telecommuting will be after the pandemic recedes as a major issue impacting work and school. Foster said that the role of the MPO should not just be reactive, but it should instead be working proactively to effect change in travel habits and try to prevent traffic from bouncing back to its previous level. Schaefer said he agreed with many of the comments and that the MPO would continue to work in this space.

6. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 11 Adopting Annual Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program Performance Measure Targets

Schaefer explained the requirement for MPOs to set targets for various performance measures, report their progress on meeting them, and detail in their long range plans and in their TIPs how the plans and projects will help the region make progress in achieving the targets. He said that some of the measures, including the safety measures, require yearly decisions by the MPO on whether to maintain or adjust the targets. The safety measures are:

- The number and rate of vehicle crash fatalities
- The number and rate of vehicle crash serious injuries
- The number and rate of non-motorized vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries

MPOs have the option of supporting the state targets or adopting their own. Last year the board discussed setting more ambitious targets than the state—currently 2% annual reductions from the prior 5-year average—but decided it would be better to focus on what the MPO can do in terms of supporting implementing agencies in their safety activities and in prioritizing safety in the projects that the MPO funds. Staff is recommending that the MPO continue to support the state targets. Schaefer noted the resolution encourages implementing agencies to adopt more aspirational safety goals like Vision Zero, and to adopt policies to achieve more reductions in fatalities and serious injuries, including the safe systems approach.

Foster said that CARPC discussed the MPO report on pedestrian and bike infrastructure standards, and that he thought a similar report on safety activities could be useful, and it would be a good role for the MPO. Schaefer agreed.

Esser moved, Wehelie seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 11. Motion carried.

7. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 12 Adopting Annual Transit Asset Management and Public Transit Agency Safety Plan Performance Measure Targets

Schaefer explained that the transit asset management and safety measures are the others for which annual performance targets must be set. Staff supports adopting the targets that Metro Transit has set. For both sets of measures, Metro has decided to keep its current targets for another year. Two of the three transit asset management measures involve the number of buses and service vehicles beyond their useful life. Metro is currently exceeding their targets due to COVID-related budget issues and the need to reallocate funds from their regular buses towards the BRT project. The third asset management measure involves the FTA condition rating of their buildings. Currently they are not meeting the target because their rating is based on their administrative and maintenance building, and upgrades to their facility have not yet been completed. The new satellite facility has not yet opened, so that is not included in the rating. Once these are done, Metro will be meet their target.

The safety measures are similar to the traffic safety measures – number and rate of fatalities, injuries, and safety events, and also the distance between vehicle failures (bus breakdowns). They exceeded all of their targets in 2020 due to the reduced service and ridership, but Metro has decided to keep their current targets this year before making any changes.

Esser moved, Williams seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 12. Motion carried.

8. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 13 Amending the 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County to Revise Attachment E to Incorporate Reference to the 2022 Federal Performance Measure Targets

Schaefer explained that this is a technical amendment to revise the TIP appendix to reference the targets just approved by the board.

Esser moved, Williams seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 13. Motion carried.

9. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 14 Approving the 2022 MPO Unified Planning Work Program

Schaefer noted that no comments had been received and that no changes are proposed to the draft document reviewed with the board at the previous meeting.

Esser moved, Krause seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 14. Motion carried.

10. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 15 Authorizing the City of Madison to Enter into an Agreement with Dane County for MPO to Provide Specialized Transportation Coordination Services to Dane County in 2022

Schaefer said that this is the standard agreement that was made last year. He clarified that this same agreement also includes \$24,000 that the County provides to Metro for marketing efforts.

Bergamini moved, Wehelie seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 15. Motion carried.

11. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 16 Authorizing the City of Madison to Enter into an Agreement with the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC) for MPO to Provide Transportation Planning Work Activities to CARPC in 2022

Schaefer said that this is another agreement that is renewed every year that enables CARPC to pass through funding from WisDOT to the MPO for transportation analyses that are done for sewer service amendments.

Esser moved, Krause seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 16. Motion carried.

12. Continued Discussion and Potential Action Regarding Expansion of the Area of Eligibility for STBG Urban and TA Program Funding from the Urban Area to the Planning Area

Schaefer noted that staff presented on this issue at the last meeting, and a decision was deferred. He said that staff supports expanding the area of eligibility from the urban area to the larger metropolitan planning area, or include the Village of Oregon along with the urban area. One of the benefits would be to further engage the village with the MPO. In order to avoid equity issues, since the village receives a small annual funding allotment (it has averaged \$50,000) that the other communities in the MPO do not, the MPO could reduce MPO-provided funding proportionately if the village were awarded MPO project funding. Expanding the area of eligibility to include the entire planning area would enable roads that are within the planning area but outside the urbanized area to receive funding; these are currently ineligible for both STBG-Urban and STBG-Rural funding [Ed. Note: Staff was informed that roadways in this area are in fact eligible for STBG-Rural funding].

Esser moved, Williams seconded, to support expanding the area of eligibility for STBG-Urban and TA program funding to include the entire planning area.

Krause noted that the area extending down US 14 to CTH MM, through Fitchburg to Oregon, is identified as a future urban growth area. Bergamini asked when the boundaries are due to be redrawn. Schaefer said that process would start late next year. In response to question from Bergamini, Schaefer explained the general criteria for setting the adjusted urban area boundary and the planning area boundary. Bergamini asked whether there was any reason to redraw the boundaries now rather than waiting until the new Census defined urbanized area boundaries come out. Schaefer replied that it would make sense to wait. Esser asked if the village was aware that the MPO was considering this change. Schaefer responded that staff had discussed the issue with the Planning Director, but not elected officials. Village staff supported the change, and assumed elected officials would as well. Esser asked about reasons for not expanding the area of eligibility. Schaefer replied that the only negative would be the additional competition for funds, which would not increase.

Wood asked Schaefer to confirm that most of the applications for funding have come from the City of Madison. Schaefer said that a majority of the applications have come from Madison and that a majority of funding has gone to Madison, but larger suburban communities and the county have received funding as well. He also noted the policy goal to use at least 10% of the funds for smaller projects from smaller communities. More such applications are expected in future years. Lynch noted the additional requirements and therefore costs associated with federally funded projects. Schaefer agreed that is a barrier for smaller projects.

Bergamini said that she would be voting against this proposal since it had not been discussed with elected officials and new urban area boundaries will be released next year. Wood asked Schaefer to clarify what is happening next year, and whether he thinks the board should hold off on making a change at this point. Schaefer said he did not foresee the planning area changing much, with no new cities or villages added. Schaefer said he is confident that the village would be supportive of this, but that he could certainly confirm this.

Lynch asked whether Dane County might apply for funding for projects in the newly eligible area. Mandli noted that the federal requirements tend to increase project costs substantially, but that he could not say whether the county would try to apply for the newly available funding in the planning area. He continued that he thought a project, such as resurfacing CTH B west of Lake Kegonsa, would be unlikely to score well enough to receive funding. Schaefer agreed.

Harrington-McKinney suggested deferring action due to lack of clarity by board members on all of the issues surrounding the proposed change. Krause said that local governments need to plan projects far in advance, so it would be helpful to expand the eligibility area now rather than waiting. Esser questioned what additional information was needed before making a decision. Foster asked about the impacts of waiting on the policy change. Schaefer said that if the village was planning to apply for Transportation Alternatives program (TAP) funding, it would be good to make the change soon since applications for that funding are due in January. Foster said he supported deferring action, and requested a presentation on the issue when taken up again. He said village officials should be notified when put on the agenda. Krause suggested Fitchburg should also be invited. Bergamini asked whether either community had expressed an intent to apply for TAP funding. Schaefer said he had not heard from any communities yet about applying for TAP funding. Bergamini asked about prior applications, and Schaefer responded Fitchburg had applied and received funding in the past, but not Oregon. Mandli asked if this had been presented to the technical committee. Schaefer said yes, but staff hadn't asked for a recommendation from the committee. In response to further discussion, Schaefer said he would find out if either Fitchburg or Oregon intended to apply for a TAP grant.

Bergamini moved, Harrington-McKinney seconded, to delay action to a future meeting to be determined by staff and by the chair. Motion carried.

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

Schaefer noted that staff was just beginning work on the travel forecast modeling for the plan due to delays with the model. He reviewed a draft of the presentation to be provide at the upcoming public information meetings, and asked for any comments.

Lynch requested that the MPO contact Renee Callaway to coordinate on identifying missing links in the bicycle network.

14. Status Report on Capital RPC Activities

Foster noted that he had made a comment on CARPC activities earlier (item #6), but did not have anything further to add.

15. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

There were no announcements. The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 1.

16. Adjournment

Moved by McKinney, seconded by Krause, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.