

**Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
May 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

[Virtual Meeting hosted via Zoom](#)

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

1. Roll Call and Introductions

Members present: Richelle Andrae, Phil Caravello, John Duncan, Pam Dunphy, Paul Esser, Derek Field, Tom Lynch, Charles Myadze, Mark Opitz, Kristi Williams, Doug Wood

Members absent: Steve Flottmeyer, Barbara Harrington-McKinney

MPO staff present: Alex Andros, Colleen Hoesly, Ben Lyman

Others present in an official capacity: Colleen Harris (EXP Consulting), Frank Pritzlaff (WisDOT), Daniel Schave (WisDOT), Jerry Shadewald (HNTB), Ben Zellers (City of Madison)

2. Approval of April 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Williams moved, Wood seconded, to approve the April 5, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

None in packet. Hoesly stated that the MPO received notice this afternoon that WisDOT will be conducting a Title VI review on the MPO this year.

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

None.

5. Presentation and Discussion on I-39/90/94 Corridor Study

Pritzlaff presented on I-39/90/94 project, design alternatives, and where WisDOT is in the planning process. Opitz asked if the increase in AADT 2021 over pre-pandemic levels correlated to decreased use of other modes, such as airline travel. Pritzlaff stated that they had not analyzed potential relationships to use of other modes. Shadewald stated that increased freight traffic was a leading cause of the increase in AADT in 2021, and more than made up for decreased commuter traffic that year.

Pritzlaff continued the presentation and discussed design alternatives for interchanges in the MPO Planning Area. Field expressed appreciation for pedestrian accommodation on the Milwaukee Street crossing of I-39/90. Opitz noted that the design alternatives are not very easy to reach from the WisDOT project web page and suggested that the link to them should be made more readily accessible to the public. Opitz asked if WisDOT staff are concerned about new interchanges (Milwaukee/East and Hoepker) leading to increased use of the interstate highways for short local trips, and those trips impacting the ability of the facilities to accommodate long-distance through-traffic. Schave responded that they are doing extensive modeling and simulation work and have not seen any indications that these interchanges would negatively effect operations. Shadewald stated that due to the existing roadway network on the far-east side of Madison, there are few alternate local routes that could have traffic diverted to the interstate, and that although some of these trips do migrate to the interstate in modelling, there are no red flags regarding an influx of these trips. Opitz stated that one of the problems

with the Beltline is that there are too few crossings of it that are not interchanges, and that care should be taken to avoid that outcome with this interstate project. Lynch stated that the Milwaukee St interchange has been in Madison's long-range plans for a long time, and planned land uses in the vicinity depend on the development of that interchange. The Hoepker Rd interchange is not in Madison's plans; however, there are entities which greatly desire better access to the American Center from the freeway, including UW Health for improved access to the hospital. Zellers stated that plans for the Milwaukee St area, which include increased housing and commercial development, are dependent upon the construction of an interchange and the access it would provide. This would allow the development of commercial and employment uses, and ultimately provide a more complete community than currently exists in the area, which is almost entirely residential in nature. Lynch mentioned that WisDOT has a cost-sharing policy and that those benefiting from the interchange(s) would likely be required to contribute to project funding. Pritzlaff stated that in the US 151 interchange alternatives, WisDOT is attempting to separate local traffic from through traffic.

6. Approval to Release for Public Review and Comment Proposed Major Amendment to 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program to increase federal funding for East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project

Hoesly stated that the City of Madison had requested a Major Amendment to the 2023-2027 TIP to increase the federal Small Starts funding of the East-West Bus Rapid Transit project by \$7.6 million. This amount is over the \$7 million threshold for a Major Amendment, which requires that the MPO Policy Board authorize staff to release the notice of amendment, with action on the amendment to be scheduled for the June Policy Board meeting. Lynch mentioned that this is a "critical path" issue that could have large implications on the project, which is already under construction.

Wood moved, Field seconded, to approve release for public review and comment the proposed Major Amendment to the 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program to increase federal funding for the East-West Bus Rapid Transit project. Motion carried.

7. Review of Scoring and Approval of Carbon Reduction Program Projects with FY 2023 Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Funding

Hoesly described the six applications for funding received by the MPO, and explained that MPO staff are not recommending funding for the Verona project as it relates to signal operation and improving vehicle flow, and does not achieve the goals of the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). Staff developed two different funding scenarios for the remaining projects. Since all of the projects would convert street lights to LED, they have the same impact on carbon reduction on a per-light basis and received the same scores on that metric. The differences in scores therefore arise due to the projects having different co-benefits, such as projects in MPO-identified Environmental Justice areas and projects with safety benefits. She described the two funding scenarios developed by staff. Due to scheduling issues with last year's projects, the City of Fitchburg and City of Madison projects did not proceed at that time, and they are recommended for funding at the levels approved in 2022 in both scenarios. The City of Verona project, while eligible for funding under this program, does not enhance any other modes and could induce vehicle traffic, and is not recommended for funding. Due to the different scales of the Sun Prairie, Middleton, and Monona projects, staff propose to fund the only a portion of the Middleton project in both projects. Scenario 1 funds the Sun Prairie project, and Scenario 2 funds the Sun Prairie and Monona projects, and a smaller portion of the Middleton project. In both scenarios, less than the minimum of 50% of the project would be funded with federal dollars, so the project will need to be reduced in scope (number of lights) to ensure that at least 50% of the project is federally funded.

Williams moved, Duncan seconded, to approve funding scenario 2 as presented by staff. Duncan asked about the reduced scope of the Middleton project and Hoesly clarified that the number of lights to be changed in the project would be limited by the amount of funding available. Motion carried.

Hoesly related that the Wisconsin FHWA staff informed MPO staff that the FHWA General Council has determined that states have the right to restrict what types of projects can be eligible for funding through federal programs, even for projects selected for funding by TMAs such as Madison. MPO staff suggest that it would be appropriate to draft a letter explaining our position on the Joint Finance Committee's prohibition against using CRP funds for a wide variety of federally-eligible project types. Opitz stated that if staff want formal Policy Board approval of a letter to this effect, it should be brought back as an agenda item at a future board meeting.

8. Review and Approval of Draft MPO Complete Streets Policy

Lyman presented background information on what Complete Streets are, and support of Complete Streets Policies in the Regional Transportation Plan. He then described the ten elements of a Complete Streets Policy, according to Smart Growth America and the Complete Streets Coalition, as these elements were used as the basis for the proposed MPO Complete Streets Policy. Lynch clarified that the state prohibition against using eminent domain for pedestrian facilities is only for new facilities, and that where facilities already exist, eminent domain can be used to obtain enough ROW to replace that facility when the road is widened or re-aligned. Lyman stated that section 4 of the policy includes a provision that if ROW cannot be obtained for a facility, that could be grounds for an exception to the policy, with the Policy Board having the authority to grant exceptions.

Andrae asked if this policy change would have changed how the recently-discussed Village of McFarland Exchange Street project and the request to remove the proposed sidewalk from a portion of the project was handled. Lyman stated that this policy update would not change how that request for project modification had been handled. Lyman provided another example of a project that may come back to the Policy Board for a request for an exception, if the applicant determines that they do not want to include bike lanes in the project.

Field moved, Caravello seconded, to approve the MPO Complete Street Policy. Motion carried.

9. Review and Approval of Draft STBG-U Program Policy and Evaluation Criteria Recommendations

Hoesly stated that the intent is for the policy and evaluation criteria to be in effect for the STBG-U project solicitation that will occur later this year. She explained that one of the reasons for updating the policy is that the apportionment for the Madison Area will be increasing, and to increase the minimum federal cost share from 60% to 65%. The project cost share sliding scale, based on project cost, would also be updated to reflect rising project costs. Hoesly described each of the proposed changes to the policy.

Field asked when the sliding scale for federal funding percentages had last been updated. Hoesly responded that there was a comprehensive revision to the policy in 2016 or 2017, but that she thinks that the sliding scale pre-dates that revision. Opitz stated that he thinks that timeline is correct.

Williams moved, Wood seconded, to approve the changes to the STBG-U Program Policy and Evaluation Criteria recommended by staff. Motion carried.

10. Status Report on Capital Area RPC Activities

Hoesly noted that there are items listed in the packet cover sheet, and that CARPC just completed their 2022 report, which is linked in the cover sheet. The Dane County Cities and Villages Association and Dane County Towns Association are hosting a training session for new elected officials, and both the MPO and CARPC will be presenting at that.

11. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

Opitz stated that he would like to meet in person, at least to some degree, although it is possible to hold hybrid meetings, and he would like feedback from the board as to meeting preferences. Andrae suggested meeting in person once this summer, but would prefer to keep the virtual option for most meetings. Wood stated that he would like to have at least one in-person meeting, but noted that it is important to have a virtual option since board members come from all over the county. Lynch stated that the City of Madison allows boards and commissions to decide whether they meet virtually or in person, but that hybrid meetings are difficult because there are only a few rooms with the technology to support those meetings. Duncan suggested quarterly in-person meetings, with the remainder held virtually. Caravello also suggested holding a single in-person meeting and then going back to virtual meetings. Esser stated that this board is well suited to virtual meetings, and although he would be supportive of a single in-person meeting, he would not support frequent in-person meetings. Williams agreed that a single in-person meeting this summer would be good but she would prefer to keep other meetings virtual. Hoesly stated that at the April meeting, it had been suggested to hold the in-person meeting in June; however, given the major TIP amendment and its public hearing on the June agenda, it would be best to keep the June meeting virtual so that it is more accessible. Regarding a potential July meeting, she did not believe that there was a need to hold a July meeting, but with the potential for new agenda items to require timely action there may be a need for a July 12 meeting. Opitz suggested that the August 2 meeting could be in person, if board members are agreeable.

Next MPO Board Meeting: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Hoesly stated that staff will be setting up new Policy Board member orientation meetings. She then noted that Dane County is leading the application effort for the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure grant, with MPO support.

12. Adjournment

Esser moved, Williams seconded, to adjourn. The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.