

**Greater Madison MPO
Technical Coordinating Committee
Meeting Minutes**

February 24, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

2:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members present: Beck, Gritzmacher, Hall, Hessling, Koprowski, Larson, Scheel, Stouder, Stauske, Tao, Violante, Paoni, Petykowski (for Phillips), LeBrun (for Dunphy), McFadden (for Balke), Bruun (for Stephany), Holt (joined during item #5)

Members absent: Clark, Even, Batuzich, Wheeler

MPO Staff present: Schaefer, Hoesly, Lyman

Others present: Mike Cechvala (Madison DOT/Metro), Asad Rahman (WisDOT), Judd Blau (DeForest), Michelle Brokaw (WisDOT SW Region – joined during item #5), Tina Butteris (Windsor)

2. Approval of January 27, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Stouder moved, Tao seconded, to approve the January 27, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Presentation on East-West Bus Rapid Transit Project

Mike Cechvala, City of Madison DOT/Metro Transit, provided a brief background of BRT and the project's current status, including adoption of the initial Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), FTA's approval of project entry into the Small Starts program for project development, proposed construction in 2023-2024, and scheduled opening for service in Fall 2024. He then described the revised LPA, including: new proposed BRT B and C routes to Middleton and connecting the North and South Transfer Points, respectively; runningway throughout the East-West corridor, including changes to center running for portions of the route; separated path on the north side of Mineral Point Road; left-turn restrictions; changes to west terminus location; routing via Mendota St; potential change to east terminus location to include route split to serve Sun Prairie and American Center; and station location refinements.

Violante asked about pedestrian access to median stations, and whether they would all be located at signalized intersections. Cechvala confirmed that all stops on all major roads will be at signalized intersections, and a few new signals will be added at station locations. Stauske asked about the relationship between BRT and Metro, and Cechvala explained that that BRT would be operated by Metro but have its own brand. For example, where regular Metro routes are numbered, BRT will likely be given letters or colors to differentiate routes. Koprowski asked what traffic modeling had been done with respect to impacts of BRT. Cechvala replied that traffic modeling was done previously, but no modeling had been done for the recent changes to the LPA, with the assumption that keeping the same number of travel lanes wouldn't change the roadway LOS. Synchro modeling analysis has been done with regard to left turn restrictions, which do not appear to have major impacts on LOS. Bruun asked about the timing of speed limit reductions on East Washington Ave., and Cechvala stated that these changes had already been made.

4. Recommendation on Amendments to Regional Transportation Plan 2050 and 2021-2025 TIP to Add USH 51 (McFarland to Stoughton) Reconstruction Project

Schaefer described the amendments and referred to the presentation on the USH 51 (McFarland to Stoughton) reconstruction project at the January 27, 2021 meeting. He mentioned the additional projects included in the TIP amendment, including the Interstate study presented on at the last meeting. Koprowski asked about the public comment period on the amendment. Schaefer clarified that the public comment period was currently underway. Assuming no major issues are raised at the hearing, it is expected that the policy board action will approve the amendment on March 3.

Koprowski moved, Paoni seconded, to recommend approval of the amendments to Regional Transportation Plan 2050 and 2021-2025 TIP to add the USH 51 (McFarland to Stoughton) reconstruction project. Motion carried.

5. Presentation on Research on Local Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Related Infrastructure Requirements

Lyman noted that since this item was originally scheduled to be presented to the TCC there have been several changes and corrections and one new slide added to the presentation based on feedback from the MPO Policy Board and Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). He explained that the presentation is an overview of the complete report document, which will be made available to local staff and other interested parties as soon as it is complete. Lyman described the research conducted and went through summaries of how each surveyed community addresses each design element or requirement, as well as recommendations from national organizations such as ITE and NACTO.

Based on feedback from Policy Board and CAC members, Lyman asked Committee members if their communities have separated path snow removal policies or programs. Staff from Middleton, Sun Prairie, and Monona said paved paths are plowed. Blau said DeForest's paths are generally in the second stage of snow removal behind streets, and that snow is removed when needed seven days/week. Stauske said snow is removed from paths in Middleton generally Monday-Friday, during regular work hours, due to limited overtime budget. Petykowski said Madison has a priority and secondary path system snow clearing policy. Gritzmacher said Sun Prairie prioritizes access to schools and transit, seven days/week.

Lyman discussed various sidewalk funding strategies used by area communities, and asked members how often they widen sidewalks, or install new sidewalks in existing neighborhoods. Blau said DeForest considers sidewalks part of their transportation network and assumes responsibility for sidewalk repair and construction. Gritzmacher clarified that Sun Prairie does have an ordinance allowing property owner assessment of partial cost for sidewalks, but their policy has been to not assess costs to the property owners. Sun Prairie widens or installs new sidewalks when roads are reconstructed, or, if it is a "key missing connection," a sidewalk can be added without road construction (per newly-adopted Comp Plan). They are developing a way to prioritize these projects. Blau said DeForest will adjust/add sidewalks as called for in their sidewalk policy, which is based on Safe Routes to Schools corridors. Sidewalk repair or construction is a line-item in their annual budget. Stauske said Middleton does not widen sidewalks that already exist, as the cost to the owner is an insurmountable obstacle. Even filling gaps is very difficult and has about a 50/50 success rate. Schaefer noted that policy board member Mark Opitz said there is opposition to changing funding to be 100% municipally-funded from people who had already paid for sidewalks on their properties.

Petykowski said Madison rarely widens existing sidewalks, generally only along parks to facilitate snow removal. New sidewalks are not always popular, but the city pushes for them harder in important areas near schools and bus stops; even those meet opposition and do not always succeed. Lyman asked if communities had changed their funding strategies, and noted that Monona had changed to 100% municipal funded due to opposition from property owners over cost assessments. Stauske said Middleton discusses changing cost assessment with every sidewalk project, but has not changed their policy. Scheel said Stoughton has debated the assessment policy almost annually for at least a decade; the 50/50 assessment is seen as more equitable, but is still not popular with property owners. Petykowski said Madison has added a safe route grant program to help defray project costs (up to 50%), which is used in areas of towns annexed into the city.

Lyman discussed equity concerns stemming from project cost assessments, how access to transportation networks can impact property value and rents, and how there is a strong degree of correlation between the MPO Environmental Justice Priority Areas and neighborhoods which lack sidewalks. Paoni raised the issue of equity around ADA accessibility, and how people who experience disabilities are disproportionately impacted by incomplete sidewalk networks.

Stauske suggested that on a slide labeled “MPO Recommendations” the text be changed to clarify that they are staff recommendations, Lyman agreed and stated that he would make that change. Lyman described the summary report on this research that he is nearing completion on and how the results will be shared. Bruun provided a correction to the information shown for Monona’s sidewalk width (5’ min.). Members discussed how they looked forward to using the information provided.

6. Update on Revisions to STBG – Urban Policies and Project Evaluation Criteria

Schaefer introduced the revisions to STBG-Urban Program Policies and Project Evaluation Criteria that staff are working on. An involved process was undertaken in 2015, which resulted in major changes to project selection scoring criteria in order to better align them with goals and policies in the RTP. A single general set of criteria were broken into topics and criteria relevant to the types of projects eligible for funding. This round of revisions was intended to focus on increasing the importance of some criteria, such as safety. Upon review, staff is recommending broader revisions to provide clarity and consistency in project evaluation. He asked that members review the documents provided and be prepared to discuss the changes in detail at the next meeting. He said staff would have a complete set of proposed revisions for that meeting.

Stauske asked about the Severe Crash Rate Index and how that was measured. Schaefer referred to the methodology used in the MPO’s intersection safety analysis led by the UW TOPS Lab. It is based on the cost of various crash severities (Fatal, Severe Injury, Minor Injury, Property Damage Only), which is then translated to weights for the different crash types. The MPO is investigating how to relate this to scoring, including also considering crash rates in segments or intersections, and identifying a high-injury network. The intent is to have better scores for projects that are addressing a safety issue. Stauske raised concerns regarding the subjectivity of the language describing how points are awarded for this criterion, and asked that how the subjective portion of the score would be determined. Schaefer responded that MPO staff are working on that, but that some of the scoring simply won’t be quantitative, and that the scoring system helps ensure that the right project attributes are considered deliberately. Stauske asked that a red-lined version of the proposed changes be provided for review. Schaefer stated that that document would be provided to TCC members at least a week prior to the next meeting.

7. Committee Reports

Tao – Madison is developing project lists for their programs; they received a record number of requests last year for traffic calming and ped/bike enhancement projects. A new traffic signal will be installed at W. Washington Ave. and Henry St. Staff will be using a relatively new project selection framework that focuses on safety, equity, and other priorities.

Petykowski – Garver path bids are due tomorrow (2/25/21).

Dane County (provided by Schaefer) – A public meeting is scheduled in February for CTH M (North) reconstruction project.

Koprowski – No report, but thanked committee members for their votes to recommend approval of USH 51 project-related amendments.

McFadden – Fish Hatchery Rd. reconstruction is starting soon; design projects on Lacy and S. Syene Roads are underway.

Gritzmacher – Sun Prairie is updating its official map with presentation to the Plan Commission early in March. BRT/Route 23 choice is before Transit Commission. City is adopting the Dane County Bicycle Wayfinding Design Guidelines.

Stauske – Middleton Comprehensive Plan is scheduled for approval next week.

Hall – DeForest project bids are coming in; bids are very good, so hoping to be able to do additional projects. Hall asked about accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists for their CTH V project. He said they were considering adding a pedestrian lane, because they weren't sure they could have physical separation due to ditches. Schaefer stated that protected bike lanes are used in more urban settings, but that may not work in that more rural setting and with higher speeds. He noted that it would not be appropriate to provide pedestrian area on the roadway; Lyman referred to the research he conducted and presented on earlier in the meeting and that the national recommendations indicated that paint should not be used to demarcate pedestrian areas.

Bruun – Monona has a lot of projects going on. Bids back for stormwater management project in Stone Bridge Park; also have the Gateway Green flood mitigation project; city is partnering with Dane County to reconstruct southern portion of Monona Dr. (Phase 4 - Beltline interchange to Broadway); road maintenance projects are scheduled throughout the city; and Pirate Island bridge is being reconstructed.

Hessling – Village had a public meeting on the Exchange St. project; ten bids were received on one street project.

8. Staff Report

Schaefer reported the following:

- Annual pedestrian and bicycle facility geodatabase updates – MPO staff will be in contact to collect 2020 project information.
- Future land use/growth forecasts for RTP Update – working with CARPC and City of Madison staff on growth forecasts. CARPC will present on the work at a future TCC meeting.
- New regional travel model – nearly complete.
- Other – Local survey for RTP: please complete if you haven't yet, it is very helpful to MPO staff. CARPC and MPO will be reaching out to communities about getting links to agencies on local web pages to improve accessibility.

9. Next Meeting Dates

The next scheduled meeting dates are March 24th and April 28th.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Lyman and Schaefer.